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THE MONKEY IN THE LOOKING GLASS:

FAIRIES, FOLKLORE AND EVOLUTIONARY THEORY IN THE SEARCH FOR BRITAIN'S IMPERIAL SELF

by

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PROFESSOR CUMING

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Introduction

In his groundbreaking work of postcolonial theory, *Orientalism,* Edward Said puts forth the idea that imperial Europe asserted an identity by constructing the character of its colonized subjects. Said writes that his book tries to "show that European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (3). The object of this thesis is a related project, for it too is a search for imperial Britain's surrogate or underground self. Yet rather than positioning this search within the British colonies, this thesis takes as its context a land and people that were at once more intimate and more alien: the races and landscapes of Fairyland.

Fairies and the folklore surrounding them, has had a presence in English literature from its conception. Fairy lore threads in some capacity through such works as the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf* , the Middle English romance of Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, and the Elizabethan literature of Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare and Michael Drayton. The fairy presence in British literature between the Elizabethan age and William Blake's anticipation of the revival of fairy literature in the Romantic period was, as Katherine Briggs observes in her work, *The Fairies in English Tradition and Literature*, a "thread spun thinner" but not broken (153); after all there is even something of the fairy tradition in the sylphs of Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the Romantic Movement revived fairy tradition in British literature in a way that set the groundwork for the Victorian era's fascination with fairies and folklore. The fairies of the Romantic poets are amongst the best-remembered figures of Romantic literature and are included works such as John Keats' "Le Belle Femme Sans

Merci", "Lamia" and Samuel Coleridge's "Christabel". As the century progressed fairies and folk mythology continued to gain prominence in literature and expanded into other areas of Victorian culture as a common subject matter. One of the more bizarre cultural manifestations of fairy tradition is to be found in the highly ornate canvases of Victorian fairy painting, which often dealt with highly adult subject matter such opium addiction and sexuality. This odd genre of painting flourished in British art between the years 1840 and 1870 (Maas 11). Fairies also became a subject of Victorian theater as fairy operas and fairy plays—not to mention the ballet, which almost always took fairies and fairytales as its subject matter—became popular both on the continent and in Britain throughout the century.[1]

The power fairies held in Victorian psyche is not only evidenced in the variety of artistic disciplines, which claimed fairy tradition as genre marker of sorts, but fairies often appear in the margins of Victorian literature that falls well outside what could be

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[1] A short history of fairy opera and theater can be found in three essays: "Fairy Music" by John Warrack and "Shakespeare's Fairies in Victorian Criticism and Performance" by Russell Jackson, and "Fairies and the Stage" by Lionel Lambourne, all within the Royal Academy of the Arts publication of *Victorian Fairy Painting*. Fairy theater, like Victorian fairy painting, reveals an entire sphere of nineteenth century culture in which fairy tradition played a most important role. Lionel Lambourne's passages on early nineteenth-century ballet even suggest a link between the importance of the fairy subject matter in ballet and the innovation of en pointe technique. Lambourne writes:

> the innovation [of pointe] is traditionally credited to the dancer Amalia Brugnoli, who was certainly the first dancer portrayed on points as a fairy—in a lithograph of the ballet *Die Fee und der Ritter*, with music possibly by Albert Gyrowetz, performed first in Vienna in 1823 and subsequently in London in 1833 as *The Fairy and the Knight*. (49)

When perfected, en pointe technique is to give the effect of "aerial wieghtlessness" (Lambourne 49); it is little wonder that Romantic ballet throughout the century were often fairy stories.

considered a fairy literature—a term that I will delineate in the following section "Terminology and Sources". The allusions to fairies on the fringe of non-fairy literature suggests that fairies held a deep, pervasive power in the Victorian imagination. Carole G. Silver, in her work *Strange and Secret People: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness*, writes that there is a "valuable subtext beneath Mary Garth's telling of 'Rumpelstiltskin' at Mr. Vincy's New Year's party in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* . . . [the] allusion suggests that fairy lore and fairy faith penetrated even the so-called realist tradition" (5). Silver also argues that "few scholars have been aware of the importance of fairy lore" in Victorian consciousness and she sets the "attempt to recontextualize" fairy lore within Victorian social history as one of the objects of her work (4). This thesis takes Silver's objective as a model and in a much smaller way attempts to situate the fairy folklore and literature from the Victorian era within the context of greater social and political ideologies of the age, specifically those pertaining to national identity, imperial power and race.

One of the elements which gave ideologies of imperialism and national identity a particularly strong presence in fairy literature of the Victorian era was the development of a field scholarship surrounding folklore and oral tradition. The nineteenth-century interest in studying and recording folklore began on the continent with German Romantic nationalism and the Brothers Grimm, whose work was translated and immensely popular in Britain after the 1820's (Naithani 1; Silver 10).[2] Inspired by the folktale collections

[2] France actually had a tradition of folktale collections, which were compiled in the seventeenth century, the most notable collectors being Madam D'Aulnoy and Charles Perrault. However, as Sadhana Naithani *The Story-Time of the British Empire* (10) suggests, it was alongside the Romantic nationalist movement and the

imported from the continent, and the edicts of Romantic nationalism, Britain created its own body of scholarship inscribing the fairy folklore native to the British Isles. The importance of Romantic nationalism to the development of fairy and folklore scholarship is the basis of Sadhana Naithani's assertion in *The Story-Time of the British Empire* that the collecting and recording of folklore was a discipline 'whose emergence is understood in folklore theory as rooted in the context of the building of modern nations in Europe" (1). In short, the compilation and scholarship of a body of folklore was one of the ways Britain and other European nations wrote their cultural identity into being. Thus, as a subject in British literature, fairies or fairyland always carried a subtext of national identity.

However, Britain's creation, or as the Victorian mindset might have it, excavation of national character through the scholarship of fairy lore and folk literature, was in more than one way quite problematic. Fairy folklore found its strongest traditions in Victorian Britain's "Celtic fringe": Scotland, Ireland and Wales. England did have an oral tradition concerning fairies and Fairyland, and it shared almost all of its features with the traditions found in Scotland, Ireland and Wales, yet the volume and living nature of folk tradition was much stronger in the Celtic areas. Ireland and Wales also had their own mythological traditions of fairy races—the Tuatha De Danann and the Fir Bolg of Ireland and the Tylwyth Teg of Wales—whose body of folklore was far more substantial and developed than narratives of changelings, brownies (household fairies), or goblins found in the rest of Britain. The notion of gleaning a national identity from folk tradition meant identifying

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much-admired work of Brother Grimm that the nineteenth century field of British folklore really began to take shape.

with one of imperial England's most troublesome colonies, Ireland, and a people who were consistently characterized as a degenerate race. In the figure of Ireland, and to a lesser degree the rest of Britain's Celtic fringe, the nationalistic project of fairy folklore studies was haunted by the notion of an uncomfortably close colonial "other". The problematic nature of deriving a British nationalism from a strongly Celtic folklore revealed an ambiguity between the imperial self and the colonized "other" that brought to light the slippage and artificiality between categories of cultural heritage, national identity and imperial authority.

The Victorian and Romantic fascination in fairies and folklore also brought distinctly anti-industrial sentiments to much of its literature and scholarship. Keightley prefaces his work, *A World Guide to Gnomes, Fairies, Elves and other Little People* (originally printed as *Fairy Mythology* 1850 and 1870), with defense of his scholarship:

> The legends will probably fade fast away from the popular memory; it is not likely that any one will relate those which I have given over again; and it therefore seems more probable that this volume may in future be reprinted, with notes and additions. For human nature will ever remain unchanged; the love of gain and of material enjoyments, omnipotent as it appears to be at present, will never totally extinguish the higher and purer aspirations of mind; and there will always be those, however limited in number, who will desire to know how the former dwellers of earth though, felt and acted. (Preface vi)

Keightley sets his folkloric scholarship against the material forces of the rapidly industrializing and modernizing age. He characterizes the collecting of oral fairy and folk traditions as an attempt to conserve and record a way of life that seemed as though it

would inevitably disappear in the near future. The connection between Fairyland and nostalgia for a way life that was fading away due to the industrialization of Britain, appears as a central theme in many of the texts that will be discussed in this thesis. One of the questions this thesis asks is how the pre-industrial nostalgia found in the fairy literature of the Victorian era might reflect an author's belief in the edicts of progress and industry, which were essential to building and sustaining the empire.

My analysis found that these texts show a great deal of skepticism towards the virtues of industrialization, modernization and the edict of inevitable progress. These sentiments united with the problematic slippage between national heritage, colonized and colonizing races, and imperial authority, evident in the scholarship of British folklore, created a body of literature that was inherently concerned with characterizing a national self, but far from confident in the imperial authority of that identity. The texts that I have chosen to analyze—Charles Kingsley's *Water-Babies*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Kenneth Grahame's *The Golden Age*, George MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*—reveal the anxieties behind Britain's claim to imperial power. In the works by Kingsley, MacDonald and Brontë, fairies often take the role of an alien, degenerate, and often explicitly colonized race that either threatens to contaminate the British race, or reveals a degenerate racialized double already present in the British self. The works of Carroll, Grahame, and Burnett are steeped in isolationist politics, and while they do not feature depictions of alien races, the locked and walled gardens of their Fairylands are equally suggestive of a fear of contamination. Thus the British identity that is proposed by these works is not altogether comfortable with its position of imperial

rule; rather it reveals a sector of Victorian culture that did not look confidently upon its role abroad, and who was anxiously searching inward for the stability promised by a Fairyland that appeared to be essentially English, and impermeable to the possibly degenerate influence of other races. It was also a vision of a landscape that was likely lost to a nation that had given itself to the industrialization and globalization of an empire.

Terminology and Sources

Throughout my thesis I have employed a set of terms—Victorian fairy literature, fairy tradition, fairy lore or fairy folklore, fairy mythology, fairy stories, fairy tales, and Fairyland narratives—which need some explanation. There is not a definitive genre of Victorian fairy literature in the same way that there is a genre of Victorian painting or fairy opera, and the abundance of terminology is in part due to an attempt to navigate the somewhat complicated way in which fairy tradition intersects with Victorian literature. In my use of this terminology, I have tried to remain consistent with my two main sources of secondary research concerning the fairy tradition: Carole G. Silver's, *Strange and Secret People: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness*, and Katherine Briggs', *The Fairies in English Tradition and Literature*.

I use the term "fairy tradition" to denote anything concerning fairies or Fairyland, from literary depictions of fairies to folkloric anecdotes. The term ''Fairy" when capitalized refers to Fairyland, i.e. the "realm of Fairy". It can also be used to describe something that is not necessarily supernatural, but has the feeling of the supernatural as if it were derived from Fairyland; for an example it might be said of a person that they

"have the look of Fairy about them." The terms "fairy lore" or "fairy folklore" refer explicitly to folkloric anecdotes involving "real" encounters with fairies or Fairyland. Fairy lore and fairy folklore might include commonly held beliefs about the nature and character of certain fairy creatures, protections against the fairies, or methods of exorcising the fairy influence from a household. In Chapter Three, I talk at length about the "changeling narrative," which is one of the most prevalent strains of fairy folklore surviving in the Victorian era; much of the material I analyze in that chapter is taken from "true" case studies of changeling children. The term "fairy mythology" is used to refer to the stories surrounding the Tuatha De Danann and the Fir Bolg of Ireland, or the Twyleth Teg, or Fair Folk of Wales. Unlike the folkloric anecdotes about encounters with changelings or fairy creatures like goblins and brownies, the Tuatha De Danann, and the Twyleth Teg, are part of a consistently older and more connected body of stories. I use the term "fairy literature" or "Victorian fairy literature" to refer to any Victorian fiction that features characters who are depicted as fairies and carry a supernatural element. I have, whenever possible, tried to avoid the term "fairy tale" as it refers to the continental folktale collections of the Brothers Grimm, Charles Perrault and Hans Christian Anderson, and I am more interested in examining how the texts employ specifically British folklore. However, writers such as Charles Kingsley and George MacDonald saw themselves as writing their own "fairy tales". To avoid confusion with the fairy tales of the continent folklore I have typically replaced Kingsley and MacDonald's claim to the term "fairy tales" with "fairy stories".

Lastly, I use the term "Fairyland narratives" to denote either tales taking place in an other-world, typically named Fairyland, such as Charles Kingsley's *Water-Babies* and

Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, or a trend in nineteenth-century children's literature that nostalgically looks to a time, or landscape, that was essentially English and engendered with a magic edenic quality. The texts in this former definition include Kenneth Grahame's, *The Golden Age* and Frances Hodgson Burnett's, *The Secret Garden*. While neither Grahame nor Burnett's novels portray their landscapes as inhabited by fairies, or as part of Fairyland directly, the connection between the Fairylands of nineteenth-century children's literature and Grahame's Arcadia, or Burnett's secret garden, is a significant and well-established link recognized by both Jackie Wullschlager in her work, *Inventing Wonderland*, and Humphrey Carpenter in his work, *Secret Gardens: A study of the Golden Age of Children's Literature*. Grahame's Arcadia and Burnett's garden have found their way into this thesis because they share and develop a political sensibility, and landscape, that is typical of Victorian depictions of Fairyland.

The majority of the primary sources referred to in my thesis are of the children's literature genre. The connection between fairy literature and children's literature is one of the most interesting developments imposed upon fairy tradition by the Victorians, considering that the fairies of earlier periods such as Keats' "Le Belle Femme Sans Merci" or "Lamia" are markedly adult. It is not until the Victorian age that fairies start to become especially associated with children. In part this can be explained by the fact that the genre of children's literature itself did not flourish until the mid-nineteenth century.[3]

[3] There was literature written specifically for children throughout the nineteenth century but it is not until 1860 that the first wave of "Golden Age" children's literature is written, setting the tone and level of artistic and intellectual merit expected of children's literature of that age. Humphrey Carpenter, *Secret Gardens: a*

However the special connection between fairy lore and children's literature is constructed through the very political Victorian ideologies surrounding childhood. J. R. R. Tolkien in the essay "On Fairy-Stories" (1947) writes:

> the common opinion seems to be that there is a natural connection between the minds of children and fairy-stories, of the same order as the connection between children's bodies and mile. I think this is an error [. . .] actually, the association of children and fairy-stories is an accident of our domestic history. Fairy-stories have in the modern lettered world been relegated to the "nursery," as shabby or old-fashioned furniture is relegated to the play-room, primarily because the adults do not want it, and do not mind if it is misused. (34)

Tolkien's statement is coming from a mid-twentieth century perceptive evidently embittered about the relegated position of fairy literature in the children's literature canon. The idea that fairy lore and fairy literature has a special connection to the minds of children was an notion established by Victorian ideologies that drew connection between folk traditions, "primitive" states of cultures, and children. A more in depth analysis of how this ideology came into being and how it played out within the children's literature of the era becomes the topic of the Chapter One.

Lastly, it is necessary to briefly acknowledge the important contextual role that the Darwinian theory of evolution plays in this thesis. The purpose of much of this thesis has been to situate Victorian fairy lore and literature within the context of imperial

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study of Golden Age and Children's literature, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985 (Preface, x).

ideologies of race and national identity. After the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1859, it was impossible to dissociate these ideologies from theories of evolution. Thus, as a way of organizing my discussions of the intersections between Victorian fairy tradition, and colonial ideologies of race and imperial power, each chapter takes a particular imperial ideology that was constructed, or perpetuated by evolutionary theory, and discusses it in relation to the Victorian fairy tradition. Chapter One will deal with the theory of recapitulation: the idea that the evolution of the species is emulated by the development of an individual within that species. Chapter Two and Chapter Three will both explore Victorian anxieties surrounding theories of racial degeneracy: Chapter Two will approach the topic through the depictions of goblins, and the notion of a deformed, degenerating fairy race and Chapter Three will discuss how anxieties of racial degeneracy informed the changeling tradition in folklore and literature. Chapter Four will discuss the idea of anachronistic space, the notion of traveling back in evolutionary time as one travels to the "primitive" spaces of the colonies. This last chapter will examine how the Fairyland literature of the second half of the nineteenth century provided an alternative to the adventure into the primordial colonies, offering instead a journey into edenic, yet domestic, Fairylands where time often stands still.

Chapter One

"The Childhood of Man": Constructions of race and colonial politics through Children's Literature

One of the most pervasive metaphors used to explain the evolution of species in the Victorian era was the theory of recapitulation. The theory of recapitulation was the idea that the great yet gradual transformation of an individual of a species, from embryo to adulthood, emulated the evolutionary development of the entire species. Gillian Beer, in her work, *Darwin's Plots*, observes that during the eighteenth century evolution actually referred to individual development, and it was not until 1830 that the term was borrowed to refer to the development of a species (11). Thus the analogy between individual development and species evolution was present from the outset and built into the very language of Darwinian theory. It was also a very attractive metaphor because it condensed species evolution, which was vast, speculative, and potentially alienating because of the remote, random character of natural selection, into something that was tangible and familiar. On a scientific level Beer notes that the parallel between species evolution and an individual's development had real experimental value in the minds of many Victorian scientists because it suggested that embryonic and early childhood development offered visual and experimental evidence for earlier phases of a species'

evolutionary development (99). Yet the analogy between individual and species evolution was also very powerful because it softened some of the more radical and destabilizing implications of Darwinian theory, particularly when it came to the application of evolution to mankind. For an example, evolutionary theory removed mankind from the center of the creation myth; mankind was no longer "the supreme example of God's design" (Finchman 22), and one of the unsettling implications of this idea, was the realization that man might be little different from zebras, whales, or flies—all species and individuals were the rather chance result of random mutations, and the remote law of natural selection. While the analogy between individual and species development could not return mankind to the privileged status of God's "supreme example," it could reinstate the individual to the center of the evolutionary narrative, awarding the individual, and their development, weight and importance in the grand scheme of evolutionary change.

As one might imagine, the parallels between individual and species development gave new interest to the genre of Bildungsroman and fairy stories.[4] These tales were concerned with the development of a child, both as their subject matter and their *raison d'etre*, and thus could potentially carry significance for the entire species of mankind. The genre of Bildungroman and fairy stories also opened a door to religious allegory, and lessons in morality and sociability within the subject of evolutionary development; the narrative of a child coming into being provided a medium through which mankind's

[4] Gillian Beer makes the observation that interest in märchen, fairy-tale, and the Bildungsroman were fueled by ideas of growth and transformation, which were brought under new light and interest with the popularization of evolutionary theory (97). Beer, however, develops this argument in a slightly different direction than I have, emphasizing the way these stories became a space to speculate about miraculous transformations and bizarre hybrid creatures, which were given new life by the theory of evolution (97-98).

evolution could be imbued with the lessons of religious, moral and social development traditional to the children's literature genre.

Charles Kingsley's 1893 children's novel, *Water-Babies*, provides a prime example of the moral and religious development of an individual inscribed within the greater context of species evolution. In the novel, *Water-Babies,* a morally degenerate chimney sweep, Tom, is given a second chance at development. He is returned to the primordial element of water and given a baby's form. In this evolutionarily low form, Tom is educated by three fairies, Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid, Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby and Madam Carey, who each help him "evolve" into an adult. In a particularly inventive move by Kingsley, the three fairies, Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid, Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby and Madam Carey, represent a maternal, Christianized personification of natural selection. Madam Carey is the fairy who develops new species. However, Madam Carey creates species not as a "creator-god" might, by dreaming up and cobbling together specific animals; instead, Madam Carey works like natural selection, as a remote force that "makes new species make themselves" (Kingsley 220). The fairies Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid and Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby are Madam Carey's counterparts responsible for Tom's, and the rest of mankind's, development. Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid and Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby work by a law of moral causality that exerts punishment and reward regardless of their empathy for their charges. Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid and Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby's care is mechanistic and remote as it transforms the body to reflect a person's moral development.

Kingsley's fairies, Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid and Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby, represent quite a loose appropriation of the theory of natural selection; yet they reveal the

creative and myth-producing potential writers and social thinkers found in the analogy between individual and species evolution. Kingsley's novel reveals how the Bildungsroman was used to blend already present social and religious values with evolutionary theory. By relating Tom's development to mankind's evolution, Kingsley is able to reconstruct the frighteningly random force of evolutionary theory and natural selection around a moral system of rewards and punishments. In doing so, Kingsley retained some of the comfort and sense of cosmic order, which was lost when evolutionary theory threw into doubt the emotionally present and active creator-god of Christianity.

Kingsley develops the idea of evolution driven by an individual's morality in an anecdote surrounding Tom's agreement to journey to the "Other-end of Nowhere," where he is to save the soul of his old master Mr. Grimes. Tom complains that though he will go on the journey, he does not want to. In response, Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid relays a lesson of both evolution, and individual, moral development through the story of an imaginary race, the doasyoulikes. The doasyoulikes were an early race of people who, having met all their material needs, refuse to work. Kingsley's doasyoulikes show no interest in scientific inquiry, industry, or invention of any sort. As a result, they slowly lose what little civilization they had, and their human form until, devolved to the state of gorillas, they meet M. Du Chaillu and are shot in the name of science. The lesson of the doasyoulikes is one of hard work, which is aimed at developing an individual, Tom, into an active, productive member of society. Yet, Kingsley posits the anecdote of the doasyoulikes as a lesson in evolutionary development as well, and thus, the development

of moral, hardworking individuals becomes a matter of species evolutionary, with human civilization at stake.

The story of the race of doasyoulikes also underscores the fact that in the face of Britain's growing empire, any attempt to reconfigure evolutionary theory around existing social or religious values undoubtedly had a political element. The application of evolutionary theory to Man assumes a kinship amongst all nations and races that had to be navigated within the hierarchal relationship of Britain and its colonies. The theories which drew parallels between individual and species evolution in particular were impossible to disassociate from colonial theories of race hierarchy and Britain's moral right, if not obligation, to colonial expansion. Enlightenment philosophy had already identified non-Western people as living "in eternal infancy" and "waiting only to receive from [Europe] the means to become civilized" (Condorcet 68). Thus the theory of the individual child's development as a metaphor for mankind's evolution, existed within a political discourse that already infantilized colonized people. Evolution entered as the scientific proof of the colonies' child-like state, which was in need of discipline, and adult "European" administration.

The supposed developmental infancy of colonized people created an evolutionary hierarchy along the lines of imperial power—lines which were categorized through racial difference. As Martin Finchman observes, with the union of evolutionism and politics, "the Victorian public was treated to a rich diet of books on scientific racism," making evolutionism one of the "more potent ingredients in an edifice of racist ideology" (115). In an attempt to solidify the evolutionarily low status of troublesome colonies, representations of the simian features in Irish and Africans "races" were common to

publications as varied as pseudo-scientific studies, punch cartoons, advertisements, and children's literature, throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century (Finchman 115-16; McClintock 50; 56; 216). This created a popular culture that inconsistently conflated children, simians and colonized people in complicity with racist ideologies.

Kingsley's characterization of the doasyoulikes is implicated within the Victorian ideologies of racial hierarchy, and this popularized conflation of children, simians and "savages". The doasyoulikes' indifference to the values of hard work, surplus production, and scientific enquiry, dooms them to become morally and evolutionarily compromised. Kingsley's parable of the doasyoulikes assumes Western, industrial values as the impetus for evolutionary progress. Even if one reads the doasyoulikes' thwarted evolution as racially neutral (something that I am not sure can be done) Kingsley's imaginary race still operates within the hierarchal concept of evolution, which favors western Europe and the economic forces behind imperialism, and casts anything else as dangerously near higher primates on the scale of civilization. Not coincidently, Tom's transition into adulthood is marked by his competence in the realm of science, industry and empire building. At the end of the novel, Tom loses his baby form to become a "great man of science [who can] plan railroads, and steam engines, and electric telegraphs, and rifled guns, and so forth;" (Kingsley 270). In other words, Tom becomes a proponent of industrialization and a producer of tools of military, and by extension, colonial domination.

It is also not coincidental that the morally misguided Tom at the beginning of the novel, is frequently described as a "little black ape" (Kingsley 21). Furthermore, the descriptions of Tom's monkey-like form make abundant use of the associations of cleanliness and Christian morality with the color white, and the associations of blackness

with dirt and immorality. Tom feels shame for his dirty exterior and unchristian upbringing only when he catches a reflection of himself in Ellie's Bedroom, after which Ellie becomes a friend and moral guide. Tom comes down the wrong chimney into Ellie's bedroom meeting the following scene:

> He saw [. . .] a washing-stand, with ewers and basins, and soap and brushes, and towels, and a large bath full of clean water—what a heap of things for washing [. . .] And then looking toward the bed he saw [. . .] Under the snow-white coverlet, upon the snow-white pillow, lay the most beautiful little girl that Tom had ever seen. Her cheeks were almost as white s the pillow, and her hair was like threads of gold spread all about the bed [. . .] No she cannot be dirty. She never could have been dirty thought Tom [. . .] And looking around he suddenly saw, standing close to him a little ugly, black, ragged figure, with bleared eyes and grinning white teeth. He turned on it angrily. What did such a little black ape want in that sweet young lady's room? And behold it was himself, reflected in a great mirror the like of which Tom had never seen before. And Tom, for the first time in his life, found out he was dirty. (Kingsley 20-22)

The theory of man's descent from higher primates, religious motifs of baptism, and the aesthetic values of racial prejudice, all collide in the moment of Tom's self-realization. The cleanliness and moral purity symbolized by the white sheets is purposefully confused with the privilege of white skin. Meanwhile, Tom's sooty exterior channels a highly racialized language of evolutionary underdevelopment. The passage even goes so far as to fetishize the white bed sheets and the wide array of bathing implements with its minute description.

In her work, *Imperial Leather*, Anne McClintock analyzes the pro-colonial soap campaigns of the latter half of the nineteenth century. McClintock observes that:

> Four fetishes recur ritualistically in soap advertising: soap, white clothing (especially aprons), mirrors and monkeys. A typical Pears' advertisement figures a black child and a white child together in a bathroom. The Victorian bathroom is the innermost sanctuary of domestic hygiene and by extension the private temple of public regeneration. (214)

The similarities between the Pears' soap campaigns and the passage from Kingsley's novel (which happens to predate the height of Pears' advertising) are uncanny. The moment of Tom's self-recognition carries the same fetishes of mirrors, monkeys, white cloth and washing; and it holds the same imagery of a white child and a black child meeting within the sanctified bathroom. McClintock's *Imperial Leather* argues that it was through these fetishized images of soap, bathrooms and white linen that Europe claimed imperial power through an edict of domesticity (32). McClintock explains that until the 1960's "the verb to domesticate also carried as one of its meanings the action 'to civilize'"(35). McClintock also outlines the etymological link between "domesticate" and "dominate, which derives from *dominus*, lord of the *domum*, the home" (35). As McClintock argues, the ideal of domesticity represented a relationship of authoritarian power and was also a mark of civilization; domesticity was thus an extremely potent ideology for imperial domination.[5] Significantly, domestication is exactly what

[5] McClintock introduces her analysis of domestic ideology and colonial power in the section "Domesticity and Commodity Racism" pp. 31-36. McClintock's theories of domesticity and the colonies are more extensive than I have been able to discuss in this

Kingsley's novel, and the Bildungsroman accomplishes for the meeting of evolutionary theory with colonial power structures. The idea that the development of a single boy might emulate the development of the entire species, became an incredibly powerful political narrative because it asserted that the supposed inherent racial superiority and evolutionary favoritism, which founded much of colonial thought, were really matters of proper education, habits of personal hygiene, and good discipline, or any of the other values one might find in a well administered nursery. Age-old social lessons that one might deliver to a child, such as edicts of hard work, are given new life and imperial authority through the metaphor of personal development as species evolution. Kingsley's novel reveals how the Bildungsroman worked to place colonized people in an evolutionary infancy, and in doing so cast Europe in the authoritarian role of nursemaid/governess to the "savage" world.

However, Kingsley's *Water-Babies* marks only the beginning of what would become Britain's "Golden Age" of children's literature.[6] Not unexpectedly, as the genre developed its relationship to metaphors of evolution, childhood and imperial power changed as well. "Golden Age" children's literature took a turn toward the fantastic (Carpenter 16). The analogy between child, animal, and "savage" remained present in the genre, but as the century progressed, what exactly that analogy signified in relation to Britain's right to imperial power became far more opaque.

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chapter. The main body of the material I have chosen to leave out is the analysis that ties together domesticity, colonial power structures and Victorian gender roles.

[6] Humphrey Carpenter, in his work, *Secret Gardens: a study of the Golden Age of Children's Literature*, defines the 'Golden Age' as a wave of English children's books written between 1860's and 1930's whose popularity and style would set the tone for the genre of children's literature (Preface x).

Children's literature throughout the latter half of the century was, like Kingsley's novel, interested in questions of authority, and the proper education and development of children. However, many of the canonical works of the Golden Age of children's literature show a great deal of skepticism toward traditional systems of authority, and register adulthood as a loss rather than a developmental gain. The Queen of Hearts from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is perhaps the best-remembered satire of Victorian order and authority in Golden Age children's literature. She represents the authority of adulthood and state, rendering dangerously ridiculous. John Tenniel, the original illustrator of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, depicts the Queen of Hearts as grotesque, overweight and strikingly middle-aged. Alice is coerced into a game of croquet where she is able to witness the Queen of Hearts' violent temper:

> [Alice] heard the Queen's voice in the distance, screaming with passion. She had already heard her sentence three players to be executed for having missed their turns, and she did not like the look of things at all, as the game was in such confusion that she never knew whether it was her turn or not. (126)

Her rule is brutal, petty, without reason, but also chaotically impotent as the croquet game is left in perpetual confusion and disorganization. Her loud, domineering character negates female domesticity, and the private order it should instill, while at the same time, the Queen of Hearts emasculates the men of state who surround her. In short, Carroll's Queen discredits all the systems of social authority and order: public (masculine) authority of state, domestic (feminine) order, the powers of reason, justice, efficiency, good administration and adulthood.

In the light of the cultural narratives that tie Britain's right to colonial rule to its evolutionary "adulthood", *Alice and Wonderland's* pervasive distrust of authority reveals Carroll's characterization of the Queen of Hearts to be, if not directly anti-imperial, at least an expression of deep disbelief in Britain's adulthood of civilization. A discomfort with adulthood and all it stood for politically and socially in terms of civilization, reason, domesticity, authority and even imperialism, came to dominate much of the Golden Age literature. Kenneth Grahame's late Victorian novel *The Golden Age* uses an explicitly subverted colonial dynamic to nostalgically construct a childhood of freedom and antiauthoritarian whimsy.

In the Prologue of *The Golden Age*, Grahame's narrator reflects upon a childhood spent with indifferent aunts and uncles, in language immersed in colonial references.

> Looking back to those days of old, ere the gate shut to behind me, I can see now that to children with a proper equipment of parents these things would have worn a different aspect. But to those whose nearest were aunts and uncles, a special attitude of mind may be allowed. They treated us, indeed, with kindness enough as to the needs of the flesh, but after that with indifference (and indifference, as I recognize, the result of a certain stupidity), and therewith the commonplace conviction that your child is merely animal. At a very early age I remember realizing in a quite impersonal and kindly way the existence of that stupidity, and its tremendous influence in the world; while there grew up in me, as in the parallel case of Caliban upon Setebos, a vague sense of a ruling power, willful, and freakish, and prone to the practice of vagaries—'just choosing so'; as, for instance, the giving of authority over us to these hopeless and incapable creatures,

> when it might far more reasonably have been given to ourselves over them. These elders, or betters by a trick of chance, commanded no respect, but only a certain blend of envy—of their good luck—and pity—for their inability to make use of it. (3-4)

Strikingly, the narrator aligns his childhood self with Caliban, Shakespeare's victim of colonialism. The narrator's observation that the aunts and uncles saw children as "merely animals" also seems to refer to the slippage between child, animal, and colonized people, which was so central to the imperial discourse of racial hierarchy. This point is emphasized by the observation that the adult's ignorance of children's humanity had "tremendous influence in the world," which becomes suggestive of the greater political implication at work in the passages' child versus adult dynamic. However, more compelling still is Grahame's portrait of the "colonizing" force of adults as incompetent, wasteful, ignorant, and authoritative by chance rather than natural superiority. In a strongly anti-imperial sentiment, Grahame's authority figures are cast as incapable, illegitimate parents to their consequently unruly childlike subjects.

Grahame's *The Golden Age* is a nostalgic reconstruction of childhood that brilliantly reveals the politics at stake in Victorian ideas of child development. Grahame takes the metaphor of England as "parent" to her "childlike" colonies and reconfigures it to reveal disillusionment in Imperial expansion and express doubt in Britain's status as a "civilized" or civilizing force. Furthermore, Grahame's *The Golden Age* underscores the lasting influence of the theory of evolutionary recapitulation upon Victorian conceptions of civilization, of racial superiority, and the notion of Britain's moral obligation toward

colonization. The movement of these ideas through children's literature across the second half of the nineteenth century emphasizes the pervasive character of colonial prejudices and evolutionary theory. However, the development of the children's literature genre also reveals how colonial constructions of race hierarchy or Britain's evolutionary adulthood were far from static or univocal in British thought, but rather, in spaces such as Fairyland, open to interpretation, to challenge, and overlade with doubt and disillusionment.

Chapter Two

Goblins:
Theories of Degeneracy and the Myth of a "civilized" race

The union of evolutionary theory and colonial racism was a double-edged sword when it came to building an empire. On one hand it produced the theories of racial hierarchy upon which much of Britain's imperial expansion was justified; yet, while evolutionary racism carried the assumption that the British imperialist was at the pinnacle of civilization and evolutionary development, Darwinian theory itself, provided no guarantee that this assumption was true. There was also no guarantee that the now civilized British race could sustain its evolutionary progress. In fact, many Victorians saw a frighteningly degenerative possible future ahead of them in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The evolutionarily privileged middle-class, which emerged economically and socially powerful through its influence in industry and colonial markets, conceived of its progress by characterizing anyone not quite adherent to middle-class British society, and the races of the colonies, as degenerate. Anne McClintock argues this point effectively, asserting that:

> The degenerate classes, defined as departures from the normal human type, were as necessary to the self-definition of the middle class as the idea of degeneration was to the idea of progression, for the distance along the path of progress traveled

> by some portions of humanity could be measured only be the distance others lagged behind. (46)

Degeneracy alluded to a vast range of "abnormal" types, from the insane and criminal, to self-styled artists, writers, and mystics, to the "primitive races" including the Jewish and the Irish. Theories of degeneracy claimed to find physical and mental similarities between these disparate groups, but what it really demonstrated was the way theories of evolutionary hierarchy were adapted to almost any group that showed what might be considered threatening, anti-social behavior. It constructed a link between the "uncivilized" conditions of colonized races and "anti-civilized"—as in anti-social—forces of criminality, class insurgency, social upheaval, or even free-thinking. In short, degeneration reconfigured anything that might be termed as social unrest as a biological matter of race. The degenerate impulse, whether it was bohemianism or lower-class insurgency, was represented as something that could be passed along biologically through generations producing new degraded races within a once healthy branch of civilization. Max Nordau in his 1892 "medical" study, *Degeneration*, explicates this fact:

> This deviation [degeneracy] even if, at the outset, it was ever so slight contained transmissible elements of such a nature that anyone bearing in him the germs becomes more and more incapable of fulfilling his functions in the world; and mental progress already checked in his own person finds itself menaced also in his descendants. (16)

The theory of degeneracy was a nightmare-like development of Victorian racism. It took the developmental hierarchy that imagined colonized people as savage, criminal, or

childlike by virtue of their "stunted" evolution, and it imagined Europe's own social unrest and criminality as a prophecy and proof of a similar racial decline. There was a resulting similarity in the language used to describe colonized subjects, and the way Victorians conceptualized degenerate classes within "civilized" Britain. The urban working-class in particular was thought of as a degenerate sector of society, and was consequently described in the language of colonial racism as uncivilized, primitive and lawless (McClintock 120). Meanwhile, the working-class neighborhoods of cities were equated to the uncharted, dangerous wilderness of colonized lands, which were bravely "explored" by the philanthropic travelers of the middle-class.[7]

Fears of degeneracy amongst the urban working-class and the language of colonial racism that followed, are featured strongly in Charles Kingsley's *Water-Babies*. Tom's initial state of moral degeneracy is a product of his upbringing amongst the chimney sweeps of the urban poor. The vices of his immoral state are inherited from his urban peers. He is a heathen because he has never been taught to say his prayers; he aspires to be a chimney-master who beats his apprentices, because that is the only figure

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[7] McClintock provides a very interesting analysis of the urban explorer-cum-philanthropist. She provides a reading of texts by early industrial writers and social explorers, such as Henry Mayhew, John Hollingshead, George Goodwin, and Charles Manby Smith, which I would have liked to spend more time researching myself, she writes:

> These were the decades of the social explorers, when middle- and upper-middle-class men ventured into the terra incognita of Britain's working-class areas, striking the pose of explorers embarking on voyages into unknown lands. As Godwin put it, these men set out to 'brave the risks of fever and other injuries to health and the contact of men and women often as lawless as the Arab or Kaffir. Drawing on popular images of imperial travel these urban explorers returned from their urban jaunts with a primitive accumulation of "facts" and "statistic" about the "races" living in their midst. (120)

of authority he has known; and in a final depiction of the urban poor's mismanagement of their children, Kingsley notes that Tom is the jolliest boy in the whole town when he is allowed a pull at the leavings of his master's beer (1-3). The work of a chimney sweep evokes the smoke and dirt of industrialized urban-spaces, strongly implicating industrialization and urbanization in Tom's soiled state. Kingsley reveals that Tom lives in a "great town in the North country," presumably one of the new industrial centers that developed in the north, and thus Kingsley even more firmly situates Tom's degeneracy against the background of rapid industrialization. Tom's work as a chimney sweep also gives him a soot-blackened complexion that recasts his race in a way emblematic of how Britain's urban poor was also recast in the racial category of "primitive" developmental by the theories of degeneration. Kingsley's racially ambiguous hero recalls the racism of the era, which attempted to find phenotypical similarities between the "degenerate races" of criminals, the Irish, the urban poor, and the supposedly evolutionarily under-developed Africans. Against the back drop of evolution and degeneracy Tom's allegorically blackened skin takes on a more literal reading that dramatizes the way social unrest and supposed criminality of the urban poor— and other degenerate classes—became highly racialized ideas.

Theories of degeneracy took the colonial anxieties of childlike races stunted in their evolution, and re-inscribed it upon the British populace. Theories of degeneracy brought colonial racism unto a home territory, and it imagined evolutionary decline within the privileged British race. Degeneracy carries with it the fear of pollution—the suspicion that the evolutionary decline that marked "savage" races, and of which had infected artists, mystics and urban working class, could encroach even further upon the

British race, and infect the respectable and the civilized. Thus there is an element to the middle-class fascination in theories of degeneracy that was anxiously self-reflexive in that its main concern was not classifying "other" classes or races as inferior and degenerate, but rather it was involved in contemplating the possibility of degeneration within its own class and race. Theories of degeneration were very much projections of the middle-class' fear of decline and racial impurity as the middle-class entered a position of authority at home and abroad.

The self-reflexive nature of middle-class anxieties surrounding theories of degeneration becomes quite evident in the Bildungsromane and fairy stories of the age. In Kingsley's *Water-Babies*, Tom's degenerate beginnings and his struggle to evolve progressively from water baby to adulthood, acts as an exemplary tale, not for chimney sweeps, but for upper-middle class children. At the end of his novel, Kingsley makes it clear that though his child readers have not been born among the degenerate urban poor as Tom was, evolutionary digression is still a fate that could await them. As a moral added to the end of his novel, Kingsley whimsically imagines that efts[8] are devolved water-babies, but seemingly playful analogy serves a way of addressing a fear of degeneration that Kingsley takes quite seriously.

> Efts are nothing else but the water-babies who are stupid and dirty, and will not learn their lessons and keep themselves clean; and, therefore (as comparative anatomists will tell you fifty years hence though they are not learned enough to tell you now), their skulls grow flat, their jaws grow out, and their brains grow small, and their tails grow long, and they lose all their ribs (which I am sure you

[2] Eft is a term applied to "a small lizard of lizard-like animal"; commonly refers to newts. ("eft, n.1". Oxford English Dictionary Online)

> would not like to do), and their skins grow dirty and spotted [. . .] you should pity them, and be kind to them, and hope that some day they will wake up, and be ashamed of their nasty, dirty, lazy, stupid life, and try to amend and become something better once more. For, perhaps, if they do so, then after 379,423 years, 9 months, 13 days, 2 hours and 21 minutes (for aught that appears to the contrary), if they work very hard and wash very hard all that time, their brains may grow bigger, and their jaws grow smaller, and their ribs come back, and their tails, wither off, and they will turn into water-babies again, and perhaps after that into land-babies; and after that perhaps into grown men [. . .] Meanwhile, do you [*sic*] learn your lessons, and thank God that you have plenty of cold water to wash in; and wash in it too, like a true Englishman. (272)

Barring the growth of a tail and the loss of their ribs, the transformation Kingsley describes of the water-baby into an eft, not coincidentally, resembles the attributes that Victorian scientists thought were enhanced in degenerate races—a smaller brain size, a flatter skull and a protruding jaw were amongst the slue of characteristics that were purported to mark a race's under-developed status.[9] However, the focus of Kingsley's

[9] Anne McClintock explains the basic theories and history of this type of scientific racism—she writes:

> Francis Galton (1822-1911), pioneer statistician and founder of the eugenics movement, and Paul Broca, clinical surgeon and founder of the Anthropological society of Paris (1859) inspired other scientists who followed them in the vocation of measuring racial worth off the geometry of the human body. To the earlier criterion of cranial capacity as the primary measure of racial and sexual ranking was now added a welter of new "scientific" criteria: the length of and shape of the head, protrusions of the jaw, and distance between the peak and the head and brow, flatheadedness, a "snouty" profile [. . .] The features of the face spelled out the character of the race. (50)

anxiety regarding degeneration, and the focus of the moral, rests with the middle-class child reader rather than the eft-cum-degenerate subject. While relating to the horror of physical degeneration, such as the abnormal growth of the jaw and the loss of the ribs, Kingsley's narrator interjects as a cautionary aside that these are transformations that the reader would surely not like to undergo himself. Through such an interjection Kingsley refocuses the drama of potential degeneration upon the middle-class child. Kingsley also attributes the eft's degeneration to the same sort of misbehavior—refusing to learn one's lessons or keep oneself clean— as that of a disobedient child. The moral of the eft's fate is quite clear: be a good, obedient child, learn your lessons and bath in plenty of cold water, or suffer the loss of your civilization, and the horrific effects of racial degeneration.

There is no denying Kingsley's moral of the eft has an element of the absurd, and it is intended to be as fanciful as it is didactic; however there is a very real sense of anxiety behind its material. This playful yet earnest tone speaks to the last line of Kingsley's novel—"this is all a fairy tale, and only fun and pretense; and, therefore, you are not to believe a word of it, even it if is true" (237)—which is a defense of fairy stories as medium that while in the spirit of "fun" and entertainment and impossible to believe literally, still relays important, serious truths.[10] The "science" that haunts the background

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[10] The defense of fairy stories and other fanciful, factually unbelievable tales as effective vessels for "truth" and education, is part of an important movement children's literature that is in a significant way responsible for the genre's "Golden Age". Kingsley's defense of fairy stories is partly a reaction to writers like Samual Goodrich, pseud. Peter Parley, who Kingsley satirizes in the ridiculous and dull figure of Cousin Cramchild. Goodrich and his followers wrote deplored fairytales and wrote only factual books for children, taking the stance that the value of children's literature was purely in its educational intentions rather than ambitions

of the eft's physical degeneration, are theories that were taken very seriously by Kingsley's contemporaries, and had a great deal of persuasive authority for the Victorians. Moreover Kingsley's depiction of the physical attributes of the eft's degeneration is remarkably detailed and true to what was theorized as the physical effects of racial degeneration. It suggests that Kingsley was keen that his readers gained a "truthful" knowledge of the "scientifically" proposed effects of degeneration, even when these theories were dressed up in fantasy for the sake of "fun" and diversion. There is a sense of desperation and earnestness in Kingsley's repetitive allusions to cold water and washing, and his pleas to "keep clean", and "thank God that you have plenty of cold water to wash in; and wash in it too, like a true Englishman". The allusions to cold water and washing approach what Humphery Carpenter in *Secret Gardens: a Study of Golden Age Children's Literature* rightly terms an obsession[11], which signified a collective anxiety of the age. Cold water and washing speaks to an anxiety of impurity. As McClintock asserts the "Victorian fascination with "clean, white bodies and clean white clothing stemmed [. . .] from the realms of ritual and fetish [. . .] Soap offered the promise

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of artistry or entertainment (Humphrey 38). The shift in children's literature away from a purely didactic form is a topic worthy of more extensive study. One of the key implications of this movement is that the "less didactic" literature, such as Kingsley's *Water-babies*, is that the political agenda behind these texts takes a secondary role to artistry. Not only do works such as *Water-Babies* prove this to be untrue, but in many ways the political education undergone by reading these stories is far more sinister because they pretend, to varying degrees, not to have these motivations.

> [11] Kingsley had what can only be described as an obsession with washing and cold water. In the love letter quoted above he speaks of the attempt to 'wash off the scent' of Fanny's 'delicious limbs', and it is recorded that he could not bear even a speck of dirt of his clothes. And once he had become a social campaigner and was concerned to improve living conditions for the urban poor, he emphasized again and again the need for clean cold water, not just to drink, but to bathe in. (Carpenter 30-31)

of spiritual salvation and regeneration [. . .] that could restore the threatened potency of the imperial body politic and the race" (211). Washing proposes a purification ritual that eased the age's fear of transmissible seeds of decline, which might could infect, and soil a once strong and pure, (morally and biologically) white race. Kingsley's obsessive call to his reader to wash and purify their bodies makes evident that the possibility of racial impurity and degeneracy was a threat to, and possible fate he saw for his middle-class reader. The conceit of racial superiority and purity, which underpinned colonial racism, appear severely shaken in the face of Kingsley's humbling plea to thank God for the plentiful supply of cold water, and the suggestion that his can reader hold off degeneration only by a fetishized adherence to clean living.

Kingsley was not the only writer to find fairy stories and children's literature an ideal medium through which to discuss the topic of racial degeneration. Fairy lore provided the imaginative author with a host of creatures and folklore uniquely suited to the subject. Fairies were divided into an array of races and species, but it was ambiguous to what degree the fairy races mixed, and what these racial differences signified within their social structures. There are accounts of fairy fairs, fairy rades (or rides), and fairy dances, which were presumably places were the fairy races might mingle, but as human encounters of such events are fleeting, the full implication of such interactions were open to speculation. Jean Ingelow in her 1869 children's novel, *Mopsa the Fairy,* Jack visits "a kind of fair, to which people had gathered from all parts" (42). Jack notes that the creatures do not appear to be of the same race, and as he wanders the fairy fair he meets variety inhabitants including a race of creatures who wear beehives on their heads, and

another race of fairies who spend half their time in the form of little men, and half their time in the form of parrots (42-49).

Irish mythology provided a context of conquest, colonization and degeneration to the later folkloric accounts of fairy races. It was commonly believed that the race of fairies who inhabited the hollow hills and caves of Ireland were all that was left of the once powerful and beautiful race of demi-gods, the Tuatha De Danann, who arrived in Ireland to conquer the hideous giants native to the land, the Fir Bolg. However, the Tuatha de Danann were themselves conquered and pushed underground by a later race, the sons of Mil (some accounts name these the ancestors of men). In their underground palaces the Tuatha De Danann declined in power and stature becoming a diminished race known as the Daoine O Sidhe fairies (Briggs, *Encyclopedia* 418). In a slight variation of the common adoption of Irish folklore to the concept of fairy races, Katherine Briggs cites John Boylin of County Meath, who "suggested that the different tribes of fairies were accounted for by some of them being spirits of the Fir Bolgs, some of the Milesians [sons of mil], some of the Tuatha De Danann" (*The Fairies* 142). In whichever, variation the mythology of the Tuatha De Danann found its way into nineteenth-century fairy lore, it proved to have compelling intersections with colonial politics, and theories of the racial degeneration of a conquered people.

Interactions between humans and fairies in early folklore also provided the Victorians with compelling material through which they might examine ideas of racial difference and degeneration. Fairies provided a racial "other" that was at once incomparably foreign—otherworldly in fact—and yet, at the same time, intimately part of the British tradition. The encounter with the Green Children of Woolpit in Suffolk

recorded by the thirteenth century chronicler Roger of Coggeshall, is a narrative of a brother and sister of an exotic race who become a curiosity when transplanted to an English village. The Green Children were so named for the pale, greenish color of their skin when they were found wandering near the wolf-pits outside the village. They did not understand the language of the villagers, and they found the food offered them strange and disagreeable. The younger boy sickened and died, but the girl eventually acclimated to her new environment, learning the language, eventually loosing her greenish color and marrying a local man (Keightly 281;Briggs 8). The story of the Green Children predates the Age of Exploration and the discovery of the New World, but it resonates with the instances that arose from the early sixteenth century throughout the nineteenth century of colonized races being exhibited as curiosities amongst the British. Katherine Briggs references another fairy encounter recorded by J.F. Campbell's *Popular Tales of the Western Highlands* in which a Hill Woman, a fairy, borrows a pan from her mortal neighbor. Briggs relates the encounter while observing that it—

> reads like a confirmation of [the] theory that fairies were a conquered people who had taken to the hills; the prosaic reward of meat and bones left in the pot, the fairy dogs which were loosed to chase the woman and were driven back by the human dogs when they came near to the steading, all sound like the intercourse of two alien tribes. There is even a hint that the human woman was as magical to the fairies as they were to her. (23)

One might imagine that these folk narratives of exchange between humans and conquered, otherworldly, races, or of exotic, mysterious children transplanted amongst the English, must have struck a chord with nineteenth-century readers for whom race had

developed into a pressing moral, scientific, and political debate. Folklore concerning fairy and human interaction also provided a number of parallels specific to the subject of racial degeneration. Fairies were always represented as a race in decline, and in the nineteenth century, this decline was often tied to modernization and urban development. Fairies had a distinctly pre-industrial flavor: their societies were medieval or archaic, they were rural beings tied to the natural landscape, and they had a dislike of iron[12]. An interest in fairies exhibited a pre-industrial nostalgia and distrust of modernization specifically related to rapid urban development and class unrest.

However the most fertile ground upon which to construct a parable of degeneration within fairy-lore was simply the physical deformity that often characterized fairies and the humans who had dealings with them. Spriggins, Brownies, Goblins, and Knockers (a Cornish mine-dwelling goblin) were among the species of fairies marked by extreme ugliness and deformity.[13] They were often recognized for their stunted growth, dark wrinkled skin, hairy bodies, and grotesque features or misshapen limbs. Fairies were also known to gift physical deformity upon humans who had offended them. Thomas Keightley for example, records the story of two serving-girls from Tavistock and their

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[12] The medieval attributes of fairy societies is a complex subject related Victorian fairy literatures heritage in medieval revivalism, which will be discussed at more length in chapter four. The connection between the rural landscape fairies might have to do with the fact that oral tradition surrounding fairies was ancient and survived in rural communities; in any event, fairy literature was often marked by a nostalgia for that pre-industrial lifestyle. The use of iron as protection against the fairies is one of the most common elements of fairy folklore, a short of explanation of the belief can be found in Brigg's *An Encyclopedia of Fairies* (234).

[13] Many of these ugly and deformed fairies were also the most malignant, however this does not always hold true. For an example, brownies are a particularly friendly fairies that inhabit family houses keeping them clean and orderly. Though easily offended, brownies do not typically exact brutal revenge in the way other fairies do.

dealings with pixies. The serving-girls were in the habit of leaving a bucket of water out for the pixies before going to bed. Forgetting to leave the water out for the fairies, one of the serving girls woke in the middle of the night to complete the task while the other refused to stir from her bed. The next morning the girl who had left the water was given a handful of silver pennies, while the other girl was struck lame for seven years (303). Physical fairy rewards and punishments is featured in a story of to hunchbacks, Lusmore and Jack Maddon, which is retold by Brian Froud and Alan Lee from a legend recorded by the nineteenth century folklorist T. Crofton Croker in *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*. In the folktale, well-mannered Lusmore sits down to rest near Knockgrafton moat. There he hears unearthly music coming from the moat and is compelled to add his own variation to the tune. The fairies are delighted by his edition and in gratitude remove the hump from his back. When Lusmore returns to the village cured of his affliction a woman inquires how she might likewise help the son of her friend, Jack Maddon, who was also hunchback. Lusmore tells the woman of how he sang to the fairies living beneath Knockgrafton moat. Soon after Jack Maddon is sent to the moat in hopes of repeating Lusmore's good luck. However Jack Maddon was in such a hurry that as soon as he heard the fairy music he began to sing is own song with little heed to its quality or its relationship to the fairy music. The fairies, angered by the rude intrusion, punish Jack Maddon, giving him Lusmore's hump on top of his own (*Fairies)* The folk-tale of the two hunchbacks, is another illustration of how physical deformity may have been thought to be connected to the supernatural influence. Moreover fairy folklore that explains physical handicaps, such as that of the serving-girls or the hunchback, links deformity to disobedience of a social ritual or order. The punishments

of hunchback and the serving girl seem too harsh by the standards of human empathy, but they reveal a desire on the part of the human storytellers to give physical handicap a moral *raison d'être*. Thus, in the nineteenth century when theories of degeneration arose to assert that moral laxity and the decline of social order had abnormal biological and physical manifestations, it was confirming a body of folklore that had already made links between social disorder, morality and "abnormal" physical conditions.

George MacDonald's novel, *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872) provides one of the most intricately developed examples of a Victorian writer adapting the folkloric descriptions of goblin deformity to the age's discussion of race and degeneration. Early in the novel MacDonald explains the existence of Goblins, writing:

> Now in subterranean caverns lived a strange race of beings, called by some gnomes, by some kobolds, by some goblins. There was a legend current in the country that at one time they lived above ground, and were very like other people. But for some reason or other, concerning which there were different legendary theories, the king had laid what they thought too severe taxes upon them, or had required observances of them they did not like, or had begun to tread them with more severity in some way or other, and impose stricter laws; and the consequence was that they had all disappeared from the face of the country. According to the legend, however, instead of going to some other country, they had all taken refuge in the subterranean caverns, whence they never came out but at night, and then seldom showed themselves in any numbers, and never to many people at once [. . .] Those who caught sight of he any of them said that they and greatly altered in the course of generations; and no wonder seeing they lived away

> from the sun, in cold and wet and dark places. They were now, not ordinarily ugly, but either absolutely hideous, or ludicrously grotesque both in face and form. There was no invention they said that could surpass the extravagance of their appearance. (10-11)

MacDonald's goblins are a case of racial development gone horribly and unnaturally wrong. The details that the goblins are "not ordinarily ugly," but "absolutely hideous" and "ludicrously grotesque," recalls the ideas of degeneration by emphasizing the abnormality of the goblin's degraded development. MacDonald even ties the goblins' degeneration to a narrative of social unrest and disobedience. The goblins demonstrate a "great delight in every way they could think of to annoy the people who lived in the open-air-story" with special animosity to the descendants of the King for whom their dislike and disobedience forced them to live beneath the ground (MacDonald, *Princess* 11). Moreover, it is their inhabitance underground that has caused their race to physically degenerate. As McClintock argues "the poetics of degeneration was a poetics of social crisis" that responded to the social unrest of the latter half of the nineteenth century. McClintock observes that the latter half of the nineteenth century saw economic depression "class insurgency, feminist upheavals, the socialist revival, swelling poverty and the dearth of housing and jobs fed deepening middle class fears [. . .] The eugenic discourse of degeneration was deployed both as a regime of discipline imposed on a deeply distressed populace, as well as a reactive response to very real popular resistance" (46). *The Princess and the Goblin* predates some of the dramatic social unrest outlined by McClintock the idea of an disobedient, insurgent populace evidently played strongly

within MacDonald's imagination. Though MacDonald's goblins certainly represent a sanitized picture of social unrest—there are no dramatizations of goblin riots—the connection MacDonald makes between social and political agitation, and racial degeneration is clearly present.

MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin* also touches upon the way fears of degeneracy were perpetuated by the increased intermingling of classes and races, which arose as the British populace expanded into both urban spaces and the colonies. McClintock argues that "central to the idea of degeneration was the idea of contagion (the communication of disease, by touching from body to body), and central to the idea of contagion was the peculiarly Victorian paranoia about boundary control"(47). The result of this paranoia was a preoccupation with "policing the boundaries between Victorian ruling elite and the 'contagious' [degenerate] classes, both in the imperial metropole and in the colonies" (47). MacDonald's novel is filled with instances of class crossings and boundaries being breached both socially and physically. The goblins themselves represent an instance of class crossing that actually marks their racial degeneration. In the legend, the goblins were once men and subjects of a human King, but when they degenerated becoming goblins, they elected their own King and government (12). Thus the class crossing of the goblin elite from subjects into mortal King and rulers of their government is simultaneous proof of their final degeneration into an entirely new race.

However, class crossing is not a state reserved for the degenerate of MacDonald's novel; in fact it is the heroine Princess Irene and her protector Curdie, a miner's son, who are most affected by permeable social boundaries. Irene is born in a very grand beautiful palace on the top of a mountain, but she is quickly removed from this place clearly

emblematic of power and royalty, and instead raised among country people, in a "large house, half castle, half farm-house, on the side of another mountain, about halfway between its base and its peak" (10). Irene's childhood home is a mix of social signs, not quite royal castle or common farm-house; she is a princess but raised outside the court amongst commoners; and even the position of the house half-way upon the mountain suggests an ambiguity of status. Irene's house is also suggestively vulnerable to the degenerate goblins. The goblins manage to dig a hole from their caves into the garden walls of the Princess' house. Throughout the story the goblins' pet animals, who are misshapen and grotesque like their goblin owners, are found running loose in the Princess' grounds, and in a climactic clash between goblins and humans, the goblins attempt to kidnap the Princess by extending this same tunnel into her bedroom. The goblins' continual assaults upon the house implies that the intermingling of social classes in both the architecture and the residents of the Princess' household is a particularly dangerous element that leaves the racially and morally pure Princess vulnerable to degenerate influence. While urban and colonial space—the typical location of Victorian anxieties concerning intermingled races and social classes—are absent from *The Princess and the Goblin*, MacDonald manages to recombine the fairy tale settings of castle and rural farm-house in a way that represents these same anxieties and ties them firmly to possibility of middle-class degeneration.

However, while degeneration is implicated in the undefined or broached class boundaries suggested by the ambiguous status of the Princess' household and the goblins' rise to royalty, at the heart of MacDonald's novel is the seemingly class-crossing friendship between Princess Irene and Curdie the miner's son. This relationship is the

Princess' strongest defense against the degenerate goblins. Early in the story Curdie rescues the Princess and her nurse from goblins when they accidently find themselves outside after-dark. Later it is Curdie who discovers a plan to kidnap Princess Irene and attack the miners, but before Curdie can foil the goblins' plans he needs the help of Irene to escape from the goblin caves where he is held hostage. The difference in social class between Princess Irene and her new friend Curdie causes the Princess' nurse a great deal of distress. After Curdie rescues the Princess and her nurse from goblins, Irene promises Curdie a kiss. The Princess' nurse is greatly disturbed by the impropriety of the Princess kissing a miner-boy, and though the nurse prevents the kiss, she laments that "formerly the goblins were her only fear; now she had to protect her charge from Curdie as well" (MacDonald, *Princess* 44). The reader, however, is not encouraged to share in the nurse's class-consciousness. MacDonald makes it clear that he is far more concerned with the moral weight of Irene keeping her promise—the promise to give Curdie a kiss—than he is in the impropriety of their class-crossing friendships. MacDonald allows the King's judgment to be the moral standard and asserts that "however much [the King] might have disliked his daughter to kiss the miner-boy, he would not have had her break her word for all the goblins in creation. But, as I say, the nurse was not lady enough to understand this" (MacDonald, *Princess* 43). At the outset this might appear as a liberal-minded reevaluation of the strict class stratification that fears of degeneration enforced; but a closer examination reveals that Irene and Curdie's relationship is imagined with the same conservative politics that created the degenerate class-crossing goblins. Irene and Curdie share friendship and an infamous kiss, but they remain firmly within their class stratifications. Curdie is so content with his life as a miner that he refuses a place in the

King's guard, which is offered to him after he saves the princess' life (MacDonald, *Princess* 200). Moreover the kiss Curdie and Irene share is less indicative of a boundary breaking relationship, as it is a class-affirming symbol of fidelity. MacDonald emphasizes that the drama of the kiss is about Irene keeping her promise—a promise, which is in response to Curdie's service. *The Princess and the Goblin* ends with the King asking Curdie what reward he can give him, only for Curdie to reply, with the piety of a knight swearing service: "You have already allowed me to serve you" (200). In the sequel to *The Princess and the Goblin*, *The Princess and Curdie*, Curdie and Irene do marry, but it is only after Curdie discovers that he is actually of royal blood. The relationship of Curdie and Irene represents a Victorian ideal of a stable and amicable interclass relationship. Social unrest and lower-class insurgency is unimaginable in the character of Curdie. These elements of social disorder—elements that construct degeneracy as a frighteningly contagious element—disappear in the case of Curdie and Irene because they choose to serve each as knight and lady in a dynamic, which is feudal in its protection of class boundaries.

MacDonald endows the relationships of his human characters with questions of social order and class boundaries, which are central to the Victorian conceptions of degeneracy, but the only direct opinions on the issue of racial degeneration comes from the mouths of the goblins themselves. Ironically it is the goblins who are most concerned with the degeneration of their race. It is revealed that Prince Harelip's mother was human and it is insinuated that he desires to kidnap and marry the human Princess, not for mere political reasons, but from a freakish desire to mix his blood with the less-worthy race of the humans. The King of the goblin's second wife, a pure goblin, berates the King about

the mixed heritage of her stepson, and the "unnatural", degenerative implication of his impending marriage:

> "Don't talk to me of his mother! You positively encourage his unnatural fancies. Whatever belongs to *that* mother, ought to be but cut out of him." [Said the queen]
>
> "You forget yourself, my dear! [. . .] You must acknowledge, however," the king said with a little groan, 'That this at least is no whim of Harelip's, but a matter of state-policy. You are well aware that his gratification comes purely from the pleasure of sacrificing himself to the public good. Does it not, Harelip?" (115)

The goblins' obsession with racial purity is marked by the extreme pride they take in their toe-less feet. This is again heavily ironic on MacDonald's part as webbed feet were, like a protruding jaw, a flattened forehead, or a "snout-like" nose, another scientifically proposed sign of biological degeneration.

The goblin's obsession with their toeless feet and racial purity becomes a site of ridicule in MacDonald's story, but it also reveals how the theories of degeneration were often fears about the racial and moral decline of the "self" which was projected an "other". The goblin queen in particular is quick to pass a charge racial impurity upon her fellow goblins, but she is equally anxious that such a charge might be leveled against herself. When Harelip alludes to the fact that the queen of the goblins wears shoes despite the fact that it is goblin fashion to go barefoot, the queen leaps at the mere hint that her feet may not be quite as they should be. Prince Harelip speaks first,

"I will have the skin taken off between [princess Irene's] toes and tie them up till they grow together. Then her feet will be like other people's. And there will be no occasion for her to wear shoes."

"Do you mean to insinuate *I've* got toes, you unnatural wretch" cried the queen; and she moved angrily toward Harelip. The councilor, however, who was betwixt them leaned forward so as to prevent her touching him, but only as if to address the prince.

"Your royal Highness," he said "possibly requires to be reminded that you have got three toes yourself—one on one foot, two on the other."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" shouted the queen triumphantly.

The councilor encouraged by this mark of favor went on.

"It seems to me, your royal Highness, it would greatly endear you to your future people, proving to them that you are not the less of themselves that you had the misfortune to be born of a sun-mother, if you were to command upon yourself the comparatively slight operation which, in more extended form, you do wisely meditate with regard to your future princess." (115-16)

As it turns out, the queen does indeed wear shoes because she, like the racially impure prince Harelip, has a set of toes despite her claims to a purely goblin pedigree. Thus the goblin queen's obsession with racial purity is really a self-reflexive anxiety about her own marks of degeneration.

In this way the goblin queen's projection of her anxiety about the possibility of her racial impurity upon Harelip suggest a very compelling parallel to the self-reflexive

way theories of degeneration functioned in Victorian society. The theory of degeneration was an anxious application of the theories of stunted evolution that constructed colonial races in opposition to the British populace and the British self. Theories of degeneration imagined class distinctions in the British populace as distinctions of race and evolution. Yet, central to the theory of degeneration is not a solidification of class stratification, or a confirmation of racial purity within the British upper and middle-classes—it was a fearful realization of the ruling middle-classes' racial and social vulnerability. The ruling elite in MacDonald's story are plagued with spaces of class ambiguity—a castle that is also a farmhouse, and princess raised amongst commoners—and thus are increasingly vulnerable to the force of degeneration. In MacDonald's story the single point of class stability and harmony is the relationship between Curdie and Princess Irene, but that relationship has no place in a modern, industrial society; their partnership, is instead a nostalgic throwback to a medieval, feudal class-system of sworn service from strictly defined social positions.

Victorian theories of degeneration were as much an expression of middle-class vulnerability and self-reflexive anxiety as they were an effective means of asserting middle-class authority. Degeneration was a double-edged discourse for the Victorian middle-class; it functioned like the racial anxieties of the goblin queen, who is happy to assert the racial inferiority of the human bloodlines, but is haunted by possibility of the racial degeneration that is marked in her own toes.

Chapter Three

Changelings:
Colonial Exchange and Theories of a Hybrid Self

Some of the most prevalent and politically charged fairy lore in the Victorian era centered around the phenomena of Changelings. Changelings were sick and aged fairies, or carved stocks of wood that the fairies left in place of a person, typically a child, who they had stolen away (Briggs 116). The folklore surrounding Changelings is vast and offers many variations, but the typical story it follows is that of a healthy, well-behaved baby, who overnight undergoes a sudden change of body and character. Sometimes the baby would become immobile and unresponsive, while other changelings were marked by their fractious and intractable character. Physical marks of changelings were their stunted, deformed or incongruent bodies, dark, sallow skin and hair, and a violently insatiable appetite (silver 62; Briggs 115). Not all changelings were young children; one of the most famous cases of changeling abduction was that of Bridget Cleary, a young married woman of twenty-six, in a village outside Clonmel, Ireland in the year 1895 who was burnt to death by her husband, Michael Cleary on the grounds of being a fairy changeling.[14] Whatever the age of the victim, changelings were always a way of explaining and controlling the sudden transformation of a loved one.

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[14] The case of Bridget Cleary is mentioned in Silver pp. 63-65 but more inclusive study of the event is found in Angela Bourke's "Reading In A Woman's Death: Colonial Text

One of the common ways to understand changeling tradition is to recognize the folklore as an explanation and communal coping mechanism in cases of mental or physical illness. Angela Bourke, in her examination of the case of Bridget Cleary, "Reading In A Woman's Death: Colonial Text And Oral Tradition In Nineteenth-Century Ireland" discuses cases of fairy abductions involving adult women, noting that "it is not difficult to imagine the variety of physical and mental illnesses, from anorexia to tuberculosis to postnatal and other depression, for which the discourse of fairy abduction might be found appropriate" (571). It is indeed easy to see how the rapid changes in body and mind that accompany these illness would meld into the frightening and sudden transformations of changeling stories. It is also not difficult to imagine that the changeling narratives that tell of a child's stunted or abnormal development in the first few years of their life possibly became an explanation for children who suffered from developmental disorders. The supposed changeling abductions of four-year-old Michael Leahy in 1826 and of three-year-old Philip Dillon in 1884, are both cited as suffering form physical paralysis and stalled growth; Michael Leahy was known to be unable to "stand, walk or speak" (Silver 62), while Philip Dillon was recorded "not have the use of his limbs" (Silver 59-60) . An account of a changeling recorded by E.M. Leather in Weobley, the year 1908, tells of a woman who "had a baby that never grew; it was always hungry, and never satisfied, but it lay in its cradle year after year, never walking, and nothing seemed to do it any good. Its face was hairy and strange looking" (Brigg 118). The paralysis described in all three of these cases could be attributed to a wide

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And Oral Tradition In Nineteenth-Century Ireland," (Feminist Studies 21.3 (1995): 553-586).

variety of physical developmental disorders, while the inability to talk attributed to both Michael Leahy and the Weobley changeling suggests a related mental retardation. Susan Schoon Eberly in her essay, "Fairies and the Folklore of Disabilities: Changelings, Hybrids and the Solitary Fairy," suggests that Hydrocephalus, which is found in 80% of the cases of spina bifida and causes the skull to expand, and untreated causes "retardation, brain damage, and paralysis", may help to explain the accounts of changelings with oversized heads, or the illusion a shrunken disproportioned body, paralyzed limbs and slowed mental development (64). She also notes that "the irritability, constant crying, and ravenous appetite of the changeling can be explained by looking at those congenital disorders which prevent the infant from gaining nourishment from the food it eats." These conditions could range from "physiological malformations such as blind esophagus, cleft palate, or blockage of the small intestines [which] physically inhibit food from reaching the digestive system" to metabolic disorders which "prevent the child from metabolizing essential nutrients" (64). Eberly specifically cites cystic fibrosis, a disease that prevents the child from utilizing proteins and one of the common inherited defects in Caucasians. Cystic fibrosis produces more than one changeling trait: ravenous appetite, severely retarded growth and death in the young adult's twenties--which speaks to those changelings who surviving childhood are nevertheless always somewhat drawn to fairy, and often leave the mortal world early to join their fairy kin (64). Yet, perhaps the most compelling point Eberly makes is the observation that genetically based developmental disorders, an example might be Down Syndrome, often produces unrelated children who have a stronger resemblance to each other than their family and kin (65; 67). One might imagine that this likeness played a substantial role in

imagining the traits of a changeling child as a member of the foreign fairy race, transplanted and unrelated to the mortal parents.

Eblery's analysis of the medical conditions potentially behind instances of changeling accounts is persuasive and remarkably comprehensive, yet it is important not to understate that changeling folklore was a socially and politically driven reimagining of these illnesses. Similar to the folktales discussed in chapter two in which a mortal—in these tales a serving girl and a hunchback—are punished by the fairies with physical defects, changeling narratives also draw connections between social misbehavior, physical or mental handicaps, and the influence of a dangerous "other" race. The traits of a changeling conflate conditions that are clearly physical defects, such as paralysis, with attributes that could simply be considered unruly behavior. A folk account recorded by Thomas Keightley in Nithsdale, Scotland tells of a child who on the second day after its birth became "ill favored and deformed". The account relates how "its yelling every night deprived the whole family of rest", that the child "but and tore its mother's breast, and would like still neither in the cradle nor the arms" (355-56). There is a passing mention that the child is deformed, but otherwise there is no description or evidence of this fact in the account. Rather, the transformation undergone by changeling seems to one of extreme misbehavior— an early and ominous anti-social tendency.

Changeling stories surrounding adult women in particular seem to have a root in "anti-social" expressions of alienation and dissatisfaction with one's condition in life, and sometimes even find an origin in social transgressions, such as infidelity. In the court record of Michael Cleary's murder trail for the burning of his wife Bridget Cleary, witnesses assert that on the night Michael Cleary attacked Bridget, she taunted Michael,

telling him "your mother used to go with the fairies, and this why you think I am going with them" (Silver 65). Bridget's statement seems to suggests that Michael's mother was unfaithful, and that Michael suspects a similar infidelity on the part of his wife; however as Bourke points out the accusation could also mean that Michael's mother "suffered periods of depression or mental illness, that she was a liar, that she neglected her children or her household duties."[15] Michael Cleary is also recorded as claiming that the changeling Bridget "was not my wife, she was too fine to be my wife, she was two inches taller than my wife" (Silver 64). It is impossible to know exactly what might be behind Michael Clearly's statement, but the words "she was too fine to be my wife" seem to suggest that Bridget harbored some sort of marital dissatisfaction, or that Bridget possibly saw herself as above—"too fine for"—her husband. Bourke speculates that Bridget may have had a lover and that she may even have been pregnant by her lover. It was clear Bridget was suffering some sort of "nervous" illness and local tradition maintains that Cleary had been suffering form tuberculosis (Bourke 579). Yet the ambiguity surrounding the circumstances of a changeling incident is, of course, part of the changeling tradition. It is impossible to know whether Bridget was branded as a changeling for suffering from a physical illness or nervous depressive episodes, or for a social transgression of infidelity, or because her husband and neighbors felt she harbored unwarranted pride and dissatisfaction; all of these explanations remain possibilities because the figure of the changeling blends and obscures the distinctions between the social, the moral and the medical. In doing so changeling stories make physical and

[15] While Bourke points to the variety of circumstances that Bridget's veiled accusation might relate too, Silver makes the straight assumption that Bridget is referring to the mother's infidelity (65).

mental illness a matter of anti-social, immoral behavior and blames this evil upon the influence of an alien force.

Thus changeling narratives share much with the Victorian discourse of degeneracy discussed in chapter two, because degeneracy, similarly rewrites anti-social behavior a physical and mental defect resulting from the influence of the "degraded", alien races of the colonies. There is also a clear racial undercurrent to the belief that children who were stolen were coveted by the fairies for their beauty and fair, golden-haired complexions, which were in direct contrast to the dark, hairy, sallow skinned creatures left behind (Briggs 115; Rhys qtd. Silver 62). More specifically, changeling mythology incorporated Victorian fears of degenerate races as it speculated that the fairies stole away these healthy, blonde babies to regenerate their own failing stock. In exchange, the good British family was left with the sickly, disruptive, aged and ugly of an alien race.

Essential to the narrative of a changeling encounter is the attempt to exorcise the dangerous alien influence of the fairies from the household, and thus prompt the return of the true human family member. Changeling exorcisms ranged from being harmlessly absurd, to symbolically violent, to fatal. One way to defeat a changeling was to induce it to betray its old age and thus its true nature. A common method to such an end was to complete some sort of bizarre task—a common task being to brew ale in an eggshell—in front of the infant so that the fairy, suddenly becoming interested, will declare that in all its years it has never seen such an activity; being thus revealed the fairy would be forced to leave and the mortal child would be returned. An exorcism by brewing ale in an eggshell is recorded in the account of the Weobley changeling.

> A woman had a baby that never grew; it was always hungry, and never satisfied, but it lay in its cradle year after year, never walking, and nothing seemed to do it any good. Its face was hairy and strange looking. One day the woman's elder son, a soldier came home from war, and was surprised to see his brother still in the cradle. But when he looked in he said, "That's not my brother mother." "It is indeed" said the mother. "we'll see about that," he said. So he obtained first a fresh egg and blew out the contents, filling the shell with malt and hops. Then he began to brew over the fire. At this a laugh came from the cradle "I am old, old, old, ever so old," said the changeling, "But I never saw a soldier brewing beer in a egg shell before." Then he gave a terrible shriek, for the soldier went for him with a whip, chasing him round and round the room, what never left his cradle! At last he vanished through the door, and when the soldier went out after him he met on the threshold his long lost brother. He was a man of twenty-four year of age, fine and healthy. The fairies had kept him in a beautiful palace under the rocks, and fed him on the best of everything. He should never be as well off again, he said, but when his mother called he had to come home. (Brigg 118)

While the tradition of brewing ale in an eggshell is often recorded in folk traditions as a method of expelling changelings, the exorcisms of changelings that captured the Victorian imagination most forcefully had a much deadly nature. It was believed that if one awakened the changeling to the perils of human mortality, the creature would choose to return to the realm of Fairy. Thomas Keightley records the story of two whiskey smugglers from Strathspey who late at night discover a baby dropped on the side of the

road by the fairies. They are then able to return the child to its mother and banish the changeling set in its place. Thomas Keightley recounts:

> As the urgency of their business did not permit them to return, they took the child with them, and kept it till the next time they had occasion to visit Glenlivat. On their arrival they said nothing about the child, which they kept concealed. In the course of conversation, the mother took occasion to remark that the disease which had attacked the child the last time they were there had never left it, and she had now little hope of its recovery. As if to confirm her statement, it continued uttering most piteous cries. To end the matter at once the lads produced the real child healthy and hearty, and told how they had found it. An exchange was at once effected and they forthwith proceeded to dispose of their new charge. For this purpose they got an old creel to put him in and some straw to light under it. Seeing the serious turn matters were likely to take, he resolved not to await the trail, but flew up the smoke-hole. (398)

The practice of placing a changeling child in a wicker basket and setting it alight are part of a series of mortality tests, including simply throwing the child upon the fire or placing the child above the fire in a heated shovel, that attempted to induce the fairy up and out of the chimney. However, while in the Scottish tale of the whiskey smugglers and the changeling the human child is returned safely, and the case is framed as a matter of local legend, changeling accounts often spread through Victorian imagination as the material of sensational news articles and court cases that emphasized the very real and brutal power fairy superstitions could have in the mortal realm. The changeling abduction of

three-year old Philip Dillon from Clonmel, Ireland is remembered by the court case that followed incident in 1884:

> Ellen Cushion and Anastatia Rourke were arrested at Clonmel on Saturday charged with ill-treating a child three years old, named Philip Dillon. The prisoners were taken before the Mayor, when evidence was given showing that the neighbors fancied that the boy, who had not the use of his limbs, as a changeling left by the fairies in exchange for the original child. While the mother was absent, the prisoners entered her house and placed the lad naked on a hot shovel under the impression that this would break the charm. The poor little think was severely burned, and is in a precarious condition. (Silver 60 qtd. Hartland, *Science*, 121-22)

Related to the mortality tests, was the belief that if one neglected or discomforted the changeling enough, the fairies would take it back rather than see one of their own race suffer. Thus John Trevelyan of Penzance was in 1843 was charged with ill-treating his young son, having exposed the child outside on a tree during wintertime and ordered his servants to beat and starve him until the fairies were moved to reclaim their kin (Silver 63). Still other changeling cases entered into the press, when parents left the changeling in wild places were the fairies frequented, or ritually bathed their children in fairy inhabited waters; these practices often proved as fatal as the mortality tests. In 1826 Anne Roche was brought to court for accidently drowning her son when she was directed by her mother to bath her four-year-old son Michael Leahy in a local rive. Carole G. Silver observes that the bathing the changeling in fairy-inhabited waters was a time-honored

tradition as well as the potential fatal "practice of placing those suspected of being changelings at the intersections of rivers, at the shores of lakes, or at the tideline of the sea" (Silver 62). Silver also cites an equally ritualized and fatal tradition of changeling bathing that claimed three lives between 1857-1890's—it involved bathing or feeding the child a solution of foxgloves (Silver 63).

In light of the way changeling incidents came to explain illness, developmental disorders and "anti-social" behavior, the fatal nature of the changeling tests was no accident. Changeling folklore was a way of explaining a child's or an adult's abnormal development and behavior, but it was also a way of policing those changes. Changeling narratives absolved the community of the some of the grief and responsibility, first of producing such children and secondly, of their disposal. As Silver writes: "if someone became a changeling it was not neglect, disease or taint in the blood line that was responsible. And if the affected creature died either naturally or as a result of changeling tests, it had not been meant to live. Besides the real person had been taken by the fairies. She or he was elsewhere," (65). The exoneration the changeling narrative awarded cases of infanticide and murder were to a degree a reality beyond personal, or even the communal realm. Michael Cleary was charged only with manslaughter, rather than the murder charge that had been brought against him. Similarly, Ellen Cushion, Anastatia Rourke and John Trevelyan, were all charged with ill-treating children rather than attempted infanticide. These cases make evident that the narrative of the changeling provided its own special, "magic" combination of exoneration within a community and the court. It played upon centuries-old folk traditions and relied on shared superstitions, which in a community or court of law could be interpreted, depending on the viewer, as

either a momentary lapse of reason and sanity on the part of the perpetrator, or a supernatural reality; both scenarios exonerated one from willful murder. Moreover, infanticide disguised as changeling exorcisms were often undergone as community projects with the parents consulting older family members, neighbors and fairy doctors (community members that boasted a special knowledge of how to deal with fairies). Yet the root of the communal forgiveness that the changeling narratives awarded cases of infanticide, child abuse and neglect, was the way changeling tradition appropriated the racial and colonial anxieties of the era. The brutal changeling exorcisms were permissible because the woman or child was no longer the family member or neighbor, but seen as an intruder from another, inhuman race. As discussed earlier, at the heart of the changeling narrative there were similar anxieties to those that created theories of racial degeneration: the fear of racial contamination, and the suspicion that a dangerous racial "other" could infiltrate domestic space bringing disorder and disease. The exorcism in the changeling narrative was a communal effort to remove that socially disruptive contamination of the fairy race.

However, what distinguishes Victorian changeling stories from other racial representations of fairies, such as the imagined degenerate races of goblins from MacDonald's work, is the emphasis upon exchange, and the multiple perspectives it awards to the dealings of these two races, the fairy and mortal. The stories of changelings always provide at least two narratives: in a changeling exchange there is the narrative of degeneration, in which the mortal family is polluted by its contact with an "other" race and forced to produce an abnormal degenerate offspring with a doubtful heritage, but there is also the narrative from the perspective of the fairy, in which a failing race is

regenerated by its exchange with the equally alien, mortal race of man. One of the more fascinating aspects of changeling narratives in the context of colonialism, is the way in which the dual narratives of regeneration and degeneration seem to represent both Britain's colonial fears *and* ambitions. The narrative of regeneration through exchange with another mysterious race is a narrative extraordinarily applicable to Britain's imperial experience and aspirations. As an economic resource the colonies and a globalized economy provided the British populace with a very real hope for regeneration. In the Victorian novel the colonies often functioned with a nearly magical wish fulfillment quality upon the economic fates of characters from all sectors of society. In Dickens' novel, *Great Expectations*, Pip's mysterious inheritance and sudden rise from poverty is the result of the criminal Magwitch's success in the wake of his emigration to Australia. In Charlotte Brontë, novel, *Jane Eyre*, Jane's sudden inheritance, which allows her to marry Rochester as an equal, is also of a colonial source, being the product of her poorer relation, John Eyre's, success in Madeira. Becky Sharpe of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* is living in destitution towards the end of the novel, but is able to strike up a lucrative relationship with Jos Sedley who makes his fortune as a tax collector in India. In an even more remarkable return to fortune Arthur Clennam from Dickens' *Little Dorrit* is rescued from debtors prison by the reappearance of his friend and colleague Daniel Doyce after Doyce has spent a large portion of the novel in Russia. The globalized marketplace that imperial Europe created allowed characters to disappear at points in the narrative only to reappear at the most fortuitous time to present their friends and family with unimagined opportunities, or save them from what appears to be inevitable crisis. However despite the belief in the colonies' regenerative powers evident in these texts, there was an

undeniable doubt surrounding the colonial enterprise that spanned form the discourses of racial degeneration, to the suspicion the colonies might be gaining more from he colonial exchange than the mother country.

The folktale of the Weobley changeling raises questions about who really benefited in a colonial exchange, and about the moral obligation one holds to colonial subjects not of the British race. In the Weobley folktale, the oldest son returns from the army to free his mother from her exploitative relationship with the changeling who has an ominously insatiable hunger and yet remains in developmental stagnation. In one reading this folk narrative seems to present a very potent narrative of colonial disillusionment. The exchange with the "foreign" fairy race is an unfair one for the mother. She is saddled with an alien child that usurps her resources, and despite her care shows no promise of development. The fairy exchange pollutes the British family, leaving the family, not revitalized, but with a degenerate, sickly offspring. There is a great deal of British resentment in the subtext of the story, that suggests that the British subject is fearful that the colonial subject has unfairly benefited form the colonial exchange. Enmeshed in racist anxieties of degeneracy it poses a criticism of the colonial enterprise on the grounds of profit—the child of the foreign race is exploitive, insatiable, unresponsive and polluting to the British family.

However, the return of the human child at the end of the account complicates the anxiety and resentment that fuels the first part of the narrative. The human son who had been stolen by the fairies returns home begrudgingly having evidently spent his time in fairyland happy and healthy; he remarks that he will "never be as well off again" (Briggs 118). From the perspective of the stolen child, the exchange with the alien race as been

nurturing. The mortal child's comment even seems to pass judgment upon the human mother's dissatisfaction with the fairy changeling, and the reality that she will be unable to care for her human son as affectively as the fairies could. This part of the tale recalls changeling narratives that frame the changeling exchange more as a failed relationship that should have been reciprocal, rather than as a robbery of British vitality by a degenerate race. Briggs writes of that occasionally in changeling folklore "the mother was told to look after the changeling carefully, so that her own child would be equally well cared for" (117). With this frame for reading the account of the Weobley changeling, it is the mortal mother who fails in her obligation to the "foreign" fairy race, and affects the return of her child that is not necessarily in its favor. At the end of the Weobley account it is uncertain whether the mortal family has lost or gained something in the return of their son—one is asked if the mortal family has purged themselves of a polluted, degenerate child or if they simply removed their son from a position of privilege that is promised by the exchange with the foreign race.

The power of changeling folktales such as the one from Weobley, is that it combines into a single narrative both Britain's imperial anxieties and doubts , as well as Britain's desires and ambitions. In doing so it creates a new type of narrative that deconstructs and reexamines where Britain stood in the colonial exchange. Robert Young in his work *Colonial Desire Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* provides a definition of hybridity that reads as follows:

> At its simplest, however, hybridity implies a disruption and forcing together of any unlike living things [. . .] hybridization can also consist of the forcing of a single entity into two or more parts, severing of a single object into two [. . .]

> Hybridity thus makes difference into sameness, and sameness into difference but in that makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different. (26)

Young uses the idea of hybridity as a model for the way post-modern theory functions, and in Young's tradition of hybridity as theory, it is possible to read hybridity as a remarkably apt model for explaining how changeling narratives worked in the Victorian psyche. The process of grafting anxieties of racial degeneration and disruptive colonial subjects with hopes of economic revitalization, reordered and transformed many of the colonial paradigms—in Young's words it makes the "same no longer same, the different no longer simply different". For an example, the role of Britain as the morally upright, imperial parent who benevolently civilizes the "childlike" races of the world is subverted and reevaluated. The changeling narratives represent imperial parents who are fed up and murderous in their intent to rid themselves of the unruly charges of another race. The colonial "parent" represented in the changeling narrative refutes the confidence and conceit of Britain's civilizing "adulthood" and reveals Britain's anxiety—the state of being saddled with a colonial people that are impossible civilize, are providing no profit (in fact they are voracious eating resources away), and most frightening still, encroaching upon, and polluting the British family and bloodline.

In a similar reevaluation of roles within the colonial exchange the changeling figure itself becomes an ambiguous figure that can indicate both the colonizer and the colonized. The changeling's presence in the family presents both racial pollution and a possibility of racial regeneration. The ravenous appetite of the changeling becomes

indicative of both fears of a racial other draining resources and usurping power, and Britain's own ravenous consumption of land as it colonizes the map. In short, the figure of the changeling becomes a sort of hybrid of colonizer and colonized "other", which rather than prescribing power and privilege within the colonial paradigm, reveals anxiety and ambivalence about the identity and authority of the British colonial self.

The changeling narrative as a way of reexamining the power and identity of the colonial self finds one of its most compelling expressions in the Charlotte Brontë's text *Jane Eyre*. Jane is on numerous occasions in the text explicitly labeled as a changeling or some other type of fairy creature who likewise lives uncomfortably between the fairy and mortal world. This identification is typically bestowed upon Jane by Edward Rochester who in tones both endearing and accusatory calls Jane a "mocking changeling—fairy born and human breed" (442), "malicious elf", "sprite", and "changeling" (276). Rochester also flirtatiously remarks during their first meeting that Jane has "rather the look of another world", and accuses her of bewitching his horse and seeking commune with the "little green men" on Hay Lane (125). However, even before Rochester enters the story Jane has identified herself with the changeling figure. During the famously psychologically formative episode from Jane's childhood in which she is locked in the red room and forced to contemplate the alienation and punishment she suffers in her Aunt's household, Jane catches sight of herself in the mirror and is frightened to see herself as one "of the tiny phantoms, half fairy, half imp," of her nurse, Bessie's bedtime stories (16). Jane's childhood identification with the fairies is indicative of the changeling-like position she occupies at Gateshead. She is orphan, transplanted and raised within a family of whom she eventually denies kinship. Jane is characterized like

the changeling, as a disruptive, wicked, "naughty", "tiresome", "sullen"--anti-social intruder within nursery (17). Jane even comprehends her alienation as physical inferiority to her cousins Eliza, John and Georgina (9). Yet the attribute that truly characterizes Jane as a changeling, is the way her disruptive behavior seems to belong to another figure: one who possess her person to enact rebellion, which the narrating Jane both fears, and on some level desires to perform. While Jane is taken to the red room still feeling angry and rebellious in the wake of the "moment's mutiny" against her cousin John, she notes that she felt "a trifle beside myself; or rather *out* of myself" (14). Jane's rebellious condemnation of Mrs. Reed's treatment of her not long after the incident of the red room, is marked by a similar sense of detachment and alien possession; Jane narrates:

> "What would uncle Reed say to you, if he were alive?" Was my scarcely voluntary demand. I say scarcely voluntary, for it seemed as if my tongue pronounced words without my will consenting to their utterance: something spoke out of me over which I had not control. (30)

In short rebellion and disruption, even when it is warranted and desired by Jane, seems to be belong to alien influence, a shadowy double with whom Jane is grafted into the single, unruly child.

As the novel progresses, the presence of a psychological double for Jane who enacts her more disruptive desires, metaphorically takes on a physical manifestation in the figure of Bertha Mason, Rochester's mad and violent wife. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar famously argue a case for Bertha as Jane's double in their work, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. Gilbert and Gubar present a compelling reading Bertha's appearance on the

night of Jane's wedding. In this scene Jane Eyre awakes in the night to catch sight of Bertha in mirror wearing and then destroying the wedding veil that caused Jane a degree of anxiety. Gilbert and Gubar write:

> On a figurative and psychological level it seems suspiciously clear that the specter of Bertha is still another—indeed the most threatening—avatar of Jane. What Berta now *does*, for instance, is what Jane wants to do. Disliking the "vapory veil" of Jane Rochester, Jane Eyre secretly wants to tear the garments up. Bertha does it for her. Fearing the inexorable "bridal day," Jane would like to put it off. Bertha does that for her too. Resenting the new mastery of Rochester, whom she sees as "*dread* but adored," she wishes to be his equal in size and strength so that she can battle him in contest of their marriage. Bertha, "a big woman, in stature almost equaling her husband," has the necessary "virile force" (chap. 26). Bertha, in other words is Jane's truest and darkest double: she is the angry aspect of the orphan child, the ferocious secret self Jane has been trying to repress ever since her days at Gateshead. (359-60)

The idea of the double who acts upon ones suppressed antisocial desires is of course the subtextual root of Jane changeling identity. Just as changeling folklore explains the strange behavior of loved one by splitting the individual into two figures—the lost love one and the misbehaving fairy intruder—Jane's anger and desire causes her to be split into two figures: the controlled Jane and the Mad Bertha.

As cited earlier, Young's definition of hybridity is "a disruption and forcing together of any unlike living things [. . . it] can also consist of the forcing of a single entity into two or more parts, severing of a single object into two"(26); reading Jane and

Bertha as changeling doubles of each other reveals how their characters, and the figure of the changeling itself, embodies this senses of hybridity. As discussed above, Jane and Bertha are two very "unlike" beings—Jane is small, pale, plain and controlled, while Bertha is tall, dark, at one time very handsome and violently insane—but at a level of plot they often act as a single unit driving the action in the direction of a one desire. In one instance Jane falls asleep thinking of the companionship she has found in Rochester and lamenting the idea of his departure from Thornfield and her company. Jane regretfully muses, "If he does go, the change will be doleful. Suppose he should be absent, spring, summer, and autumn: how joyless sunshine and fine days will seem!" (150). Jane is awakened in the night by Bertha's disembodied laughter so that she may save Rochester from a fire that Bertha has set in his room. The episode brings Jane and Rochester closer together acting almost as an answer to Jane's desires expressed earlier in the night, her fears of abandonment, and the hope she has for continuing and deepening their relationship.

The idea of a hybrid as proposed in the figure of Jane and Bertha reveals an interesting play of power, control and desire within the construction of the self. Bertha as a changeling double to Jane becomes a source of power for Jane. Bertha who is outside social laws in her insanity, is able to assert power and enact desires in which Jane's social self cannot indulge. However despite the potential power and gain the changeling dynamic between Bertha and Jane might award the latter, there is always a sense of menace and danger emanating from Bertha in the fact that as a double of the self, Bertha is frighteningly outside of Jane's control. Moreover one of the most interesting aspects of reading Bertha and Jane's characters within the changeling dynamic is found in the fact

that Charlotte Brontë chooses to inscribe the fates of these characters within the context of Britain's colonial involvement in the West Indies. In changeling folktales the colonial context is implied in the fact that the changeling represents the influence of an alien race, however, *Jane Eyre* provides a changeling narrative in which the colonial context is explicit. In doing so, Charlotte Brontë emphasizes how the power dynamic of the British self expressed by Jane enacting and suppressing desire through a changeling "other", was part of a colonial discourse.

The fates of Jane and Bertha are inscribed in two attempts to find social and economic revitalization through the colonies. Jane's uncle, John Eyre, and Edward Rochester both journey to the West Indies in an attempt to revive their family fortunes. While John Eyre is successful and his fortune is instrumental to bringing about the happy conclusion of the novel, Mr. Rochester's colonial exchange in the West Indies traps him in a marriage with Bertha Mason, who is the epitome of Victorian conceptions of degeneration. She is the daughter of a family whose members are, like herself, declining into mental illness. Moreover this mental illness is conflated with the immorality and vice inherited by her mother who was equally "intemperate" and "unchaste". These traits of mental degradation and immorality are then tied to a suggestion of racial impurity both in the descriptions of Bertha's dark visage, and her families long time residence in the West Indies compounded with the familial history of sexual promiscuity. The two narratives of economic and social regeneration, and of racial and moral degradation becomes the structure through which the privilege and the danger of constructing a colonial self are revealed. The colonies have the power to award Jane the inheritance that restores her to the home she found in Edward Rochester and his household, and at the

same time grants her an independence of selfhood, which she has sought throughout the novel and would not have achieved had she married Rochester when the wedding proposal is first offered. Yet, Jane's antisocial desires, her childhood anger and her feelings of imprisonment as manifested by Bertha, are rewritten as having a source in the contagious racial degeneracy represented Bertha and colonial exchange. Thus Jane and Bertha come to represent the precarious place the colonial occupies as both greatly privileged and potentially open to attack from the so called degenerative influence of other races. Faithful to the structure of a changeling narrative, Jane, the true child, can only claim her home after the fearful changeling double, the manifestation of her dissatisfaction and her antisocial self, is exorcised from the household; moreover the exorcism of Bertha is, as the exorcism often is in the changeling tradition, a fatal incident of fire. However, the most compelling aspect of Brontë's text, and indeed the folk traditions of changelings, is not the story of expelling the influence of "degenerate" racial "other" from the British self and household, but rather the idea of the changeling itself—the notion that Victorian discourse saw the colonial self as a hybrid: an heir to colonial privilege and power but also a victim of the degenerative influence of an "other" race producing the most intimate antisocial impulses within the British self.

Chapter Four

Fairyland:
Reimagining the Colonial adventure out of Time

Until this chapter, fairy literature has been discussed in connection to colonialism of the nineteenth century primarily in terms of Victorian race theory. Fairy creatures became a compelling "other" race onto which the Victorian imagination could graft its most lurid depictions of colonized races. These races ere depicted as almost subhuman sectors of mankind who were degenerate in their moral and physical status, lived in underdeveloped childlike states, and who were dangerous forces of social unrest. Moreover, because the fairy race has it genealogy somewhere between the foreign and domestic, Victorian writers of fairy literature were given a space to reexamine and shed doubt upon the distinctions and differing fates that delineated the "civilized" and "uncivilized" races of he world. It gave the imperial writer a place to reflect upon what was at stake in a colonial economy, and to express the realization that these racialized portraits of degeneration and social disorder could be a depictions of the fallen British self as much as a portrait of an inferior racial "other". However, central to the nineteenth century imperial experience, and its literature and theory, is the conquest of land. The introduction of Darwinian evolution into the politics of colonization and race theories made it so that evolutionary progress and civilization were all attributes that could be mapped upon the world. Colonized spaces, particularly Africa, existed within this

paradigm as an evolutionarily frozen state; on the timeline of man's development, colonial spaces were stuck in a "savage" past while Europe progressed into modernity. Thus, in Victorian literature and ideology, to travel into colonial spaces was to travel back in time, and into mankind's past. In *Imperial Leather*, McClintock terms this construction of time and development upon the colonial map as "anachronistic space," and describes the colonial travelers' experience of moving backwards in time. She writes:

> According to the colonial version of this trope, imperial progress across the space of empire is figured as a journey backward in time to an anachronistic moment of prehistory. By extension, the return journey to Europe is seen as rehearsing the evolutionary logic of historical progress forward and upward to the apogee of the Enlightenment in the European metropolis. Geographical difference across space is figured as a difference across time. The ideologue J. M. Degerando captured this notion concisely: "The philosophical traveler, sailing to the ends of the earth, is in fact traveling in time; he is exploring the past." The stubborn and threatening heterogeneity of the colonies was contained and disciplined not as socially or geographically different from Europe and thus equally valid but as *temporally* different and thus as irrevocably superannuated by history. (40)

As McClintock observes, the Victorian hierarchy of race reconstructed the map placing the colonies and their "uncivilized races" geographically out of time, dissociated from the progress and the present of the metropolis.

The character of Marlow in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* narrates his own experience of traveling backwards in time and evolutionary development as he travels deeper into the colonial Congo. Marlow observes that:

> Going up that river was like traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, and impenetrable forest. The air was warm, thick heavy, sluggish. There was no joy in the brilliance of sunshine. The long stretches of the waterway ran on, deserted, into the gloom of overshadowed distances. On silvery sandbanks hippos and alligators sunned themselves side by side. (Conrad 41)

Marlow describes the Congo as a "strange world of plants, and water, and silence"— it is a primordial space. The world of humidity and water inhabited by ancient creatures, such as alligators, and kinglike trees, recalls a world brewing in the earliest stages of evolution. Meanwhile the "thick heavy, sluggish" air further emphasizes a feeling of stagnation, and the notion of an environment that will not progress, but must loiter in time. To visit such a space is, as Marlow asserts, to travel back into the evolutionary past to the "earliest beginnings of the world." Marlow's description of the journey into anachronistic space is particularly fascinating because it so clearly connects the ideological links between evolutionary development, colonial privilege and the conquest of land. The Congo is a landscape waiting for colonization because it is developmentally lagging in the world's evolutionary past.

In the introduction to *Imperial Leather* McClintock notes that one of the strategies often employed in postcolonial criticism is to find narratives that challenge the validity of a univocal, linear time (10). By setting itself against linear time, postcolonial criticism challenges Victorian ideologies of progress, evolutionary and racial hierarchies, and the geographical map of primordial colonies to the modern metropolis that was asserted by

narratives of colonial conquest. What is less often noted is that in the genre of fairy literature and folklore, British culture of the nineteenth century already had a body of narrative and tradition that played with the validity of linear time. One of the most recognizable features of Fairyland is that time passes incredibly slowly in comparison to the mortal world. A common and ancient trope of Fairyland is that of the mortal traveler, who having spent only a short time in the fairy realm, returns to find that lifetimes have passed in the mortal realm (Briggs 104). Though less common, the paradigm of fairy and mortal time can be reversed, particularly when Fairyland is likened to the dream world. Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is one of the most well-known stories in which time passes faster than it would in the mortal realm because of the dreamlike quality in Carroll's Fairyland. Alice awakens after a long and complex adventure to find herself on the riverbank beside her sister where the story had begun. Jean Ingelow's *Mopsa the Fairy* also reverses the Fairy and mortal time paradigm: Jack returns from his adventures in Fairyland fearful that parents will have missed him, only to discover that time in Fairyland passed in such a way that they had not yet noticed that he was gone (205). Whether time runs supernaturally slow or supernaturally fast, the journey into Fairyland is one that breaks from the assumptions of a single, linear time frame. However, what should be even more compelling to the postcolonial critic is the way the subject of Fairyland draws a connection between these journeys out of linear time and the exploration of a new land.

In the colonial narrative, the journey into the colonies is one that moves backward in time into a primordial landscape; in the Fairyland narrative, the journey is strikingly similar—it too is often a journey backward in time and sometimes even into the

primordial—yet in Fairyland this movement often signifies anti-colonial desires and subverts the attributes of a colonial journey. In the colonial narrative, the journey into the past affirms the forward progress of Britain's industrialized and modernized society. It places imperial, industrialized Britain at the triumphant endpoint of civilization's timeline, characterizing the metropolis as the present and the colonies as lagging behind in time and development. The traveler into Fairyland also explores a pre-industrial past, but their journey is laden with nostalgia. The past civilizations that the Fairyland traveler discovers are those of the genteel Middle Ages rather than man's early "savage" civilizations. Rather than affirming the virtue of industrialization, Fairyland narratives throw doubt upon modernity as the peak of civilization by experiencing modern, industrial Britain as a loss.

In nineteenth-century literature, Fairyland typically retains the archaic or medieval elements of earlier folklore. In *Mopsa the Fairy*, Mopsa becomes queen of a seemingly medieval race of fairies who dwell in a "grand hall" and are described as a court of fairy knights and ladies ruled a fairy King and Queen (Ingelow 228). While MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin* does not feature a Victorian traveler falling into Fairyland, the entire world of the novel is set in a fairy world where goblins and fairy grandmothers dwell; more pointedly this fairy world is markedly medieval in both its descriptive make-up and its values of fidelity (as noted in Chapter Two). The medieval, courtly attributes in these depictions of Fairyland are indicative of fairy literature's heritage in the highly nostalgic and often anti-industrial, medieval revivalist movement of Romantic and Victorian literature and art. Medieval and archaic fairies thread through the work of many of the most prominent Romantic and Victorian poets—Keats' "Belle

Femme Sans Merci" or "Lamia" and Tennyson's Arthurian "Lady of Shalott" represent just a few the texts containing these medieval revivalist fairy figures. For writers and artists such as William Morris and John Ruskin, medievalism was political as well as aesthetic in that it developed in reaction to the social ills of Britain's rapid industrialization. The anti-industrial medievalism which prompted artistic movements, like Morris' Arts and Crafts group driven by the belief that one must aesthetically travel back in time because the pre-industrial middle ages held something vital that had been lost to modern society.[16] This idea proposed an inadvertent challenge to the imperial map or timeline of civilizations. The industrialized metropolis is not the pinnacle of civilization; in fact, for the medieval revivalist the entire notion of a linear progression of civilization cannot hold validity because British culture needed to be revitalized by a journey back in time to the Middle Ages. Therefore, the medieval nature of Fairyland is a nineteenth-century trope that reveals its anti-industrial political heritage. Through this heritage, the Fairyland journey back in time proposes a counter narrative to that of the colonial journey back in time; for rather than affirming Victorian Britain's present as a state of imperial and industrial power and progress, it echoes the nostalgia of medieval revivalists for whom the modern, industrial metropole is an agent of loss.

A medieval or archaic character is one of the most widespread attributes of Fairyland, but even in depictions of Fairyland that do not reflect this medieval past, there is still often a connection made between a nostalgic pre-industrial lifestyle and the

[16] Mainly what Morris felt had been lost in the industrial age was the value of craftsmanship and the personal relationship the worker had with his product and his patrons. In this way Morris' desire to return to the artist-product-consumer relationship of medieval craftsmanship echoes MacDonald's portrayal of Curdie's fidelity to Irene: both Morris and MacDonald seek to return to pre-industrial social relationships that they felt were more stable and fulfilling.

landscape of Fairyland. At the end of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice's sister imagines the sounds of her rural surroundings as the sounds of Wonderland. The passage runs as follows:

> So she sat on, with closed eyes, and half believed herself in Wonderland, though she knew she had but to open them again, and all would change to dull reality—the grass would be only rustling in the wind, and the pool ripping to the waving of the reeds—the rattling teacups would change to tinkling sheep-bells, and the Queen's shrill cries to the voice of the shepherd boy—and the sneeze of the baby, the shriek of the Gryphon, and all the other queer noises, would change (she knew) to the confused clamor of the busy farm-yard—while the lowing of the cattle in the distance would take the place of the Mock Turtle's heavy sobs. (192)

Carroll constructs the rural landscape as a doorway into Fairyland. The imaginings of Alice's sister reveal that it is literally the sounds of the farmyard that have allowed Alice to fall into Wonderland. While Carroll's Wonderland is not a journey into the past in the way that Ingelow or MacDonald's medieval Fairylands suggest, it still situates Wonderland in a pastoral, pre-industrial landscape. Moreover the passage and the landscape are pervaded with feelings of nostalgia and loss. The older sister's musings move seamlessly into a meditation upon adulthood and childhood as the sister imagines Alice's future as a grown woman who "through all her riper years" has not lost the "simple and loving heart of her childhood." In one sense Carroll attempts to circumvent the inevitable loss implied in the move from childhood to adulthood, yet this is only passingly successful. Carroll does not leave the reader with the adult Alice who retains the "heart of her childhood," but with adult sister who is exiled from Wonderland able

only to "half-believe." The feeling and expression of exile and loss is intertwined with the pastoral landscape. The rural landscape emits mournful sounds, the "shrill cries" of the shepherd boy, and the lowing of the cattle, which sound like "heavy sobs" all of which express the passages' highly nostalgic tone. Thus, while Carroll's Wonderland is not steeped in medievalism it still recalls an anti-industrial sentiment in that it depicts the pre-industrial landscape as a site of loss and nostalgia.

The final passages in Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* draw upon a connection between nostalgia for childhood and the nostalgia for a pre-industrial landscape, and in doing so, point to a second interesting reversal of the narrative of the colonial journey. The association of childhood with nature, innocence and nostalgia for the rural landscape is not specific to fairy literature or even the Victorian era, but it is a particularly prominent theme in the Romanticism. For an example works such as Wordsworth's "Imitations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" or Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* provide excellent demonstrations of the way childhood innocence and feelings of loss play upon the pastoral landscape. However, the rise of evolutionary theory in the Victorian era engendered childhood with a body of associations oriented around imperialism and race, which were mismatched with the Romantic associations of childhood with nostalgia and the natural landscape. As detailed in Chapter One, notions of a "childhood of man" arose out of the theories that proposed that colonized races were evolutionarily under-developed compared to the civilizations of Europe. Thus the timeline, or gradation of man's evolutionary development, that was imposed upon the map was fully immersed in this discourse of colonized people living in a "childhood" of civilization. The colonial journey backward along the timeline of

evolutionary development was therefore a journey back into a childhood of sorts. Thus Fairyland narratives and colonial narratives orient themselves as journeys into a "childhood"; however rather than revealing some type of likeness between these two journeys into a developmental past, all that is revealed is the disconnect and contradiction between the various ideologies which constructed childhood in the Victorian psyche.

It is important to note that the tie between Fairyland and childhood, though in some way almost always tied to a Romantic sense of pre-industrial nostalgia, has an older heritage that is more explicitly tied to the unusual flow of time in Fairyland. The mythological Irish Fairyland west across the sea where the Tuatha De Danann retreated after the Sons of Mil conquered them, was named Tir Nan Og meaning "Land of the Young" (Briggs, *Encyclopedia* 400). Tir Nan Og gets is named for the apparent immortality and continuant youth of inhabitants because time in Tir Nan Og can hardly be said to pass at all (Briggs, *Fairies* 104). This idea of halted time preserving a childhood suggests an even stronger juxtaposition between the Fairyland and the Colonial journey. The travelers in both the colonial and the Fairyland narrative explore a land that is sluggish or frozen in time and its occupants consequently forever childlike—the premise of J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan; or the Boy who wouldn't Grow up* being the classic of example of such a story. However, for the colonial adventurer the land of childhood they visit is degraded and "savage" in its lack of development, and it is a space in which one enters as a colonizing, "Adult" force ready to claim authority. Fairyland on the other hand is a land of childhood that one escapes into so that one might temporarily avoid or subvert the authority of adulthood—Fairyland is a space where one might choose, like Barrie's Peter Pan, simply not to grow up. In a more subtle denial of adulthood, the older

sister's final musings in Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* reflects upon the inevitability of Alice's adulthood, but casts the adventure in Wonderland almost as a talisman against the full effects of adult development:

> this same little sister of hers would, in the after-time, be herself a grown woman; and how she would keep, through all her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood: and how she would gather about her other little children, and make their eyes bright and eager with many a strange tale, perhaps even with the dream of Wonderland of long ago. (192)

The passage suggests that the adventure in Wonderland allows Alice to keep her "the simple and loving heart of her childhood" despite becoming a grown woman. Alice is pictured as an adult, who like Carroll himself, seeks the company of children and in a second-hand way never really leaves childhood. The word choice in the phrase "she would gather about her *other* little children" serves to emphasize the notion that the grown Alice will still be, by virtue of her tales of Wonderland, very much one of the children herself. Fairyland, as described by Barrie and Carroll, is a place where one might fulfill the nostalgic desire to remain a child; it is a place where one may fall out of time and development to escape adulthood. Fairyland adventures in nineteenth- century literature emulate the colonial journey back in time and into a childlike state but rather than asserting the benefits of Britain's progress and evolutionary development, it expresses nostalgia and doubt about progress and development, and celebrates a suspension of these forces. The Fairyland adventure reveals a slippage in the idea of childhood as it was constructed in the Victorian imagination by both a Romantic pre-industrial nostalgia and the ideologies of race, evolution and progress. Fairyland

narratives reveal that tied up in one of colonialism's most pervasive narratives—the "childhood" of "savage" nations—there were counter desires whose politics doubted the edicts of inevitable progress and industry, central to the building of an empire.

The last prominent element, which ties nineteenth-century Fairyland travels to the narrative of the colonial journey, is the idea of primordial space. In Victorian writing to explore colonial lands is often to journey into a landscape of the world's evolutionary origins, or as Joseph Conrad describes it, a journey into the "earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings" (41). Fairyland is also often characterized as a primordial landscape, yet it is a vastly different landscape associated with Eden rather than a world evolutionary origins. The association between Eden and Fairyland was established in fairy tradition long before it appeared in the novels of nineteenth century writers. The folklorist Thomas Keightley relates a Welsh folktale concerning a race of fairies named the Tylwyth Têg and their edenic abode near a lake in Brecknock, Wales. He writes:

> In ancient times a door in a rock near this lake was found open upon a certain day every year. I think it was Mayday. Those who had the curiosity and resolution to enter were conducted by a secret passage, which terminated in a small island in the centre of the lack. Here the visitors were surprised with the prospects of a most enchanted garden stored with the choicest fruits and flowers, and inhabited by the Tylwyth Têg, or Fair Family, a kind of Fairies, whose beauty was equaled only by the courtesy and affability which they exhibited to those who pleased them. They gathered fruit and flowers for each of their guests, entertained them

> with the most exquisite music, and disclosed to them many secrets of futurity. (408)

Not unexpectedly, the folktale ends with Man's exile from the paradisal garden when a visitor steals a flower from its grounds. Keightley's description of the Tylwyth Têg's carries a strong likeness to the Irish mythological Fairyland, Tir Nan Og, which Katherine Briggs describes as an "earthly paradise [. . .] a land of beauty, where the grass was always green and fruit and flowers could be picked together, where feasting, music, love, hunting, and joyous fighting went on all day and death made no entry" (*Encyclopedia* 400). The evolutionarily primordial landscape of the colonies and the primordial Eden of Fairyland provides another intriguing juxtaposition. They represent two primordial spaces, but they are, like the notion of childhood, constructed by two entirely different forces in the Victorian imagination. The primordial landscape of Conrad's narrative draws from a scientific and Darwinian imagination while the primordial Fairyland returns to the religious and paradisal images. The incongruity between the imaginative forces creating the primordial spaces in Fairyland and the colonial map becomes even more striking nineteenth-century children's literature.

Carroll's Alice catches her first glance of Wonderland through a miniature 15-inch door locked with a golden key. The Fairyland that awaits on the other side is described as "the loveliest garden you ever saw" with "beds of bright flowers" and "cool fountains" (Guttenberg Chap 1). Kenneth Grahame's narrator in *The Golden Age* (1895) similarly believes himself to be in Fairyland when he sneaks into the neighbor's country estate and meets a Princess. The narrator initially names the new found land "the Garden of Sleep"—he only later calls it Fairyland, though the characterization is always there

(52). The Garden's supernatural quality is marked by the landscape's transition from the lively tangle of brambles to the still, otherworldly quality of the tamed formal garden. The narrator describes the transition:

> Gone was the brambled waste, gone the flickering tangle of woodland. Instead, terrace after terrace of shaven sward, stone-edged, urn cornered, stepped delicately down to where the stream, now tamed and educated, passed from one to another marble basin, in which on occasion gleams of red hinted at gold-fish poised among the spreading water-lilies. The scene lay silent and slumberous in the brooding noonday sun: the drowsing peacock squatted humped on the lawn, no fish leaped in the pools, no bird declared himself from the trim secluded hedges. Self-confessed it was here, then, at last, the Garden of Sleep! (48)

Grahame and Carroll both take the paradisal garden of Fairyland described in the mythology of the Tylwyth Têg and Tir Nan Og and domesticate it, rewriting the tame, formal Garden of the Victorian household into a magic, Edenic landscape. The domesticated Eden proposed in Grahame and Carroll's works finds its full expression in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911) that places at the center of the narrative the mysterious locked Garden, which remains a secret save to children in household, Mary, Dickon and Colin creating one of the most lasting images of Paradise to be found in children's literature.

Frances Hodgson Burnett's depiction of the coming spring to the secret garden provides makes even more explicit how the domestic Eden proposed by Carroll and Grahame engendered a familiar, domesticated landscape with a sense of wonder and

adventure. Burnett describes the children experiencing the "magic" of spring in the garden:

> They always called it Magic and indeed it seemed like it in the months that followed--the wonderful months—the radiant months—the amazing ones. Oh! The things which happened in that garden! If you have never had a garden, you cannot understand, and if you have had a garden you will know that it would take a whole book to describe all that came to pass there. At first it seemed that green things would never cease pushing their way through the earth [. . .] The seeds Dickon and Mary had planted grew as if fairies had tended them [. . .] they came alive day by day, hour by hour. Fair fresh leaves, and buds—and buds—time at first but swelling and working Magic until they burst and uncurled into cups of scent delicately spilling themselves over the brims and filling the garden air [. . .] Also you could make the acquaintance of strange busy insect things running about on various unknown but evidently serious errands [. . .] climbing blades of grass as if they were trees from whose tops one could look out to explore the country [. . .] Ants' ways, beetles' ways, bees' ways, frogs' ways, birds' ways, plants' ways, gave [Colin] a new world to explore." (297)

Burnett's secret garden in the spring rewrites a common landscape, the British garden, into something wondrous and almost supernatural complete with fairy-tended seeds and buds that work "magic until they burst". Moreover, the familiar landscape of the English garden is transformed by Burnett into a place exploration for Colin, and the other children, who discover a "new world" in the ways of ants, beetles, bees and frogs.

The remarkable discovery something new in familiar through the miniature perspective of ants and beetles, which is proposed by Burnett, is a recurrent theme in fairy literature of the nineteenth century.[17] The miniature world of Fairy is about discovering new dimensions within a familiar space: it is about finding unexpected worlds contained within one's own backyard, and the rediscovery by the miniaturization of one's perspective, of the extraordinary in a landscape that had become mundane. One of the most famous encounters with the miniature world of fairy is that of Blake's encounter with a fairy funeral. The account is first recorded in Allan Cunningham's *Lives of the most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors and Architects* (1830). Blake is said to have related a story:

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[17] The notion that a miniaturized, fairy perception might transform something familiar and mundane into something remarkable, has its antecedent in the earlier fairy poetry of the 16th an 17th century. Shakespeare's Queen Mab who is no bigger than an agate stone, delivers men their dreams in a carriage, "drawn by a team of little atomies". Shakespeare's Mercutio continues to describe her minute coach:

Her wagon spokes made of long spinners legs / The cover of the wings of grasshoppers; / Her traces of the smallest spider's web / Her collars, of the moonshine's wat're deams; / Her whip of cricket's bone; the lash of film; / Her wagoner, a small gray-coated gnat, / Not half so big as round little worm; / Her chariot is an empty hazelnut (i.iv. ln 55-67 pg 38-9)

Queen Mab's coach is a made of the refuse of the mundane insect world—spider legs, grasshopper wings, cricket bones built into a hollowed hazelnut—but when cobbled together in a miniaturized world these bits and pieces of the ordinary become the delicate, if somewhat grotesque, carriage of a fairy queen. Michael Drayton, in his work *Nymphidia* also makes use of scraps of common animals to construct his fantastical and grotesque fairy palace. Drayton writes: "The walls of spiders' legs are made / Well mortised and finely laid; / He was the master of his trade / It curiously that builded ; The windows of the eyes of cats, / And for the roof, instead of slats, Is covered with the skins of bats, / With moonshine that are gilded" (ln 41-8). For both Drayton and Shakespeare the miniature perspective of the Fairy world dissects and transfigures objects and creatures from the familiar natural world into something bizarre and extraordinary.

> I was walking alone in my garden, there was a great stillness among the branches and flowers and more than common sweetness in the air; I heard a low and pleasant sound, and I knew not whence it came. At last I saw the broad leaf of a flower move, and underneath I saw a procession of creatures of the size and color of green and gray grasshoppers, bearing a body laid out on a rose leaf, which they buried with songs, and then disappeared. It was a fairy funeral.' (qtd. Bentley 65, Briggs 162, Silver 14)

Blake's discovery of fairies in his garden expresses a desire for miniaturized worlds that might populate even the most familiar spaces. It represents the desire to rediscover one's home territory and find there something extraordinary, and thoroughly unexpected.

The familiar yet remarkable, Eden proposed by all three these authors could not be more different from the primordial space visited by the colonial traveler. Marlow's journey into Congo is marked by exoticism and wildness: its riotous vegetation, great impenetrable forests and powerful, tropical humidity. On the other hand the primordial space, the Eden, of Carroll, Grahame and Burnett's novels are trimmed, cultivated landscapes of hedges, ponds, and flowerbeds. Unlike the wild Congo these Edenic gardens are domestic both in the sense that they belong to the British climate and that they are tamed and cultivated. The colonial adventure and the journey into Fairyland both frame themselves as explorations of new land, which has a special primordial draw; however where the colonial adventure reveals a landscape with something adventurously compelling in its alien and uncultivated state, the Fairyland narrative encounters a tamed, familiar landscape whose position in the Fairyland journey suddenly engenders it with sense of novelty and wonder.

In light of colonial exploration, the desire expressed by Fairyland to rediscover familiar home territory as something adventurous and remarkable reveals a politics beneath its the surface that is very ambivalent about the virtue of Britain's imperial project. In fact the very image of a locked or walled garden suggests an isolationist's politics rather than the globalized politics of colonialism. It is indicative of an anxiety about foreign influence which was, as the discussion of the anxieties of degeneration and hybridity proved in Chapters Two and Three, inevitable the colonial exchange. Yet ultimately what marks the domestic Edens of nineteenth-century Fairyland adventures as isolationist in their politics is the fact that they present an alternative to the colonial adventure narrative. The Fairyland journey offers, like colonial journey, an adventure into new land—a land that is mysterious, primordial, divorced from modern of time—yet the Fairyland adventure ends not in the conquest of foreign land but in the revaluation of Britain's own landscape.

While isolationist politics seems to float in background of all the depictions of the domestic Eden, it is Burnett's *The Secret Garden* that takes these sentiments to their fullest expression, and distills them into a statement that explicitly critical of the Britain's colonial involvement. *The Secret Garden* centers around the rehabilitation of two children: Colin Craven, who is crippled by a childhood spent believing that he is going to die, and Mary Lennox who, unloved and neglected by her parents in India, develops a sour disposition. Both these characters are transformed into healthy, affectionate children by tending the secret garden, and discovering the "Magic" and value of the British landscape. In the story of Mary Lennox offers an interesting reading of Britain's colonial involvement as neglectful and harmful of its own future. Mary's parents, who are of the

class of imperialist administrators, are too involved with their social affairs abroad, to tend to their domestic obligations. As a result, Mary is never properly socialized. At one point in the novel it is revealed that Mary is unable to dress herself, because she is so accustomed to having her needs met by Indian servants (33) In another instance Mrs. Crawford, who looks after Mary as she awaits passage back to England after her parents' death, remarks: "her mother was such a pretty creature. She had a very pretty manner too, and Mary has the most unattractive ways I ever saw in a child" (13). Mr. Crawford's reply suggests that the Lennox's neglect of their domestic affairs is to blame for Mary's unsociability; he observes that "perhaps if [Mary's] mother had carried her pretty face and pretty manners oftener into the nursery Mary might have learned some pretty ways too [. . .] many people never even knew that she had a child at all" (13). Thus the future of Britain's imperial class, as symbolized by Mary, is a privileged, but marked by unsocial tendencies and incapability and debilitating lack of independence breed by the colonial social system.

Burnett further asserts the idea of Britain's poorly cultivated and bleak future in the colonies when she depicts Mary in barren garden in India. Unlike the secret garden in England, which becomes abundant with flowers and vines, the play garden in India is no more that "heaps of earth and paths," and a heap of stones that pretend to be a rockery (*Secret Garden* 11). The garden of stones and earth in India suggest a barrenness and futility in colonial figure's efforts to bring forth to anything vital from the foreign land. In the image of the British child playing in a barren garden ,there is a great deal criticism of the imperial project and political weight to the idea of a British figure unable to cultivate the land of its foreign conquests.

Burnett poses an even more explicit criticism of Britain's colonial involvement through the voice of Dickon's mother, Susan Sowerby, who is portrayed as a wise, moral influence in the novel. Sowerby is quoted as giving her children an intriguingly anti-imperial lesson in geography:

> When I was at school my jography told as th' world was shaped like a orange an' I found out before I was then that th' whole orange doesn't belong to nobody [. . .] there's no sense in grabbin at th' whole orange—peel an' all. If you do you'll likely not get even the pips, an' them's too bitter to eat (245)

However while the criticism of colonial involvement is clearly present in Susan Sowerby's geography lesson, it is framed in very Anglocentric terms. "Grabbing the whole orange" is presented as a bad policy not so much because it promotes inequality—granting one power more "orange" than it deserves—but because "grabbing the whole orange" has the dangerous potential of leaving one with the inedible, the pips and peel. Susan Sowerby's sentiments are that it is better to focus one's own quarter world because the conquest of other lands had the possibility of saddling the imperialist with "pips and peel," territories more trouble and bitter than they were worth.

Thus while the rural, pre-industrial landscape nostalgically imagined by Fairyland literature does reveal sense of doubt in the virtue of the edicts of progress, industry and modernity underpinning colonial expansion; and while the journey into Fairyland might reclaim and subvert the colonial narrative by rewriting the experience of the familiar and domestic landscape of the British garden as an adventure into mysterious, and wondrous, uncharted lands; the anti-colonial implications of these narratives are of a very conservative, Anglocentric variety. They reveal a focus on the British self—which in one

form or other, has threads through all of the discussions of fairies in this thesis—and reveals that even at its most unequivocally critical of the imperial project, the criticisms made in fairy literature remained within an ideology which viewed the privilege and protection of the British self as paramount.

Conclusion

One of the most evocative and pervasive images in Victorian fairy literature is that of the looking glass. It appears as a doorway into another world in Lewis Carroll's second novel, *Alice through the Looking Glass*. In Charles Kingsley's *Water-Babies,* Tom's journey is set into motion by a frightfully alienating encounter with the looking glass in Ellie's bathroom; Tom is faced with a "little black ape" that he is ashamed and astonished to realize is himself (Kingsley 22). Jane Eyre's formative childhood experience in red room features a similarly alienating encounter with a mirror. Jane recognizes herself as the inhuman specter in the glass, one "of the tiny phantoms, half fairy, half imp" of nursery tales (16). Even Jack from Jean Ingelow's *Mopsa the Fairy* encounters an unsettling mirror image of himself at the end of the novel when he meets a fairy prince who is to rule beside Mopsa as a fairy king. The moment is narrated as a sudden, uncanny moment of self-recognition: "the boy turned and then Jack felt as if he was looking at himself in the glass" (168). The recurrent image of the looking glass. and the uncanny mirror image points toward a conclusion which I hope has become evident over the course of this analysis: the idea that fairy tradition was a medium through which Victorian writers attempted to uncover an image of the British self. Moreover the uncanny and often frightening appearances of the mirror reveal that this British self was an uncomfortable manifestation, and haunted by the anxieties and discontinuities that arose as imperial Britain attempted to navigate an identity within Victorian conceptions of race and power.

One of the objectives of this project was to situate the Victorian fascination in fairy lore within the context of Britain's imperial ideologies. This ambition led to a related examination of the role evolutionary theory played in Victorian culture during the second half of the nineteenth century. Evolutionary theory was an essential component to many cultural narratives underpinning Britain's imperial authority including the characterization of colonized people as "children" ruled by the "adult" administration of the metropole, and the characterization of colonized races as degenerate. Fairy literature complicated these narratives. It revealed the underground feeling of anxiety and skepticism inherent these ideologies. The fairy stories of goblins and changelings didn't reproduce stories of degenerate "other" races in a way that simply asserted the belief in British superiority; rather fairy literature was far more consumed with imagining the dangerous potential for degeneration within the British self and British populace as it came into contact with the supposed contagious degeneracy of other races and classes.

In Victorian fairy stories the imperial paradigm of colonized "children" and colonizing "adults" is also approached with skepticism concerning the virtue of imperial exchange. The ruling power of adulthood is frequently satirized and portrayed as ineffective and even vulnerable. Meanwhile, childhood—which in the context of folklore scholarship strongly carries the implication of a "primitive" state civilization—is met with tones of nostalgia and desire. Moreover the sense of loss and desire which encompasses Victorian childhood, was intimately tied in fairy literature to the nostalgia for a thoroughly domestic pre-industrial landscape. Thus much of the desire expressed in Victorian fairy literature does not align the Imperial edicts of industry, progress, "adult"

authority, and exploration in foreign territory; rather, it reveals a dissatisfaction, if not a disbelief in the narratives of imperial authority and progress.

However, despite the critique of imperial expansion that is implicated at times within the fairy literature discussed in this thesis, these texts still remain entrenched in colonial ideologies. The isolationist politics that is suggested in the locked, archetypically English gardens of Burnett, Carroll, and Grahame suggest a longing for a cultural purity. They proposes a wall that keeps out the influence of anything that might not match their domestic—both in the sense of being well civilized and native to Britain—interiors. It is suggestive of the same deeply racist anxiety about the degenerative influence of the colonial (and racial) "other" that threaded through the folklore and literary depictions of goblins and changelings.

Yet while Victorian fairy literature might not consciously or in any conclusive way critique imperial ideology, the ambivalence of fairy literature reveals how these cultural narratives take on a life of their own, often subverting their original intentions. The Victorian discourses of racial hierarchy, degenerate colonial classes, and childlike "savage", civilizations, did not produce imperial confidence as they were meant too, but by the middle of the nineteenth century, these very same narratives had transformed to denote the dangers, anxiety and possible failures of Britain's position as an imperial power.

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