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Citation: Vuohelainen, M. (2006). "Oh to Get out of that Room!": Outcast London and the Gothic Twist in the Popular Fiction of Richard Marsh'. In: Sayer, K. (Ed.), *Victorian Space(s)*. Leeds Centre Working Papers in Victorian Studies, VIII. (pp. 115-126). Leeds: Trinity and All Saints, University of Leeds.

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‘Oh to get out of that room!’:

Outcast London and the Gothic twist in the popular fiction of Richard Marsh

I

A ‘grim spectre of anguish’, asserts a writer of the 1890s, ‘stalks unheeded by’ the ‘mighty heart of the richest city that the world has ever known’.¹ A contemporary agrees that his readers may not believe in the existence of this monster: ‘We shall not wonder if some, shuddering at the revolting spectacle, try to persuade themselves that such things cannot be in Christian England, and that what they have looked upon is some dark vision conjured by a morbid pity and a desponding faith’.² The first writer further insists that ‘the Armies of Light have already been waging’ a ‘great battle... in the darkest portion of poorest London’³ against this evil presence, though they cannot claim to have conquered it. The two writers, A. Osborne Jay and Andrew Mearns, both of them clergymen, are not speaking of a Mr Jekyll, a Count Dracula or even a Jack the Ripper, though their language might suggest it; their topic is instead ‘the greatest problem of our time’,⁴ urban decay and extreme poverty in the slums of the notorious space termed ‘outcast London’.

This paper analyses the interaction between the slum writings of the late-nineteenth-century social workers and the Gothic horror fiction of ‘Richard Marsh’, a sadly neglected popular author of the turn of the century. Only a handful of scholars have written about Marsh (1857-1915) or his work, generally focusing on his novel *The Beetle. A Mystery* (1897), which makes an excellent comparison with Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*.⁵ Yet Marsh’s *oeuvre*, some of which was written under his real name, Bernard Heldmann, amounts to sixty-one novels, twenty-three short-story collections and in excess of 230 short stories or short serials. In genre, this remarkable body of work ranges from school and adventure stories for boys to occult horror, from detection to popular romance, from war and invasion stories to sensation fiction, from ghost stories to anarchist thrillers. A very up-to-date writer, Marsh affords his twenty-first-century reader a wonderful insight into mainstream British interests and concerns at the turn of the century.

This paper examines the representation of outcast London in Marsh's popular fiction, focusing on two of the author's Gothic horror novels, *The Beetle. A Mystery* (1897) and *The Joss. A Reversion* (1901). The two are among Marsh's best work; *The Beetle* was in every respect his most successful piece of writing, rivalling and, in fact, clearly outselling its close contemporary, Stoker's vampire classic *Dracula*, well into the twentieth century;⁶ *The Joss* could be seen as a reworking of the earlier success. Both novels depict the plight of impoverished protagonists trapped inside decaying urban and domestic spaces inhabited by racially alien monsters. In *The Beetle*, the impoverished and unemployed clerk Robert Holt enters a seemingly empty house, where he falls under the spell of an evil Egyptian of indeterminate sex. Not only is this alien presence in possession of considerable mesmeric powers; it also has the ability to transform itself into the monstrous beetle of the novel's title and in this shape sexually assaults men and women alike. In *The Joss*, the unemployed and desperate shopgirls Pollie Blythe and Emily Purvis reluctantly take their abode in a derelict house that Pollie has unexpectedly inherited. However, their new home also contains a sinister secret resident, Pollie's supposedly deceased uncle Benjamin Batters. This eccentric Englishman has in his travels in the east been mutilated by a Pacific tribe into an outrageous living Oriental idol, the joss of the novel's title, and endowed with magic powers. As he proceeds to detain the two girls inside his derelict, prison-like house, the shelter it initially affords them is transformed into a trap.

This paper begins by situating *The Beetle* and *The Joss* in the context of the contemporary debate on poverty, establishing that journalistic and fictional accounts of squalid living conditions often overlap and interact at the turn of the century. The paper considers the representation of outcast London as an alien territory, 'Darkest London' or a moral 'Abyss', noting the sensationalist depiction of urban poverty in semi-factual journalistic and scientific accounts. It argues that, like other examples of turn-of-the-century horror, fantasy and science fiction, Marsh's novels lift the exaggeration inherent in the social investigators' accounts onto a new Gothic level that transforms the experience and representation of poverty into a displaced sense of horror and

monstrosity. The paper concludes with an exploration of this Gothic twist in Marsh's fiction, examining the transformation of squalid, yet domestic, interiors into imaginary Gothic spaces of darkness, danger and entrapment.

II

Marsh's writing on outcast London was part of a national debate on poverty, unemployment and urban decay in turn-of-the-century Britain. Greater London had grown at an uncomfortable pace in the nineteenth century, expanding from a million inhabitants in 1801 to four million in 1881, and reaching seven million by 1911. As a result, the poorest Londoners crowded into increasingly uncomfortable, insalubrious and cramped conditions in the slums, the East End in particular becoming a symbol of urban decay.⁷ The issue of 'outcast London' was debated in the national press and in Parliament, which looked at such issues as unemployment, the housing of the poor and sweated labour at the time when Marsh was covering these subjects.⁸ In fiction, poverty was a frequent topic for the school of Literary Naturalism, including such writers as George Gissing and Arthur Morrison. More importantly, however, urban poverty was eagerly taken up by a host of social explorers, missionaries and early sociologists, whose forays into the East End of London produced dozens of accounts of outcast London.⁹ These emotive writings achieved enormous sales, bringing the East End to public consciousness from the mid-1880s.¹⁰

The social investigators presented their findings in startling detail. The most scientific of these surveys, Charles Booth's monumental study of *The Life and Labour of the People of London* (1889-1902), meticulously mapped London street by street, evaluating the relative wealth of each area and showing an alarming proximity between wealth and squalor throughout the imperial metropolis. The observers commented on the dreariness of slum streets: 'in the slums... all is a monotone – a sombre grey deepening into the blackness of the night'.¹¹ They also noted the insalubrious character of these 'pestilential human rookeries':

[Y]ou have to penetrate courts reeking with poisonous and malodorous gases arising from accumulations of sewage and refuse scattered in all directions and often flowing beneath your feet; courts, many of which the sun never penetrates, which are never visited by a breath of fresh air, and which rarely know the virtues of a drop of cleansing water. You have to ascend rotten staircases, which threaten to give way beneath every step... You have to grope your way along dark and filthy passages swarming with vermin.¹²

The depictions of domestic interiors in the slums of London were, similarly, characterised by a general state of filth, unpleasant smells and a conspicuous lack of furniture. In his explorations, George R Sims discovered ‘crumbling’ and ‘mildewed’ walls ‘streaming with damp’, ceilings ‘black and peeling off’, and floors ‘rotten and broken away’.¹³ ‘[H]ow can those places be called homes, compared with which the lair of a wild beast would be a comfortable and healthy spot?’, Andrew Mearns challenges the reader.¹⁴ The appeal to the middle-class virtues of domesticity and cleanliness could hardly be expressed in stronger terms.

The social explorers generally distinguish between the poor and the outcast population; while the respectable poor were seen as at risk of getting ‘hopelessly entangled in [the] labyrinth’ of the slums,¹⁵ the dangerous outcast classes were, by comparison, seen as beyond the reach of help. Visiting them was characterised as a descent into an abyss: ‘We go lower still, until we come to darkened homes, where live violent fathers, indifferent mothers, and unkempt children. Still lower, till we arrive at the residuum of society, where unrestrained passions have full sway, and all the sweeping torrent of blackened iniquity rolls along in its course, drowning virtue and swamping goodness’.¹⁶ In this ‘darker zone: a subterranean, rayless vault – the commonwealth of the double night’ morality is extinct and ‘even the soul’s torch goes out; hence there is twofold darkness’¹⁷ as ‘people condemned to exist under such conditions take to drink and fall into sin’.¹⁸ The language used to evoke the misery of life in outcast London is particularly sensationalist in its evangelical insistence on the impending submersion in sin and fall into the abyss.

Not only did the social explorers’ descriptions of poverty emphasise the moral corruption accompanying it; they also depicted their topic in strikingly racial and imperial tones,

drawing comparisons between the benighted colonial subjects and the indigenous poor.¹⁹ Abject poverty was described in terminology which emphasised the ‘darkness’ and racial deviance of the inhabitants of slumland, imposing a slice of Africa on London. ‘As there is a darkest Africa is there not also a darkest England?’, enquired General Booth of the Salvation Army, ‘May we not find a parallel at our own doors, and discover within a stone’s throw of our cathedrals and palaces similar horrors to those which Stanley had found existing in the great Equatorial forest?... What a satire it is upon our Christianity and our civilisation, that the existence of these colonies of heathens and savages in the heart of our capital should attract so little attention!’.²⁰ The urban decay of the slums was seen to strip the inhabitants of their British characteristics, turning them into an alien race with animalistic, violent and criminal tendencies.²¹

In their wish to influence the middle-class reader or benefactor, the social explorers’ accounts of slum life construct outcast London, particularly the East End, as a dangerous urban labyrinth poised to engulf civilised London within a pall of darkness. C.F.G. Masterman’s strangely wormlike dwellers from the abyss represent an overwhelming deluge of morally backboneless creatures ‘choking up the streets of the great city, and silently flowing over the dismal wastes beyond’.²² ‘*This terrible flood of sin and misery is gaining upon us*’, Andrew Mearns warns his readers, ‘It is rising every day’.²³ Within the urban labyrinth, a ‘dark continent... within easy walking distance of the General Post Office’,²⁴ there lurks a threatening Other in need of urgent containment, ready to contaminate and take over civilised life.

III

Where the social explorers allow a hint of the Gothic into their factual accounts, turn-of-the-century horror, fantasy and science fiction often deliberately borrows from non-fictional genres. H.G. Wells’s Morlocks in *The Time Machine* (1895), Marie Corelli’s demon workers in *The Sorrows of Satan* (1895) and the mouldy residences of Bram Stoker’s Count in *Dracula* (1897) are all indebted to the social explorers’ emotive language. The fiction of Richard Marsh, similarly, compares well with the late-

nineteenth-century accounts of slum life, perhaps reflecting Marsh's previous journalistic career. The author is likely to have been familiar with the contemporary evangelical representations of poverty and may even have produced anonymous journalistic work on the topic. He may also have hoped to benefit from the prominence of such social concerns at the time by provoking images that his middle-class readers would have been familiar with from the contemporary press.

At first sight, Marsh's presentation of poverty is realistic. Charles Booth's maps of London poverty, in particular, make an interesting comparison in the way they place wealth and poverty within easy reach of each other. In Marsh's work, poverty is not restricted to the East End: it covers all parts of London and affects all social classes, always existing in proximity of comfort and luxury. Like the social observers, Marsh describes squalid localities and is very careful in placing poverty geographically. Thus, the beetle's lair is located in Walham Green, near Hammersmith in West London, the streets of which on Charles Booth's poverty maps are indeed coloured in blue, dark blue and black as indicative of poverty, even abject poverty.²⁵ Approaching the house, Robert Holt feels that he is 'leaving civilisation behind', resembling the accounts of the social explorers in his insistence on squalor and darkness: 'In the darkness and the rain, the locality which I was entering appeared unfinished... The path was unpaved; the road rough and uneven, as if it had never been properly made. Houses were few and far between. Those which I did encounter seemed, in the imperfect light, amid the general desolation, to be cottages crumbling to decay'.²⁶ Holt is literally leaving civilised London for a more primitive mode of existence.

To the starving Holt, the shelter offered by the beetle's lair is inviting indeed: 'I saw the open window', Holt explains, 'How it rained out there!... And, inside that open window, it was, it must be, so warm, so dry'.²⁷ The homeless Holt, refused entry to the Casual Ward, is glad of any refuge from the rain, regardless of its architectural or hygienic faults. To Marjorie Lindon, a wealthier observer, however, the house looks prohibiting:

A more dismal-looking habitation one could hardly imagine. It was one of those dreadful jerry-built houses which, while they are still new, look old... it was already threatening to tumble down... The windows had surely never been washed since the house was built, - those on the upper floor seemed all either cracked or broken... Curtains there were none.²⁸

Entering the house, Marjorie comments on the ‘uncomfortable odour [that] greeted our nostrils, which was suggestive of some evil-smelling animal... There was not a table in the place, - no chair or couch, nothing to sit down upon except the bed’.²⁹ The filth and the lack of furniture are reminiscent of the social explorers’ accounts of slum homes.

In *The Joss*, the dangerous classes are brought into the very centre of London. In the later novel, the haunted house is situated in the imaginary Camford Street in Westminster, in the labyrinth of narrow streets and alleyways south of the Houses of Parliament which is again, accurately, coloured in black and blue on Booth’s maps as indicative of chronic want and criminality:³⁰ ‘It was in the heart, if not exactly of a slum, then certainly of an unsavoury district... Camford Street itself was long, dreary, out-at-elbows, old... Buildings stretched from end to end in one continuous depressing row’.³¹ The interior of the house is not inviting, either, but the homeless protagonists have no other option but to enter: ‘Not only was it inches thick in dust, but it was in a state of astonishing confusion... the place was alive with cockroaches... I should say from the smell of the place that there has never been any proper ventilation since the house was built’.³² The monotony and filth of the slums are situated in the closest possible proximity to the centre of British politics.

The first impressions Marsh allows his reader of the urban and domestic settings of outcast London are conveyed in realistic terms closely reminiscent of the social explorers’ accounts. However, the genre in which Marsh was writing, occult horror, required him to push the semi-factual descriptions one step further. In meeting the requirements of his genre, Marsh gives his depictions of outcast London a Gothic twist. Interestingly, he builds this twist on the elements he has gleaned from the social observers’ factual accounts – notably filth, lack of air and light, vermin, immorality and criminality. Thus, his depictions of squalid streets are indebted to slum literature, but are

chiefly nocturnal rather than depicting the slums in daylight. The dark and dingy city was, of course, a staple of the late-Victorian urban Gothic,³³ and in Marsh's fiction, the threat of outcast London is more keenly felt at night.

The Gothic twist is particularly notable in the excess with which Marsh depicts domestic space in decaying buildings. In dark and crooked buildings the walls lean, the doors creak and open windows cajole trespassers into danger. Cockroaches no longer confine themselves to cupboards and dark corners; instead, in the form of giant, malodorous, Oriental beetles, they climb their victims' bodies with sticky feet to suck the life out of them:

[W]ith a sense of shrinking, horror, nausea, rendering me momentarily more helpless, I realised that the creature was beginning to ascend my legs, to climb my body... it mounted me, apparently, with as much ease as if I had been horizontal instead of perpendicular. It was as though it were some gigantic spider, - a spider of the nightmares; a monstrous conception of some dreadful vision... It reached my chin, it touched my lips, - and I stood still and bore it all, while it enveloped my face with its huge, slimy, evil-smelling body, and embraced me with its myriad legs.³⁴

In *The Joss*, similarly, rats multiply in a fashion reminiscent of *Dracula*. No longer shying away from people, they gather in carpet-like hoards:

[T]here was a pandemonium of sounds, as of a legion rushing, scrambling, squeaking. It was rats – myriads. The whole house swarmed with them; they were everywhere. They were about our feet; I felt them rushing over my boots, whirling against my skirts. One rat is bad enough, in the light, but in the dark – that multitude! I had to scream; to stumble blindfold among those writhing creatures, and keep still, was altogether too much for my capacity.³⁵

Not only repulsive, the multitude of rats are also hungry, contemplating attacks against the unprotected:

The rats were audible everywhere... All at once I became conscious that rats were peeping at me from all about the room; out of holes and crannies of whose existence I had not been aware; above, below, on every side. And I knew that an army waited on the landing... for a signal to make a rush... I wanted to shriek and warn Pollie of what was coming; to let her know that in a second's time the room would be a pandemonium of rats, all of them in search of food.³⁶

Fred Botting characterises the Gothic mode as the 'writing of excess'.³⁷ Where contemporary social explorers also commented on the fear of vermin common amongst slum-dwellers, in Marsh's fiction these unwelcome creatures have become objects of horror, nightmarish exaggerations of an actual physical shrinking from contact with unclean parasites. The characters', as well as the reader's, reaction to such encounters is one of abhorrence and loathing, even panic fear: 'The horror of it made me mad', Robert Holt explains, 'I dashed towards the window... oh, to get out of that room!... despite my hunger, my fatigue, let anyone have stopped me if they could!'.³⁸ Holt's irrational fears and chaotic thoughts, focusing on escaping a frightening domestic trap, again direct the reader's attention to the Gothic mode.³⁹ Similarly, the protagonists' rapid reduction to irrationality points at the Gothic fascination with the 'abhuman', the ruination of the independent human subject.⁴⁰

Marsh's depiction of abject poverty also owes a great deal to the depiction of outcast London as a dangerous class of animalistic, deracialised criminals lacking in moral fibre. The beetle, though clearly of foreign origin, intriguingly avoids easy categorisation:

'I had no doubt that it was a foreigner... I could not at once decide if it was a man or a woman. Indeed at first I doubted if it was anything human... There was not a hair upon his face or head, but, to make up for it, the skin, which was a saffron yellow, was an amazing mass of wrinkles. The cranium, and, indeed, the whole skull, was so small as to be disagreeably suggestive of something animal. The nose, on the other hand, was abnormally large; so extravagant were its dimensions, and so peculiar its shape, it resembled the beak of some bird of prey... The mouth, with its blubber lips, came immediately underneath the nose, and chin, to all intents and purposes, there was none. This deformity – for the absence of chin amounted to that – it was which gave the face

the appearance of something not human, - that, and the eyes. For so marked a feature of the man were his eyes, that, ere long, it seemed to me that he was nothing but eyes... They were long, and they looked out of narrow windows, and they seemed to be lighted by some internal radiance, for they shone out like lamps in a lighthouse tower... They held me enchained, helpless, spell-bound.⁴¹

The combination of degeneration theory, racial stereotyping and animal characteristics in the passage is disturbing. The beetle-creature clearly reflects contemporary thinking on the physiognomy of degenerate criminals, confirming the monster both as a murderer with a beak-like nose and as a sexual offender with Negroid blubber lips. Like the hapless narrator Robert Holt, contemporary readers, too, would have been alarmed at the spectacle the creature presents. Disturbingly, even the creature's gender is uncertain.

Like the beetle, the joss is a monstrous sight:

[C]ould the things be human? Long parti-coloured hair – scarlet, yellow, green, all sorts of unnatural colours – descending from the scalp nearly obscured the visage. There seemed to be only one eye and no nose. If there were ears they were hidden... There were no signs of legs... Arms, on the other hand, there were and to spare. A pair dangled at the sides which were longer than the entire creature. Huge hands were at the ends... There was an uncanniness about his looks, his ways, his every movement... It was hard to believe that such a creature could be human. And English! The sight of him filled me with a sense of nausea.⁴²

Both creatures, happy to dwell in squalor, are presented in such extreme terms that their humanity comes into question. The Oriental religious rites they engage in, imported to Britain from Egypt and the Great Ke Island off the coast of New Guinea, appear utterly loathsome and alien to the British protagonists in their cruelty, sexual depravity and violence. The abject poverty they represent harks back to more primitive times and appears to refute any chance of social progress.

Like the cannibals depicted in contemporary Imperialist accounts of Africa, the monstrous poor in Marsh's fiction are predatory, and their way of life a trap to those who enter it. The Gothicised domestic settings described above are death-traps not only because of their insalubrious nature but also because they act as traps attracting hapless trespassers. In *The Beetle*, Robert Holt, as discussed above, is initially glad of any shelter; once inside, however, Holt begins 'to wish I had not seen the house; that I had passed it by; that I had not come through the window; that I were safely out of it again'.⁴³ The beetle-creature inhabiting the house, however, promptly proceeds to enslave his victim, 'to warp my limbs;... to confine me, tighter and tighter, within, as it were, swaddling clothes; to make me more and more helpless'.⁴⁴ In *The Joss*, irremovable iron shutters and ingenious locking devices keep out not only unwanted intruders but also the light of day, as well as barring the trapped girls' escape routes: 'Now that you are once inside the house', instructions left by Benjamin Batters explain to Pollie and Emily, 'you will never sleep out of it again... You may think you will, but you won't. The spell is on you. It will grow in power. Each night it will draw you back'.⁴⁵ The domestic vortex in which the beetle and the joss live devours people, reminding the reader of the social explorers' insistence that the 'abyss' was always hungry for new victims.

IV

This paper has analysed the generic overlap between factual and fictional accounts of outcast London produced at the turn of the nineteenth century. It has argued that the social explorers' semi-factual accounts of London poverty construct an imaginary cityscape of darkness, decay and danger that refers back to the fiction of the late nineteenth century. Similarly, fictional renderings of outcast London freely draw on factual accounts. Focusing on the popular fiction of Richard Marsh, this paper has suggested that the author gives his depiction of squalor a Gothic twist, transforming slum descriptions into Gothic stories of haunted houses. In the process, the reader's attention is redirected from the social problem of poverty to the contemplation of the supernatural. The pangs of hunger, the effects of squalor and the frustration of unemployment assume an uncanny resemblance to pleasurable horror and fantasy. Arguably, this Gothic twist

allows Marsh a popular novelist, to tackle social issues in the language of popular fiction, giving a voice to middle-class readers' revulsion towards and fear of outcast London. In his fiction, Marsh turns poverty, a natural but unpleasant and unavoidable social problem, into a Gothic monstrosity, outside society and its rules, which it is legitimate to hate and desirable to destroy.

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³ A Osborne Jay, *Life in Darkest London. A Hint to General Booth* (London: Webster & Cable, 1891), 2

⁴ [Mearns], 17

⁵ On Marsh, see Robert Aickman, *The Attempted Rescue* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1966); William Baker, 'Introduction' in Richard Marsh, *The Beetle* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd in association with the University of Luton, 1994): vii-x; Michael Rupert Taylor, 'G. A. Henty, Richard Marsh and Bernard Heldmann', *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review* 277 (August/ September 1997): 10-15; and Richard Dalby's three accounts, 'Introduction' in *The Haunted Chair and Other Stories by Richard Marsh* (Ashcroft, British Columbia: Ash-Tree Press, 1997): ix-xxi, 'Richard Marsh: Novelist Extraordinaire', *Book and Magazine Collector* 163 (October 1997): 76-89 and 'Unappreciated Authors: Richard Marsh and *The Beetle*', *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review* 144 (April 1986): 136-141. On *The Beetle*, see Rhys Garnett, 'Dracula and *The Beetle*: Imperial and Sexual Guilt and Fear in Late Victorian Fantasy' in Rhys Garnett and R.J. Ellis (eds.), *Science Fiction Roots and Branches. Contemporary Critical Approaches* (Houndmills: MacMillan, 1990): 30-54; Judith Halberstam, 'Gothic Nation: *The Beetle* by Richard Marsh' in Andrew Smith, Diane Mason and William Hughes (eds.), *Fictions of Unease: The Gothic from Otranto to The X-Files* (Bath: Sulis Press, 2002): 100-118; Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body. Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996);

Roger Luckhurst, 'Trance-Gothic, 1882-1897' in Ruth Robbins and Julian Wolfreys (eds.), *Victorian Gothic. Literary and Cultural Manifestations in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000): 148-67; and Julian Wolfreys, 'Introduction' in Richard Marsh, *The Beetle* (1897; repr. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004): 9-34.

⁶ Dalby, 'Richard Marsh' (1997): 82; Wolfreys, 11

⁷ A.S. Wohl, 'The Housing of the Working Classes in London, 1815-1914', in Stanley D. Chapman (ed.), *The History of Working Class Housing. A Symposium* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1971): 13-54, 16-19

⁸ Parliamentary debates and measures included the Artisans' Dwellings Act (1875), the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes (1884-5), the Housing of the Working Classes Act (1890) and the Committee of the House of Lords on Sweating (1888-90).

⁹ The following are among the best known of these accounts: [Andrew Mearns], *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London. An Inquiry into the Condition of the Abject Poor* (1883), Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London* (1889-1903), William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890), A. Osborne Jay, *Life in Darkest London* (1891) and George Sims, *How the Poor Live* (1893).

¹⁰ P. J. Keating, *The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), 109

¹¹ George R Sims, *How the Poor Live and Horrible London* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1889), 46

¹² [Mearns], 7-8

¹³ Sims 5,12

¹⁴ [Mearns], 7

¹⁵ William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London: International Headquarters of the Salvation Army, [1890]), 24

¹⁶ [A Alsop], *Below the Surface; or, Down in the Slums, by A Delver* (London & Manchester: John Heywood, 1885), 9-10

¹⁷ B. O. Flower, *Civilization's Inferno, or, Studies in the Social Cellar* (Boston: Arena Publishing Company, 1893), 99-100

¹⁸ [Mearns], 11

¹⁹ Deborah Epstein Nord, 'The Social Explorer as Anthropologist. Victorian Travellers among the Urban Poor' in William Sharpe and Leonard Wallock (eds.), *Visions of the Modern City. Essays in History, Art, and Literature* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987): 122-134, 122-3

²⁰ William Booth, 11-12, 16

²¹ Jennifer Davis, 'Jennings' Buildings and the Royal Borough. The Construction of the Underclass in Mid-Victorian England' in David Feltman and Gareth Stedman Jones (eds.), *Metropolis: London. Histories and Representations since 1800* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989): 11-39, 11-12

²² C.F.G. Masterman, *From the Abyss. Of Its Inhabitants by One of Them* (London: R Brimley Johnson, 1902), 12

²³ [Mearns], 5

²⁴ Sims, 1

²⁵ Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London*. Vol. 2: *Streets and Population Classified* (1902; repr. New York: Augustus M Kelley, 1969), 20-21; Vol. 5: *Maps of London Poverty. Districts and Streets*: Map 10. Booth divided households into categories ranging from A (occasional labourers, loafers, semi-criminals) to H (upper-middle-class and above), according to income. Groups A-D, encompassing 30.7% of Londoners, he esteemed to be living in poverty. Booth's study was accompanied by a set of maps of London colour-coded to indicate the relative wealth of each area. The colour black was reserved for streets of the most squalid kind, being inhabited by semi-criminal classes (Class A). Dark blue denoted the very poor living in chronic want (Class B). Light blue stood for the poor (Classes C and D).

²⁶ Richard Marsh, *The Beetle. A Mystery* (London: Skeffington, 1897), 7

²⁷ Marsh, *The Beetle*, 10

²⁸ Marsh, *The Beetle*, 222

²⁹ Marsh, *The Beetle*, 228-9, 237

³⁰ Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London*. Vol. 5: Map 7

³¹ Richard Marsh, *The Joss. A Reversion* (London: F.V. White, 1901), 160

³² Marsh, *The Joss*, 60-1

³³ Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London & NY: Routledge, 1999), 139

³⁴ Marsh, *The Beetle*, 14-16

³⁵ Marsh, *The Joss*, 99

³⁶ Marsh, *The Joss*, 114-5

³⁷ Botting, 1

³⁸ Marsh, *The Beetle*, 16

³⁹ Botting, 2; Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction. Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), xv

⁴⁰ Hurley, 3

⁴¹ Marsh, *The Beetle*, 17-19

⁴² Marsh, *The Joss*, 246-7, 268

⁴³ Marsh, *The Beetle*, 12

⁴⁴ Marsh, *The Beetle*, 34

⁴⁵ Marsh, *The Joss*, 70