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**History, Power and Monstrosity from Shakespeare to the *Fin de*
*Siècle.***

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Submitted to the University of Wales in fulfilment of the requirements

for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English

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SUMMARY.

This thesis examines the historical significance of literary representations of monsters and monstrosity over several centuries, in the belief that literary monstrosity is symptomatic of wider anxieties concerning contemporary fears of historical change during periods of potentially revolutionary social upheaval. This leads to the conclusion that history itself thus becomes monstrous, through symbolising a disruptive, chaotic, and above all uncanny return of such repressed fears from the monstrous past of the British bourgeoisie.

My first chapter examines how Renaissance authors such as William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe and John Milton use monstrosity to depict a nascent bourgeoisie's fears of increasing royal and aristocratic tyranny. Following this, my second chapter investigates how the Monster becomes an overdetermined cultural sign of revolutionary historical change in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is discussed in my third chapter, with fears of monstrous foreign invaders showing the *fin-de-siècle* bourgeoisie as haunted, both by their horrific past, and by a future loss of power to radical historical forces represented above all by the monstrous New Woman. In my fourth chapter, H. G. Wells's scientific romances embody the *fin-de-siècle* bourgeoisie's unease at their increasing dependence upon monstrous science to maintain their power, especially since its military applications would soon bleed their empire dry in the First World War. My fifth chapter, meanwhile, explains how monstrous criminals in texts by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Robert Louis Stevenson and Oscar Wilde show the irruption of uncanny history into the ideological self-image of the *fin-de-siècle* social order. I shall then conclude by reaffirming the contribution that all this makes to advancing the study of monstrosity, and in particular to exploring connections between history and the monstrous.

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s).

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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ABBREVIATIONS.

IDM = *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (Wells, H. G.).

IM = *The Invisible Man* (Wells, H. G.).

JP = *Journalism and Prophecy, 1893-1946* (Wells, H. G.).

TM = *The Time Machine* (Wells, H. G.).

WW = *War of the Worlds* (Wells, H. G.).

(See Bibliography for full details).

INTRODUCTION.

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language... (Marx, in McLellan, 63).

Anyone who fights with monsters should take care that he does not himself become a monster. And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes back into you... (Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 68).

The British Empire has always encountered difficulty in distinguishing between its heroes and its monsters... (Moore and O'Neill et al., *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, 6).

One has no wish to be devoured by alien monstrosities – even in the cause of political progress... (*Doctor Who: Carnival of Monsters*. Dir. Barry Letts. BBC Worldwide Ltd. 1973).

As can be gauged from the above extracts, to become involved with monsters, whether you are simply trying to overcome them, or, more insidiously, to control and manipulate their fearsome power for your own purposes, is to risk suffering a far more pernicious, self-destructive fate than mere physical annihilation. Indeed, facing a monster usually involves dealing with your own potential contamination by the overwhelming power of monstrosity itself, which can be spread, if not by such obvious physical means as Count Dracula's vampire-bite, then by more subtle psychological and ideological means. An especially interesting example of the latter occurs in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, after one of the worst atrocities committed by her monstrous creation. This involves the murder of Victor Frankenstein's little brother, William, and is followed by a particularly brutal miscarriage of justice, namely the hanging of the innocent Justine Moritz for the crime, an event which in turn is also engineered by the

Monster himself. Thus, as Victor's equally ill-fated fiancée, Elizabeth, notes, where once '...accounts of vice and injustice... [appeared] as tales of ancient days, or imaginary evils; or at least they were remote... now misery has come home, and men appear to me as monsters thirsting for each other's blood...' (Shelley, Mary.

Frankenstein: Complete Authoritative Text with Bibliographical and Historical

Contexts, Critical History, and Essays from Five Different Critical Perspectives, ed.

Johanna M. Smith. Boston/New York: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1992, Case

Studies in Contemporary Criticism, 85). Such an apparently gloomy vision of a world

saturated in monstrous deeds and people has not deterred modern critics from grappling

with texts which feature such matters, however, and, in fact, it may indeed have

attracted them to such texts instead. This is certainly the case when it comes to the

recent critical history of the literary genre most commonly associated with creating just

such a pervasive atmosphere of bleak terror, namely the Gothic. Indeed, while my

analysis will by no means be restricted to specifically Gothic texts, in my opinion it is

nevertheless intriguing that many of the most famous Gothic texts, such as *Dracula*,

often use such historical motifs to evoke fears of a return to an even more monstrous

past. This is not always the position taken up by other Gothic critics, however, as these

comments by William Patrick Day demonstrate:

The creation of the Gothic fantasy world is an assertion of the existence of a timeless reality outside history, one in which historical reality can be used as a source of imaginative pressure and in this way controlled... By making the past vanish into fantasy, making it into a function of exotic atmosphere, part of the literary dreamscape, the author and reader both accept the disappearance and irrelevance of history and replace the past with a world outside of time. Historical processes are disrupted and replaced by dreams; indeed, the obvious artificiality and nonhistorical qualities of the Gothic fantasy are, essentially, a rejection of the very idea of history as something to take seriously... The Gothic world's transcendence is perhaps best embodied in *Dracula*, a man of the Middle Ages who breaks the bonds of time, bridging the feudal and modern worlds in his attempt to conquer England as in the past he had conquered

Transylvania. For the Gothic fantasy, as for *Dracula*, historical time is an illusion... (32-33).

It is certainly true that such historical incongruity lies at the heart of many of the most powerful monstrous texts such as *Dracula*, and that one of its most common effects is to stifle concerted action against monsters such as the Count, by belying the true danger that they represent. This allows them to gain a foothold in the so-called 'normal' world until it is too late to easily dislodge them, while much of that 'normal' world remains unsuspecting or, even worse, complacent in the meantime, until even *Dracula's* victims themselves could never truly understand their plight. For after all, as even Abraham Van Helsing himself acknowledges, how many of them beforehand would have believed in such a creature '... in the midst of our scientific, sceptical, matter-of-fact nineteenth century...' (Stoker, Bram. *Dracula: Complete, Authoritative Text with Bibliographical, Historical, and Cultural Contexts, Critical History, and Essays from Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. John Paul Riquelme. Boston/New York: Bedford/St Martin's, 2002, *Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism*, 243)? Yet it is not enough to simply say that this represents the Gothic past disrupting the present through superstition and romance, and that the relationship between the two remains a straightforward battle between the irrational terrors thus created, and their effect on an (ostensibly more) rational present. For while monsters often do disrupt grand narratives of historical progress, such as those of Christianity or Marxism, more often than not they do so through harnessing and/or embodying the overwhelming power of history itself. (Indeed, this power can manifest itself either through one or a succession of monstrous historical events, or simply through the passage of time [and of biological time, especially]). In such circumstances, *history itself becomes monstrous*, in a process whose implications for the wider cultural relationship that exists between history and monstrosity will be examined fully during the remainder of my thesis. Within *Dracula*

itself, moreover, and despite all the Count's attempts at self-modernisation, even the undoubtedly Gothic atmosphere of Castle Dracula serves, not to undermine the importance of the passage of history, but to emphasise the potential danger that it represents. Under such Gothic circumstances as these, therefore, and as Jonathan Harker himself would surely agree, the monstrous historical terrors represented by the '...old centuries [themselves] had, and have, powers of their own which mere "modernity" cannot kill...' (Dracula, 60).

As a result of all this, I posit that monstrous literature in general is designed to negotiate and, if possible, overcome the fears and anxieties created by a chaotic, uncontrollable process of historical change. This applies whether the texts in question involve the return of past forms of monstrous tyranny to engulf a vulnerable present, as with traditional Gothic texts, or instead show even more horrific socio-political forces overpowering us in the future, as is often the case in science fiction. Indeed, modern criticism of monstrous texts often seems part of a wider cultural process of coping with such unending historical change, for as Maggie Kilgour comments:

Scholarship is always a necromantic enterprise; today it tends to revive the dead to dismember it, in the hope of recreating both past and present... A form [like Gothic,] whose monstrous corporate identity transgresses traditional generic categories seems appropriate for new attempts at boundary negotiations... But the gothic [also] seems an appropriate genre for our own dark enlightened age, another best and worst of times, so ahead of itself that it calls itself 'postmodern', in which we believe that by dismantling the past and remaking it in our own image we will really get ahead, and yet are simultaneously sceptical of all plots of progress. At a time in which change has become so rapid that it seems a truly gothic force over which we have no control, we flee from a sense of an ending to a culture of recycling which we hope will preserve us from the horrors of loss, closure, and death... (221-223).

Such a culture of recycling the monstrous motifs of the literary or historical past in order to make sense of more contemporary uncertainties and anxieties is in itself hardly

unique to our own era, of course, or even to the Gothic. Indeed, it is quite plausible that to do so has been one of the main preoccupations of most, if not all, forms of monstrous literature that have evolved since the very beginnings of recorded history itself. After all, it is possible both to trace the literary usage of monstrosity back to such ancient myths as those recorded in Homer's *Odyssey*, and moreover to discern how the monsters depicted in these myths were often ascribed even deeper historical foundations in their own right. Indeed, in mythical terms such monstrous personal histories would sometimes stretch as far back as the dawn of time itself. For as we are reminded in one of the most famous monstrous mythological episodes to survive in English literature, namely the coming of the fiendish Grendel in the seminal Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*:

... This unhappy being had long
lived in the land of monsters
since the Creator cast them out
as kindred of *Cain*. For that killing of Abel
the eternal Lord took vengeance.
There was no joy of that feud: far from mankind
God drove him out for his deed of shame!
From Cain came down all kinds misbegotten
– ogres and elves and evil shades –
as also the Giants, who joined in long
wars with God. He gave them their reward...
(*Beowulf: A Verse Translation*, trans. Michael Alexander.
Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973, lines 104-114.
Penguin Classics).

Returning to the equally ancient tradition of classical Greco-Roman mythology, meanwhile, it is striking that at least one key text, namely Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, is concerned throughout with the dangers and possibilities which monstrous transformations embody. Indeed, Ovid depicts a wide array of such truly radical changes, while stretching them over the widest historical canvas then possible, thus creating '... one continuous song from nature's first / Remote beginnings to our modern times...' (Ovid. *Metamorphoses*, trans. A. D. Melville. Oxford/New York: Oxford

University Press, 1986, I, 4-5. The World's Classics). It is my intention to do something similar within the confines of this thesis, with the proviso that I will mostly be working with monstrous texts that are themselves drawn, not from ancient mythology, but from various crisis-points in the historical career of the British bourgeoisie. In doing so, I shall, of course, place particular emphasis upon those texts which I deem to best embody the historical fears and anxieties that surrounded the rise of British bourgeois power from its humble beginnings during the Renaissance, to its apparently near-universal triumph following the French and Industrial Revolutions. Nevertheless, however, I shall also concentrate upon those texts which best depict the even more terrifying prospect of the potential future collapse of this hard-won economic and imperial power, by far the greatest concentration of which appear during the nineteenth-century *fin de siècle*.

Of course, I have no wish to diminish the literary or historical value of earlier monstrous literature by thus concentrating upon various Renaissance, Romantic, and *fin-de-siècle* texts in the main body of my thesis. Indeed, I shall continue to use such ancient texts as *Beowulf*, Homer's *Odyssey*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to provide a useful historical contrast to these more modern texts whenever a suitable occasion arises in the remainder of this introduction, for example in discussing the idea of the monstrous hero. Neither should it be inferred that monstrous texts from the twentieth, or even the twenty-first centuries should be any less significant in critical terms than those written between the Renaissance and the *fin de siècle*. In fact, it could be argued that with the rapid evolution of modern media technology, and above all the cinema, the potential cultural impact of monstrosity itself has become, if not more powerful, then at least accessible to a more universal audience in recent years than was ever possible before. Indeed, as Alan Moore comments:

In a century packed to the bursting point with paradoxes, one of the most puzzling must surely be the meteoric ascent of horror as a genre in literature, cinema and even music, all at a time when each day seems to make us just a little more conscious and aware of the real-life horrors unfolding all around us... (Moore and Bissette, et al., 7).

As a result of all this, modern monsters often appear to symbolise the increasingly universal destructive potential of other forms of modern technology, and above all of nuclear weapons. Moreover, they also often embody the authoritarian regimes and ideologies that have unleashed such horrors upon us in the past, and which we fear will do so again.¹ Yet inasmuch as the West was itself responsible for unleashing the first atomic bombs, it is unsurprising that modern science fiction, in particular, is consumed with prophesying the myriad ways in which both this and other sinister scientific developments could soon be used to transform us into monsters ourselves.

Even as it does so, however, science fiction also articulates a growing dread that we will ultimately have no choice but to adopt such extreme measures, merely in order to survive in what we fear will be an increasingly dystopian future history. As such, as

Fred Botting notes:

Science fiction, connected to the Gothic since *Frankenstein*, presents new objects of terror and horror in strangely mutated life-forms and alien invaders from other and future worlds. With science fiction, however, there is significant divergence from Gothic strategies: cultural anxieties in the present are no longer projected on to the past but are relocated in the future... Located in a thoroughly secular world, science signifies the oppressive domination of technological production, bureaucratic organisation and social regulation. What is lost and recovered in the confrontation with scientifically-inspired machines, mutants and inhuman, automated worlds is a virtually religious sense of human wholeness and agency... In this 'postmodern condition' the breakdown of modernity's metanarratives discloses a horror that identity, reality, truth and meaning are not only effects of narratives but subject to a dispersion and multiplication of meanings, realities and identities that obliterates the possibility of imagining any human order and unity. Progress, rationality and civilisation, increasingly suspect, cede to new forms of sublimity and excess, new terrors, irrationalities and inhumanities... (*Gothic*, 156-157).

What emerges in science fiction, therefore, is a real sense of the social and ideological norms that had once governed the bourgeois world order being shattered by the uncontrollable, inhuman pace of historical change, as embodied above all by a relentless growth in the power of science itself. This becomes particularly apt as we continue to advance at breakneck speed towards a host of new theories and discoveries, from evolutionary and atomic theory to genetic engineering and climate change, whose implications routinely enhance humanity's potential for monstrous self-destruction, as well as questioning the very nature of humanity. In doing so, modern science therefore reinforces the terrifying images of its increasing potential to create monstrous new ideas and inventions, not to mention beings, which have lurked in the bourgeois imagination since the days of H. G. Wells and Mary Shelley, or even those of Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. This recurrent concern of monstrous literature with the potentially catastrophic results of radical developments in scientific power also evokes other potential critical paradoxes, however, which again link it with the Gothic.

For example, as William Patrick Day notes:

Both Victor Frankenstein and Dr. Jekyll are scientists, and their creations should fall within the laws of the physical universe. Instead they transform the natural world into a source of the monstrous. Jekyll and Frankenstein are caught in the paradox that by pursuing [sic.] the logic of scientific investigation and the powers inherent in the understanding of the laws of the universe, they have created beings that are antinatural, that seem to call into question the order and comprehensibility of the material world... The Gothic, by use of the monstrous and supernatural, divests the physical and spiritual worlds of their power to impress a sense of order on the human mind... [Instead, we find that] the Gothic world is a *naturally* monstrous universe, a logical paradox in which all principles of order cease to operate. The Gothic world is at once physical and supernatural but unbounded by the laws of the material world and without divine or spiritual order... (36-37).

In the paradoxical, uncontrollable world thus unleashed by Gothic science, monsters become very much like revolutions: since their respective appearances on the literary and historical stage also signal that the established norms of society are under

serious threat, and may indeed no longer apply. As a result, such occasions inevitably create the potential for dangerously violent clashes between representatives of hitherto established ideas of so-called 'normality' and these thoroughly alienated historical newcomers. Nevertheless, as Marx comments above, revolutions often also involve the return of older political ideas and social problems in new historical guises, as the defenders of revolution remind their fellows of past victories against other oppressive regimes, in order to make their own success appear historically pre-ordained.

Meanwhile, however, their enemies highlight with equal stubbornness past occasions where such radical historical changes backfired on those who initiated them, in order to accomplish much the same propaganda purposes for the sake of their own, anti-revolutionary cause. It is also at this point that concepts of monstrosity enter the discourse of revolutionary history, with the warring parties attempting to label the others' beliefs and actions as being irredeemably 'monstrous', as both Edmund Burke and Tom Paine did to their respective rivals during the French Revolution, for example. (For more on this latter point, see my second chapter, which discusses Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and the French Revolution). It is also the case that, as Nietzsche comments, what '...one age perceives as evil is usually an untimely echo of something that was once perceived as good – the atavism of an older ideal...' (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 69). What does this tell us about the relationship between the historical development of monstrosity in literature, and the wider historical anxieties of the society that produces it? Indeed, to what extent does history itself become monstrous in the eyes of those who stand to lose their hard-earned power as a result of these revolutionary changes? Moreover, to what degree can Nietzsche's earlier comments about the dangers of becoming monstrous ourselves, even while battling other monsters, be applied to those heroic cultural figures, such as Sherlock Holmes, who

defend bourgeois Britain from the monstrous encroachments of alienated criminals and/or alien invaders?

I shall attempt to answer all these questions in the course of this thesis, and I shall begin here by first examining the key theoretical and ideological concepts which will underline the basis of my investigations. In particular, I shall then apply these concepts to establishing and understanding the critical relationship between history and monstrosity which stands at the core of this thesis. Before doing so, however, I wish to define more clearly the precise meaning of such terms as 'monster' and 'monstrosity' in this context. By doing this, I can begin to establish more clearly exactly where my thesis fits into a world of monstrous literary criticism which has itself grown to gargantuan proportions over recent years. For example, the ideas of Franco Moretti and Chris Baldick have proven highly influential upon both monstrous literary criticism in general, and upon this thesis in particular. Especially fascinating has been Moretti's work upon the historical role of monstrous literature (specifically Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*), in maintaining social order through creating '... a fear one *needs*: the price one pays for coming contentedly to terms with a social body based on irrationality and menace. Who says it is escapist?' (Ibid. 108). Moretti would at first appear to provide a very convincing Marxist examination of the relationship between literature and history, as well as incorporating other important theoretical viewpoints, such as psychoanalytic criticism, into his analysis, in much the same way that I intend to do. However, even such an excellent critic as Moretti is far from infallible, as can be seen, for example, in his misidentification of the first character in *Dracula* to use the word 'vampire'. Moreover, the sprawling focus of his work means that, while providing important material for a Marxist historical understanding of both *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*, as well as of Shakespearean tragedy

and Sherlock Holmes stories, he cannot consider the latter two as monstrous literature in the same way as the other two.² I, of course, intend to do just that throughout my work, as well as examining several monstrous texts which Moretti does not cover, as written by such authors as H. G. Wells and Oscar Wilde, amongst others. Moreover, Moretti in my opinion gives perhaps too much credence to Marxist prophecies regarding what I believe is a fundamentally uncontrollable and unpredictable historical process, which disrupts any such dogmatic approaches to understanding monstrous history in the same way that evolutionary theory disrupted religious dogma with regard to natural history. After all, even supposedly loyal adherents of Marxism have preferred to alter their own theories of history in the chaotic light of events, rather than to be left behind in the battle for political and ideological power, ever since the days of Lenin himself. Thus, no rigidly dogmatic understanding of history, whether Marxist or otherwise, can hope to fully explain the potentially limitless possibilities for future chaos and monstrosity lurking within the unknown future. Indeed, as my chapter on Wells will show, this had already become demonstrably true even during the Russian Revolution itself, when in practice ‘... the historical law of revolutions broke down because people in one revolution used the memory of previous ones to change the way they occurred...’ (Evans, 60). Chris Baldick, meanwhile, critically examines the ideological power of the monstrous myth of *Frankenstein* in shaping other writers’ usage of monstrosity to suit the socio-political anxieties of their own contemporary historical contexts. Certainly, I myself harbour a similar critical desire to use classical Marxist concepts, such as that of bourgeois social dominance coming under increasing threat from revolutionary changes in power relations, to examine the wider historical effects of monstrous literature. Where my approach will *differ* from Baldick’s is not only, as with Moretti, in the wider varieties of monstrous literature which I shall

analyse in my thesis, however. (For despite the fact that he analyses many different texts to uncover the literary ancestry and descendants of the *Frankenstein* myth, Baldick nevertheless remains largely focused instead upon the historical development of this single myth). After all, not only am I more fundamentally concerned with the ideological significance of monstrosity in understanding concepts of history itself than Baldick is, but he also seems to me to underestimate the historical threat that monstrous literature itself can pose to bourgeois ideology. Most notoriously, at one point he even dismisses no less significant a monstrous text than *Dracula* itself as representative of little more than a flirtatious bourgeois throwback to ‘...feudalism’s death warmed up...’ (Baldick, 148). I shall later go on to dispute this approach to Stoker’s novel in far greater detail in my own chapter on *Dracula*: for now, suffice it to say that it appears far too reductive an analysis of this seminal monstrous text. (Indeed, I shall then demonstrate how it is also concerned with, among other things, the *fin-de-siècle* British bourgeoisie’s fears of foreign invasion, degeneration, and the rise of the New Woman).

To some extent, of course, such growth in monstrous literary criticism merely reflects a wider cultural fascination with questions of monstrosity: a fascination which, as I have shown, stretches back for millennia to the days of ancient mythology. From these ancient beginnings, moreover, both authors and critics have sought to provide answers to such questions, in a continual process of cultural evolution which has seen the creation of a seemingly unending variety of ever-different, ever-changing monstrous texts aimed at doing precisely that. During this process, however, it is nevertheless clear that several basic parallels can be drawn between different monstrous texts, whether written at the same time or in different historical periods, in terms of the fundamental anxieties that lie at their cores, such as fears of tyranny or invasion. (Or,

indeed, of both occurring simultaneously, as is the case above all in the context of

Dracula). Moreover, as Joan B. Landes comments:

If the question ‘What is a monster?’ has produced countless replies in different historical circumstances, there is one constant running through all these responses: whatever a monster is, it is not one of us. Monsters violate the borders between men and beast or human and divine, but they are also a way of talking about the rejected or repulsive Other. Monsters disturb a shared sense of decorum, order and taste. They are grotesque, distorted, ugly, bestial, and horrifying. They fascinate and repel. They are sent to link bodily deformity to moral or political evils. And above all, monsters offer a way of thinking about the world. So when a known social universe abruptly changes, as happened in France during the 1790s, it is not surprising that figures of monstrosity were everywhere to be found in visual and verbal imagery... (153-154).

Where my own ideas diverge most clearly from all this earlier work, however, is above all in my conviction that monstrosity itself is best understood not just as a historical symbol, but more specifically as a foreboding cultural *symptom* of such dangerous historical crisis points. At these fearful times, therefore, monsters themselves emerge from apparent dormancy to indicate where the society, or rather ‘patient’, in question is suffering from great social and political ills which, unless addressed, may prove overwhelming, if not fatal. What we can then extrapolate from this is an overall definition of a monster as a *terrifying, often sinister person or creature, who is symptomatic of society’s fears of historical change*: an interpretation which certainly tallies with what can be established regarding the linguistic roots of monstrosity, for one thing.

For example, the origins of the word ‘monster’ in the Latin word *monstrum*, meaning ‘portent’ or showing, thus reinforce the main argument of this thesis, namely that monstrosity itself is a kind of historical symptom. (Similarly, meanwhile, its roots in the Latin word *monēre*, meaning ‘warn’, shows in turn how monstrosity therefore becomes a sign of great danger). In the context of this thesis (and for cultural and historical reasons that shall shortly be explained more fully), the ‘patient’ in question is largely the British bourgeoisie between the Renaissance and the *fin de siècle*, and the times of greatest stress therefore involve critical moments in their historical development. These include its ‘birth’ during the Renaissance, followed by its entering into a form of ‘puberty’ as its powers grow to their greatest height in the aftermath of

the French and Industrial Revolutions. Perhaps most powerful, however, are those monstrous symptoms which emerge as premonitions of the potential 'death' of British bourgeois power in the years before the doubly traumatic historical ordeals represented by the First World War and the Russian Revolution. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the bulk of this thesis should be devoted to examining texts dating from precisely the selfsame *fin-de-siècle* period. Indeed, I shall later argue that this period of greatest imagined danger involves the most compelling variety of threatening historical symptoms which bourgeois Britain had yet faced. As a result, this period produces what I contend is a more compelling variety of monstrous texts than any seen hitherto, from authors such as Bram Stoker, H. G. Wells, Oscar Wilde, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Robert Louis Stevenson, to name but the most illustrious of these. Moreover, their works have had a more powerful and pervasive cultural afterlife than almost any other examples of post-Renaissance monstrous literature, save perhaps Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and some of William Shakespeare's greatest works in this field, such as *Richard III* and *Macbeth*.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, such *fin-de-siècle* texts as Stoker's *Dracula* and Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, among others, have indeed joined these earlier works in becoming the subjects of legions of cinematic and other adaptations, thus demonstrating the powerful cultural after-effects that can be achieved by monstrous literature. Moreover, we have also seen how such texts can shift from being symptoms of specific historical fears or anxieties, to being symptomatic of more recurrent forms of dangerous historical trauma, such as potential vulnerability to tyranny or invasion. What could also result from regarding monstrosity as a symptom of historical trauma, however, is the objection that this reduces the bourgeoisie to the status of a rather pathetic hypochondriac, helplessly paralysed by even the most remotely sinister

historical development, and that such a portrayal grossly exaggerates their true vulnerabilities. Indeed, it can be argued in turn that seeing them in this pathetic light leaves us not only prone to exaggerating how far such fears were justified, but also to exaggerating how far such fears were in fact truly held by the bourgeoisie. After all, as Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall note:

At least in Marx's account, the bourgeoisie is the most relentlessly dynamic and iconoclastic class in history, driven as it is to embark upon ceaseless transformation and innovation. It always includes, of course, a panicky rearguard of gloomy Calvinist bankrupts and floodgates-of-anarchy ideologues for whom the disruptive social consequences of such transformations spell imminent doom; but the true bourgeois can afford to regard his 'Others' not with terror but with equanimity and even delight, because, from opium fiends in China to wielders of 'Pink Dollars' in California, they represent what he loves best – a new market. Except in brief periods of openly revolutionary disturbance, the prevailing mood of the bourgeoisie is commonly one of well-fed complacency. There are good practical reasons why the middle class should sleep more soundly than other social groups can; and there is no evidence that it sleeps less soundly after curling up with a titillating anthology of vampire stories. Indeed, it is likely that an awareness of bourgeois complacency is precisely the irritant that impels the modernist intelligensia to *wish* paralysing dread upon the bourgeoisie, as if 'we' could catch its guilty conscience by means of non-realist literary art, as Hamlet does with Claudius. The figure of the terrified bourgeois in Gothic Criticism is a fantasy projected by vengeful frustration, shaped like a wax effigy in a species of literary-theoretical voodoo... (226).

On the surface, this image of a contented bourgeoisie, largely unruffled by monstrous texts, save as fleeting sources of thrilling entertainment, would appear to deal a hammer-blow to the idea that monstrosity is symptomatic of society's (and especially bourgeois society's), fears of historical change that I have constructed here. And it is certainly undeniable that the bourgeoisie's own rise to power was largely dependent upon mastering rapidly changing historical circumstances, and indeed thriving upon them, as exemplified above all by their swiftness to adapt to, if not engineer, the radically different world that followed the French and Industrial Revolutions. But even if this should be true of the vast majority of bourgeois history, even Baldick and

Mighall themselves nevertheless acknowledge that this picture of bourgeois self-confidence does not necessarily apply to what they describe as ‘...*brief periods of openly revolutionary disturbance...*’ (Ibid. 226, my Italics). And as all my researches will demonstrate time and again, it quickly becomes apparent that the most powerful literary representations of monsters and monstrosity occur precisely during such disturbing times, when the course of history itself apparently lies in the balance. (Moreover, I shall also demonstrate that these conclusions also apply to texts written either during the immediate historical aftermath of such periods of revolutionary upheavals, such as *Frankenstein* [published 1818], or at a time when such upheavals are widely anticipated, as is the case with *Dracula* [1897]). Ever since the Renaissance, indeed, monstrous literature has most often flourished in such dangerously uncertain historical contexts, even as British, as well as wider Western historical understanding, becomes increasingly dominated by either the prospect or the aftermath of revolutionary social change and upheaval. Given moreover that, as my opening extract from Karl Marx demonstrates, those engulfed in such revolutionary historical moments become desperately engaged in trying to manipulate past history to ensure their own future survival, the widespread appearance of monstrous literature during these uneasy periods of history is indeed hardly surprising. As Jacques Derrida points out, after all, the monster is an extremely powerful symbol of a profoundly uncertain, and indeed uncontrollable, future history, which therefore ‘...is necessarily monstrous... that is, that which can only be surprising, that for which we are not prepared... is heralded by species of monsters. A future that would not be monstrous would not be a future; it would already be a predictable, calculable, and programmable tomorrow...’ (387).

What Baldick and Mighall’s objections also neglect, however, is the extent to which even the seemingly secure bourgeoisie themselves have nevertheless been in a

constantly unstable and insecure ideological position ever since their own revolutionary emergence during the Renaissance. For no sooner had they overthrown the absolutist power of their royal and aristocratic overlords, than the proletarian masses upon whom their own economic power depends began to appear ominously ready to supplant the bourgeoisie's newfound position of social dominance in turn. (This is evidenced by the emergence of both the Levellers in seventeenth-century England, and the *sans-culottes* in eighteenth-century France, following both countries' respective bourgeois revolutions). Throughout this thesis, I shall demonstrate how literary monstrosity has been used at several landmark moments of socio-economic and ideological crisis since the Renaissance, in order to convey conflicting and opposed historical and political meanings for an increasingly bourgeois-led British society. The result of this, therefore, is that the monster often embodies the same paradoxical position of simultaneous power and weakness as the bourgeoisie itself. This historical resemblance endures despite the fact that the very foundations of the bourgeoisie's social and imperial power are often threatened by the wrath of these selfsame monsters. After all, and again according to classical Marxist ideology, the bourgeoisie's historical fate is to find itself inescapably trapped between both traumatic memories of past aristocratic cruelties, and forebodings of an even more horrible future, when it shall suffer in turn at the vengeful hands of its former proletarian victims. In this thesis, indeed, I shall analyse the historical roots of these conflicting perceptions of bourgeois society's seemingly imminent, yet endlessly deferred apocalyptic destruction, a process which began, moreover, as soon as the bourgeoisie's rise to power first began, as evidenced in the monstrous literature of the English Renaissance. Before doing so, however, it would be best to clarify further the ideological position that I myself hold in the context of this thesis. For while have I hitherto relied a great deal upon the insights of Marxist and/or

New Historicist ideas in stating my case, yet I remain unafraid to undermine their more dogmatic conclusions in order to advance them further. (Moreover, I intend to use insights from other theories such as psychoanalytic or feminist criticism, whenever I deem it appropriate to do so). Ironically, this latter point means that my own methodological position, which I will shortly adopt to examine monstrosity more widely in this thesis, itself appears to be somewhat monstrous, in the strictly Frankensteinian sense of the term. (For example, one of the key definitions of the word ‘monster’ which can be found in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* itself refers to a creature ‘... compounded of incongruous elements...’ [ed. R. E. Allen et al. 768. Eighth Edition). In sum, while I have used many varied examples of secondary literature to provide a solid critical background for my thesis, my own methodological approach throughout will be largely based upon Marxist-historicism, while incorporating insights from psychoanalytic criticism (and especially from Freud) and feminist theory (especially from Huet), where appropriate. (Such occasions will include a discussion of the Freudian Uncanny in the context of Sherlock Holmes, or of the power of the maternal imagination to generate monstrous births in the context of *Richard III*, respectively). All this will be used to prove three linked theoretical concepts, beginning with the assertion that monstrosity is an overdetermined symptom of society’s – and especially British bourgeois society’s – fears of historical change. Because of this, history itself then becomes monstrous, in that it in turn symbolises the chaotic return of such repressed fears from the monstrous past of the British bourgeoisie. As such, history becomes fundamentally uncontrollable and unpredictable, with the effect that grand metanarratives regarding its destined future course, whether derived from Christianity, from Marxism, or from elsewhere, are constantly disrupted. Moreover, because of the overwhelming fear and uncertainty resulting from all this,

British bourgeois society will often need monstrous heroes to save it from its even more monstrous enemies. However, the terrifying destructive and/or subversive power that monstrous heroes usually possess, as well as such heroes themselves, could very easily be turned against the selfsame British bourgeois society that they normally defend.

(Indeed, this society often remains suspicious and fearful of its own heroes as a result of this). This latter point, meanwhile, largely derives from the views of Friedrich Nietzsche, whose work also forms a significant role in shaping the ideological background of this thesis, as does that of the aforementioned Freud, and above all that of Karl Marx. For while modern criticism has often provided useful insights into monstrous literature, as shown above, it can be equally useful to examine *fin-de-siècle* monstrous texts, in particular, in the light of the historical and ideological contexts which shaped them in turn, a process to which all three men contributed greatly.

In the meantime, I have already stated the chief reason for using a specifically Marxist form of New Historicism as the main methodological cornerstone of my thesis. This is because in most examples of monstrous literature, the bourgeoisie find themselves in much the same ambivalent historical position as is usually ascribed to the monster in these texts, namely that of simultaneously being both horribly powerful and profoundly vulnerable. After all, the bourgeoisie too possess overwhelming power over their own seemingly helpless victims, namely the proletariat, which is nevertheless juxtaposed with an increasing sense of their lingering vulnerability to the revolutionary wrath of such allegedly inferior classes. The paradoxical implications of such Marxist theories regarding the classical bourgeois socio-historical position as being fundamentally akin to that of the monster also have a great deal of significance in my overall assessment of the symbiotic relationship between history, power, and literary monstrosity. Therefore, while exploring such ideological paradoxes further, I shall also

demonstrate another aforementioned theoretical premise of my research, namely that history itself becomes monstrous in such texts, and especially so ever since the Renaissance beginnings of the bourgeoisie's own brutal revolutionary rise to power. As Graham Holderness comments, indeed, it is therefore unsurprising that in some ways '... early modern thinkers seem to have considered history, certainly metaphorically and even at some level literally, as a power of resurrection, a means of raising the dead...'

(43).

Later, Holderness goes on to examine the monstrous psychological implications of thus regarding history as a powerfully undead intellectual force in relation to William Shakespeare's *Richard III*, a notoriously ambiguous literary/historical text which will also be a cornerstone of my own analysis of monstrous literature during the English Renaissance. In doing so, he describes Richard's '... acute consciousness of history's "shadow", that marginal space where history is made not only by deaths and accessions, battles and executions, but also by the potency of the shadow-world, the dimension of dreams and fantasies, self-fulfilling prophecies and enabling fictions...'

(85). This confirms my own belief that post-Renaissance concepts of history as monstrous resurrection, with sinister powers to preserve and revive a seemingly-dead past which society's increasingly bourgeois rulers preferred buried, are compatible with Freudian ideas of the uncanny. These ideas in turn do much to further our historical understanding of monstrosity's powerful psychological impact. As Sigmund Freud himself comments, after all:

Many people experience the [uncanny] feeling in the highest degree in relation to death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts... There is scarcely any other matter... upon which our feelings have changed so little since the very earliest times, and in which discarded forms have been so completely preserved under a thin disguise, as our relation to death. Two things account for our conservatism: the strength of our original emotional reaction to death and the insufficiency of our scientific knowledge about it. Biology has not yet been able to decide

whether death is the inevitable fate of every living being or whether it is only a regular but yet perhaps unavoidable event in life. It is true that the statement "All men are mortal" is paraded in text-books of logic as an example of a general proposition; but no human being really grasps it, and our unconscious has as little use now as it ever had for the idea of its own mortality. Religions continue to dispute the importance of the undeniable fact of individual death and to postulate a life after death; civil governments still believe that they cannot maintain moral order among the living if they do not uphold the prospect of a better life hereafter as a recompense for mundane existence... Since almost all of us still think as savages do on this topic, it is no matter for surprise that the primitive fear of the dead is still so strong within us and always ready to come to the surface on any provocation... We can also speak of a living person as uncanny, and we do so when we ascribe evil intentions to him. But that is not all; in addition to this we must feel that his intentions to harm us are going to be carried out with the help of special powers... The layman sees in them the working out of forces hitherto unsuspected in his fellow-men, but at the same time he is dimly aware of them in remote corners of his own being. The Middle Ages quite consistently ascribed all such maladies to the influence of demons, and in this their psychology was almost correct... (364-366).

Therefore, while there really are many parallels between the role of the monster and the role of the bourgeoisie within Marxist ideas of history, much the same could thus apparently be said with regard to the Freudian uncanny. This is certainly the case in that monstrous historical anxieties which should have been repressed often tend, as I have already acknowledged, to turn up years later in other monstrous texts, which in turn goes to show the radical insolubility of many such problems even after centuries of bourgeois-ruled society.

As my work progresses, meanwhile, I am also prepared to use aspects of feminist criticism where I believe its insights into the historical fears of bourgeois patriarchy to be especially useful, such as in examining *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, not to mention H. Rider Haggard's *She*. Indeed, as I begin by examining Renaissance concepts of monstrosity in the works of such authors as Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Milton, it will be useful to recall Marie-Helene Huet's work upon Renaissance beliefs

linking monstrous births to a monstrous maternal imagination.³ According to her,

these beliefs posited that:

Instead of reproducing the father's image, as nature commands, the monstrous child bore witness to the violent desires that moved the mother at the time of conception or during pregnancy. The resulting offspring carried the marks of her whims and fancy rather than recognizable features of its legitimate genitor. The monster thus erased paternity and proclaimed the dangerous power of the female imagination. The theory that credited imagination with a deceiving but dominant role in procreation continued to be the object of heated discussions until the beginning of the nineteenth century... (Huet, 1).

Indeed, even as growing bourgeois power created a short-lived revolutionary English republic, there remained a lingering patriarchal '... political culture where... notions of inheritance, name, title, and lineage were reinforced by multiple rights (birthrights, rights to inheritance, entails, and so forth), [and] the question of paternity had considerable urgency...' (Huet, 34). These insights are particularly appropriate in analysing *Richard III*, whose monstrous rule is robbed of legitimacy largely by the imaginative power of historical memory, itself largely preserved by his female enemies (including his own mother), despite all his attempts to establish an alternative patriarchally-based historical legitimacy. Indeed, my first chapter will demonstrate that the critical issues I have introduced here (namely symptomatic literary monstrosity, the monstrosity of history itself, and our Nietzschean potential to become as monstrous as those we fight), all find full expression within the simultaneously notorious literary and historical figure of Richard himself. By first examining the monstrous literary history of someone who, of course, proclaims himself to be inescapably '... determined to prove a villain...' (Shakespeare, William. *Richard III*, I, i, 30)⁴, we can therefore ironically confirm the monstrous uncontrollability and unpredictability of history itself, even for its most monstrously powerful manipulators. For, as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen comments:

Political or ideological difference is as much a catalyst to monstrous representation on a micro level as cultural alterity in the macrocosm. A

political figure suddenly out of favour is transformed like an unwilling participant in a science experiment by the appointed historians of the replacement regime: 'monstrous history' is rife with sudden, Ovidian metamorphoses, from Vlad Tepes to Ronald Reagan. The most illustrious of these propaganda-bred demons is the English king Richard III... The almost obsessive descanting on Richard from Polydore Vergil in the Renaissance to the Friends of Richard III Incorporated in our own era demonstrates the process of 'monster theory' at its most active: culture gives birth to a monster before our eyes, painting over the normally proportioned Richard who once lived, raising his shoulder to deform simultaneously person, cultural response, and the possibility of objectivity. *History itself becomes a monster*: defeating, self-deconstructive, always in danger of exposing the sutures that bind its disparate elements into a single, unnatural body. At the same time Richard moves between Monster and Man, the disturbing suggestion arises that this incoherent body, denaturalized and always in peril of disaggregation, may well be our own... (9, my Italics).

At the same time, however, Cohen's observations also point to another important theme of this thesis, namely the equally unstable relationship that exists between monstrosity and the idea of the hero. Of course, one of the most fundamental aspects of the traditional heroic role is to battle monsters, which occurs for example in both Homer's *Odyssey* and *Beowulf*. To do so is to run the risk of becoming monstrous oneself, which is precisely what happens to one of Beowulf's contemporaries, namely Heremod, a once-heroic, but later tyrannical Danish king, whose ignominious fate is described thus:

Heremod's stature and strength had decayed then,
his daring diminished. Deeply betrayed
into the fiends' power, far among the Giants
he was dispatched to death. Dark sorrows
drove him mad at last. A deadly grief
he had become to his people and the princes of this land.
Wise men among the leaders had lamented that career,
their fierce one's fall, who in former days
had looked to him for relief of their ills... [Whereas Beowulf]
endeared himself ever more deeply to friends
and to all mankind, evil seized Heremod...
(*Beowulf*, 901-915).

Beowulf himself, however, manages to avoid such a shameful fate, as despite ultimately being felled by an evil dragon, he is remembered by his people instead as

‘... the gentlest of men, and the most gracious, / the kindest to his people, the keenest for fame...’ (*Beowulf*, 3181-3182). In a society which at its best seems dominated by such materialistic ideas as *wergild*, that is, paying a financial blood-price for committing murder, however, it is perhaps unsurprising that less savoury forms of desire than Beowulf’s hunger for glory should also be prevalent. After all, it was an act of desperate greed that unleashed the dragon’s fury in the first place, namely the theft of part of its treasure hoard by a poor slave, yet even then ‘... it was without relish that he had robbed the hoard; / necessity drove him...’ (*Beowulf*, 2221-2222). Indeed, the fact that Beowulf himself is laid to rest in the midst of this selfsame hoard is therefore as potentially unsettling as it is glorious. For we are told that:

The great princes who had placed the treasure there
had laid on it a curse to last till doomsday,
that the man who should plunder the place would thereby
commit a crime, and be confined with devils,
tortured grievously in the trammels of hell.
But Beowulf had not looked on the legacy of these men
with too eager an eye, for all its gold...
(*Beowulf*, 3069-3075).

All this also serves to demonstrate, moreover, that even under the benevolent rule of the great hero Beowulf, all was not always well for his people, the Geats: yet without him, a truly monstrous fate looms horribly over all their futures. This latter point is reinforced by the loud lamentations of one of his subjects, who fears that now ‘... evil days were destined her / – troops cut down, terror of armies, bondage, humiliation...’ (*Beowulf*, 3154-3155). The world of Beowulf is thus steeped in monstrosity in the same way as the other texts already discussed, with diabolical acts of murder becoming an entrenched part of the historical landscape, whether committed by carnivorous, if not cannibalistic, beasts, or by brutal human soldiers. Even Beowulf himself is not averse to committing monstrous acts of violence to defend his friends and allies, as is shown most graphically when he rips a whole arm and shoulder from Grendel’s body. Yet

despite all his formidable power, Beowulf remains vulnerable to the one foe which even he cannot defeat, namely the inescapable power of time itself, as it is embodied in his own physical ageing and decay. After all, even after Beowulf slays Grendel and his equally monstrous mother, this fundamental vulnerability to the monstrous forces of biological change is nevertheless made clear by the words of the chief target of their murderous attacks, namely the hapless Danish king Hrothgar. For he in turn warns Beowulf that:

... The noon of your strength
shall last for a while now, but in a little time
sickness or a sword will strip it from you:
either enfolding flame or a flood's billow
or a knife-stab or the stoop of a spear
or the ugliness of age; or your eyes' brightness
lessens and grows dim. Death shall soon
have beaten you then, O brave warrior!
(*Beowulf*, 1761-1768).

Homer's *Odyssey*, meanwhile, also depicts its chief heroic figure, namely Odysseus himself, being confronted by a monstrous enemy whose threat is enhanced further by the sense of historical danger that he represents. In this case, the enemy in question is the cannibalistic Polyphemus, one of the giant Cyclopes, a race whose savage barbarity is clearly linked to the primitive historical (if not pre-historical) nature of their entire way of life, including matters of law, agriculture and religion. According to Odysseus himself, after all:

... [The] Cyclopes... [are] a fierce, lawless people who never lift a hand to plant or plough but just leave everything to the immortal gods. All the crops they require spring up unsown and untilled, wheat and barley and vines with generous clusters that swell with the rain from heaven to yield wine. The Cyclopes have no assemblies for the making of laws, nor any established legal codes, but live in hollow caverns in the mountain heights, where each man is lawgiver to his own children and women, and nobody has the slightest interest in what his neighbours decide... (Homer. *The Odyssey*, trans. E. V. Rieu, revised trans. D. C. H. Rieu/Peter Jones. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1991, 9, 106-116. Penguin Classics).

In his introduction to this edition of *The Odyssey*, Peter Jones points out that such lawlessness ‘...is clearly meant to stand *in contrast* with Odysseus’ way of doing things...’ (Ibid. xxxvii). And it is certainly true that Odysseus is very keen to stress to his host/captor the importance of upholding civilised laws of hospitality, and invokes the sacred authority of no less a figure than Zeus himself to this end. (Polyphemus, on the other hand, is quick to dismiss such appeals with a curt assertion that his people ‘...care nothing for Zeus... nor for the rest of the blessed gods, since we are much stronger than they...’ [*Odyssey*, 9, 275-277]). Yet Odysseus himself is certainly no stranger to offending the gods: indeed, his eventual escape from the monster’s clutches by blinding Polyphemus offends one god in particular, namely Poseidon the sea-god, so badly that his wrath will plague Odysseus again and again throughout his wanderings. Of course, the main reason for this godly anger is doubtless the fact that Polyphemus himself is none other than Poseidon’s son, yet it is nonetheless telling to note the differences that then emerge between the conduct of the apparently godless Polyphemus, and that of the seemingly pious Odysseus. For while the humbled Cyclops prays to his godly father for revenge, an arrogant Odysseus by contrast is frankly contemptuous of Poseidon’s power at this point. (Indeed, he finally shouts to his blinded victim that ‘...I only wish I could make as sure of robbing you of life and breath and sending you to Hell, as I am certain that not even [Poseidon] the Earthshaker will ever heal your eye...’ [*Odyssey*, 9, 523-525]). Once he calms down, of course, Odysseus ensures that an appropriate sacrifice to the gods is made as quickly as possible after his escape, but to no avail, and his later difficulties in returning to Ithaca demonstrate that the monstrous historical legacy of such violent impiety is not easily dispelled. Indeed, it is my contention that the violence used here and elsewhere by heroes such as Odysseus demonstrates that the differences between them and their

monstrous foes are not so great after all, especially when survival itself is at stake. Moreover, this endemic use of monstrous violence by the supposed upholders of 'civilisation' not only demonstrates how far their society thus justifies such brutality when it feels itself to be under threat, but can also provide uncomfortable reminders of this society's own acts of predatory aggression elsewhere. After all, when Odysseus finally declares his true identity to Polyphemus, it is accompanied with an infamous title that he has fully earned both at Troy and elsewhere, namely that of '... sacker of cities...' (*Odyssey*, 9, 505). (Something which surely cannot apply to the Cyclopes to the same extent, for all their own monstrous violence, since they live not in cities, but in caves, and anyway lack the technological power to launch such imperial assaults upon other countries, since they possess neither ships nor shipwrights).

Perhaps the ultimate symbolic demonstration of the persistent vulnerability of even the greatest heroes to the seductive power of monstrosity is the ease with which Odysseus can abandon his very human identity to survive, as best exemplified when he tricks Polyphemus by adopting the somewhat inhuman role of 'Nobody'. (This is later reinforced by the ease with which even he falls under their spell of the far more attractive, yet equally monstrous Sirens, as well as by the resulting eagerness with which he would have then gladly abandoned his crew to join them). To some extent, moreover, I have also shown how the process can work the other way, with monsters such as the Cyclopes demonstrating normally human characteristics, such as piety, which they would have utterly eschewed before. Such role-reversals as this between the traditional cultural roles of heroes (and/or humans) and monsters are also reinforced by another version of the Cyclops myth, which can be found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. This recounts how, before his fateful meeting with Odysseus, Polyphemus fell in love with the sea-nymph Galatea, and notes the changes which he then tried to make in some

of the wilder aspects of his monstrous appearance and behaviour, in order to woo her. Like other monsters that would later find themselves in similar situations, such as Frankenstein's Monster or King Kong, the desire for female companionship leads Polyphemus to adopt a gentler manner than is usually associated with him, at least by others. Indeed, Galatea herself describes the contrast that emerged between this new behaviour and his earlier, more bloodthirsty habits as follows:

... That savage creature,
The forest's terror, whom no wayfarer
Set eyes upon unscathed, who scorned the gods
Of great Olympus, now felt pangs of love,
Burnt with a mighty passion, and forgot
His flocks and caves. Now lovelorn Polyphemus
Cared for his looks, cared earnestly to please;
Now with a rake he combed his matted hair,
And with a sickle trimmed his shaggy beard,
And studied his fierce features in a pool
And practised to compose them. His wild urge
To kill, his fierceness and his lust for blood
Ceased and in safety ships might come and go...
(*Metamorphoses*, XIII, 761-773).

Such an apparent reformation, however short-lived, therefore demonstrates how, in a world driven by historical change, the boundaries between monster and human are by no means secure, and that it is possible for anyone's behaviour to shift rapidly from one extreme to the other. (And, indeed, back again, as is later demonstrated by Polyphemus's violent attack upon a rival suitor, who nevertheless ultimately escapes death through being transformed into a river-god. In itself, moreover, this event shows how even a powerful monster's deepest desires can be overridden by rapid historical change). The same is true of the boundaries between monster and hero, and I shall show throughout this thesis how a fearful society's need for heroes capable of committing monstrous (and especially monstrously violent) deeds in order to protect it, in fact results in its becoming even more vulnerable than before. For a monstrous hero's violence and power can not only be turned against the society that created him, as

occurs in both *Richard III* and *Macbeth*, for example, and is also hinted at in the background of such texts as the Sherlock Holmes stories, as I shall later demonstrate. After all, even if such a hero can triumph over his monstrous enemies, the resulting destruction can appear even worse than that which would have occurred if the latter had been left unprovoked.

Such is the case with Odysseus, whose reckless taunting of his blinded enemy not only provokes a violent response from the wounded giant, but also provokes paroxysms of fear in his long-suffering crew, who ask him why ‘... do you want to provoke the savage in this obstinate way?’ (*Odyssey*, 9, 494-495). Here again, what would normally be described as a defining characteristic of heroism, in this case courage, goes to such reckless extremes as to appear monstrous, at least in terms of the potential dangers that may follow in its wake. By contrast to such self-destructive heroism, meanwhile, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* shows us how traditionally monstrous physical qualities, such as overwhelming size and deformed facial features (in this case, Polyphemus’s single eye), can be turned on their head, and instead be presented as demonstrating virtuous, or even attractive, qualities. After all, even the much-maligned Polyphemus himself feels able to insist that:

For sure I know – I have just seen – myself
Reflected in a pool, and what I saw
Was truly pleasing. See how large I am!
No bigger body Jove himself can boast
Up in the sky – you always talk of Jove
Or someone reigning there. My ample hair
O’erhangs my grave stern face and like a grove
Darkens my shoulder; and you must not think
Me ugly, that my body is so thick
With prickly bristles. Trees without their leaves
Are ugly, and a horse is ugly too
Without a mane to veil its sorrel neck.
Feathers clothe birds and fleeces grace the sheep:
So beard and bristles best become a man.
Upon my brow I have one single eye,
But it is huge, like some vast shield. What then?

Does not the mighty sun see from the sky
All things on earth? Yet the sun's orb is one...
(*Metamorphoses*, XIII, 835-853).

On one level, therefore, Polyphemus's attempts to shift the boundaries of monstrous discourse in this way allude to how unstable ideas of monstrosity can be in a world governed by rapid, if not revolutionary, historical change. Paradoxically, however, the fact that, despite all this boastful rhetoric, a terrified Galatea nevertheless remains entirely unconvinced by his arguments shows how both fears of monstrosity, and, indeed, monstrosity itself, remain extremely persistent historical factors regardless of any and all such changes. As I have also shown, moreover, such monstrous paradoxes are particularly powerful within bourgeois culture, especially since bourgeois society itself is usually in a monstrous historical position of simultaneous power and weakness. Indeed, it is largely for this reason that monstrous texts produced by bourgeois culture themselves appear particularly powerful in rhetorical terms, and this lasting historical impact in turn explains why such texts are the main focus of this thesis. It now remains for me to give a brief outline of precisely which monstrous bourgeois texts I shall concentrate upon in the remainder of my thesis, as well as providing an equally brief justification for their selection in each case.

I shall begin with a chapter that analyses monstrous texts written during the time of the British bourgeoisie's historical 'birth', namely the Renaissance. This first chapter will explore how these texts used monstrosity to reflect the rapid expansion in, and ravenous hunger for, economic, intellectual, and political power which surrounded this 'birth', with Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and William Shakespeare's *Richard III* emerging as especially interesting examples of this process. Both these texts, however, also begin to demonstrate the use made of monstrosity during the Renaissance to dramatise bourgeois fears of tyranny, a development also characteristic

of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. This in turn also shows the dangerous class warfare which could result from such a regime, as well as from a rebellious proletariat, and the monstrous fate of those, like the luckless Cinna the poet, or the nascent bourgeoisie themselves, who find themselves trapped between these two classes. *Julius Caesar* also begins to explore ideas of monstrous history by means of enticing, but ultimately misleading attempts at historical prophecy, a process that reaches its apotheosis in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, meanwhile, takes all the concerns with monstrous tyranny outlined in this chapter, and places them in the revolutionary political and religious context of a monstrous Civil War. *Paradise Lost*, moreover, also provides a vital bridging point for my second chapter on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, a text which both refers directly to Milton's earlier work, and itself also portrays the monstrous historical turmoil which results from a revolutionary attempt to create a new breed of man.

By then, this turmoil had gathered even greater momentum, as a monstrous increase in scientific and technological power confronted bourgeois society with the '... great problem of... uncontrolled productive expansion... in its most alarming forms – an extension of industrial force which was at the same time a diminution of human control... In this knot of ominous historical contradictions, the myth of Frankenstein has become the great fact of nineteenth-century life...' (Baldick, 140). Within *Frankenstein* itself, meanwhile, such concerns with the monstrous aftermath of the Industrial Revolution are combined with monstrous uncertainty over the social implications of an equally dramatic contemporary rise in female power, a process whose historical legacy will also be examined in my third chapter on Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. *Dracula*, moreover, also depicts in particularly bloodthirsty terms the anxieties which the *fin-de-siècle* British Empire faced over its continual economic and

military vulnerability to foreign invasion, even as *Frankenstein* is strongly informed by fears of the monstrous military power unleashed by the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon. H. G. Wells' scientific romances, meanwhile, show how forebodings that Britain's seemingly overwhelming scientific and imperial power could prove worthless against the backdrop of an increasingly monstrous future would gather new pace as fears of a monstrous Great War loomed ever larger upon the historical horizon. Indeed, my fourth chapter will show how Wells's own monstrous scientific prophecies, such as the tank, provide interesting examples of this process, as can be seen both in *The War of the Worlds* and elsewhere. Meanwhile, other Wellsian works, such as *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, will be shown to demonstrate the monstrous historical impossibility of truly predicting a future dominated by an uncontrollable evolutionary biology. *The Invisible Man*, meanwhile, is also useful in analysing *fin-de-siècle* fears of the monstrous impact, not only of changes in scientific power, but also of uncanny biological and psychological degeneracy and instability, upon the contemporary criminal underworld. Building on this, my fifth chapter will demonstrate how Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 'Sherlock Holmes' stories paid even greater attention to these historical anxieties *vis-à-vis* the monstrous *fin-de-siècle* criminal, whose apparent power and danger had already been horribly embodied by the 'Jack the Ripper' murders. Moreover, this chapter will also assess the importance of the Freudian uncanny in understanding the monstrous criminal doubles that often crop up in Doyle's work, as well as in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde* and Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray*, and how they affect my own ideas on monstrous heroes. From the Renaissance to the *fin de siècle* and beyond, therefore, I have chosen to analyse those texts, as outlined above, which I believe best prove how this recurrent usage of literary monstrosity is highly symptomatic of contemporary fears of historical change

during frequent periods of potentially revolutionary social upheaval. This is partly because, as I have shown, these particular texts best embody those deep-rooted fears that most dominate their respective historical contexts, namely fears of tyranny, socio-economic and political revolution, and the frightful vulnerability of British imperial power to both foreign and domestic enemies. On another level, however, these texts have been chosen because they have left the deepest historical scars on bourgeois culture, as shown in part by their continuous revival ever since in various forms of modern media. (More broadly, indeed, it is precisely because of this powerful cultural impact, as well as the similarity that exists between the 'powerful-yet-vulnerable' historical positions of both the bourgeoisie and the monster that I have chosen to concentrate upon monstrous bourgeois texts in this thesis). As I shall demonstrate in my first chapter, moreover, this was certainly true of monstrous Renaissance texts, and indeed, it could be argued that their lingering historical and cultural power was apparent even then. For on one level, at least, they are also aware that, like Shakespeare's Richard III, they themselves enact the most monstrous deeds '... of piteous massacre / That ever yet this land was guilty of...' (IV, iii, 2-3).

Notes to Introduction.

1. For modern monstrous texts that I believe to be particularly powerful examples of both these trends, see the *Incredible Hulk* comic book series, as well as the various appearances of the Daleks in the television series *Doctor Who*, respectively.
2. In fact, the character who first uses the word 'vampire' in *Dracula* is none other than Jonathan Harker, as he attempts to translate the words used by the Transylvanian natives for '... something that is either were-wolf or vampire...' (*Dracula*, 32). Moretti, by contrast, wrongly claims it to be Quincy Morris who does this (95). For his respective comments on Shakespeare, *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*, as well as on Sherlock Holmes, see Moretti, 42-108, 130-156. Meanwhile, for another key critical work on *Frankenstein* as a modern Marxist myth, see Baldick, 1-62, 121-140.
3. Further feminist discussion of Renaissance beliefs on the power of the monstrous maternal imagination in these terms can be found in Huet, 1-37.
4. All citations from Shakespeare's plays made throughout this work are taken from *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, ed. Richard Proudfoot et al. London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2001. Revised Edition.

CHAPTER ONE:

'...I have't, it is engendered! Hell and night / Must bring this

monstrous birth to the world's light...': Monstrous Historical Change

and the Tyrannical Renaissance Texts of Shakespeare, Marlowe, and

Milton.

... Why, Love forswore me in my mother's womb:
And, for I should not deal in her soft laws,
She did corrupt frail Nature with some bribe,
To shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub;
To make an envious mountain on my back,
Where sits Deformity to mock my body;
To shape my legs of an unequal size;
To disproportion me in every part,
Like to a chaos, or unlick'd bear-whelp
That carries no impression like the dam.
And am I then a man to be beloved?
O monstrous fault to harbour such a thought!
Then, since this earth affords no joy to me
But to command, to check, to o'erbear such
As are of better person than myself,
I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown;
And, whiles I live, t'account this world but hell...
... And from that torment I will free myself,
Or hew my way out with a bloody axe...
(*Henry VI, Part 3*, III, ii, 153-181).

In this passage, the future Richard III creates a series of powerful images of his own physical monstrosity, and moreover attributes this inhuman condition to the mistreatment which he suffered in his mother's womb, at the hands of a corrupt and '...dissembling Nature...' (*Richard III*, I, i, 19). Within this process of macabre self-expression, therefore, it is noteworthy that in doing so, Richard echoes much of what Marie-Helene Huet has identified as one of the most persistent theories concerning the causes and nature of monstrosity that prevailed in Europe during the Renaissance. (Indeed, I have already noted this to some extent in my introduction). For as she herself explains, other contemporary theories may have focused instead upon potential

religious, cosmological, or biological causes – such as bestiality or pre-existing parental deformity – behind monstrous offspring:

But a remarkably persistent line of thought argued [meanwhile] that monstrous progeny resulted from the disorder of the maternal imagination. Instead of reproducing the father's image, as nature commands, the monstrous child bore witness to the violent desires that moved the mother at the time of conception or during pregnancy. The resulting offspring carried the marks of her whims and fancy rather than the recognizable features of its legitimate genitor. The monster thus erased paternity and proclaimed the dangerous power of the female imagination... (Huet, 1).

Certainly, Richard's later attempts to seize the crown attempt to overcome the implications behind such a theory, as portions of his official propaganda promoting his claim to be the rightful ruler focus upon his bodily '...lineaments / Being the right idea of...[his] father...' (*Richard III*, III, vii, 12-13). Anyone who said otherwise would doubtless be in grave danger, as illustrated by his murder of Henry VI almost immediately after Henry called him no more than an '... indigest deformed lump, / Not like the fruit of such a goodly tree...' (*Henry VI, Part 3*, V, vi, 81-82). The aftermath of this assassination will, however, see Henry's seemingly lifeless corpse itself become monstrous in the contaminating presence of Richard. Immediately, his enemies seize upon this phenomenon as yet another portentous symbol of Richard's own monstrosity, for even as '... dead Henry's wounds / Open their congealed mouths and bleed afresh... / Thy deed inhuman and unnatural / Provokes this deluge most unnatural...' (*Richard III*, I, ii, 55-61). Overwhelmingly, therefore, these scenes establish Richard as being trapped within a personal history which has rendered him at odds with the society in which he lives, wherein his physical deformities have long been co-opted to form part of an inescapable tradition of ominous political symbolism.¹

My purpose during the remainder of this chapter will be to examine how such politically-inspired usage of monstrosity is reflected within both Shakespeare's plays

and on a wider historical level within late-Elizabethan / early-Jacobean English society, in particular in relation to fear of the tyrannical other. Moreover, as critics such as Paul N. Siegel and Graham Holderness have pointed out, Richard for one certainly speaks in a language often infused with the commercial imperatives of the Renaissance's emergent capitalist order. Indeed, he resolves at one point to literally buy his way into the new, non-monstrous identity that he believes to be within his grasp following his wooing of Lady Anne. Such is the purpose here of the ostentatious display and luxury which itself becomes a potent symbol of the new order, as Richard celebrates his improbable achievement, and determines that, having so '... crept in favour with myself, / I will maintain it with some little cost...' (*Richard III*, I, ii, 263-264). Because of this, it has now become appropriate to investigate further Siegel's hypothesis that '... Shakespeare, incarnating in the monstrous form of Richard III the spirit of the bourgeoisie at the time of its menacing approach to power, was able to anticipate the bourgeoisie's behavior when it gained world domination...' (85). For a wider sense of the overwhelming power behind the forces of monstrous revolutionary history, however, and of the sweeping changes in *scientific* power which often occur in their wake, it is best to begin by assessing another monstrous Elizabethan text alongside *Richard III*, namely Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. For there is clearly a great deal of common ground between Richard's self-proclaimed lust for power, and Faustus's diabolical confession that, in his case, the only true '... god thou servest is thine own appetite / Wherein is fixed the love of Beelzebub...' (Marlowe, Christopher. *Doctor Faustus*, in *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*, ed. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, The World's Classics, II, i, 11-12).

Doctor Faustus, Richard III, and the Monstrous Roots of Renaissance Capitalism.

... Be a physician, Faustus. Heap up gold,
And be eternized for some wondrous cure...
... Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man.
Wouldst thou could make men to live eternally,
Or, being dead, raise them to life again,
Then this profession were to be esteemed...
(*Doctor Faustus*, I, i, 14-26).²

Before elaborating further on Faustus's historical connections to Richard III, it is also important to note that he also has a great deal in common with his fellow monstrous alchemist, Victor Frankenstein. This is especially true given the equally grandiose extent of their respective lusts for scientific power, and the limitless ambition with which they at first plan to wield their misbegotten knowledge. Both men would doubtless initially agree, after all, with Faustus's contemptuous dismissal of their contemporaries' conventional medical practices as being beneath their intellectual prowess. (This is despite the seemingly tempting material rewards available to the medical profession, which even Faustus himself freely acknowledges above). Moreover, both are also prepared to explore the most sinister limits of their already notorious professions in order to fuel their quest for unhallowed knowledge, with Victor's filthy immersion in biological horrors being matched by Faustus' self-proclaimed willingness to commit unimaginably monstrous atrocities in order to please his devilish masters. In doing so, Faustus hopes to gain access to limitless supernatural power, although as in *Frankenstein*, the extent to which he can in fact control the monstrous forces unleashed by his attempts to do so is doubtful even from the beginning of his ill-fated bargain with Mephistopheles. Indeed, Mephistopheles's statement that Faustus's conjuring only drew him to appear before the reckless doctor by accident in the first place swiftly undercuts Faustus's exhilarated boasting about his newfound grasp of the seemingly all-powerful '... force of magic and my spells. / Now, Faustus, thou art conjurer laureate / That canst command great Mephistopheles...'

(*Doctor Faustus*, I, iii, 31-33). These self-interested illusions concerning the potentially colossal supernatural *and* earthly power and wealth that Faustus believes is due to him, alongside the fear of immediate physical torture at the hand of his demonic masters, serve to effectively undermine his occasional longings to repent his devil's bargain. (After all, we have already seen that, for Faustus, the only true '... god thou servest is thine own appetite, / Wherein is fixed the love of Beelzebub. / To him I'll build an altar and a church, / And offer lukewarm blood of new-born babes...' [*Doctor Faustus*, II, i, 11-14]).

This ruthless proto-capitalist drive for acquisition, whether of material wealth, power, or hidden knowledge, was also shared with some of the leading lights of the nascent Elizabethan empire, whose own interest in breaking magical/scientific boundaries for economic and military purposes has been explored thoroughly by John S. Mebane. Indeed, Faustus apparently '... possesses exactly the same mixture of... intoxication with an expansive vision of human potential and desire for the power to serve one's own selfish ends... as Dee... and... Sir Walter Raleigh and other members of the militant Protestant and imperialist party at Elizabeth's court...' (Mebane, 122). Others moreover regard Faustus's nationalistic visions of Germanic imperial glory as combining with his quasi-Lutheran, even Calvinistic obsession with the written word of God and the monstrously limited possibilities he finds therein for human salvation to create an archetypal figure of Protestant rebellion against the strictures of established religion. (For one thing, it is hard not to see a monstrous parody of Protestantism's fundamental concern for individual salvation in Faustus's ill-fated, and essentially bourgeois, conception of his own soul as a form of private property. Thus he is finally drawn to sign his demonic contract by his determination to question why '... shouldst thou not? / Is not thy soul thine own?' [II, I, 69]). Certainly, it is also possible to read

into Faustus's monstrously ambitious character not only the Frankensteinian professional hubris and intellectual longing for supernatural power that dominated his early sorcerous career, but also an equally powerful assertion of his own imperial destiny. After all, his irreverent, power-hungry anti-Catholic approach in discussing such matters is written in such globally imperialistic terms as to seemingly evoke Elizabeth I's own aforementioned, monstrously determined nationalistic rhetoric following the Spanish Armada, as he proclaims further:

... O, what a world of profit and delight,
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence
Is promised to the studious artisan!
All things that move between the quiet poles
Shall be at my command. Emperors and kings
Are but obeyed in their several provinces,
Nor can they raise the wind or rend the clouds;
But his dominion that exceeds in this
Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man.
A sound magician is a mighty god.
Here, Faustus, try thy brains to gain a deity...
... How I am glutted with conceit of this!
Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,
Resolve me of all ambiguities,
Perform what desperate enterprise I will?
I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates.
I'll have them read me strange philosophy
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings.
I'll have them wall all Germany with brass
And make swift Rhine circle fair Wittenberg...
... I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring
And chase the Prince of Parma from our land,
And reign sole king of all our provinces;
Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war
Than was the fiery keel at Antwerp's bridge
I'll make my servile spirits to invent...
(*Doctor Faustus*, I, i, 55-99).

For all his own imperial pretensions, however, Faustus is himself the object of a more dangerous cosmic imperial strategy throughout, as Mephistopheles and various other demons seek to snatch Faustus's soul from the monstrously uncompromising clutches

of Heaven, all in order to enlarge Satan's infernal kingdom. According to Jonathan Dollimore, it is even plausible to suggest that '... God and Lucifer seem equally responsible in his final destruction, two supreme agents of power deeply antagonistic to each other yet temporarily co-operating in his demise. Faustus is indeed their subject, the site of their power struggle. For his part God is possessed of tyrannical power...' (153).

On the other hand, it seems that Heaven may instead appear monstrously indifferent to the fate of Faustus's soul, for all that the Good Angel's pious hopes for Faustus's eventual redemption are later reinforced by the Old Man's forestalling of the wretched doctor's suicidal despair. Neither they nor any other godly power, it seems, finally wishes to challenge Lucifer's earlier malevolently proprietorial assertion to an already terrified Faustus that '... Christ cannot save thy soul, for he is just. / There's none but I have int'rest in the same...' (*Doctor Faustus*, II, iii, 83-84). In Faustus's greatest moment of monstrous despair, when he is teetering on the very verge of damnation, he is irrevocably torn between appeasing these two uncompromising religious extremes, succeeding only in alienating them both, until eventually neither Christ nor Lucifer see fit to spare him from his monstrous fate. As the monstrous burden of an inexorable historical process looms ever heavier upon his doomed body and soul, the relentless pressure of death and damnation drives Faustus to ever more desperate rhetorical flourishes. (Indeed, it is as if Faustus is attempting to find the one magical incantation that can obscure the hellish fact of his impending demise). Despite everything, however, he remains trapped before the overwhelming historical power contained within the daily progress of time itself, with inevitably damning results, as follows:

... Ah, Faustus,
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,

And then thou must be damned perpetually,
 Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
 That time may cease and midnight never come!
 Fair nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make
 Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
 A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
 That Faustus may repent and save his soul...
 ... The stars move still; time runs; the clock will strike;
 The devil will come, and Faustus must be damned.
 O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?
 See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
 One drop would save my soul, half a drop. Ah, my Christ!
 Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
 Yet will I call on him. O, spare me Lucifer!
 Where is it now? 'Tis gone; and see where God
 Stretcheth out his arm and bends his ireful brows!
 Mountains an hills, come, come and fall on me,
 And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!
 No, no!
 Then will I headlong run into the earth.
 Earth, gape! O, no, it will not harbour me...
 ... Ah, half the hour is past!
 'Twill all be past anon...
 (*Doctor Faustus*, V, ii, 57-89).

Ironically, of course, the magical power for which Faustus had gambled everything ultimately proves as useless in saving his soul as it had earlier been in revealing any of the radical astronomical secrets which Renaissance scientists such as Galileo would soon risk their own lives to discover. Faustus's frustrations with Mephistopheles's commonplace revelations, which generally tend to confirm the traditional medieval consensus upon the subject, themselves take on aspects of contemporary class tensions, as his insatiable bourgeois aspirations towards intellectual power are rewarded with answers that even his servant, Wagner, would be able to deduce unaided. Furthermore, and as I have already demonstrated above, the Renaissance itself saw the monstrous historical beginnings of:

...European man[‘s]... extraordinary career of consumption, his eager pursuit of knowledge, with one paradigm after another seized, squeezed dry, and discarded, and his frenzied exhaustion of the world's resources... Marlowe's plays in particular, give voice to a radically intensified sense that time is abstract, uniform and inhuman... Puritans in the late sixteenth

century were already campaigning vigorously against the medieval doctrine of the unevenness of time, a doctrine that had survived largely intact in the Elizabethan Church Calendar. They sought, in effect, to desacramentalize time, to discredit and sweep away the dense web of saint's days... seasonal taboos, mystic observances, and folk festivals that gave time a distinct, irregular shape; in its place they urged a simple, flat routine of six days work and a sabbath rest... At the other end, the Protestant rejection of the doctrine of Purgatory eliminated the dead as an "age group", cutting off the living from ritualized communion with their deceased parents and relatives. Such changes might well have contributed to a sense in Marlowe... that time is alien, profoundly indifferent to human longing and anxiety. Whatever the case, we certainly find in Marlowe's plays a powerful feeling that time is something to be resisted and a related fear that fulfillment and fruition is impossible... At such moments, Marlowe's celebrated line is itself rich with irony: the rhythms intended to slow time only consume it, magnificent words are spoken and disappear into a void. But it is precisely this sense of the void that compels the characters to speak so powerfully, as if to struggle the more insistently against the enveloping silence... No particular name or object can entirely satisfy one's inner energy demanding to be expressed or fill so completely the potential of one's consciousness that all longings are quelled, all intimations of unreality silenced. Throughout the sixteenth century, Protestant and Catholic polemicists demonstrated brilliantly how each other's religion – the very anchor of reality for millions of souls – was a cunning theatrical illusion, a demonic fantasy, a piece of poetry. Each conducted this unmasking, of course, in the name of the real religious truth, but the collective effect upon a skeptical intellect like Marlowe's seems to have been devastating... (Greenblatt, 48-62).

In the case of the seemingly skeptical Faustus, however, the harsh pressures of time and uncompromising religious strictures lead him to nevertheless cling on to certain superstitious attitudes even while rejecting conventional paths to salvation, whether these be rooted in revived concepts from pagan mythology or lingering portions of Christianity. As the play's B-text in particular also makes clear, however, the very temporal limitations of his devil's bargain which later fuel his moments of greatest despair, are also nevertheless shown to lie behind his most monstrous displays of such magical powers as he does possess, however fleetingly. This is demonstrated above all when his seemingly decapitated corpse scornfully asks his horrified enemies whether they:

... Knew you not, traitors, [that] I was limited
For four-and-twenty years to breathe on earth?

And had you cut my body with your swords,
Or hewed this flesh and bones as small as sand,
Yet in a minute had my spirit returned,
And I had breathed a man made free from harm.
But wherefore do I dally my revenge?
(*Doctor Faustus* [B-text], IV, ii, 71-77).

Other critics have pointed out elsewhere the monstrous irony of his merciless attitude here in comparison with his own later pleas for mercy against the combined wrath of both Heaven and Hell. What interests me here, however, is how Faustus' own profoundly historical/temporal monstrosity becomes a useful weapon against his enemies, in stark contrast to Shakespeare's Richard III, whose own enemies, as shown above, use his horribly belated monstrous birth as a propaganda tool, claiming it foreshadowed his later political tyranny. Moreover, Richard's newfound capitalist identity can itself be assimilated into the monstrous Ricardian legend by his enemies, making him no more than a demonic mercenary, or '...hell's black intelligencer, / Only reserved their factor to buy souls / And send them thither...' (*Richard III*, IV, iv, 71-73). Similar tensions exist, moreover, between the feudal traditions and the capitalist aspects mentioned above which lie behind Richard's bid for the crown, and the degree to which they can be manipulated to obscure Richard's monstrosity and allow his tyrannical rule. On the one hand, we find Richard's closest follower for most of the play, the Duke of Buckingham, whose motivations in both joining and eventually betraying Richard are themselves often based upon considerations of mercenary profit and loss. At one point, he artfully exploits his political eloquence to persuade the Archbishop of Canterbury to allow, if necessary, the violation of the ancient church custom of sanctuary which the Queen Mother and her young son, the Duke of York, have claimed in an attempt to remain safe from Richard. In doing so, he expresses a cynical worldly impatience with these ancient traditions, telling the Archbishop that he is '... too senseless-obstinate, my lord, / Too ceremonious and traditional. / Weigh it but

with the grossness of this age, / You break not sanctuary in seizing him...’ (*Richard III*, III, i, 44-47). It is unsurprising therefore that Richard, in putting Buckingham’s loyalties to the final ruthless test of approving the Princes’ murder, should yet again adopt a metaphor from the new world of capitalist enterprise, explaining that ‘... now do I play the touch / To try if thou be current gold indeed...’ (Ibid. IV, ii, 8-9).

On the other hand, we also find Richard himself making a seemingly robust defence of the old aristocratic system of feudal rule when it suits his own political purposes, such as when he attacks the Queen’s family as mere parvenu social upstarts. He then alleges that their meteoric rise to power has come at the expense of both himself and of England’s ancient nobility, who are now held ‘... in contempt, while great promotions / Are daily given to ennoble those / That scarce some two days since were worth a noble...’ (Ibid. I, iii, 80-82). Such actions clearly display Richard’s consummate skill at abusing the ancient traditions of the realm, be they religious or secular, to ensure his own ends: a process of monstrous distortions which culminates in the definitive political masquerade which he and Buckingham put on before the citizens of London. Here, in a grotesquely brazen display of mock piety and false modesty, he will concoct yet another new identity, protesting as he does against being forced to take on the very political power and kingly status which he has coveted all along. Thus, Richard takes to new heights (or depths) his constantly displayed tendency towards clothing ‘... my naked villainy / With odd old ends stol’n forth of Holy Writ, / And seem a saint, when most I play the devil...’ (Ibid. I, iii, 336-338). Moreover, it can be argued that, in carrying out this mass public performance of state ritual, Richard is attempting to use ancient feudal tradition to combat contemporary ideas of monstrosity, such as that of a hunchbacked body as symbolic foretelling of a downwardly mobile

social destiny. For as Linda Charnes points out, in other Renaissance ideas, such as that of the 'King's two bodies':

There are... ideological structures available that Richard (and Shakespeare) can appropriate to replace an obvious body with one that is implied, one not necessarily determined by physical characteristics. In seeking the crown, Richard seeks no less than a new body: the body implied by "the King's body", which, according to medieval political theology, admits of no flaws and is the highest manifestation of God's grace on earth... (31-32).

Ultimately, however, while indeed exploiting such traditions whenever possible, Richard himself also remains a figure of the nascent capitalist class in the ways we have analysed above. Despite this, he still remains out of step with the pleasure-loving post-war world that confronts him at first, a hedonistic vision of a peaceful society which he believes to be utterly ill-suited for his own restless bourgeois dynamism. It is thus unsurprising that Richard should at first impute his monstrous condition to the direct result of having himself emerged too soon upon the historical stage '... unfinish'd, sent before my time / Into this breathing world scarce half made up...' (*Richard III*, i, 20-21).

On the other hand, the infamous allegations made by his enemies run precisely opposite to such claims, insisting on several occasions that, far from being a premature creation, Richard's monstrous career began with an overlong gestation in his mother's womb, from whence he emerged with hair and teeth. Similarly, as Charnes notes, this overriding sense of monstrous belatedness, which repeatedly engulfs his fantastic attempts to set himself up at the head of a new historical order, is itself the result of his having been consistently:

Overwritten into monstrosity by a century of overemplotted historiographic gestation, [wherein] Shakespeare's Richard is subject to a textual history that underwrites the legitimacy of a Tudor queen while at the same time figuring the pervasive male dread of and contempt for the female body and female power... (54).

This claim reflects yet again a significant correspondence between Shakespeare's play and Huet's work upon Renaissance theories upon monstrosity's links to the influence of the maternal imagination. It is also interesting to recall that contemporary English usage of Elizabeth I's own legendary image involved deliberately blurred gender boundaries in ways which could themselves be deemed monstrous in this theoretical context, especially in the aftermath of the Spanish Armada, wherein she became mythologised as a '... warrior queen. Clad... in armour, she drew charismatically on the strengths of both sexes to encourage her troops...' (Holderness, 35). Even the very concept of history itself could be viewed in monstrous terms during the Renaissance, given that period's widespread intellectual belief, later echoed within its very name, that history was '... metaphorically and even at some level literally... a power of resurrection, a means of reviving the dead...' (Ibid. 43).

This, of course, is precisely the monstrous prospect that overwhelms a horrified Richard in the final days of his regime prior to its bloody ragnarok at Bosworth Field. Having been categorically disowned by even his own mother as part of the barrage of female criticism which greets him while en route to battle, Richard is then tormented in his sleep by the vengeful ghosts of his past victims. Awakening to find that his earlier fantasy of possessing his own, non-monstrous identity has been superceded, and his mind hopelessly shattered into a chaotic state of confusion between his warring personalities, he is left with the monstrous, all-encompassing predicament that:

... I am a villain – yet I lie, I am not!
Fool, of thyself speak well! Fool, do not flatter.
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain...
... I shall despair. There is no creature loves me,
And if I die, no soul will pity me –
And wherefore should they, since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself...
... By the Apostle Paul, shadows tonight

Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers,
Armed in proof, and led by shallow Richmond...
(*Richard III*, V, iii, 192-220).

Meanwhile, Richard's own tongue proves increasingly ineffective in accomplishing his will-to-power, where once it had enabled him to beguile all those around him into ignoring the danger of his seemingly obvious monstrosity, despite the warnings of vengeful 'prophetesses' such as Margaret or the monstrously deceived Lady Anne. Firstly, he is gravely mistaken in believing that his words have successfully manipulated the ex-Queen Elizabeth into strengthening his dynasty by allowing him to marry her daughter (the sister of his most infamous victims, the two young Princes). Worse errors than this will shortly follow, as his new Tudor arch-enemy proves far more formidable than the man whom Richard's pre-battle oration portrays as being a mere '...milk-sop! One that never in his life / Felt so much cold as over-shoes in snow...' (Ibid. 326-327). Indeed, it is arguable that Richmond, soon to be the new King Henry VII, is himself an equally, if not more effective manipulator of monstrous signs in comparison to Richard, as seen in the cunning battlefield trick of using multiple imposters of himself which protects him from Richard's monstrous wrath.

Moreover, it is the play's Richmond who sets in stone the Tudor legend of the tyrannous Ricardian monster, which legitimises what would otherwise seem to be just another stage in the near-century-long pattern of royal usurpations and civil war which forms the primary historical background to Shakespeare's English history plays. For in this view, Richard is no more than:

... A bloody homicide and a tyrant;
One rais'd in blood, and one in blood establish'd;
One that made means to come by what he hath,
And slaughter'd those that were the means to help
him,
A base foul stone, made precious by the foil
Of England's chair, where he is falsely set;

One that hath ever been God's enemy.
Then, if you fight against God's enemy,
God will, in justice, ward you as his soldiers;
If you do sweat to put a tyrant down,
You sleep in peace, the tyrant being slain...
(Ibid. 247-257).

Yet even as Richmond attempts to salvage the symbolic value of the English monarchy from Richard's monstrous contamination, his own victory has already given the lie to a great deal of such royalist Tudor mythology. For the result of Bosworth clearly displays the defeat of one whose own motives for seizing power, as we have seen, largely depended upon this absolutist ideology, and who had earlier claimed that '... the King's name is a tower of strength / Which they upon the adverse faction want...' (Ibid. 12-13). Moreover, even the strongest presentations of the Tudor legend cannot wholly detach themselves from the overwhelming force of Richard's monstrous presence. Leonard Tennenhouse may claim that Richard's defeat will purify that which his monstrous body has disfigured, namely the natural power of the royal bloodline, and so '... preserve the iconic relationship between the two bodies of the monarch...' (77). Yet we have already seen just how deeply this Ricardian infection has spread within this royal blood through observing the monstrous phenomenon of the opening of the dead Henry VI's wounds, and it must remain doubtful that the one symbolic act of Richard's defeat will be enough to overcome it.

Indeed, as Charnes points out, the monstrous scapegoating of Richard instead highlights his fundamental similarity with his own victims and the society which the Tudors must now rule, and not only in terms of the selfsame royal bloodline which we have discussed above. Overwhelmingly, his power, lust and violent ambition merely reflect that of Shakespeare's English ruling classes long before Ricardian rule, and even where he is indeed displayed as '... the play's resident (and Tudor historiography's requisite) monster fascist... he is at least given the perks which go with the job...'

(Charnes, 65). The worst excesses of this monstrous Richard of Tudor legend are indeed tyrannical, and are exemplified most strongly by the murder of the Princes in the Tower, itself infamously branded the ‘... most arch deed of piteous massacre / That ever yet this land was guilty of...’ (*Richard III*, IV, iii, 2-3). Yet even the most vitriolic of anti-Ricardian Tudor historians, such as Polydore Vergil, do not deny Richard’s courage during his last stand at Bosworth Field. Shakespeare in turn presents this heroic aspect of Richard’s character in the same superhuman language as is reserved for the worst of his monstrous atrocities, as he ‘...enacts more wonders than a man, / Daring an opposite to every danger...’ (*Richard III*, V, iv, 2-3). It is thus with considerable ambivalence towards the monstrous dramatic history of he who saw himself ‘...determined to prove a villain...’ (Ibid. I, i, 30), that we turn to how Shakespeare portrays a monstrous tyrant on a wider historical scale. For *Julius Caesar* shows history’s most infamous world-empire, Rome, as rife with barbaric internecine violence, even while wider Renaissance culture still aspired to emulate its glories.

Roman Tyranny and Monstrous Class Warfare in *Julius Caesar*.

...Hence! home, you idle creatures, get you home!
Is this a holiday? What, know you not
(Being mechanical) you ought not walk
Upon a labouring day, without the sign
Of your profession...
... You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless
things!
Knew you not Pompey...
...And when you saw his chariot but appear,
Have you not made [such] an universal shout
That Tiber trembled underneath her banks...
...And do you now cull out a holiday?
And do you now strew flowers in his way,
That comes in triumph over Pompey’s blood?
Be gone...
(Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, I, i, 1-53).

In *Julius Caesar*, we find Shakespeare’s contribution to this widespread contemporary fascination with the fate of ancient Rome, as it was conquered by the tyrannical power

of Caesar himself, who does not at first seem so obvious a monster as Richard, despite physical disabilities such as epileptic fits. Yet even Caesar's weaknesses fuel the monstrous paradox of tyranny in this play, because even if he is only a '...mere man who puffs himself...he also...endangers the republic – he is weak and little, so we can kill him; he is big and despotic, so we should...' (Prescott, 134-135). Despite this implied obsession with the monstrous figure of the tyrant, however, it is worth noting that the play begins with the nascent seeds of class struggle between Rome's plebeians and patricians as shown above, as they engage in passionate debate over the social implications of yet another civil war. The proletarian figure of the cobbler, for example, appears to see little more than the fortunate combination of an occasion for carnivalesque social freedom with a useful opportunity for personal profit in the celebration of Caesar's triumph. For he claims to be leading the festival crowds around the streets of Rome so as to '...wear out their shoes, to get / myself into more work...' (*Julius Caesar*, I, i, 30-31). As far as the tribunes are concerned, however, the unruly behaviour of the plebeian crowds merely shows them in a monstrous, inhuman light, as their initial disruption of the signs of Roman class differences is exacerbated by their ungrateful neglect of the memory of their past heroes. The social result of this belief becomes clear in the dehumanising language with which the tribunes condemn this plebeian lack of what they regard as an appropriate historical consciousness. For these subhuman connotations immediately turn the lower orders into forgetful beasts and grotesque, ignorant things, and that the tribunes do see them in such a monstrous context is clear from the beginning of this first encounter between them and the plebeians. It is admittedly possible that the tribunes intended such contemptuous rhetoric as a method of inciting the plebeians to organise some form of popular counter-demonstration against Caesar, rather than be manipulated by his misappropriation of the

popular festival calendar. For as Alan Sinfield notes, the actual historical role of the Roman tribune was to be a democratically-elected leader of the plebeians, and in his opinion, in the ruthless political world represented in *Julius Caesar*, ‘... if popular rights are to be defended... party discipline has to be maintained...’ (*Faultlines*, 18). At the same time, however, it is also possible that the tribunes’ role in curtailing this unruly popular festival is meant instead to reflect a grim social reality of Elizabethan London, rather than of ancient Rome. For their behaviour is strongly reminiscent of the Puritanical attack upon such mass carnivals for confusing the emerging social distinctions between different types of worker, an attack which was intended to expand an emergent capitalism’s control over its workforce. Such bourgeois attempts at social regulation, moreover, were gladly supported by the theatre-owners of Shakespeare’s day, perhaps making *Julius Caesar*’s bitter anti-popular rhetoric here ‘... a manoeuvre in the campaign to legitimise the Shakespearean stage and dissociate it from the subversiveness of London’s artisanal subculture...’ (Wilson, 47). Whatever its immediate political cause, however, it is undeniable that the tribunes’ oratory towards the plebeians is laden with the rhetoric of monstrosity. This could in turn be seen as predictive of the plebeians’ vulnerability to powerful rhetoric later on in the play, and of the monstrous violence which the resulting dehumanised mob would unleash upon its enemies both real and imagined, the most famous of the latter being the luckless poet, Cinna. Certainly, the presence of such monstrous rhetoric is in itself unsurprising, given what Chris Baldick identifies as Shakespeare’s constant tendency to regard ingratitude, such as that for which the tribunes condemn the plebeians here, as being morally monstrous in and of itself. Before discussing the monstrous aspects of the Roman crowd further, however, we must now return to the central monstrous figure whose presence has exacerbated such social divisions. This is, of course, Caesar himself, who according

to the tribunes is hell-bent upon soaring ‘...above the view of men / And [so] keep us all in servile fearfulness...’ (*Julius Caesar*, I, i, 75-76).

As we have already seen, Caesar does not at first appear to be so obviously physically qualified for monstrosity, as opposed to his later appearance as a monstrous ghost, or Brutus’s ‘...evil spirit...’ (Ibid. IV, iii, 279), as he then describes himself. Indeed, when Cassius begins his diatribe against Caesar’s tyranny, he presents the supposedly would-be emperor as an extremely vulnerable human figure, who to Rome’s disgrace

... Is now become a god, and Cassius is
A wretched creature, and must bend his body
If Caesar carelessly but nod on him.
He had a fever when he was in Spain,
And when the fit was on him I did mark
How he did shake. ‘Tis true, this god did shake...
...As a sick girl. Ye gods, it doth amaze me
A man of such a feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestic world
And bear the palm alone...
(Ibid. I, ii, 116-131).

Yet it is clear from Cassius’s words that he fears that Caesar’s rise to ultimate power is in danger of leaving all others in Rome, even aristocratic patricians such as he, upon the same monstrous social level as the plebeian rabble whose inhuman portrayal we discussed above. As such, none would seemingly be able to resist the cruel grip of a degrading historical age wherein Roman society, subjugated by the tyrannous Caesar, would have conclusively ‘...lost the breed of noble bloods...’ (Ibid. 150). That monstrous prospect triggers a wildly hostile response in Cassius, which is itself rooted deep within the Stoic culture of Shakespeare’s Roman aristocrats, culminating ‘...in an endless quest for glory... [that] essentially makes human relationships into a “zero-sum game”... ..Caesar’s imperial ascent means their personal, degrading fall...’ (Rebhorn, 35-36). This patrician spirit of cut-throat emulation anticipates the equally vicious

rivalries that disfigured the Elizabethan English aristocracy, especially as epitomised by the notorious career of the rebellious Earl of Essex, who, as Rebhorn notes, reputedly even thought of himself as Julius Caesar upon occasion. Even where such aristocratic rivalries appear to have been momentarily set aside in order to combat the grotesque treatment which they are dealt at the hands of Caesar, their common foe, a powerful impression of potential monstrosity has already infected the future assassins themselves. The sheer horror resulting from this can briefly overcome even Brutus himself, as his first impressions of the faction that he will soon jointly command prove:

...O conspiracy,
Sham'st thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,
When evils are most free? O then by day
Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough
To mask thy monstrous visage? Seek none,
conspiracy:
Hide it in smiles and affability...
(*Julius Caesar*, II, i, 77-82)

That this murderous coalition manages to hold together as long as it does, despite such deep initial suspicions, is a testament to the sheer force of the hatred which Caesar's threatened ascendancy beyond the political norms of Rome has aroused in this erstwhile governing class. How Caesar has engendered such infamy as *the* monstrous tyrant of his age will be the next focus of this chapter, examining the critical implications of Cassius and others's insistence that '...I had as lief not be as live to be / In awe of such a creature as myself...' (Ibid. I, ii, 95-96).

At first, such a declaration made may appear to mitigate Caesar's monstrosity in ways already hinted at above, unless Cassius also sees himself as a monster. For in order that Caesar should remain of the same species as Cassius in the way that the latter complains of here, then the two bitter political enemies should indeed share some form of common humanity with each other. It soon becomes apparent from Cassius's further words upon the subject, however, that it is as a truly monstrous and inhuman tyrant that

he thinks of Caesar, and so it is that he portrays the would-be king to Brutus in

infamous terms, as an overwhelmingly powerful monster:

... Why, man, he doth bstride the narrow world
Like a colossus, and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.
Men at some time are masters of their fates.
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars
But in ourselves, that we are underlings...
(*Julius Caesar*, I, ii, 134-140).

Moreover, it is clear from many of his speeches throughout the play that even Caesar himself is aware of his own potential monstrosity, although he prefers to cloak it in a more illustrious, superhuman guise, as he indeed becomes an unfeeling tyrant. Having achieved his quest for power, his chosen self-image is as an almighty being, one who is unique in that, compared to his human subjects, he is as '... constant as the northern star... / ... That unassailable holds on to his rank / Unshaked of motion...' (Ibid. III, i, 60-70). At the same time, however, it is interesting that Caesar occasionally associates himself with the fiercer, more bestial forms of monstrosity in much the same way that he elsewhere denies being influenced by the normal range of human emotions. Indeed, on the very occasion when he is about to make the fateful decision to go to the Capitol on the Ides of March, which will in turn seal his doom, he combines the two impulses, insisting that

... Caesar should be a beast without a heart
If he should stay at home today for fear.
No, Caesar shall not. Danger knows full well
That Caesar is more dangerous than he.
We are two lions littered in one day,
And I the elder and more terrible,
And Caesar shall go forth...
(Ibid. II, ii, 42-48).

This overwhelming hubris which continually engulfs Caesar is as potent a propaganda weapon in the devious hands of Cassius as we have already shown the dictator's

undeniable human weakness to be. Indeed, the effect of Cassius's words is truly revolutionary, for they help the arch-conspirator build up such an overwhelming rhetorical portrait of Caesar's monstrous tyranny as to convince any potential ally that this horrific overlord must be exterminated. Especially important for this effect to succeed is what happens when Cassius' rhetoric is combined with the terrifying monstrous portents, such as those which we have already described in connection with *Richard III*, which assail Rome on the night before Caesar's assassination. All this then enables an extremely convincing political argument to be made in which violent action is the only thing that can save Rome from itself. For as an apparently diseased natural world coincides with the growing monstrosity of both the encroaching tyrant and the potential plebeian mob over which he would rule, it suddenly becomes an increasingly convincing idea that Rome itself has turned monstrous:

... Why all these things change from their ordinance
Their natures and preformed faculties
To monstrous quality, why, you shall find
That heaven hath infused them with these spirits
To make them instruments of fear and warning
Unto some monstrous state...
... And why should Caesar be a tyrant then?
Poor man, I know he would not be a wolf
But that he sees the Romans are but sheep.
He were no lion, were not Romans hinds.
Those that with haste will make a mighty fire
Begin it with weak straws. What trash is Rome?
What rubbish, and what offal? when it serves
For the base matter to illuminate
So vile a thing as Caesar...
(*Julius Caesar*, I, iii, 66-111).

From this ideological perspective, monstrosity therefore pervades all aspects of Roman society, and indeed of Rome itself, for so long as Caesar remains in power. It now remains to be seen how far this can be connected in Marxist terms to the historical development of ancient Roman society, and indeed that of Shakespeare's England. That these two disparate historical eras are indeed closely intertwined within the play is

made clear, for example, by Siegel, who argues that Shakespeare had access to several contemporary historians's accounts of the true class nature of the Roman proletariat.

Yet he was far more concerned to use their monstrous acts, in particular the aforementioned murder of Cinna, as an '... indication of what culture can expect at the hands of the mob, whether... [it] be composed of Roman plebeians or radical [English] puritans.... [Their] anachronistic depiction... made the events of the past have relevance to the Elizabethan present and made the events of the Elizabethan present have a universal significance...' (Siegel, 124). Now we must examine further the historical implications of such portrayals in relation to the thoroughly alienated society shown in *Julius Caesar*. Because here, after all, even monstrous omens and portents are loaded with apparent signs of Rome's inescapable class divisions, for while when '...beggars die there are no comets seen; / The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes...' (*Julius Caesar*, II, ii, 30-31).

When examining the roots of the monstrous behaviour which seems to afflict Rome's entire social structure, it is therefore important from a Marxist viewpoint to notice the importance of money in influencing the actions of each class in this nascent imperial culture. According again to Siegel, the historical consequences of Roman reliance upon military conquest as a means of economic expansion, and upon cheap slave labour as the means of production, inexorably led to the creation of an increasingly dangerous political environment. For even as Rome's aristocratic classes became extremely wealthy as a result of imperial expansion, her small farmers, already heavily in debt, were conscripted into the army and thereby pushed even further into financial ruin, and the city as a result '... became swollen with dispossessed small-holders. Cliques of nobles vied for the spoils of empire while the disparity between the rich and poor grew...' (Siegel, 102). It is therefore unsurprising to see how deeply

greed, corruption and their after-effects come to dominate the minds of Shakespeare's patrician conspirators in *Julius Caesar*, especially as they begin to see the political fruits of their monstrous gamble in assassinating Caesar unravel before their eyes. The initial causes of Brutus' and Cassius' remarkable quarrel in Act IV, Scene iii, after all, appear to be wholly monetary in nature. Here, the former levels stinging accusations of corruption and greed against his supposed ally, culminating in the charge that Cassius basely denied him the gold he needed to pay off his troops. It is interesting to note, of course, that Brutus, while apparently furious about what he sees as a monstrous lapse in friendship from his supposed chief ally, is also obsessed in this scene with avoiding any such mercenary connotations in relation to his own motives. As such, he refuses to believe that the seemingly noble motives behind Caesar's assassination could have been so quickly, and so easily, corrupted, and expresses his overwhelming anger and disgust as follows:

... What, shall one of us,
That struck the foremost man in all this world
But for supporting robbers: shall we now
Contaminate our fingers with base bribes,
And sell the mighty space of our large honours
For so much trash as may be grasped thus?
I had rather be a dog and bay the moon
Than such a Roman...
... For I can raise no money by vile means:
By heaven, I had rather coin my heart
And drop my blood for drachmas, than to wring
From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash
By any indirection...
(*Julius Caesar*, IV, iii, 21-75).

Brutus's contempt for the grubby economics of bribery and extortion that, it seems, are already endemic in the Roman political world becomes clear from this speech, to the extent that he would himself rather become an animal than be caught up in such monstrous degradation. Yet in launching their conspiracy, Brutus and his allies have embarked upon a political venture which is as risky and challenging in its own way as

the Elizabethan voyages of capitalist discovery made by Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Francis Drake themselves. Therefore, it is extremely appropriate that we find Brutus describing his final battle against Octavius and Mark Antony's legions in explicitly commercial terms:

... Our legions are brimful, our cause is ripe.
The enemy increaseth every day;
We, at the height, are ready to decline.
There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune:
Omitted, all the voyages of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures...
(Ibid. 212-221).

How these aristocratic assassins were reduced to such an acute political dilemma, and the implications of this in terms of monstrosity for both Shakespeare's plebeians and Caesar himself, will be the next focus of my analysis.

The most obvious point in this play at which the patricians's enterprise diverges into a chaotic political disaster ironically comes after Brutus's attempt to convince the plebeian crowd of the justice behind Caesar's assassination, which occurs during the latter's funeral ceremonies, has apparently succeeded in its propaganda aims. Indeed, judging from the crowd's initially enthusiastic reaction, it would appear that Brutus is on the verge of achieving what René Girard, for one, believes is his secret ultimate goal. That is, the man whose overwhelming love for Caesar has become a hateful desire to supplant his hitherto-unbeatable rival's place in Rome's affections, now hears the rejoicing populace voice his fondest wishes, namely that he should now '... be Caesar.... / ... Caesar's better parts / Shall be crowned in Brutus...' (*Julius Caesar*, III, ii, 31-32). Unfortunately, such euphoria proves short-lived, as Antony proves a consummate political orator, with his impassioned eulogy to Caesar not only provoking

a more powerful emotional response than Brutus' simple evocations of political principle, but also proving far more appealing to the plebeians' economic self-interest. For as we have already seen, the proletarian classes of Shakespeare's Rome become as profit-oriented as any of the city's patricians, and therefore are equally as corruptible. Indeed, they are perhaps more so, for even if the plebeians are not necessarily quite as easy to manipulate as they are sometimes portrayed, it nevertheless remains the case that their political allegiance can soon be swayed if they are given a big enough material incentive to do so. Here, it appears that it is this covetous tendency which truly lies at the root of their seemingly politically-motivated initial demands that they '... will be satisfied, let us be satisfied...' (*Julius Caesar*, III, ii, 1).

Being well aware of such monetary considerations, Antony's words to the crowd are full of references to the economic benefits which the plebeians, both individually and as a social class, have enjoyed at the hands of Caesar. Insisting that the man whom Brutus and the conspirators would attempt to portray as a monstrous tyrant was in fact Rome's mightiest benefactor, Antony declares that when '... the poor hath cried, Caesar hath wept...' (Ibid. 92). In keeping with this image, Antony assures the crowd that Caesar's proud record of enriching Rome, which while he was alive was typically achieved through military conquest abroad, will continue after death, as Antony exploits the rhetorical masterstroke of Caesar's will to its fullest, declaring that while:

... He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill...
... Wherein hath Caesar thus deserved your loves?
Alas, you know not. I must tell you then.
You have forgot the will I told you of...
... To every Roman citizen he gives,
To every several man, seventy-five drachmas...
(*Julius Caesar*, III, ii, 89-235).

With these mercenary measures, therefore, Antony is able to enlist the support of the Roman plebeians, who now begin to behave in so brutal a manner as to begin to justify the earlier prejudices of the tribunes against the potential monstrosity of their entire class. One intriguing possibility on this occasion is that in thus declaring themselves loyal to Caesar's cause, the resulting mob effectively become self-proclaimed monsters, as the plebeians greedily hunger for the financial benefits which have become the veritable lifeblood of this class. Furthermore, the vampiric nature of this consumerist behaviour harks back in many ways to Calpurnia's monstrous dreams of Caesar as a copiously bleeding statue. As such, Rome's lower classes now fulfil this nightmarish prophecy by greedily devouring the fruits of Caesar's promised legacy, by imbibing from a symbolic '... life-giving fountain, which, however, spouts cash as well as blood...' (Halpern, 225). In return, they swear to wreak monstrous violence upon those whom they imagine to be Caesar's enemies, as seen above in the case of the unfortunate Cinna, and so fulfil Antony's promises to the dead Caesar that he should be thoroughly avenged, and that in doing so:

... Blood and destruction shall be so in use,
And dreadful objects so familiar,
That mothers shall but smile when they behold
Their infants quartered with the hands of war:
All pity choked with custom of fell deeds,
And Caesar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Ate by his side come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines, with a monarch's voice,
Cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war,
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men, groaning for burial...
(*Julius Caesar*, III, i, 265-275).

Overall, therefore, the desperate attempt of the patrician conspirators to forestall the tide of history and so preserve the Roman republic over which they preside has obviously gone horribly astray, especially as the monstrous spirit of Caesarism now literally walks the earth as a result. The assassinated Caesar therefore becomes a far more formidable

opponent than when alive, for before then his deluded hubris made useful political capital for the conspirators, even as they exploited his human frailties to create the impression of a worthy monstrous scapegoat for Rome's ills. Dead, however, Caesar both literally and metaphorically becomes a monster of far greater power than Brutus ever imagined in his worst nightmares about Caesar becoming a monstrous '... serpent's egg / Which hatched, would as his kind grow mischievous...' (*Julius Caesar*, II, i, 32-33). I shall now return again to discussing the implications that Renaissance ideas of historical and cultural monstrosity, which we have here found readily applicable Shakespeare's ancient Rome, would have upon a text that deals more specifically with an English – or at least British – social context, namely *Macbeth*. For it is in that play that we find one of Shakespeare's most potent combinations of tyrannical power and a society surrounded by the monstrous, both of which are, moreover, fused in the increasingly monstrous and tyrannical figure of Macbeth himself. It now remains for us to examine how this murderous chain of historical events came about, by which Macbeth is inexorably trapped, as if he had indeed been tied '... to a stake: I cannot fly, / But, bear-like, I must fight the course...' (*Macbeth*, V, vii, 1-2).

Haunted by History: Doomed Tyrants and Monstrous Prophecies in *Macbeth*.

... What are these,
So withered and so wild in their attire,
That look not like th'inhabitants o'th'earth,
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand
me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so...
(*Macbeth*, I, iii, 39-47).

The most obvious signs of monstrosity in *Macbeth* appear from the very beginning of the play, as we encounter three witches or the Weird Sisters, as they shall later be

known. They first appear amidst an ominous thunderstorm, which is just part, it seems, of a larger dramatic pattern of horrible, portentous weather, which well befits the Sisters' collective cries of '... Fair is foul, and foul is fair: / Hover through the fog and filthy air...' (Ibid. I, i, 11-12). As they await the coming of Macbeth, it would appear from their discourse that the Sisters are extremely malicious and vindictive in their ways, as is noted, for example, by John Turner. Moreover, it also seems that through their dark magic, they have, if perhaps not absolute, then at least sufficient supernatural power to force their hapless victim, as in the case of the sailor whose wife offended them, to '...live a man forbid...' (*Macbeth*, I, iii, 21). That such witchcraft is itself a token of monstrosity in this text also becomes clearer when we note the main preoccupation to which they devote their magical arts during the course of this play, namely, the manufacture of deceptively equivocal prophecies. As we have already noted above in connection with *Richard III*, the very concept of history, whose future the witches's magic will so often invoke, is in itself replete with monstrous symbolism during the English Renaissance. Indeed, these ideas of the monstrous qualities of history itself can be expressed in a manner that is also relevant to the highly portentous prophetic context, not only of *Macbeth*, but of *Julius Caesar* as well. Meanwhile, the Sisters's ritualised invoking of the future destiny of the Scottish crown in *Macbeth*, as Holderness has noted, often occurs within the context of an occult resurrection of the dead, such as occurs in Act IV, Scene i at the underworld's Pit of Archeron. Even where the latter is not specifically the case, moreover, these connections between the monstrous nature of witchcraft and that of history itself quickly become apparent, as I shall demonstrate below.

A key example of this process occurs when Banquo, having just heard the Sisters's seemingly golden prophecies for Macbeth's future during their first encounter,

asks them whether they can truly ‘... look into the seeds of time, / And say which seeds will grow, and which will not...’ (*Macbeth*, I, iii, 58-59). Before this, after all, Banquo is shown to be very well aware of the witches’s obvious visual monstrosity, which he portrays in a manner reminiscent yet again of Huet’s theories upon the influence of Renaissance ideas of gender upon contemporary depictions of monstrosity. For if the displacement of the father’s image by the maternal imagination can determine a monstrous child’s appearance, the apparent misappropriation by either sex of the other’s appearance and qualities may itself seem monstrous. This is shown above by Banquo’s astonished confusion over the seemingly androgynous Sisters outlandish appearance, whose inhuman connotations also recall Richard III’s lifelong battle to overcome the degrading social consequences of his own physical monstrosity. (Which was, of course, itself ‘caused’ by the power of the monstrous female imagination, as I have shown). As the insulting, dehumanising language which is also meted out constantly to the witches shows, it would appear meanwhile that Shakespeare’s ‘... official society can only ever imagine its radical “other” as chaos rather than creativity, and is thus bound to define the Sisters as evil...’ (Eagleton, 3). Of even greater importance to the play than the witches’ visual monstrosity, however, is the monstrous power of their words, of which the captivated Macbeth is only too well aware, as he attempts to overcome the horrible temptations to usurp the Scottish throne which their prophecies have stirred within him. In historical terms, this powerful impression of verbal monstrosity is enhanced by the political context of violence and treachery within which *Macbeth* is first written and performed, as the early-Jacobean state attempted to crush the determined resistance of Catholics and other rebels to the new regime and its policies. One famous example of how these dangers are approached within the text of *Macbeth* can be found in what is itself the notoriously chaotic language of the Porter. For, as Mullaney notes, his

description of ‘... an equivocator... who committed treason enough for God’s sake / yet could not equivocate to heaven...’ (*Macbeth*, II, iii, 8-11), recalls the Jacobean regime’s view of the conduct of the Catholic Father Garnet while on trial for complicity in the 1605 Gunpowder Plot. Such correspondences between *Macbeth* and the bloody aftermath of this traumatic act of intended treason, as well as with other similar occasions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, themselves often inspired by magical prophecies, clearly draw attention to the continuing, if perhaps limited, vulnerability of the English state to rebellion. This weakness, in conjunction with the ultra-violent and torturous methods which the Jacobean regime, aspiring to absolutist rule, used to protect its hold on power, explains why the condemned traitor is subjected to a public ritual of confession and brutal punishment during this period. As a result:

The traitor stands at an uncertain threshold of Renaissance society, athwart a line that sets off the human from the demonic, the natural from the unnatural, and the rational from the enigmatic and obscure realm of unreason. Treason is a twice-monstrous act: it is something awesome and terrifying... [with] tumultuous repercussions even in failure – but it is monstrous, too, in that it is something made to show and reveal itself in both speech and spectacle... (Mullaney, 109).

Ceremonial propaganda such as this serves both to conform and, at least in theory, to absolve this Jacobean connection between treachery and monstrosity, and reflections of it occur throughout *Macbeth*, beginning with the Thane of Cawdor’s repentance just prior to his execution. In this final performance, the hitherto-disloyal thane makes such an exemplary impression in his new penitent role as to surprise his witnesses, as though nothing ‘... in his life / Became him like the leaving it; he died / As one that had been studied in his death...’ (*Macbeth*, I, iv, 7-9). This is in direct contrast to his successor as Thane of Cawdor, namely *Macbeth* himself, who instead decides that he would rather die fighting than be humiliated, and therefore ‘... will not yield / To kiss the ground before young Malcolm’s feet, / And to be baited with the rabble’s curse...’ (*Ibid.* V, vii,

27-29). It is to further examination of how Macbeth has nevertheless fallen victim to the official ideology behind this monstrous degradation of the traitorous subject, and how this reflects upon the tyrannical status that the self-same ideology would impose upon his life-history, that we will now turn.

First presented to us as a warrior of exceptional courage and violence, Macbeth's berserker ferocity not only kills men, but also grotesquely mutilates them in the process, thereby creating monstrous sights on an extremely savage scale. This unrelenting brutality, when combined with Banquo's efforts in a similar vein, leads to the resulting carnage resembling not only a monstrous portent, but also an apocalyptic one, as the bleeding Captain speculates upon whether they '... meant to bathe in reeking wounds, / Or memorize another Golgotha...' (Ibid. I, ii, 40-41). By the fateful night upon which he murders Duncan, however, Macbeth is not only engaged upon creating such monstrous bodies, but also perceives monstrosity everywhere he goes. Here, what is natural and unnatural have become horribly alike, as Macbeth's fantastic imagination usurps the influence which his eyes would normally have upon his perceptions, so that the monstrous takes over while '... o'er the one half-world / Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse / The curtain'd sleep...' (Ibid. II, i, 49-51). In part, this latter condition is due both to the witches' monstrous prophecies as discussed above, and more especially to the influence of Lady Macbeth, who has taught him to hide his own monstrous intentions from view, and thus '... look like the innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't...' (Ibid. I, v, 64-65). This sinister alliance between the play's most powerful female figures also recalls yet again Huet's work on the importance of the female imagination in the creation of monsters, according to Renaissance beliefs on the subject. For as Janet Adelman notes, the moment when this diabolical bargain is struck is itself steeped in images of the monstrous androgyny which we have earlier seen

embodied in the witches. To a certain extent, this latter quality is also reflected in the often feminised, yet still patriarchal figure of Duncan, who even in death resembles an archetypal female monster, ‘... a new Gorgon...’ (Ibid. II, iii, 71). Whereas Duncan, despite his praise of his warriors’ bloody exploits, is often seen as a benign, almost innocent parental figure, Lady Macbeth appears as a monstrous parent indeed. This impression applies whether she is claiming that she would commit infanticide had she sworn to do, or whether she is summoning demonic forces to partake of her perverse nursery, and to ‘... unsex me here... / ... And take my milk for gall, you murth’ring ministers...’ (*Macbeth*, I, v, 40-47). At the same time, however, it is from Macbeth’s initial descriptions of the witches that his wife’s inspiration to enter this monstrous pact derives, and the balance of monstrosity between the two would-be usurpers is occasionally very precarious. Even as Macbeth attempts to deny his own monstrosity, claiming that ‘... I dare do all that may become a man; / Who dares do more is none...’ (Ibid. I, vii, 46-47), his wife is quick to assert this monstrosity in the interests of their joint bid for power, asking him scornfully what ‘... beast was’t then, / That made you break this enterprise to me...’ (Ibid. 47-48). This antagonistic partnership regarding questions of monstrosity reasserts itself during the banquet scene, where Macbeth stretches the persuasive powers of her worldly scepticism almost to breaking point, with his horrified political recklessness when faced with the truly monstrous apparition of Banquo’s ghost.

According to Marxist critics such as Terry Eagleton, the Macbeths’ partnership is a sharp contrast in political terms to the radical creative anarchy of the socially marginalised witches. Instead, it expresses an early bourgeois ‘... impulse to transgress [which] inhabits history: it is an endless expansion of the self in a single trajectory, an unslakable thirst for some ultimate mastery which will never come...’ (Eagleton, 4). It

is in an attempt to secure such a sense of lasting power, which has hitherto escaped him since he took the crown, that Macbeth makes his second and final journey to see the witches. By trying thus to discern the future so that he may overcome his enemies, both living and dead, Macbeth is confronted instead by monstrous visions whose revelations equivocate between different half-truths, as he will discover when their prophecies of monstrous, yet seemingly-impossible events actually occur after a fashion. On a historical level, moreover, the significance of this scene is enhanced as he is shown a monstrous display of a future Scottish royal line descended from his great dynastic rival, Banquo, which would appear to ‘...stretch out to th’crack of doom...’ (*Macbeth*, IV, i, 117). In this encounter, he is in fact confronting the ancestral royal lineage which by Shakespeare’s time has, in the person of James I/VI, come to rule both England *and* Scotland, and must therefore be depicted with similarly non-monstrous qualities as *Richard III* ascribes to the ancestors of the Tudors. This ruling dynasty is shown here in such a manner that, while emphasising their continuing power and longevity, must attempt to suppress their own potential future monstrosity, such as we have seen expressed in their monopoly of state violence, as well as that which is hidden deep within its past. This monstrous past could have manifested within *Macbeth* in several ways, such as in Banquo’s actual historical complicity in Macbeth’s usurpation, or in the inclusion within this line of kings of an aberrant female ruler. For the latter, namely James’s own mother, Mary, Queen of Scots, had a notoriously bad contemporary reputation as a monstrous tyrant, as is shown for example in at least one of Shakespeare’s most likely contemporary historical sources for *Macbeth* itself, namely George Buchanan’s *History of Scotland* (1582). Therein, as Alan Sinfield notes:

...Mary is the lawful ruler *and* the tyrant, and her deponents are usurpers *and yet* lawful also. To her are attributed many of the traits of Macbeth: she is said to hate integrity in others, to appeal to the predictions of witches, to use foreign mercenaries, to place spies in the households of

opponents and to threaten the lives of the nobility; after her surrender she is humiliated in the streets of Edinburgh as Macbeth fears to be. It is alleged that she would not have shrunk from the murder of her son if she could have reached him. This account of Mary as arch-tyrant embarrassed James, and that is perhaps why just eight kings are shown to Macbeth by the Witches... ('History, Ideology and Intellectuals', 127).

Therefore, it may well be more than a coincidence that it is while frustrated and angered by these selfsame visions that Macbeth's already-established violent monstrosity finally descends into out-and-out tyranny. For, having ordered the slaying of Macduff's entire family in revenge for their father's escape from Scotland, Macbeth has again acted here in a manner reminiscent of Shakespeare's Richard III, for both of them have now become the destroyers of youthful innocence. The potential usefulness of this as Stuart propaganda is therefore clear, for any tyrannous abuses of power that may occur under their rule must nevertheless pale in comparison with the monstrous acts committed here by Macbeth. This is also reflected in the play itself by Macduff's willing acceptance of a certain amount of tyranny even under Malcolm, including sins of lust and avarice, so long as Scotland is freed from the monstrous Macbeth. Yet the latter's monstrous power, as symbolised by his supposed invulnerability to all save '... he, / That was not born of woman...' (*Macbeth*, V, vii, 3), can only be overcome by one whose own monstrous birth thus counteracts this prophecy. This of course proves the case with Macduff, who '... was from his mother's womb / Untimely ripped...' (Ibid. V, viii, 15-16), yet Macbeth still refuses to entirely surrender himself to the humiliating Renaissance discourse of monstrous display (as described above by Mullaney in relation to treachery), which Macduff now regards as a fitting punishment for a cowardly tyrant. Macbeth's final despairing resistance is futile, however, and he and his already-deceased '... fiend-like queen...' (Ibid. V, ix, 35) now take their places in the triumphant historical narrative of Malcolm, who as we have seen may act in a monstrously tyrannous manner in a limited way, but who is also, however, of far greater

skill in the arts of deception than even Lady Macbeth. In this, as with the propaganda realm of James I, traitorous monsters, such as those engaged in witchcraft, are only free to act upon the outskirts of society, and their power-crazed hopes are steadily dashed the closer they get to the figure of the king.

Such royalist ideological visions, however, were not sufficient to save Duncan's life, and nor will they eventually save that of James I's son, Charles I, during the English Civil Wars of the mid-seventeenth century. On the contrary, according to Franco Moretti:

... Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy was in fact one of the decisive influences in the creation of a 'public' that for the first time in history assumed the right to bring a king to justice... Tragedy disintegrated the absolute monarch to all ethical and rational legitimation. Having deconsecrated the king, tragedy made it possible to decapitate him... The political dimension of tragedy does not consist in illuminating the displacements of power, as happens in the long procession of sovereigns in the [Shakespearean] histories and even in *Julius Caesar*; it lies rather in posing the question of whether a *cultural foundation* of power is still possible, and answering it in the negative... In the tragedies, sovereign power has instead become an insoluble *problem*: forced to face this fact, the hero can no longer believe in his struggle for power, and abandons it as a meaningless enterprise... [This creates] the sovereign who is unable to unite history and transcendence, action and value, passion and reason, and whose fall therefore epitomizes the collapse of an entire civilization... The palace of the prince is truly haunted, and the inflexible allegorical destiny suspended above every aspect of it (love and ambition, masters and servants, actions and words) makes it a site at once dilapidated and threatening. To the imagination of the Jacobean, this was a court that, incapable of being set to rights, had to be dispersed, exorcised... (Moretti, 42-82).

It is therefore interesting to see how Milton's later portrayal of monstrous revolutionary history is influenced by those Renaissance fears of tyrannical rule which I have hitherto explored *vis-à-vis* Marlowe and Shakespeare, especially since many monstrous aspects of absolutist power still lingered on in France and elsewhere even after 1789. Milton's own dangerous position as a passionate advocate of a seemingly righteous, but nevertheless failed rebellion against tyrannical royal power, would, after all, have left him horribly aware of the monstrous suffering behind revolutionary historical change,

even if a triumphant prophetic future could ultimately emerge from such hellish chaos. Thus, Milton shares in that paradoxical historical uncertainty which prompts the fallen Adam's confession that '... full of doubt I stand, / Whether I should repent me now of sin / By me done and occasion, or rejoice / Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring...' (Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*, ed. John Leonard. London, Penguin Books, 2000, Penguin Classics, XII, 474-476). We shall now see whether such chastened, but still essentially optimistic revolutionary ideals could truly survive the fall of the Republic, or whether their bleak historical situation required a more pessimistic viewpoint, as seen when Michael asserts that '... tyranny must be, / Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse...' (Ibid. 95-96).

Revolutionary History and Monstrous Religion in *Paradise Lost*.

...At certain revolutions all the damned
Are brought: and feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce...
...A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good,
Where all life dies, death lives, and nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, unutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feigned, or fear conceived...
(*Paradise Lost*, II, 597-627).

By the 1640s, English political discourse was full of images of monstrosity, such as those compiled by John Bulwer, themselves appearing in a period which saw an increase in apparently monstrous births. According to Jerome Friedman, moreover, all this formed part of a profoundly irrational popular political culture wherein '... almost all reports of prodigies, apparitions, and monsters made a better argument for the king than for Parliament... All the accounts of these excesses demonstrated God's anger with England for executing Charles, not for England's inability to create a satisfactory revolution...' (259). If so, and given Milton's almost universal critical reputation since as a die-hard supporter of the Puritan/republican revolution which seized power

following the execution of King Charles I in 1649, what does such a threatening political climate signify in reading the monstrous history revealed in *Paradise Lost*? In particular, how important are the text's notions of monstrous tyranny in shaping the political and/or historical visions that govern the fate of its post-revolutionary new world order, especially if even Edenic humanity itself strongly resembles the intellectually voracious, even insatiable post-Renaissance humanity described earlier by Greenblatt? What if, indeed, when compared with the '... feudal world of God and his court, of Satan and his host, Adam is clearly of another species – the commoner, the first bourgeois, that extraordinary mutation which is middle-class man, destined... to be fruitful and multiply, and to inherit the earth...' (Jameson, 53)?

Certainly, Adam's attitude towards *human* politics would appear to render him a staunch republican, of the kind that would go on to fuel bourgeois revolutions in both Europe and America for the next two centuries following the English Civil War. When he discusses Nimrod's impious effrontery in seeking to make himself the first human tyrant in Biblical history with the Archangel Michael, after all, Adam launches into an especially bitter condemnation of the very ideological underpinnings behind such absolutist monarchial rule. This condemnation is expressed as follows:

... O execrable son so to aspire
Above his brethren, to himself assuming
Authority usurped, from God not giv'n:
He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl
Dominion absolute; that right we hold
By his donation; but man over men
He made not lord; such title to himself
Reserving, human left from human free.
But this usurper his encroachment proud
Stays not on man; to God his tower intends
Siege and defiance: wretched man!
... To whom thus Michael. Justly thou abhorr'st
That son, who on the quiet state of men
Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue
Rational liberty; yet know withal,
Since thy original lapse, true liberty

Is lost, which always with right reason dwells...
...Immediately inordinate desires
And upstart passions catch the government
From reason, and to servitude reduce
Man till then free. Therefore since he permits
Within himself unworthy powers to reign
Over free reason, God in judgement just
Subjects him from without to violent lords;
Who oft as undeservedly enthrall
His outward freedom: tyranny must be,
Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse,
Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
But justice, and some fatal curse annexed
Deprives them of their outward liberty,
Their inward lost...
(*Paradise Lost*, XII, 64-101).

As can be gleaned from Michael's stern reply, there is an ominous sense, recurring throughout these prophetic visions, that God's will, and by extension history itself, will rarely fulfill even the seemingly religiously and/or politically righteous desires of the fallen Adam. Earlier, he had already been warned not to judge human history by the extent to which similar desires for peace and happiness appeared to be satisfied, for the historical results of such '...effeminate slackness...' (XI, 634) may well lead to even greater acts of future monstrosity. For careless indulgence of seemingly harmless, but ultimately dangerous people and passions leads, in a manner reminiscent yet again of Huet's work upon Renaissance theories of monstrosity, to a horrible increase in the monstrous production of '...prodigious births of body and mind. / Such were these giants, men of high renown... / Of triumph, to be styled great conquerors, / Patrons of mankind, gods, and sons of gods, / Destroyers rightlier called and plagues of men...' (XI, 687-697). By 1649, however, it was Parliament's forces, especially those led by Oliver Cromwell, which had most successfully grabbed this monstrous military glory, and had, most obviously with regard to Charles I himself, brought '...home spoils with infinite / Manslaughter, [which] shall be held the highest pitch / Of human glory...'

(XI, 692-694). Furthermore, if Christopher Hill is correct, then the later ignominious fate of Cromwell and his allies as their republic slowly crumbled bears some influence upon Milton's depiction of the wretched fallen angels, who are, after all, far from being '... mere personifications of evil. They were angels of light who rejected the light... Presumptuous aspiration, use of the wrong means, pride and arrogance: they are the vices against which Milton and other radicals had warned Oliver Cromwell and his generals...' (16-18). Moreover, as parliamentary rule grew ever more ineffective, until it was eventually superceded by Cromwell's one-man rule as Lord Protector, it is useful to recall the historical similarities between this regime and that of Napoleon Bonaparte, whose own monstrous history will be examined fully in my next chapter. As J. C. Davis comments, after all, even by the time of the French Revolution '... Cromwell continued to be portrayed as the ambitious, fanatical usurper, detested by republicans... Both [he and Napoleon] were seen as taking advantage of a situation where the love of liberty was firmly established only with a minority and shallowly rooted, at best, with the masses...' (53). What hope could the revolutionary bourgeoisie ever have of ultimately triumphing over royalist tyranny, if even their supposed allies could succumb to the temptations of monstrous absolutism?

Such unease with the potentially monstrous power of absolute monarchy can perhaps best be gauged in *Paradise Lost* by looking not only at the tyrannous tendencies of Eve's utterly untrustworthy serpentine 'ally', Satan, but also at the less obviously monstrous power of humanity's ultimate Miltonic ally, namely the Son Himself. For all that the latter may offer himself as a blood sacrifice to redeem humanity's fallen condition, there is evidence in his first defeat of the Satanic army that his all-conquering power may not only appear monstrous in its own right, but produces even greater monstrosity elsewhere. This is shown not only through monstrous physical

signs like his angelic charioteers' multiple faces (recalling, perhaps, a long-standing medieval tradition of depicting Christ thus to denote the Trinity), but with the creation of the monstrous earthquake-like fissure through which his defeated satanic enemies are driven to Hell, as:

... So spake the Son, and into terror changed
His count'nance too severe to be beheld
And full of wrath bent on his enemies...
... Nor less on either side tempestuous fell
His arrows, from the fourfold visaged four,
Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels,
Distinct alike with multitude of eyes;
One spirit in them ruled, and every eye
Glared lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire...
... The overthrown he raised, and as a herd
Of goats or timorous flock together thronged
Drove them before him thunderstruck, pursued
With terrors and with furies to the bounds
And crystal wall of Heav'n, which op'ning wide,
Rolled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed
Into the wasteful deep; the monstrous sight
Strook them with horror backward, but far worse
Urged them behind; headlong themselves they threw
Down from the verge of Heav'n; eternal wrath
Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.
Hell heard th' unsufferable noise, Hell saw
Heav'n ruining from Heav'n and would have fled
Affrighted; but strict Fate had cast too deep
Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound...
(*Paradise Lost*, VI, 824-870).³

One recurrent theme of this work will be how the monstrous conflicts within these texts bear out the quasi-Nietzscheian concept that to overcome the dangers unleashed by monstrous history, one must also become monstrous, and the Son's monstrous response to Satan's encroaching militarism provides an interesting example of this process. In response, the damned Satan's own monstrosity becomes ever more pronounced in his bitter retaliation against innocent humanity, a process which he himself acknowledges as follows:

... O foul descent! that I who erst contended
With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrained

Into a beast, and mixed with bestial slime,
This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
That to the height of Deity aspired;
But what will not ambition and revenge
Descend to? who aspires must down at low
As high he soared, obnoxious first or last
To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,
Bitter ere long back on itself recoils;
Let it; I reckon not, so it light well aimed,
Since higher I fall short, on him who next
Provokes my envy, this new favourite
Of Heav'n, this man of clay, son of despite,
Whom us the more to spite his Maker raised
From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid...
(*Paradise Lost*, IX, 164-178).

Given their shared propensity for passionate speeches promising monstrous vengeance for their terrible wrongs at the hands of their respective creators, it is therefore unsurprising that Shelley's Monster, himself an avid reader of *Paradise Lost*, should often consider the envious '... Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition... ' (*Frankenstein*, 113). Satan's own monstrous career, however, also strongly resembles that of Victor Frankenstein, especially as he also becomes a monstrous creator, for his early thoughts of monstrous rebellion trigger his giving 'birth' to Sin, with whom he would soon engender the even more monstrous Death. (Again, this echoes Huet's theories on Renaissance monstrosity, whereby '... the monstrous child bore witness to the violent desires that moved the mother at the time of conception or during pregnancy...' [1]). Indeed, Satan almost confirms his own Frankensteinian role as an infanticidal monstrous creator by nearly coming to blows with his monstrous son, Death, until the female Sin forestalls the conflict by reminding him of their shared monstrous history.

Ultimately, mankind's own monstrous history is triggered by Satan's infusion of his archetypally bourgeois greed for knowledge and power into the innocent Eve, who responds with her own rebellious longing to '... render me more equal, and perhaps, / A

thing not undesirable, sometime / Superior; for inferior who is free? '(IX, 823-825).

Such forbidden intellectual connections between human hunger for knowledge and a monstrous lust for power also become breeding-grounds for monstrous tyranny, which itself appears '... as the visible inscription in the material of history of the always prior subjection of reason to this excess of desire...' (Grossman, 168). Certainly, a common feature of post-Renaissance monstrous literature is for an overreaching individual's seemingly harmless intellectual desire for forbidden scientific knowledge to quickly mutate into a tyrannical hunger for a more political, or rather imperial, form of ostensibly absolute power. This occurs in monstrous texts from several periods, from Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* to Wells's *Invisible Man* and beyond. Moreover, given our current focus on *Paradise Lost*, it is interesting to note that these would-be scientific tyrants sometimes couch their attempts to usurp power in religious terms. This is the case with the Daleks's monstrous creator Davros, for example, who proclaims that to control such scientific power '... would set me up above the gods! And through the Daleks, I shall have such power!' (*Doctor Who: Genesis of the Daleks*. Dir. David Maloney. BBC. 1975). (In fact, even Victor Frankenstein himself believes that his scientific achievements will put him in a godlike position, since a whole '... new species would bless me as its creator and source...' [*Frankenstein*, 54]). It is unsurprising, therefore, that Milton also seems to regard the many religious differences that had largely fuelled the Civil Wars as being due to a similarly monstrous greed for intellectual and political power on the part of past unscrupulous, and especially Catholic, religious leaders. For as Michael tells the fallen Adam, the Christian faithful would long remain vulnerable to these heretical:

... Wolves [who] shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,
Who all the sacred mysteries of Heav'n
To their own vile advantages shall turn
Of lucre and ambition, and the truth

With superstitions and traditions taint,
Left only in those written records pure
Though only by the Spirit understood.
Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,
Places and titles, and with these to join
Secular power, though feigning still to act
By spiritual, to themselves appropriating
The Spirit of God, promised alike and given
To all believers; and from that pretence,
Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force
On every conscience...
(*Paradise Lost*, XII, 508-522).

In the face of such monstrous historical errors, it is unsurprising that the Puritan Milton wishes to reaffirm the unsullied authority of the scriptures themselves here, for as Greenblatt's work on Marlowe makes clear, the Republic's collapse came after the rather less-than-radical masses were exhausted by successive mutually-destructive radical religious conflicts.⁴ England's eventual return to monarchical rule in 1660, after all, was the subject of mass rejoicing: all of the Renaissance theatre's misgivings about the monstrous dangers of royal tyranny had, it seems, been temporarily overshadowed by the traditional theatrical power of the English monarchy, of which Milton himself complained bitterly. In his descriptions of the unfallen Adam, after all, we find him praising instead Adam's nakedness, as demonstrating that '... in himself was all his state, / More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits / On princes, when their rich retinue long... / Dazzles the crowd, and sets them all agape...' (V, 353-357). Nevertheless, former Republican leaders were increasingly ascribed their own posthumous monstrous histories, with Cromwell in particular becoming a near-legendary historical monster, with echoes of both Faustus's demonic power-bargain and Satan's lingering tyrannical grandeur. In this dangerous historical context, Milton could only bewail the diabolical fall of the Republic thus:

... O shame to men! Devil with devil damned
Firm concord holds, men only disagree
Of creatures rational, though under hope

Of Heavn'ly grace: and God proclaiming peace,
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not Hellish foes enow besides,
That day and night for his destruction wait...
(*Paradise Lost*, II, 496-505).

Given this hostile ideological climate, moreover, it is unsurprising that Milton should wish to regard Biblical prophecy as a final historical guarantee that the righteous would nevertheless triumph over their benighted foes. Indeed, David Loewenstein believes that he in fact aligns himself with his poem's recurring figure of the 'one just man', from the loyal angel Abdiel to Noah, and beyond ultimately to Christ himself. For all of these in turn '... must struggle with the terrible burden of history as an unregenerate process... Through prophecy the just man will renovate human history itself...' (101). Such truly heroic individuals nevertheless continue to preach God's word despite all the pain that their monstrous enemies can inflict upon them and their historical appearance often signals a righteous revolution, impelled by a monstrously powerful God.

Significantly, however, Loewenstein also notes that:

The poet is also linked with the just few... by his own desire to intervene in the drama of history and warn its endangered protagonists... [For while such] just men with unusual visionary power may emerge at critical junctures in human history, they cannot necessarily alter its catastrophic course or prevent its violent conflicts... (102-103).

This latter point fits in well with both the linguistic origin of monstrosity in *monēre*, the Latin word for 'warn', as noted in my Introduction, as well as with one of the core argument of my own thesis. For I have argued that such historical change is itself monstrous, especially given how it disrupts both religious and political grand narratives. This disruption in turn would produce further radical and unpredictable social upheavals in time, such as England's 1688 Glorious Revolution, and, more powerful still, 1789's French Revolution. In analysing Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* in its own chaotic

historical context of monstrous tyranny giving rise to monstrous revolution, and *vice versa*, it is with the monstrous realisation that radical historical change may create even greater suffering, as revolutionary regimes become monstrous tyrannical dictatorships in their own right. Even as the voracious bourgeois quest for ever more monstrous resources of wealth and power expands from its Renaissance beginnings, therefore, it is necessary to bear in mind Satan's ironic imperialism as he foretells Adam and Eve's inevitable fall into their own monstrous new world of historical change:

... Ah gentle pair, ye little think how nigh
Your change approaches, when all these delights
Will vanish and deliver ye to woe,
More woe, the more your taste is now of joy;
Happy, but for so happy ill secured
Long to continue, and this seat your Heav'n
Ill fenced for heav'n to keep out such a foe
As now is entered; yet no purposed foe
To you whom I could pity thus forlorn
Though I unpitied: league with you I seek,
And mutual amity so strait, so close,
That I with you must dwell, or you with me
Henceforth; my dwelling haply may not please
Like this fair Paradise, your sense, yet such
Accept your Maker's work; he gave it me,
Which I as freely give; Hell shall unfold,
To entertain you two, her widest gates,
And send forth all her kings; there will be room,
Not like these narrow limits, to receive
Your numerous offspring; if no better place,
Thank him who puts me loath to this revenge
On you who wrong me not for him who wronged.
And should I at your harmless innocence
Melt, as I do, yet public reason just,
Honour and empire with revenge enlarged,
By conquering this new world, compels me now
To do what else though damned I should abhor.
 So spake the Fiend, and with necessity,
The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds...
(*Paradise Lost*, IV, 366-394).

Here and elsewhere, we can therefore see how the language of monstrous prophecy is used again and again by Renaissance writers to reinforce a kind of despairing tyrannical vision of a seemingly inevitable, and even more monstrous, future

historical destiny. *Macbeth* and *Richard III*, in particular, show the monstrous tyrannical deeds of the past as making future atrocities more likely, whether through inciting revenge by others, or simply through driving a tyrannical ruler into an ever more murderous frame of mind. The latter, of course, can simply be symptomatic of monstrous paranoia, such as when Macbeth kills Macduff's family to '... make assurance double sure, / And take a bond of fate...' (IV, i, 83-84). But such monstrous conduct is often also a symptom of deep foreboding and despair, as is seen when even Shakespeare's most notorious arch-tyrant, Richard III himself, is forced to admit that murdering the Princes and marrying their sister remains a highly '... Uncertain way of gain! But I am in / So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin...' (IV, ii, 63-64). Where monstrous Renaissance texts often differ from those of other periods, however, is in their usage of a specifically *religious*, as opposed to merely supernatural, ideological framework to underpin this sense of monstrous destiny. For example, this monstrous religious ideology can manifest itself as a would-be tyrant simply *misreading* God's mysterious historical plan, and becoming monstrous as a result. This most obviously occurs when Faustus's deal with the devil is first triggered by his rejection of divinity as reinforcing this sense of inevitable entrapment. In turn, this rejection is triggered by the idea that '... belike we must sin, / And so consequently die. / Ay, we must die an everlasting death. / What doctrine call you this?' (*Doctor Faustus*, I, i, 46-49). Despite the powerful depictions of the inevitable eternal battle between heavenly Good and demonic Evil to control human history to be found both here and in *Paradise Lost*, however, it appears that all such attempts to control historical destiny are instead secretly undermined by a sense of monstrous chaos. (For example, Satan's grandiose plans to usurp control over humanity would never have got off the ground '... had not by ill chance / The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud... hurried him / As many

miles aloft... [*Paradise Lost*, II, 935-938]). In the utterly unpredictable historical atmosphere of the monstrous Renaissance, we are therefore confronted by a deeply troubling dichotomy between desperate attempts to reassert some kind of absolute vision of the whole course and purpose of history itself, and a despairing acknowledgement that to do so is increasingly impossible. This bleak assessment certainly applies in terms of Renaissance literary politics, such as when Shakespeare apparently presents the Tudor-Stuart royal succession as supernaturally ordained, but derives this hard-won historical 'truth' from the religiously suspect prophecies of *Richard III's* ghosts and *Macbeth's* witches, rather than from the direct authority of Heaven. Yet even when this Christian authority is directly depicted as well as invoked, as in *Doctor Faustus*, we have already seen that it is fundamentally unable – or even worse, unwilling – to save Faustus's damned soul from itself. Similarly, and despite his self-avowed overriding desire to '...justify the ways of God to Man...' (*Paradise Lost*, I, 26), even Milton cannot assert the ultimate apocalyptic triumph of Christian righteousness without acknowledging all the historical evil which must occur before then. (Indeed, no less an authority than the Archangel Michael freely admits that until the Second Coming itself occurs '... so shall the world go on, / To good malignant, to bad men benign, / Under her own weight groaning...' [Ibid. XII, 537-539]). Ultimately, therefore, the increasingly revolutionary rise of the bourgeoisie would combine with such religious uncertainty to create a world where the old rules of feudal power would appear increasingly obsolete, for all its hopes '... to restore itself by concentrating power in the hands of the sovereign...' (Moretti, 57). Instead, the usually bloody fate of the absolute ruler would mean that such a tyrant would himself increasingly become a monstrous symbol, or even prophetic warning, of both the inevitability of historical change, and of the difficulty – if not absolute impossibility – of trying to control this

process. For even when obviously monstrous signs and portents seemingly predict an imminent ‘... strange-disposed time...’ (*Julius Caesar* I, iii, 33), of extreme historical changes, even the most absolute ruler cannot escape the fact that ‘...men may construe things after their fashion / Clean from the purpose of the things themselves...’ (Ibid. 34-35). At the same time, religious ideas of the monster as a divine historical warning, as epitomised by Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, would be increasingly superceded by the more scientific historical perspectives pioneered by Francis Bacon, who ‘... looked to nature’s aberrations for the finest examples of her workmanship...’ (Park and Daston, 43). Yet science itself would be seen by some as increasingly monstrous, even as it provided the philosophical, industrial, and military power which the revolutionary bourgeoisie would readily exploit in its attempts to seize power, as the events of the French Revolution most dramatically proved. Because of this, in my next chapter I shall turn to analyse the most infamous monstrous text to come out of the historical aftermath of the French and Industrial Revolutions, namely Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. By doing so, I shall thereby examine the monstrous effects of revolutionary historical change on the plight of an archetypal scientific Monster who, even more than *Richard III*, sees himself as being truly ‘... determined to prove a villain...’ (*Richard III*, I, i, 30).

Notes to Chapter One.

¹. The importance of Richard's monstrosity as a pre-existing historical legend within these plays is assessed by Charnes, 3-11, 22-69. The ways in which history itself haunts Richard are explored by Holderness, 82-108. Meanwhile, the significance of such traditions in reading the character of the historical King Richard III is discussed by Ross, xxxiii-lxvii, 224-229. How the historical Richard himself, as much as his enemies, relied upon historical propaganda is shown by Hicks, 19-26, 55, 171-202.

². All citations from *Doctor Faustus* will be taken from the A-text unless otherwise noted, with both A- and B-texts of the play being taken in turn from Christopher Marlowe. *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*, ed. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. World's Classics. In any case, I have no desire to enter into any critical debate about the textual reliability of either A- or B-texts, and will indeed happily use whichever one will most effectively support any particular point that I wish to make on an individual basis. Nevertheless, those who wish to explore the *ideological* differences between the two texts should begin by consulting Bartels (who sees the A-text as concentrating more upon 'domestic' concerns than the more imperially-oriented B-text), 111-113, 138-142; Sinfield (who prefers the B-text for its sharper theological polarities), *Faultlines*, 234-237.

³. A thorough investigation of medieval depictions of core Christian ideas such as the Trinity, or even the figure of Christ Himself, in seemingly monstrous guises is made by Mills, 28-54.

⁴. For a fascinating historical account of the cultural usage of monstrosity to express widespread popular dissatisfaction with Republican radicalism, see Friedman, 41-56, 252-264.

CHAPTER TWO:

'I myself have been blasted in these hopes, yet another may

succeed': Revolutionary History and the Power of *Frankenstein's*

Monstrous 'New Man'.

Slave, I have reasoned with you, but you have proved yourself unworthy of my condescension. Remember that I have power; you believe yourself miserable, but I can make you so wretched that the light of day will be hateful to you. You are my creator, but I am your master - obey! (*Frankenstein*, 142).

Alas! why did they preserve so miserable and detested a life? It was surely that I might fulfil my destiny, which is now drawing to a close... Then the appearance of death was distant, although the wish was ever present in my thoughts; and I often sat for hours motionless and speechless, wishing for some mighty revolution that might bury me and my destroyer in its ruins... (Ibid. 153).

As we begin this chapter, the critical importance of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* within the overall history of literary monstrosity that I am examining in this thesis must first be made clear. This is an especially significant consideration given the unusual chronological position which Shelley's text occupies with regards to the structure of this thesis. For *Frankenstein* originally emerges over two centuries after the Shakespearean texts examined in my previous chapter were written, while being less than a century in advance of the monstrous texts of the *fin de siècle* which I shall examine in future chapters. It therefore appears at a key historical crossroads between Renaissance notions of political monstrosity, and those that would proliferate within the literature of the final years of the nineteenth century. We have, of course, already discovered political and historical connections between depictions of the monstrous in both *Frankenstein* and Shakespeare's plays, while analysing the latter in relation to contemporary fears of tyranny (whether focused upon the potential absolutism of English monarchs or upon the collective violence of the mob). For through doing so in

my previous chapter, we found that *Frankenstein* refers at least once to the Civil Wars which ravaged England less than thirty years after Shakespeare's death – far more explicitly, perhaps, than it alludes to the revolutionary turmoil of its own period. Further analysis of the critical significance of such links between Renaissance ideas of monstrosity and those of the early nineteenth century shall take place later in this chapter, with particular reference to Marie-Helene Huet's work upon contemporary theories closely linking the monstrous to the power of the diseased maternal imagination. Eventually, I shall also be able to draw several historical/political critical parallels between the depiction of monstrosity in *Frankenstein*, and those later found in the monstrous texts of the *fin de siècle*. These parallels, moreover, shall apply whether the latter texts in question focus upon imperialist anxieties about creating a future race of vengeful monsters through mistreatment of the colonial other, or upon the fear that contemporary society is powerless to withstand the power of a monstrous new order. For in the latter case, *Frankenstein's* social anxieties foreshadow those later associated with many of the monstrous social classes of the *fin de siècle*, such as women (for which, see Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in particular), or the proletariat, as is widely demonstrated in the monstrous texts of that period. Often, these anxieties are combined with a continuing focus upon the seemingly tyrannical power of monstrous individuals to further disrupt society, with the different aspects of monstrosity shown by Victor Frankenstein and his Monster finding various echoes in later, equally monstrous villains. Examples of the latter in the *fin-de-siècle* texts that I shall be discussing in future chapters include Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Professor Moriarty, and Robert Louis Stevenson's Mr. Hyde. This era's proliferation of monstrous literature would thus logically reflect contemporary fears that, somehow, '... in the field of culture as elsewhere, the results of bourgeois society and historical progress, long conceived as a

co-ordinated forward march of the human mind, were different from what had been expected...’ (Hobsbawm, *Empire*, 226). That such a disturbed historical vision can be traced back in these terms to the revolutionary social and political upheavals earlier reflected in Mary Shelley’s text, becomes obvious when we consider Victor Frankenstein’s explosive anguish following his bungled creation of the Monster. Here, a thoroughly traumatised Victor can only wonder at the remarkable ‘...bitterness of [my] disappointment; dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space were now become a hell to me; and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete...’ (*Frankenstein*, 59). That this monstrous genesis of a hitherto unknown, perhaps even unimaginable new historical being, species or world in the aftermath of a political/cultural revolution, in which science will play a vital role, should provoke such fearful hostility in its creative ancestors, whether individuals or wider societies, is therefore unsurprising. For as Jacques Derrida (whose insights into such historical and cultural ideas of monstrosity were discussed in my Introduction) explains, it is precisely such revolutionary texts or discourses which provoke both the most controversial and the most profound transformations of the very ‘... nature of social and cultural experience, historical experience. All of history has shown that each time an event has been produced, for example in philosophy and poetry, it took the form of the unacceptable, or even of the intolerable, of the incomprehensible, that is of a certain monstrosity...’ (387). It is this epochal function of *Frankenstein*, reflecting through its depictions of monstrous creations and events the historical anxieties of its own age of constant battle over the direction of widespread social, political, and cultural revolutions, that I shall proceed to examine in the remainder of this chapter.

Frankenstein, however, is nevertheless the only *literary* text of the revolutionary Romantic cultural era of the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries that I intend to

examine in detail during the bulk of this chapter. This is despite the fact it is far from being the only significant monstrous narrative to appear during this especially traumatic historical period. Indeed, further examples of such literary explorations of monstrosity abound during this era, such as can be found in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner', or in John Keats's 'Lamia' and 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'.¹

Moreover, these particular texts share many (though by no means all) of the key defining characteristics of broader Romantic-Gothic writing with *Frankenstein*, for as Fred Botting comments:

It is at the level of the individual that Romantic-Gothic writing takes its bearings. The individual in question stands at the edges of society and rarely finds a path back into the social fold... Instead, the consciousness, freedom, and imagination of the subject is valued. Usually male, the individual is outcast, part victim, part villain. Older Gothic figures and devices, overused to the point of cliché, are transformed into signs of aristocratic tyranny, leftovers from an unenlightened world. The disturbing and demonic villain, however, retains a darkly attractive, if ambivalent, allure as a defiant rebel against the constraints of social mores... Real evil is identified among embodiments of tyranny, corruption and prejudice, identified with certain, often aristocratic, figures and, more frequently, with institutions of power manifested in government hierarchies, social norms and religious superstition... Alienated from society and themselves, Romantic-Gothic heroes undergo the effects of this disillusion, doubting the nature of the powers that consume them, uncertain whether they originate internally or from external forces... (*Gothic*, 92-93).

Unlike *Frankenstein*, however, not only are the events of these poems set during the far distant historical past, they are also steeped in the seemingly archaic supernaturalism of these eras. This holds true whether their primary historical and /or religious context takes the shape of the ancient Greek paganism shown in 'Lamia', or of the medievalism of 'La Belle Dame'. Coleridge's depiction of the Ancient Mariner is equally applicable to such supernatural historical interpretations, appearing thus as a Catholic '...representative of the early age of discovery, [who] tries desperately to reconcile the monstrous world with his Christian background...' (Goetsch, 80). When

attempting to analyse such ideological factors in relation to *Frankenstein*, however, we are confronted not only with the text's essentially contemporary, if occasionally anachronistic, eighteenth century historical setting, but with a central chain of monstrous events which appear to be resolutely non-religious in their origins. For as Victor Frankenstein begins to describe his initial attempts to create artificial life to his rescuer, Robert Walton, he uses an unassailably secular tone and language to proclaim that his creation of the Monster is rooted in a gruelling, repellent, yet above all *practical* process of scientific materialism. It is unsurprising, therefore, that Victor should use such engrossing corporeal rhetoric, even as he insists that:

To examine the causes of life, we must first have recourse to death. ... In my education, my father had taken the greatest precautions that my mind should be impressed with no supernatural horrors. I do not ever remember to have trembled at a tale of superstition, or to have feared the apparition of a spirit. Darkness had no effect upon my fancy; and a churchyard was to me merely the receptacle of bodies deprived of life, which, from being the seat of beauty and strength, had become food for the worm. Now I was led to examine the cause and progress of this decay, and forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel-houses. My attention was fixed upon every object the most insupportable to the delicacy of the human feelings. ... Remember, I am not recording the vision of a madman. The sun does not more certainly shine in the heavens, than that which I now affirm is true. Some miracle might have produced it, yet the stages of discovery were distinct and probable. After days and nights of incredible fatigue... I became myself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter... (*Frankenstein*, 53-54).

Taking this passage alone into consideration, therefore, we can glean that in analysing this text we should not necessarily look to supernatural forces to provide explicit ideological explanations for the monstrosities produced within it. In itself, moreover, such a conclusion would at first appear to confirm *Frankenstein's* own ideological distance from the concerns of the monstrous texts that appeared during the Renaissance, or those since which used ideological frameworks derived from that era, and/or from the even more distant past. Mary Shelley's largely material/biological frame of

reference here is a far cry, for example, from what has been seen as Shakespeare's usage of monstrosity as less a matter of '... physiological prodigies and freaks than a way of defining moral aberrations... The monster is one who has so far transgressed the bounds of nature as to become a moral advertisement...' (Baldick, 11-12). Upon further investigation, however, such seemingly rigid ideological divisions between scientific materialism and the supernatural can themselves be shown as being inapplicable to some aspects of both *Frankenstein* and the other texts discussed above. Keats's 'Lamia', for example, depicts a richly fantastic world of gods and monstrous serpent-women, yet it proves impossible even here to overcome the power of an encroaching rational worldview. Ultimately, the poem can only lament in the face of the triumph of this '... dull catalogue of common things, [where] / Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings, / Conquer all mysteries by rule and line...' (Keats, 'Lamia', Part II, lines 233-235). By contrast, while *Frankenstein* has hitherto appeared, in the terms of this analysis, as being overwhelmingly dominated by the discourse of scientific materialism, it is nevertheless equally true that the voices of a religious/supernatural discourse are themselves not wholly silenced within this text, despite such apparent secular dominance. On the contrary, the importance of these occult voices in framing the parameters of its monstrous discourse is made apparent throughout, a tendency which becomes most obvious through the figure of the Monster himself, who is constantly depicted by Victor Frankenstein as an inhuman wretch steeped in demonic evil. Indeed, such a diabolical identification is later ironically reinforced by the importance of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and especially that poem's depiction of Satan, in the process of developing the Monster's own identity.

Of even greater significance, however, is the fact that a brief investigation of Victor's intellectual background will show that the lure of occult grandeur initially

outweighs any considerations of scientific progress in shaping his future career. For example, he emphatically stresses at one point that the possibilities of supernatural power found within alchemy excite him far more than any material benefits which he may accrue in the process of his experiments, insisting that to him:

Wealth was an inferior object; but what glory would attend the discovery, if I could banish disease from the human frame, and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death! ... Nor were these my only visions. The raising of ghosts or devils was a promise liberally accorded by my favourite authors, the fulfilment of which I most eagerly sought; and if my incantations were always unsuccessful, I attributed the failure rather to my own inexperience and mistake, than to a want of skill or fidelity in my instructors... (*Frankenstein*, 45).

Nevertheless, the divide which seemingly exists above between Victor's early fascination with the wonders of alchemy, and his later obsessive commitment to furthering the boundaries of scientific materialism, certainly should not hide the extent to which the key *political* objectives lying behind his work remain unchanged throughout. This is because Victor, despite his initial protests that he has no interest in either historical affairs of state or in the philosophical underpinnings of contemporary systems of government, is forever consumed by an overriding Promethean longing to seize power and glory by conquering the forces of nature instead. Ostensibly, of course, such desires often appear to be overshadowed by his claims that in doing so he may also benefit humanity as a whole. Yet it still remains true that Frankenstein hopes that, as a result of his discovery of the secrets behind the creation of artificial life, he will be rewarded with an unprecedented degree of power over the resulting '... new species [which] would bless me as its creator and source... No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs...' (*Frankenstein*, 55). The quotations at the beginning of this chapter, however, show how the Monster, whose very existence is rooted in this quest for power and glory on his creator's behalf, also constantly seeks to assert his own power and therefore overcome the wretched

circumstances which Frankenstein's efforts have condemned him to. Ironically, of course, the very power-lust that inspires this monstrous creation is itself ultimately responsible for rendering Frankenstein as utterly vulnerable as he appears to be throughout both passages. For it is the impatience that results from this obsessive desire to gain mastery over the process of producing artificial life as quickly as possible which leads to the Monster being given a physical body of unique size and strength, the result of which makes him almost impossible to subdue. Overall, therefore, in conducting the following historical analysis of the relationship between power and monstrosity within *Frankenstein*, it is vital that we remember that the novel can largely be seen as being an ideological as much as a physical battleground between Victor and the Monster. There is a battle for power and mastery not only over each other, but also over the direction in which their joint history will be preserved for future generations. For example, the Monster attempts to convince Frankenstein of the justice underlying his complaints of ill-treatment at the hands of humanity, as well as his own desire for a mate, by describing at length the miserable history of his monstrous life hitherto. Frankenstein himself, meanwhile, soon takes over from Walton in writing down the history that he has been telling the Captain, a process of narrative manipulation that the former justifies by explaining that he does not wish for a monstrously '...mutilated... [history to]... go down to posterity...' (*Frankenstein*, 175).

As both protagonists try to interpret their history of mutual injustice and loathing in a way that can justify their often equally monstrous actions both to themselves and each other, it is therefore appropriate that we should discuss the wider socio-historical aspects behind the power and monstrosity depicted within *Frankenstein*. To do so, we shall examine in detail the major revolutionary social upheavals that so often shook the period in which the novel was written. In many cases,

these took place in the context of the technological whirlwind of the Industrial Revolution, which had itself resulted in the creation of a new, potentially revolutionary social class of largely industrial workers. As such, this nascent proletariat shared a common role as social outcasts, and one that suggests a close link between their plight and that of the Monster, a connection which I shall examine fully later on in this chapter. Before that, however, in an effort to gain further insight into the social and historical processes which surround the Monster's creation, the importance of the alienated female as a catalyst for this and other monstrous acts of creation and/or destruction will also be analysed further. To what extent, for example, does the monstrous physical and psychological violence unleashed by Victor Frankenstein's attempt to create a new race of powerful, yet dependent creatures, which will be 'born' without the intervention of women, force us to view the novel's female figures as being potential monstrous outcasts themselves? For as we shall see, even the memory of an apparently innocent victim of disease such as Frankenstein's mother, Caroline, who moreover dies long before the Monster is created, becomes tainted with monstrosity as the result of Victor's traumatic obsession with conquering the boundaries of an often feminised nature. This is especially true of Elizabeth, Victor's '... more than sister...' (*Frankenstein*, 41) and intended bride, who also becomes yet another grisly casualty of the war between the powerful male figures of Victor and his Monster, thus sharing the horrific fate of others such as Justine and the aborted female monster.

Another key aspect of this latter section of my analysis of *Frankenstein* will be a discussion of the significance of Mary Shelley's own social status as an alienated female and monstrous creator, especially in relation to her political views concerning the revolutionary social changes which occurred during her lifetime. These shall then be examined further in relation to the contemporary political ideology of philosophical

radicalism that was so indelibly associated with the history of her parents, Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin, as well as that of her future husband, Percy Shelley. The former couple, in particular, were deeply involved with the radical discourse surrounding the forces of social and political change which were unleashed by the French Revolution, while their conservative enemies sought to discredit their views by highlighting the abhorrent and above all monstrous nature of the violence which engulfed the Revolution at every turn. In turn, however, monstrosity was widely used by both radical revolutionaries and the conservative supporters of France's *ancien regime* as a political propaganda weapon against their enemies, and as such played an important role in the contemporary British debate concerning the true history of events in the aftermath of 1789. How such ideological power-struggles over the historical and political significance of the French Revolution can be seen as reflecting those which we have already detailed above *vis-à-vis* the war between Monster and creator in *Frankenstein* will, therefore, be an appropriate subject with which to begin this section of my analysis. Indeed, from this perspective, it is highly significant that many should initially hail the French Revolution in terms of the same radical optimism with which Walton first describes his own voyage of discovery, both confident that nothing can now '... stop the determined heart and resolved will of man...' (*Frankenstein*, 32). For as Thomas Paine wrote in his *Rights of Man*, it was surely the case, given the new historical order which he felt emerging following the French upheavals of 1789 and onwards, that from '... what we now see, nothing of reform in the political world ought to be held improbable. It is an age of Revolutions, in which everything may be looked for...' (146).

Monstrous Political Discourse and Revolutionary History in Paine, Burke,

Napoleon and *Frankenstein*.



Every age and generation must be as free to act for itself, *in all cases*, as the ages and generations which preceded it. The vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave, is the most ridiculous and insolent of all tyrannies... It is the living, and not the dead, that are to be accommodated. When man ceases to be, his power and his wants cease with him; and having no longer any participation in the concerns of this world, he has no longer any authority in directing who shall be its governors, or how its governments shall be organized, or how administered. ... There was a time when kings disposed of their crowns by will upon their deathbeds, and consigned the people, like beasts of the field, to whatever successor they appointed. This is now so exploded as scarcely to be remembered, and so monstrous as hardly to be believed... (Paine, 41-42).

All these considerations leave no doubt on my mind, that if this monster of a constitution can continue, France will be wholly governed by the agitators in corporations, by societies in the towns formed of directors of assignats, and trustees for the sale of church lands, attornies, agents, money-jobbers, speculators, and adventurers, composing an ignoble oligarchy founded on the destruction of the crown, the church, the nobility, and the people. Here end all the deceitful dreams and visions of the equality and rights of men. In... this base oligarchy they are all absorbed, sunk, and lost for ever... (Burke, *Reflections*, 313).

While examining Paine's hopeful conclusions about the seemingly limitless possibilities for improving the lives of humanity which he held this new revolutionary age to have universally opened up, we must however remember that he wrote these words as part of a fiercely-fought political debate over its historical character and origins. In particular, contemporary observers such as Paine, or his conservative arch-rival, Edmund Burke, were concerned to determine the extent to which the apparent lack of historical precedent for such a sweeping revolution as that of 1789 truly warranted such optimistic proclamations of human freedom reborn.² For it was precisely this sense of revolutionary disrespect for organic political and social systems which had hitherto endured the turmoil of centuries which, according to those such as Burke, would damn the resulting artificial political and social structure to the monstrous fate reserved for such untested follies. Significantly, this awful fate, according to Burke, would echo that hitherto reserved for grave-robbers, or for others who would similarly defy the funereal

taboos of civilised ‘... history, either sacred or profane, to vex the sepulchre, and by their sorceries, to call up the prophetic dead...’ (cited in Sterrenburg, 154). Such sacrilegious conduct as is here ascribed to those behind the French Revolution is of course eerily close to that of Victor Frankenstein as he laboured to create the Monster, as has been shown above. It is tempting, therefore, to regard the vicious war which erupts between this blighted pair as the inevitable result of such a primal violation of the historical norms of human behaviour, in much the same way as Burke here regards the bloody birth of the French Revolution. These morbid parallels are reinforced further when we recall how Victor’s haste in creating his artificial Monster led to an unnecessary increase in the latter’s potential destructive power. For, in Burke’s view, the inexperienced political philosophers who sought to create a republican revolution in France displayed a similar lack of foresight as that shown disastrously here by this natural philosopher, revealing a presumptive foolishness that Burke sees as fatal to all their glorious illusions of a humanity reborn:

But, when all the good arts had fallen into ruin, they proceeded, as your assembly does, upon the equality of men, and with as little judgement, and as little care for those things which make a republic tolerable or durable. But in this, as well as in almost every instance, your new commonwealth is born, and bred, and fed, in those corruptions, which mark degenerated and worn out re-publics. Your child comes into the world with the symptoms of death... [they form] the character of its physiognomy, and the prognostic of its fate...
(*Reflections*, 299).

Paine, however, while not averse to adopting Burke’s theme of the pitfalls awaiting those whose monstrous abuse of the tools of political power nigh-on amount to violating the peace of the dead, prefers to dwell upon the unjust tortures which such monstrously depraved rulers inflict upon their living slaves. Evoking a sense of the horrible pain and degradation which such monstrous cruelty produces in its human victims, Paine proceeds to foreshadow *Frankenstein*’s depiction of the terrible suffering

which an equally prejudiced society also inflicts upon the Monster himself, and the violent revenge which inevitably follows against his oppressors.

Even more importantly in this context, by thus discussing the criminalised masses whose apparent lack of humanity was belied by their emotional responses to such ill-treatment, Paine explains how such seemingly monstrous beings should logically be treated otherwise given their wretched plight:

It may perhaps be said, that it signifies nothing to a man what is done to him after he is dead; but it signifies much to the living: it either tortures their feelings, or hardens their hearts; and in either case, it instructs them how to punish when power falls into their hands. ... Lay then the axe to the root, and teach governments humanity. It is their sanguinary punishments which corrupt mankind... It is over the lowest class of mankind that government by terror is intended to operate, and it is on them that it operates to the worst effect. They have sense enough to feel they are the objects aimed at; and they inflict in their turn the examples of terror they have been instructed to practice. ... But everything we see or hear offensive to our feelings, and derogatory to the human character, should lead to other reflections than those of reproach. Even the beings who commit them have some claim to our consideration... It is by distortedly exalting some men, that others are distortedly debased, till the whole is out of nature. A vast mass of mankind are degradedly thrown into the background of the human picture, to bring forward with greater glare, the puppet-show of state and aristocracy... (57-59).

Here, Paine gives us a sense of how, in an enlightened post-revolutionary world, the hitherto-criminalised masses would instead receive society's utmost compassion, an utopian ideal that, while closely resembling the Monster's hopeless dreams of social acceptance, differs radically from the fear and hatred actually meted out to him by mankind. Rather, in such a cruel social order as that into which the Monster is abandoned without any semblance of consent on his part, the only slim hope of escaping these abuses which remains open to him is to abjectly plead with his neglectful creator for some form of deliverance. His forlorn attempts to do so are nevertheless always coloured by a bitter knowledge of his own potential to punish any future

betrayals that he may suffer, whether coming at the hands of Victor Frankenstein

himself, or committed by others because of their monstrous prejudice against him:

How dare you sport thus with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind. If you will comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends. ... Oh, Frankenstein, be not equitable to every other, and trample upon me alone, to whom thy justice, and even thy clemency and affection, is most due. Remember, that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. ... But hear me. The guilty are allowed, by human laws, bloody as they are, to speak in their own defence before they are condemned... You accuse me of murder; and yet you would, with a satisfied conscience, destroy your own creature. Oh, praise the eternal justice of man! (*Frankenstein*, 90-91).

Elsewhere, Paine himself mocked Burke's impassioned attempt to render the political principles agreed following England's own Glorious Revolution of 1688 both quasi-sacred and essentially invulnerable to further revolutionary change, and used the metaphor of a '... political Adam, in whom all posterity are bound forever...' (Paine, 44), to similar ironic effect. It is important to note that in several instances, the debate between these authors on this point of constitutional history is yet again steeped in the language of powerful monstrosity, and in particular in relation to the violent retribution of unwillingly resurrected undead figures such as the Monster himself. That attempting to resurrect and/or give immortality to old political systems which contemporary historical change had seemingly rendered obsolete, especially when compared to the new revolutionary liberty apparently emerging in post-1789 French society, could appear both monstrously presumptuous and monstrously absurd, is clear. (Especially so, if we again recall Paine's radical historical assertion that every '... age and generation must be as free to act for itself, *in all cases*, as the ages and generations which preceded it. The vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave, is the most ridiculous and insolent of all tyrannies...' [42]). Ironically, meanwhile, and especially considering

his own apparent veneration for what he sees as the ruling ancestral wisdom behind the British political system, Burke himself sometimes characterises as potentially monstrous the very historical forces that shaped even such established political settlements as that which he defends in Britain. An important example of this occurs when Burke observes that:

In history a great volume is unrolled for our instruction, drawing the materials of future wisdom from the past errors and infirmities of mankind. It may, in the perversion, serve for a magazine... supplying the means of keeping alive, or reviving dissensions and animosities, and adding fuel to civil fury. History consists, for the greater part, of the miseries brought upon the world by... all the train of disorderly appetites, which shake the public... You would not cure the evil by resolving, that there should be no more monarchs, nor ministers of state, nor of the gospel... Wickedness is a little more inventive... The very same vice assumes a new body. The spirit transmigrates; and, far from losing its principle of life by the change of its appearance, it is renovated in its new organs with the fresh vigour of a juvenile activity. It walks abroad; it continues its ravages; whilst you are gibbeting the carcass, or demolishing the tomb... It is thus with all those, who attending only to the shell and husk of history, think they are waging war with intolerance, pride, and cruelty, whilst, under colour of abhorring the ill principles of antiquated parties, they are authorizing and feeding the same odious vices in different factions, and perhaps in worse... (*Reflections*, 247-249).

Even more surprising, perhaps, is the fact that upon this point, if perhaps on nothing else, Paine is in full agreement with Burke: that is, both men acknowledge the dangers posed by those who would seek to manipulate historical forces to their own sordid political advantage. (Although it is somewhat less surprising, and even more ironic, that Paine should essentially accuse Burke of doing precisely this, and moreover, of applying faulty historiography to his politically-biased analysis by not going back far enough into the ancient past. Burke therefore fails to note what for Paine are the egalitarian conditions under which humanity was first created, when ‘...Man was his high and only title, and a higher cannot be given him...’ [Paine, 65]).

Where Paine and Burke obviously differ on this issue, however, is in the social identity of those classes whom they see as being chiefly responsible for the monstrous results of such historical manipulations. Burke, for example, clearly perceives that the major beneficiaries of the monstrous misuse of history which he details above, and who would thus justify the savagery of their own politically-based violence, are the same villains whom he abhors for creating France's new revolutionary constitution. Even as Burke's overriding scorn for these revolutionary upstarts and their blood-soaked, mercenary new order is made ever more explicit, therefore, we recall his earlier dire prophecies as to the inevitably shameful social consequences for a civilisation ruled by such a monstrously misguided bourgeoisie. For this bourgeois dominance would, in Burke's eyes, apparently create an '...ignoble oligarchy founded on the destruction of the crown, the nobility, and the people... In... this base oligarchy they are all absorbed, sunk, and lost forever...' (*Reflections*, 313). We have also already seen, however, how by contrast Paine regards the sordid oppression and violence of pre-revolutionary France, and especially Britain, as characterising an unacceptably tyrannical form of society, and being itself responsible for the increasing degradation of these societies' often-criminalised lower orders. Moreover, we have learnt that those whom he deemed chiefly responsible for such vicious cruelty, which in turn doomed its impoverished victims to a bleakly monstrous existence, were the aristocratic rulers of these societies. Through their collective and systematic abuse of the rights of even their fellow aristocrats, and especially their familial rivals for power, this monstrous governing class appeared to Paine's eyes to be far more unnatural and inhuman in their callous behaviour than the poor could ever be. This was particularly so in the case of the aristocratic system of inheriting property through primogeniture (i.e., that the entire estate should be passed down exclusively from the father to his eldest son), for as such:

The [monstrous] nature and... character of aristocracy shows itself to us in this law. It is a law against every law of nature, and Nature herself calls for its destruction. Establish family justice, and aristocracy falls. By the aristocratical law of primogenitureship, in a family of six children, five are exposed. Aristocracy has never more than *one* child. The rest are begotten to be devoured. They are thrown to the cannibal for prey, and the natural parent prepares the unnatural repast. ... As everything which is out of nature in man, affects, more or less, the interest of society, so does this. All the children which the aristocracy disowns... are, in general, cast like orphans on a parish, to be provided for by the public, but at a greater charge. ... To restore, therefore, parents to their children, and children to their parents – relations to each other, and man to society – and to exterminate the monster Aristocracy, root and branch – the French constitution has destroyed the law of PRIMOGENITURESHP. Here then lies the monster, and Mr. Burke, if he pleases, may write its epitaph. ... But whether we view it before or behind, or sideways, or any way else, domestically or publicly, it is still a monster... (Paine, 82-83).

In this analysis, therefore, we have done far more than merely establishing the ideological importance of both history and monstrosity in forming the powerful rhetorical discourse upon which both Burke and Paine relied in making their wider political case. We have also demonstrated that in this battle to persuade public opinion in Britain and elsewhere of the righteousness of their respective assessments of the French Revolution, both authors were careful to taint the social classes which were their ideological enemies with the full social and political stigma of monstrosity. This was the case even where these authors had, as with Paine in relation to the criminalised lower orders, called for the compassionate treatment of other social classes that had previously been stigmatised in this way. What hope, therefore, can the Monster have to be treated with justice and compassion, when even radically liberal revolutionaries, including Paine himself, obviously still regard monstrosity itself as a derogatory political label with which to besmirch their enemies? Indeed, even if he could achieve such apparent social acceptance, could the Monster ever actually trust such promises should they prove inconvenient to the wider social priorities of those who agree such

bargains with him, but who themselves still remain in a position of intellectual or physical power over him?

That there are few grounds for optimism on the Monster's behalf on such matters is clearly illustrated by the cruelly provisional nature of his acceptance by the De Lacey patriarch, and of the agreement reached between Victor Frankenstein and himself concerning the creation of his longed-for monstrous female companion. The transitory nature of such agreements between dominant powers and their monstrous social others on a wider political scale during the nineteenth century can also be clearly seen, particularly when such developments manifested themselves upon a ruthless imperial scene. One particularly tragic example of this contemporary imperial tendency towards treating the 'monstrous' colonial other with contemptuous ill-faith can be found in the constant breaking of peace treaties between the USA and the doomed Native Americans which occurred throughout the nineteenth century, with near-genocidal consequences. Further analysis of this usage of monstrosity in imperialist political discourses will have to wait for future chapters, however, with particular reference to H. G. Wells's *War of the Worlds*. For now, I shall only stress the potential critical importance of Shelley's Monster in consolidating the nineteenth-century literary tradition of the monstrous colonial other. This implicit racial aspect of the mistreatment of the Monster is made apparent by his resolutely non-European physique as noted both by Walton upon first encountering him, and through his creator's nightmarish horror at his ugly '... yellow skin [which] scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath...' (*Frankenstein*, 58).³ Another critical topic derived from the debate between Paine and Burke, but which shall also be discussed further on in this chapter is the importance of Victor Frankenstein's own ambiguous social status in determining how far he, too, is tainted with the stigma of political monstrosity. One example of the

critical usage of this latter question can be found in the work of Anca Vlasopolos, who uses the ideas that Paine introduced concerning the inhuman lengths to which the monstrous aristocracy will go in sacrificing their 'natural' familial obligations to maintaining their grip on power. For as she puts it, the social fear and conflict resulting from class selection through aristocratic inbreeding '... in the end causes the collapse of the house of Frankenstein... The principal dynamics of Victor Frankenstein's actions involves incest-avoidance; his fear leads to the birth of the monster and ultimately to the demise of almost all family members and friends...' (Vlasopolos, 125). Before returning to such questions, however, we shall continue to examine the socio-political importance of the usage of monstrous imagery in relation to both the French Revolution and *Frankenstein*, concentrating in particular upon the monstrous depictions of the age's ultimate revolutionary tyrant, namely the 'Corsican ogre' himself, Napoleon Bonaparte.⁴

Monstrous Revolutionary Violence and Napoleonic Power in *Frankenstein*.

Everything about Napoleon generates its own paradox... On the one hand, he can be seen as the most titanic figure in the long line of 'Caesarism' that disfigures French history, beginning perhaps with Louis XIV and stretching... [to] De Gaulle. On the other, can be viewed as a mere plaything of historical inevitability, a puppet of ineluctable social and economic forces... He was an astonishing phenomenon, a man often compared to Stalin and Hitler but one who, unlike them, had no party machine or mass movement to back him... He detested the French Revolution but was in many ways the greatest revolutionary voluntarist of them all... The deepest paradox about Napoleon was that this deeply superstitious man, who professed an almost Oriental belief in Fate, again and again tried to prove that nothing is written. Dreaming the impossible dream, he attempted to fulfil it, and for a time the impossible was granted him... When he spoke scornfully of a 'nation of shopkeepers', Napoleon was really expressing his contempt for all who live by the laws of reality and the art of the possible. The traditional hero, like Hercules, harrows Hell, as Napoleon did in Russia in 1812. And Prometheus himself, who gave Man fire, was chained forever to a rock, where a vulture gnawed unceasingly at his entrails. Chained to a rock on St. Helena, Napoleon became the sacrificial victim who in French cultural mythology more

than any other man represents the nation and *la gloire*... (McLynn, 667-668).

Given the Promethean qualities which McLynn identifies here as fundamental psychological forces behind Napoleon's conquests, it is unsurprising that I should attempt to see many similarities between his historical predicament and that of another 'modern Prometheus', namely Victor Frankenstein himself. Nevertheless, the sheer brute force at Napoleon's command would also connect him with the superhumanly powerful – and potentially destructive – figure of the Monster, who, when enraged, declares himself perfectly capable of tearing his victims '... limb from limb, as the lion rends the antelope...' (*Frankenstein*, 117). Even before the rise of Napoleon, of course, Burke had already used the idea that the monstrous destiny of the revolutionary French nation, which had already shed so much blood in its pursuit of liberty, equality and fraternity, would eventually fall under the control of such military dictators as he. Moreover, other contemporary observers had already commented upon the potentially destructive effects of the anarchic indiscipline which radical revolutionary fervour had already unleashed within the French army. Indeed, the Comte de la Tour du Pin - the head of the National Assembly's military committee during the Revolution's early years – saw fit to remark that:

These evils are great... [but] they are not the worst consequences which may be produced by such military insurrections. Sooner or later they may menace the nation itself. The nature of things requires, that the army should never act but as an instrument. The moment that, erecting itself into a deliberative body, it shall act according to its own resolutions, the government, be it what it may, will immediately degenerate into a military democracy; a species of political monster, which has always ended by devouring those who have produced it... (Cited in Burke, *Reflections*, 332-333).

For such conservative observers as Burke, as we have already seen, the whole French Revolution could be thus described in terms of its monstrous predilection towards bloodthirsty violence, a symptom of its unhallowed power which also appears to

characterise the monstrous potential of Frankenstein's creation, again in ways discussed earlier. This murderous aspect of Shelley's treatment of monstrosity is made clear in the description that Victor gives us of the native reports which he hears as he draws ever nearer to what he believes to be his final apocalyptic battle with the Monster. The Arctic regions through which Victor hurtles impatiently abound with horrified tales of an inhuman marauder '... armed with a gun and many pistols; putting to flight the inhabitants... through fear of his terrific appearance...' (*Frankenstein*, 172). As the novel's Ragnarok seemingly approaches, therefore, we must remember that a great deal of potentially fearsome firepower is now in the hands of a monster who was already, as we have seen, extremely formidable as a physical opponent. Of course, a despairing Victor remains all too aware of all this, having already haplessly acknowledged that no ordinary mortal, after all, could possibly '... arrest a creature capable of scaling the overhanging sides of Mount Salève...' (*Frankenstein*, 73). The bitter threats of violence which throughout characterise the relationship between the Monster and its creator therefore resemble the deep hatred and unease which also lay beneath the hostilities between revolutionary and/or Napoleonic France and its monarchical neighbours. What began in both cases as an attempt to create an entirely new form of humanity, free of the social and historical weaknesses, whether philosophical or physical, which had bedevilled the human species for millennia, ultimately degenerates into a uniquely monstrous form of warfare.⁵

The potentially monstrous power of this new form of revolutionary warfare would become clear from the very first major victory gained by the radicalised forces of the equally soon-to-be new-born French republic. Here, invading Prussian troops were swept away by the nationalistic fury of the vast revolutionary army that confronted them at Valmy in September 1792. In the aftermath of this catastrophe, the surviving

invaders were told by Wolfgang Goethe (who had accompanied them in anticipation of a Prussian walkover), that a ‘...new epoch in the history of the world has begun, and you can boast you were present at its birth...’ (cited in Doyle, 193). What Goethe, whose writings also play a significant role in the emotional education of Shelley’s Monster, had predicted soon became apparent to the horrified military leaders of France’s enemies, whose long experience of the formal rules and tactics of *ancien regime* warfare was utterly overwhelmed by the brutal visions

Equally suggestive of the future [which] were the tactics deployed by the young Republic’s monster armies... The French could overwhelm their enemies with human waves: and although commanders facing them were at first appalled by their disregard for human life, they soon learned how effective it was. Citizen soldiers felt no restraints, particularly when defending their homeland... They reintroduced into warfare a ferocity and lack of restraint unknown, in western Europe at least, for well over a century... (Doyle, *French Revolution*, 206).

A graphic description of the sheer mental chaos of the upheavals which result from another, similarly radical revolution in scientific techniques (albeit, in this case, biochemical rather than military) can be found in Victor Frankenstein’s description of the galvanising effect of Waldman’s speech upon his vulnerable mind. For as his professor extols the wondrous possibilities for mankind unleashed by such advances, the lure of power that this holds out for Victor overwhelms all his past distaste for a seemingly impoverished intellectual field, so that even though:

I felt as if my soul were grappling with a palpable enemy; one by one the various keys were touched which formed the mechanism of my being... So much has been done, exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein, - more, far more, will I achieve: treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation. ... My internal being was in a state of insurrection and turmoil; I felt that order would thence arise, but I had no power to produce it... (*Frankenstein*, 51).

Just as the unprecedented power inherent in Frankenstein’s Monster is therefore anticipated, in fact, by that of the revolutionary mental forces which grip his creator

until the very moment of the latter's coming to life, so too with the potential military power of the French Revolution.

That the various revolutionary factions could call upon their own popular armed forces, especially in Paris, which were eager to defend the gains they had made, or were expecting to make, from the new political order, was thus apparent even as the wars against the nation's monarchical neighbours progressed. That these popular armed forces in turn could therefore enforce their own political will upon their erstwhile revolutionary masters by the same means, i.e., through brute military power, becomes clear from Joseph Fouché's account of the radical Parisian *sans-culottes*'s role in expelling their political enemies from power in June 1793. Moreover, like many other examples of the widespread political propaganda of the age, Fouché's writings use monstrous imagery to display the fearful power which the French Revolution could unleash against its enemies. For example, he uses the language of monstrosity to justify the violent actions of the fanatical revolutionary *sans-culotte* supporters of the equally radical Jacobins, who rallied them in order to expel the comparatively moderate Girondins from the government of France. In doing so, Fouché claims to describe how:

The excess of oppression broke through the restraints on the people's indignation. A terrible cry made itself heard in the midst of this great city. The tocsin and the cannon of alarm awakened their patriotism, announcing that liberty was in danger, that there wasn't a moment to spare. Suddenly the forty-eight sections armed themselves and were transformed into an army. This formidable colossus is standing, he marches, he advances, he moves like Hercules, traversing the Republic to exterminate this ferocious crusade that swore death to the people...

(Cited in Mellor, 83).

This monstrous official propaganda image of the powerful revolutionary masses united as one colossal national army against their enemies, both at home and abroad, also became an example, however, of the ideological battle raging between France's various socio-political classes for control of post-revolutionary society's cultural history. Much

of this French cultural revolution was designed to provide the selfsame masses with a politically suitable ideological framework to replace what many revolutionaries saw as the despised cadaver of feudal superstition which was the Catholic Church. Indeed, during 1793, the brief radical outburst of the dechristianisation movement, begun by Fouché himself, was itself beginning, in at least one Parisian section, with a ceremony in which local churches were described as monstrous ‘... lairs frequented by ravenous animals which devour the people’s daily bread...’ (cited in Lewis, 45). Moreover, even revolutionary leaders who did not support the atheistic excesses of this movement, such as the deist Maximilien Robespierre himself, would have agreed with the idea that:

The top priority for the political and cultural elite of the French Revolution was the creation of ‘*l’homme nouveau*’, a new Adam (Eve would follow him) re-housed in a secularised, rationalised Garden of Eden. Rousseau had created the prototype with his *Emile*... The new world which was to be inhabited by the new man would now begin with the birth of the Republic, not with the birth of Christ. ‘Revolutionary Man’ would be secularised from birth; that event, like his marriage and death, would henceforth be recorded, in revolutionary days, months, and years, in the registers of the town hall, not in the Gregorian divisions of time employed in his parish church... (Lewis, 93).

The ‘new man’ created by Victor Frankenstein, of course, experiences suffering that would disrupt even such a post-revolutionary temporal order: his monstrous birth is singularly traumatic and cruel, his marriage is aborted before his bride can even be ‘born’, and his death is unrecorded as anything other than a prophecy. Indeed, the early life of the Monster in a forest landscape which constantly leads him to pain and, even worse, knowledge of his own monstrosity could be used to dispute Rousseauistic ideas that a reborn humanity should rid itself of a corrupted civilisation and return to a state of Nature. For the Monster’s various misfortunes while living in ‘... what was thought to be the most natural state for man points up its unnaturalness – the world of Nature is hostile to a being that doesn’t fit. ... Clearly, Rousseau’s state of Nature is, for the Monster, a Miltonic place of infernal torment...’ (Tropp, 71-72).

While the Monster's natural despair is thus fittingly reinforced by his later diabolical reading of *Paradise Lost*, his most traumatic literary discovery nevertheless occurs when he finds his true material history in the pages of Victor's journal. If anything, the Monster's pain and self-disgust has increased after reading his creator's account of everything '... which bears reference to my accursed origin... in language which painted your own horrors, and rendered mine indelible...' (*Frankenstein*, 113). Ironically, we have already seen how Victor himself, when confronted with the reality that his dreams of alchemical power derived from ancient texts were practically ineffective, initially displayed a profound contempt for what he saw as the debased mundanities into which scientific thought had since fallen. While following what he believed to be the glorious visions of those archaic days of alchemical power, he therefore willingly acknowledged that:

... I had retrod the steps of knowledge along the paths of time, and exchanged the discoveries of recent enquirers for the dreams of forgotten alchymists (*sic*). Besides, I had a contempt for the uses of modern natural philosophy. It was very different, when the masters of the science sought immortality and power; such views, although futile, were grand: but now the scene was changed. The ambition of the enquirer seemed to limit to the annihilation of those visions on which my interest in science was chiefly founded. I was required to exchange chimeras of boundless grandeur for realities of little worth... (*Frankenstein*, 50).

Similarly, what began in post-1789 France as a revolutionary cultural attempt to regenerate humanity, and so cast off centuries-old ideologies of socially crippling, servile deference to both the Church and the aristocratic/royalist state, eventually becomes merely another cynical attempt to indoctrinate the masses with an elite's socio-political dogma. An example of this can be found in the various propaganda uses to which this new political and cultural elite put the monstrous image of a colossal revolutionary Hercules already discussed above. For one thing, their classically-derived Herculean images were a far less popular revolutionary symbol than those which

appealed more directly to proletarian concerns, such as the creations of the socially radical Jacques-René Hébert. Meanwhile, as the Revolution progressed to what the elite hoped would be a more socially stable political order after the fall of Robespierre's Jacobins and the end of the Terror, a new order arose which would deliberately exclude mass popular radicalism from power. In this context, even the Herculean images themselves became less threatening, with classical grandeur replacing the rough-edged popular monstrosity described by Fouché. This process of monstrous emasculation certainly parallels the future usage of Frankenstein's Monster in political propaganda in the decades following the novel's publication. Following George Canning's notorious speech against emancipating Britain's West Indian slaves in the House of Commons in 1824, Shelley's monstrous creation was frequently '... used by nervous liberal statesmen to delay reform... [meanwhile] the monster (and worse, the slave) was being transformed by such rhetoric into a mindless brute...' (Baldick, 60).

Elsewhere, the usage of *Frankenstein* as a powerful source of monstrous propaganda often took the form of political cartoons warning of the risks of creating monstrous revolutionary classes through even the slightest hint of political reform. As Lee Sterrenberg notes, such conservative appropriations of the image of the Monster recurred during British political crises throughout the nineteenth century, whether over the Reform Bill of the 1830s, 1840s Chartism, or the continual difficulties faced in Ireland during the 1880s. It is interesting to note, however, that such contemporary propaganda efforts were not restricted to using Shelley's Monster in this way, for, among other political targets, they also show '... a persistent refusal to represent the figure of Napoleon in ordinary human scale. At times [he is] the eloquent Colossus of Europe whose imperial designs... frighten the English, at others a small, cocky Frenchman whose oversized cocked hat is the sign of an aggressive, imperialist

ambition and ego...’ (Kelley, 354). Such monstrous dichotomies in the imagery of Napoleon also reflect the divisions drawn by Mary Shelley between the character and fates of Victor Frankenstein and his Monster. For while there is a growing contrast within *Frankenstein* between Promethean revolutionaries’s gloriously sublime dreams of power, and the suffering which these monstrous visions create, both in themselves and in others, we find that these dichotomies are also reflected in the character of the notorious ‘Corsican ogre’ himself. Indeed, even the persecution and self-martyrdom which lies behind the Monster’s eventual Arctic exile both anticipates and reverses the historical circumstances of Napoleon’s final banishment to the murderous tropics. Given these uncanny dichotomous parallels between Napoleon’s history and that of both Victor and the Monster, it is therefore highly appropriate that one of Napoleon’s modern biographers, Frank McLynn, states that the key to Bonaparte’s historical greatness lay in his ‘... Promethean ambitions and abilities...’ (667). Moreover, and despite McLynn’s earlier remarks on Napoleon’s apparent hatred for the French Revolution, it is clearly the case that his almost unparalleled political/military genius should not obscure his deep debt to the Revolution for the unprecedented opportunities that it had given him to exploit these powerful abilities. If anything, Napoleon’s initial seizure of power in 1799, for all that it appeared to be directed against the ruling revolutionary elite, nevertheless signalled the extent to which he was the French Revolution’s ultimate monstrous political creation. His triumph heralded a government which, although seemingly prepared to eschew some revolutionary principles through acts such as officially reconciling with the Catholic Church during 1801-1802, was always careful to preserve the core socio-political/economic gains of:

... The middle bourgeoisie, the well-to-do peasants and a few business-men... those who profited most from the Revolution. Thanks to the money at their disposal in 1789, many of them were able to buy national property and build up large landed fortunes at a

time when stock was collapsing, and then, through loans, they had been able to gain the goodwill of the peasants whose land was divided up. The only way in which the Revolution could be brought to a close was through an alliance of the bourgeoisie and the peasantry around one man or one principle. The man was found: Bonaparte. The principle was already known: property. It behoved Bonaparte to maintain the advantages already acquired, by fixing a point of no return to the past and by restraining the forward march of the Revolution. For, as has often been pointed out, the effect of the Revolution on the bourgeoisie and the peasants was to make the poor poorer and the rich richer. The Fourth Estate, the rural and urban proletariat had to be contained... (Tulard, 350-351).

The importance of such contemporary issues of social class in understanding the significance of *Frankenstein* for a British society trying to master both a post-revolutionary and post-Napoleonic new world order will be discussed later in this chapter. Before doing so, however, we must briefly consider the importance of Mary Shelley herself as a monstrous creator, and the significance of this in understanding the role of the novel's own, largely female victims of the apocalyptic war between Victor and his Monster. In doing so, I shall demonstrate how the proliferation of such female victims of monstrosity is a direct result of the constant social injustice meted out to the Monster himself, as he insists that much of the guilt for his own monstrous fate lies with the gender whose inevitable fear and hatred of his monstrous body ensures his unhappiness. For as he describes his framing of Justine for little William Frankenstein's murder, the Monster exclaims that since the monstrous act was '... committed because I am for ever robbed of all that she could give me, she shall atone. The crime had its source in her: be hers the punishment...' (*Frankenstein*, 124).

Creating Female Monstrosity in *Frankenstein*.

You know that as a female I am particularly attached to... [my daughter]... I feel more than a mother's fondness and anxiety, when I reflect on the dependent and oppressed state of her sex. I dread lest she should be forced to sacrifice her heart to her principles, or her principles to her heart. With trembling hand I shall cultivate sensibility, and cherish delicacy of sentiment, lest, whilst I lend fresh blushes to the rose, I sharpen the thorns that will wound the breast I

would fain guard – I dread to unfold her mind, lest it should render her unfit for the world she is to inhabit – Hapless woman! what a fate is thine! (Wollstonecraft, 97).

As we examine the Monster's impassioned statements regarding the natural world – usually demonstrating either profound appreciation of its beauty, or lamenting despair at the pain which he is doomed to suffer at the hands of both nature and human society – we find disturbing echoes of another, equally notorious contemporary monster. In this case, however, the political 'monster' is unquestionably female, namely Mary Shelley's own mother, Mary Wollstonecraft. Because of her outspoken support for both the aims of the French Revolution, and for the rights of women, Wollstonecraft, along with her equally radical partner and later husband, William Godwin, had for years been the subject of vicious attacks from conservative political writers, in a discourse often composed of the language of political monstrosity. In one example of such writing in the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, those who were inspired by the Godwins' revolutionary social and political principles were, in fact, described as being '... the spawn of the monster...' (cited in Sterrenburg, 147). Yet in her own words, such as in her account of *A Short Residence in Sweden*, we have already seen that Wollstonecraft appeared to be far from this image of a monstrous mother. Indeed, her proto-feminist principles appear rather to intensify her attempts to care for her daughter, and so we must remember instead her claims to feel '...more than a mother's fondness and anxiety, when I reflect on the dependent and oppressed state of her sex...' (Wollstonecraft, 97). Her fears that an educated female child is doomed to suffer in a cruel world which despises her kind must surely remind us of the Monster's despair of ever being treated kindly at the hands of a human race which fears and hates monsters such as himself. (In both cases, after all, the disenfranchised individual's mind is unheard and ignored by others, while the outward visual beauty or ugliness of the body almost invariably overrides everything else in

determining their fate). Such feelings of parental inadequacy are only intensified, however, when we recall that the Monster is furthermore to be virtually abandoned by his creator, for the child over whom Wollstonecraft expresses these anxieties is *not* the future Mary Shelley, but rather the daughter of an earlier lover, one Gilbert Imlay. Tragically, Wollstonecraft would perish after giving birth to Mary Shelley, a family catastrophe which was at least in part due to the medical incompetence of a male doctor. Indeed, he was one of a recent breed of male midwives who were themselves often described by contemporary opponents as monsters who breached natural boundaries of gender and morality, and in Britain as followers of a distinctly French form of perverted medical practice.⁶

While I do not intend to go into extended discussion of the impact of this horrendous event on Mary Shelley, it would be remiss of me not to consider perhaps the most obvious linkage between it and the fear of female monstrosity which dogs Victor Frankenstein throughout the novel, and which often terrifies him even more than the reality of his own monstrous *male* creation. Immediately after the Monster first shows signs of life, a bitterly disappointed Victor falls into fitful dreams, in which:

I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her; but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form... I started from my sleep with horror... when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch – the miserable monster whom I had created... (*Frankenstein*, 58).

At one stroke, the figures of several monsters unite into one terrifying apparition, as a potentially incestuous sister/wife transforms into a decaying maternal corpse, and finally becomes an all-too-real hideous male figure, which is both alive and dead at

the same time. On one level, this monstrous female image must surely hark back to Mary Wollstonecraft's own written anxieties about death and the resulting human decay, and particularly about monstrous attempts to resurrect the dead, or at least to preserve them through embalming, which she describes thus:

It is treason against humanity, thus to lift up the awful veil which would fain hide its weakness... [Nothing] is so ugly as the human form when deprived of life, and thus dried into stone, merely to preserve the most disgusting image of death... Life, what art thou? Where goes this breath? this *I*, so much alive? In what element will it mix, giving or receiving fresh energy? – What will break the enchantment of animation? – For worlds, I would not see a form I loved – embalmed in my heart – thus sacrilegiously handled! Pugh! My stomach turns. – Is this all the distinction of the rich in the grave? – They had better quietly allow the scythe of equality to mow them down with the common mass, than struggle to become a monument of the instability of human greatness...
(Wollstonecraft, 109).

Yet on the other hand, Victor's nightmare is also the symptom of another aspect of the fear of potential female monstrosity which pervades the novel, namely that they would allow the independent creation of a future race of world-conquering monsters. Huet has described how Victor's anxieties over his own mishandled mourning of his mother's death, coupled with the knowledge that the future marriage expected to occur between Elisabeth and himself is not only quasi-incestuous, but would mean a union with the woman whose own illness was ultimately responsible for that death. These monstrous anxieties and others therefore mark out *Frankenstein* as '... a tale of disrupted filiation, a story grounded in the belief that it is sacrilegious to give birth when death surrounds us...' (Huet, 142). Yet while this is precisely what Victor does, as we have seen, in creating his own Monster, by the time that he is being forced to create a monstrous female companion for this first misshapen male creation, we find that he has become fully aware, as he could not before, of the sheer disgusting horror which producing such monstrous beings entails. As a result, his impulsive decision to destroy the half-

completed monstrous female is caused by monstrous anxieties of many kinds, all of which involve, in one sense or another, a fear that those who are in some way like him, whether on the level of gender, social class, or even species, would otherwise lose any degree of socio-political control which they may already possess over their world and its future historical direction. All this, when combined with the uncanny similarity between this scene of monstrous creation and that which had disastrously occurred in Ingolstadt, makes it virtually inevitable that this act of monstrous abortion should occur, for as Victor makes clear:

I was now about to form another being, of whose dispositions I was alike ignorant; she might become ten thousand times more malignant than her mate, and delight, for her own sake, in murder and wretchedness. He had sworn to quit the neighbourhood of man... but she had not, and she, who in all probability was to become a thinking and reasoning animal, might refuse to comply with a compact made before her creation. They might even hate each other... Even if they were to leave Europe... yet one of the first results of those sympathies for which the daemon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated on the earth, who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror. Had I a right, for my own benefit, to inflict this curse upon everlasting generations? ... I trembled, and my heart failed within me; when, on looking up, I saw, by the light of the moon, the daemon at the casement... As I looked on him, his countenance expressed the utmost extent of malice and treachery. I thought with a sensation of madness on my promise of creating another like to him, and trembling with passion, tore to pieces the thing on which I was engaged. The wretch saw me destroy the creature on whose future existence he depended for happiness, and, with a howl of devilish despair and revenge, withdrew... (*Frankenstein*, 140-141).

This act of male aggression against the loss of control which the monstrous female represents, however, merely makes irrevocable the war between Victor and his first Monster, in which females will often not only become victims of the monstrous violence thus unleashed, but will become monsters themselves, also. The results of this destructive process therefore ensures the spread of monstrosity throughout Victor's native society, as well as over much of the rest of the globe during his final pursuit of

the monster. Elisabeth, herself a monstrous victim of both the system of aristocratic incest described above by Paine, and later of the Monster's ultimate act of violent revenge upon Victor, is the one who feels such effects of this monstrous war most vividly. Already, the impact of first the transformation of the innocent Justine into a judicial monster over William's murder, coupled with her later execution, has led Elisabeth to perceive her world in monstrous ways. Evil and injustice have thus become, not remote or imaginary as before, but horribly real to her, for '...now misery has come home, and men appear to me as monsters thirsting for each others blood...' (*Frankenstein*, 85). In such a monstrous world, the female vulnerability which Wollstonecraft had feared is sickeningly apparent, as even women who should, like the monstrous Bride, by rights become as powerful as human men, if not more so, are destroyed by a male society which fears the emergence of female monsters as a threat to their own power. Instead, while powerful male figures do battle over the future usage of the power which they have themselves usurped from a feminised natural world, even seemingly independent human females, such as Safie, must run in fear from the monstrous violence which such monstrous males control.

All this is in sharp contrast to the seemingly harmonious picture of the domestic sphere of Western society, itself ostensibly under female control, which Elisabeth paints elsewhere in a letter to Victor, wherein:

Little alteration, except the growth of our dear children, has taken place since you left us. The blue lake, and snow-clad mountains, they never change; – and I think our placid home, and our contented hearts are regulated by the same immutable laws. My trifling occupations take up my time and amuse me, and I am rewarded for any exertions by seeing none but happy, kind faces around me. Since you left us, but one change has taken place in our little household. ... The republican institutions of our country have produced simpler and happier manners than those which prevail in the great monarchies that surround it. Hence there is less distinction between the several classes of its inhabitants; and the lower orders, being neither so poor nor so despised, their manners are more refined and moral. A servant in Geneva does not

mean the same thing as a servant in France and England. Justine, thus received in our family, learned the duties of a servant; a condition which, in our fortunate country, does not include the idea of ignorance, and a sacrifice of the dignity of a human being... (*Frankenstein*, 63-64).

Interestingly, this depiction of a social world that seems invulnerable to historical change itself is not only a grossly exaggerated vision of female happiness in a world wherein they are in fact helpless prey for the violence of male monsters. In fact, it also paints a false image of the way in which questions of social class are dealt with in the novel. It may be the case that on some level, as Franco Moretti suggests, *Frankenstein* is an attempt to project a world in which the increasing social antagonisms between capital and labour which bedevil Shelley's contemporaries are relegated to being truly monstrous, but unrepeatable, historical experiments. This, for him, explains the lack of explicit industrial development within the novel, for despite the mysterious methods used to create the Monster, there are no factories in existence. Otherwise, they would provide a way to utilise the monstrous race which in Victor's worst nightmares would have resulted from giving the Monster a female companion, and so ensure their continued expansion into a future which they would eventually control. According to Moretti, therefore, by excluding the factories thus '... to exorcise the proletariat, Mary Shelley, with absolute logical consistency, erases capital from her picture also. In other words, she erases history...' (90). Yet even Moretti acknowledges elsewhere that, while the capitalist/proletarian conflict may appear to have been erased from the book with the apparent deaths of its protagonists, the novel is nevertheless through them already steeped throughout in the social conditions which themselves create this conflict. In particular, the Monster, through his physical signs of monstrous difference from the rest of humanity, not only reminds us of how apparent racial differences were often perceived in terms of the monstrous colonial other, as demonstrated earlier. Rather, his alienated physique

also recalls the new ways in which differences of social class were inscribed on the body after the demise of feudal mechanisms of social control, as Moretti himself describes:

Even before he begins to live, this new being is already monstrous, already a race apart. He must be so, he is made to be so: he is created, but on these conditions. There is here a clear lament for the feudal sumptuary laws which, by imposing a particular style of dress on each social rank, allowed it to be recognized at a distance and nailed it physically to its social role. Now that clothes have become commodities that anyone can buy, this is no longer possible. Differences in rank must now be inscribed more deeply: in one's skin, one's eyes, one's build. The monster makes us realize how hard it was for the dominant classes to resign themselves to the idea that all human beings are – or ought to be – equal.

But the monster also makes us realize that in an unequal society they are *not* equal. Not because they belong to different “races” but because inequality really does score itself into one's skin, one's eyes and one's body. And more so, evidently, in the case of the first industrial workers: the monster is disfigured not only because Frankenstein wants him to be like that, but also because this is how things actually were in the first decades of the industrial revolution... (Moretti, 87).

As such, the Monster's physical deformities evoke historical memories of the cruelty that the new industrial working classes suffered at the hands of the machines upon which they depended for their livelihood, which could maim or even kill them for a momentary mistake. Yet for *Frankenstein's* key depiction of the horrific damage which even ordinary industrial labour could inflict on a man, especially given the monstrously long hours which these workers often had to suffer, we must now turn, ironically, to Victor's own arduous ordeal in creating the Monster in the first place.

Frankenstein and the Monstrous Proletariat.

...I appeared rather like one doomed by slavery to toil in the mines, or any other unwholesome trade, than an artist occupied by his favourite employment. Every night I was oppressed by a slow fever, and I... shunned my fellow-creatures as if I had been guilty of a crime. Sometimes I grew alarmed at the wreck I had become; the energy of my purpose alone sustained me: my labours would soon end...
(*Frankenstein*, 57).

As this extract demonstrates, the true nature of Victor's overall class position remains complex and uncertain, even though he is clearly involved in the aristocratic social realm by birth, and especially through his position on the marriage market. For he not only works like a true proletarian as seen above, but he is also part of a keenly republican society, as described earlier by Elisabeth.⁷ As we have already seen in our analysis of the French Revolution in relation to *Frankenstein*, of course, the social class which would control such republican societies, and to which Victor therefore would himself belong on one level, would be the ever-encroaching bourgeoisie. These triumphant revolutionaries would thus appear to be far more monstrously powerful than even their Renaissance kindred, often portrayed by Shakespeare in the form of such monstrous social usurpers as Richard III, as we saw during my previous chapter. Indeed, as Chris Baldick points out, the very act of creating the Monster, upon which much of the issues dealt with in this chapter have turned, itself takes the form of an extremely bourgeois project. As such, all its present and future monstrous conditions and consequences, whether analysed in terms of political, social, and/or sexual monstrosity, merely serve to reinforce Victor's own bourgeois social position, for:

... Frankenstein's creation of his monster is a very private enterprise, conducted in the shadow of guilt and concealment, undertaken in narcissistic abstraction from social ties. The result... can be taken as embodying the socially irresponsible logic of private production itself. The monster is the spirit of private production brought to life, his asocial origin emphasized by his namelessness... [and] fully anti-social potential. Frankenstein's sublimated 'abstinence' – a form of renunciation to which the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie often referred as an explanation for its ascendancy – produces a creature who is obliged to abstain from social intercourse. Victor's victory, the triumph of his ascetic masculine heroism, is a conquest over his own social and sexual being, fulfilled in a creature to whom social and sexual ties are denied... (Baldick, 51).

In the course of the monstrous events of the novel, of course, bourgeois creators, as we have seen, die as surely as their proletarian creations, and indeed, figures who belong or

who aspire to belong to the bourgeoisie are usually destroyed, at one point or another, by the revenge of a monstrous proletariat. Not only does the entire Frankenstein dynasty perish at the Monster's hands (save for Victor's brother, Ernest, whose military ambitions make him as much of a potential death-bringer as the Monster himself), but all those who aspire to their social level in some way also end up as his victims. We have already mentioned the monstrous fate of Justine, who wished to emulate Victor's mother, her apparent guardian and protector, in every way possible, and who was eventually framed and hanged for murder as a result of unintentionally possessing a portrait of Victor's mother. Another such victim, meanwhile, is Victor's best friend, Henry Clerval, who in typical bourgeois fashion wished to rise from the comparatively humble world of commerce, so as to help extend British imperial power in India. Earlier, we saw how the Monster could be seen as being as much a representative of the monstrous colonial other as we have since found him to be of the monstrous proletariat, so his murder of Clerval could be seen as a pre-emptive act of racial and class vengeance, as well as clearly being a way to cause exquisite torment for Victor. We also remarked how such concerns would be dealt with further in relation to future chapters of my thesis, which would deal with the monstrous texts of the British *fin-de-siècle*. Before we turn to these future texts, however, we must emphasise how the miserable fate of Victor Frankenstein shows that the bourgeoisie, even at the apparent height of their political and cultural power, were nevertheless vulnerable to material forces of historical change. Warren Montag, for one, sees such forces as operating in this monstrous text through the equally powerful force of scientific progress, which will, both in itself and through the monstrous proletarian creations which appear in its wake, have Victor in its own monstrous thrall. For whereas:

The monster in its turn is not so much the creation that Frankenstein constantly calls it, as a product, the product of reason. In fact, the

frequent recourse to theological terminology... masks the extent to which Frankenstein has himself been created, hailed into existence in order to hasten the realisation of a reason whose ends are unknowable to him. Reason is always in the process of becoming real and its realization may well involve the production of monsters or a displacing of the human by the inhuman. For in the process, which in its largest sense is nothing other than history itself, humankind is in no way central. Humanity's greatest achievement may have been to hasten its own destruction... (Montag, 307).

In the process, of course, the Monster himself, who often wishes to destroy humanity in just the way predicted above, becomes vulnerable to historical forces which are as much beyond his control as was the issue of his very creation. For all the monstrous power which we have often shown him to possess, he is not only helpless to stop Victor Frankenstein's constant thwarting of his desires, but cannot overcome his very nature as a monster whom we have also shown as being, despite his eventual mastery of bourgeois, or even aristocratic, culture and diction, still a proletarian at heart. As such, the Monster remains, even in an ostensibly post-revolutionary society, vulnerable to equally monstrous historical forces as those which govern Victor's tormented existence, as well as being, on one level, a virtual slave of the triumphant bourgeoisie in ways which his creator is not, for:

Like the proletariat, the monster is denied a name and an individuality. He is the Frankenstein monster; he belongs wholly to his creator (just as one can speak of a 'Ford worker'). Like the proletariat, he is a collective and artificial creature. He is not found in nature, but built... Reunited and brought back to life in the monster are the limbs of those – the poor – whom the breakdown of feudal relations has forced into brigandage, poverty and death. Only modern science – this metaphor for 'the dark satanic mills' – can offer them a future... (Moretti, 85).

Therefore, as we turn to analyse the monstrous texts of the *fin de siècle*, we must always recall their most prominent historical forebear, especially since the socio-political order of British society retained much the same power structure as that which was establishing itself in the decades immediately following Frankenstein's creation.

For despite various attempts at reform, this was still a world whose monstrous literature still echoed contemporary fears of war and revolution on a fantastic scale, and which yet more or less underestimated the historical reality which would soon follow in its wake. For example, one ideologically comforting, yet ultimately misleading, historical assumption widely held during the *fin de siècle* can be described as follows:

... [The] assumption seemed to be that any war in which Britain or America might become involved would be a just one, a genuine struggle against the hordes of evil. But if this was the case, if this struggle had an existence outside the hysteria and theatricality of those drunk with adventure stories, it was not likely to be won by playing the game. Evil had little respect for the courtesies of the games field. Even human enemies could sometimes be bad sports, as the British found when the Boers turned to guerrilla warfare... The British were being humiliated by the Boers... because they cared more for games and mock combat than for military preparedness... (Jarrett, 175).

Indeed, my next chapter will concentrate upon the most infamous *fin-de-siècle* example of a monstrous foreign invader, who is nevertheless easily able to infiltrate and subvert even the most seemingly secure strongholds of British life, especially where the defence of traditional bourgeois notions of womanhood is concerned. This of course is Bram Stoker's legendary arch-vampire, none other than Count Dracula himself, whom Franco Moretti also describes, alongside Frankenstein's Monster, as the foremost example of a super-powerful modern monster who '... sows devastation over the whole world, from the Alps to Scotland, from Eastern Europe to the Pole... The modern monsters... threaten to live for ever (*sic*), and to conquer the world. For this reason they must be killed...' (85).

Like several of the greatest cultural monsters of other ages from Marlowe's Doctor Faustus to *Doctor Who*'s Daleks, however, Frankenstein's Monster proves to be extremely difficult to kill. (Even at the end of Shelley's text, after all, his fiery suicide remains no more than an unverifiable promise for a shadowy future). More to

the point, the monstrous scientific ideas behind his creation could potentially prove to be equally hard to eradicate, as even Victor himself remains extremely ambivalent on this subject to the very end. (This ambivalence can clearly be seen in Victor's dying advice to Walton that he should seek '... happiness in tranquility, and avoid ambition, even if it is only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries. Yet why do I say this? I myself have been blasted in these hopes, yet another may succeed...' [*Frankenstein*, 181]). On an even wider historical scale, moreover, the radical ideas of the French Revolution would prove to be equally viral in nature, as Eric Hobsbawm acknowledges thus:

But changes in frontiers, laws and governments were as nothing compared to a third effect of these decades of revolutionary war: the profound transformation of the political atmosphere. When the French Revolution broke out, the governments of Europe regarded it with relative sangfroid: the mere fact that institutions changed suddenly, that insurrections took place, that dynasties were deposed or kings assassinated and executed did not in itself shock eighteenth-century rulers, who were used to it, and who considered such changes in other countries primarily from the point of view of their own... But by 1815 a wholly different attitude towards revolution prevailed, and dominated the policy of the powers.

It was now known that revolution in a single country could be a European phenomenon; that its doctrines could spread across the frontiers and, what was worse, its crusading armies could blow away the political systems of a continent. It was now known that social revolution was possible; that nations could exist as something independent of states, peoples as something independent of their rulers, and even that the poor existed as something independent of the ruling classes... [*It*] was a universal event. No country was immune from it. The French soldiers who campaigned from Andalusia to Moscow, from the Baltic to Syria... pushed the universality of their revolution more effectively than anything else could have done. And the doctrines and institutions they carried with them, even under Napoleon... were universal doctrines, as the governments knew, and as the peoples themselves were soon to know also... (*Revolution*, 116-117; my italics).

In the meantime, even while the bourgeois social order trembled before its fears of an inevitably monstrous future, its myriad social achievements while in power nevertheless depended upon the monstrous labours of the proletariat. (Of course, this

monstrous future did eventually materialise, in the shape of the twin historical hammer-blows of the First World War and the Russian Revolution). Indeed, the proletariat themselves would surely have recognised one of their own upon hearing Shelley's Monster lamenting the vicious forces of social and political segregation which meant that he was robbed of any place in the wider human world. For this monstrous cruelty only serves to keep him an equally monstrous revolutionary outsider, as evidenced here:

While I listened... the strange system of human society was explained to me. I heard of the division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty; of rank, descent, and noble blood... I learned that the possessions most esteemed by your fellow creatures were high and unsullied descent united with riches. A man might be respected with only one of these advantages; but, without either, he was considered, except in very rare instances, as a vagabond and a slave, doomed to waste his powers for the profits of the chosen few! And what was I? Of my creation and creator I was absolutely ignorant; but I knew that I possessed no money, no friends, no kind of property. I was, besides, endued with a figure hideously deformed and loathsome; I was not even of the same nature as man... When I looked around, I saw and heard of none like me. Was I then a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled, and whom all men disowned? (*Frankenstein*, 106).

Throughout this chapter, we have shown how the Monster becomes an overdetermined signifier of troubling, unharnessed contemporary social and historical transformations or, more appropriately, 'revolutions', and as such becomes a kind of 'living' cultural and textual sign or symptom of historical change. Simultaneously, therefore, the Monster's superhuman strength embodies both the unprecedented scientific and technological power which fuelled the Industrial Revolution, and the overwhelming military might which had allowed Napoleon and his revolutionary predecessors to utterly reshape, however briefly, the entire map of Europe, if not the world. Meanwhile, his monstrous estrangement from the historic norms of human society embodies the overwhelming cruelty and suffering which

followed the ‘unnatural’ misshaping of centuries of peasant life into the strange new world of the industrial proletariat, in order to feed the insatiable hunger for profits that defined post-revolutionary bourgeois capitalism. More broadly, however, we have also seen how the philosophical debates which provided ideological fuel for the French Revolution, as well as for its enemies, were steeped in the language of political monstrosity, as seen most clearly in the work of both Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine. This foreshadows the fact that the Revolution itself would be governed by an inherent historical instability with regard to those whom it identified as monstrous. For as the political situation changed, previous leaders, if not creators, of the Revolution would later be labelled as its most monstrous enemies and duly destroyed: a truly Frankensteinian phenomenon epitomised by the ignominious downfall of Robespierre, as well as (to a lesser extent) that of Paine himself. Indeed, we have seen how even within *Frankenstein* itself, the social identities of monster and creator alike shift a great deal. For the Monster becomes something of a radical Romantic thinker, who insists that his thoughts ‘... were once filled with sublime and transcendent visions of the beauty and majesty of goodness...’ (*Frankenstein*, 183). Victor, on the other hand, is increasingly governed by his own monstrous self-loathing and self-imposed isolation: a process which began when the very creation of his Monster left him ‘... nervous to a most painful degree... I shunned my fellow-creatures as if I had been guilty of a crime...’ (Ibid. 57). It is precisely this sense of the increasing vulnerability of the post-revolutionary British bourgeoisie to such historic identity crises that I wish to discuss in my next chapter on Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. This applies both in terms of a feared loss of bourgeois class identity to either a resurgent aristocracy or a degenerate proletariat, or lingering fears of foreign invasion, which both became especially acute during the imperialist *fin de siècle*. (I

also wish to further my work on the monstrous female creator in *Frankenstein* by looking at the monstrous history of the *fin-de-siècle* New Woman, herself feared as the unprecedented herald of an unnatural new species of humanity). By applying the insights upon monstrous revolutionary history gained here to *Dracula*, I shall therefore illuminate the monstrous history of another insecure bourgeois protagonist, himself haunted by ‘... the light of my own vampire... let loose from the grave, and forced to destroy all that was dear to me...’ (*Frankenstein*, 73).

Notes to Chapter Two.

- ^{1.} A detailed examination of the poems of Coleridge and Keats mentioned in this passage in relation to Romantic ideas of monstrosity can be found within Goetsch, 60-82, 96-118.
- ^{2.} Useful critical discussions of the significance of this political debate begun between Burke and Paine in relation to crafting a historical reading of *Frankenstein* include Baldick, 16-24, 27; Graham, 71-73. Its monstrous linguistic implications are assessed by Botting, *Making Monstrous*, 141-152, 155-157. The monstrous psychological aspects of their dispute are explored by Sterrenburg, 144-146, 152-166, 171. Meanwhile, the wider historical context behind it is examined further by Doyle, *French Revolution*, 166-173.
- ^{3.} The usage of the Monster in the discourse of the monstrous colonial other is discussed further by Mellor, 113-114; and given a more orientalist literary-historical significance by Nevins, 191-193. An alternative biological/maternal explanation of the reasons for the Monster's seemingly foreign appearance can be found in Sutherland, 511-515.
- ^{4.} A useful introduction to the political and cultural impact of Napoleon's monstrous career upon British Romanticism can be found in Bainbridge, 1-16. More specifically, an important analysis of the physical monstrosity often associated with depictions of either a colossal or a virtually Lilliputian Napoleon by contemporary British artists, and especially the nation's political caricaturists, can be found in Kelley, 351-379. Other, more general historical accounts of the political and cultural importance of the mythic role of Napoleon as another example of the both glorious and monstrous contemporary figure of the 'modern Prometheus' include Tulard, 341-352; McLynn, 1-2, 662-668, Hobsbawm, *Revolution*, 96-98.
- ^{5.} For useful general discussions of the importance of this warfare for the character and impact of the French Revolution, see Lewis, 34-53; Doyle, *French Revolution*, 197-219; 378-381, 391-394, 403-406, 409-410, 414-417, 424-425. Its longer-term historical implications for both Europe and the world are explored by Hobsbawm, *Revolution*, 86-96, 101-124; Meanwhile, official attempts to create a revolutionary cultural image of a humanity reborn in the aftermath of 1789 are examined by Lewis, 91-105. How such revolutionary propaganda, as well as that produced by conservative opponents of the French Revolution, informs the ideological background of *Frankenstein*, is discussed further by Mellor, 81-87.
- ^{6.} Further information concerning both the role of the male doctor in Mary Wollstonecraft's death, and the contemporary monstrous discourse regarding such male midwives, can be found respectively in Mellor, 1; Jordanova, 73-76.
- ^{7.} Useful discussions of this republicanism in connection to the novel's concern, alluded to both in this and earlier chapters, with the English Civil War can be found in Montag, 300-302; Nicoles, 268-270.

CHAPTER THREE:

'...It is nineteenth century up-to-date with a vengeance. And yet, unless my senses deceive me, the old centuries had, and have, powers of their own which mere "modernity" cannot kill...': Undead

History and Monstrous Invasions in *Dracula*.

I feel myself quite wild with excitement. I suppose one ought to pity any thing quite so hunted as is the Count. That is just it: this Thing is not human – not even beast. To read Dr. Seward's account of poor Lucy's death, and what followed, is enough to dry up the springs of pity in one's heart... (*Dracula*, 234).

Through them I have come to know your great England; and to know her is to love her. I long to go through the crowded streets of your mighty London, to be in the midst of the whirl and rush of humanity, to share its life, its change, its death, and all that makes it what it is. But alas! ... Well do I know that, did I move and speak in your London, none there are who would not know me for a stranger. That is not enough for me. Here I am noble; I am boyar; the common people know me, and I am master. But a stranger in a strange land, he is no one; men know him not – and to know not is to care not for. I am content if I am like the rest, so that no man stops if he see me, or pause in his speaking if he hear my words, to say, "Ha, ha! a stranger!" I have been so long master that I would be master still – or at least that none other should be master of me... (Ibid. 45).

As we begin this chapter's historical examination of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, we must firstly consider how far my previous chapter's conclusions concerning the ideological usage made of questions of monstrosity, history, and power within Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* remain applicable to this other infamously monstrous text. We have already seen how Shelley's text uses the monstrous to reflect upon contemporary anxieties concerning the sweeping changes in gender and class relations which occurred in the wake of an era of unprecedented socio-political revolution, with particular reference to the philosophical and military impact of events in post-1789 France. For the British bourgeois readers of Stoker's text, however, which was itself written during the nineteenth-century *fin de siècle*, it would at first appear surprising if such post-

revolutionary historical concerns should arouse undue feelings of monstrous social anxiety any longer. After all, was not the year of *Dracula's* publication, namely Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee year of 1897, supposed to symbolise the very pinnacle of triumphant power for the imperial capitalist world-order that they had done so much to construct for Britain? Such was certainly the case as far as one prominent political figure and former businessman, Joseph Chamberlain, was concerned, as he made clear in a speech to the Royal Colonial Institute that year, in his then capacity as Colonial Secretary. For even as Britain was in the process of becoming pre-eminent in the ongoing European Scramble for Africa (and other colonial possessions), Chamberlain boasted of his proud belief in the glorious achievements of British imperialism. He affirmed that '... in almost every instance in which the rule of the Queen... and the great *Pax Britannica* has been enforced, there has come with it greater security of life and property, and a material benefit to... the bulk of the population... [If] Greater Britain remains united, no empire in the world can ever surpass it in area, in population, in wealth, or in the diversity of its resources...' (cited in Ledger and Lockhurst, 139-141). If such confidence in the overwhelming power, security, and indeed justice of the British Empire was truly justified, therefore, should not the seriousness of the threat represented by the monstrous literary other to the fictional representatives of such an order pale in comparison to earlier, post-revolutionary horrors? Moreover, in comparison to the historical turmoil represented within *Frankenstein*, should not the ideological threat of the monstrous vampire Count merit a lesser degree of bitter abhorrence than shown above by Mina Harker, which instead, as we shall see, eclipses even that felt by Victor Frankenstein towards his monstrous creation? After all, why expend so much violent fear and hatred upon such a foe if, as Chris Baldick comments, he represents nothing more ideologically significant to Stoker's bourgeois

contemporaries than a historically flirtatious replay of their earlier revolutionary

‘... victory over the baronial despot: Dracula is feudalism’s death warmed up...’ (148)?

We shall proceed to examine such important questions in due course, but before that, it is necessary that we should first pay close attention to the overall ideological connections between monstrosity, history, and power that I am seeking to establish through analysing monstrous texts such as *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. Only then will it be possible to examine Stoker’s text in full relation to its *fin-de-siècle* historical context, for before we can examine how a specific example of literary monstrosity reflects upon its historical background, we must first see to what extent history itself becomes monstrous *within these texts*.

We have, of course, already established this sense of history as being potentially monstrous in its own right, especially when looked at in relation to bourgeois ideologies of power, in previous chapters of this thesis. On one level, this becomes linked to post-Renaissance conceptions of history as a powerful, yet potentially uncontrollable, intellectual tool, capable of resurrecting the seemingly dead past. In so far as history retains these elements of resurrection, therefore, it is as such closely linked with more supernatural concepts of a marginal, but potent, ideological ‘... shadow-world, the dimension of dreams and fantasies, self-fulfilling prophecies and enabling fictions...’ (Holderness, 85). These could in turn render historical knowledge itself capable of containing monstrously undead elements of a disturbing past which the increasingly bourgeois rulers of society would rather had remained repressed, such as the widespread suffering, and even bloodshed, required to establish and maintain their grip on power. We, on the other hand, have already seen how this suffering and bloodshed actually occurred in the historical aftermath of both the English and French Revolutions, as well as how such historical traumas are indelibly embedded in the monstrous texts of both

periods. (This is especially so with regard to both Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Shelley's *Frankenstein* respectively, as I have demonstrated in the first two chapters of this thesis). As a result, it would appear that *Dracula* is potentially very significant in establishing the monstrosity of history itself, since the particular form of supernatural monstrosity which is at the core of this text, namely vampirism, is depicted as plaguing mankind throughout its own history. In this text, therefore, the undead past becomes an even more monstrous historical arena than even the most pessimistic *fin-de-siècle* bourgeois thinkers could have imagined. Here, as Dr. Abraham Van Helsing stresses, vampirism appears historically universal, being known:

In old Greece, in old Rome; he flourish in Germany all over, in France, in India... and in China, so far from us in all ways, there even is he, and the peoples fear him at this day. He have follow the wake of the berserker Icelander, the devil-begotten Hun, the Slav, the Saxon, the Magyar... The vampire live on, and cannot die by mere passing of the time... (*Dracula*, 243-244).

For the purposes of my thesis, however, I have elected to concentrate upon the monstrous history underlying the power structures of bourgeois society at various points of its own socio-political evolution, with particular reference to monstrous literary texts published at several key points in this historical process. These include the historical beginnings of the British bourgeoisie in the upheaval of the Renaissance and Civil War periods, and the radical upheavals which accompanied their eventual seizure of power in the wake of the French and Industrial Revolutions, as already seen in my previous chapters. It now remains to examine how far the widespread revival of monstrous literature during the nineteenth-century *fin de siècle* can be historically linked to contemporary fears and anxieties concerning the potential destruction of this British-dominated imperial bourgeois world order. We shall also discover how such monstrous literary prophecies of this potentially apocalyptic event, while sharing the

same *fin-de-siècle* historical background, nevertheless differed in their particular diagnoses of the monstrous historical causes which lay behind this foretold collapse.

Broadly, however, we can state here that these texts often depicted those responsible for such monstrous disasters as historically 'alien' invaders, whose own monstrous figures usually appeared as either savage throwbacks or inhuman futurists. On other occasions, however, it appeared that internal forces of monstrous degeneracy would ultimately tip the balance and engineer imperial Britain's downfall, which would in turn fill the resulting national and/or global power vacuum with even more monstrous historical forms of socio-political chaos. Indeed, this chaotic nature of *fin-de-siècle* monstrosity, wherein even ruthlessly organised criminals or invaders serve to disrupt the existing bourgeois social order, is itself an important link to another key aim of my thesis. Briefly, I intend to show how the idea that history is itself a monstrous force means that, where the impact of historical change appears to be most fearful in bourgeois eyes, such as when revolutionary socio-political forces threaten to engulf bourgeois power structures, literary monstrosity in turn appears more powerful. Monstrosity thus becomes an over-determined cultural signifier of historical change, and in bourgeois culture, such terrifying signifiers become inextricably linked with fear of the revolutionary violence that such change could potentially unleash. That revolutionary historical changes and bourgeois visions of monstrosity should be so closely connected becomes clearer upon recalling that bourgeois culture's grip on political power was largely born in the shadow of revolution. This first becomes clear in the aftermath of the seventeenth-century Civil Wars, but bourgeois power also reached new historical heights as Europe was again engulfed in revolution after 1789. (Although, significantly, in both cases, the extent of the socio-political turmoil unleashed by revolution eventually went too far, endangering bourgeois interests).

Interestingly, in both cases the forces of bourgeois revolution were largely personified in one monstrous tyrannical figure, namely Oliver Cromwell and Napoleon Bonaparte, respectively, the latter of whom I have already discussed extensively in my previous chapter upon Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Eventually, however, the usefulness of both these leaders in establishing bourgeois power was eventually eclipsed by the potential for political chaos which followed their downfall, leading to a resurgence of pre-revolutionary power structures, which were nevertheless still largely bourgeois-influenced in practice. As such, however, the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie remained haunted by their memories of the potentially monstrous power which their own revolutionary past had disastrously placed in the hands of the working masses, whose own misery had if anything worsened under bourgeois rule. Logically, therefore, the vengeance which such erstwhile proletarian victims would exact if they were again allowed to seize power would no doubt be equally as violent and revolutionary as anything found either in the 1640s in England, or after 1789 in France. Monstrosity thus appears to have been a perfect bourgeois cultural vehicle for acknowledging such fears of historical change, and the loss of power, if not total annihilation, which would doubtless follow further socio-political revolution in the historical context of the *fin de siècle*. After all, had not the greatest revolutionary enemies of bourgeois power, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, themselves used monstrous language to express the danger which their new Communist order posed to existing ruling classes? Even the preface of their first manifesto menacingly proclaimed that a monstrous new historical '... spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of Communism. All the Powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre...' (Marx and Engels, 78). It is my intention to see how Stoker's own holy alliance's attempts to vanquish the monstrous threat dramatised in *Dracula* fit in to this contemporary sense of a monstrous historical

process which seemed to have escaped bourgeois control, with violent bloodshed as an inevitable result of this bourgeois apocalypse. I will, moreover, make particular reference to the monstrous historical fate that was widely felt by contemporaries to await the nation that had for decades served as the chief international guardian of bourgeois economic power, namely the British Empire. For such undeniable imperial power nevertheless concealed fundamental anxieties concerning Britain's own continual vulnerability, for example, to foreign invaders, as I shall demonstrate below. Moreover, how could *Dracula*, depicting the *fin-de-siècle* invasions of a vampire lord who so powerfully embodies the monstrous feudal past which the bourgeoisie had fought so hard to destroy, possibly show any confidence that their future history would be any less monstrous, given this constant vulnerability to monstrous outsiders? By examining such questions, I will show how *Dracula*'s usage of monstrous history displaces such *fin-de-siècle* anxieties to a supernatural power struggle which at least remains within the historical boundaries of ancient rules concerning vampire lore, although even these can occasionally be manipulated by monstrous antagonists, as we shall see. Nevertheless, such an apparently deeply anachronistic threat could thus be more easily confronted than the widely prophesised, yet still monstrously unknown future conflicts which would soon engulf imperial Britain, and shake the historical foundations of bourgeois power like nothing before or since.

On at least one level, however, it is at first hard to see history itself, especially in relation to the distant past that *Dracula*'s long undead existence evokes, as necessarily appearing in any way monstrous to Stoker's contemporaries. This is especially so given the stark contrast which existed, for example, between the destructive potential of contemporary warfare (such as witnessed during the American Civil War of 1861-65 and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71), and the glories of the ancient lost

civilisations unearthed by pioneering archaeologists. Indeed, even as Heinrich Schliemann re-discovered the ruins of Troy and Mycenae during the 1870s, his apparent success in resurrecting the legendary past itself conflicted with how the ‘... great practical achievements of nineteenth-century “civilisation” were in the eyes of many tainted by the prospect of future horrors. What more enticing idea than to discover an almost limitless prospect: a recoverable history stretching back deep into lost time? Progress – that great goal of nineteenth-century thinkers – progress to a culture of noble aspirations, simple moral grandeur, could indeed be made, but by journeying backwards...’ (Wood, *Trojan War*, 53). Such a *fin-de-siècle* sense of a monstrous future as is described here will of course be examined more closely during my next chapter in relation to the works of H. G. Wells. This will be the case especially when these works appear to anticipate the impending apocalyptic demise of much of the contemporary imperial bourgeois world-order to the historical forces of war and revolution in the aftermath of the events of 1914 and 1917 respectively. Returning to the contrast between *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*’s respective usages of history itself as a monstrous force, however, others have noted that, much as these two texts’ monstrous protagonists are at opposite social extremes, and yet somehow both equally dangerous to bourgeois socio-economic order, so it is in historical terms.¹ Frankenstein’s Monster has almost no independent grasp of what little personal history he possesses, and, as we have seen, can only find confirmation of his monstrous destiny in others’ narratives, whether from John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, or Victor Frankenstein’s own research notes. We have also concluded before that this lack of socio-historical status is an important driving force behind the Monster’s self-alignment with the impoverished proletariat, since of ‘... my creation and creator I was entirely ignorant; but I knew that I possessed no money, no friends, no kind of property...’ (*Frankenstein*, 106). Count Dracula,

however, in much the same way as H. Rider Haggard's Ayesha, or 'She', barely a decade earlier, appears by contrast to be monstrously omnipotent in terms of the imperial power and riches which his centuries-long history has given him. In describing the past glories of his aristocratic house to Jonathan Harker, the Count proceeds to show his dynasty – or rather, as it transpires, himself alone – as ruthless imperial conquerors whose bloody historical legacy is impossible for even the most ancient of European empires – including the British themselves – to match:

Is it a wonder that we were a conquering race; that we were proud; that when the Magyar, the Lombard, the Avar, the Bulgar, or the Turk poured thousands on our frontiers, we drove them back? ... Was it not this Dracula, indeed, who inspired that other of his race who in a later age again and again brought his forces over the great river into Turkey-land; who, when he was beaten back, came again, and again, and again, though he had to come alone from the bloody field where his troops were being slaughtered, since he knew that he alone could ultimately triumph? They said that he thought only of himself. Bah! what good are peasants without a leader? Where ends the war without a brain and heart to conduct it? Again, when, after the battle of Mohacs, we threw off the Hungarian yoke, we of the Dracula blood were amongst their leaders, for our spirit would not brook that we were not free. Ah, young sir, the Szekelys – and the Dracula as their heart's blood, their brains, and their swords – can boast a record that mushroom growths like the Hapsburgs and the Romanoffs can never reach. The warlike days are over. Blood is too precious a thing in these days of dishonourable peace; and the glories of the great races are as a tale that is told... (*Dracula*, 53-54).

By contrast to this sanguinary epic of dynastic, racial and – as is yet unknown to Harker – individual survival and, ultimately, conquest, the British Empire's record of global dominance was not only of far shorter historical duration at this point in time, it also proved to be far more fragile. For despite the optimistic jingoism of staunch imperialists such as Cecil Rhodes, or the aforementioned Joseph Chamberlain, the post-revolutionary imperial order created by British bourgeois capitalism was already showing worrying signs of vulnerability to the monstrous forces which would soon unleash a chaotic new era of historical change. The wider impact of such changes upon the socio-political structure of the *fin-de-siècle* world would as a result be of even more

monstrous proportions for its ostensibly bourgeois rulers than those reflected within *Frankenstein*. On one level, this was simply because, despite the hardship and violence these rulers employed to re-establish a fully-functional bourgeois political and economic order in the turmoil following the French and Industrial Revolutions, their ultimate success nevertheless left them seemingly triumphant over any and all socio-historical obstacles and/or enemies. For a few short decades after the Revolutions of 1848, indeed, political, economic, and social progress in establishing liberal capitalism throughout Europe reached such heights of success as to seemingly render any further revolutionary upheavals unnecessary. The political implications of this bourgeois triumphalism could be witnessed in the unprecedented decline in the number of European socialists and social revolutionaries that occurred during this period, as noted by Eric Hobsbawm.²

From the 1870s onwards, however, the return of widespread economic depression became increasingly apparent, which in turn led the obstinately free-trading British economy to depend more and more upon the fruits of empire, as opposed to her rivals' usage of domestic tariffs to protect their own industries. Admittedly, such economic imperialism was usually less significant to the new formal colonisation of Africa and elsewhere (with the exception of South Africa), than to the long-standing informal British dominance of trade with such areas as Latin America or the so-called 'white dominions', such as Australia or Canada. Such dependence upon imperial wealth, however, only served to highlight yet again the extent to which the post-revolutionary bourgeois order had become vulnerable to the monstrous historical forces driving such economic changes, and had indeed been growing increasingly so ever since its traumatic birth in Mary Shelley's era. From those fundamentally monstrous revolutionary beginnings to what I will prove to be an equally monstrous *fin-de-siècle*,

such innate vulnerabilities had in fact shaped much of what made the years between the

American and French Revolutions and the First World War historically unique, since:

What is peculiar about the long nineteenth century is that the titanic and revolutionary forces of this period which changed the world out of recognition were transported on a specific, and historically peculiar and fragile vehicle. Just as the transformation of the world economy was, for a crucial but necessarily brief period, identified with the fortunes of a single medium-sized state – Great Britain – so the development of the contemporary world was temporarily identified with that of nineteenth-century liberal bourgeois society. The very extent to which the ideas, values, assumptions and institutions associated with it appeared to triumph in the Age of Capital indicates the historically transient nature of that triumph... (Hobsbawm, *Empire*, 11).

Another way in which the very success of Britain's imperial bourgeois order rendered their own nation vulnerable to monstrous outside forces becomes clear in Haggard's *She*. For whereas one reason why Ayesha plans to invade Britain is indeed because it is the homeland of the man whom she believes is the reincarnated love of her life, she has also become acutely aware that it is also home to '... a great people, is it not? with an empire like that of Rome...' (Haggard, H. Rider. *She*, ed. Daniel Karlin. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, 254). The monstrous impact that such an invasion of Britain would have upon contemporary world order becomes clear as Haggard's narrator, the physically ape-like but mentally brilliant Ludwig Horace Holly, acknowledges the strong probability of its success, coupled with its inevitably bloody aftermath:

The terrible *She* had evidently made up her mind to go to England, and it made me absolutely shudder to think what would be the result of her arrival there. What her powers were I knew, and I could not doubt but that she would exercise them to the full. It might be possible to control her for a while, but her proud, ambitious spirit would be certain to break loose and avenge itself for the long centuries of its solitude. She would, if necessary, and if the power of her beauty did not unaided prove equal to the occasion, blast her way to any end she set before her, and as she could not die, and for aught I knew could not even be killed, what was there to stop her? In the end she would, I had little doubt, assume absolute rule over the British dominions, and

probably over the whole earth, and, though I was sure that she would speedily make ours the most glorious and prosperous empire that the world has ever seen, it would be at the cost of a terrible sacrifice of life. ... What was the meaning of it all? After much thinking I could only conclude that this wonderful creature, whose passion had kept her for so many centuries chained as it were, and comparatively harmless, 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... (*She*, 256).

Here, as in *Dracula*, an invasion of Britain is to be attempted by a being whose monstrous powers are inextricably linked to their uncanny possession of virtual immortality. This in turn renders them both a living – or undead, as the case may be – embodiment of the monstrous power of historical forces to change the world. Where these two *fin-de-siècle* texts differ in their approach to such monstrously powerful historical change, however, is that whereas Holly can thus see potential long-term material benefits for the world following such an invader's monstrous *coup d'état* (albeit at the price of much bloodshed), Stoker's narrators cannot. Such a thing would be truly impossible for the so-called 'Crew of Light' led by Dr. Abraham Van Helsing to contemplate.³ Rather, the sheer overwhelming horror with which such a prospect is regarded in the novel is clearly evidenced by Jonathan Harker's unbearable revulsion towards such a monstrous invasion, whose evil consequences would themselves prove to be truly undying, for:

This was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where, perhaps, for centuries to come he might, among its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever-widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless. The very thought drove me mad. A terrible desire came upon me to rid the world of such a monster... But as I did so the head turned, and the eyes fell full upon me, with all their blaze of basilisk horror. The sight seemed to paralyse me... The last glimpse I had was of the bloated face, blood-stained and fixed with a grin of malice which would have held its own in the nethermost hell... (*Dracula*, 74).

Yet again, we are faced here with a portrayal of Dracula's monstrosity which eclipses even the tormented relationship between Victor Frankenstein and his own monstrous creation in terms of the sheer abhorrence shown towards this prospective vampiric invader. We should recall at this point, for example, how Victor reluctantly persuaded himself to listen to the Monster's pleas for a fair hearing during their first encounter in the Alps. In doing so, he is forced to reflect for the first time upon '... what the duties of a creator towards his creature were, and that I ought to render him happy before complaining of his wickedness...' (*Frankenstein*, 92). Moreover, the Monster himself, while grieving over the corpse of his creator, confesses that, even as his terrible campaign of vengeance for Victor's destruction of his longed-for monstrous bride began to take shape, his vicious hatred was counter-balanced by his overwhelming guilt. Following Victor's own death, his monstrous wrath is thus turned upon himself to an ultimately suicidal extent, as his plans to that end become '... my only consolation. Polluted by crimes, and torn by the bitterest remorse, where can I find rest but in death? ... Farewell, Frankenstein! If thou wert yet alive, and yet cherished a desire of revenge against me, it would be better satiated in my life than in my destruction...'

(*Frankenstein*, 185). Interestingly, even where Victor's hatred of his creation had appeared to be at its most uncompromising, such as in the immediate aftermath of his younger brother's murder, it is expressed in a monstrous psychological discourse of vampiric invasion which uncannily anticipates *Dracula* itself:

Nothing in human shape could have destroyed that fair child. *He* was the murderer! ... The mere presence of the idea was an irresistible proof of the fact... I considered the being whom I had cast among mankind, and endowed with the will and power to effect purposes of horror... nearly in the light of my own vampire, my own spirit let loose from the grave, and forced to destroy all that was dear to me... (*Frankenstein*, 72-73).

In *Dracula*, however, and contrasting with the *comparatively* lesser degree of uncompromising hatred existing between *Frankenstein's* monstrous antagonists, it

appears that only Mina consistently expresses the possibility of showing even a modicum of pity for the Count himself, as opposed to his most prominent British victim, Lucy Westenra. The latter's historical significance in relation to *fin-de-siècle* conceptions of female monstrosity will be assessed more fully later in this chapter.

Even such apparent compassion as Mina later shows towards her monstrous seducer, however, is increasingly compromised by the fact that she is rapidly becoming a vampire herself. For whereas, as a result of this, Mina is desperately seeking mercy from her erstwhile fellow-crusaders against the Count, yet the contemptuous hatred which is continuously felt by both the bitten and the unbitten within Stoker's text towards the taint of vampirism pervades throughout. Especially indicative of this is the fact that the actual 'mercy' which Mina desires for both herself and her monstrous vampiric sire itself emphatically requires that her allies should '... not hold your hands from his destruction...' (*Dracula*, 306). We have already examined some of the historical roots of such pervasive loathing of vampiric monstrosity in terms of the British bourgeoisie's fears concerning the increasing economic vulnerability of their imperial capitalist world order. Now we must examine other aspects of such monstrous *fin-de-siècle* bourgeois anxieties in relation to *Dracula*, such as the also increasingly fragile nature of their class dominance even within British society itself. On one important level, these anxieties are based upon the still hugely influential status of the aristocracy within the socio-political structures of *fin-de-siècle* Britain. In my previous chapter, I established that, for revolutionary bourgeois thinkers such as Thomas Paine, it was the tyrannical power of the aristocratic order which was chiefly responsible, through such warped social institutions as primogeniture, for provoking the monstrous aspects of the French Revolution. That nightmarish memories of such monstrous aristocratic tyranny should persist in the wider bourgeois political and cultural

unconscious during the *fin de siècle* is thus understandable, given the traumatic nature of the revolutionary historical ‘birth’ of their liberal capitalist world order which followed the French Revolution of 1789. Meanwhile (and again in my previous chapter), I also discussed to what extent this bourgeois historical ‘trauma’ was due to the apparently universal impact of the new forms of mass popular warfare which became widespread during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. For even after Waterloo, memories of the overwhelming power of the French *levée-en-masse*, and of the fierce partisan guerrilla warfare often used to resist French power in Spain and elsewhere, still haunted those bourgeois rulers who had had to endorse such revolutionary military methods in order to survive. (That this remained true during the *fin de siècle* becomes clear when we recall how even the mighty British Empire, who had earlier been the Spanish partisans’s greatest allies, would soon be hard pressed to defeat the Boers, who were themselves masters of such guerrilla tactics. Indeed, this wider quasi-Nietzschean problem of creating future enemies in order to overcome contemporary ones would persist into the twenty-first century, as Slavoj Žižek’s fascinating work on the modern-day ‘war on terror’ in Afghanistan makes clear). That the revolutionary implications of all this were also clear to Stoker’s contemporaries can therefore be confirmed by *The Communist Manifesto* itself, despite its ridicule of aristocratic attempts to ally with the proletariat against the bourgeoisie as displaying a ‘... total incapacity to comprehend the march of modern history...’ (106). For Marx and Engels nevertheless also maintained that, because of the increasingly destructive and unstable nature of capitalist and industrial expansion, more and more of the crisis-fuelled revolutionary historical ‘... weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now [being] turned against the bourgeoisie itself...’ (*Communist Manifesto*, 87).

In this sense, therefore, much as *Frankenstein* had earlier reflected on the horrific terror and pain surrounding contemporary revolutionary historical change through the suffering of its own monstrous creation, *Dracula*'s aristocratic vampires reflect the persistent bourgeois fear of losing their newly-powerful status to an older, but resurgent ruling class. The way in which Stoker presents the monstrous bloodlust inherent in both aristocratic and vampiric exploitation of their social inferiors is also significant in thus analysing how far *Dracula* is willing to confront these historical 'childhood' traumas underlying bourgeois control over *fin-de-siècle* society. (Of course, I use the somewhat Oedipal term 'childhood' quite deliberately here, although I do not intend to engage in a prolonged psychoanalytic critique of wider *fin-de-siècle* bourgeois life at this stage of my thesis). As such, I remain in broad agreement with Punter that historically:

One of the [most socially revealing] aspects of [*fin de siècle*] decadence was the supremacy of the moment of attraction in the continual dialectic of attraction and repulsion which characterised the relation between the dominant middle class and its 'un-dead' predecessor... From the bourgeois point of view, *Dracula* stands for sexual perversion and sadism; but we also know that what his victims experience at the moment of consummation is joy, unhealthy perhaps but of a power unknown in conventional relationships... (260).

Because of all this, it can be argued that vampires are in fact the most important symbols of such contemporary usage of the monstrous to confront those historical anxieties which were deeply rooted in bourgeois suffering under aristocratic rule. For despite *The Communist Manifesto*'s declared contempt for aristocratic attempts to form anti-bourgeois alliances with the proletariat, such attempts had nevertheless posed a great ideological dilemma for those who believed in bourgeois political and economic progress as the all-powerful herald of a glorious future. For as the nineteenth century progressed, there were many others who still opposed this seemingly inevitable bourgeois dominance, and instead upheld a very different historical vision of a better

world. Indeed, Eric Hobsbawm concludes that in hindsight, both conservatives and radicals – albeit usually for opposing reasons – often preferred the pre-revolutionary *ancien regime* to its bourgeois-led successor, as follows:

In [the *ancien regime*]... God made them high and lowly and ordered their estate, which pleased conservatives, but he also imposed duties (however light and badly carried out) on the high. Men were unequally human, but they were not commodities valued according to the market. Above all they lived together, in tight networks of social and personal relationships, guided by the clear map of custom, social institutions and obligation. Doubtless Metternich's secretary Gentz and the British radical demagogue and journalist William Cobbett... had a very different medieval ideal in mind, but both equally attacked the Reformation which had, they held, introduced the principles of bourgeois society. And even Frederick Engels, the firmest of the believers in progress, painted a notably idyllic picture of the old eighteenth-century society which the Industrial Revolution had disrupted.

Having no coherent theory of evolution, the anti-progressive thinkers found it hard to decide what had 'gone wrong'. Their favourite culprit was reason, or more specifically eighteenth-century rationalism, which sought foolishly and impiously to meddle with matters too complex for human understanding and organization: societies could not be planned like machines... Instinct, tradition, religious faith, "human nature", "true" as opposed to "false" reason, were marshalled, depending on the intellectual bent of the thinker, against systematic rationalism. But above all its conqueror was to be *history*... (*Revolution*, 298-299).

Thus, it is unsurprising that Stoker's vampires, and above all Dracula itself, should not only embody the monstrous power of human history itself through their sheer longevity and vast global reach, as we have seen, but are also rooted in pre-Reformation religious ideology. As Van Helsing notes, after all, the '... vampire which is amongst us is of himself so strong in person as twenty men; he is of cunning more than mortal, *for his cunning be the growth of ages*... All we have to go upon are traditions and superstitions... A year ago which of us would have received such a possibility, in the midst of our scientific, sceptical, matter-of-fact nineteenth century?' (*Dracula*, 242-243; my italics). More broadly, Dracula embodies all the past feudal cruelties and oppression which the bourgeoisie had believed they had overcome through their own revolution, but which still lingered elsewhere, and which they also feared could return to haunt

them in the future. On one level, of course, this fear reflects the violent iron hand with which tyrannical aristocratic overlords had once dominated all aspects of their underlings' lives, and which the *fin-de-siècle* bourgeoisie suspected was still rife wherever such monstrous rulers still survived, as Jonathan Harker unfortunately discovers in Dracula's Transylvania. (After all, as Harker himself notes, it is with '... the same imperious gesture that I had seen used to the wolves...' (*Dracula*, 62), that the Count declares to his three female vampires that Harker himself '... belongs to me!' [Ibid.]). As I shall later demonstrate further, moreover, they feared that such a historic reversion could be forced upon them, either through conquest by such monstrous outside invaders, or through having to adopt monstrous foreign practices themselves, especially as their whole imperial economic order increasingly appeared on the verge of collapse. For, as Moretti points out, there were important historical and economic indicators during the *fin de siècle* to bear out this lingering anxiety that the monstrous bourgeois future could increasingly resemble the monstrous bourgeois past, as follows:

If the vampire is a metaphor for capital, then Stoker's vampire, who is of 1897, must be the capital of 1897. The capital which, after lying "buried" for twenty long years of recession, rises again to set out on the irreversible road of concentration and monopoly. And Dracula is a true monopolist: solitary and despotic, he will not brook competition. Like monopoly capital, his ambition is to subjugate the last vestiges of the liberal era and destroy all forms of economic independence. He no longer restricts himself to incorporating (in a literal sense) the physical and moral strength of his victims. He intends to make them his *for ever*. Hence the horror, for the bourgeois mind. One is bound to Dracula, as to the devil, for *life*, no longer "for a fixed period", as the classic bourgeois contract stipulated with the intention of maintaining the freedom of the contracting parties. The vampire, like monopoly, destroys the hope that one's independence can one day be brought back. He threatens the idea of individual liberty. For this reason the nineteenth-century bourgeois is able to imagine monopoly only in the guise of Count Dracula, the aristocrat, the figure of the past, the relic of distant lands and dark ages. Because the nineteenth-century bourgeois believes in free trade, and he knows that in order to become established, free competition had to destroy the tyranny of feudal monopoly. For him, then, monopoly and free competition are irreconcilable concepts. Monopoly is the *past* of competition, the middle ages. He cannot believe it can be its *future*, that competition itself can

generate monopoly in new forms... Dracula is thus at once the final product of the bourgeois century and its negation... In Britain at the end of the nineteenth century, monopolistic competition was far less developed (for various economic and political reasons) than in the other advanced capitalist societies. Monopoly could thus be perceived as something extraneous to British history: as a *foreign threat*... Religious superstition imposes the same limits on Dracula that Victorian capitalism declares itself to obey spontaneously. But Dracula – who is capital that is not ashamed of itself, true to its own nature, an end in itself – cannot survive in these conditions. And so this symbol of a cruel historical development falls victim to a handful of whited sepulchres, a bunch of fanatics who want to arrest the course of history. It is they who are the relics of the dark ages... (92-94).

In Stoker's text, all this is reinforced by the bloody abuses which Dracula and his ilk inflict on Transylvanian peasant and British solicitor alike, which also revive the feudal social structures which formed the most primal aspects of bourgeois nightmares of their traumatic past. Nevertheless, the Count's wider conduct as he attempts to infiltrate imperial Britain also raises the question how far the bourgeoisie themselves had come to resemble their former monstrous aristocratic rulers. After all, it is through combining predatory violence with economic exploitation that Dracula would maintain his feudal dominance in a *fin-de-siècle* guise, and thus, whether in Transylvania or in Britain, ensure that '...I would be master still – or at least that none other should be master of me...' (*Dracula*, 45). Even more significant, however, is the fact that he readily adopts not only Jonathan Harker's bourgeois knowledge, but also his very bourgeois identity in order to do so, as most infamously occurs when the Count masquerades around Transylvania in Harker's stolen clothes. By doing so, as Harker himself concludes, the Count '...may both leave evidence that I have been seen in the towns and villages posting my own letters, and that any wickedness which he may do shall by the local people be attributed to me...' (*Dracula*, 67). Moreover, the ease with which the Count is able to accomplish this ruse shows just how unstable and vulnerable the trappings of bourgeois power still were during the *fin de siècle*. Harker's wholesale

loss of his symbolic social status as a confident bourgeois professional, along with his clothes, thus renders him on a similar level of powerless despair as that which he later witnesses in the peasant woman whose child the Count has stolen whilst in Harker's costume. Because of this, it is unsurprising that the captive Harker increasingly resembles a helpless victim of pre-*Magna Carta* feudal tyranny, who can only impotently '... rage to think that... I am... a veritable prisoner, but without that protection of the law which is even a criminal's right and consolation...' (*Dracula*, 67).

Despite the apparent common ground between Harker and the peasant woman as victims of this monstrous vampire overlord, however, there still remain several key differences of class, race, and gender between these two sufferers, the latter of which will be examined more closely later on. These differences are themselves reflected not only in Dracula's success in convincing the peasant woman that Harker is the true monster, but in Harker's own lack of pity for her monstrous demise at the hands of the Count's private army of wolves. All this, however, is nevertheless largely eclipsed by Harker's continuing decline into powerlessness while imprisoned in Castle Dracula, again symbolising *fin-de-siècle* fears of a resurgent aristocracy through the degradation of a bourgeois protagonist into peasant-like dependence upon the whims of the vampire lord. As Punter comments:

Dracula is the final aristocrat; he has rarefied his needs, and the needs of his house and line, to the point where he has no longer any need of any exchange-system or life-support except blood. All other material connexions [*sic*] with the 'dishonourable' bourgeois world have been severed: the aristocrat has paid the tragic price of social supersession, yet his doom perforce involves others. Cheated of his right of actual dominion, his power is exerted in mere survival: his relationship to the world is the culmination of tyranny, yet it is justified in that it is not his own survival that he seeks but the survival of the house, and thus, of course, the survival of the dead... To the peasantry of central Europe, it may well have seemed that the feudal lord *was* immortal: the actual inhabitant of the castle upon the mountain might change, but that might not even be known. What would have been known was that there was always a lord; that by some possibly miraculous means life and title

persisted, at the expense, of course, of peasant blood, in the literal sense of blood shed in battle and in cruelty. Dracula can no longer survive on blood of this kind; he needs alternative sources of nourishment to suit his socially attenuated existence. The dominion of the sword is replaced by the more naked yet more subtle dominion of the tooth; as the nobleman's real powers disappear, he becomes invested with semi-supernatural abilities, exercised by night rather than in the broad day of legendary feudal conflict... Dracula exists and exerts power through right immemorial; Van Helsing and his associates defeat him in the appropriate fashion, through hard work and diligent application, the weapons of a class which derives its existence from labour... (257-260).

In the case of the British bourgeoisie, indeed, any lingering fears of a monstrous aristocracy having power over their imperial capitalist order remained well founded in the historical context of 1897. For even as *Dracula* was then being published for the first time, a Conservative administration had been in power for two years under Lord Salisbury, whose political style epitomised the '...great aristocrat who felt obligated to do his duty of governing the country but found it all rather a bore. Politics was a game, to be played by those who were the natural leaders of the country...' (Harrison, 31-32). Moreover, although his administration was the first for over twenty years in which the bourgeoisie outnumbered the aristocracy in terms of cabinet personnel, even here the former only numbered eleven in comparison to the latter's eight members of a 19-strong political body. It must be pointed out here, however, that the Crew of Light's campaign against the Count is itself often discussed in hunting terms, almost becoming a monstrous big game expedition, for which, as Doctor Seward remarks, previous '...adventurous days of ours are turning up useful...' (*Dracula*, 352). On a wider level, it also proves possible to enlist the symbolic power of the British aristocracy in order to further their crusade against this monstrously despotic foreigner. This is especially the case when Lord Godalming's name is used to cover their invasion of Dracula's London properties by breaking and entering into them, for his aristocratic '...title will make it all right... with any policeman that may come along...' (Ibid. 298). Yet on the other

hand, the latter case only demonstrates further the extent to which the political and social institutions of *fin-de-siècle* Britain remained vulnerable to subversion, especially in relation to the lingering power of the aristocracy. It is my intention to show how such monstrous vulnerabilities, as reflected within *Dracula*, together appear powerful enough to nearly overwhelm the entire imperial capitalist social structure of *fin-de-siècle* Britain, whether they be focused in aristocratic and/or foreign invaders, or in the degenerate proletariat. In particular, I shall draw attention to the importance of female monstrosity within Stoker's text, whether this should itself be focused in female vampires such as Lucy, who are usually depicted as being even more abhorrent than Dracula himself, or on the contemporary historical spectre of the 'New Woman'.⁴

Under such multifaceted monstrous assaults, the novel's mostly bourgeois representatives of the powers that be in imperial Britain are thus driven in turn to seek moral reassurance of their future by recalling the values of self-sacrifice and militant Christianity which they held responsible for originally enabling them to take power. As we have seen, however, the bourgeoisie's distant past held historical memories which were just as monstrous as the apocalyptic *fin-de-siècle* horrors which they feared would engulf them, shown here in the guise of *Dracula*'s vampirism. Indeed, we shall show how the very roots of bourgeois imperial power were themselves potentially monstrous, whether in terms of the bloodshed inherent in revolution and/or colonialism, or in the appalling exploitation of women and/or the working classes which allowed the bourgeoisie to build up their monstrous fortunes. For as Mina acknowledges, such wealth could itself be tainted by monstrosity, in terms of its inherently amoral status as the fuel for an even more monstrous future capitalism, as she contemplates '... the wonderful power of money! What can it not do when it is properly applied; and what might it do when basely used...' (*Dracula*, 349). How such observations herald the

monstrous associations that are often made between money and vampirism in *Dracula* will therefore be the next subject of this discussion.

Degenerate *Fin-de-Siècle* Vampires and Bourgeois Historical Fears in *Dracula*.

In particular, we must now examine Stoker's text in light of widespread contemporary fears that the vast economic fruits of bourgeois imperial capitalism would only serve to create monstrous legions of degenerate parasites, especially among the wretched ranks of the proletariat. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to point out that a more in-depth exploration of the significance of such contemporary theories of degeneracy will be carried out in my final chapter on the vulnerability of *fin-de-siècle* Britain's imperial bourgeois order to attacks from various insidiously monstrous *internal* enemies.

Therein, I shall pay special attention to such questions in relation to contemporary fears concerning the potentially unstoppable growth of a monstrous Britain, and a dangerously monstrous London in particular, as reflected by bourgeois anxieties concerning both evolutionary theory and/or horrific criminal activity. (Both of these key historical factors will then be examined in the context of monstrous texts such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, especially 'The Final Problem'). It would be remiss of me, however, were it not pointed out in turn during this chapter that those theories of biological and criminal degeneracy which were expressed by such *fin-de-siècle* commentators as Max Nordau and Edwin Ray Lankester also remain relevant to Stoker's invading vampire Count. For as we have already seen, Dracula's uncanny immortality renders him a fitting monstrous symbol of the bloody horrors lurking behind the brutal feudal pre-history that, according to early radicals like Paine and later Marxist structures of human socio-political evolution, foreshadowed the bourgeois order's own revolutionary rise to power. We have also seen that this notoriously violent

and exploitative bourgeois take-over of British society, which grew to fruition between the Civil War and the Industrial Revolution, engendered several vampiric aspects of their own future capitalist empire. (An empire, moreover, which by the *fin de siècle* was itself largely forced to live on foreign economic resources to survive). What must now become clear is the monstrous extent to which *fin-de-siècle* British imperial capitalism also depended upon similarly ruthless exploitation of its own native proletariat, as had also been predicted by radical political and economic commentators. For example, it is therefore interesting to note that, as Baldick remarks:

The most vivid representation of the bourgeoisie's doomed state of possession by irresistible forces is to be found in Marx's repeated images of capital as a vampire... Again, it is the inherent restlessness of the bourgeoisie, as the first great revolutionary class in history, which condemns it to a thirst that can never be quenched... Capital, which appears to be able to perform the miracle of reproducing itself unaided... is shown to be, beneath the ostensible equity of the wage-bargain, a secret blood-sucker. No longer the self-sufficient fount of wealth, it now appears as a parasite, dead, but by virtue of its parasitism still allowed to linger as undead. The fate of the worker in this topsy-turvy, haunted world is to reproduce and constantly reanimate the 'dead labour' or capital for which he or she exists as nourishment... This uncanny inversion is the state – or, rather, process – of alienation: the surrender of your vital capacities to an 'alien' force which ensures that your own powers are turned against you... (128-131).

Here, therefore, we are again faced with the monstrous image of Dracula as an alien foreign invader, able to absorb the very social and/or biological strengths of his victims which fuelled their own individual socio-economic ambitions, and thus to render them monsters themselves. We have already seen how such assimilatory tactics were used when the Count wore Jonathan Harker's bourgeois garb to make this aspiring British solicitor appear as a bloodthirsty vampire in just such a monstrous image. (This particular scene thus also forms an important symbol of *Dracula's* portrayal of monstrous imperial assimilation, to which we will return again at a later stage of my analysis of the text). Later, of course, in his final assaults upon Lucy, Dracula's own

literal bloodlust is, if anything, given more fuel by the doomed attempts of Van Helsing and his allies to save her through blood transfusion, which prolong her ordeal, and, ultimately, merely affords her attacker a longer meal. It now remains to be seen how such monstrous tactics of bloodthirsty alienation and/or assimilation are used upon his other underlings, for whether these doomed workers themselves serve him voluntarily or not, they in turn are often cruelly tricked by their vampiric master. Examples of this include the luckless captain of the ship which first carries the Count to Britain, who eventually becomes the final survivor of a mostly devoured crew, and who finally also dies himself, having meanwhile barely avoided the vampire's fangs through lashing himself and a crucifix to the wheel. Another alienated foreign underling who falls victim to the Count is one of those whom he hires to transport his coffin from the ship upon which he attempts to escape from Britain and return to his native Transylvania. Again, the services of this man, one Petrof Skinsky, also receive a deadly reward, as shown when his body is later discovered with a '... throat [which] had been torn open as if by some wild animal...' (*Dracula*, 343). The most prominent of Dracula's servants and future victims in this context, however, is undoubtedly the British madman Renfield, the significance of whose role in enabling the Count's monstrous invasions shall be the subject of the next stage of my analysis.

In thus analysing Renfield, one useful aspect to bear in mind is the extent to which this madman himself bears a significant relation to contemporary monstrous discourses upon social degeneracy, in much the same way as his demonic master. The Count himself infamously appears in Mina's own *fin-de-siècle* scientific analysis as a psychological '... criminal and of criminal type. Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him, and *qua* criminal he is of imperfectly formed mind...' (*Dracula*, 336). I have already explained elsewhere that detailed examination of such contemporary views

upon criminal and/or evolutionary degeneracy as those held by such respected observers as are cited here, namely Max Nordau and Cesare Lombroso, must wait for a future chapter upon the work of Stevenson and Conan Doyle. Nevertheless, it would be negligent of me not to note here how Lombroso appears on one occasion to regard the most basic characteristics of vampirism itself as monstrous symbols of criminal degeneracy. Thus, such degeneracy itself becomes monstrous, with Dracula himself appearing to share in the archetypal criminal's '... irresistible craving for evil for its own sake, the desire not only to extinguish life in the victim, but to mutilate the corpse, tear its flesh, and drink its blood...' ('Criminal Man', 388). It is therefore unsurprising that Renfield, also an aspiring bloodsucker, should himself demonstrate what such *fin-de-siècle* discourses would regard as further psychological symptoms of this monstrous state of degeneracy, sometimes to an extent which surpasses even the excesses of his master's own corrupted soul. This is particularly true when we come to analyse the monstrous emotions that are characteristic of the behaviour of both these bloodthirsty beings, with the Count himself often described as capable of unimaginable degrees of '... wrath and fury, even to the demons of the pit...' (*Dracula*, 62). As for Renfield, the extent of his own monstrously volatile emotions, even before his master's arrival in Britain, also becomes clear when he is described in Dr Seward's early case-notes as being '... morbidly excitable; [with] periods of gloom ending in some fixed idea which I cannot make out...' (Ibid. 82). How closely such a diagnosis as this would actually relate to the psycho-medical discourses of monstrous degeneracy that were historically prevalent during the *fin de siècle*, can be gauged by looking at the work of the aforementioned Max Nordau. For, according to his conclusions, such psychological degenerates as Renfield not only suffered from the types of monstrous physical stigmata

and deranged morality that I shall later examine in depth in relation to Stevenson's *Dr.*

Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, but were also subject to yet:

... Another mental stigma of degenerates [namely]... their emotionalism... He laughs until he sheds tears, or weeps copiously without adequate occasion... and music, especially, even the most insipid and least commendable, arouses in him the most vehement emotions. He is quite proud of being so vibrant a musical instrument, and boasts that where the Philistine remains completely cold, he feels his inner self confounded, the depths of his being broken up, and the bliss of the Beautiful possessing him to the tips of his fingers... (Nordau, cited in Ledger and Lockhurst, 16).

At first glance, it would appear that, when comparing Renfield and his master in such terms, the Count is the more obviously degenerate of the two, not least on the aesthetic level that is examined here. This is certainly the case when it comes to assessing the wider cultural impact of their respective portrayals of aesthetically monstrous degeneracy, especially in relation to the legions of screen adaptations of Stoker's original text which have since been produced. For whereas Renfield is certainly known to hum a tune whilst catching his flies in Stoker's text, a far greater degree of monstrous notoriety is reserved for the Count's own sinister aestheticism, itself especially well captured within Bela Lugosi's 1931 film performance. Yet this latter quality is also to be found on occasion within Stoker's own text, such as in the Count's infamous lines upon the howling wolves of his native land, whom he rapturously hails as '... the children of the night. What music they make!' (*Dracula*, 43). Here, then, a seemingly primitive aesthetic emotionalism forms an important part of the Count's overall monstrous degeneracy, along with his ensuing appeal to the savage past, as he admonishes his bemused guest, Jonathan Harker, that '... you dwellers in the city cannot enter into the feelings of the hunter...' (*Ibid.*). While this latter comment becomes particularly ironic in relation to my previous observations upon how the Count himself later becomes a monstrous hunted animal, it also serves to remind us of the appeal to social elitism which Nordau also regarded as an inherent quality of *fin-de-siècle*

degeneracy. It is therefore interesting to note how Nordau's apocalyptic analysis insists that wealth, as well as madness, appears as a monstrous pre-requisite for those contemporaries who rejoiced in such aesthetic degeneracy, who would in turn contaminate the rest of society. Indeed, Nordau was often at pains to stress his firm belief that the majority of society, especially the mass of the bourgeois and proletarian classes, held no sympathy for degenerate *fin-de-siècle* art. Nevertheless, he was also aware of the monstrous social power of those whom he saw as a degenerate cultural elite, who themselves practised a form of pervasive vampirism in spreading degenerate artistic principles to the philistine masses. The monstrous result of their elitist fanaticism thus made it appear '... as if the whole of civilised humanity were converted to the aesthetics of the Dusk of Nations...' (Nordau, cited in Ledger and Luckhurst, 14). As such, the social and moral fibre of *fin-de-siècle* society was, despite the apparent strength of bourgeois and/or proletarian convictions on such subjects, vulnerable to invasion from alien representatives of a monstrous form of degeneracy. In Stoker's text, moreover, such degeneracy may at first also appear, like vampirism itself, to stem entirely from the ultimate alien elitist figure, Count Dracula himself. That he is not, in fact, the sole source of monstrous degeneracy which the Crew of Light has reason to fear and distrust during the course of Stoker's text will form the basis of the next stage of my analysis. For as we move from examining the ambivalent social and ethnic allegiance of Renfield to the equally uncertain status of the text's working-class Britons in these respects, we will again see how vulnerable the contemporary bourgeois imperialist order had become to a monstrous invading force. Later, we will examine how these images of a monstrous invasion of *fin-de-siècle* Britain, led by elitist alien outsiders, but aided and abetted from within by degenerate elements of society, relate further to the portrayal of monstrous womanhood within *Dracula*. This will especially

be the case in relation to the contemporary historical fears of female monstrosity represented by the idea of the New Woman, which I have already alluded to above, and which will be examined in detail later.⁵

Renfield's Vampiric Possession and other Monstrous Signs of Bourgeois Weakness in *Dracula*.

Before that, however, we must return to Renfield, and note how Nordau's linkage of *fin-de-siècle* degeneracy to a monstrously misplaced desire for social superiority, belying the true mental inadequacies of these snobbishly deluded individuals, closely befits the equally monstrous image of Dr. Seward's '...zoophagous (life-eating) maniac...' (*Dracula*, 92). We have already noted how this elitism, combined with emotional volatility, in fact forms the most important criteria for Nordau's definitions of mental degeneracy. This in turn renders Renfield an exceptionally difficult subject for the orthodox medical discourses that Dr. Seward represents to contain, even as his insanity grants him a monstrous strength which makes him equally difficult to restrain physically within the confines of Seward's asylum. Indeed, at the height of Renfield's monstrous self-delusions concerning his own power and status, which are of course encouraged by his demonic master so as to secure his services – and, perhaps, even his soul – we find that Seward remains as nonplussed as ever, and is later forced to admit that:

...I am puzzled afresh about Renfield. His moods change so rapidly that I find it difficult to keep touch with them, and as they always mean something more than his own well-being, they form a more than interesting study. This morning... his manner was that of a man commanding destiny. He was, in fact, commanding destiny – subjectively. He did not really care for any of the things of mere earth, he was in the clouds and looked down on all the weaknesses and wants of us poor mortals... (*Dracula*, 270).

As vampire and madman continue to battle for Renfield's soul, however, we find that both of the extremes to which his volatile behaviour will swing in the latter part of

Dracula represent an equally nightmarish aspect of *fin-de-siècle* bourgeois fears of degenerate elitist monstrosity. Moreover, such aspects can also be applied to bourgeois fears of the potentially monstrous proletariat and/or female with relative ease, as is indeed the case with regard to one extreme of Renfield's behaviour, when he briefly appears to be the very epitome of respectable bourgeois sanity. At this point, Renfield's monstrous plight illustrates bourgeois concern at the ease to which monstrosity could assimilate into and distort their hard-won social order, as already demonstrated during Jonathan Harker's earlier imprisonment in Transylvania. For when Renfield begs to be released, fearing the monstrous uses to which Dracula could put his still-vulnerable mind, he ultimately fails to convince the bewildered Crew of Light, which at this point remains unaware of the extent and purpose of the Count's influence over him, of his sanity. This is despite his consummate portrayal, however briefly, of a man in full possession of those social and linguistic discourses which would normally grant him a secure place in bourgeois society. As such, therefore, Renfield represents a monstrous picture of how far the bourgeoisie still feared that they could be degraded into a state of virtual serfdom by despotic invaders. With his ongoing vampiric indoctrination by the Count finally rendering him a wretched traitor to the interests of the mostly-bourgeois members of the Crew of Light, Renfield will ultimately prove unable to retain his own symbolically bourgeois social status. This is despite his desire here to prove a friend and brother to those members of the Crew of Light whom he acknowledges as '... gentlemen, who by nationality, by heredity, or by the possession of natural gifts, are fitted to hold your respective places in the moving world...' (*Dracula*, 248-249). Instead, although he will later resist the Count when the latter proves to be an ungrateful master, Renfield essentially becomes the Count's most servile vassal, as he attempts to live up to his earlier sworn oath to be '... here to do Your bidding, Master. I am Your

slave, and You will reward me, for I shall be faithful. I have worshipped You long and afar off. Now that You are here, I await Your commands, and You will not pass me by, will you, dear Master, in your distribution of good things...’ (Ibid. 121). Such misuse of religious language as this will eventually prove to be one of the key symbols of Stoker’s own usage of a historically alien, as well as largely archaic, discourse to portray contemporary bourgeois Britain’s unease at the potentially despotic cultural influence of such monstrous invaders. Moreover, the importance of such aliens’ linguistic patterns, i.e. the monstrously non-standard English of foreigners such as Van Helsing, or even the Count himself, within *Dracula*’s portrayal of monstrous invasion, will also be assessed further at a later stage of this chapter.

Until then, however, we must recognise in turn how this particular depiction of Renfield’s vampiric bloodlust in terms of a greedy thirst for material wealth is also reflected elsewhere within the many other levels of degenerate monstrosity that are visible within *Dracula*. For this insatiable materialism, while clearly represented in the monstrous figure of the Count himself, as we have seen, is also an important monstrous symbol of an ever-encroaching degenerate proletariat. Indeed, this text often portrays a proto-vampiric working-class materialism in which a thirst for money and a thirst for drink – albeit shown here in terms of alcohol rather than blood – are often inextricably combined, to the extent that the Crew of Light often attempt to exploit such tendencies. Such exploitative bourgeois practices are nevertheless prone to backfire, however, as Jonathan Harker discovers when, upon visiting one working-class informant, Thomas Snelling, he finds that ‘...unhappily he was not in a condition to remember anything. The very prospect of beer which my expected coming had opened to him had proved too much, and he had begun too early on his expected debauch...’ (*Dracula*, 263). At this point, moreover, it is important to note that the monstrously non-standard English

of the British proletarians depicted within Stoker's text also occasionally subverts the intentions of the mostly bourgeois Crew of Light. For example, as Jonathan Harker discovers during his quest for information as to the whereabouts of Dracula's London bases, the confusing nature of this social class' common usage of '... phonetic spelling had again misled me...' (*Dracula*, 265). Despite such shortcomings, however, it nevertheless remains true that the information that can be gained from such working class sources as these remains absolutely vital in the quest to find and destroy Dracula. Moreover, as Van Helsing ironically makes clear in his own broken English, some economic incentive is also usually necessary to enlist the help of such proletarian '... friends of the thirst and the language that was of bloom and blood...' (*Dracula*, 315). We also find, however, that the bourgeoisie's usual patronising contempt for this monstrous intoxication is also combined with a tendency to neglect the true dangers arising from such weaknesses, even as bourgeois characters such as Dr. Seward usually misread any monstrous signs of vampirism which appeared before Van Helsing's arrival. Certainly, on a wider imperial level, the physical weaknesses of the proletariat could potentially endanger the military power of the bourgeois-controlled British Empire during the *fin de siècle*, as various contemporary surveys of the health of army recruits in the wake of the Boer War discovered. The difficulties faced in finding military volunteers of sufficient physical calibre were in fact at their worst in the industrial towns of Northern England, with three-fifths of Manchester volunteers, for example, proving unfit for service in 1899. That such extreme recruitment problems were occurring during the *fin-de-siècle* years was bad enough, but the sense of widespread proletarian degeneracy that they engendered was even worse. For not only had the army's physical requirements for military service been repeatedly lowered in the face of these difficulties, but the implications of such statistics for Britain's overall

strength ‘... were hardly encouraging, for these recruits were drawn from the potentially fittest section of the people...’ (Harrison, 133). In the context of *Dracula*, however, it is not such fundamentally *male* proletarian degeneracy that is most to be feared by those in the Crew of Light who must themselves combat a monstrous invasion. This is not only because the text’s most obviously degenerate male monsters, namely Renfield and the Count himself, stress their own respective bourgeois and/or aristocratic social status despite occasional appearances to the contrary, of which more later. Rather, it is because not only are females the most prominent victims of vampirism in the novel, as with Mina and Lucy, but they also often play the most important role in enabling such attacks, as we shall soon discover in relation to Lucy’s maidservants, and even her own mother. It is therefore logical that I should now turn my attention to the importance of *fin-de-siècle* historical fears of female monstrosity as reflected within *Dracula*. For in these terms, it appears that not only do women in this text often become monstrous themselves, but they also serve as the chief catalysts of the monstrous spread of vampirism, the reasons for which I shall now investigate further.

Monstrous History and Predatory Female Power in *Dracula*.

On one level, at least, it initially appears that the primary reason that Lucy’s maidservants, for example, should repeatedly – albeit unwittingly – betray their mistress to the vampire’s fangs, is because they, too, suffer similar material greed to that which characterises Stoker’s male proletarians. To begin with, they too succumb to the lure of alcohol, so as to overcome their shock in the immediate aftermath of the death of Lucy’s mother. The debilitating effect of this particular sherry, which has itself been drugged with opium, both renders them unconscious, and leaves Lucy herself alone and vulnerable to Dracula’s final assault. A far more monstrous consequence of such proletarian females’ material greed later occurs when a maid steals a golden crucifix,

which Van Helsing had earlier placed around the neck of Lucy's corpse in order to contain her vampire-self within her burial-chamber. This act of proletarian female greed effectively sabotages Van Helsing's initial plan to neutralise Lucy's nascent monstrous taint through immediate decapitation and removal of the heart, ultimately enabling an invading vampirism to spread ever further within British society. Ironically, this closely follows the unknowing Dr. Seward's fulsome praise of this maid as an unusually devoted '... poor girl putting aside the terrors which she naturally had of death... so that... [her mistress'] poor clay might not be lonely till laid till eternal rest...' (*Dracula*, 177-178). Seward's misdiagnosis of this situation again forms part of a pattern whereby the native bourgeois members of the Crew of Light continually misinterpret and underestimate the significance of various monstrous events within and around Dracula's vampire invasion of their land, especially when bereft of the aid of Van Helsing. This is itself partly a consequence of their own lingering reluctance to accept that an apparently superstitious, as well as a largely archaic, discourse of supernatural monstrosity truly lies behind this monstrous invasion. One particularly telling example of its destabilising impact upon their own hitherto secure bourgeois identity occurs when Dr. Seward, himself a psychiatrist, admits that, despite the weight of evidence to the contrary, he still occasionally believes that '... we are all mad and shall wake to sanity in strait-waistcoats...' (*Dracula*, 276). Meanwhile, the ultimate implications of all this also remains extremely ambivalent in a wider *fin-de-siècle* context. For whereas several historicist commentators have linked the text's anxieties over supernaturally powerful monstrous forces to fears of the equally monstrous consequences of unleashed female sexuality, they often vary greatly in the degree of significance which they give to these two monstrous factors. On the one hand, as Robert Mighall believes, it is possible that to concentrate too much on the role of sexuality in *Dracula* is to attempt to

restrict the text's potential ideological meaning to an essentially a-historical eroticised critical discourse. As a result of this, such a restricted initial '...premise of perverted sexuality imposes a scientific order on the potential disorder of the monstrous. The evil and the bizarre are thus made intelligible by being eroticised, pathologised and classified...' (Mighall, 65-66). Alternatively, it is equally plausible that vampirism and especially female sexuality are inextricably linked in this text, as witnessed by the extremely powerful levels of fear and/or hatred which Stoker's female vampires usually engender within the Crew of Light, the reasons for which I shall examine more fully later. On this level, therefore, it would be the case that, as Sos Eltis puts it, increasing *fin-de-siècle* anxieties over unstable concepts of sexuality would themselves lead directly to ever-more-terrified new visions of degenerate female monstrosity, one of *Dracula's* most potent portrayals of which occurs even as:

The unrestrained sexual appetite and aggression displayed by the vampiric Lucy offer a nightmare vision of animal sexuality and the loss of all restraint... It is an extreme horror that calls for equally extreme measures to contain it – the unsettling violence of Lucy's staking and decapitation. Yet it is not female sexuality per se that is being punished but its uncontrolled excess. Vampire sexuality is sinisterly attractive to the uninfected humans, and seems to exist at the opposite end of a continuum from "healthy" sexuality. Jonathan Harker eagerly anticipates the fair vampire's bite despite his horror, and Mina similarly confesses that she did not want to hinder Dracula as he bared her throat. Van Helsing too... [is drawn] toward the voluptuous beauty of the female vampires in their tombs. The physical lure of the vampire, the animal sensuality that Dracula's blood unleashes, is not monstrously "other" than ordinary human sexuality, but an unrestrained manifestation of the same... (Eltis, 463-464).

By considering this critical ambivalence concerning *Dracula's* usage of monstrous sexuality, therefore, it becomes logical to regard the text's female vampires in particular as victims of the profound sexual confusion identified here, as felt by such *fin-de-siècle* bourgeois males as those who largely make up the Crew of Light. For, alongside such undeniable sexual attraction as this, which should in turn lead such potential male victims and/or abusers to appreciate fully the potential seductive power of such female

vampires, attempts are usually made to deny such monstrous women any hint of what contemporaries saw as genuine femininity. Indeed, in the novel's early stages, before any hint is made that British women could in turn possess such vampiric qualities, there appears to be an enormous contrast made between real womanhood and its monstrous supernatural counterpart. As Jonathan Harker describes the Count's three monstrous brides, it seems that being a vampire like them leads to an irrevocable divorce from any true femininity whatsoever, ironically here in sharp contrast to their future almost-sister, for '...Mina is a woman, and there is naught in common. They are devils of the pit...' (*Dracula*, 75). It is also extremely significant in this context that the most monstrous crime which the three vampire brides successfully commit prior to this, as opposed to their ultimate failure to seduce and/or feed upon Jonathan Harker in the face of Dracula's own monstrous wrath, turns out to be infanticide. For as they feast upon the peasant child which their monstrous sire had earlier abducted whilst in Harker's clothing, not only do they deprive their child-victim's own mother of any meaningful future, and thus – as Harker himself believes – render her own death by wolf-pack a merciful fate by comparison. More importantly, they are in fact also beginning a pattern of monstrous female infanticide which will later be continued by their other British 'sister', Lucy Westenra, in her own undead guise as the notorious 'Bloofer lady'. Such monstrous attacks can surely be linked in turn to contemporary bourgeois male anxieties concerning what they saw as the potentially damaging effects of encroaching female emancipation upon the very future of their imperial race.

This was especially the case while the New Woman appeared engaged, as a satirical article in 'Cornhill Magazine' during 1894 suggested, upon a foolish campaign '... to prove that woman's mission is something higher than the bearing of children and the bringing them up...' (cited in Ledger and Luckhurst, 83).⁶ Motherhood in *Dracula*,

meanwhile, often appears to be the subject of an almost equally deep ambivalence as that with which female sexuality itself is already regarded in this text. This is further reflected not only by the wretched fate of the peasant woman mentioned above, but also by niggling critical uncertainties regarding the blood-status of Mina's later child, Quincey. (For he remains the potential collective heir of not only the Crew of Light, but also of Dracula himself, whose own contagious blood still lurks somewhere within Mina's veins). At this point, too, it is appropriate to recall the important role which Lucy's own misguided mother plays in enabling her daughter's own vampiric infection, as by accident or design she constantly removes the anti-vampire defences such as garlic which Van Helsing had constructed. Indeed, such unfortunate female actions as this can almost appear to justify, alongside the already-noted negligence of Lucy's maidservants, Van Helsing's own later misogynist rejection of female involvement as he (unsuccessfully) attempts to save Lucy's life from the after-effects of Dracula's assaults. This, indeed, appears to lie behind Van Helsing's ultimate disregard for any possibility of using easily-available female donors while attempting to find suitable candidates for blood transfusion to Lucy, finally saying that '...I fear to trust those women, even if they would have courage to submit...' (*Dracula*, 262). Moreover, we have seen how female vampires such as Lucy and her three Transylvanian 'sisters' increasingly appear so irredeemably monstrous as to not only deserve exile from contemporary bourgeois ideals of womanhood, but also, for the Crew of Light at least, to require the enactment of an extremely brutal extermination. Indeed, such deeds provoke a degree of vicious hatred which annuls even Lucy's hitherto much-loved status amongst the men of the Crew, as can be seen clearly in Dr. Seward's expressions of horrified loathing upon first encountering her new incarnation as a bloodily infanticidal vampire:

The sweetness was turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty, and the purity to wanton voluptuous wantonness... Van Helsing raised his lantern... by

the concentrated light that fell on Lucy's face we could see that the lips were crimson with fresh blood, and that the stream had trickled over her chin and stained the purity of her lawn death-robe... At that moment the remnant of my love passed into hate and loathing; had she then to be killed, I could have done it with savage delight. As she looked, her eyes blazed with unholy light, and the face became wreathed with a voluptuous smile. Oh, God, how it made me shudder to see it! With a careless motion, she flung to the ground, callous as a devil, the child that up to now she had clutched strenuously to her breast, growling over it as a dog growls over a bone... (*Dracula*, 218-219).

This latter detail illustrates yet again how vampirism appears in Stoker's text to be an act of historical regression, triggering on this occasion Lucy's monstrous transformation from membership of Britain's supposed social elite into a sexually degenerate variety of predatory beast. Where this of course differs from other such *fin-de-siècle* texts upon monstrous degeneration as Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde* or Wilde's *Dorian Gray*, however, is in *Dracula*'s concentration upon such historical transformations as a mostly *female* phenomenon, a preoccupation which it most notably shares with Haggard's *She* among its contemporaries. It is Haggard's text, indeed, which provides us with perhaps the most vivid contemporary image of female sexuality being monstrous in its own right, at least from a contemporary male perspective. As with Lucy, therefore, such sexualised female monstrosity quickly becomes something that appears to *She*'s bourgeois male observers as something utterly loathsome at the most primal, instinctual level, with animal lust mixing with awe-struck terror as they struggle to verbally confine a monstrously uncanny woman:

... Then all of a sudden the long, corpse-like wrappings fell from her to the ground, and my eyes travelled up her form, now only robed in a garb of clinging white that did but serve to show its perfect and imperial shape, instinct with a life that was more than life, and with a certain serpent-like grace that was more than human. ... I gazed above them at her face, and – I do not exaggerate – shrank back blinded and amazed. I have heard of the beauty of celestial beings, now I saw it; only this beauty, with all its awful loveliness and purity, was *evil* – at least, at the time, it struck me as evil. How am I to describe it? I cannot – simply, I cannot! The man does not live whose pen could convey a sense of what I saw... It lay rather, if it

can be said to have had any fixed abiding place, in a visible majesty, in an imperial grace, in a godlike stamp of softened power, which shone upon that radiant countenance like a living halo. Never before had I guessed what beauty made sublime could be – and yet, the sublimity was a dark one – the glory was not all of heaven – though none the less was it glorious... (*She*, 155).

Such monstrously sublime female power as is here possessed by Haggard's Ayesha, and again by Stoker's female vampires, can in my opinion be directly linked with contemporary ideas of history itself as being not only profoundly monstrous, as shown above, but also profoundly female in its nature. For, by becoming part of Dracula's ever-expanding vampire 'family', women such as Lucy become powerfully connected to a centuries-old dynastic history of bloody imperial conquest, as we have already seen. Similarly, Ayesha's apparent immortality can be seen as being at least partially responsible for the enthralling fascination which her all-conquering female beauty exerts upon her *fin-de-siècle* male observers. Her age-old imperial history, itself already examined above, thus renders her an equally powerful '... all-inclusive projection of the anthropological or archaeological fancy – a storehouse of all that human civilisation has created and endured... The fact that she... is the object of the quest... [recognises] that it is the female of the species who perpetuates culture, much as society's recorded achievements may carry the indelible, and selective, mark of the male...' (Fraser, 45). From this, it would be logical to suggest that, when Haggard and Stoker's bourgeois male protagonists find themselves confronted by such potentially immortal females of monstrous power as Ayesha and Lucy respectively, they are unconsciously faced by the monstrous possibility that their own historical achievements are meaningless by comparison. Indeed, vampirism in *Dracula* thus owes much of its monstrous power to its capacity to reconnect *fin-de-siècle* femininity to an age-old historical vision of monstrous imperial power, allowing in turn far greater expression of female power than even a British Empire which was itself ostensibly ruled by a woman, for:

Despite Mina's pious disclaimer that she has anything in common with the New Woman, it seems more plausible to read the novel as a nineties myth of newly empowered womanhood, whose two heroines are violently transformed from victims to instigators of their story. Aggrandized by her ambiguous transformations, Mina, and by implication womanhood itself, grows into the incarnation of irresistible Truth... The power of Dracula himself narrows to the dimensions of his vulnerable coffin, for despite his ambitious designs on the human race, he seems to be the world's last surviving male vampire. Neither Renfield nor the Russian sailors Dracula attacked at sea are transformed after death; only his three thirsty brides, Lucy, and Mina rise into the Undead. Had Dracula survived the end of the novel, this army of women might indeed have devoured the human race under his generalship, for as far as we see, his greatest power lies in his ability to catalyze the awesome changes potential in womanhood, in those modest personifications of divine and human truth... (Auerbach, 'Magi', 28).

How far these feminised historical truths appeared to Stoker's bourgeois male contemporaries to herald the demise of the British Empire itself, and to what extent the figure of the New Woman appeared to be a monstrous, almost apocalyptic sign of such potentially revolutionary historical change, must now be examined further.

Dracula and the Monstrous New Woman.

Historically, it appears that the first written usage of the term of 'New Woman' to describe the increasingly emancipated *fin-de-siècle* female was made in an 1894 article by Sarah Grand, entitled 'The New Aspect of the Woman Question', and first published in the *North American Review*. Significantly – with regard to the direction of my own thesis, that is – it is interesting to note that this article itself acknowledges that at least some of her male contemporaries were likely to regard such radical social changes as heralding inherently monstrous historical developments. Indeed, she believed it inevitable that such historically paranoid men would regard female emancipation, as personified in their eyes by the New Woman, as marking a sinister attempt to wrest power from what they saw as *fin-de-siècle* society's rightful male bourgeois rulers, for the idea:

That woman should ape man and desire to change places with him was conceivable to him as he stood on the hearth-rug in his lord-and-master-monarch-of-all-I-survey attitude, well inflated with his own conceit; but that she should be content to develop the good material which she finds in herself and be only dissatisfied with the poor quality of that which is being offered to her in man, her mate, must appear to him to be a thing as monstrous as it is unaccountable. 'If women don't want to be men, what do they want?' asked the Bawling Brotherhood when the first misgiving of the truth flashed upon them; and then, to reassure themselves, they pointed to a certain kind of woman in proof... that we were all unsexing ourselves... (Cited in Ledger and Luckhurst, 88-89).

Often, modern critical readers of *Dracula*, such as Sos Eltis and Marie Mulvey-Roberts, take up this idea of the New Woman as an apparently 'unsexed' threat to the established gender boundaries of *fin-de-siècle* bourgeois society, boundaries which had in any case already been considerably weakened over recent decades. Economic, legal, and educational changes had by then transformed the potential social status of many, although by no means all, women in British society, although particular emphasis must here be placed upon the spectacular pace of recent technological change, especially in communications, which is felt throughout *Dracula* itself. Such new developments offered entirely new professional opportunities for the increasingly independent educated bourgeois woman in particular. This is especially reflected in *Dracula* by the importance to the Crew of Light's success of Mina's wide-ranging command of such disparate examples of *fin-de-siècle* communications technology as shorthand, railway timetables, and in particular the typewriter. Indeed, with her unintended acquisition of telepathic powers alongside the unholy taint of the Count's vampire bite, Mina in a sense becomes a living communications medium, who under hypnosis provides even more vital information regarding the Count. The process is, of course, capable of being reversed, and had the Count sought to make even more use of this potential source of knowledge, he might have escaped his hunters more effectively. For now, however, we must reflect that without Mina's educated grasp of modern technology, not to mention her telepathic prowess, the hunt for Dracula himself might never have begun, a fact

reflected when the Count first attempts to destroy all the Crew's sources of information regarding his monstrous activities. He is, of course, thwarted in this desire by Mina's other, typewritten copy of all this, yet this record's future historical status is often seen as highly suspect in itself, despite Van Helsing's assurances that the Crew in fact '... want no proofs; we ask none to believe us...' (*Dracula*, 369). It is precisely this sense of a clear-cut authentic historical structure being replaced by a new-fangled amalgam of female-driven sources of illegitimate power, potentially revolutionary in its very modernity, that can be detected in male bourgeois fears of the New Woman, as anticipated above by Sarah Grand herself. Other critics have already examined the effect of the New Woman upon *Dracula*'s portrayal of a monstrous world of ever-shifting gender boundaries, which both allow vampirised females unprecedented access to hitherto male symbols of power, and reveals in its male characters potential vulnerability to previously feminised emotional states. After all, is it not precisely when Mina is excluded from the inner workings of the Crew of Light's campaign against the Count that they suffer, in the latter's vampiric attack upon her, what appears to be their moment of greatest defeat since losing Lucy? Paradoxically, however, does this selfsame vampiric infection not in fact act as an uniquely successful transfusion, allowing them to gain the previously monstrous supernatural qualities that, as we have seen, play such an important role in finally overthrowing Dracula's power?

Similarly, the stresses placed upon the men of the Crew during the monstrous events of the novel does unleash previously untapped emotional aspects of their characters, which can yet appear almost conventional when expressed solely between men, as when Lord Godalming breaks down in the aftermath of Lucy's 'death'. As Dr. Seward attempts to comfort his grief-stricken friend, indeed, he reflects that in '... such cases men do not need much expression. A grip of the hand, the tightening of an arm

over the shoulder, a sob in unison, are expressions of sympathy dear to a man's heart...'
(*Dracula*, 180). It has, in fact, become a critical commonplace that one of Stoker's primary interests in *Dracula* is to establish such homo-social emotional bonds as being themselves vital for the quest to defeat *fin-de-siècle* monsters such as the Count himself. This in turn would appear to be in keeping with his own hero-worship of emotionally powerful male *fin-de-siècle* cultural icons such as the American poet, Walt Whitman, or the English actor, Henry Irving, who was Stoker's employer, if not master.⁷ Such male emotional bonds, indeed, can appear to provide ideological cover for the unleashing of what some critics see as a virulently misogynist violence. As a result of this, for example, the Crew's destruction of the vampire Lucy appears to be far less of a blessed act of soul-saving proportions, than a '...gang rape, which crudely asserts masculine strength and power...' (Cranny-Francis, 73). Certainly, as we have shown, the degree of sheer hatred which is directed at the vampire Lucy by the men of the Crew, especially when contrasted with the love which she had previously inspired in them while human, would be capable of provoking such a violent, even warlike response. This rings especially true given Lord Godalming's infamous resemblance to '...a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it...' (*Dracula*, 223). When it comes to Mina's own assault by a monstrously predatory male, meanwhile, it is significant that the man who most obviously betrays her to the Count's clutches, namely Renfield, should so closely resemble the sado-masochistic, servile *fin-de-siècle* bourgeois male '...executioner's assistant...' identified by Bram Dijkstra (352). According to this critic, such wretched bourgeois masochists as Renfield forever longed to possess the violent power incarnated in such monstrous master-figures as the Count:

But all the while the executioner's assistant... continues to live a meaningless existence, does not share in the executioner's wealth, and yet

will always do his master's bidding, partly so that he may continue to dream of taking the executioner's place. It is this which makes him the executioner's perfect assistant, the workhorse without whom the imperial sadist could not maintain his power. The assistant is the parasite who gives his master life. In 1900 he had already bought a house, and lived quite comfortably among the... enlightened middle class. The principle surrogate he used to fill his master's role and give meaning to his insignificance as a worker in the quarries of power was his wife, whom he forced to impersonate the devil so that he might play the martyr... Only those with a truly ruthless hunger for acquisition could play leading roles, sit on the table during the great feast of imperial acquisition which was taking place everywhere and from which, on the material level, both the aristocracy and the middle class were certainly benefiting considerably. Thus, even many of the most comfortably situated men in late nineteenth-century culture felt a vague, poorly defined sense of marginalization. If the robber barons and the already faceless trusts now seemed to have become the true movers and shakers – were the new executioners – the cloudy-browed middle aristocracy and middle bourgeoisie formed but an uneasy band of executioner's assistants. Aware that they were no longer executioners themselves, they looked around for someone to take the blame. And, as always, woman was conveniently available... (Dijkstra, 353-354).

When Renfield actually meets the female victim whom he is being compelled to sacrifice to the demonic desires of his vampire master, however, he is filled with decidedly mixed feelings about her, befitting one whom we have shown to be a deeply ambivalent man in psychological terms. This is perhaps best expressed by his otherwise puzzling farewell, given as Mina leaves, and itself of a highly ambivalent nature: '...I pray God that I may never see your sweet face again. May He bless you and keep you...' (*Dracula*, 239). It would therefore be logical to conclude that this expresses in turn what we have already detected as an equally deep historical ambivalence widely felt during the *fin de siècle*, between scientific and supernatural explanations of sexual monstrosity within texts such as *Dracula*. Thus, it would follow that Britain's all-powerful bourgeois imperial order was itself ruled by hitherto '...proudly rational men and women of the 1890s [who] were reluctant either to go back to belief in the wiles of Satan or to go forward to belief in the supremacy of sex...' (Jarrett, 165). It is my contention that such deeply rooted, historically ambivalent fears concerning *fin-de-*

siècle gender issues are combined within *Dracula* in the monstrous form of the predatory female vampire. For her own monstrous power is, according to my analysis, derived in turn from her unique historical position as a representative of both contemporary forces for women's emancipation, and ancient sources of female power which had long defied the control of a seemingly male-dominated social order. Such ambivalent fears of a monstrous *fin-de-siècle* womanhood can also be connected in turn with the equally contemporary anxieties which the ruling bourgeois order felt regarding its own religious and imperial destiny, and which I shall now proceed to examine more closely.

In analysing this sense of a monstrous womanhood in relation to *Dracula's* religious significance, for example, it is useful to note that, for at least one *fin-de-siècle* feminist writer, namely Mona Caird, the repressive influence of religious discourse upon women's rights over the centuries had itself taken on monstrous proportions. This was particularly the case in relation to questions of marriage and sexual freedom, which, according to Caird, had been dominated by frankly misogynist ideological perspectives ever since the Protestant Reformation, as opposed to the comparative liberty in such matters which she detected in medieval culture, for:

In the age of chivalry the marriage-tie was not at all strict, and our present ideas of "virtue" and "honour" were practically non-existent. Society was in what is called a chaotic state; there was extreme licence on all sides, and although the standard of morality was far severer for the woman than for the man, still she had more or less liberty to give herself as passion dictated, and society tacitly accorded her a right of choice in matters of love. But Luther ignored all the claims of passion in a woman; in fact, she had no recognised claims whatever; she was not permitted to object to any part in life that might be assigned her; the notion of resistance to his decision never occurred to him – her role was one of duty and service; she figured as the legal property of a man, the safeguard against sin, and the victim of that vampire "Respectability" which thenceforth was to fasten upon, and suck the life-blood of all womanhood... (Cited in Ledger and Luckhurst, 77-78).

By contrast, when women such as Lucy and Mina are bitten by their bloodthirsty vampire Count, they are effectively assimilated into a monstrous dynastic history stretching back centuries to the very medieval period during which, as Caird believes, women's sexual freedom was more advanced than during the *fin de siècle*. As many commentators have pointed out, however, vampirism does not necessarily automatically lead to greater expressions of sexual license by its female victims, despite all the descriptions of monstrous voluptuousness which we have seen to pervade Dr Seward's descriptions of the undead Lucy, for example. Indeed, I am not claiming here that the latter is necessarily as unrelentingly monogamous as Haggard's Ayesha, who after all had awaited the return of Kallikrates, the lover whom she herself had originally murdered, for over two millennia. Nevertheless, it is true that Lucy herself, whilst undead, does not display as much indiscriminate desire as might be associated with the living girl who could not understand why '... can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble...' (*Dracula*, 80). For upon first encountering her erstwhile husband, Lord Godalming, she more-or-less ignores the rest of the Crew of Light, instead imploring him to leave '... these others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you. Come, and we can rest together. Come, my husband, come...' (Ibid. 219). Similarly, Caird's portrayal of the intimate connection between Protestantism and a monstrous curtailing of women's freedom is not necessarily reflected in Stoker's *Dracula*, not least because Protestantism itself proves utterly ineffective for combating the threat of a monstrous vampiric invasion, which itself mostly takes the form of subverting British women. Rather, the holy iconography of the old religion, Catholicism, which the Reformation itself had been designed to supplant, is instead required in order to battle against the Count with any hope of success. Given, moreover, the importance placed in Catholic doctrine upon the Virgin Mary, as well as

its unique support for female religious professionals in the guise of the nunnery system, it thus appears logical to connect this uncanny power of Catholic ritual to that of its monstrous targets, in particular women. This is despite the great symbolic importance of the monstrous forces of modern female emancipation which the ruling male bourgeoisie feared were arising in the form of the New Woman, and which I have already examined fully in the context of *Dracula*. For in *fin-de-siècle* Europe, as Eric Hobsbawm remarks, statistically, at least, traditionally devout ‘... women who opted for the defence of their sex through piety enormously outnumbered those who opted for liberation...’ (*Empire*, 210). Significantly, it is an old woman who gives Jonathan Harker the crucifix which will, unbeknownst to him, first save his life from Dracula’s monstrous hunger. This is despite his initial reluctance to accept it, however, since ‘... as an English Churchman I have been taught to regard such things as in some measure idolatrous... She saw, I suppose, the doubt in my face, for she put the rosary round my neck, and said, “For your mother’s sake”...’ (*Dracula*, 31). I have already discussed the ambivalent connections that exist between motherhood and an often feminised monstrosity within *Dracula*, and it is therefore also plausible that similar connections existed in relation to *fin-de-siècle* Catholicism, for, as Derek Jarrett notes below:

In Protestant eyes there was an obvious connection between popery and Satanism. Anyone superstitious enough to believe in the power of rituals and sacraments to ward off evil would be tempted to dabble with evil himself in the way doctors experimented with disease in order to test the efficacy of their remedies. How could you distinguish the experiment from the real thing, how could you tell whether papists were girding themselves against Satan or preparing to serve him, since both activities involved the same mumbo-jumbo? Worse still, how could you be sure that your Protestant brethren were not papists or Satanists in disguise? (Jarrett, 168).

Certainly, it is also plausible to connect such contradictions as these between the apparently holy role of Catholic ritual and doctrine, and the potentially monstrous uses

to which Protestants feared their power could be turned instead, to those which seem to arise concerning the Count's own monstrous power. For example, Van Helsing is equally conscientious in using the holy power of the Host – itself in this case a foreign invader, as he originally brings it from Amsterdam – to purify the coffin lairs of both Dracula's three brides *and* of the monstrous Count himself. Yet when he is in exterminated in turn by the imperial weaponry of the Crew of Light, the traditional practices of vampire lore which appeared so necessary for killing both Lucy and the three brides, namely staking and decapitation, no longer appear necessary. It is almost as if Dracula's power is no longer what it was, given the loss of his monstrous female army, and it is certainly true that the loyalty of his male Slovak army melts away while covered by the guns of the Crew of Light. To complicate matters even further, not only does such religious iconography finally appear unnecessary – or even unable, according to one particular line of criticism – to destroy the vampire Count, but it also forms a necessary part of his own undead existence. For as Van Helsing acknowledges, while unhallowed earth allows the Count to fully express his monstrous powers, nevertheless it is truly '...not the least of its terrors that this evil thing is rooted deep in all good; in soil barren of holy memories it cannot rest...' (*Dracula*, 245). It is thus unsurprising that the status of the Count's earth-boxes should play such an important logistical role in the progress and eventual thwarting of Dracula's monstrous invasion, nor that he should gather funds for it from ancient treasures, buried underneath his own native soil. For this deeply historic capital is, I believe, that which he caused to be unearthed on the one night of the year when evil forces are traditionally allowed full sway in Transylvania, namely the eve of St. George's Day.

Ironically, therefore, the Count's monstrous invasion of Britain becomes economically feasible on the holy day of England's very own patron saint, and indeed,

British gold lies among this monstrous ancient hoard, still ‘... covered with a film of dust, as though it had lain long in the ground...’ (*Dracula*, 70). Earlier, I discussed how Britain herself increasingly depended upon economic imperialism in particular to sustain its own global wealth and power, and it is thus appropriate that the lifeblood of bourgeois imperial capitalism should now be used to overthrow the dominant power which had for so long sustained it. The monstrous warfare which such invasions were usually expected to presage in popular *fin-de-siècle* invasion fiction, will here be financed from an equally monstrous land with ‘... hardly a foot of soil in the region which has not been enriched by the blood of men, patriots or invaders...’ (*Dracula*, 46). Indeed, *Dracula*’s critique of a monstrous vampire capitalism has, I believe, equally uncanny socio-historical roots, for whereas I have already demonstrated how important bourgeois memories of bloody aristocratic tyranny are in understanding the Count, he sometimes also demonstrates a form of monstrous future capitalism wherein the worker appears extinct. This is most obvious in the fact that *Dracula*, despite being a monstrous lord with access to his own private army, has no domestic servants, a fact soon noticed by the Briton, Jonathan Harker, whose own home economy included unusually high numbers of such workers during the *fin de siècle*. Whether this represents an economy where the worker is no longer necessary, or whether this addresses a far more monstrous prospect for the bourgeoisie, i.e., that the aristocrat and the worker have somehow combined into one monstrous body to eliminate society’s middle orders, is unclear. Nevertheless, the British Empire faces invasion by a monster who, while still far enough removed from a comfortable bourgeois life as to do his own menial chores, is nevertheless so powerful an embodiment of the monstrous foreign wealth upon which British power depended, as to bleed money on one occasion. For as Jonathan Harker first attempts to attack the Count with his powerful Kukri knife, he

fails to pierce his monstrous enemy's heart, succeeding only in cutting '... the cloth of his coat, making a wide gap whence a bundle of bank-notes and a stream of gold fell out...' (*Dracula*, 304). It now remains for me to briefly discuss further the implications of all this for the Count's own monstrous invasion project. After this, I shall go on to my next chapter, discussing the precise nature of the actual monstrous combination of apocalyptic warfare and communist revolution which history held in store for the British Empire in the *fin-de-siècle* context of H. G. Wells's monstrous novels.

Monstrous Invasions and Imperial Power Games in *Dracula*.

Dwelling for now upon one Wells novel in particular, namely *The War of the Worlds*, in the context of Stoker's *Dracula*, meanwhile, it is unsurprising that both of these texts upon monstrous invasions should contain a great deal of shared historical background, since they first appeared barely a year apart. A useful summary of several of the various similarities and differences between their respective treatments of the popular invasion genre in monstrous terms is made by R. J. Dingley, who describes how:

In 1897, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was published and H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* was serialised in *Pearson's Magazine*... In both, England is infiltrated by alien creatures of more-than-human power, and familiar locations... become the setting for nightmare events. In both books the alien creatures, for all of their astonishing accomplishments, are vulnerable to quite commonplace deterrents... Both in Wells' novel and in Stoker's, the alien species is possessed of an insatiable thirst... Both the Martians and the vampire find their incursions facilitated by Western humanity's inability to credit either the existence or the strength of such formidable adversaries... Greedy for the corporeal blood of others, Dracula is anxious to conserve the purity of his own... The Count's invasion, then, like that of the Martians, reflects imperialistic motivations. Not merely does he need to subdue new worlds in order to survive; he feels, also, that racial superiority gives him the right to empire. The right, and also, perhaps, the moral justification. European imperialists frequently vindicated their predatory activities with the argument that they were extending to a lower form of life the benefits of advanced civilisation and of religious enlightenment... Wells' Martians, of course, have no such missionary excuse, but Dracula does in fact appear to be under the impression that he is ameliorating the lot of his victims... With the air of a truly philanthropic imperialist, the Count is offering his prey the privilege of assimilation into

a master-race, even the possibility of becoming herself a conqueror... (13-17).

As such, whereas a successful Martian invasion would see the end of British history as anything other than chronicling a race of livestock and/or house-pets, Dracula, with his own rich imperial history belying his links to a tyrannical past, is offering the prospect of a cross-racial imperial alliance. Whereas most *fin-de-siècle* invasion narratives published since Colonel George Chesney's initial best-seller, *The Battle of Dorking* (1871), featured either Germany or France as the most likely invaders, depending upon the current state of British foreign policy, by 1897 France appeared to be the more likely future enemy. This was particularly the case in the wake of several Anglo-French colonial disputes which had arisen over recent years, as well as France's own defensive alliance with Britain's old Crimean enemy, the Russian Empire, in 1894. At the time of *Dracula's* publication, therefore, most contemporary invasion fiction by authors such as William Le Queux, displayed a long-lingering British imperial desire for a racial coalition with their Teutonic cousins. Had this occurred, it might well have been possible to permanently squash any possibility of the dreaded foreign invasion, by forging an unbeatable military combination through '...joint operations of the Royal Navy and the Imperial German Army. The Anglo-Saxon Century had truly arrived...' (Eby, 28). Analysing *Dracula* in the context of such shifting imperial rivalries, therefore, it is possible to discover connections between several of the rival European powers and the Count's own monstrous invasion. (Although, interestingly, this is not the case with the French, unless they were so monstrously fearful for Stoker as to be literally unspeakable!) Transylvania was, after all, then part of the ramshackle Austro-Hungarian Empire, whose ethnic chaos would eventually trigger the First World War. The Count himself, meanwhile, is brought to England on a vessel of the Russian Empire, whose own impending collapse would herald the monstrous fulfilment of the

bourgeoisie's worst fear, namely that of Communism, as identified above. The status of Imperial Germany in *Dracula*, however, remains highly ambiguous, given that German is the most commonly used language in Dracula's homeland, as well as the Count's boasting about his blood-links with Europe's most notoriously savage invaders, the Huns. After all, the latter's own notorious name and monstrous historical reputation would become synonymous with British anti-German propaganda following the outbreak of war in 1914. The prominence of the often inappropriately German-speaking Van Helsing amongst the Crew of Light, however, leads me to speculate that perhaps his own great power and status in the battle against the vampire Count is perhaps a tacit admission of a longing in Stoker for an Anglo-German racial alliance. The fact that Stoker should be so careful as to hide this desire behind Van Helsing's explicit Dutch nationality, which would in turn render him neutral in terms of *fin-de-siècle* European politics, nevertheless shows a degree of ambivalence that is in fact rather common in relation to Van Helsing. For his own extreme conduct in battling vampirism would, under any other circumstances, be seen in the same horrified light as is voiced here by Dr. Seward, since mutilating Lucy's corpse would ordinarily be of '...no good to her, to us, to science, to human knowledge – why do it? Without such it is monstrous...'

(*Dracula*, 177).

Other critics have already discerned in Stoker's text a similarly ambiguous portrayal of the imperial implications of yet another foreign ally of the Crew of Light, namely the American, Quincey Morris. For all that he does in battling Dracula, including the ultimate sacrifice of his own life, has been seen as Stoker's attempt to assimilate into the British establishment the vast power of the foreign rival which would ultimately supersede their imperial role more effectively than any other. As such, Morris appears by the end almost as a *de facto* archetypal Englishman, as finally '... to

our bitter grief, with a smile and in silence, he died, a gallant gentleman...’ (*Dracula*, 368). It is certainly true that Stoker acknowledges the potentially vast power that America could wield in any struggle for imperial dominance, for as Seward claims in relation to Morris, if America could ‘... go on breeding men like that, she will be a power in the world indeed...’ (Ibid. 184). Moreover, critics such as Franco Moretti and Stephen D. Arata see Morris as himself somewhat shadily associated with Dracula’s own monstrous cause, before apparently shifting sides as the latter’s invasion attempt is steadily beaten back, and, indeed, reversed.⁸ Both make reference to suspicious incidents in relation to Morris, such as when he fires upon the Crew’s initial meeting from the outside, ostensibly having just seen a monstrous bat, even as Van Helsing is outlining the initial stages of their campaign against Dracula. Morris would therefore be as suspiciously tainted with monstrosity as his later namesake, Mina’s own child; for the latter, after all, inherits Dracula’s monstrous blood as part of his racial make-up, since his mother was forced to swallow the ancient vampire’s own blood as part of her own infection. For according to Moretti, Morris himself represents an encroaching American capitalism that is itself the monstrous offspring of British bourgeois power, with the result that the American’s murder appears rather as a British-sanctioned crime which the latter, however, cannot acknowledge. It would be unwise, however, to accept such conclusions as this uncritically, for both Moretti and Arata are, in my opinion, capable of overstating their case in damning Morris as a *de facto* vampire. For example, it is emphatically *not* the case that Morris is the first character in the novel to use the word ‘vampire’ in any context, as they both appear to claim. That dubious honour belongs instead to Jonathan Harker, whose early attempts to decipher Transylvania’s myriad languages allow him to hear monstrous words ‘... which mean the same thing, one being Slovak and the other Servian [*sic*] for something that is either were-wolf or

vampire...’ (*Dracula*, 32; my italics). More widely, it hardly seems far-fetched to claim that the Crew’s efforts to conquer Dracula’s monstrous invasion would hardly get off the ground without the efforts of those of its members who at various points appear tainted by either foreign and/or monstrous blood. Amongst these we must not only include Morris, who takes a leading role in the Crew’s adventurous hunting exploits, but also Mina and Van Helsing, who provide the Crew with most of its intellectual and organisational power. It is therefore unsurprising that Van Helsing should place great emphasis upon the fact that the defenders ‘... have on our side power of combination – a power denied to the vampire kind; we have resources of science; we are free to act and think...’ (*Dracula*, 243). For in a *fin-de-siècle* context bedevilled by fears of monstrous invasion aided and abetted by a monstrous internal degeneracy, particularly amongst both the native proletariat and increasingly emancipated female Britons, a united defence often appeared to be Britain’s only possible salvation. Yet we have already seen how *fin-de-siècle* science itself plays a very ambiguous role in battling Dracula’s invasion. For the importance of such modern technology as railways, typewriters and repeating rifles in their campaign is matched, if not surpassed, by the importance of the ancient religious iconography whose own ambiguous role we have already described. Moreover, the efforts of the best doctors, even when backed with the very lifeblood of the imperial British race and its foreign allies, remain powerless to save victims of monstrous vampirism such as the unfortunate Lucy, as we have seen. It now remains to see how science itself came to be seen in the context of H. G. Wells’s scientific romances as a monstrous historical force, heralding the overthrow of Britain’s *fin-de-siècle* bourgeois imperial order by an encroaching future of monstrous global warfare and revolution. For we have already seen in *Dracula* how a *fin-de-siècle* scientific viewpoint could become a weakness in the face of monstrous invasion, limiting the

nation's rulers in turn to a narrow historical viewpoint regarding Britain's imperial capitalist future, for as Van Helsing insists to his sceptical British colleague, Dr.

Seward:

Ah, it is the fault of our science that it wants to explain all; and if it explain not, then it says there is nothing to explain. But yet we see around us every day the growth of new beliefs, which think themselves new; and which are yet but the old, which pretend to be young – like the fine ladies at the opera. ... Let me tell you, my friend, that there are things done to-day in electrical science which would have been deemed unholy by the very men who discovered electricity – who would themselves not so long before have been burned as wizards. There are always mysteries in life. Why was it that Methuselah lived nine hundred years... and yet that poor Lucy, with four men's blood in her poor veins, could not live even one day? ... Do you know all the mystery of life and death? Do you know the altogether of comparative anatomy, and can say wherefore the qualities of brutes are in some men, and not in others... (*Dracula*, 200-201).

During this chapter, we have seen how, despite the apparently confident assertions of ardent imperialists such as Joseph Chamberlain and Cecil Rhodes, *fin-de-siècle* Britain nevertheless felt itself to be extremely susceptible to the monstrous forces which could potentially be unleashed by future historical change. (This in turn was epitomised by the increasing power of Britain's chief imperial and economic rivals, namely the USA and, above all, Germany). On one level, this is yet another example of Britain's lingering vulnerability to invasion, which *Dracula* depicts as a hellish, almost apocalyptic event, which would leave this once-mighty imperial nation under the ruthless control of bloodthirsty foreign tyrants. That Stoker's vampire overlord should not only be a foreign invader, but an aristocratic one to boot, demonstrates how Britain's bourgeois rulers still feared the lingering power of their aristocratic predecessors. Indeed, such fears could only have been reinforced by the overwhelmingly aristocratic nature of the German military and ruling class, whose imperial prowess had, until as recently as 1890, been personified by the Machiavellian diplomacy of Prince Otto Von Bismarck. Certainly, the Count declares himself to be

equally adept at imperial power-games, and mockingly insists that the crusading Crew of Light ‘...should have kept their energies for use closer to home. Whilst they played wits against me... who commanded nations, and intrigued for them... hundreds of years before they were born – I was countermining them...’ (*Dracula*, 288). Moreover, this also suggests that Britain’s own internal weaknesses would be what rendered them vulnerable to such a monstrous invader. For the aforementioned lingering power of aristocratic misrule to undermine bourgeois interests was aggravated still further by the apparent biological degeneracy of the proletariat, as well as by the radical historical ideas of the monstrous New Woman. Because of this, Stoker’s invading vampires could successfully infiltrate the ideological structures of bourgeois-led British society, and thus undermine its internal defences to the extent of appearing diabolically attractive to its weakest members such as Renfield and Lucy. (At the same time, indeed, many bourgeois Britons also become increasingly attracted to the idea of allying with the nation’s greatest imperial and economic rivals, namely the USA, and even Germany itself, as represented in *Dracula* by Morris and Van Helsing, respectively). As a result, *fin-de-siècle* Britain would have to confront the monstrous historical truth that its ruling bourgeois society would itself be forced to adopt ever more monstrous foreign practices to survive in an increasingly hostile environment, especially given the various arms races which would soon loom between Britain and Germany. These in turn would grow increasingly dangerous, especially under the bellicose new German ruler, Kaiser Wilhelm, until, by the outbreak of the First World War, both nations’s military stockpiles would increasingly resemble the monstrous technology of H. G. Wells’s scientific romances. But increasingly, *fin-de-siècle* science itself had apparently become monstrous in the process, a development which is anticipated here by the ease with which even the supernatural Dracula himself can be seen ‘... creeping into knowledge

experimentally...' (*Dracula*, 301). To what extent it was true that science was indeed evolving into even more monstrous forms, and how much influence these developments in turn had upon bourgeois historical fears of an increasingly monstrous, if not apocalyptic, future, will be the main interest of my next chapter on Wells. For as the historical spectres of the First World War and the Russian Revolution loomed ever larger, there seemed less and less ideological room for Van Helsing's proud confidence that the imperial British bourgeoisie and their allies were destined to overcome even the most monstrous foreign invaders. After all, in a future dominated by monstrously godless evolutionary science, how could they still claim to be true historical '...ministers of God's own wish: that the world, and men for whom His Son die, will not be given over to monsters, whose very existence would defame Him...' (*Dracula*, 316)?

Notes to Chapter Three.

- ¹. For an important examination of Count Dracula and Frankenstein's Monster as representing opposite, yet equally monstrous, social extremes within bourgeois capitalism, see Moretti, 83-98. Further mention of the extent to which they are also binary opposites in terms of their respective access to signs of socio-historical identity can be found in Olorenshaw, 158.
- ². For further critical work upon the role of contemporary conceptions of history in relation to Haggard's depictions of reincarnation within *She*, see Fraser, 43-46. The most useful modern historical analysis that I have read upon the mid-nineteenth-century triumph of British-dominated liberal capitalism, and the growing dependence of this bourgeois world order upon economic imperialism, meanwhile, is made by Hobsbawm, *Empire*, 9-11, 39-40, 74-75. Discussion of the wider political and cultural impact of such imperialism upon *fin-de-siècle* British society itself can be found in Harrison, 210-216.
- ³. For the first usage of this critical term to describe Van Helsing's group, which has ever since been widely used within analyses of *Dracula*, see Craft, 96-117.
- ⁴. An interesting analysis of British cabinet personnel during the *fin de siècle* in terms of social class can be found in Harrison, 31-35. The extent to which it was also historically possible for women to influence imperial policies in the context of *fin-de-siècle* London is explored further by Schnee, 119-161. Meanwhile, a good cross-section of historical sources concerning the contemporary debate regarding the monstrous phenomenon of the New Woman are cited in Ledger and Luckhurst (eds.), 75-96. Moreover, for a highly significant examination of wider cultural connections between vampirism and male perceptions of womanhood during the *fin de siècle*, see Dijkstra, 331-335, 340-354.
- ⁵. Further contemporary extracts concerning the *fin-de-siècle* debate over concepts of degeneration are collected together in Ledger and Luckhurst (eds.), 1-24. An interesting historical interpretation of the contemporary medical and psychological beliefs that underlie fears of degeneration within *Dracula* is made by Pick, 149-161.
- ⁶. Important work upon the monstrous New Woman in a more specifically imperial context has been done by Warwick, 202-219. A more sceptical view of the historical significance of monstrous sexuality in *Dracula* is, however, made by Mighall, 62-75. Wider historical background to these questions is also provided by Harrison, 157-183; Hobsbawm, *Empire*, 192-218.
- ⁷. A useful biographical analysis of the importance of such homo-social bonds in Stoker's life and works can be found in Frayling, *Nightmare*, 69-71, 89-93, 106-113.
- ⁸. My attention was first drawn to the incongruity of the Dutch Van Helsing's unusual usage of German words by John Paul Riquelme's notes in my edition of *Dracula*, n. 143. Important work upon the ideological significance of contemporary invasion fiction can meanwhile be found in Eby, 10-37; Brantlinger, 190-192. The key critical analysis of Morris' monstrous role in *Dracula* in terms of *fin-de-siècle* capitalism is made by Moretti, 94-96; while its more imperial/racial aspects are investigated by Arata, 'Occidental Tourist', 136-138. A useful comparison between the monstrous invasions of *fin-de-siècle* Britain made by Stoker's vampires and Wells's Martians, meanwhile, is drawn by Dingley, 13-23.

CHAPTER FOUR:

‘With infinite complacency men went...about their little affairs, serene in...their empire over matter. It is possible that the infusoria under the microscope do the same. And early in the twentieth century came the great disillusionment...’: Science, Power, and H. G. Wells’s Monstrous Futures.

And we men, the creatures who inhabit this earth, must be to them at least as alien and lowly as are the monkeys and lemurs to us. The intellectual side of man already admits that life is an incessant struggle for existence, and it would seem that this too is the belief of the minds upon Mars. Their world is far gone in its cooling and this world is still crowded with life, but crowded only with what they regard as inferior animals. To carry warfare sunward is, indeed, their only escape from the destruction that generation after generation creeps after them.

And before we judge of them too harshly we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanished bison and the dodo, but 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? (Wells, *War of the Worlds*, in *The Time Machine and The War of the Worlds*. London: Millennium/ Gollancz, 1999, SF Masterworks, 100-101).

‘Who are these creatures?’ said I, pointing to them, and raising my voice more and more so that it might reach them. ‘They were men – men like yourselves, whom you have infected with some bestial taint, men whom you have enslaved, and whom you still fear. – You who listen,’ I cried, pointing now to Moreau, and shouting past them to the Beast Men, ‘You who listen! Do you not see these men still fear you, go in dread of you? Why then do you fear them? You are many – ‘

‘For God’s sake,’ cried Montgomery, ‘stop that Prendrick!’

‘Prendrick!’ cried Moreau.

They both shouted together as if to drown my voice. And behind them lowered the staring faces of the Beast Men, wondering, their deformed hands hanging down, their shoulders hunched up. They seemed, as I fancied then, to be trying to understand me, to remember something of their human past.

I went on shouting, I scarcely remember what. That Moreau and Montgomery could be killed; that they were not to be feared: that was the burthen of what I put into the heads of the Beast People to my own ultimate

undoing... (Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, ed. Brian Aldiss. London/Vermont: J. M. Dent/ Charles E. Tuttle, 1995, Everyman, 64-65).

Within this chapter, I shall show how such monstrous prophetic spectres of warfare and revolution as seen above haunted the wider historical imagination of the imperial British *fin de siècle*, adding new scientific dimensions of fear to the already over-determined literary symbolism of monstrous historical change discussed in previous chapters. For in drawing upon a wider bourgeois dread that the steadily-encroaching future would herald a monstrous, even apocalyptic loss of power on their behalf, it is widely agreed that H. G. Wells's greatest contributions to this monstrous literature lay in his own powerful usage of contemporary science, especially evolutionary theory. (Indeed, David C. Smith goes so far as to claim that Wells's greatest contribution '... to fiction writing was to apply real science, and the questions and techniques of science, rather than the pseudo-science of his competitors...' [56-57]). Certainly, the monstrous literature discussed in previous chapters of my thesis often also appeared somewhat fearful of, or at best ambivalent towards, the growing power of science, especially when manifested through the demonic lust for personal glory of alchemists such as Doctor Faustus or Victor Frankenstein. That Wells operated to some extent in the same tradition of the monstrous mad scientist will be seen when we analyse the historical significance of both Moreau and Griffin. Before that, however, we can accurately gauge Wells's own ambivalence towards monstrously unchecked scientific power by recalling Vincent Brome's perceptive observations on the subject. For indeed, as Wells wrote his scientific romances:

He saw that science might run off in Frankenstein abandon, gathering more and more power over nature while the ordinary human being had less and less power over himself. Power, the concept of power, of power through scientific experiment, of the need to bring power itself under control, to constrain it for the collective happiness of mankind, dispensing in the end with the necessity for power at all; these ideas fascinated Wells and drove him into one story after another... (Brome, 68).

By contrast with *Dracula's* depiction of a *fin-de-siècle* science which at best became ideological cover for paranormal discourse, and at worst appeared virtually useless without a revival of ancient religious ways (despite Stoker's oft-mentioned usage of the most up-to-date communications technology, for example), Wellsian science remains essential for human survival. Religion, meanwhile, is usually the target for vicious satire in Wells's scientific romances, most interestingly when the narrator of *The War of the Worlds* berates a hysterical Curate for unmanly moral cowardice during the Martian invasion, asking what '... good is religion if it collapses under calamity? Think what earthquakes and floods, wars and volcanoes, have done before to men! Did you think God had exempted Weybridge? He is not an insurance agent...' (*WW*, 163). What is also revealed in such exchanges, however, is the recurring Wellsian idea of an essentially amoral, endlessly changing natural world remaining indifferent, if not actively hostile, to dreams of human dominion over it, especially when such wishes are expressed in terms of bourgeois aspirations. Again, the apocalyptic landscape of *The War of the Worlds* provides the best example of this, when the Artilleryman condemns the sheer cowardice which could be seen to dominate not just religion, but most other aspects of *fin-de-siècle* bourgeois life, as utterly useless for survival in this savage future, for:

Mind you, it isn't all of us who are made for wild beasts; and that's what it's got to be... All... those damn little clerks that used to live down that way – they'd be no good. They haven't any spirit in them – no proud dreams and no proud lusts; and a man who hasn't one or the other – Lord! what is he but funk and precautions? They just used to skedaddle off to work – I've seen hundreds of 'em, bit of breakfast in hand, running wild and shining to catch their little season-ticket train, for fear they'd get dismissed if they didn't; working at businesses they were afraid to take the trouble to understand; skedaddling back for fear they wouldn't be in time for dinner; keeping indoors after dinner for fear of the back streets, and sleeping with the wives they married, not because they wanted them, but because they had a bit of money that would make for safety in their one little miserable skedaddle through the world. Lives insured and a bit invested for fear of accidents.

And on Sundays – fear of the hereafter. As if hell were built for rabbits!
Well, the Martians will just be a godsend to these. Nice roomy cages,
fattening food, careful breeding, no worries... (*WW*, 250).

The idea that the human future would be increasingly shaped by such animalistic traits, which earlier bourgeois historical thought would have deemed utterly anachronistic in a world of ceaseless progress, had already emerged in *fin-de-siècle* minds as the dark side of evolutionary theory, in particular. (Indeed, it is interesting to note that the Artilleryman sees the mass of bourgeois humanity as little more than helpless prey for monstrous future predators: a bloodthirsty historical vision that, of course, is literally fulfilled in Wells's *Time Machine*). The resulting bourgeois fear that British imperial power was essentially a hollow distraction from their continuing bestial vulnerability to monstrous forces of historical change has, of course, already been examined in the context of my previous chapter upon *Dracula*. Therein, as I have shown, these forces were largely transferred onto the monstrous feudal past, as personified in the supremely anachronistic figure of the undead Count: Wells, by contrast, continually sees such forces in the context of an equally monstrous future of scientifically-based struggles to usurp human imperial power. When considered in this futuristic guise, moreover, history itself usually appears as fundamentally *inhuman* in its chaotic, uncontrollable reactions to scientific attempts to control and exploit such power. As a result of this, I shall argue that the Wellsian future also remains essentially unknowable despite such scientific efforts, and that a monstrous, even apocalyptic fear remains throughout that these equally monstrous *fin-de-siècle* '... days of weak experiment, fragmentary theory, and mutual discord are indeed man's culminating time!' (Wells, H. G. *The Time Machine*, in *The Time Machine & The War of the Worlds*. London: Millennium/Gollancz, 1999, SF Masterworks, 92).

The future of science itself, moreover, was also beginning to become monstrously unpredictable even as Wells wrote his scientific romances, and in ways which threatened to undermine the very foundations of the practical scientific laws which had driven the growth of industrial technology, and therefore of bourgeois capitalism itself. As Hobsbawm comments:

In the minds of the triumphant bourgeois world the giant static mechanism of the universe inherited from the seventeenth century... produced not only permanence and predictability but also transformation. It produced evolution (which could easily be identified with secular "progress", at least in human affairs). It was this model of the universe and the human mind's way of understanding it which now broke down... [The] new structuring of the universe increasingly found itself obliged to jettison intuition and "common sense". In a sense "nature" became less "natural" and more incomprehensible... A much larger body of scientists as well as eventually most educated human beings found themselves involved in the crisis of the Galilean or Newtonian universe of physics, whose beginning can be fairly precisely dated in 1895, and which was to be replaced by the Einsteinian universe of relativity. It met with less resistance in the world of physicists than the mathematical revolution, probably because it had not yet revealed itself as implying a challenge to traditional beliefs in certainty and the laws of nature. That was to come only in the 1920s. On the other hand it met with enormous resistance from the laity... Ideologists on the left were to reject relativity as incompatible with their idea of science, and those on the right condemned it as Jewish. In short science henceforth became not only something which few people could understand, but something of which many disapproved while increasingly recognizing that they depended on it... (*Empire*, 244-247).

Of course, the entire premise of my thesis is that bourgeois culture in fact also *feared* historical change as heralding a monstrous, even revolutionary threat to their power as overlords of an imperial capitalist world-order, and that, in Wells, scientific power appears simultaneously as both a potential saviour and destroyer. Despite all the destruction caused to such British imperial pretensions by superhuman Martian technology, for example, the Artilleryman for one remains convinced that to have any hope of recapturing their planet, or even to live as anything other than animals,

Especially we must keep up our science – learn more... After all, it may not be so much we may have to learn before – Just imagine this: Four or five of their fighting-machines starting off... Not a Martian in 'em, but men – men

who have learned the way how... And... *swish* comes the Heat-Ray, and, behold! man has come back to his own...' (*WW*, 253).

Nevertheless, Hobsbawm's sense of a monstrous, yet somehow inevitable future captivity at the hands of powerful scientific and historical forces also dominates Wells's scientific romances, whether represented by tyrannical geniuses such as Griffin or Moreau, or by evolutionary predators such as Morlocks or Martians. For Wells, indeed, evolutionary history itself appears as the primary scientific vehicle for conveying the monstrous future fears of the bourgeois *fin de siècle*, despite what Hobsbawm describes above as its potentially progressive implications. After all, such monstrous ambivalence became inevitable when one admitted, as Wells himself did in an 1891 article, that it was highly probable that the very evolutionary process which had allowed humanity to dominate the Earth would eventually destroy it. As this work upon 'Zoological Retrogression' made clear, for all any *fin-de-siècle* scientist could tell, mankind's grip upon earthly power was already doomed, because

... Nature is, in unsuspected obscurity, equipping some now humble creature with wider possibilities of appetite, endurance, or destruction, to rise in the fulness (*sic*) of time and sweep *homo* away into the darkness from which his universe arose. The Coming Beast must certainly be reckoned in any anticipatory calculations regarding the Coming Man... (Cited in Ledger and Luckhurst, 12).

In keeping with this bestial prognosis for human history, Wells's evolutionary monstrosities usually appear to be so horribly inhuman as to appear utterly unrecognisable, and even Moreau's creations can never entirely blend in with human outsiders, as shown by the constant hostility of the crew of the *Ipecacuanha* towards them. Often, indeed, it is the terrifying realisation that such ugly creatures bear distinctly human traits beneath their monstrous surfaces that provokes the most violent reactions against such misbegotten wretches, as shown when Prendrick shoots the Leopard-Man, and again in the Time Traveller's bloodthirsty hatred of the Morlocks.

Yet in the latter case at least, this evolutionary kinship is even more powerfully reaffirmed by the very human nature of these aggressive reactions, even as the Time Traveller realises that it appears very ‘... inhuman, you may think, to want to go killing one’s own descendants! But it was impossible, somehow, to feel any humanity in the things...’ (*TM*, 68).

Certainly, Wells’s own scientific training would have left him in little doubt of humanity’s potential for violent aggression, or of its ultimate basis in evolutionary history. To a large extent, this knowledge, as well as Wells’s ambivalence towards its potentially monstrous ideological implications, was ultimately inherited from Wells’s former teacher, T. H. Huxley, then Britain’s greatest advocate of contemporary science, and in particular of evolutionary theory.¹ Huxley’s discourse, however, remains far more optimistic than Wells’s as regards humanity’s potential for future evolutionary growth, especially given his own faith in bourgeois scientific history as a liberating force, as seen in this 1893 article, in which he pleads:

... Let us understand, once and for all, that the ethical progress of society depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it. It may seem an audacious proposal thus to pit the microcosm against the macrocosm and to set man to subdue nature to his higher ends; but I venture to think that the great intellectual difference between the ancient times... and our day, lies in the solid foundation we have acquired for the hope that such an enterprise may meet with a certain measure of success... The most impressive, I might say startling, of these changes have been brought about in the course of the last two centuries; while a right comprehension of the process of life and the means of influencing its manifestations is only just dawning upon us... Moreover, the cosmic nature born with us and, to a large extent, necessary for our maintenance, is the outcome of millions of years of severe training, and it would be folly to imagine that a few centuries will suffice to subdue its masterfulness to purely ethical ends. Ethical nature may count upon having to reckon with a tenacious and powerful enemy as long as the world lasts. But, on the other hand, I see no limit to the extent to which intelligence and will, guided by sound principles of investigation, and organised in common effort, may modify the conditions of existence, for a period longer than that now covered by history. And much may be done to change the nature of man himself... But if we may permit ourselves a larger hope of abatement of the essential evil of the world than was possible to those who, in the

infancy of exact knowledge, faced the problem of existence more than a score of centuries ago, I deem it an essential condition of the realization of that hope that we should cast aside the notion that the escape from pain and sorrow is the proper object of life... (Cited in Ledger and Luckhurst, 239-241).

This concluding note of pessimism will loom large in my later discussion of Moreau, as the ostensible scientific purpose behind his monstrous experiments, as well as their horrific consequences, are deeply rooted in questions of pain as related to the evolutionary future. For now, however, I shall merely note that the fate of another of Wells's monstrous geniuses, namely Griffin, demonstrates the potential disasters that could befall a scientific establishment that flouted or ignored the communal requirements of Huxley's vision of scientific progress. Griffin himself rages against the iniquities of working under an unscrupulous professor who '... was a scientific bounder, a journalist by instinct, a thief of ideas, he was always prying! And you know the knavish system of the scientific world. I simply would not publish, and let him share my credit...' (Wells, H. G. *The Invisible Man: A Grotesque Romance*, ed. Macdonald Daly. London/Vermont: J. M. Dent/Charles E. Tuttle, 1995, Everyman, 83). Ultimately, as Griffin invisibly emerges as a monstrously power-hungry, yet singularly ill-adapted evolutionary specimen of a naked superman upon the freezing streets of *fin-de-siècle* London, and we find confirmation that:

...Griffin, in his maniac delusions of divine superiority, despises humanity. When, therefore, he goes among the London crowds naked and starving it is because... he is deliberately refusing to wear the uniform of his herd-like fellow men... Nakedness is the sign of his difference, and his godlike superiority over the lesser, visible beings, he despises. He no more needs trousers than Jove or Satan. It is beneath his notice to concern himself with such minutiae... (Sutherland, 231-232).

It is, of course, a similarly *unscientific* failure to focus upon such seemingly petty, but practically vital details which, eventually scuppers the invading Martians's own bid for power in *The War of the Worlds*. (This unobservant neglect, of course, is a completely

opposite attitude to the core ideology of the *fin de siècle*'s greatest literary scientist-hero, Sherlock Holmes, as my next chapter will demonstrate). Moreover, the Martians's unanticipated, yet inevitable extermination by earthly bacteria serves to demonstrate yet again Wells's fundamental ambivalence towards the monstrous implications of humanity's own evolutionary history, as the future survival of the race becomes utterly dependent upon the grisly scientific fact that:

These germs of disease have taken toll of humanity since the beginning of things – taken toll of our prehuman ancestors since life began here. But by virtue of this natural selection of our kind we have developed resisting power; to no germs do we succumb without a struggle... By the toll of a billion deaths man has bought his birthright of the earth, and it is his against all comers; it would still be his were the Martians ten times as mighty as they were. For neither do men live nor die in vain... (*WW*, 263).

During the historical catastrophe of the First World War, however, such stoic acceptance of mass sacrifice in order to overcome a monstrous foreign enemy, whilst long remaining an important part of Wells's own beliefs, would nevertheless appear increasingly hollow given the monstrous military horrors unfolding on the Western Front. For as Wells had instinctively grasped in his scientific romances, the immediate future of *fin-de-siècle* Britain would involve historically unprecedented levels of bloodshed, even if the sheer scale of carnage involved in these monstrous struggles for imperial power ultimately dwarfed even his prophetic imagination, as we shall now examine further.

The War of the Worlds and the Great War.

He sprang to his feet and saw to starboard, and not a hundred yards from their heeling, pitching boat, a vast iron bulk like the blade of a plough tearing through the water, tossing it on either side in huge waves of foam that leaped toward the steamer, flinging her paddles helplessly in the air, and then sucking her deck down almost to the waterline.

A douche of spray blinded my brother for a moment. When his eyes were clear again he saw the monster had passed and was rushing landward. Big iron upper-works rose out of this headlong structure, and from that twin funnels projected and spat a smoking blast shot with fire. It was the torpedo-

ram, *Thunder Child*, steaming headlong, coming to the rescue of the threatened shipping.

Keeping his footing on the heaving deck by clutching the bulwarks, my brother looked past this charging leviathan at the Martians again, and he saw the three of them now close together, and standing so far out to sea that their tripod supports were almost entirely submerged. Thus sunken, and seen in remote perspective, they appeared far less formidable than the huge iron bulk in whose wake the steamer was pitching so helplessly. It would seem they were regarding this new antagonist with astonishment. To their intelligence, it may be, the giant was even such another as themselves. The *Thunder Child* fired no gun, but simply drove full speed towards them. It was probably her not firing that enabled her to get so near the enemy as she did. One shell, and they would have sent her to the bottom forthwith with the Heat-Ray... To the watchers in the steamer, low in the water and with the sun in their eyes, it seemed as though she were already among the Martians... (*WW*, 203-204).

The *Thunder Child* episode which begins here is a highly significant one in revealing Wells's outlook upon the monstrous possibilities of future warfare, especially given the technological power which would be unleashed in the process, and the implications which this entailed for the future survival of *fin-de-siècle* imperial Britain. It is in the ensuing battle between the Martian tripods and the *Thunder Child*, after all, that we find the most effective military display of Britain's own technological power in fighting off these monstrous invaders, albeit only in terms of an ultimately pyrrhic victory over two fighting-machines. Nevertheless, the fact that the *Thunder Child* alone can thus destroy more Martians – before being overcome herself – than the entire British Army proves able to do throughout the novel, clearly reflects the relatively high contemporary importance given to the Royal Navy's role in national and/or imperial defence. This one glorious episode, however, has already been overshadowed in Wells's novel by the general impotence of other naval forces against the Martians's monstrous technology, with the mysterious Black Smoke proving particularly deadly. Following its devastating initial usage, we are told that henceforth '... no body of men would stand against them, so hopeless was the enterprise. Even the crews of the torpedo-boats and destroyers that had brought their quick-firers up the Thames refused to stop, mutinied, and went down

again...' (*WW*, 182). Later, I shall demonstrate how this process of chaotic disintegration in the face of the overwhelming military power of these monstrous invaders is repeated throughout this *fin-de-siècle* British society, with the control mechanisms of bourgeois life proving worthless as the world of imperial capitalism descends into monstrous panic. To begin with, however, we must first concentrate on the full historical implications of this disastrous military collapse. Especially important is the fact that it occurs in the aftermath of seemingly thorough and well-organised defensive preparations, which are described in the novel as follows: the '... authorities, now fully alive to the tremendous power of their antagonists, worked with furious energy. Every minute a fresh gun came into position until... every copse, every row of suburban villas on the hilly slopes about Kingston and Richmond, masked an expectant black muzzle...' (*WW*, 159). Following earlier encounters with human artillery, however, the Martians use the Black Smoke as a brutally efficient way of eradicating such pockets of organised resistance, with humanity yet again reduced to a bestial enemy whose extermination is accomplished '... as methodically as men might smoke out a wasps' nest...' (*WW*, 182). Here, Wells envisioned the full horrors of what would become one of the most monstrous scientific weapons of many used, or misused, to try to break the bloody stalemate into which the Western Front had eventually degenerated, namely poison gas, as first used by the Germans in 1915. Historically, however, the sheer endemic monstrosity of the Great War is evidenced by the speed with which this counterpart of Wells's all-conquering Black Smoke became just another standard weapon of mass destruction, as the invention of gas masks and the natural unpredictability of the winds blunted its edge. Nevertheless, the *War of the Worlds* powerfully captures the monstrous horror of gas attack upon unprepared soldiers, in a scene of hellish confusion wherein

... One may picture, too, the sudden shifting of the attention, the swiftly spreading coils and bellyings of that blackness advancing headlong, towering heavenward, turning the twilight to a palpable darkness, a strange and horrible antagonist of vapour striding upon its victims, men and horses near it seen dimly, running, shrieking, falling headlong, shouts of dismay, the guns suddenly abandoned, men choking and writhing on the ground, and the swift broadening-out of the opaque cone of smoke. And then night and extinction – nothing but a silent mass of impenetrable vapour hiding its dead.

Before dawn the black vapour was pouring through the streets of Richmond, and the disintegrating organism of government was, with a last expiring effort, rousing the population of London to the necessity of flight... (*WW*, 183).

In emphasising the biological nature of the inhuman suffering produced in this forerunner of twentieth-century chemical warfare, Wells here anticipates perhaps the most famous literary depiction of the monstrous impact of such weapons during the Great War, namely Wilfred Owen's poem, 'Dulce et Decorum Est'. Owen's horrific symptomatic visions of bloody, '... froth-corrupted lungs, / Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud / Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues...' (cited in Hibberd, 149, lines 22-24), illustrate his scorn of a warlike culture of patriotic duty and self-sacrifice unto death, perpetuating the titular '... old Lie...' (Ibid. line 27). How far Wells's own depictions of monstrous warfare would reflect his views upon the Great War, and how far these views themselves reflected upon the equally monstrous historical anxieties of the *fin de siècle*, especially regarding the military impact of ever-faster scientific and technological change, I shall now examine.²

In his initial reactions to the outbreak of war, Wells's prophetic imagination again became filled with suitably apocalyptic visions of monstrous invasion, which would later lead him to a brief return to something approaching mainstream Christian faith. As the nation was on the verge of declaring war in August 1914, such visions would first lead him to proclaim to the sceptical critic of the war, George Bernard Shaw, that, given the monstrous efficiency of the German military, the British '... must

have a *levée en masse* [*sic*]. We must get out our shot guns [*sic*] and man the hedges and ditches, but it will be the end of civilisation...’ (cited in Mackenzie and Mackenzie, 297). Ironically, given the also generally apocalyptic tone of the *War of the Worlds*, Wells’s narrator informs us during the early stages of the Martian invasion that the news of their arrival at first ‘... certainly did not make the sensation that an ultimatum to Germany would have done...’ (*WW*, 127). That British xenophobia towards fellow humans will remain prevalent throughout the Martian invasion, for all the narrator’s hopes for future global co-operation voiced in its aftermath, is elsewhere shown by the irrational conviction of a hysterical female refugee ‘... that the French and the Martians might prove very similar...’ (*WW*, 201). Indeed, after events in 1914 spiralled horribly out of control until war became inevitable, at least one literary exponent of such xenophobia, namely the Poet Laureate, Robert Bridges, was moved in turn to compare the Germans themselves to such Wellsian scientific monstrosities in a September letter to the *Times*, claiming:

The infernal machine which has been scientifically preparing for the last twenty-five years is now on its wild career like one of Mr. Wells’s inventions, and wherever it goes it will leave desolation behind it and put all material progress back for at least half a century. There was never anything in the world worthier of extermination, and it is the plain duty of civilised nations to drive it back into its home and exterminate it there... (Cited in Hibberd, 53).

Wells himself, meanwhile, would repeatedly attempt to fuse what he also saw as a pressing need to root out the monstrous militarism that had infected *fin-de-siècle* Germany with humanity’s fundamental historical responsibility to create an united, peaceful world, lest even more monstrous future wars drive it towards evolutionary suicide. In perhaps his most famous wartime pamphlet, 1914’s *The War That Will End War*, he insisted that an unprecedented opportunity had arisen, for all the monstrous destruction necessary to defeat Germany, to end the greater monstrosity of chaotic

historical change, and impose human rationality upon the nature of history itself. By doing so, he would risk joining the ranks of those ‘Critical-Utopian Socialists’ who had been ridiculed in *The Communist Manifesto* itself, thus:

Historical action is to yield to their personal inventive action, historically created conditions of emancipation to fantastic ones, and the gradual, spontaneous class action of the proletariat to an organization of society specially contrived by these inventors. Future history resolves itself, in their eyes, into the propaganda and the practical carrying out of their social plans... (Marx and Engels, 115).

Certainly, Wells appears to be speaking to a bourgeois audience, in particular, as he insists that:

The character of the new age that will come out of the catastrophes of this epoch will be no mechanical consequence of inanimate forces... No doubt the mass of mankind will still pour along the channels of chance, but the desire for a new world of a definite character will be a force, and if it is multitudinously unanimous enough, it may even be a guiding force, in shaping the new time. The common man and base men are scared to docility. Rulers, pompositives, obstructives are suddenly apologetic, helpful, asking for help. This is a time of incalculable plasticity. For the men who know what they want, the moment has come. It is the supreme opportunity, the test or condemnation of constructive liberal thought in the world... (*Journalism and Prophecy*, 59-61).

Nevertheless, this apparent opposition between Wellsian and orthodox Marxist visions of the future course of history may not, in fact, be quite as clear-cut as it seems. For one thing, Wells’s wholesale determination to escape from the self-destructive chains of the monstrous past through embracing radical change certainly has revolutionary historical implications. In itself, after all, this radical determination is in keeping with Marx’s famous dictum that whereas earlier philosophers ‘...have only given different interpretations of the world; the important thing is to make it different...’ (*Communist Manifesto*, 10 [cited in introduction by A. J. P. Taylor]). On the other hand, rigid Marxist ideas of history were themselves vulnerable to the ruthless passage of time, eventually suffering the fate which Marx himself reserved for other outdated socialist ideas: namely that their ideological power would ebb away ‘... when stubborn historical

facts... dispersed all intoxicating effects...' (*Communist Manifesto*, 109). As A. J. P.

Taylor points out, after all:

Marx operated before the historical outlook had been established... In Marx's lifetime, true history was beginning. He was not interested in it. It offered scepticism where he wanted certainty. It destroyed the foundations of all systems, when he had perfected the final system... Essentially he was a prophet, not a philosopher. He invoked history only when it was going his way and, if events did not fit into his system, so much the worse for events... His test of a system was not so much whether it corresponded to reality as whether it would help to stimulate the changes which he wanted. The Marxist system was a propagandist myth, deceptively adorned with scientific analysis... (11-27).

In any case, and despite Wells's apparent historical optimism in *The War That Will End War*, the monstrous historical possibility that future bourgeois-led scientific attempts to dominate natural forces could themselves have disastrous unforeseen evolutionary consequences nevertheless remains the subject of most of Wells's *fin-de-siècle* scientific romances. *The War of the Worlds* itself, of course, is no exception to this. For above all, the monstrous Martians are themselves the *result* of the evolutionary ascendance of cold scientific rationalism, as hinted at by their mastery of technological power, over the animalistic irrationality which by contrast still governs the vast majority of human reactions to their invasion. Even the narrator himself is not immune to such bestial emotionalism, and it is interesting that his warlike impulses are often linked to a recurrent death wish, as in his suicidal desire, while wandering the blasted streets of seemingly-conquered London, for the Martians to wipe out his desolate existence. This mad wish echoes his earlier wild battle-lust when they seemed relatively helpless, and he in turn felt that something '... like the war-fever that occasionally runs through a civilised community had got in my blood... I was even afraid... that last fusillade... [meant] the extermination of our invaders from Mars. I can best express my state of mind by saying that I wanted to be in at the death...' (*WW*, 136). By contrast,

and despite their apparent monstrous enjoyment of a quasi-vampiric diet of human blood, the Martians themselves are often described as seeming to be far less alive than their own monstrously powerful machines, and yet in evolutionary terms, as the narrator makes clear:

To me it is quite credible that the Martians may be descended from beings not unlike ourselves, by a gradual development of brain and hands (the latter giving rise to the two bunches of delicate tentacles at last) at the expense of the rest of the body. Without the body the brain would, of course, become a mere selfish intelligence, without any of the emotional substratum of the human being... (*WW*, 221).

While the monstrous scientific power of Martian forces thus becomes the terrible historical result of an alien offshoot of human evolution, by 1914 it seemed increasingly inevitable that Germany's own growing scientific power would naturally drive its military forces towards ever-greater earthly conquests, ultimately targeting the British Empire itself. In 1896, Wells himself complained about the inadequacies of the British scientific instrument trade, whose German rivals would thus '... not only reign supreme over the world of science, the English with their expensive, badly made, protected products would be forced to attempt to compete...' (cited in Smith, *Desperately Mortal*, 45).

One German equivalent of Wellsian scientific prophecy, meanwhile, came in a book by one General Von Bernhardt, entitled *Germany and the Next War*, which became increasingly notorious in Britain following its publication in 1912, and to modern eyes clearly reads like a monstrous historical forerunner of future Nazi ideology. Moreover, this particular wedding of evolutionary theory to the needs of German imperialism also recalls the conquering Martians's own scientific ruthlessness – itself partly biologically-based, as without the digestive or sexual appetites imposed by human anatomy, the Martians '... were lifted above all these organic fluctuations of mood and emotion...' (*WW*, 220). Nevertheless, the General's words also resound with

an irrational war-fever similar to the suicidal, even apocalyptic belligerence already shown by the narrator himself. How an equally irrational war-fever became combined with the ruthlessness underlying militarized science in 1914 could be predicted in this extract from the General's propaganda pamphlet, thus:

War is a biological necessity of the first importance, a regulative element in the life of mankind which cannot be dispensed with, since without it an unhealthy development will follow, which excludes every advancement of the race, and therefore all real civilization... The weaker succumb. This struggle is regulated and restrained by the unconscious sway of biological laws and by the interplay of opposite forces. In the plant world and the animal world this process is worked out in unconscious tragedy. In the human race it is consciously carried out, and regulated by social ordinances. The man of strong will and strong intellect tries by every means to assert himself, the ambitious strive to rise, and in this effort the individual is far from being guided merely by the consciousness of right. The life-work and the life-struggle of many men are determined, doubtless, by unselfish and ideal motives, but to a far greater extent the less noble passions – craving for possessions, enjoyment or honour, envy and the thirst for revenge – determine men's actions. Still more often, perhaps, it is the will to live which brings down even natures of a higher mould into the universal struggle... Since every part of the globe is inhabited, new territory must, as a rule, be obtained at the cost of its possessors – that is to say, by conquest, which thus becomes a law of necessity... *Higher civilization and the correspondingly greater power are the foundations of the right to annexation...* (Cited in Hibberd, 9-11; my italics).

As we have seen, fear of such a monstrous fate being meted out to their own erstwhile race of conquerors by advancements in German power had of course long been the driving force behind much British *fin-de-siècle* invasion fiction from Chesney onwards. Wells's Martian invasion, however, best epitomises the sense of biological/evolutionary dethronement which corresponds to this monstrous scientific vision of German imperial conquest, noting that '...if we have learned nothing else, this war has taught us pity – pity for those witless souls who suffer our dominion...' (*WW*, 244). Interestingly, the most outspoken visionary of post-Martian survival, the Artilleryman, also clearly acknowledges the historical and imperial ramifications of Britain's defeat, emphasising the necessity of adapting quickly to a monstrous new world where scientifically

advanced invaders have ‘...made their footing good and crippled the greatest power in the world... Cities, nations, civilisation, progress – it’s all over. That game’s up. We’re beat...’ (*WW*, 247-249).

Meanwhile, another apocalyptic struggle for the very future of Western civilisation seemed to be drawing ever closer during the *fin de siècle*, as Anglo-German technological rivalry intensified. Here, too, there were anxious historical echoes of the Artilleryman’s call to imitate both Martian ruthlessness and Martian military science in order to survive this coming onslaught. Indeed, we have already hinted at how widespread British anxiety about the relative power of the Royal Navy plays into their decidedly ambivalent role during the Martian invasion, and historians often claim that similar naval anxieties lay at the heart of an otherwise unlikely Anglo-German antagonism before the Great War. This particular arms race, however, was in fact ultimately won by the British, whose construction of the monstrously powerful dreadnought battleships gave them an overall naval advantage which was only really jeopardised by the Germans’s later concentration upon an even more monstrous weapon of scientific warfare, namely the submarine. The question which remained, however, was the same as that which dominated the monstrous texts of not only Wells, but also, as we have shown, of Bram Stoker as well: *in order to combat the invasions of a monstrous enemy, to what extent must one become monstrous in turn?* For, as with Mina Harker’s vampiric taint, and her ensuing psychic link with the Count, it is, after all, only the *Thunder Child*’s own monstrous mechanical appearance which allows the torpedo-ram to even approach the equally-sinister Martian Fighting-Machines, let alone engage them in battle. Historians, meanwhile, have also explored the extent to which the monstrous horrors of the Great War itself can also be blamed upon other - and

equally radical – changes in military technology that had occurred during and since the

fin de siècle. Morrow, for example, comments that:

Like some metal monster, or “Great Sausage Machine” as British troops referred to the Western Front, the war developed a life of its own, feeding on the bodies of men. Such implications remove responsibility from decision-makers, as if technological demands robbed them of their free will. Technology may create certain imperatives or options, but it does not possess agency. Humans do, and they develop and exploit technology. German commanders at least revised offensive and defensive tactics to adjust to and exploit firepower. Both British and French commanders, with few exceptions... either made no effort to do so or did so at a snail’s pace, killing large numbers of their troops in the meantime... Between 1914 and 1918 the military establishment and industry combined to evolve ever deadlier and more effective weapons and then to produce them in quantity. Their further development of the airplane, the tank, and the submarine prepared the way for future warfare on land, in the air, and under the sea. The war demonstrated unequivocally that technological progress did not necessarily equate to human progress, but could instead enable greater destruction and conceivably the regression of civilization... The brutalization of the European combatants, with attendant atrocities against soldier and civilian, began in imperial wars and accelerated in the First World War, not with the rise of totalitarian regimes and the Second World War... (281-282).

With regard to the most obviously monstrous *British* contribution to the deadly technology which came to dominate the Western Front, however, it is interesting that Wells himself is largely credited with having popularised the ideas behind the tank, as he later did with the even more monstrous atomic bomb. While the Martian tripods themselves bear a strong resemblance to these powerful armoured killing machines, it is in ‘The Land Ironclads’, a short story published in 1903, that he explicitly explored the possibilities of what would later become tank warfare. As with the evolutionary theory which he had done so much to popularise, however, it would ironically be in Nazi Germany that the monstrous forces behind such scientific advances would be most ruthlessly exploited, with the resulting *blitzkrieg* raging over Europe in 1940. Returning to the Great War, however, it is interesting to note that the armoured warriors

controlling these 'Land Ironclads' are described as possessing a similarly cold, ruthless emotional outlook as the mechanised Martians themselves, for, as Wells insists:

They had nothing of that flapping strenuousness of the half-wit in a hurry, that excessive strain upon the blood vessels, that hysteria of effort which is so frequently regarded as the proper state of mind for heroic deeds.

For the enemy these young engineers were defeating they felt a certain qualified pity and a quite unqualified contempt. They regarded these big, healthy men they were shooting down precisely as these same big, healthy men might regard some inferior kind of nigger. They despised them for making war, despised their bawling patriotisms and their emotionality profoundly; despised them, above all, for the petty cunning and almost brutish want of imagination their method of fighting displayed... They resented the assumption that their own side was too stupid to do anything more than play their enemy's game, that they were going to play this costly folly according to the rules of unimaginative men. They resented being forced to the trouble of making man-killing machinery; resented the alternative of having to massacre these people or endure their truculent yappings; resented the whole unfathomable imbecility of war... (*JP*, 34-35)

As the overwhelming scientific power of these armoured warriors gives them victory over a previously arrogant, but now bestially dethroned enemy race, much as the Martians seemingly triumph at first, the very physical strength of both these conquerors' helpless human foes ironically denotes their ultimate weakness. Whereas *Dracula* saw its monstrous vampire lord select Britain as his target because of its richness in fresh, healthy human resources, so it is that the relative power and wealth available to the bourgeoisie in *fin-de-siècle* imperial Britain marks it out as the perfect prey of the equally bloodthirsty Martians. The predatory implications of this evolutionary dethronement of the British bourgeoisie are epitomised by Wells in the case of one '... stout, ruddy, middle-aged man, well dressed; three days before he must have been walking the world, a man of considerable consequence. I could see his staring eyes and gleams of light on his studs and watch-chain... And then began a shrieking and a sustained and cheerful hooting from the Martians...' (*WW*, 228). The Great War, meanwhile, would see the British, like all other combatants, plagued by the twin combination of an irrational war-fever which was initially even more virulent than

that evoked by the Martian invasion, and the sort of fatal lack of imagination associated with the enemy of the 'Land Ironclads'. For in both 'The Land Ironclads' and *The War of the Worlds*, as Eby comments,

... Wells foresaw the lemming impulse that would carry over the brink, without benefit of reason, millions of acquiescent European lives in the Armageddon lying a few years in the future... Yet while he accurately foresaw the demise of war as romantic activity, he failed to predict the incapacity of military leadership to adjust to the new technology. These were more ignorant and obstinate than even Wells could conceive... (44-46).

One significant result of this monstrous historical combination of militaristic intoxication and military incompetence, of course, was that the war became so exhaustingly destructive as to overturn the social order of Europe itself, most obviously in Russia from 1917 onwards. Interestingly, as far as not only the Russian liberals whom Wells himself had befriended before the war, but even most Russian socialists were concerned, the rise of the Bolshevik revolutionaries who eventually seized power appeared to be as monstrously inexplicable as the coming of the Martians themselves.³ When judged against the apparently inexorable scientific laws which orthodox Marxism had hitherto depicted as governing even revolutionary historical change, it appeared that a long-awaited bourgeois revolution '... had finally occurred, only to be snatched from their grasp by sinister and incomprehensible forces... [Non-Bolshevik] Marxists were similarly outraged: the time was not yet ripe for proletarian socialist revolution, and it was inexcusable that a Marxist party should break the rules and seize power...' (Fitzpatrick, 41). The fact that this seemingly inconceivable monstrous historical event should occur in defiance of all known laws of scientific historical change reminds us of a similar sense in *The War of the Worlds* that history is, for all the attempts at scientific prophecy which dominate Wells's monstrous texts, fundamentally *unknowable*. Such monstrous historical unpredictability is ironically underscored when, while sifting

through the wreckage of his former home after Earth's bacteria gives mankind an uncertain stay of execution, the narrator finds his pre-Martian writings upon '... the probable development of Moral Ideas with the development of the civilising process... "In about two hundred years", I had written, "we may expect –" The sentence ended abruptly...' (*WW*, 270). We shall now see how the issues of class conflict, historical change, and evolutionary necessity already explored above work over a far larger historical scale than even Wells could imagine, as he overthrows any bourgeois illusions of a progressive imperial future in *The Time Machine*. For here, we shall see instead a monstrously prolonged historical exploration of the nightmarish, fundamentally *inhuman* human future hinted at in the monstrous chaos of the Martian invasion, wherein we saw that:

Had the Martians aimed only at destruction, they might on Monday have annihilated the entire population of London, as it spread itself slowly through the home counties. ... If one could have hung that June morning in a balloon in the blazing blue above London, every northward and eastward road running out of the tangled maze of streets would have seemed stippled black with the streaming fugitives, each dot a human agony of terror and physical distress. ... Never before in the history of the world had such a mass of human beings moved and suffered together. The legendary hosts of Goths and Huns, the hugest armies Asia has ever seen, would have been but a drop in that current. And this was no disciplined march; it was a stampede – a stampede gigantic and terrible – without order and without a goal, six million people, unarmed and unprovisioned, driving headlong. It was the beginning of the rout of civilisation, of the massacre of mankind... (*WW*, 197).

The Time Machine and Monstrous Evolution/Revolution.

Looking at these stars suddenly dwarfed my own troubles and all the gravities of terrestrial life. I thought of their unfathomable distance, and the slow inevitable drift of their movements out of the unknown past into the unknown future. I thought of the great processional cycle that the pole of the earth describes. Only forty times had that silent revolution occurred during all the years that I had traversed. And during these few revolutions all the activity, all the traditions, the complex organisations, the nations, languages, literatures, aspirations, even the mere memory of Man as I knew him, had been swept out of existence. Instead were these frail creatures who had forgotten their high ancestry, and the white Things of which I went in

terror. Then I thought of the Great Fear that was between the two species, and for the first time, with a sudden shiver, came the clear knowledge of what the meat I had seen might be. Yet it was too horrible!
(*TM*, 62).

As this extract demonstrates, an important aspect of the treatment of historical monstrosity in the context of this Wellsian text is to first show *human* history itself as being in its death-throes, before going even further by showing the increasingly monstrous results of a relentless post-human evolutionary process. By the end of the novel's temporal odyssey, after all, there are such grotesque successors to mankind's dominance as predatory giant crabs with '... evil eyes... wriggling on their stalks, its mouth... all alive with appetite, and its vast ungainly claws, smeared with an algal slime... descending upon me...' (*TM*, 84). Finally, life on Earth virtually becomes monstrously unrecognisable as such to even a pioneering scientific observer like the Time Traveller, when faced with a '... round thing, the size of a football perhaps... [with] tentacles... it seemed black against the withering blood-red water, and it was hopping fitfully about...' (*TM*, 86). Moreover, as the planet thus steadily degenerates over countless millennia of historical and/or evolutionary change, every aspect of its natural environment also becomes as unspeakably monstrous as these creatures, until the Time Traveller himself must admit that:

... I cannot convey the sense of abominable desolation that hung over the world. The red eastern sky, the northward blackness, the salt Dead Sea, the stony beach crawling with these foul, slow-moving monsters, the uniform poisonous-looking green of the lichenous plants, the thin air that hurts one's lungs: all combined to an appalling effect... (*TM*, 84).

Before unveiling this bleak vision of a Huxley-inspired evolutionary apocalypse, however, Wells is more directly concerned throughout much of the novel with humanity's own likely immediate evolutionary fate, which had become a particularly pressing *fin-de-siècle* issue due largely to the degenerative theories of Nordau, as discussed in my previous chapter. The advent of these theories, which appeared to many

to render bourgeois hopes for historical progress essentially null-and-void, and thus overturned many prior Victorian conceptions of humanity's own growing historical significance, had meanwhile proven to be an extremely disconcerting ideological experience in itself. In scientific terms, indeed, contemporary evolutionary theory had contributed to a general *fin-de-siècle* sense of human dethronement, rendering the hapless human individual no more than an intelligent beast, subject to monstrous historical developments that Wells expresses both here and in other scientific romances, especially *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. As I have already demonstrated, it is this monstrous sense of humanity's historical and evolutionary destiny as being fundamentally *inhuman* and/or uncontrollable that I shall be most concerned to examine fully in this chapter. This concept of history as being itself essentially monstrous can in fact be discerned on one level though the uncanny distress experienced while trying to explore its mysteries, as when the Time Traveller confesses that '...I am afraid I cannot convey the peculiar sensations of time travelling. They are excessively unpleasant. There is a feeling exactly like that one has upon a switchback – of a helpless headlong motion! I felt the same horrible anticipation, too, of an imminent smash...' (*TM*, 19). Even the time machine itself essentially appears '...squat, ugly, and askew; a thing of brass, ivory, and translucent glimmering quartz...' (*TM*, 89-90). On a wider ideological level, meanwhile, the relentless increases in *fin-de-siècle* scientific power which could allow Wells to even imagine such a machine would also reinforce the idea that history itself could be a monstrous force that belittled human power even as it increased human knowledge. Wells's constant use of contemporary scientific discourse in his scientific romances therefore made them the perfect literary vehicles for expressing these monstrous historical fears. For, as Norman and Jeanne Mackenzie note:

A sense of time, as the dimension against which man's past and future might be measured, and his present complacency judged, was the most

original contribution that Wells brought to English fiction. His feeling for the span of time was both biological and cosmic... It was not merely the new biology that was evolutionary... The new geology, the new astronomy, the new mathematics and the new physics were all sciences vitally concerned with time. From the middle of the century, in fact, science had been dramatically changing the dimensions of existence. Fundamentalists who clung to Archbishop Ussher's sacred date of 4004 BC for the Creation became as ridiculous as the flat-earthers. Within a couple of decades the chronologies of life and matter had been pushed back not by millions of years but by tens of millions. Ideas of the uniqueness of man and the special place of his planet in the scheme of things were undermined as astronomy enlarged the frontiers of the new universe to show that the solar system was dwarfed by an infinite series of galaxies, and that life might well exist on other possible worlds. The late Victorians, indeed, found new conceptions of time pressing upon them at every point. And this new view of the universe was matched by a new view of society as, under the impetus of population growth, urbanisation and the application of science and technology, the social system changed dramatically... It was in this context that Wells and his contemporaries faced the vital question about the end of Victorian England. Was this confused twilight a dawn or a dusk? Was everything in every way getting better and better, or were all the signs of change simply harbingers of catastrophe? (121-122).

One ideology which appeared to offer contemporaries some hope of understanding the historical direction of the *fin-de-siècle* world through an equally scientific view of history itself was, of course, that of Marxism: and notions of the future triumph of communistic visions of human society often recur within the *Time Machine*. Even as the Russian Bolsheviks seized the chance to put such theories into practice in the aftermath of the revolutions of 1917, they therefore believed themselves to be '... immune from utopianism because their socialism was scientific. But, whether or not they were right about the inherently scientific nature of Marxism, even science needs human interpreters, who make subjective judgements and have their own emotional biases. The Bolsheviks were revolutionary enthusiasts, not laboratory assistants...' (Fitzpatrick, 83). As the Time Traveller himself discovers, therefore, any scientific theories concerning the future history of mankind are themselves vulnerable to the chaotic consequences of the monstrous violence which inevitably follows such revolutionary social and/or biological changes in the relative power of opposing social

classes and/or species. Whereas the Bolsheviks regarded their apparent lack of utopianism as guaranteeing scientific objectivity, however, the fact that the Time Traveller, unusually for utopian literature, has no *articulate* guide to the society of 802,701 AD only makes the historical truth behind this brave new world appear even more elusive. Ultimately, and despite the comforting presence of Weena, the Time Traveller is thus acutely aware that all his theories regarding the mysterious processes that created this monstrous future are merely broad historical speculations, and that as such, his apparently convincing explanations ‘... may [therefore] be absolutely wrong...’ (*TM*, 50).

Despite this, however, even his own bourgeois audience had to admit that, while the evolution of different social classes into warring subspecies might have seemed ‘... grotesque... and wildly incredible... yet even now there are existing circumstances to point that way... Even now, does not an East End worker live in such artificial conditions as practically to be cut off from the natural surface of the earth?’ (*TM*, 49). (In literary terms, moreover, the Morlock’s monstrous appetites and comparative weakness in daylight would seemingly anticipate many aspects of *Dracula*’s portrayal of vampirism). Indeed, the Morlocks’s cannibal onslaughts upon the Eloi could be justified in terms of contemporary Marxist historical science, as acts of vengeance for the horrors inflicted upon their proletarian ancestors by over a century of bourgeois exploitation and neglect. Nevertheless, the Time Traveller acknowledges that these monstrous evolutionary changes are due to the selfish power of nineteenth-century bourgeois industrialism over a social order whose ruling capitalist ideology ‘... had taken Necessity as his watchword and excuse, and in ... time Necessity had come home to him... But this attitude of mind was impossible... [The] Eloi had kept too much of their human form not to claim my sympathy... [for] their degradation and their Fear...’

(*TM*, 63). The extent to which any of the novel's evolutionary protagonists can truly be regarded as possessing a securely human identity is extremely limited, however, especially when this 'humanity' is considered in terms of those values which the *fin-de-siècle* bourgeoisie would have truly regarded as fundamental to their own civilisation. The Time Traveller himself is concerned throughout that humanity's descendants will have left such moral niceties behind long ago, beginning with an acknowledgement of his own monstrous powerlessness were he to encounter a future race of supermen whose latent ancestral '...cruelty had grown into a common passion... What if in this interval the race had lost its manliness, and developed into something inhuman, unsympathetic, and overwhelmingly powerful? I might seem some old-world savage animal, only the more dreadful and disgusting for our common likeness – a foul creature to be incontinently slain...' (*TM*, 22). Such fears of the consequences of a monstrous future racism and/or speciesism, as well as the sheer ruthless power of these potential future evolutionary overlords, which in turn resembles that later displayed by the Martians, also echoes the often belligerent nature of *fin-de-siècle* attitudes towards seemingly primitive imperial others. Indeed, even though an obviously superior evolutionary heir to human global power does not in fact materialise in the historical context of 802, 701 AD, the Time Traveller's ignorant historical plight is nevertheless explicitly compared to that of a mystified colonial other. As the Time Traveller himself remarks, after all:

Conceive the tale of London which a negro, fresh from Central Africa, would take back to his tribe! What would he know of railway companies, of social movements, of telephone and telegraph wires, of the Parcels Delivery Company, and postal orders and the like! Yet we, at least, should be willing enough to explain these things to him! And even of what he knew, how much could he make his untravelled friend either apprehend or believe? Then, think how narrow the gap between a negro and a white man of our own times, and how wide the interval between myself and these of the Golden Age! (*TM*, 41-42).

In comparison, any sense of a shared human evolutionary heritage with the inhabitants of 802, 701 AD is extremely disturbing for the Time Traveller, as seen earlier through his violent instincts when confronting the monstrous cannibalism of the Morlocks, themselves already physically monstrous through being ‘... so like a human spider!’ (TM, 47). Scientifically, however, he cannot dismiss the likelihood of this monstrous evolutionary connection, being reminded instead of his own close historical proximity to such monstrous feeding mechanisms, for one of his own human contemporaries is ‘... far less discriminating and exclusive in his food than he was – far less than any monkey. His prejudice against human flesh is no deep-seated instinct... After all, they were less human and more remote than our cannibal ancestors of three or four thousand years ago...’ (TM, 63). For the hapless victims of this monstrous diet, however, the ignorance of his Eloi companion, Weena, regarding even basic aspects of human scientific achievement, such as writing or fire, leads him to perceive her as in fact appearing ‘... more human than she was, perhaps because her affection was so human...’ (TM, 65). By contrast, the Time Traveller’s experiences render his own actions more akin to the Morlocks’ bloodthirsty conduct, not only in terms of his ravenous cravings for meat upon returning to his own time, but in his progressive loss of the physical and ideological trappings of the British bourgeois *fin-de-siècle*. Because he originally heeded historical prophecies of mankind’s inevitable scientific triumph over nature, the ill-prepared Time Traveller is therefore eventually left ‘... with only the weapons and the powers that Nature had endowed me with – hands, feet, and teeth; these, and four safety matches that still remained to me...’ (TM, 55). Bereft of most of his scientific trappings, this collapse into primitivism is most radically accelerated when he loses his ultimate scientific lifeline to his *fin de siècle* past, namely the time machine itself. As a result, the Time Traveller must now suffer the monstrous historical and biological

experience of potentially ‘... losing my own age, of being left helpless, in this strange new world. The bare thought of it was an actual physical sensation. I could feel it grip me at the throat and stop my breathing. In another moment I was in a passion of fear...’ (TM, 35). That such a loss of scientific power would be especially devastating for the Time Traveller in particular becomes even clearer when we take into account Draper’s suggestion that generally:

In Wells’ scientific romances, man is both a questing spirit trying to break through the barriers of material reality and an imperfectly intelligent animal shaped by the forces of nature. The heroic spirit seizes upon the power of science as a means to free itself, but as the consequences... are explored... finds itself disappointed or even deconstructed into a terrifying bestiality... The Time Traveller is the prototypical Wellsian hero, defying established notions of reality for a greater one revealed through science... He is a representative of science, able to manipulate the forces of nature. But what the matches illuminate when he gets beneath the deceptive surface of the world is a ruthless exploitation of creature by creature which compromises man beyond any possibility of redemption... (35-38).

Befitting the Time Traveller’s own roots in the bourgeois *fin de siècle*, meanwhile, a growing consciousness of humanity’s seemingly irredeemable addiction to savage violence and exploitation promotes a similar rise in the contemporary British bourgeoisie’s fears that they would soon lose both their domestic and imperial power. By unleashing their own increasingly savage violence so as to defend their remaining power, however, both the Time Traveller and, more widely, the rest of Britain’s *fin de siècle* bourgeoisie would unwittingly further the annihilation of all that they still held dear in a world of monstrous historical change. In the same way that British advances in military technology were shown above to merely make modern warfare an increasingly monstrous bloodbath, so do the Time Traveller’s attempts to use his matches to defend himself ultimately lead to a devastating forest fire, and thus to Weena’s own, doubtless horrible death. (Nevertheless, since Weena would otherwise have probably become prey to hungry Morlocks in any case, the Time Traveller still ‘... cannot describe how it

relieved me to think that it had escaped the awful fate to which it seemed destined...’ [TM, 77]). Such violent destruction renders the Time Traveller himself, if not a fully-fledged monster in his own right, then capable at least of being a monstrous catalyst of devastating power, both in the carnage he provokes in 802,701 AD, and in the monstrous historical knowledge he brings back from the future. As the novel’s narrator finally admits, if the Time Traveller’s adventures only serve to confirm his already dark forebodings concerning the possible future of bourgeois civilisation, then his *fin-de-siècle* audience is left powerless to do anything other than ‘... to live as though it were not so...’ (TM, 92). For the Time Traveller himself, however, his only option is to escape the coming evolutionary and historical Armageddon by disconnecting himself from a human race whose present and future destinies both appear increasingly monstrous. Other critics have already pointed out the more mythic historical connections that this self-imposed exile within history itself evokes, such as its Promethean links with an earlier monstrous scientific overreacher, namely Victor Frankenstein.⁴ The natural forces they sought to control overwhelm both, and the Time Traveller suffers a monstrous historical ‘... malaise [which] takes the form of an inability to come to terms with his own time, and so he is doomed, to wander through time till the end of his days...’ (Dryden, 160). The idea of a monstrous scientific outcast and/or outsider from the norms of *fin-de-siècle* bourgeois society will also recur within Wells’s other scientific romances, and is especially relevant to both Moreau and Griffin. For they both represent the revolutionary cutting edges of their respective *fin-de-siècle* scientific fields, and as such are more vulnerable as lone outsiders to the kind of collective, usually bourgeois-led anti-scientific backlash which Eric Hobsbawm, for one, could have predicted. (After all, we have already noted his claim that, historically, *fin-de-siècle* science itself increasingly became ‘... not only something which few

people could understand, but something of which many disapproved while increasingly recognizing that they depended on it...' (*Empire*, 247). Of course, the Martians – who themselves fulfil an equally pioneering historical role in terms of military science, as I have demonstrated – are not really faced with such a serious *popular* backlash, save in the wildest dreams of the Artilleryman. Yet their monstrous fate replicates the pattern which also describes those of Moreau and Griffin, namely that of a seemingly godlike display of scientific power, which nevertheless soon comes to ignominious grief in the chaotic and unpredictable realm of monstrous history. This Wellsian insistence on historical mortality thus negates both of these outsiders's deliberate attempts to set themselves above conventional humanity through monstrous scientific means. For their ignominious deaths must largely overshadow their respective radical attempts to either overcome mankind's psychological absorption by ideas of pleasure and pain, as with Moreau, or to simply seize political power like Griffin and proclaim '... the Epoch of the Invisible Man...' (*IM*, 123). Yet by both representing the kind of monstrous scientific future which bourgeois society feared most for being a '... dark, unknown space from which horrors are visited...' (Botting, *Gothic*, 163), Moreau and Griffin thus also represent the terrifying power of monstrous history itself, even though this power will ultimately destroy them. In analysing their own attempts to radically alter the *fin-de-siècle* world's biological and socio-political power structures, we shall therefore proceed to identify the monstrous historical forces *that these scientific anti-heroes themselves embody*. (After all, we have already discerned the relative importance of both evolutionary and revolutionary scientific theory within the *Time Machine* in much the same way). Despite all this, however, neither evolution nor revolution is fundamentally capable of overcoming the monstrous inhuman social divisions between Morlocks and Eloi, although, ultimately, such forces can reverse the relative status of

both as either a future predator or as future prey. Against the historical background of such monstrous socio-biological upheavals, after all, even the Time Traveller's own unprecedented scientific power proves ultimately incapable of mastering the nightmarish (r)evolutionary reality which has long arisen between Eloi and Morlock. As such, he is ultimately left in a monstrously helpless situation, for:

Hitherto I had merely thought myself impeded by the childish simplicity of the little people, and by some unknown forces which I had only to understand to overcome; but there was an altogether new element in the sickening quality of the Morlocks – a something inhuman and malign. Instinctively I loathed them... The Upper-world people might once have been the favoured aristocracy, and the Morlocks their mechanical servants; but that had long since passed away. The two species that had resulted from the evolution of man were sliding down towards, or had already arrived at, an altogether new relationship. The Eloi, like the Carolingian kings, had decayed to a mere beautiful futility. They still possessed the earth on sufferance: since the Morlocks, subterranean for innumerable generations, had come at last to find the sunlit surface intolerable. And the Morlocks made their garments... perhaps through the survival of an old habit of service. They did it as a standing horse paws with his foot, or as a man enjoys killing animals in sport: because ancient and departed necessities had impressed it on the organism. But, clearly, the old order was already in part reversed. The Nemesis of the delicate ones was creeping on apace. Ages ago, thousands of generations ago, man had thrust his brother man out of the ease and the sunshine. And now that brother was coming back – changed! Already the Eloi had begun to learn one lesson anew. They were becoming reacquainted with fear... (*TM*, 58-59).

The Island of Doctor Moreau, The Invisible Man, and the Monstrous Scientific

Outcast.

So for twenty years altogether – counting nine years in England – I have been going on, and there is still something in everything I do that defeats me, makes me dissatisfied, challenges me to further effort. Sometimes I rise above my level, sometimes I fall below it, but always I fall short of the things I dream. The human shape I can get now, almost with ease, so that it is lithe and graceful, or thick and strong; but often there is trouble with the hands and claws – painful things that I dare not shape too freely. But it is in the subtle grafting and re-shaping one must needs do to the brain that my trouble lies. The intelligence is often oddly low, with unaccountable blank ends, unexpected gaps. And least satisfactory of all is something that I cannot touch, somewhere – I cannot determine where – in the seat of the emotions. Cravings, instincts, desires that harm humanity, a strange hidden reservoir to burst suddenly and inundate the whole being of the creature with anger, hate, or fear. These creatures of mine seemed strange and

uncanny to you as soon as you began to observe them, but to me, just after I make them, they seem to be indisputable human beings. It's afterwards as I observe them that the persuasion fades. First one animal trait, then another, creeps to the surface and stares out at me... But I will conquer yet. Each time I dip a living creature into the bath of burning pain, I say, This time I will burn out all the animal, this time I will make a rational creature of my own. After all, what is ten years? Man has been a hundred thousand in the making... (*IDM*, 75-76).

... You are against me. For a whole day you have chased me; you have tried to rob me of a night's rest. But I have had food in spite of you, I have slept in spite of you, and the game is only beginning... There is nothing for it, but to start the Terror. This announces the first day of the Terror. Port Burdock is no longer under the Queen... it is under me – the Terror! This is day one of year one of the new epoch – the Epoch of the Invisible Man. I am Invisible Man the First. To begin with the rule will be easy. The first day there will be one execution for the sake of example – a man named Kemp. Death starts for him today, He may lock himself away, hide himself away, get guards about him, put on armour if he likes; Death, the unseen Death, is coming... (*IM*, 123).

With the aforementioned growth in evolutionary theory occurring alongside ever more dramatic examples of technological change, nineteenth-century scientific thought had, by the *fin de siècle*, become an engine of historical change to an unprecedented degree, being both the bedrock of Britain's imperial power and a potential tool of its downfall. We have already seen, for example, how revolutionary changes in military technology would drive the crippling slaughter of the First World War, but even Britain's peacetime prosperity had been affected by scientific developments. Indeed, my earlier analysis of Wells's own concerns with Britain's relative weaknesses in manufacturing scientific instruments can be seen as merely highlighting a single ominous symptom of a monstrous overall decline in British scientific power. Increasingly, the fabled 'workshop of the world', whose revolutionary industrial might had driven bourgeois capitalism to its heights of imperial power, appeared almost hamstrung in many ways by its historic scientific dominance, rather than empowered by its past successes to meet

the monstrous challenges of future economic competition. After all, as Harrison

comments:

To some extent of course Britain was paying the price for being first in the field. When larger nations followed the British example and industrialized it was inevitable that they would surpass her in certain respects... There was also the burden of established and tried techniques, entrenched attitudes and heavy investment to be borne. Why re-equip with new technology if the old could be made to last a little longer? It was a temptation to which older manufacturers might succumb, for in the short term it was easier and cheaper than root-and-branch innovation. This was not by any means an unreasonable response. It made good economic sense in that it minimized costs and maintained profits, at least for the foreseeable future. Nineteenth-century machines were often superbly built and, with occasional replacement of worn parts, could last a long time... The failure to innovate and the consequent falling behind America and Germany in industry after industry exposed weaknesses in the British economy... British pioneers... had laid the foundations, but [French,] American and German firms developed the technology and provided the investment... The British economy neither kept abreast of the development of new industries nor adopted new techniques in the older industries to the same extent as her competitors... The doubts about late Victorian entrepreneurship, however, can be extended beyond purely economic evidence to wider, cultural factors. It has been argued that the dominance of aristocratic values and styles of life, which the English middle classes increasingly aspired to emulate, was inimical to dynamic economic progress... But as long as engineers and industrialists were regarded as inferior in prestige and status to the gentry and the gentrified professions, little change was to be expected... (17-20).

That an individual's commitment to scientific progress was very far from guaranteeing socio-economic prestige in Wells's Britain can be gauged from the outcast status of his scientific protagonists, especially in the cases of Moreau and Griffin, as I shall examine further. For whereas the Time Traveller lives a seemingly comfortable bourgeois existence before being transformed by his temporal discoveries, Griffin for one is confined to a lowly social station even before making the monstrous discoveries which will ensure his own exile from mainstream humanity. Griffin himself is, after all, very insistent that the attractions of scientific invisibility, and the potential power which he believed would result from achieving this state, were overwhelming to '... a shabby, poverty-struck, hemmed-in demonstrator, teaching fools in a provincial college, [who]

might suddenly become – this. I ask you, Kemp, if *you* – Anyone, I tell you, would have flung himself upon that research...’ (*IM*, 84). Many critics, however, have sought to contrast Griffin’s wretched social state with Kemp’s own possession of both scientific knowledge *and* bourgeois comfort, and it is certainly the case that Kemp cannot comprehend the monstrous economic extremities compelling Griffin to even steal from his own father to further this research. The fact that this monstrous theft drives his father to suicide makes little difference, however, to the obsessive Griffin, who already proclaims his own disregard for his hometown’s conventional bourgeois morality. As such, Griffin himself recalls the ‘... strange sense of detachment [that] I felt from the squalid respectability, the sordid commercialism of the place... I did not feel a bit sorry for my father. He seemed... the victim of his own foolish sentimentality. The current cant required my attendance at his funeral, but it was really not my affair...’ (*IM*, 85). Similarly controversial scientific drives are echoed elsewhere in the monstrous exile of Moreau from *fin-de-siècle* Britain, the reasons behind which I shall later examine further, but which can at this point be best hinted at by Moreau’s self-confessed enthralment before the possibilities of scientific progress, insisting to Prendrick that:

You cannot imagine the strange colourless delight of these intellectual desires. The thing before you is no longer an animal, a fellow-creature, but a problem. Sympathetic pain – all I know of it I remember as a thing I used to suffer from years ago. I wanted – it was the only thing I wanted – to find out the extreme limit of plasticity in a living shape... To this day I have never troubled about the ethics of the matter. *The study of Nature at last makes a man as remorseless as Nature...* (*IDM*, 73; my italics).

Given Hobsbawm’s earlier comments about the *fin-de-siècle* bourgeoisie’s growing dependence on, yet simultaneous disapproval of, the power of scientific progress, the monstrous ruthlessness of Wells’s exiled geniuses would therefore appear to reflect contemporary anxiety about the unpredictable, potentially destructive results of such scientific dependence. There was no historical guarantee, after all, that the aims and

achievements of such ruthless individuals, or the scientific forces whose power they sought to wield, would prove compatible with the liberal ideals which had hitherto been used to justify bourgeois economic and socio-political power. How Wells attempts to deal with such monstrous anxieties in these texts will form the remainder of my discussion here.

Critics have long been aware of Wells's revolutionary interest in possible historical successors to bourgeois democracy, and his desire, especially in his later years, for a new class of scientific elite to take power on a global level. As Peter Kemp comments, moreover, the '...idea of the man of destiny has intense appeal to Wells – despite his continual insistence that history is made by mass-movements, not individual personalities. As if trying to reconcile his excitement about the one with his faith in the other, he ensures that his colossi sooner or later come to grief...' (193). Historically, a similar bourgeois desire for an all-powerful elite individual to take over a world whose Victorian certainties had been shattered by war and economic collapse, and thereby ward off the monstrous alternative future of communist anarchy, would lie behind much of the sinister appeal of twentieth-century fascist dictators. During the *fin de siècle*, however, Wells's enduring ambivalence towards such monstrously powerful individuals leads, for example, to Griffin's ignominious fate, as we shall demonstrate later. In the case of Moreau, meanwhile, and despite his own seeming disinterest in anything other than pure scientific research, we find that this very lack of concern renders him even more historically dangerous in an age of increasing global scientific power. As Hillegas comments, indeed, given this historical context:

Moreau is a far more sinister creature than the medieval Faust or Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. He has Huxley's intelligence, knowledge, and command of the powerful scientific method; but he does not have Huxley's controlling humanity. What we have here, of course, is a foreshadowing of the ruler of the modern scientific state... Thus Moreau's activities foreshadow anti-utopian nightmare states whose rulers, free of all ethical

considerations, employ biological, chemical, and psychological conditioning and manipulation in order to maintain total control over their citizens... (37).

Similarly, the radical socialist political ideologies by which Karl Marx and others had sought to impose scientific rationalism upon the course of historical change proved just as dangerous to the survival of the *fin-de-siècle* imperial bourgeois world-order. As I have shown, such attempts would unleash monstrously unpredictable and/or uncontrollable historical forces whose manifestation during the Russian Revolution of 1917 onwards would fully bear out the worst fears of Wells's bourgeois contemporaries. Wells himself, meanwhile, would show in the monstrous results of Moreau's experiments the potential dangers underlying his own desire to impose scientific power upon mankind's future history, despite their potentially noble scientific aim of overcoming biological pleasure and pain, which Moreau himself ironically sees as '... the mark of the beast... Pain and pleasure – they are for us, only so long as we wriggle in the dust...' (*IDM*, 72). The monstrous degree to which the natural pain of evolutionary biological change is scientifically intensified by Moreau in order to overcome its overall power also in fact proves to have monstrously unpredictable, uncontrollable historical results, despite his attempts to mimic what he saw as evolution's own scientific laws, since:

Moreau's speculative mutilations, his attempts to turn animals into something different, are intended to emphasise how much of life is painful hypothesis, nature trying out one experiment after another, indifferent to suffering or pain. But whereas, in the natural realm, change is generally slow so that any pain involved is dispersed throughout a species and over a long period of time, in Moreau's laboratory, where he is attempting to accelerate the process, the suffering is hideously apparent, concentrated in days or weeks of extreme torment and intensified upon one individual... While shrieks and sobs shrill out from the laboratory which acts as an image of evolution, the island around it runs with blood, is increasingly strewn with half-eaten corpses, and pullulates with predatory appetites... (Kemp, 21).

This bloodthirsty environment itself befits both a narrator, Prendrick, who is introduced to us as a potential cannibal following the shipwreck of his original vessel, and a creator, Wells, who was then labouring under a (misdiagnosed) biological death-sentence of bloody consumption. Given all this, therefore, it is unsurprising that the proletarian Beast-Folk's potential responses to their hostile environment includes both servile acquiescence to the quasi-religious Law, or striking back through monstrous revolutionary violence, as occurs with the Puma-Woman's ultimately murderous assaults upon Moreau himself. Interestingly, both of these monstrous developments may to some extent be anticipated by Moreau and/or his human cohorts, yet they finally evolve in wholly unexpected directions: the Law ascribes godlike powers to Moreau, going far beyond what he had originally seen as a hypnotic attempt to forestall bestial rebellion. Instead, the uncompromising creeds of the Law notoriously claim that '... His is the lightning-flash... His is the deep blue sea... His are the stars in the sky...' (*IDM*, 57), yet prove powerless to forestall the constant threat of monstrous regression into often uncontrollable bestiality, which accelerates horribly after Moreau's death. This ultimate failure of Moreau's experiments only serves, of course, to confirm Prendrick's earlier doubts as to the scientific justification for the monstrous pain that they inflicted upon these unfortunate wretches, who despite everything merely remain throughout as:

Poor brutes! I began to see the viler aspect of Moreau's cruelty. I had not thought before of the pain and trouble that came to these poor victims after they had passed from Moreau's hands. I had shivered only at the days of actual torment in the enclosure. But now that seemed to be the lesser part. Before they had been beasts, their instincts fitly adapted to their surroundings, and happy as living things may be. Now they stumbled in the shackles of humanity, lived in a fear that never died, fretted by a law they could not understand; their mock-human existence began in an agony, was one long internal struggle, one long dread of Moreau – and for what? It was the wantonness that stirred me.

Had Moreau any intelligible object I could have sympathised at least a little with him. I am not so squeamish about pain as that. I could have forgiven him a little even had his motive been hate. But he was so irresponsible, so utterly careless. His curiosity, his mad, aimless

investigations, drove him on, and the things were thrown out to live a year or so, to struggle, and blunder, and suffer; at last to die painfully. They were wretched in themselves, the old animal hate moved them to trouble one another, the Law held them back from a brief hot struggle and a decisive end to their natural animosities. ... I must confess I lost faith in the sanity of the world when I saw it suffering the painful disorder of this island. A blind fate, a vast pitiless mechanism, seemed to cut and shape the fabric of existence, and I, Moreau (by his passion for research), Montgomery (by his passion for drink), the Beast People, with their instincts and mental restrictions, were torn and crushed, ruthlessly, inevitably, amid the infinite complexity of its incessant wheels... (*IDM*, 93-94).

This controlling influence, of course, is itself precisely what the monstrous forces of historical change, represented here in evolutionary terms, have upon human life according to my thesis, and which monstrous literature in general is written to explore. In the context of *fin-de-siècle* Britain, however, an even better symbol of a botched human attempt to control destiny through scientific means, and it is to this monstrous text that I shall finally turn in this chapter.

In discussing the Invisible Man himself, we must remember his constant assertions of his obvious monstrous difference from normal humanity (existing even before his transformation, as the text claims Griffin to be ‘...almost an albino...’ [*IM*, 72]), in terms of personal superiority, which is again easily read in evolutionary terms. While Griffin thus often provides the clearest scientific illustration in these texts of Brome’s earlier assertions of Wells’s own obsessive preoccupation with power, however, we must also remember my earlier demonstration of Griffin’s often absurd limitations despite all his own wild anticipations, with the English weather proving especially damaging. His conspicuous lack of power in these unfavourable circumstances merely reinforces his later self-assessment of the sole purpose of his invisibility, which is to enforce his dreams of a monstrous invisible tyranny, since his powers prove ‘...particularly useful, therefore, in killing. I can walk round a man, whatever weapon he has, choose my point, strike as I like. Dodge as I like. Escape as I

like... And it is killing we must do, Kemp... Not wanton killing, but a judicious slaying... Yes – no doubt its startling. But I mean it. A Reign of Terror...’ (*IM*, 114). Interestingly, this monstrous use of violence to assert personal power, and even survival, in a monstrously hostile environment is echoed elsewhere by the Time Traveller’s savagery towards the Morlocks, as I have shown. We also find evidence of this in Prendrick’s confession that, after Moreau’s death, the Beast-Folk ‘... soon gained a wholesome respect for my trick of throwing stones and the bite of my hatchet... I found their simple scale of honour was based mainly on the capacity for inflicting trenchant wounds. Indeed I may say – without vanity, I hope – that I held something like a pre-eminence among them...’ (*IDM*, 119). Returning to Griffin, then, it is therefore small wonder that, according to Linda Dryden, not only is it a self-proclaimed fact that the murderous:

... Griffin is a terrorist, out of place in the “normal” city landscape, but he is also a Gothic monster in the sense of the Gothic subject’s... [monstrous] body that is prone to metamorphosis and fluctuability... The terrible corruption of human flesh – Hyde, Dorian Grey, the Morlocks... Lucy Westenra, Griffin – defines much of the horror of the modern Gothic where London and its environs is the location of any number of mutations and blood-chilling horrors... (173-174).

Griffin, however, is even more of a lone outsider than any other London horrors mentioned here, and it is interesting that he partly blames this solitary tendency in his work, a bourgeois quality which I have previously connected with Victor Frankenstein, upon the inadequate support of the *fin-de-siècle* scientific community. For Victor, despite occasionally sharing in Griffin’s contempt for the hidebound world of the official scientific establishment, as seen when he first meets the repulsive Professor Krempe, is nevertheless enthralled by the more positive aspects of academic life, as embodied at Ingolstadt by his other, more inspirational teacher, Professor Waldman. Indeed, it is Waldman who teaches him a most appropriate lesson *vis-à-vis* this chapter,

namely that even eighteenth-century scientists can gain ‘... new and almost unlimited powers; they can command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake, *and even mock the invisible world with its own shadows...*’ (*Frankenstein*, 51; my italics). Of course, Victor later claims to regret his enchantment by this powerful scientific knowledge – understandably so, given that such knowledge will ultimately result in the creation of the Monster. Yet his initial withdrawal into scientific isolation is ostensibly not so much a case of hostile alienation from mainstream academic circles, but rather a question of having simply outgrown them. Griffin’s monstrous solitude, by contrast, explicitly speaks almost entirely of such alienation, as epitomised by his bitter experiences of the dreary reality of scientific work at the University of London, as we have already seen. His despair at this seems total, with Harrison’s earlier historical impression that *fin-de-siècle* science itself had lost much of its prestige in Britain thus being proven in this case by Griffin’s sheer exasperation at having to suffer the unwelcome attentions of his unscrupulous ‘... provincial professor, [who was] always prying... And the students, the cramped means! Three years I had of it...’ (*IM*, 84). Elsewhere, a wider British ambivalence towards *fin-de-siècle* scientific progress is also reinforced, meanwhile, by both Moreau’s exile for monstrous acts of cruel vivisection, and by Prendrick’s ambivalent response to it. For, as Prendrick himself comments:

It was not the first time that conscience has turned against the methods of research. The doctor was simply howled out of the country. It may be he deserved to be, but I still think the tepid support of his fellow-investigators, and his desertion by the great body of scientific workers, was a shameful thing. Yet some of his experiments, by the journalist’s account, were wantonly cruel. He might perhaps have purchased his social peace by abandoning his investigations, but he apparently preferred the latter, as most men would who have once fallen under the overmastering spell of research... (*IDM*, 32).

Wells himself later admitted that Prendrick’s ambivalence here was partly inspired by authorial misgivings regarding the literary community’s treatment of an equally

monstrously disgraced Oscar Wilde, and we have seen throughout this chapter how Wells's scientific romances echo the latter's socially apocalyptic *fin-de-siècle* tendencies. Under the increasingly monstrous historical shadow of impending war and revolution, bourgeois imperial Britain edged ever closer towards a historical near-apocalypse that embellished Dorian Gray's earlier ironic wish for a '*...fin du globe...* Life is a great disappointment...' (Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, ed. Robert Mighall. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2000, Penguin Classics, 174). One monstrous scientific outcast who would heartily agree with this assertion is Griffin himself, whose monstrous hunger for scientific power had led him to go '*... over the heads of the things a man reckons desirable. No doubt invisibility made it possible to get them, but it made it impossible to enjoy them when they were got... And for this I had become a wrapped-up mystery, a swathed and bandaged caricature of a man!*' (*IM*, 112). Even as social/scientific superiors such as Kemp shun this would-be invisible usurper of British imperial power (while themselves desiring the scientific power he embodies), so do seemingly inferior proletarians such as the largely comic inhabitants of Iping, and the mob of navvies and assorted others who finally kill him. For all his monstrous deeds and invisible power, it seems, Griffin ultimately becomes yet another disillusioned scientific failure, who is ironically less able to hide his identity than other *fin-de-siècle* London monsters such as Hyde, Professor Moriarty, or Dorian Gray himself. Whereas they can all exercise their various monstrous gifts to achieve power and influence enough to live well in the equally monstrous imperial capital, the hapless Griffin quickly finds that '*... even to me, an Invisible Man, the rows of London houses stood latched, barred, and bolted impregnably...*' (*IM*, 99).⁵ Yet imperial bourgeois Britons should not celebrate the demise of their invisible enemy too swiftly, for I have shown that the descendants of precisely such powerful proletarians as those who

destroy Griffin will, millennia hence, become the monstrous Morlock predators of the bourgeoisie's own probable evolutionary heirs, the Eloi. Overall, therefore, as Wells's prophecies of monstrous historical changes in scientific power continued apace, the increasingly terrified bourgeois rulers of British society grew ever more intent upon finding either a sinisterly powerful protector to safeguard their political/economic empire, and/or upon finding monstrous scapegoats for their perceived internal weaknesses. Specimens of such degenerate, yet mesmerising creatures were quickly found both in monstrous literature as with the aforementioned Hyde, Gray, and Moriarty, and also in its monstrous authors like Wilde, as well as in truly monstrous historical events such as the Jack the Ripper murders of 1888. My next chapter will discuss further how the *fin-de-siècle* imperial metropolis breeds such monstrously degenerate yet powerful criminals and/or anti-heroes, whose ambivalent appeal to the growing social elitism of an increasingly embattled British bourgeoisie is echoed by Griffin himself, as he brushes aside Kemp's objections to his monstrous acts:

‘But – I say! The common conventions of humanity – ‘

‘Are all very well for common people ... My dear Kemp, it's no good your sitting and glaring as if I were a murderer. It had to be done. He had his revolver. If once he saw me he would be able to describe me – ‘

‘But still’, said Kemp, ‘in England – today. And the man was in his own house, and you were – well, robbing.’

‘Robbing! Confound it! You'll call me a thief next! Surely, Kemp, you're not fool enough to dance on the old strings. Can't you see my position?’

‘And his too,’ said Kemp.

The Invisible Man stood up sharply. ‘What do you mean to say?’

Kemp's face grew a trifle hard. He was about to speak and checked himself. ‘I suppose, after all,’ he said with a sudden change of manner, ‘The thing had to be done. You were in a fix. But still – ‘

‘Of course I was in a fix – an infernal fix. And he made me wild too – hunting me about the house, fooling about with his revolver, locking and unlocking doors. He was simply exasperating. You don't blame me, do you? You don't blame me?’

‘I never blame anyone,’ said Kemp. ‘It's quite out of fashion... (*IM*, 109).

In this chapter, we have seen how Wells's scientific romances depict a monstrous future where bourgeois pretensions of control over their own historical destiny are shattered by the bloody chaos which is revealed by the inexorable growth of monstrous science, and gives rise to monstrous evolutionary ideas of history itself. In particular, bourgeois Britain's imperial power would soon be decimated by the apocalyptic scientific warfare of the First World War, which, with its armoured tanks and poison gas, increasingly bore a horrific resemblance to the alien carnage of the Martian invasion in *The War of the Worlds*. Meanwhile, *The Time Machine* shows the truly monstrous ideological implications of an unpredictable evolutionary history, where even the most convincing bourgeois deductions regarding a potentially monstrous future pale before the true horrors of the monstrous class conflict which would unleash both the Morlocks and the Russian Revolution. Again, it is this very loss of control which will be dramatised by the ignominious fates of the bourgeois scientific pioneers of both *The Invisible Man* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, in the guise of a navy's spade and the claws of the Puma-Woman, respectively. For the dictatorial, and even godlike, imperial pretensions of both Griffin and Moreau are thus rapidly overthrown by the selfsame unpredictable historical forces of monstrous evolution and class conflict which drive the Time Traveller into pessimistic despair. In a *fin de siècle* society thus haunted by scientific monstrosity, it is unsurprising that such radical scientists as Griffin and Moreau should be forced into exile from, if not into crimes against, the very imperial bourgeois British society which relied upon other monstrously powerful scientists for its own defence. (This is exemplified by the ambiguously protective roles of both Van Helsing, as we have seen, and especially Sherlock Holmes, as I shall show in my next chapter). It remains to be seen how criminal science itself came to define a world where scientists could masquerade as

criminal masterminds, and vice versa, even as degenerate aristocrats could immerse themselves in the largely proletarian criminal underworld, in order to more fully defy the conventional mores of bourgeois society. For in such a world, as Prendrick notes, those who professed to uphold such bourgeois ideals were instead deceptively vulnerable to such bestial fears of monstrous internal enemies '... as a half-tamed lion cub may feel... I feel as though the animal was surging through them; that presently the degradation of the Islanders will be played over again on a larger scale... When I lived in London the horror was wellnigh insupportable...' (*IDM*, 128).

Notes to Chapter Four.

¹ For an interesting selection of Huxley's work, as well as that of other key scientific figures during the *fin de siècle*, see Ledger and Luckhurst, 221-242. The most useful overview of the overall historical context of *fin-de-siècle* scientific thought that I have read, meanwhile, is to be found in Hobsbawm, 243-261.

² Eby, 38-55, provides a fascinating analysis of the connections between Wells's writings and the Great War, with particular reference to the *War of the Worlds*. Useful biographical accounts of Wells's wartime conduct, and its ideological implications, appear in Mackensie and Mackensie, 297-318; and Smith, *Desperately Mortal*, 217-242. (Also interesting, moreover, is the fact that, had a German invasion of Britain succeeded in 1940, then Wells himself was on the list of prominent individuals to be rounded up by the Gestapo, as shown by Hammond, *Preface*, 77). Powerful historical work upon the *fin-de-siècle* roots of the Great War, meanwhile, is contained in Hobsbawm, 302-327; and Morrow, 1-36, with an account of the first usage of poison gas also appearing in the latter, 78-79.

³ British responses to Von Bernhardi's work are assessed in Eby, 189-191; and Hibberd, 9-11, 20-21. For discussion of the historical significance of Anglo-German naval rivalry during the *fin de siècle*, see Hobsbawm, 319-320; and Morrow, 11-13, 23-26. The development of increasingly ruthless forms of submarine warfare is also discussed in Morrow, 54-58, 100-105, 148-153, 202-206, 258-261. Early tank warfare, and/or Wells's role in 'inventing' the tank itself, is the subject of Eby, 47-48; Robson, 64-65; Morrow, 134-135, 192-193; Smith, *Desperately Mortal*, 228. Meanwhile, Wells's important early influence upon the creation of the atomic bomb is explored in Mackensie and Mackensie, 298-299. For Wells' reactions to the Russian Revolution, see Smith, *Desperately Mortal*, 232-235; Mackensie and Mackensie, 300-301, 313-314, 325-328. Useful historical introductions to the Revolution itself include Hobsbawm, 277-279, 292-301; Fitzpatrick, 15-67; and Wood.

⁴ An intriguing examination of several Wellsian texts, including *The Time Machine*, in terms of the relationship between predator and prey, as well as his treatment of food in general, is made by Kemp, 7-72. For discussion of these mythic and/or Promethean aspects of *The Time Machine*, see Dryden, 161-162; Parrinder, 47-48; Hammond, *Preface*, 174-188; Hammond, *Modern Novel*, 58-59, 75-84. Wagar, 76-99.

⁵ The anti-utopian nature of both *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and *The Invisible Man* is explored by Hillegas, 34-39. The significance of Wells's own medical condition upon the sense of monstrous dethronement found in his scientific romances is assessed by Smith, 48-49; Parrinder, 46, 49-64. Oscar Wilde's influence upon *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is commented upon by Showalter, 80. For the importance of London in interpreting both *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and *The Invisible Man*, see Dryden, 167-177. Another seminal analysis of the socio-biological significance of the advances in scientific power shown in both texts is made by Draper, 42-50.

CHAPTER FIVE:

'Culture and corruption...I have known something of both. It seems

terrible to me now that they should ever be found together...': Uncanny

History and Unstable Criminality in the Monstrous Cases of Sir Arthur

Conan Doyle, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Oscar Wilde.

As you are aware, Watson, there is no one who knows the higher criminal world of London so well as I do. For years past I have continually been conscious of some power behind the malefactor, some deep organising power which forever stands in the way of the law... For years I have endeavoured to break through the veil which shrouded it, and at last the time came when I seized my thread and followed it, until it led me... to ex-Professor Moriarty of mathematical celebrity.

He is the Napoleon of crime, Watson. He is the organizer of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city. He is a genius, a philosopher, an abstract thinker. He has a brain of the first order. He sits motionless, like a spider in the centre of its web, but that web has a thousand radiations, and he knows well every quiver of each of them. He does little himself. He only plans. But his agents are numerous and splendidly organized. Is there a crime to be done, a paper to be abstracted, we will say, a house to be rifled, a man to be removed – the word is passed to the Professor, the matter is organized and carried out. The agent may be caught. In that case money is found for his bail or his defence. But the central power which uses the agent is never caught, never so much as suspected... You know my powers, my dear Watson, and yet... I was forced to confess that I had at last met an antagonist who was my intellectual equal. My horror at his crimes was lost in my admiration at his skill... His shoulders are rounded from much study, and his face protrudes forward, and is forever oscillating from side to side in a curiously reptilian fashion... The air of London is the sweeter for my presence. In over a thousand cases I am not aware that I have ever used my powers upon the wrong side. Of late, I have been tempted to look into the problems furnished by nature rather than those more superficial ones for which our artificial state of society is responsible. Your memoirs will draw to an end, Watson, upon the day that I crown my career by the capture or extinction of the most dangerous and capable criminal in Europe... (Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan. 'The Final Problem', 200-203).¹

The suspense became unbearable. Time seemed to him to be crawling with feet of lead, while he by monstrous winds was being swept towards the jagged edge of some black cleft of precipice. He knew what was waiting for him there; saw it indeed, and, shuddering, crushed with dark hands his burning lids as though he would have robbed the very brain of sight, and driven the eyeballs back into their cave. It was useless. The brain had its own food on which it batted, and the imagination, made grotesque by terror, twisted and distorted as a living thing by pain, danced like some foul puppet on a stand, and grinned through moving masks. Then, suddenly, Time stopped for him. Yes: that blind, slow-breathing thing crawled no more, and horrible thoughts, Time being dead, raced nimbly on in front, and dragged a hideous future

from its grave, and showed it to him. He stared at it. Its very horror made him stone... (*Dorian Gray*, 159).

The dismal quarter of Soho... with its muddy ways, and slatternly passengers, and its lamps, which had never been extinguished or had been kindled afresh to combat this mournful reinvasion of darkness, seemed, in the lawyer's eyes, like a district of some city in a nightmare. The thoughts of his mind beside, were of the gloomiest dye; and when he glanced at the companion of his drive, he was conscious of some touch of that terror of the law and the law's officers, which may at times assail the most honest.

As the cab drew up before the address indicated, the fog lifted a little and showed him a dingy street, a gin palace, a low French eating house, a shop for the retail of penny numbers and twopenny salads, many ragged children huddled in the doorways, and many women of many different nationalities passing out, key in hand, to have a morning glass; and the next moment the fog settled down again... and cut him off from his blackguardly surroundings. This was the home of Henry Jekyll's favourite; of a man who was heir to a quarter of a million sterling... (Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: And Other Tales of Terror*, ed. Robert Mighall London, Penguin Books Ltd., 2002, Penguin Classics, 23).

From the above extracts, it is possible to discern at least two common sources for *fin-de-siècle* bourgeois anxieties over what appeared to be an increasingly monstrous criminal insurgency within the very domestic heart of Britain's hard-won global empire. The first of these derived from the monstrous possibility that such resourceful criminals could exist, and even thrive, behind a respectable, or at least wealthy, façade, which would leave them hidden and/or invulnerable from the law. The other, meanwhile, stemmed from the idea that the increasing power of such monstrous criminals showed that bourgeois control over the direction of historical change, whether in political or even evolutionary terms, was slipping ever further away from the supposed heroes and/or rulers of British imperial capitalism. Before outlining these fears of monstrous criminal instability further, however, it is worth remembering how, in previous chapters, I have already examined similar contemporary fears of imperial vulnerability with regard to potential *foreign* invaders. On one level, it seemed that the monstrous results of invasion could leave the British helpless under the bloodthirsty rule of a regressive, quasi-feudal continental tyranny, as in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

Alternatively, there remained the near-genocidal possibilities afforded to such an invasion by the increasingly monstrous weapons of *fin-de-siècle* scientific warfare, the power of which was extrapolated by H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* into a monstrous apocalyptic future itself eerily akin to the future historical Great War of 1914-1918.

Even without the horrors of invasion, however, *fin-de-siècle* fears of Britain's internal weaknesses remained rife, and other contemporary writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, and especially Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, would find ample grounds for such fears by examining the monstrous underworld of criminal London, in particular. After all, Stevenson and Doyle's depictions of an all-powerful, but horribly elusive criminal dictatorship under one monstrous individual would bear contemporary historical fruit in the monstrous mystery of Jack the Ripper himself. His terrifying murderous reach, while centred in London's notorious East End (as opposed to Hyde's outrages, which usually occur in the equally-notorious West End district of Soho), was nevertheless felt throughout the capital in a manner akin to Moriarty's spider-web of criminal power. Indeed, the ideological impact of the Ripper's criminal web of fear would itself expand still further, until at least one newspaper, the *Daily Chronicle*, proclaimed that his rampages grew from the monstrous *social* roots of *fin-de-siècle* London:

The rowdy hobbledehoy is developing more and more rapidly into the savage of the slums. He in turn is becoming more and more akin to the monster – half-man, half-brute – who is now prowling round Whitechapel like the 'were-wolf' of Gothic fable. But where is this process of hideous evolution to stop? Are the resources of civilisation powerless against it? (September 10th, 1888, cited in Curtis, 128).

What I shall demonstrate in this chapter is that in the monstrous criminal literature of Stevenson, Wilde, and Doyle, not only is this so-called 'civilisation' indeed largely powerless against such an evolutionary encroachment by monstrous criminals, but it is also inextricably implicated in their rise to power. The monstrous instabilities provoked

by such difficulties, as monstrous criminals such as Mr. Hyde, Dorian Gray, and Professor Moriarty hide beneath both seemingly innocent physical exteriors and seemingly unimpeachable bourgeois, if not aristocratic, wealth, leads their enemies to adopt increasingly monstrous, and especially violent, methods in order to fight them. The latter process applies as both James Vane and Gabriel Utterson seek vengeance against Dorian Gray and Mr. Hyde respectively, but it is especially interesting to note the often-monstrous qualities of he whom many critics deem the foremost defender of *fin-de-siècle* bourgeois morality in crime fiction, Sherlock Holmes himself.²

Throughout this thesis, I have been interested in the quasi-Nietzschean proposition that in order to fight the monstrous forces unleashed by historical change, one must become increasingly monstrous oneself, and I see the development of Holmes's own crime-fighting power as an extremely important example of this process. This is most clearly demonstrated in 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band', one of Holmes's most infamous cases. In it, he appears (indirectly) responsible for slaying a particularly evil murderer, Dr. Grimesby Roylott: yet so horrifying is Roylott's monstrous crime that even Holmes himself doubts that this death will '... weigh very heavily upon my conscience...' (Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band', 117). For Roylott murdered his own stepdaughter with a rare venomous snake, and would have also killed her sister in the same way, had Holmes and Watson not intervened. Yet Holmes proves himself to be as monstrously strong as his enemy when they first meet, by straightening a steel poker that had been bent double by Roylott himself – an act which, in itself, is usually deemed to be impossible by critics. Moreover, it is with savage fury that he stops the snake from attacking its intended victim, thereby accidentally re-directing it to attack and kill Doctor Roylott. As he did so, indeed, Holmes's very '... face was [left] deadly pale and filled with horror and loathing...' ('Speckled Band', 117).

Meanwhile, many other critics have in fact noted the important overlap between medicine and monstrous criminality in this period, echoing the historical concerns with uncontrolled scientific power that I have outlined elsewhere in my chapters upon Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and the monstrous texts of H. G. Wells. While this is obviously of particular importance in analysing *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, medical professionals were often also commonly believed to be behind the Ripper murders themselves, bearing out Holmes's claim *vis-à-vis* the monstrous Roylott, that when '... a doctor does go wrong, he is the first of criminals. He has nerve and he has knowledge...' (Ibid. 116). Such potentially untrustworthy doctors were also unlikely; meanwhile, to inspire much confidence, among the increasingly embattled *fin-de-siècle* bourgeoisie, that the monstrous degeneracy that seemed to have infected their world through the squalid horrors of criminal London could ever be cured.³ As I shall later demonstrate further, the biological and/or evolutionary implications of these developments would therefore indicate yet again that the direction of history itself was becoming increasingly monstrous in bourgeois terms. For just as what hitherto seemed an inexorably progressive growth in the global power of British capitalism instead heralded a monstrous future of imperial decline, so the evolution of crime itself seemed to indicate a similar decline in both imperial and domestic social terms, as noted by David Taylor:

The late nineteenth-century criminal, and particularly the habitual criminal, aroused a mixture of not always consistent responses. On the one hand, he was a figure to be pitied for his weaknesses. Morally and physically deficient, he lacked the ability to control his own life. He was, in a sense, a victim of forces and circumstances that were beyond his control and, as such, deserving of sympathy and support. On the other hand, he was still a figure to be feared and needed to be controlled for the good of society at large... The concern created by the habitual criminal stemmed from the degeneracy which he literally embodied... Breeding prolifically, the degenerate in society threatened to swamp respectable society, bringing physical degeneration as well as moral collapse... The idea of the criminal as a defective individual, blighted from birth by the defects of his parents and liable to add to the process of degeneration, was but one strand in a more general concern for the continuing healthiness and efficiency of the nation. The habitual criminal, the persistent and seemingly irredeemable offender, was the starkest reminder of the

corrupting effect of urban growth... There was a growing sense of despondency brought about by the discovery of a greater degree of poverty than had previously been imagined and the emergence of socialist groups who focused on these social problems. There was concern about the loss of economic dominance to the rapidly expanding economies of Germany and America and the growing imperial difficulties, culminating in the second Boer War, in which the world's greatest imperial power struggled to assert itself with an army in which many working-class men from the towns and cities of Britain had been found to be unfit to serve. In what was seen as a Darwinistic struggle between nations for survival, Britain seemed to be among the unfit... (51-57).

While the years leading up to the *fin de siècle* could thus create many terrifying social symptoms of the monstrous direction of Britain's future history, *fin-de-siècle* writers could successfully manipulate time itself to monstrous literary effect. One foremost example of this is Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray*, which portrays this notion of temporal monstrosity through transforming a man's youthful desire for historical time itself to stop on a personal, biological level, into something that – even to Dorian himself – appears to be irredeemably monstrous, both physically and psychologically. While his portrait is made to suffer the abhorrently deathlike, or even murderous effects of the ravages of biological time in his place, he remains compelled from the first to admit the uncanny psychological impact of his increasingly monstrous criminal history. This monstrous temporal awareness undermines all Dorian's fond hopes that the horrors of his '... past could always be annihilated. Regret, denial, or forgetfulness could do that. But the future was inevitable. There were passions in him that would find their terrible outlet, dreams that would make the shadow of their real evil...' (*Dorian Gray*, 115).

I have already examined the significance of Cesar Lombroso's work in relation to *fin-de-siècle* concepts of monstrous criminality in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, but Lombroso's anthropological conclusions are also clearly significant in relation to the other monstrous *fin-de-siècle* criminal texts to be examined in this chapter.⁴ After all, in his opinion, historical monstrosity is part of the very biological '... nature of the criminal – an atavistic being who reproduces in his person the ferocious instincts of

primitive humanity and the inferior animals' ('Criminal Man', 388). As the supposedly scientific criminal data of those such as Lombroso appeared to confirm deterministic ideas of criminal behaviour, especially when considered *vis-à-vis* related *fin-de-siècle* theories of evolution and/or degeneration, his contemporaries were meanwhile led to believe that biological evidence of criminality was widespread. In this monstrous scientific context of demonised human subjects being classified as possessing typically criminal physical features, it is unsurprising that the monstrous appearances of literary arch-villains such as Doyle's Colonel Sebastian Moran should be deemed to give off '...Nature's plainest danger signals...' ('The Adventure of the Empty House', 209). As modern politicians know full well, however, even supposedly scientific criminal statistics can possess an ideological value, and can be easily manipulated to incite widespread moral panic at apparently monstrous increases in crime, with the *fin-de-siècle* historical result that:

While there seems to be an interplay between criminal statistics and periodic fears of crime and disorder, it is also probable that the collection and publication of national crime statistics led to the perception of crime as a national and impersonal problem. During the eighteenth century, when there were no such statistics, crime was essentially a personal problem for victims and accused. Statistics made crime national and made the criminal a national bogeyman. Crime could now be shown to be offences perpetrated on a large scale against respectable people by a group which, by being measured statistically - -whatever the faults of the statistics - -could be defined collectively as criminals or as the criminal class... (Emsley, 42).

As is proven by the monstrous careers of both Moriarty, and especially Hyde, however, the most damning physical evidence of belonging to such a criminal class is usually easily obscured in most eyes through applying sufficient money. Ultimately, perhaps, as in the case of Dorian Gray, it appears that '...civilized society at least, is never very ready to believe anything to the detriment of those who are both rich and fascinating...' (136). (Conversely, Sherlock Holmes, who is at first the only one who suspects the monstrous extent of Moriarty's criminal empire, is characterised as a man who

‘... loathed every form of society with his whole Bohemian soul...’ [Doyle, ‘A Scandal in Bohemia’, 70]). It is Hyde, however, who provides the most telling evidence of the financial bedrock of power in *fin-de-siècle* capitalism being turned against the wider society which spawned it, even becoming a bourgeois symbol of criminalised wealth himself when coolly insisting that no ‘... gentleman but wishes to avoid a scene... Name your figure...’ (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 8). The very fact of Hyde’s existence also disrupts the legal underpinnings of bourgeois life, as the will which Jekyll draws up to provide for his seemingly younger alter-ego fills Utterson with a professional dread of uncovering the monstrous mystery which Hyde has come to represent:

This document had long been the lawyer’s eyesore. It offended him both as a lawyer and as a lover of the sane and customary sides of life, to whom the fanciful was the immodest. And hitherto it was his ignorance of Mr. Hyde that had swelled his indignation; now, by a sudden turn, it was his knowledge. It was already bad enough when the name was but a name of which he could learn no more. It was worse when it began to be clothed upon with detestable attributes; and out of the shifting, insubstantial mists that had so long baffled his eye, there leaped up the sudden, definite presentment of a fiend... (Ibid. 11).

Such fears of the monstrous consequences of discovering the unstable identities of criminals such as Hyde also recalls the monstrously ambiguous power of scientific knowledge itself in relation to Victorian concepts of criminality. After all, the very science upon which those such as Lombroso depended in developing their new methods of interpreting the chaos of historical crime was also responsible for creating Hyde himself, the latter process, moreover, being achieved through the use of a form of monstrously impure chemistry. Lombroso’s own use of *fin-de-siècle* science, meanwhile, could itself mimic the monstrous effects of Jekyll’s potion, in that the atavistic theories he concocted from analysing the seemingly abnormal physical features - and especially the abnormal skulls - of criminals, could themselves *produce* monstrous criminal symptoms in even the most seemingly innocuous sources. For example, when Lombroso (with William Ferrero) wrote about female criminality in

1895, he was soon forced to admit that ‘...it is incontestable that female offenders seem almost normal when compared to the male criminal, with his wealth of anomalous features...’ (‘The Criminal Type in Women’, 30). As first glance, this seemingly contradicts his general belief that women had remained much closer to their primitive ancestral atavistic selves than men, since this greater level of female atavism should thus have led in turn to women having a far *higher* level of biological anomalies than found in men. Far from discouraging his atavistic ideas, however, this in fact appears to have strengthened their ideological power, for he claims that when atavistic symptoms *do* appear in women, the type of female criminals this produces could potentially be far more dangerous, and therefore far more monstrous, than their male counterparts.

According to Lombroso himself, furthermore, this is because:

In ordinary cases these [criminal atavistic] defects are neutralized [in women] by piety, maternity, want of passion, sexual coldness, by weakness and an underdeveloped intelligence. But when... piety and maternal sentiments are wanting, and in their place are strong passions and intensely erotic tendencies, much muscular strength and a superior intelligence for the conception and execution of evil, it is clear that the innocuous semi-criminal present in the normal woman must be transformed into a born criminal more terrible than any man.

What terrific criminals would children be if they had strong passions, muscular strength, and sufficient intelligence; and if, moreover, their evil tendencies were exasperated by a morbid psychical activity! And women are big children; their evil tendencies are more numerous and more varied than men’s, but generally remain latent. When they are awakened and excited they produce results proportionately greater.

Moreover, the born female criminal is, so to speak, doubly exceptional, as a woman and as a criminal. For criminals are an exception among civilized people, and women are an exception among criminals, the natural form of retrogression in women being prostitution and not crime... As a double exception, the criminal woman is consequently a monster... (‘The Criminal Type in Women’, 31-32).

Small wonder, then, that *Dracula*’s female vampires – who display many of the monstrous criminal symptoms described above – should often appear to be even more dangerous and evil than their master, as I have shown in my previous chapter. (In turn, the chances of the Count’s other potential vampiric ‘offspring’ – namely Mina’s child, Quincey – becoming monstrous in due course must appear to increase dramatically

meanwhile, in the light of Lombroso's remarks here about the monstrous criminal potential of children). Small wonder, indeed, that the most notorious 'criminal' to actually defeat Sherlock Holmes in his entire canon should *be* a woman – and a woman, moreover, who is highly skilled at adopting masculine traits and costumes – namely Irene Adler in 'A Scandal in Bohemia'. I shall, of course, examine the critical implications of the latter at a later stage of this chapter. Suffice it to say, for now, that all this also reminds us yet again of how, in such a historically-unstable age as the monstrous *fin de siècle*, monstrosity itself appears at its strongest when masked by apparent innocence (as with Jekyll), beauty (as with Dorian), or heroism (as with Holmes). Unsurprisingly, therefore, all this historic ambiguity and uncertainty is also characteristic of *fin-de-siècle* science itself, as we have seen in my chapter on Wells, and this in turn also extends to the supposedly 'scientific' criminology of Lombroso and his ilk. (On one occasion, indeed, this sense of the uncertainty of contemporary scientific roles is itself effectively dramatized by Conan Doyle in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. For Holmes, the master of scientific criminology, is faced with the prospect of becoming its future subject, as his latest client, an avid atavist, informs him that a '... cast of your skull, until the original is available, would be an ornament to any anthropological museum. It is not my intention to be fulsome, but I confess that I covet your skull...' [Doyle, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, 285]).

The ambiguous nature of such *fin-de-siècle* scientific knowledge therefore gives it a potentially monstrous, and certainly powerful, contemporary social and psychological impact upon issues of criminality. This is especially so since, as Wilde's Lord Henry Wotton comments:

In the wild struggle for existence, we want to have something that endures, and so we fill our minds with rubbish and facts, in the silly hope of keeping our place. The thoroughly well-informed man – that is the modern ideal. And the mind of the thoroughly well-informed man is a dreadful thing. It is like a bric-a-brac shop, all

monsters and dust, with everything priced above its proper value... (*Dorian Gray*, 15).

This excessive desire for knowledge thus creates an unmanageable psychological state, which ultimately devalues the core ideas and beliefs which form the ideological backbone of mainstream bourgeois thinking, and leads such sensation-hungry bohemian dilettantes as Dorian to favour more radical social and scientific ideas, both old and new, instead. Elsewhere, we have already seen how those such as Griffin or Moreau – not to mention Doctor Jekyll himself, as I shall soon demonstrate further – desperately sought the most revolutionary scientific ideas that they could find at the wildest, most esoteric intellectual edges of the *fin-de-siècle* world. In previous ages, as we have also seen, a similar unmanageable addiction to radical scientific knowledge had already sealed the monstrous fates of both Doctor Faustus and Victor Frankenstein. Yet the *fin-de-siècle* figure whose persona most effectively combines both of these potential sources of monstrosity – i.e., the trappings of bohemian society and a lifelong desire for new sources of obscure information – has nevertheless paradoxically become the greatest literary hero of that age. For it is precisely this systematic process of gathering various forms of scientific knowledge, which creates perhaps the most powerful crime-fighting weapon of the literary *fin de siècle*, namely the monstrously well-equipped detective mind of Sherlock Holmes himself. This potential for monstrosity underlying the very intellectual roots of Holmes's power is also heightened when we recall the profoundly historical nature of his use of such knowledge. Indeed, through newspapers and other sources, he meticulously creates a criminal archive of such historic depth as to give Watson the belief that Holmes '... appears to know every detail of every horror perpetrated in the century...' ('Study in Scarlet', 12). It is therefore with a renewed appreciation of the monstrosity of history itself, which I have reiterated throughout my thesis, that I shall turn to a further analysis of the monstrous instability behind both

Holmes himself and the criminals he confronts. After all, the historic role of even such eccentric forms of law-enforcement as Holmes and Watson represent, remains to be seen as a part of a wider, and also potentially monstrous, authoritarian force for brutal social repression, for as Wilde comments elsewhere:

As one reads history... one is absolutely sickened, not by the crimes that the wicked have committed, but by the punishments that the good have inflicted; and a community is infinitely more brutalised by the habitual employment of punishment than it is by the occasional occurrence of crime... When there is no punishment at all, crime will either cease to exist, or, if it occurs, will be treated by physicians as a very distressing form of dementia to be cured by care and kindness. For what are called criminals nowadays are not criminals at all. Starvation, and not sin, is the parent of modern crime. That indeed is the reason why our criminals are, as a class, so absolutely uninteresting from any psychological point of view. They are not marvellous Macbeths... They are merely what ordinary, respectable, commonplace people would be if they had not got enough to eat... ('The Soul of Man Under Socialism', 906).

Monstrous Crime-Fighting and Sherlock Holmes's Uncanny Criminal History.

My first feeling of fear had passed away, and I thrilled now with a keener zest than I had ever enjoyed when we were the defenders of the law instead of its defiers. The high object of our mission, the consciousness that it was unselfish and chivalrous, the villainous character of our opponent, all added to the sporting interest of the adventure. Far from feeling guilty, I rejoiced and exulted in our dangers. With a glow of admiration I watched Holmes unrolling his case of instruments and choosing his tool with the calm, scientific accuracy of a surgeon who performs a delicate operation. I knew that the opening of safes was a particular hobby with him, and I understood the joy which it gave him to be confronted with this green and gold monster, the dragon which held in its maw the reputations of many fair ladies... (Doyle, 'The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton', 246).

In chronicling Holmes's and Watson's zealous adoption of criminal methods, as seen above, in order to thwart the odious blackmail of the eponymous Milverton, Doyle is hardly depicting an aberrant lapse into chivalric outlawry on behalf of his *fin-de-siècle* dynamic duo. From their earliest cases, Watson finds Holmes's detective prowess so monstrously powerful '... that I could not but think what a terrible criminal he would have made had he turned his energy and sagacity against the law instead of exerting them in its defence...' (Doyle, 'The Sign of Four', 50). Watson himself, meanwhile, is shown to be at least as willing, if not always as eager, to violate the law under the

'right' ethical circumstances – such as in the Milverton case – from at least 'A Scandal in Bohemia' onwards. Even the Milverton case itself, however, is perhaps more ethically complicated than it first appears, despite the seeming poetic justice involved in the extermination of a monstrous criminal who, like Moriarty himself, fills Holmes's imagination with bestial, or rather reptilian, associations thus:

Do you feel a creeping, shrinking sensation, Watson, when you stand before the serpents in the Zoo, and see the slithery, gliding, venomous creatures, with their deadly eyes and wicked, flattened faces? Well, that's how Milverton impresses me. I've had to do with fifty murderers in my career, but the worst of them never gave me the repulsion which I have for this fellow. And yet I can't get out of doing business with him – indeed, he is here at my invitation... He allows it to be known that he is prepared to pay very high sums for letters which compromise people of wealth and position. He receives his wares not only from treacherous valets and maids, but frequently from genteel ruffians... Everything which is in the market goes to Milverton... No one knows where his grip may fall, for he is far too rich and far too cunning to work from hand to mouth. He will hold a card back for years in order to play it at the moment when the stake is best worth winning. I have said that he is the worst man in London, and I would ask you how one could compare the ruffian, who in hot blood bludgeons his mate, with this man, who methodically and at his leisure tortures the soul and wrings the nerves in order to add to his already swollen money bags? (243).

Despite such unusually impassioned rhetoric, however, Holmes is later forced to admit that, in his own insidious manner, Milverton is as much of a predator upon the guilty as he is himself. This monstrous social truth, which in turn shields Milverton from conventional legal action, means that his (mostly female) victims initially remain helpless against him, for what '... would it profit a woman... to get him a few months' imprisonment if her own ruin must immediately follow? His victims dare not hit back. If ever he blackmailed an innocent person, then indeed we should have him, but he is as cunning as the Evil One...' ('Milverton', 243). As a result, we not only find a detective resorting to crime in this particularly significant case, we also encounter two other important aspects of Doyle's treatment of monstrous *fin-de-siècle* crime: the first being the unnerving, inter-locking relationships that exist between such crime and the world of bourgeois capitalism. (Milverton himself claims at one point, just before being shot

by one of his erstwhile female victims, that ‘...I wouldn’t hurt a fly of my own accord, but every man has his business...’ [246]). The second such aspect, meanwhile, is the recurring monstrous fear, exacerbated by such historical criminal atrocities as the Ripper murders, of conventional law-enforcement methods proving ineffective in a dangerous world full of ‘...certain crimes which the law cannot touch, and which therefore, to some extent, justify private revenge...’ (‘Milverton’, 247). All this combines to produce a monstrous criminal universe wherein criminals and crime-fighters are uncannily similar in many ways, and even the archetypal Great Detective himself remains ultimately powerless to deduce the great monstrous historical riddle of what ‘...object is served by this circle of misery and violence and fear? It must turn to some end, or else our universe is ruled by chance, which is unthinkable. But what end? There is the great standing perennial problem to which human reason is as far from an end as ever...’ (Doyle, ‘The Adventure of the Cardboard Box’, 385).

Holmes’s potential fallibility here extends to other, more mundane questions of monstrous criminality, and, in one significant case, ‘The Five Orange Pips’, his eventual failure to protect his client is foreshadowed by a monstrous sense of a vulnerable, unstable world besieged by vicious natural forces. In perhaps Doyle’s most vivid depiction of the helplessness of those who would seek to tame the monstrous forces of criminal nature pervading *fin-de-siècle* London, Watson proclaims that:

It was in the latter days of September, and the equinoctial gales had set in with exceptional violence. All day the wind had screamed and the rain had beaten against the windows, so that even here, in the heart of hand-made London, we were forced to recognize the presence of those great elemental forces which shriek at mankind through the bars of his civilization, like untamed beasts in a cage. As evening drew in, the storm grew higher and louder, and the wind cried and sobbed like a child in the chimney. Sherlock Holmes sat moodily at one side of the fireplace, cross-indexing his records of crime... (‘Five Orange Pips’, 94).

That the hapless client in this case, one John Openshaw, should fall victim to the monstrous Klu Klux Klan despite Holmes’ attempt to gather, through such criminal

texts, a universal library of potentially relevant knowledge, also shows the vulnerability inherent in a detective's professional reliance upon a monstrously unstable history. As

Lawrence Frank comments, after all:

Like the geologist or the paleontologist, the detective explains a fact or an event by placing it within a chronological series; he then imaginatively transforms it into a chain of natural causes and effects, leading backward in time to some posited originating moment. Such a moment is arbitrary and hypothetical; like the origin of the legend of the hound of the Baskervilles, it stands as a character or hieroglyph to be read and interpreted... The soft gravel path... becomes a page from which tell-tale traces, as signs or characters to be read, may disappear; it is akin to the geographical record written in the living, but ephemeral, language of nature upon which natural historians and others build their accounts of geological and human origins... (157).

Despite all this, however, under ideal conditions Holmes's potent combination of scientific, historical, and theatrical knowledge can offer boundless possibilities for exploiting his own uncannily – even monstrously – accurate deductive powers.

(Witness Watson's startled claim that Holmes '... would certainly have been burned, had you lived a few centuries ago...' ['Scandal in Bohemia', 70]). Holmes' usual reliance in his cases upon his mastery over this unstable theatrical and historical power of deduction can nevertheless backfire, as he discovers when he suffers his most infamous defeat at the hands of Irene Adler. Not only does her own powerfully subversive theatrical cross-dressing match, if not surpass, Holmes's feats of disguise, but the male detective's surprising inability to recognise her in male costume, even after hearing her voice, denotes his excessive reliance upon the conventional historical norms of female behaviour in making his deductions. Indeed, this result parallels the contemporary historical growth in female-driven economic consumerism which surrounded Holmes's supposedly male-dominated Baker Street headquarters, as these streets were increasingly owned '... through stealth and subversion, as parts of the city... inhabited by Holmes... became progressively redefined as female-owned (economically, culturally, and intellectually)... It is in the country that rationality can

seemingly be reasserted, but this... is often compromised by images of damaged masculinity which suggest that any such reassertion can only partially succeed...’ (Smith, *Victorian Demons*, 138). Certainly, for all the dangers still lurking in *fin-de-siècle* London, Holmes himself is at pains to evoke the even more monstrous criminal situation that he sees as prevailing in the seemingly idyllic countryside, claiming at one point that:

It is my belief, Watson, founded upon my experience, that the lowest and vilest alleys in London do not present a more dreadful record of sin than does the smiling and beautiful countryside... The pressure of public opinion can do in the town what the law cannot accomplish. There is no lane so vile that the scream of a tortured child, or the thud of a drunkard’s blow, does not beget sympathy and indignation among the neighbours, and then the whole machinery of justice is ever so close that a word of complaint can set it going, and there is but a step between the crime and the dock. But look at these lonely houses, each in its own fields, filled for the most part with poor ignorant folk who know little of the law. Think of the deeds of hellish cruelty, the hidden wickedness which may go on, year in, year out, in such places, and none the wiser. Had this lady who appeals to me for help gone to live in Winchester, I should never have had a fear for her... (Doyle, ‘The Adventure of the Copper Beeches’, 138).

That particularly monstrous crimes could evoke a powerful collective response in even the most notorious areas of London is evidenced by historical attempts in Whitechapel to form numerous citizens’ patrols in order to combat the murderous scourge of Jack the Ripper. Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde*, however, shows such popular vigilantism as akin to monstrous mobs, especially in the case of those female members of the mob which first gathers around Hyde, described by Enfield as being ‘... as wild as harpies...’ (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 8). Indeed, strong connections clearly exist between the historical Ripper and the fictional Hyde, to the extent that critics have described the progressive conflation of the two in the popular mind, both during and after their *fin-de-siècle* beginnings. (Witness, for example, the fact that the actor Richard Mansfield was one suspect for the Ripper’s crimes, largely due to the monstrous dramatic power of his own performance in the title role/s of an early theatrical production of *Jekyll and Hyde*).⁵

For now, however, I shall concentrate upon the monstrously unstable and fearful atmosphere of uncanny criminality that arose in the wake of both the fictional Holmes and the historical Ripper. In comparing these two mighty opposites of *fin-de-siècle* crime, indeed, it is necessary to always bear in mind the monstrous historical aspects of Sigmund Freud's later theories on the psychological significance of the very idea of 'the uncanny' itself. After all, the Holmesian vision of a potentially omniscient detective uncovering any material clues to a hidden criminal history becomes an extremely uncanny one when compared to one definition of the uncanny cited by Freud, namely of '... something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light...' (364).

Moreover, these near-supernatural powers of detection, along with Watson's perennially mystified responses to their ostensibly elementary conclusions, have become core parts of Holmesian mythology in the same way that Jack the Ripper's monstrous brutality and uncanny power to *avoid* detection have determined the course of *his* notorious criminal history. It is thus very interesting when assessing the relative monstrosity of Holmes and the Ripper to recall that, as Freud comments further:

We can also speak of a living person as uncanny, and we do so when we ascribe evil intentions to him. But that is not all; in addition to this we must feel that his intentions to harm us are going to be carried out with the help of special powers... The layman sees in them the working of forces hitherto unsuspected in his fellow-men, but at the same time he is dimly aware of them in remote corners of his own being. The Middle Ages quite consistently ascribed all such maladies to the influence of demons, and in this their psychology was almost correct... (365-366).

Meanwhile, Holmes's criminal investigations also evoke sinister social and psychological connotations similar to those connecting Hyde's criminal career with that of the Ripper, for, as Judith R. Walkowitz notes:

According to the new male fictional forms of the period, this 'dark world' respected no geographical or class boundary, because the predatory Other made its home in the inner recesses of the Self... Through fantasy, elite men were able to project their sexual fears and anxieties on to a 'male killing force', but in the person of the detective hero they quickly invoked a superrational superego to hunt down those same repressed desires and to restore order... The social response to the Ripper

murders of 1888 also stimulated widespread male fascination with and emulation of both those roles – of the Ripper as a ‘hero of crime’ and of the scientific investigators on his trail... (131).

The monstrous internal instability between the roles of powerful criminal and great detective which I have already examined in relation to Holmes himself is therefore replicated in terms of *fin-de-siècle* British society as a whole, often, moreover, with potentially dire ramifications on a global imperial scale. To assess the social uncertainty which this creates, we need only reflect upon the relative ease with which, for example, a master criminal can claim aristocratic status – and vice versa – in the Holmesian canon. After all, John Clay, the villain of ‘The Red-Headed League’, insists upon his royal blood, even in the aftermath of his capture, saying to the Scotland Yard official who accompanies Holmes and Watson that ‘... I beg that you will not touch me with your filthy hands...’ (82).

Clay is but the first of a long line of aristocratic villains to appear in the Holmesian canon, such as the notorious Baron Gruner, or even the aforementioned Dr. Roylott, as evidenced by the latter’s ancestral links to Saxon nobility, of which more later. In purely socio-economic terms, however, he is perhaps the most symbolically threatening of these warped criminal aristocrats to arise from within British imperial capitalism, as his case not only demonstrates the ignoble historical roots of the empire’s wealth, but its profound contemporary dependence upon foreign resources to stay afloat. (The latter factor, meanwhile, being a key aspect of *fin-de-siècle* Britain’s imperial economic history that was also explored in my earlier chapter upon Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*). For not only is a powerful modern bank literally vulnerable to invasion from below (i.e., a tunnel) because of its close proximity to a shabby pawnbroker’s place of business, but it first attracts Clay’s attentions because of the fortune in French gold which it has borrowed to strengthen its resources. On the

opposite social extreme, meanwhile, we find the eponymous case of 'The Man with the Twisted Lip', originally one Neville St. Clair, seemingly a firmly bourgeois stockbroker and former journalist, who finds far greater economic rewards as a successful beggar, and therefore becomes the notorious Hugh Boone. For not only does this case demonstrates both the monstrous power of criminal theatricality which I have already discussed in relation to both Holmes himself and 'the Woman', Irene Adler, and dramatises contemporary fears of an unreliable and/or deceptive proletarian underclass. It also shows how powerfully bourgeois economic greed could work to destabilise the other, seemingly more respectable social values long associated with this class in *fin-de-siècle* Britain. For as Boone/St. Clair himself admits, before fully adopting his criminal career he faced a heated internal '... fight between my pride and my money, but the dollars won at last...' (Doyle, 'The Man with the Twisted Lip', 105). A similar sense of crime as the inevitable historical result of internal instability emerges in a biological, evolutionary guise when we examine the monstrous Moriarty and his followers, and also in relation to the monstrous criminal history revealed in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. While analysing these notoriously monstrous cases, however, Holmes's own potentially monstrous history cannot be overlooked, especially considering that he himself acknowledges that his dramatic crime-fighting career may well be partly due to his peculiar ancestry, being the product of both the landed British aristocracy and the French art world. In Holmes's opinion, after all, when art becomes thus historically rooted '...in the blood [it] is liable to take the strangest forms...' (Doyle, 'The Greek Interpreter', 185).⁶

Moriarty himself, meanwhile, is also possessed of great ancestral gifts in terms of his own social birthright, while his apparently excellent academic career only serves to highlight how far he was originally '...endowed by nature with a phenomenal

mathematical facility... But the man had hereditary tendencies of the most biological kind. A criminal strain ran in his blood, which, instead of being modified, was increased and rendered infinitely more dangerous by his extraordinary mental powers...' ('Final Problem', 200). Such a biologically-driven reversion to the ways of his criminal ancestry, as well as his reptilian appearance, highlight the extent to which Moriarty therefore appears as a criminally degenerate historical throwback. Indeed, Holmes later uses his case as the primary justification of his belief in the importance of past criminal history in assessing *fin-de-siècle* criminality, comparing Moriarty's monstrous genius for clandestine organisation of others' criminal activities with that of the notorious eighteenth-century historical arch-criminal, Jonathan Wild. Holmes's theories of crime as a monstrously inexorable historical response to the biological pressures of a criminal ancestry is perhaps best spelt out, however, in the case of Moriarty's second-in-command, the aforementioned Colonel Moran. As Holmes describes it there, for all the Colonel's undoubted courage and hunting prowess, he nevertheless remained monstrously vulnerable to these criminal hereditary pressures, in much the same way that:

There are some trees, Watson, which grow to a certain height, and then suddenly develop some unsightly eccentricity. You will see it often in humans. I have a theory that the individual represents in his development the whole procession of his ancestors, and that such a sudden turn to good and evil stands for some strong influence which came into the line of his pedigree. The person becomes, as it were, the epitome of the history of his own family... ('Empty House', 210).

The extent to which the monstrous criminal is therefore shaped by the biological and evolutionary pressures of this monstrous historical heritage are best epitomised by Holmes's most infamous monstrous case, namely that of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. There, we find yet again the inbred ancestral twist that produces a particularly ruthless criminal, namely Stapleton, whose illegitimate connection to a disgraced branch of the wealthy aristocratic Baskervilles is finally uncovered through his resemblance to the

villainous members of their ancient family portrait gallery. The atavistic historical implications of this discovery, which will also be significant in analysing further the monstrous criminal texts of both Wilde and Stevenson, lead Holmes to proclaim it an especially ‘... interesting instance of a throwback, which appears to be both spiritual and physical. A study of family portraits is enough to convert a man to the doctrine of reincarnation...’ (*Hound*, 320). Of equal significance to this monstrous family history is the often equally atavistic environment of the terrible moors which give rise to the Baskerville legend, which is also of course a monstrously powerful historical text in its own right. Indeed, the sinister historical power of the Baskervilles’ monstrous criminal legend persists despite all Holmes’s attempts to assert his own historical mastery over it, first by dating its manuscript form (almost) accurately, and then by declaring it as ultimately only of interest to ‘... a collector of fairy tales...’ (*Hound*, 287). After all, for all that the monstrous vision of a supernatural Hound is ultimately quashed by a relentless, and typically secular, Holmesian investigation, its biological history is never anything less than monstrous, even if finally ‘... he was mortal, and if we could wound him we could kill him...’ (*Hound*, 323). The Hound, like its criminal master, is after all the misbegotten result of a monstrously warped breeding process, the combination of mastiff and bloodhound producing a truly terrible beast, which even in death appears in Watson’s eyes to be ‘... gaunt, savage, and as large as a small lioness...’ (*Ibid.*). When the Hound is still alive, and moreover covered in the diabolical sheen of phosphorus by Stapleton himself, it is unsurprising therefore that Watson should be virtually paralysed by fear of it, for even as its greatest underlying terror lies in its uncertain origins, especially since it appears that:

A hound it was, an enormous coal-black hound, but not such a hound as mortal eyes have ever seen. Fire burst from its open mouth, its eyes glowed with a smouldering glare, its muzzle and hackles and dewlap were outlined in flickering flame. Never in the delirious dream of a disordered brain could anything more savage, more

appalling, more hellish be conceived than that dark form and savage face which broke upon us out of the wall of fog... (*Hound*, 322).

This monstrous Hound is far from being the only bestial criminal lurking upon the murderous moors, however, for even his ruthless master maintains a predatory passion for entomology, which, in conjunction with his '... grey clothes and jerky, zigzag, irregular progress made... [Stapleton]... not unlike some huge moth himself...' (*Hound*, 301). A seemingly more obvious example of bestial criminality, meanwhile, comes in the shape of the escaped murderer, Selden, whose monstrous appearance is also extremely suggestive of the primitive (pre)historical roots to which evolutionary theories might increasingly ascribe his feral villainy, as:

Over the rocks... there was thrust out an evil yellow face, a terrible animal face, all seamed and scored with vile passions. Foul with mire, with a bristling beard, and hung with matted hair, it might well have belonged to one of those old savages who dwelt in the burrows on the hillsides. The light beneath him was reflected in his small, cunning eyes which peered fiercely to right and left through the darkness like a crafty and savage animal who has heard the steps of the hunters... (*Hound*, 308).

Against this horrifying image, the disquieting ease with which both he and Stapleton can nevertheless penetrate the precarious world of the Baskervilles cannot be overlooked. This persistent vulnerability is especially telling since Selden is already known to the authorities as a particularly ferocious criminal, yet he is nevertheless free to hide on the moors, with '... his heart full of malignancy against the whole race which had cast him out...' (*Ibid.* 298). Whereas Stapleton conceals his aristocratic roots in order to strike at Sir Henry, however, Selden is driven to his death by wearing the aristocratic clothes given to him by his hopelessly compromised relatives among the servants of the Baskerville household. Indeed, after the Hound kills Selden, it is the reactions of his sister, Mrs. Barrymore, which remind one yet again of the inherent instability of any dogmatic contemporary views of the innately monstrous *fin-de-siècle* criminal. For, as Watson himself points out, even though to '... all the world he was the

man of violence, half animal and half demon... to her he always remained the little wilful boy of her own girlhood... Evil indeed is the man who has not one woman to mourn him...' (*Hound*, 319). (Stapleton, in fact, appears to be in precisely that monstrous situation following his own death in the Grimpen Mire, especially given his earlier horrific abuse of his own wife). It now remains for me to briefly demonstrate how such monstrous historical instability ultimately affects our perceptions of Holmes himself, before turning to examine these evolutionary and/or socio-economic issues of *fin-de-siècle* criminality further in the work of Stevenson and Wilde. For the power of monstrous history in creating such sinister criminal instability means that '...you leave your own age behind you, and if you were to see a skin-clad, hairy man... fitting a flint-tipped arrow... you would feel that his presence there was more natural than your own...' (*Hound*, 303).

Before, I examined the most dangerous social implications of the potentially monstrous instability of Holmes's own crime-fighting identity through assessing the comfortable ease with which Holmes can slip into the role of criminal during his investigations, yet the reverse scenario is also true in many ways. After all, I have also shown how Irene Adler's monstrous powers of disguise demonstrate how far the unstable nature of *fin-de-siècle* criminality can fool even the Great Detective himself. Stapleton, however, goes even further than this by cunningly assuming none other than Holmes' own identity while stalking his Baskerville prey in London, in a skilful ploy which first proves to Holmes that '...this time we have got a foeman who is worthy of our steel...' (*Hound*, 296). It is while he himself is most fully engaged in hunting down such cunning criminals, however, that Holmes's own unstable identity is most dramatically shown, until he almost shares in the bestial monstrosity of the crimes themselves. As Watson remarks in the case of 'The Boscombe Valley Mystery',

Holmes appears to be ‘... transformed when... hot upon such a scent as this... Men who had known only the quiet thinker and logician of Baker Street would have failed to recognise him... His nostrils seemed to dilate with a purely animal lust for the chase, and... a question... only provoked a quick, impatient snarl...’ (91). The importance of his near-bestial hunting powers in enabling him to detect the clues which lesser mortals such as Lestrade constantly overlook and/or monstrously misinterpret, is paramount throughout the Holmesian canon, to the extent that, as Joseph McLaughlin claims:

From his first appearance, Holmes is portrayed as an urban Natty Bumppo. On the one hand, he is powerfully attracted to, and... identifies with, the criminals, foreigners, and socially marginal types he loves to dress up as and impersonate. His marginality is further cultivated by his distance from the official metropolitan police; he is only an amateur, a consultant. On the other hand, his work protects the national center from corrosively dangerous foreign influences. The socially marginal Holmes is the protector of the ‘home’-land. Watson testifies to the need for a hero like Holmes who fulfills the fantasies of frustrated imperialists. As Doyle and Watson construct him, Holmes becomes popular as a new masculine model – a champion of justice who is part hot-blooded savage warrior of the urban jungle and part cold-blooded civilised intellectual of an emerging modernity... Sherlock Holmes is a tracker – the Leatherstocking of London. He never seems so engrossed in his work as when he examines the dirt and dust, reading a text invisible to most eyes, written in a language that is incomprehensible to others... Holmes’ specialized ability to read the ground enables him to produce seemingly impossible yet accurate hypotheses. In this respect, his rationality often has the effect of convincing Watson and others that his powers are supernatural. As a master rationalist, he is both scientist and shaman. In attending to the story on the ground, Holmes employs a knowledge that civilized, urban man has forgotten... Holmes is both exotic tiger and domesticated foxhound... Holmes assists the forces of civilization in hunting down those who act outside its laws. Like the foxhunt, in which humans ritually reassert their dominance over the most wily of animals, the formulaic Holmes tales will continuously reenact the same basic plot in which Holmes displays his mastery over those who live outside civilised boundaries... (30-43).

Therefore, while Holmes’s social role as the *fin de siècle*’s archetypal ‘Great Detective’ serves an ambiguous *historical* function in focusing primeval hunting and/or prophetic powers into scientific concepts of forensic observation, it also performs an ambiguous *ideological* function *vis-à-vis* contemporary notions of law and justice. Indeed, I have already shown how Holmes himself regards certain acts of criminal revenge as justified to the extent that he refuses to arrest, for example, the female avenger of Milverton’s

monstrous blackmail. Moreover, it is clear that both he and Watson are themselves often prone to committing ostensibly chivalric crimes where they deem it necessary, as I have described in relation to both the Milverton case itself and others. What Watson also makes clear, however, is that, despite any official claims of impartiality, it is nevertheless true that, as Lord Godalming's important aristocratic influence implies in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, when '... an object is good and a client is sufficiently illustrious, even the *rigid British law becomes human and elastic*. My friend has not yet stood in the dock...' (Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Illustrious Client', 427; my italics). What such apparent official protection cannot obscure, however, is the potentially monstrous consequences inherent within even seemingly chivalrous acts of criminal vengeance, the violence of which is emphasised even from *A Study in Scarlet* onwards.

In that particular case, the avenging Jefferson Hope rivals Holmes himself in his determination and inventiveness, but the murderous results of Hope's efforts are far more explicitly monstrous than is usually the case with Holmes's investigations, as follows:

On his [enemy's] rigid face there stood an expression of horror, and... of hatred, such as I have never seen upon human features. This malignant and terrible contortion, combined with the low forehead, blunt nose, and prognathous jaw gave the dead man a singularly simious and apelike appearance, which was increased by his writhing, unnatural posture. I have seen death in many forms, but never has it appeared to me in a more fearsome aspect than in that dark grimy apartment, which looked out upon one of the main arteries of suburban London... (*Study in Scarlet*, 15).

Alongside this sense of monstrous *fin-de-siècle* criminality threatening even the imperial metropolis itself – which I have already emphasised in relation to both Holmes's monstrous cases, and also the historically monstrous crimes of Jack the Ripper – many critics have also commented upon the imperial fears raised in Doyle's work. It is certainly true that many of Holmes's monstrous adversaries are native to either Victorian Britain's past or present colonial possessions, as with the American

Jefferson Hope, or the hideous and malevolent dwarf, Tonga, originally from the Andaman Islands, whose poison-darts menace Holmes and Watson in *The Sign of Four*. Moreover, many British-born Holmesian criminals are perhaps significantly warped by their monstrous experiences abroad, whether in South America, as with Stapleton, or in India as with both Colonel Moran and Dr. Roylott (amongst others). Indeed, even Moriarty himself has significant imperial connections, if not in terms of a possible Irish ancestry, then at least in terms of his alibi as a London-based army coach.⁷ Not for nothing, it seems, does Watson, himself a monstrously damaged veteran of imperial campaigns in Afghanistan, notoriously regard the capital itself as the ‘... great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained...’ (*Study in Scarlet*, 9). What I would wish to add to this bleak picture is a sense that not only is London thus inundated with monstrous criminality, but so is that wider domestic and imperial world over which Holmes is seen to operate. Thus, as David Skene-Melvin comments, Holmes’ monstrous world ‘... is so full of corruption that a hero does not have to seek evil; rather, there is so much around that sooner or later someone will hire him to do Good... Dragon slaying for fun or profit...’ (123). Yet even such a remarkable crime-fighting hero as Holmes is himself inevitably, and indelibly, stained with monstrosity in doing so, and not only with regard to the affronts which some of his more bohemian practices, such as taking the notorious seven-percent cocaine solution, may have posed to contemporary bourgeois mores. As I have shown throughout this chapter, the very unstable genius which enables him to be such a great detective also makes it more likely that he can successfully commit crimes himself when necessary, while his social importance and monstrous personal power shields him from most potential repercussions. As such, Holmes *images his adversaries*, providing an uncanny echo of his criminal opponents even as he tries to stop them. This in turn indicates a

general cultural monstrosity that lingers throughout these *fin-de-siècle* texts, and destabilises the symbolic distinctions – whether between detective and criminal, or between different social classes – upon which normative bourgeois culture sought to erect itself. Holmes therefore not only becomes monstrous in order to fight such monstrous criminals as Moriarty, but must do so even to survive in a degenerate world which thus protects not only the ‘Napoleon of crime’, but also Dr. Jekyll and Dorian Gray, and perhaps even the Ripper himself, from justice. As I turn to analyse further Stevenson’s and Wilde’s monstrous criminal texts, therefore, it will be necessary to remember how, even when Holmes’s crime-fighting powers are at their monstrously brilliant height, *fin-de-siècle* Britain nevertheless remains extremely vulnerable to the unstable historical pressures unleashed by monstrous criminality. Such monstrous historical forces, after all, can subvert even the most seemingly upright believer in contemporary bourgeois morality with their seductive promises of scientific power and criminal indulgence, until, as Holmes himself remarks following one of his most monstrous later cases, humanity’s evolutionary future itself lies in grave jeopardy, for:

The real source [of evil here]... lies, of course, in that untimely love affair which gave our impetuous professor the idea that he could only gain his wish by turning himself into a younger man. When one tries to rise above Nature one is liable to fall below it. The highest type of man may revert to the animal if he leaves the straight road of destiny... There is danger there – a very real danger to humanity. Consider, Watson, that the material, the sensual, the worldly would all prolong their worthless lives. The spiritual would not avoid the call of something higher. It would be the survival of the least fit. What sort of cesspool may not our poor world become? (Doyle, ‘The Adventure of the Creeping Man’, 463).

Uncanny History and Monstrous Criminal Doubles in Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and*

***Mr. Hyde* and Wilde’s *Picture of Dorian Gray*.**

But when I slept, or when the virtue of the medicine wore off, I would leap almost without transition (for the pangs of transformation grew daily less marked) into the possession of a fancy brimming with images of terror, a soul boiling with causeless hatreds, and a body that seemed not strong enough to contain the raging energies of life. The powers of Hyde seemed to have grown with the sickliness of Jekyll. And certainly the hate that divided them was equal on each side. With Jekyll, it was a

thing of vital instinct. He had now seen the full deformity of that creature that shared with him some of the phenomena of consciousness, and was co-heir with him to death... he thought of Hyde, for all his energy of life, as of something not only hellish but inorganic. This was the shocking thing; that the slime of the pit seemed to utter cries and voices; that the amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned; that what was dead, and had no shape, would usurp the offices of life. And this again, that this insurgent horror was knit to him closer than a wife, closer than an eye; lay caged in his flesh, where he heard it mutter and felt it struggle to be born; and at every hour of weakness, and in the confidence of slumber, prevailed against him, and deposed him out of life. The hatred of Hyde was of a different order. His terror of the gallows drove him continually to commit temporary suicide, and return to his subordinate station of a part instead of a person; but he loathed the necessity... But his love of life is wonderful; I go further; I, who sicken and freeze at the mere thought of him, when I recall the abjection and passion of this attachment, and when I know how he fears my power to cut him off by suicide, I find it in my heart to pity him... (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 68-69).

The worship of the senses has often, and with much justice, been decried, men feeling a natural instinct of terror about passions and sensations that seem stronger than themselves, and that they are conscious of sharing with the less highly organized forms of existence. But it appeared to Dorian Gray that the true nature of the senses had never been understood, and that they remained savage and animal merely because the world had sought to starve them into submission or to kill them by pain... As he looked back upon man moving through History, he was haunted by a feeling of loss. So much had been surrendered! and to such little purpose! There had been mad wilful rejections, monstrous forms of self torture and self-denial, whose origin was fear, and whose result was a degradation infinitely more terrible than the fancied degradation from which, in their ignorance, they had sought to escape, Nature, in her wonderful irony, driving out the anchorite to feed with the wild animals of the desert and giving to the hermit the beasts of the field as his companions... (*Dorian Gray*, 126).

As can be gauged from these examples, both Stevenson's and Wilde's monstrous texts are heavily laden with the criminal possibilities of historical change as a highly unstable, internalised force lurking behind the monstrous transgressions of both Jekyll/Hyde and Dorian Gray. On one level, this operates in terms of a similarly biological, hereditary form of criminal history to that which I have already described in relation to many of Doyle's monstrous criminals, and which his contemporaries had begun to perceive through the monstrous future possibilities unleashed by evolutionary theories. Certainly, Wilde for one had already mentioned elsewhere the monstrous power which such evolutionary forces could wield over those who might wish to

control their future historical direction, as evolution itself ‘... is the law of life, and there is no evolution except towards individualism. Where this tendency is not expressed, it is a case of artificially arrested growth, or of disease, or of death...’ (‘Socialism’, 919).

Interestingly, such monstrous conditions also shape the evolution of Jekyll’s and Hyde’s monstrous histories, since their eventual mutual death is long foreshadowed by others’ misguided expectations that the former ‘... is plainly seized with one of those maladies that both torture and deform the sufferer...’ (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 41). Indeed, Stevenson’s account of the monstrous consequences of misunderstanding and/or misappropriating the power of evolutionary historical change also depicts the unleashing of a monstrous criminal, namely Hyde, whose biological growth long remains hideously stunted, much like that of the habitual *fin-de-siècle* criminal as described above by Taylor. (Moreover, Hyde’s eventual increase in size and dominance is itself described in terms of a disease, whereby the ‘... powers of Hyde seemed to have grown with the sickliness of Jekyll...’ [*Jekyll and Hyde*, 69]). All this is thus anticipated by Jekyll’s doom-laden attempts to turn human evolution away from such strictly *individual* roots, and instead scientifically (mis)shape an unstable future governed by his notorious ‘... partial discovery... that man is not truly one, but truly two...’ (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 35). Speculating about potential advances in this seemingly exciting new bio/psychological field, Jekyll goes on to predict that others will later confirm the truth of a belief in truly *multiple* personalities that he shares with Wilde’s Dorian Gray, although the latter best encapsulates its monstrous historical implications. According to Dorian, who is after all fully aware of the monstrous history of his own grotesquely cruel aristocratic lineage, the horrors of our ancestral past may well bear ultimate responsibility for any such potential evolutionary leap in humanity’s monstrous psychological potential. By the notoriously unstable *fin de siècle*, therefore, centuries of

monstrous history had created this uncanny ‘... being with myriad lives and myriad sensations, a complex multiform creature that bore within itself strange legacies of thought and passion, and whose very flesh was tainted with the monstrous maladies of the dead... Had some strange poisonous germ crept from body to body till it had reached his own?’ (*Dorian Gray*, 137). What, therefore, are the criminal implications of such wide-ranging internal instability, especially given the monstrous violence that both Dorian and Jekyll/Hyde’s unleashed passions usually create in both themselves and others? After all, I have shown their *fin-de-siècle* society as being already increasingly historically unstable, especially with the ever-possible criminal misuse of its signifiers of bourgeois power to monstrously violent effect, a particularly disturbing criminal historical process that I shall now proceed to examine further.

One notorious such example occurs late at night when Hyde batters the seemingly gentle Sir Danvers Carew MP to death using his walking stick, after the latter merely accosts him ‘... with a very pretty manner of politeness...’ (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 21). As Cyndy Hendershot points out in relation to this sudden outbreak of Hyde’s monstrous criminal power, the very fact that ‘... a gentleman’s civilized accessory so easily transforms into a caveman’s club indicates the uneasy closeness between Carew and Hyde’s violent behaviour...’ (111). Many critics also see this mysterious nocturnal encounter between a seemingly out-of-place older gentleman and the monstrously volatile Hyde as a prime example of the latent web of monstrously dysfunctional homosexual relationships, which apparently form the underlying gender/power framework of Stevenson’s monstrous text. According to Peter K. Garrett, however, any excessive critical concentration upon the *purely* sexual aspects of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*’s monstrous criminal history could potentially be highly misguided, and indeed, he claims that ultimately:

Such readings entail a certain refusal to read, to accept the tale's repeated insistence on Hyde's cruelty and malice as the essence of his evil. It is his capacity for drinking pleasure from any degree of torture to another that makes him seem monstrous to the wondering Jekyll, a desire to dominate whose drive towards death emerges as a primary force, not the disguised expression of some deeper impulse. And what is most disturbing... is that this savage will to power cannot be contained within the figure of Hyde or exorcised by Jekyll/Hyde's final self-destruction; it becomes truly monstrous in becoming mingled with the motives of the other characters, the narrative, and its readers – precisely as they seek the solution to a mystery or a responsible moral message. Like Jekyll, the tale releases a force that cannot be mastered – not because it simply overwhelms all resistance but because all efforts to resist or contain it seem to become further instances of its cruel logic. As the violence of anarchic desire and the violence of moral order threaten to become indistinguishable, we again confront the darkest Gothic vision, the reduction of all values to common terms of power... (118).

Hyde's monstrous application of such power through criminal violence thus accelerates the historical degeneration of the conventional socio-political hierarchies governing *fin-de-siècle* Britain, especially since he can easily exterminate Carew, who is seemingly the most illustrious Establishment figure in Stevenson's text. In sharp contrast, however, at this stage Hyde's criminal power can still be effectively checked by the equally monstrous threat of violent collective action, especially from proletarians such as those who compose much of the mob that surrounds him following the notorious child-stamping 'Juggernaut' incident. Indeed, it is Jekyll's own outraged servant who ultimately provokes, alongside the lawyer, Utterson, the final violent demise of Jekyll/Hyde, thus forestalling the monstrous growth of the latter's ever-increasing criminal powers, which might have eventually proved to be virtually unstoppable. Jekyll himself increasingly suspects that Hyde's monstrous body had '... grown in stature, as though... I were conscious of a more generous tide of blood; and... if this were much prolonged, the balance of my nature might be permanently overthrown, the power of voluntary change be forfeited...' (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 62). Alongside his evolving physical monstrosity, therefore, Hyde is also fully aware of the outlaw greed for

scientific knowledge that created him, the appeal of which is made clear in his final speech to the sceptical Dr. Lanyon, as follows:

As you decide, you shall be left as you were before, and neither richer nor wiser, unless the sense of service rendered to a man in mortal distress may be counted as a kind of riches of the soul. Or, if you shall so prefer to choose, a new province of knowledge and new avenues to fame and power shall be laid open to you, here in this room, upon the instant; and your sight shall be blasted by a prodigy to stagger the unbelief of Satan... And now, you who have so long been bound to the most narrow and material views, you who have denied the virtue of transcendental medicine, you who have derided your superiors – behold! (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 53).

Despite the apparent decline of Jekyll's biological and/or psychological influence in the wake of the monstrous evolution of Hyde's criminal power, it is hard indeed not to detect the former's own professional pride in his monstrous alter-ego's boasts upon the incredible results of their notoriously unconventional scientific methods. The scientific monstrosity of the process itself is attested to by the fact that witnessing it virtually drives Lanyon to his grave, and it is certainly the case that Hyde himself proves equally horrible and/or fascinating to others such as Utterson. Indeed, even as the apparent purity of his evil – again, ironically caused by impure powders – has been shown to provoke all around him to potential homicidal fury, Hyde becomes a monstrous criminal catalyst to the violence of others, while presenting a singularly monstrous mystery for more inquisitive others like Utterson. From the first, the outlaw London that Hyde haunts is also seen as overflowing with monstrous criminality, and possesses a myriad of shady nocturnal streets which only exacerbate '...that state of mind when a man listens and listens and begins to long for a policeman...' (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 7). The monstrous psychological impact of this uncannily ubiquitous criminality can be gauged from the need for guilty self-recognition of past misdeeds, which Hyde's case implies to be a universal, even an inevitable, aspect of *fin-de-siècle* life. This remains true even for such determined would-be detectives as Utterson, of whom Stevenson himself claims that '...few men could read the rolls of his life with less apprehension, yet he was

humbled to the dust by the many ill-things he had done...’ (17). Certainly, Jekyll himself initially cannot imagine anything other than an internalised psychological explanation for Hyde’s uncanny monstrosity, especially since his monstrous drug essentially has no behavioural ‘... discriminating action; it was neither diabolical or divine; but it shook the doors of the prisonhouse of my disposition...’ (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 59). Moreover, Hyde clearly has a monstrous psychological impact upon others, who can even become ‘... sick and white with the desire to kill him...’ (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 8). Indeed, his very existence provokes a monstrous waking nightmare in Utterson’s obsessive mind, as follows:

Six o’clock struck on the bells of the church that was so conveniently near to Mr. Utterson’s dwelling, and still he was digging at the problem. Hitherto it had touched him on the intellectual side alone; but now his imagination also was engaged or rather enslaved... He would be aware of the great field of lamps of a nocturnal city; then of the figure of a man walking swiftly; then of a child running from the doctor’s; and then these met, and that human Juggernaut trod the child down and passed on regardless of her screams. Or else he would see a room in a rich house, where his friend lay asleep... and lo! there would stand by his side a figure to whom power was given, and even at that dead hour, he must rise and do its bidding. The figure in these two phases haunted the lawyer all night... And still the figure had no face... or one that baffled him and melted before his eyes; and thus it was that there sprang up and grew apace in the lawyer’s mind a singularly strong, almost an inordinate, curiosity to behold the features of the real Mr. Hyde. If he could but once set eyes on him, he thought the mystery would lighten and perhaps roll altogether away, as was the habit of mysterious things when well examined... And at least it would be a face worth seeing: the face of a man who was without bowels of mercy: a face which but had to show itself to raise up... a spirit of enduring hatred (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 13-14).

Certainly, a prevalent monstrous discourse of *fin-de-siècle* criminality governs Jekyll/Hyde’s own (mis)understandings of their dysfunctional, yet symbiotic bio-psychological relationship, until the latter only tolerates the former ‘... as the mountain bandit remembers the cavern... [that] conceals him from pursuit...’ (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 63). Such calculating criminal exploitation of his monstrous alter-ego’s powerful identity is also carried out by Jekyll from the first, as he recalls that historically, elite men ‘... have before hired bravos to transact their crimes, while their own person and

reputation sat under shelter. I was the first that ever did so for his pleasures...’ (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 60). The criminal boundaries between Jekyll and Hyde thus prove blurred throughout, especially considering that Jekyll in fact retains his own evil, despite his otherwise radical transformations, and as such reluctantly retains common elements with one who, supposedly ‘...alone in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil...’ (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 58).

Much of this sense of monstrous criminal kinship also applies within Wilde’s text, especially if we consider the socio-historical implications of Linda Dryden’s particularly cogent analysis of the similarity between Jekyll’s and Hyde’s uncanny criminal relationship and that between Dorian Gray and his increasingly hideous portrait, for:

Dorian takes full advantage of the privileges of his class, which also include forays into the murkier districts of the East End, while the picture records the depraved trajectory of his career... [Moreover, the picture] is alive, corrupt and indestructible, a physical manifestation of evil like Hyde... Confined, static, in its gilt frame the picture is [also, nevertheless] another victim of its owner’s excesses. It is not a party to Dorian’s crimes – it is never at the scene – but its corrupted aspect bears gruesome testimony to Dorian’s evil. Like Jekyll, the picture is the passive onlooker but always affected by the actions of its counterpart... The picture is both a perverse pleasure and a dreaded responsibility; coupled with his hedonistic desires, it propels Dorian towards evil... [When discovered by Hallward, his] fear is primal, the fear of the haunted animal, because Dorian has become the monster of the modern Gothic at loose on the foggy streets of London... Like Jekyll/Hyde, he leads a double life that allows him access to these upper echelons of society and permits him to descend to the lowest levels of human habitation in the city. Dorian’s movement about the metropolis is the subject of shocked gossip... Such gossip was ruinous to reputation, as Wilde himself was to find, for the press was notorious for leaping on upper-class scandals... Scandal and gossip abound, yet the truth is that Dorian Gray exceeds even the stories that are circulating around his reputation, for in his skulking about the seedy haunts of the city, and in his awful murder of Hallward, he has become a Gothic monster... Dorian’s picture can [thus] be read as a reflection of the grimy underbelly of the metropolis and his seemingly unspoilt exterior as the façade of high society behind which lurk corruption and vice... (131-143).

What I would hope to add to this analysis is a greater understanding of the uncanny significance of monstrous history itself in driving home Dorian’s own monstrous criminal nature. This combines with the idea that monstrosity itself is a figure of *fin-de-*

siècle instability, which characteristically exposes itself in a play of uncanny doublings in these texts around definitions of bourgeois subjectivity and nonmaturity. (For to mature in this way would not only involve succumbing to the forces of biological aging, and eventually death, from which Dorian longs to escape, but would also mean surrendering power to the prophesied historical heirs of the embattled bourgeoisie, namely the monstrous proletariat). Throughout Wilde's text, therefore, not only does Dorian's own monstrous wish involve an unnatural escape from the biological impact of the historical process, but the past itself is often regarded with monstrous fascination and fear, in much the same tyrannous manner as I have already described *vis-à-vis* Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Dorian repeatedly voices not only a notoriously apocalyptic desire for an end to such historical tyranny, longing as he does that the monstrous *fin de siècle* really '... were *fin du globe*... Life is a great disappointment...' (Dorian Gray, 171), but also a desire to create new hedonistic philosophies which would overcome the nightmarish psychological crimes which puritanical bourgeois history had committed against human existence. For in such a world, the monstrous past '... would have little or no place, or survive, at any rate, in no conscious form of obligation and regret, the remembrance even of joy having its bitterness, and the memories of pleasure their pain...' (*Dorian Gray*, 127). As ever, however, Dorian's views on such desirable historical oblivion merely echo Lord Henry Wootton's cynically selfish pronouncements, which in terms of *orthodox* contemporary socialist doctrine (although not Wilde's own uniquely individualistic brand of socialism), themselves appear to encourage monstrous visions of scandalous social neglect behind his ruthless assertions that:

People are afraid of themselves nowadays. They have forgotten the highest of all duties, the duty one owes to one's self. Of course they are charitable. They feed the hungry, and clothe the beggar. But their own souls starve, and are naked. Courage has gone out of our race. Perhaps we never really had it. The terror of society, which

is the basis of morals, the terror of God, which is the secret of religion – these are the two things that govern us... But the bravest man among us is afraid of himself. The mutilation of the savage has its tragic survival in the self-denial that mars our lives. We are punished for our refusals. Every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the mind, and poisons us. The body sins once, and has done with its sin, for action is a mode of purification... The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself, with desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful... (*Dorian Gray*, 20-21).

In social terms, indeed, Lord Henry's aristocratic horror at the very idea that London's brutalised proletarians fundamentally share the '... same flesh and blood as one's self' (*Dorian Gray*, 80), is itself criminally echoed by Dorian's own ruthless social evolution. Even at this stage, after all, an increasingly unfeeling Dorian has long left behind his earlier, seemingly more innocent self, and instead soon becomes the effective 'murderer' of the actress, Sybil Vane. (This latter episode, meanwhile, itself becomes particularly ironic given Dorian's earlier charitable contributions to the fashionable cause of relieving the monstrous suffering then found in what would become the Ripper's notorious Whitechapel streets). Ultimately, for the latter and his circle, the world of East End criminality merely becomes another loathsome voyeuristic arena for their hedonistic attempts to bury the monstrous pain occasioned by wider historical change in instantaneous sensual gratification. At his most monstrously psychologically ruthless, in fact, Dorian can usually come to regard his own monstrous crimes with a quasi-scientific sense of artificial detachment, especially when they merely inflict pain upon members of *fin-de-siècle* society's lower orders, such as occurs *vis-à-vis* the horrific fate of the hapless Sybil Vane. Following her suicidal response to his hatred of her seeming artistic betrayal through bad acting, he thus infamously comments that while he '... murdered her just as surely as if I had cut her little throat with a knife. Yet the roses are not less lovely for all that... How extraordinarily dramatic life is... [Why] is it that I cannot feel this tragedy as much as I want to? I don't

think I am heartless... ' (*Dorian Gray*, 96-97). When it comes to his own deliberate acts of criminal monstrosity, however, Dorian is often also driven on by the emotionally overwhelming power of biologically and/or psychologically transgressive impulses, whose sheer brute force is vividly depicted in criminal terms by Wilde himself, as he claims that in us all:

There are moments, psychologists tell us, when the passion for sin, or for what the world calls sin, so dominates a nature, that every fibre of the body, as every cell of the brain, seems to be instinct with fearful impulses. Men and women at such moments lose the freedom of their will. They move to their terrible end as automatons move. Choice is taken from them, and conscience is either killed, or, if it lives at all, lives but to give rebellion its fascination, and disobedience its charm... Callous, concentrated on evil, with stained mind, and soul hungry for rebellion, Dorian Gray hastened on, quickening his step as he went... (*Dorian Gray*, 181).

A similarly impulsive bio-psychological urge towards monstrous criminality also operates within Stevenson's work, even as historical time itself becomes as monstrously fearsome to Jekyll as I have shown it to be in Dorian's case. As William Veeder comments, Hyde's comparative youth is the monstrous physical result of Jekyll's quixotic psychological drive to escape the even more monstrous historical confines of human mortality, and as such:

Jekyll is waging war against time itself. This war involves patriarchy not only in its specifically late-Victorian, professional manifestation, but also in its traditional form. Patriarchy presupposes time, constitutes an accommodation with mortality. Patrilineal succession envisions the endurance not of an individual but of a tradition. A son gets to become a father because he accepts the next stage: the handing on of his status to a younger successor and the going on to death. Jekyll in effect goes back on the bargain... Immortality through regression is a doomed dream, [however,] and Jekyll knows it... (148).

How the psychological pressures of this monstrous history become manifest in both Stevenson's and Wilde's monstrous texts as a criminal impulse towards instantaneous acts of monstrous transgression will thus be the main focus of my conclusion to this chapter. In doing so, I will also briefly examine further how such monstrous criminal impulses destabilise any historical scheme based upon predictability and/or progress, in

much the same way that H. G. Wells continually points out the monstrous unpredictability of biological evolution, as I demonstrated in my previous chapter. As Wilde points out, after all, the greatest historical error made by at least one powerful ruler, namely ‘... Louis XIV was that he thought human nature would always be the same. The result of his error was the French Revolution...’ (‘Socialism’, 918).

Returning to *Jekyll and Hyde*, we find that this sense of monstrous history as wildly unpredictable, and, indeed, of time itself as *unmasterable*, is best expressed by Jekyll’s increasing loss of control over his ability to transform into Hyde, and the terrifying sense of criminal vulnerability which this creates. Following Carew’s murder, the monstrous consequences of becoming Hyde involve not the escape from the temporal pressures of encroaching death which Jekyll had hoped for, but rather a far more imminent danger of extinction should he become ‘... once more Edward Hyde. A moment before I had been safe of all men’s respect, wealthy, beloved... and now I was the common quarry of mankind, hunted, houseless, a known murderer, thrall to the gallows...’ (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 66). This psychological shift from the monstrous double as biological safe haven from mortality to being a grotesque criminal harbinger of doom, a process which can also be applied to the monstrous relationship between Dorian Gray and his portrait, is moreover ascribed deep historical roots by Freud himself, who comments that:

The same desire [for immortality] led the Ancient Egyptians to develop the art of making images of the dead in lasting materials. Such ideas, however, have sprung from the soil of unbounded self-love, from the primary narcissism which dominates the mind of the child and of primitive man. But when this stage has been surmounted, the ‘double’ reverses its aspect. From having been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death... When all is said and done, the quality of uncanniness can only come from the fact of the ‘double’ being a creation dating back to a very early mental stage, long since surmounted – a stage, incidentally, at which it wore a more friendly aspect. The ‘double’ has become a thing of terror, just as, after the collapse of their religion, the gods turned into demons... (Freud, 357-358).

Given Wilde's knowledge of the repressive social role of religion as a terrifying guard against transgression, as well as the biological pressures impelling one to shatter such restraints, it is unsurprising that he also provides an eloquent warning to those who would attempt to regain control over historical destiny itself. In any successful socialist future, after all, Wilde argues that, far from requiring the communist dictatorship of the proletariat which orthodox Marxist-Leninist thought would later deem necessary *vis-à-vis* the Russian Revolution, instead:

What is needed is individualism. If the Socialism is authoritarian; if there are governments armed with economic power as they are now with political power; if in a word, we are to have industrial tyrannies, then the last state of man will be worse than the first... For while under the present system a very large number of people can lead lives of a certain amount of freedom and expression and happiness, under an industrial-barrack system, or a system of economic tyranny, nobody would be able to have any such freedom at all. It is to be regretted that a portion of our community should be practically in slavery, but to propose to solve the problem by enslaving the entire community is childish... ('Socialism', 900).

Paradoxically, however, the contemporary media response to the Ripper murders makes it clear that such vital social reforms as improved East End housing were in fact given fresh impetus by fears of the impulsive, disruptive *fin-de-siècle* criminal, which found their monstrous historical apotheosis in the terrifying figure of Jack himself. (In practice, of course, such reforms were by no means enough to help those worst affected by Victorian poverty, as, for example, unfortunately '... none of the Ripper's victims could ever have afforded to rent one of these model flats...' [Curtis, 267]). Moreover, when none other than Dorian Gray himself is caught in the momentary grip of just such a monstrous transgressive impulse, he clearly revels in the fallen, dangerous nature of the London underworld. (This despite the fact that, as we have seen, Dorian was once involved in East End charity work himself, notwithstanding his later contempt for the monstrous poor themselves). The whole tragic Sybil Vane episode, for example, is triggered after Lord Henry fills Dorian '... with a wild desire to know everything about

life... There was an exquisite poison in the air. I had a passion for sensations... I felt that this grey, monstrous London of ours, with its myriads of people, its sordid sinners, and its splendid sins... must have something in store for me...' (*Dorian Gray*, 48). On other occasions, the destabilising historical effects of such transgressive criminal impulses trigger instead the sort of bestial evolutionary degeneracy that I have already examined in relation to both Sherlock Holmes's monstrous cases, and to the 'strange case' of Jekyll and Hyde itself. Dorian's murder of Basil Hallward occurs, after all, even as the '...mad passions of a hunted animal stirred within him, and he loathed the man who was seated at the table, more than in his whole life he had ever loathed anything...' (*Dorian Gray*, 151). When such uncanny psychological pressures can thus erupt into criminal violence at any moment, the future direction of history itself is always monstrously vulnerable to inevitable, yet unpredictable change, with monstrous consequences for those who dominate, however precariously, the existing social order. Holmes himself often regards his monstrous crime-fighting career as having influenced *fin-de-siècle* London for the better, and as the Great War looms at the climax of both his career and the *fin de siècle* itself, is quietly confident that Britain will somehow survive this monstrous historical tempest regardless. Thus he proclaims to Watson that, despite everything the monstrous *fin-de-siècle* criminal could throw at them:

You are the one fixed point in a changing age. There's an east wind coming all the same, such a wind as never blew on England yet. It will be cold and bitter, Watson, and a good many of us may wither before its blast. But it's God's own wind none the less, and a cleaner, better, stronger land will lie in the sunshine when the storm has cleared...' (Doyle, 'His Last Bow': An Epilogue of Sherlock Holmes', 419).

Against such understandable, and perhaps even necessary, faith in the brighter future that would surely follow the apocalyptic battles of 1914-1918, however, it is also necessary to remember that the younger Holmes would doubtless have cautioned against such attempts at historical prophecy. Both ourselves and Watson, therefore,

should perhaps also be reminded once again that Holmesian detective practice dictates from the first that it is ‘... a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence. It biases the judgment (sic)...’ (*Study in Scarlet*, 14). This is appropriate advice, given the evidence I have amassed here of the extent to which unstable *fin-de-siècle* Britain was already in ideological danger from the monstrous literary criminality exemplified by Hyde, Moriarty, and Dorian Gray, as well as from the monstrous *historical* criminality of, above all, Jack the Ripper. It would therefore also appear logical to counter Holmes’ patriotic faith with Lord Henry Wootton’s notoriously cynical *fin-de-siècle* voice, which moreover claims that in fact, the underlying psychological basis of such Holmesian ‘... optimism is sheer terror... We praise the banker that we may overdraw our account, and find good qualities in the highwayman in the hope that he may spare our pockets...’ (*Dorian Gray*, 73). I will moreover leave the last word on monstrous *fin-de-siècle* criminality to Lord Henry and his monstrous catalyst of a *protégé*, Dorian Gray himself, whose own apparent physical stability belies a crippling psychological burden of monstrous criminal history. Within the monstrous historical heart of darkness of Wilde’s society London, we therefore find a world governed by aestheticised criminal transgressions, whose equally monstrous rulers ultimately regard crime as yet another monstrous thrill to be experienced in the dangerous world of the metropolitan underclass, thus:

‘What would you say, Harry, if I told you that I had murdered Basil?’ said the younger man. He watched him intently after he had spoken.

‘I would say, my dear fellow, that you were posing for a character that doesn’t suit you. All crime is vulgar, just as all vulgarity is crime. It is not in you, Dorian, to commit a murder. I am sorry if I hurt your vanity by saying so, but I assure you it is true. Crime belongs exclusively to the lower orders. I don’t blame them in the smallest degree. I should fancy that crime was to them what art is to us, simply a method of procuring extraordinary sensations.’

‘A method of procuring sensations? Do you think, then, that a man who has once committed a murder could possibly do the same crime again? Don’t tell me that.’

‘Oh! anything becomes a pleasure if one does it too often,’ cried Lord Henry, laughing. ‘That is one of the most important secrets of life. I should fancy, however, that murder is always a mistake. One should never do anything that one cannot talk about after dinner...’ (*Dorian Gray*, 203).

Throughout this chapter, I have shown how the monstrous criminal literature of the *fin de siècle* dramatises the uncanny irruption of a certain monstrosity, full of repressed, unconscious, unknown, and generally non-rationalisable historical forces, into the contemporary bourgeoisie’s understanding of history itself. In turn, this monstrosity is itself a figure of the general historical instability which dominated the entire *fin de siècle*, and which made itself felt in monstrous criminal literature around definitions of bourgeois subjectivity and nonmaturity, in particular. This is characteristically expressed through a play of uncanny doublings in these texts, with Dorian Gray in particular seeking to escape a pervasive *fin-de-siècle* sense of impending historical doom by clinging on to his younger physical self. (At the same time, however, he increasingly becomes both fearful of, and obsessed with, the monstrous past which is embodied by his increasingly decrepit pictorial self, and believes that ‘... the whole of history was merely the record of his own life... He felt that he had known them all, those strange terrible figures that passed across the stage of the world and made sin so marvellous and evil so full of subtlety...’ [*Dorian Gray*, 138]). A similar process also applies in the case of Dr. Jekyll, whose monstrously impure chemistry also raises questions about the historical reliability of *fin-de-siècle* criminal science, as both his potion and Lombroso’s atavism ultimately unleash apparently bestial criminal throwbacks from their hiding places in seemingly innocent contemporary bodies. The historical unreliability of *fin-de-siècle* criminal science in turn threatens to undermine those who depend on it for battling monstrous *fin-de-siècle* criminals, and threatens in particular to disrupt the historical logic behind the uncanny deductions of none other than Sherlock Holmes. This adds an even more dangerous

ideological charge to a Holmesian canon which already often depicts the disruption or disturbance of the ideological self-image of the *fin-de-siècle* bourgeois social order, and whose mightiest defender often contemplates his own potential success as a criminal. For this is a society where seemingly rigid legal and class boundaries can be easily overcome, not only through such uncanny biological transformations as those of Jekyll and Dorian, but also through the application of money, a fact which both they and Professor Moriarty himself both readily exploit. Thus, the monstrous *fin-de-siècle* criminal becomes a potent historical symbol of the lingering vulnerability of British bourgeois society to subversion from within, until even the notoriously monstrous Ripper can ultimately escape justice. Moreover, their success also demonstrates how attempts to assert law and order over the course of history itself remain fatally vulnerable to the disruptive criminal violence of monstrous individuals. This monstrous historical vulnerability has been reasserted again and again ever since, from the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 to the fall of the Twin Towers in 2001, with an increasing likelihood of potentially apocalyptic consequences as a result. I shall therefore conclude by reestablishing the relationship between history and monstrosity which lies at the heart of this thesis, before reaffirming how my ideas on this furthers our critical understanding of monstrous texts in general to new levels. After all, as Wilde himself notes in his 'Soul of Man Under Socialism', and despite all the abiding interest that I have myself shown in the workings of monstrous history within the monstrous literature of earlier ages, ultimately it is always '... with the future that we have to deal. For the past is what man should not have been. The present is what man ought not to be. The future is what artists are...' (918).

Notes to Chapter Five.

- ¹ All of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes works cited herein can be found in *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*. New Lanark: Geddes & Grosset, 2001.
- ² For powerful general analyses of the historical importance of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes narratives in shaping the ideological self-image of the *fin-de-siècle* bourgeoisie, see Knight, *Form and Ideology*, 67-106; Knight, 'Great Detective', 368-388; Symons, 77-89. Their darker historical and psychological aspects are explored by Lambert, 31-63. Moreover, an intriguing psychological analysis of how Holmesian texts represent bourgeois masculinity through scientific and technological power is carried out by Maertens, 296-321. For the key role of Holmes in shaping a Marxist critique of the wider detective fiction genre, meanwhile, see Moretti, 134-149.
- ³ An interesting general analysis of the importance of contemporary medical ideas in determining *fin-de-siècle* concepts of monstrosity can be found in Smith, *Victorian Demons*. More specific work upon the medical/imperial context of Doyle's monstrous writing can moreover be found in Otis, 90-118. Similarly, the medical context of both Stevenson and Wilde's monstrous work is examined further by Mighall, 187-199. For the monstrous medical aspects of the Ripper murders, meanwhile, see Walkowitz, 168, 199, 209-212; Curtis, 99-100, 145-148, 213-237, 249-255; Bloom, 122-124, 129-134; Frayling, 158-160.
- ⁴ Lombroso's monstrous claims are examined more fully in the context of Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde* by Arata, 'Sedulous Ape', 233-254.
- ⁵ For the history of popular vigilantism in the wake of the Ripper murders, see Walkowitz, 203-205, 213-214, 220, 226; Curtis, 259-262, 267-268. Information on the significance of Richard Mansfield in the cultural context of both the Ripper murders and *Jekyll and Hyde* can meanwhile be found in Frayling, *Nightmare*, 153-160.
- ⁶ The significance of *fin-de-siècle* capitalist ideology in relation to Doyle's 'The Red-Headed League' is made clear by Sweeney, 37-61. Similarly, an important analysis of the wider historical role of professionalism and social class within 'The Man with the Twisted Lip' is made by Jaffe, 403-427; while this story's connections with Doyle's own professional status are more closely investigated by Knight, *Form and Ideology*, 97-101.
- ⁷ For the Irish context of Doyle's work, including the figure of Moriarty, see Wynne, 69-79. Moreover, an interesting (albeit fictionalised) historical account of Moriarty's potential links to *fin-de-siècle* Irish terrorism is made by Rennison, 60-78, 87-90. Meanwhile, for a truly fascinating (and highly recommended) example of the usage of Moriarty in an imperial role outside the Holmesian canon, see Moore and O'Neill et al., *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*.

CONCLUSION.

In the seventeenth century, the increasing numbers of literate Englishmen found published news about apparitions, monsters, and witchcraft important and plausible... Even in twentieth-century England, such superstitious explanations have remained historically important until recently... UFO's have replaced apparitions, AIDS carries the same stigma as medieval monstrosity, and Jesse James was certainly a match for Captain James Hind... Now, as in the seventeenth century, individuals from all economic classes, educational backgrounds, political views, and walks of life eagerly accept ideas of gloom and doom and the imminent end of the world.

Could it be that humanity possesses a fairly set fund of basic ideas that are continually modified to fit new circumstances? Could it be that humanity is innovative when necessary but conservative by nature and happily irrational throughout? Could cultural change over time be less a transition from the superstitious to the rational than the rejection of older versions for newer renditions of the same irrational/enchanted ideas?

Even more noteworthy is the importance these ideas assume during times of crisis. Whether it be war, revolution, plague, or other natural disasters, otherwise reasonable individuals in every society will turn to ideas of enchantment as acceptable explanations for complex events. Much as the children of both rich and poor, of both the educated and ignorant, are afraid of the dark, their parents turn to adult versions of these ideas predicated on the fear of foreigners, when their world teeters toward the inexplicable. Whatever the legitimate, rational, objective factors involved in demands for change, conservative solutions based on fear and superstition will usually prevail. In other words, rather than disparaging enchanted ideas and superstitious fears as illegitimate historical factors, scholars would do better to embrace these truly classical intellectual underpinnings of all societies as factors that may continually frustrate true change... (Friedman, 260-262).

While many people, especially politicians, try to learn lessons from history, history itself shows that in retrospect very few of these lessons have been the right ones. Time and again, history has proved a very bad predictor of future events. This is because history never repeats itself; nothing in human society... ever happens twice under exactly the same conditions or in exactly the same way. And when people try to use history they often do so not in order to accommodate themselves to the inevitable, but in order to avoid it... [History, then,] can identify, or posit with a high degree of plausibility, patterns, trends and structures in the human past. In these respects it can legitimately be regarded as scientific. But history cannot create laws with predictive power. An understanding of the past might help in the present insofar as it broadens our knowledge of human nature, provides us with an inspiration – or a warning – or suggests plausible, though always fallible arguments about the likely possibilities of certain things happening under certain conditions. None of this, however, comes anywhere near the immutable predictive certainty of a scientific law. All those who thought, or claimed, that they had discovered

laws in history... were wrong; indeed... as soon as Marxists in Russia thought they recognized a historical law, they proceeded to do their level best to break it... It is always a mistake for a historian to try to predict the future. Life, unlike science, is simply too full of surprises... (Evans, 59-62).

By contrast to Jerome Friedman's bleak diagnosis of humanity's fundamentally *predictable* irrationality and apocalyptic devotion to superstition, Richard J. Evans is interested here in contrasting the fundamentally *unpredictable* results of an uncontrollable historical process with the seemingly more predictable nature of experimental science. This identifies a historical paradox which I have explored throughout this thesis, namely that the bourgeoisie fears the monstrous possibilities of historical change precisely *because* they are uncontrollable and unpredictable, yet many of the specific historical fears in question recur in many monstrous texts from different periods. (For example, fears of tyranny and/or foreign invasion recur in texts as far apart as *Richard III* and *Dracula*). What I have done to resolve this paradox is to go beyond such theories by uniting them, first by recognising that the most powerful examples of monstrous literature are normally about deep-rooted historical problems such as these, which often have only been *temporarily* resolved in any one period. Despite this, however, the continually evolving nature of history means that even where such fears persist, they are depicted in very different monstrous guises over time, in a process of monstrous evolution whose twists and turns over three hundred years have been detailed throughout this thesis. Moreover, it is precisely this overwhelmingly powerful force of constant evolution that explains the difficulty of pinning down a specific definition (and especially a specific *physical* definition) of monstrosity. (These difficulties in turn account for the many attempts that have nevertheless been made to do so, some of which are detailed in my introduction). After all, I have shown how a monster may have a grotesquely huge body like the Cyclops or Frankenstein's Monster,

a normal-sized but misshapen body like Richard III, an outwardly handsome but inwardly foul body like Dorian Gray, or even no visible body at all like the Invisible Man. Yet none of these examples appears any less monstrous in itself than any other on this score. (Not only that, but there are also monsters who do not seem monstrous in any obvious physical sense, either openly displayed or secretly disguised, but who, like the Macbeths, can nevertheless ‘... look like th’innocent flower, / But be the serpent under it...’ [*Macbeth*, I, v, 64-65]).

How I overcame such difficulties required me to go beyond these purely representational ideas of monstrosity, and instead to examine its precise *function* in a world of chaotic historical evolution. This led me to the conclusion that monstrosity is essentially *symptomatic*, and that it thus points out where the bourgeoisie’s fears of historical change have become most grossly overdetermined, and therefore where the greatest dangers to their own power, whether real or imagined, truly lie. In other words, when literary monstrosity is at its most powerful, the course of bourgeois history has normally reached a terrifying, potentially revolutionary crisis point, which as I have demonstrated was true of both the Renaissance and the post-revolutionary Romantic periods, and especially so of the *fin de siècle*, also. (This is why the texts studied in this thesis almost always either originate precisely from the times of such historical flashpoints, or at least appear in their immediate aftermath, or when one is widely anticipated). With the appearance of the monster, moreover, the very possibility of history being used as a reliable demonstration of any prescribed grand narrative of future human progress, whether this narrative is structured after religious or socialist principles, becomes radically disrupted. By thus incarnating specific historical threats to the social and political dominance of this society’s bourgeois rulers, monstrous literature shows just how precarious their grip on power truly is, inasmuch as it remains

forever at the mercy of the latest dangers to emerge from an essentially chaotic historical process. In these circumstances, moreover, history itself can provide these ruling classes with no easily understood and reliable plan for maintaining social order and controlling any potentially revolutionary course of events, as Evans notes above.

All this then led me to conclude that in such a context, *history itself becomes monstrous in bourgeois literary representations*, by symbolising the disruptive, chaotic, and above all uncanny return of repressed fears from the monstrous past of the British bourgeoisie. (This goes further than many other critics, such as Franco Moretti or Chris Baldick, who also comment upon the importance of history in understanding monstrous texts, yet rarely give much attention to what this entails for understanding the essentially unmanageable nature of history in turn). Moreover, by simultaneously incorporating such recurrent, yet constantly changing and unpredictable historical fears, the monster itself, like the bourgeois society which spawns it, remains fundamentally lacking in any stable centre or core of historical meaning to orient itself against the potentially apocalyptic future which such upheaval creates. Those who attempt to establish such a stable personal history in order to maintain their grip on power, or even just to cope with the bleakness of their own monstrous existence, meanwhile, often find their efforts confounded by the uncontrollable nature of this constantly evolving historical process. The resulting vengeful fury and despair exacerbates their own monstrosity, much as an already regicidal Macbeth is driven to exterminate even more innocent victims, namely Macduff's children, by the diabolical knowledge that the ultimate beneficiaries of his bloody deeds will be Banquo's heirs and not his own. Having already attempted to anticipate the course of history by immediately fulfilling the Weird Sisters' uncanny prophecies of his eventual rise to power, he becomes haunted instead by his disastrous failure to do so. Macbeth is thus forced to conclude

that time itself ‘... anticpat’st my dread exploits...’ (Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*, IV, i, 144-146); but his attempts to re-impose his will over historical events through swift ruthless action only fuel his own destruction at the hands of another monstrous avenger, namely Macduff himself. Richard III is similarly vulnerable to the ever-shifting tides of historical change in the political power structures that he attempts to dominate, and finds his own monstrous power changing accordingly. For example, he fails to securely establish his own linear historical blood-right to the English throne, despite portraying his monstrous appearance as proof of his rightful descent from his royal father, Richard, Duke of York. Instead, Richard III is also haunted, and eventually overcome, by the rival historical vision of a rightful Lancastrian-Tudor dynasty, as preserved mostly by that line’s female survivors, in particular the formidable Queen Margaret, who remains a sinister historical force in her own right. It is unsurprising, therefore, that his own historical/political judgement should increasingly desert him even as his hard-won royal power should begin to ebb away, a process which ironically begins when he alienates his closest ally, the Duke of Buckingham, by neglecting to reward him at the proper time. Indeed, he likens Buckingham instead to a disruptive clock-part that ‘... keep’st the stroke / Betwixt thy begging and my meditation...’ (Shakespeare, *Richard III*, IV, ii, 114-115). In itself, naturally, this failure also undermines his earlier boasts about his uncanny ability to adapt to a constantly evolving historical situation, and thereby ‘... add colours to the chameleon, / Change shapes with Proteus for advantages, / And set the murderous Machiavel to school...’ (Shakespeare, *Henry VI, Part 3*, III, ii, 191-193).

More broadly, the failure of such attempts to control history also betrays recurring fears that to survive in a dangerous historical context where monstrous enemies appear constantly ready to engulf British bourgeois power from both within and without, it is

necessary to resort to increasingly monstrous measures ourselves. This leads into another key aspect of my thesis, namely the phenomenon of the monstrous hero, the prime example of which in this context is none other than Sherlock Holmes himself. For one thing, his cold scientific logic and radical bohemianism could easily provide solid historical grounds in themselves for believing the archetypal Great Detective to thus be vulnerable to charges of monstrosity. (Indeed, I have already shown that no less an authority than Doctor Watson himself warns Holmes that he ‘... would certainly have been burned, had you lived a few centuries ago...’ [*Scandal in Bohemia*, 70]). More significantly, the occasions where he himself breaks the law in the interests of justice, such as his safe-cracking exploits in ‘Charles Augustus Milverton’, are even more important, for they demonstrate that the legal procedures which surround bourgeois society may no longer serve to protect its interests. Therefore, these ideas of heroic monstrosity, largely original in themselves, have also allowed me to gain even more original insights about other aspects of the British bourgeoisie’s profound historical weaknesses. For this in turn would generate a largely unconscious, or at least unacknowledged longing for someone to save them from decline and despair, no matter how monstrous they themselves may eventually turn out to be: certainly, Holmes himself appears enthusiastic for an imperial reunion with America at one point.¹ (A further example of this, which again I believe to be original to this thesis, is the conclusion made in my chapter on *Dracula*: namely that the unusually German-speaking, rather than Dutch-speaking, nature of Van Helsing is perhaps symbolic of Stoker’s unspoken desire for a similar alliance with Imperial Germany).

Another important aspect of my work, which itself largely stems from my argument that monstrosity can be read as a symptom, is the degree to which bourgeois fears of monstrous historical change have been driven by radical scientific

developments. For historically, science itself has increasingly become ‘...not only something which few people could understand, but something of which many disapproved while increasingly recognizing that they depended on it...’ (Hobsbawm, *Empire*, 247). This becomes particularly true of the British bourgeoisie, whose own historic rise to global imperial power was largely fuelled by the radically accelerated growth of their scientific and technological power during the Industrial Revolution. By 1914, however, this process had already created the monstrously lethal military technology that would ultimately bleed the Empire dry during the First World War and beyond. This occurred even while rival nations such as Germany, and even ostensible allies such as the USA, gradually outstripped Britain’s industrial technology and, as a result, usurped her economic power. According to Franco Moretti, indeed, it is precisely this loss of scientific power which drove British writers to create such scientific protectors as Sherlock Holmes, since the historical ‘...need for a myth of science was felt precisely by the world that produced *less* of it. England did not attain the second industrial revolution, but it invented science fiction...’ (145).

By the monstrous *fin de siècle*, meanwhile, Dracula himself combines a desire to absorb the most up-to-date scientific and social knowledge possible in order to further his vampiric invasion of Britain with fierce pride in his own glorious ancient royal bloodline. Yet he too is eventually defeated by another combination of ancient folklore and modern technology, as best personified by Van Helsing. The latter’s own ruthless conduct in battling the Count’s depredations upon the increasingly contaminated Lucy, however, nevertheless remains disturbingly vulnerable at first to the charge of being of ‘...no good to her, to us, to science, to human knowledge – why do it? Without such it is monstrous...’ (*Dracula*, 177). By contrast, in the case of Frankenstein’s Monster, it is his ill-fated attempts to elicit compassion from his human neighbours that become

increasingly compromised even in his own mind. For as he gains more knowledge of his monstrous personal history by reading his creator's scientific notes, he is aghast to discover that within them '... the minutest description of my odious and loathsome person is given, in language which painted your own horrors, and rendered mine indelible...' (*Frankenstein*, 113). Thus, while historical awareness, and indeed, history itself, is a vital source of strength for Dracula, it nevertheless appears by contrast to be a source of profound weakness for Frankenstein's Monster. From analysing such historical symptoms within these and other cases of literary monstrosity, it has therefore proved possible to draw several other profound and largely original conclusions about the shifting yet remarkably recurrent post-Renaissance cultural relationships between concepts of history, power, and monstrosity. These have included the ideas that changes in scientific power repeatedly prove to be an important historical influence upon monstrous literary texts, that heroes can easily become monsters themselves, and more significantly that history itself is often shown to be a powerfully monstrous force in its own right. Amidst this volatile climate of intellectual uncertainty and social upheaval, the monster is used as a symptomatic literary symbol of British bourgeois society's recurrent fears of revolutionary historical change, as I have noted above. Indeed, it is this idea of monstrosity as a symptom that I believe to be the most significant, and indeed the most original contribution to knowledge of this thesis. For I have used it to depict a British bourgeoisie which, far from being largely unruffled by monstrous historical change, as Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall claim in my introduction, where instead almost constantly afraid that the next revolutionary change would, as Marx eventually predicted, lead to their downfall. Small wonder, then, that as bourgeois Britain entered the monstrous twentieth century, when much of this global power was indeed lost, Joseph Conrad would note that the Thames, supposedly a gateway to the

very hub of empire, instead ‘...seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness...’

(Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness: Complete, Authoritative Text with Biographical and Historical Contexts, Critical History, and Essays from Five Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. Ross C. Murfin. Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1996, 95.

Second Edition. Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism).

Notes to Conclusion.

1. Holmes's enthusiasm for an American alliance is made clear in Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor', 129.

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