Writing Egyptomania:

Nineteenth-Century American Literature and its Interactions with Ancient Egyptian Archaeology

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English Department Honors Thesis

Submitted: April 3rd, 2023

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Introduction

In 1822 the Western world experienced a revolution in literature and archaeology when the Rosetta Stone was successfully translated. American literature—ranging from newspaper articles, travel narratives, short fiction, and books concerning ethnology and race science—became inundated with discussion of the material culture of ancient Egypt. The legibility of hieroglyphics coupled with the physical accessibility of Egypt culminated in Egyptomania, an ancient spell that took over the Western world. Nineteenth-century American writers were inspired by the ancient architecture, mummies, and artwork that they often encountered in their travels to Egypt, accounts about such trips, or visits to museums. In many cases, authors responded to one another's work and furthered discussions about ancient Egyptian material culture and its relevance to American life.

Along with this renewed interest in travel and study, however, came the forces of imperialism and colonization. The power vacuum created in the wake of Napoleon's failed expedition in 1799 allowed the British Empire to take control of the unstable Egyptian government and appoint leaders that they thought fit to rule (Deane 381). Correspondingly, the French gained governmental control through the newly founded field of Egyptology, employing the best archaeologists in the Egyptian government's department of antiquities to conduct excavations (Farman 156). While England and France waged their rivalry and attempted to control the country, the United States of America had much different intentions towards Egypt. According to the American diplomat to Egypt from 1876-1881, Elbert E. Farman (1831-1911), Americans mostly desired to excavate and study the lost artifacts of the ancient Egyptians (160). In his memoir, Farman writes, "the Government of the United States, having no political purposes to carry out in this country, did not assume the right to interfere with its Government,"

a stark contrast to the international policies of France and England (Farman 160). Even former United States President Ulysses S. Grant was so intrigued by ancient Egypt that he traveled along the Nile in 1878 and was accompanied by conservators of the Cairo Museum to further educate him on the monuments and ongoing archaeology (Farman viii). It seemed that this desire for knowledge as opposed to the desire for power was recognized by the Egyptian government itself. In response to the Americans' request for Cleopatra's Needle in 1880, Egyptian government officials acknowledged the United States' "real archaeological interest" and granted them the ancient obelisk as a "pledge of the friendship that has constantly existed between the Government of the United States and that of the Khedive" (Farman 163).

By allowing authors to adapt already existing genres and debates to Egyptomania themes, nineteenth-century Egyptian archaeological discoveries had a profound impact on American literature. As a phenomenon, Egyptomania allowed American authors both to reframe social issues concerning gender, race, and imperialism in new settings and tap new sources of gothic mystery and anxiety. The Americans' interaction with the material culture of ancient Egypt also fostered sentiments of repulsion and attraction; while some authors detested the ancient monuments or portrayed the preserved mummies as grotesque bearers of curses, other writers expressed a sense of admiration for the ancient architecture or even an attraction to the sculpted effigies and mummified corpses. Perhaps even more intriguing are the sources that simultaneously express repulsion and attraction towards the ancient Egyptian artifacts that culminates in an anxiety that I call the fear of Oriental superiority. As American authors interacted with the material culture, they began to question who the ancient Egyptians were and how they managed to create such monumental and well-preserved artifacts. Especially among white Americans, there was anxiety that the ancient Egyptians were not European but either

African or Middle Eastern, claims which were supported by abolitionists at the time. Further, many American authors struggled to comprehend how such ancient people were so advanced in methods of art and engineering, thus thwarting the current nineteenth-century ideals of technology and progress.

My aim here is not to explore the effects of Egyptomania in general on American culture, but rather to analyze how specific artifacts, monuments, and mummies were received and adapted by nineteenth-century American authors. This interaction with material culture differs from many other scholarly articles and books concerning Egyptomania that often give very little information or insight about the ancient Egyptian artifacts themselves. Modern analyses of American Egyptomania include Scott Trafton's *Egypt Land: Race and Nineteenth-Century Egyptomania* (2004), Britt Rusert's *Fugitive Science* (2017), and Jasmine Day's *The Mummy's Curse* (2006). Trafton provides information regarding the influence of Egyptomania on existing debates and science concerning race and gender in America, primarily focusing on gothic mummies and on racial debates conducted by ethnologists and abolitionists. Similarly, Rusert focuses on the same race debates and brings in more information about American ethnology and racial science that was heavily influenced by Egyptology, yet neither Trafton nor Rusert analyze the direct relationship between the ancient material culture and the writings of American authors. Day writes mostly about the treatment of ancient Egyptian mummies in real-life and in literature, and thus provides the most archaeological context for her claims. Unlike Trafton and Rusert, I take a more nuanced approach to the racial debates that analyzes how specific monuments influenced these arguments, such as Frederick Douglass's commentary on a statue of the Pharaoh Ramses II. Day's engagement with nineteenth-century excavations and display of mummies,

particularly the royal mummy cache discovered in the Valley of the Kings in 1881, helps fuel this approach of American literature through an archaeological lens.

Chapter I will focus on the complicated interactions between American writers and the architecture of ancient Egypt, namely the Great Pyramids of Giza and the surrounding temples. While some travel writers, like explorer John Lloyd Stephens (1805-1852), praised the monuments and recounted their awe and admiration of the ancient feats of engineering, other American authors, such as Mark Twain (1835-1910) and Herman Melville (1819-1891), expressed a sense of the anxiety and dread produced by their firsthand interactions with the Pyramids. As with many aspects of Egyptomania, there are both feelings of repulsion and attraction that the travelers grapple with in their struggle to comprehend not only the sheer size of the architecture but also with its age and mysterious construction. At home, American writers like Washington Irving (1783-1859) and Julian Hawthorne (1846-1934) adopted the ancient structures as a new, gothic setting for their fictional narratives, using real places like the Pyramids of Giza or the Temple of Medinet Habu as the setting for gothic fantasy.

Chapter II will show how the discovery of mummies raised the question of whether this important aspect of Egyptomania literature should be considered an artifact or as a person. This complicated duality of mummies is most likely what made them such perfect antagonists for American gothic stories, as the mummy provided gothic fiction with a new supernatural monster whose Oriental, and typically female, identity imbued stories with themes of imperialism and sexual assault. Female writers like Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888) and Jane Goodwin Austin (1831-1894) used these themes in their mummy fiction to highlight issues surrounding these topics, shocking readers with the threat of the Oriental. Even a satirical short story, “Some Words with a Mummy” (1845), by Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) draws upon the eerie idea of a

foreign, resurrected person. Slightly different from the gothic genre is John Brown Russwurm's (1799-1851) article that personifies an Egyptian mummy brought to an American museum and questions the role of the United States in the early years of the Egyptomania craze.

Chapter III explores how these nineteenth-century anthropologists attempted to use ancient artwork to provide additional evidence of race among the ancient Egyptians. American ethnologists like Samuel George Morton (1799-1851) and George Robbins Gliddon (1809-1857) hotly debated abolitionists including Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) about whether the ancient statues, reliefs, and wall paintings found throughout the tombs and plains of Egypt had European, African, or Middle Eastern features. Each group seemed to claim the racial identity of the ancient Egyptians as their own, often comparing the sculpted or painted faces to contemporary figures; the likeness of the Pharaoh Ramses II was used to describe both Douglass's mother and Napoleon Bonaparte. Regardless of the figures' "true" identities, however, the American tourists were continuously amazed by the well-preserved artifacts, and in the case of the ancient architecture, professed their awe through travel accounts.

By looking at the direct relationship between ancient Egyptian artifacts and nineteenth-century American sources, one gains a greater understanding of the overall phenomena of Egyptomania and how it affected different aspects of American culture, including travel writing, fiction, and racial science, all of which were greatly affected by the architecture, mummies, and artwork of ancient Egypt. The physical and intellectual interactions between Americans and artifacts not only fueled the Egyptomania craze but also reshaped preexisting arguments concerning gender, race, and imperialism. Overall, the interplay between literature and archaeology reveals a fascinating layer of nineteenth-century American culture and literature.

Chapter I: Architecture

Theirs is no vulgar sepulchre—green sods
Are all their monument, and yet it tells
A nobler history, than pillared piles,
Or the eternal pyramids …

—James Gates Percival, "The Graves of the Patriots"

When in 1825 "The Graves of the Patriots" was published in the *United States Literary Gazette* to commemorate the American lives lost in the Revolutionary War, Egyptomania had already reached Western shores. Only three years after the translation of the Rosetta Stone and at the onset of travel to the old country, Percival adopts a dismissive tone about ancient Egypt and its architecture, thereby removing himself from the ongoing Egyptomania craze. The United States— a country barely fifty years old when this poem was published—is seen as more "noble" than the builders of the "eternal pyramids," laying claim over a civilization that defined the beginning of human history. The poet uses the pyramids, perhaps the most famous example of ancient Egyptian architecture, as a symbol of an old, hierarchical society and associated it with the British monarchy and empire that the American colonies successfully resisted. This idea is also supported by the fact that Egypt was currently controlled by British powers, equating the ancient wonders with imperial power. In the same breath, Percival dismisses the grandeur of ancient Egypt and praises the new American democracy. While many writers would praise the ancient structures for their grandeur and engineering, during the first years of the Egyptomania craze, Percival presents a dismissive image of the pyramids that complicates the attraction of the ancient Egyptian monuments.

A more typical response can be seen in the physical interaction between American travelers and the Great Pyramids of Giza, which often left visitors with a positive impression as they recorded their amazement and awe in travel narratives or memoirs. Author and poet Susan

E. Wallace, for instance, records her firsthand experience with the architecture of ancient Egypt in her 1888 travel book *The Repose in Egypt*, being one of the few women to publish her travel writings. In the preface of her work, she writes:

> I confess to pleasure in thinking there are readers who believe all has not been sung and said about the Pyramids. To behold those unfabled mountains of stone, had been to me a desire and a despair from childhood to mature years, and when at last I did see them, with these eyes, looking exactly as they should look, I felt like Simeon of old in the Temple. (Wallace 10)

Wallace's positive attitude towards the Great Pyramids perhaps stems from the fact that they look "exactly as they should look," thus fulfilling her high expectations. She emphasizes the realness of the pyramids in her description of them as "unfabled," rejecting the notion of their being anything less than amazing or imagined. Wallace's sentiment directly contrasts the tone of "The Graves of the Patriots" by praising the monuments instead of criticizing their splendor. What also sets the two works apart is their relation to the pyramids; while Percival sees the Great Pyramids as artificial and imperial, Wallace highlights her physical interaction with the pyramids by claiming that she beheld them with her own eyes. Wallace's account is produced by her firsthand engagement with the material culture of ancient Egypt.

Another American traveler in Egypt—a former Confederate soldier who served under the Egyptian Khedive, General William Wing Loring (1818-1886)—wrote extensively about the Great Pyramids and his sentiments. In his memoir *A Confederate Soldier in Egypt* (1884), Loring claims that "there is no reason, in the great size and necessary cost of the Pyramids in money and toil, for thinking that they were built simply for the vainglory of the ancient Pharaohs … they embodied for future ages symbols expressive of the most enlightened conceptions of human

knowledge" (90). Like Wallace, Loring contradicts and even argues against Percival's view by rejecting the notion of the Great Pyramids being "built simply for the vainglory of the ancient Pharaohs." While Loring similarly uses the pyramids as a symbol, instead of casting them as a representation of imperial power, he sees the structures as an embodiment of "human knowledge"; Loring, like many other writers at the time, viewed the ancient Egyptians as the first civilization in history and thus attributes their accomplishments as the beginning of human knowledge. The general goes one step further and claims that the ancient Egyptians were also the "most enlightened" thinkers in history, a title that thus allowed them to build such monumental structures. The Great Pyramids for Loring, then, are not only an impressive construction but also a reminder of an enlightened past.

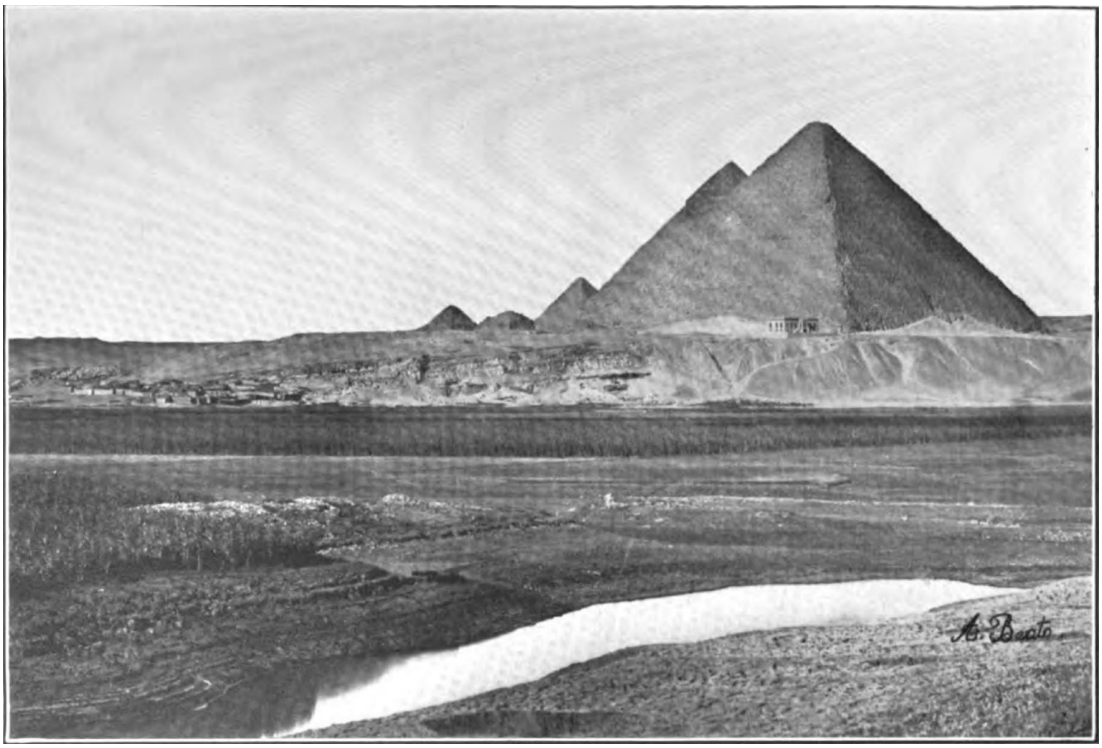

Fig. 1. "Pyramids of Gizeh," photograph from Elbert E. Farman, *Along the Nile with General Grant* (New York: Grafton, 1904; print; 41)

Out of all of the American writers who traveled to Egypt, Herman Melville may have had the worst experience with the Great Pyramids of Giza. In one of his journal entries he claims, "As long as earth endures some vestige will remain of the pyramids. Nought but earthquake or geological revolution can obliterate them … Pyramids still loom before me- something vast, incomprehensible, and awful" (Melville 75-76). While many travelers, and even Percival, comment upon the "eternal" nature of the Great Pyramids, Melville attempts to imagine how they can be violently destroyed. To Melville, it seems that the pyramids are a blight upon the face of the earth that can never be completely removed. Though the pyramids are man-made feats of architecture, he imagines that man would be unable to destroy them, only the forces of nature could make any impact. Unlike Percival, however, Melville's strong dislike of the ancient structures does not stem from a critique of grandeur or monarchy, rather, Melville's negative opinions seem to stem from the sheer size of the pyramids; he finds the architecture too large to properly conceive, dubbing them "vast, incomprehensible, and awful." The inclusion of the word "awful" in his barrage of attacks upon the pyramids emphasizes the mix of emotions Melville experiences in his encounter with them, intermingling a sense of awe and a sense of anxiety both produced by the "vast" nature of the Great Pyramids. In fact, Melville remains haunted by the image of the pyramids as he claims they "still loom before me," as if their massive size continues to intimidate him. The fear and anxiety elicited by the ancient structures explains Melville's desire for their violent "obliteration."

In his travel narrative *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), Mark Twain presents a rather paradoxical encounter with the pyramids that complicates his relation to the ancient structures. Initially, Twain describes them as far off in "a rich haze that took from them all suggestions of unfeeling stone, and made them seem only the airy nothings of a dream" (449). However, as

Twain and his caravan approach the Pyramid of Khufu, the largest of the Great Pyramids, he exclaims that "It was a fairy vision no longer. It was a corrugated, unsightly mountain of stone" with "monstrous sides" (449). What Twain finds alluring about the Pyramids seems to be the opposite of Wallace's sentiment; while Wallace praises the "mountains of stone" that fulfilled her expectations, Twain uses the same exact phrase to describe the ugliness and harsh reality of the pyramid's appearance (Wallace 10). Unlike Wallace, Twain wishes that the pyramids were things of "visions" or "dreams," as if he desires that the monuments were indeed fables and not tangible structures. While Loring finds the pyramids awe-inspiring, Twain finds them "monstrous," shunning the ideas of humanity and enlightenment emphasized by Wallace and Loring and instead evoking a sense of fear.

Attempting to understand just how large the Pyramid of Khufu is, Twain reconciles its height with something he finds familiar, such as a bluff on the Mississippi River, which he originally believed to be "the highest mountain in the world" (453). Twain writes that "this symmetrical Pyramid of Cheops—this solid mountain of stone reared by the patient hands of men—this mighty tomb of a forgotten monarch—dwarfs my cherished mountain" (453-454). In alluding to the monarchy of ancient Egypt, Twain follows Percival's idea by criticizing the splendor of such a tomb. Both writers compare the simplicity of American culture to the overly grand nature of the pyramids. However, while Percival seems to simply dismiss the feats of the ancient Egyptians, Twain conveys a sense of uneasiness. Twain is intimidated by the Pyramid of Khufu because it has radically changed his understanding of a familiar landmark; his "cherished mountain," a feat of the natural world, has been bested by the tomb of an ancient, Oriental monarch. The American landscape is no match against the "patient hands of men" who built the pyramids. Twain suggests, like Melville, that the Great Pyramids are simply too big to properly

conceive, yet once Twain does attempt to reconcile the height of the pyramid with something comparable, he is left with both a sense of awe and anxiety. Thus, in Twain's writing, there is a fear of Oriental superiority that causes him to question whether American culture has already been surpassed by ancient Egyptian culture.

The numerous temples scattered throughout Egypt had a similar effect on the American writers who traveled there. The famed explorer John Lloyd Stephens, who arguably popularized American travel to Egypt in the nineteenth century, penned rather dramatic descriptions of his experiences with ancient temples in his 1837 narrative *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land* (Trafton 14). At the Temple of Edfu, for instance, he claims that if the ancient structure "stood in Hyde Park or the Garden of the Tuileries, France, England, all Europe would gaze upon it with wonder and admiration; and when thousands of years shall have rolled away, and they too shall have fallen, there will be no monument in those proudest of modern cities, like in the little town of Edfu" (Stephens 121). Like Melville at the Great Pyramids of Giza, Stephens imagines a time when nothing will be left but the Temple of Edfu, which he believes will remain intact despite the passing of "thousands of years." However, Stephens praises the magnificence of the ancient temple rather than dismissing it and proposes that the Western world would "gaze upon it with wonder and admiration." While this bold statement may be seen as an advertisement for tourism, Stephens uses these positive ideas of admiration and attraction to combat the anxiety and repulsion produced by the Temple of Edfu; not only is the ancient building's architecture remarkable because it predates modern European cities, but there is also a sense that the Western world could never replicate such a feat. As Stephens asserts, "there will be no monument in those proudest of modern cities" like the

Temple of Edfu, which currently stands in the Orient. Therefore, Stephens praises the Temple of Edfu while simultaneously addressing the anxiety produced by ancient, Oriental superiority.

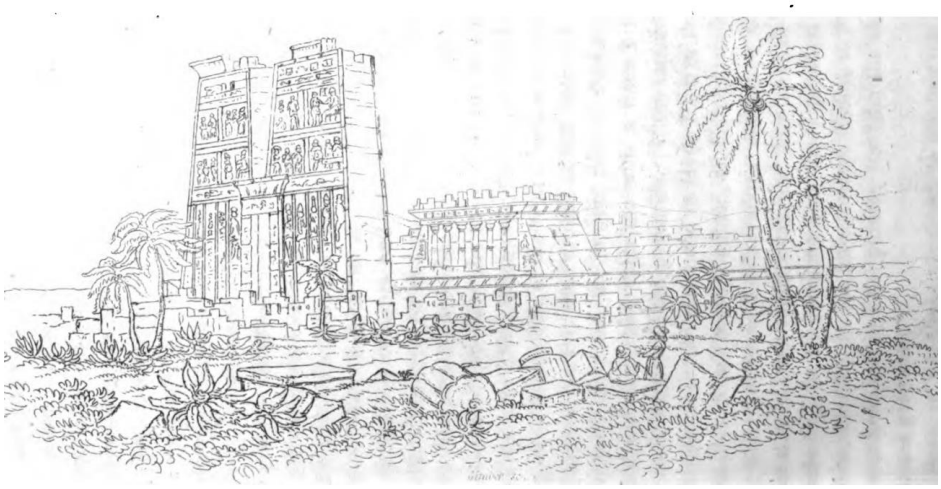

Fig. 2. "Propylon Temple at Edfou," illustration from John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Petraea, and the Holy Land* (New York: Harper, 1839; print; 121)

In *The Innocents Abroad,* Twain also builds upon the anxiety produced by interactions with ancient Egyptian temples. Upon visiting the Sphinx Temple at Giza, he seems to record his thoughts with a sense of despair; he professes that the ancient Egyptians "built temples which mock at destroying time and smile upon our lauded little prodigies of architecture; that old land that knew all which we know now, perchance and more" (Twain 458). In this excerpt, Twain channels the nineteenth-century notion of ancient Egypt being considered "the marker of the absolute, the eternal, and an authority" that can answer all questions (Trafton 133). Because the temples are so well preserved and well built, it was common for Americans to consider the ancient Egyptians as possessing more knowledge than they did in the nineteenth century. The anxiety produced by this idea of being outdone by a long-dead, Oriental people is seen in Twain's comments about the Sphinx Temple. He personifies the ancient architecture as "mocking" and "smiling" upon American feats, which are physically much smaller in comparison to the vast monuments of ancient Egypt as Twain merely refers to American

architecture as “little prodigies” (458). By acknowledging anxiety surrounding American progress, technology, and knowledge and by treating ancient Egypt as an “absolute,” Twain has no other option than to criticize his own society.

While American travel literature grappled with the anxieties of Oriental superiority when presented with the material culture of ancient Egypt, American gothic fiction capitalized on this growing fear surrounding the monuments. In her 1869 short story, “Lost in a Pyramid; Or, the Mummy’s Curse,” Louisa May Alcott uses the Pyramid of Khufu as the setting for her gothic narrative. The story focuses on two Egyptologists who find themselves lost in the Pyramid of Khufu—the same structure that Twain found “monstrous”—and must burn a mummy to seek the way out via smoke. Although Alcott sets her narrative in a real archaeological setting, the inside of the pyramid is completely imagined as labyrinthine and full of mummy niches. Once the narrator, an archaeologist named Paul Forsyth, realizes that he and his guide, Professor Niles, are lost, he expresses how “a chill passed over me, for a perfect labyrinth of narrow paths lay before us” (Alcott 38). The danger in this scene is not constructed by the supernatural, but by the idea of being trapped inside an ancient, foreign tomb; further, there is added anxiety in the fact that the architecture of the pyramid has outsmarted two American archaeologists in their attempts to study the monument itself. While the real Pyramid of Khufu is not actually labyrinthine in structure and does not contain hundreds of tombs, Alcott still uses the ancient Egyptian building as a gothic setting, drawing on the fear of Oriental superiority established by American travel writers. Alcott imagines her characters reacting to the architecture of ancient Egypt in the same way, if not more exaggerated, as the travel writers. In fact, Farman’s own writing, although it was published after “Lost in a Pyramid,” seems to use the same fictional conventions as Alcott. Farman recalls an instance when he and a professor explored a tomb full of crocodile mummies,

writing that they explored "a cave of the extent of which we had no knowledge … Where we were, it was ten feet or more high and dark passages led off in different directions" (87). Like Alcott, Farman captures the same sense of anxiety in not being able to understand the ancient Egyptians' seemingly complicated architecture.

Another American writer of gothic literature, Washington Irving, also used the Great Pyramids of Giza, specifically the Pyramid of Khafre, as the setting for one of his short stories from his novel *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832). "Legend of the Arabian Astrologer," though it is set in medieval Spain, is very much written for an American audience riddled with anxiety over Oriental superiority. The short story follows the Moorish king Aben Habuz and his quest for obtaining a book of magic hidden within the Pyramid of Khafre. His desire is fueled by the words of an all-knowing astrologer who claims that what he can teach the king "is nothing to the knowledge locked up in those mighty piles. In the center of the central pyramid is a sepulchral chamber, in which is enclosed the mummy of the high priest … and with him is buried a wondrous book of knowledge, containing all the secrets of magic and art" (Irving 198-199). Interestingly, Irving uses the same language as Percival by referring to the Great Pyramids of Giza as grandiose "piles" and "sepulchers." However, Irving seems to use these terms to aggrandize the ancient monuments in the astrologer's praise of the ancient Egyptians' knowledge. Once again, there is a treatment of ancient Egypt as the "absolute" and all-knowing that serves to persuade the king of the book's power. While this excerpt is a conversation between a fictional astrologer and king, Irving still seems to advocate this idea of ancient Egypt and its architecture possessing knowledge and technology that rivaled nineteenth-century American ideas of progress. Once King Aben Habuz reaches Egypt, his description of the interior of the Pyramid of Khafre is similar to Alcott's short story. The king expresses of the

pyramid, “I came upon one of its interior and hidden passages. Following this up, and threading a fearful labyrinth, I penetrated into the very heart of the pyramids, even to the sepulchral chamber” (Irving 199). Irving’s Pyramid of Khafre is just like Alcott’s Pyramid of Khufu in that it has a labyrinthine structure with numerous passages meant to trick the protagonist. Although King Aben Habuz is not American like Forsyth, he is still in danger of being outsmarted by the architecture of the ancient Egyptians, whose knowledge is far superior to the king’s, and subsequently, Irving’s American readers. The ancient Egyptians’ knowledge is also proved to be a threat as the book is used as a weapon against King Aben Habuz by the astrologer, thus destroying his empire built upon the book’s magic; not only is there a cautionary tale in Irving’s short story, but there is an emphasis on the anxieties produced by the works of the ancient Egyptians and their seemingly superior knowledge.

Another gothic short story produced by an American writer during the nineteenth century that interacts with ancient Egyptian architecture is “The Unseen Man’s Story” (1893) penned by Julian Hawthorne. The narrator of the story is a young American man who travels to Egypt and encounters a strange Frenchman, Carigliano, who believes himself to be the reincarnation of an ancient Egyptian prince and plans to give his heart to a long-dead queen. Carigliano lives in the real-life Temple of Medinet Habu, yet Hawthorne, like Alcott and Irving, adds fictional elements to the ancient Egyptian structure. The narrator “followed [Carigliano] through the ruins for a distance of perhaps fifty yards. I then saw him stoop, and push against a slab of granite, set in an apparently solid portion of the temple wall. It moved, as if upon a hidden pivot, and disclosed a flight of steps leading downward. The darkness was intense; and for a moment I hesitated” (Hawthorne 229-230). Similar to the fictional imagery of the Great Pyramids of Giza in Irving and Alcott’s short stories, Hawthorne adds a hidden passageway that frightens the narrator and

furthers the complexity of the ancient Egyptians' architecture. The addition of the "hidden pivot" and the concealed granite door grants the Egyptians a technological edge that greatly surprises the American traveler. Not only is the narrator intimidated by the advanced technological skill, but he is also made anxious by the dark, unknown passageway before him. The hidden passageway, as it turns out, is where the Frenchman lives, and it is in this eerie, ancient setting that he tells the narrator of his encounter in the tomb complex nearby, possibly the Valley of the Kings. Carigliano claims that the spectacular tomb of the undead princess was opened to him via ancient machinery, as in the Temple of Medinet Habu, which he describes as "the semblance of a human figure, slowly and steadily turning the handle of a machine … so regular and rigid were his movements, and so imperfect was the light that I could not decide whether he indeed was a human being, or only himself a cunningly wrought part of the machine" (Hawthorne 238). In the fantastical tomb, Carigliano presents two equally frightening scenarios as to the identity of the figure: either he is an undead Egyptian who still has power over the doorway to the tomb, or he is an automaton that is part of the mechanism. In either case, the figure, and consequently the tomb's entrance, are a display of the ancient Egyptians' knowledge and advanced technology that both frightens and impresses the Frenchman. Hawthorne's inclusion of such a complex machine in an ancient Egyptian tomb is derived from a fear of Oriental superiority because it directly attacks the American notion of progress and technology.

Fig. 3. "Entrance to Small Temple, Medinet Habu, Thebes," photograph from Elbert E. Farman, *Along the Nile with General Grant* (New York: Grafton, 1904; print; 109)

It is unclear whether or not the narrator of "The Unseen Man's Story" completely believes Carigliano and his stories of reincarnation or undead ancient Egyptians, yet his conclusion about the overall experience still hints at a certain anxiety. Upon his return to the United States, he tells a friend that Carigliano "was thought [to have] wandered into the tombs of the queens; probably he found his way into one of them and never got out again" (Hawthorne 252). Though the narrator was presented with ancient machinery at Temple of Medinet Habu, he settles upon a more rational explanation of the Frenchman's disappearance that is similar to the dangers presented in Alcott's "Lost in a Pyramid." The narrator may not believe in undead Egyptians or an automaton machine, but he still acknowledges the complexity of ancient Egyptian tombs and the danger of being outsmarted by such architecture.

When presented with the idea of ancient Egyptian architecture, nineteenth-century American writers often found themselves conflicted. On the one hand, writers advanced invidious comparisons between ancient Egypt and the rising, democratic United States. On the other hand, a sense of awe and a fear of Oriental superiority animated stories about American archaeologists being trapped in or thwarted by ancient Egyptian structures. The various monuments—the Great Pyramids of Giza, the Temple of Edfu, the Sphinx Temple, and the Temple of Medinet Habu—are so vast in their size and so complex in their construction that travelers abroad and authors at home were baffled that an ancient, foreign people could have executed such works. The authors of fiction took advantage of this deeply unsettling notion and penned tales of mystery and horror that exploited the negative emotions produced by the travelers' interactions with the ancient material culture. In the next chapter, the use of mummies as an embodiment of this fear of Oriental superiority makes this idea even more evident.

Chapter II: Mummies

Alongside the vampires, werewolves, and ghosts that dominated nineteenth-century gothic literature, a new supernatural villain took the stage during the Egyptomania craze: the mummy. This antagonist was entirely foreign, hailing from the land of the Orient and buried in ancient tombs, yet incredibly familiar in its manifestation as a human corpse. This new gothic villain was uncanny in its status as both human and inhuman, and the mummy's power lay in its ability to cast ancient curses upon unknowing victims. Professor Jerome Jeffrey Cohen, in his book *Monster Theory,* explains this phenomenon of culture creating a monster; he claims that "the monster is born only at [a] metaphoric crossroads, as an embodiment of a certain cultural movement—of a time, a feeling, and a place. The monster's body quite literally incorporates fear, desire, anxiety, and fantasy … giving them life and an uncanny independence" (4). Regarding gothic mummies, the "certain cultural movement" in question is undoubtedly Egyptomania.

For archaeologists, mummies were both human corpses and artifacts. Mummy-unwrapping demonstrations were popular spectacles performed by museum curators and Egyptologists that took place in public spaces in both England and the United States. The way in which archaeologists treated the corpses depended primarily on the deceased's status; the bodies of ancient Egyptian royalty were revered and housed in the Cairo Museum, whereas the mummies of lower classes—even if they were as well-preserved as their pharaohs—were left to the devices of modern Egyptian peasants (Day 35). For instance, in 1881 a royal mummy cache at Deir-el-Bahari, near the Valley of the Kings, was discovered and seized by archaeologists in order to prevent local villagers from taking the valuable bodies and their grave goods for illegal sale (Day 21). In *The Innocents Abroad,* Twain comments on the use of "three thousand year old

mummies" for train fuel (457). Though Twain's comment is satirical, it does allude to the real "industrial exploitation" of ancient Egyptians' bodies during this time of Egyptomania and overall European interest in Egypt (Day 25). Evident in Twain's travel narrative, the Egyptian mummy was incorporated into nineteenth-century American literature as a means for writers to expose anxieties surrounding imperialism and to probe the relationship between subjecthood and objecthood.

The American gothic adaptation of mummies and their infamous curses began to take hold in the 1860s, when authors like Louisa May Alcott and Jane Goodwin Austin, along with an anonymous writer, penned their tales. With its uncanny appearance, decayed wrappings, and unsettled identity as artifact or human, the mummy was easily adapted to the gothic genre, drawing upon established themes of imperialism and female disruption of society while furthering new tropes of the mummy's curse and the rape of the mummy. As Marie Mulvey-Roberts notes in "The Female Gothic Body," women's bodies throughout history have been "associated with monstrosity," and that "monstrosity has been regarded as quintessential to the construction of femininity" within patriarchal ideology (106). The female mummies present at the center of these American authors' tales thus continue and further gothic tradition, presenting the ancient Egyptian women as decaying monstrosities.

The Egyptian mummy is also both appealing and utterly repulsive; in nearly all American mummy fiction, the undead is a woman whose beauty cannot be denied by any male archaeologist or adventurer who stumbles upon her tomb. Coupled with this attractiveness, however, is a disgust for what the woman has become: a decayed corpse. Consequently, this abject doubling of the Egyptian mummy embodies the dual and abject nature of the typical gothic villain. Furthermore, the mummy's preserved body embraces the "fear, desire, anxiety,

and fantasy" that Cohen outlines (4). The male archaeologist is presented with fear and anxiety over the features of the dead woman and her newfound place in American society, yet he also exhibits a fantastical desire to unclothe the mummy and covet her grave goods. Interestingly, this attraction to the mummy may be based on actual accounts of archaeologists commenting upon the beauty of corpses in their works; for instance, American ethnologist Samuel George Morton, in his records of ancient Egyptian skull measurements, often describes the attractive qualities of the female mummified heads. In *Crania Aegyptiaca; Or, Observations on Egyptian Ethnography Derived from Anatomy, History and the Monuments* (1844), Morton writes of one young woman's corpse as possessing a "beautifully developed forehead, and remarkably thin and delicate structure throughout" (6). These comments, which seem to be expressed only in reference to female bodies, present a real-life example of a complicated interaction between an American man and a female Egyptian mummy. In the narratives considered here, the villainous Egyptian mummy is written in terms of both object and character; the mummy is objectified literally as an artifact, and romantically as the object of the male protagonists' attraction. Conversely, the Egyptian mummy is written as a character who has a degree of agency in each story, as Cohen would label as "uncanny independence," and serves as a foil for both the male and female American protagonists, as well as a foil to her presumed dead and static nature (4).

The gothic short stories of Alcott, Austin, and anonymous are strikingly similar and share the same tropes of the mummy's curse and the rape of the mummy. Published anonymously in *The Knickerbocker* magazine in 1862, "The Mummy's Soul" is the first known American short story to feature a villainous female mummy. The narrative features an archaeologist who, after discovering the tomb of an ancient female mummy, takes her destroyed remains and grave goods back home with him to America. Among these grave goods is a strange insect that stings the

man's wife, leaving her to shrivel up and die. The archaeologist is also fatally stung, but not before he throws the bug into the fire, conjuring the same mummy he encountered in the ancient Egyptian tomb. The story ends with the ancient mummy living in his home and trying to escape as the man slowly dies from the insect's bite. The gothic nature of the mummy is first suggested while the male narrator cautiously explores her tomb, expressing his belief that mummies are "dead for centuries, yet alive in everything but life" ("The Mummy's Soul" 435). This idea fully encapsulates the identification of the Egyptian mummy as a gothic monster, commenting on both the human and inhuman qualities of the mummified woman. Additionally, the narrator, upon finding the antagonistic mummy, remarks at the "hideous revelation" that this woman once had "a lovely face" ("The Mummy's Soul" 437). The anonymous author thus presents another gothic duality of the ancient mummy by finding her simultaneously attractive and repulsive, and also reinforces Mulvey-Roberts' idea that monstrosity can be derived from a woman's body; given that the mummy is female, the narrator is able to comment on her attractiveness and find it as a source of horror as it juxtaposes her decaying nature.

Austin's short story, "After Three Thousand Years," was penned in 1868, only a few years after "The Mummy's Soul." Though the male protagonist, Mr. Vance, in Austin's work is not an archaeologist, he is still a wealthy traveler who searches the tomb of a female mummy in search of a necklace for his lover, Marion. As he arrives home in New York, however, he realizes that the necklace he pillaged is cursed, as discovered by a specialist who translated the hieroglyphic inscription on the clasp. Once she discovers that Mr. Vance is in love with her cousin, Marion dons the poisonous necklace and dies in the same way that the female mummy did three thousand years before. The mummy in this narrative is much less direct in the curse she inflicts upon the American couple; unlike the anonymous author's resurrected femme fatale, she

simply remains dead throughout the course of the story. Mr. Vance has the tendency to objectify the mummy, referring to the ancient Egyptians as a sort of commodity when he tells Marion how "a new mummy is not to be met with every day, even upon the Nile" (Austin 19-20). Mr. Vance then takes this objectification in a different direction once he tells Marion how he encountered the female mummy; while opening the sarcophagus, he claims that "within lay a slight, elegant figure, very dark in color … but retaining sufficient beauty of outline, both in face and form, to prove to my mind that a rare loveliness of the days gone by lay before me" (Austin 22). Unlike the male protagonist of "The Mummy's Soul," who is utterly repulsed despite the mummy's preserved beauty, Mr. Vance is fully entranced by his uncovered female mummy. Mr. Vance's interaction with the ancient Egyptian woman's corpse is eerily similar to Morton's real-life interaction with the same subject; there is a striking parallel between Mr. Vance's commentary on his mummy's beautiful "face and form" and the face of Morton's mummy being described as "beautifully developed." Regardless of Austin's connection to Morton's ethnographic work, the strange attraction between American traveler and ancient Egyptian mummy may be seen as an effect of Egyptomania in the United States. Additionally, his attraction may foreshadow Mr. Vance's betrayal of love to another woman besides Marion.

An aforementioned gothic mummy narrative that clearly conveys the tropes of both the mummy's curse and the rape of the mummy is Alcott's "Lost in a Pyramid; Or, the Mummy's Curse." After the archaeologists burn the mummy and escape the Pyramid of Khufu, Forsyth safely returns to America and brings with him flower seeds that were held in the mummy's clasp, a treasure that intrigues his fiancé, Evelyn, so much that she decides to plant them without Forsyth knowing. Professor Niles, still in Egypt, does likewise, and the flower that blooms enacts the mummy's curse: Professor Niles is fatally poisoned and Evelyn falls into a coma for the rest

of her life. As in Austin's short story, the female mummy who "casts" the curse upon the male protagonist and his fiancé does not actually come to life, as in "The Mummy's Soul," but she still has power over the other characters. However, ancient Egyptian mummies are generally more antagonized in Alcott's story than in any of the other narratives considered here; as Forsyth recalls his adventure, he mentions "coming face to face with some shriveled specimen perched like a hobgoblin on the little shelves where the dead used to be stowed away for ages" (Alcott 36). Forsyth acknowledges that these mummies were once human beings, but given their present decayed state, they remind him more of monsters than actual people. Aside from the mummy being depicted as a monstrous villain, other gothic elements that exist within Alcott's narrative include the duality of beauty and horror of the female mummy. Forsyth's reaction to the unwrapped mummy is similar to the male protagonist of "The Mummy's Soul" in that he wonders if "this dark, ugly thing had ever been a lovely, soft-eyed Egyptian girl" (Alcott 39). While Forsyth is not as attracted to his female mummy as Mr. Vance was to his, there still exists the thought of beauty in the grotesque.

Despite the differences in characters, occupations, and motives, what exists in all three of these gothic mummy stories, and what makes them so horrifying to their nineteenth-century American readers, is the trope of the mummy's curse. Centered around "symbolic revenge" and "themes of reprisal, retribution, and retaliation," the curse takes on many different forms throughout fiction (Trafton 125). The mummy's curse can be seen as a gendered weapon, given that its creator is a dead woman, that disrupts the patriarchal ideology, be it American society or imperialism, that negatively affects both women and the Orient. As stated before, it is this same patriarchal ideology that categorizes the female mummy as a monstrosity. In some cases, as in "The Mummy's Soul," the mummy is reincarnated or reanimated and has a high degree of

agency in bringing destruction upon whoever opens their tomb and pillages their grave goods. Cohen outlines reincarnation as a phenomenon that defines the monster's body as both "corporeal and incorporeal," implementing its tendency to shift forms as a "threat" to its enemies (5). This idea of reincarnation is perhaps derived from the ancient Egyptian monuments and mummies themselves, which seem to possess an "immunity to historic change" (Deane 402). Thus, the female mummy's propensity to reincarnate, which is a form of her curse, acts as a threat to existing gendered boundaries.

Although the idea of a reanimated Egyptian mummy no doubt terrified nineteenth-century readers, the trope of the mummy's curse also drew upon a more concrete and realistic fear from the West: the fear of the Orient. What is so shocking about gothic mummy fiction is the idea that an entity—one that is not only malevolent, but also ancient, foreign, and Oriental—can have such a negative effect on a previously serene American domestic space. The mummy's curse is an invasion of the household by a being who is so far removed from the American household in time and in space that it threatens society overall. What causes this invasion, though, is the Western man himself; his pillaging of the mummy's grave goods is symbolic of Western countries meddling in the Egyptians' affairs abroad, and his return home to America with these ancient treasures literally brings the Orient into the domestic sphere. Whether the man brings the treasure home as a "souvenir" as in Alcott's story, a "commission" as in Austin's tale, or as "mementoes" in the unknown author's narrative, the fact that he brings home an Oriental good acknowledges the presence of the foreign in the domestic space (Alcott 41) (Austin 23) ("The Mummy's Soul" 438). The negative effects of the objects on the afflicted American households may act as a commentary on Oriental imperialism, using the mummy's curse as a warning to those who exploit Egypt's history and artifacts.

The fear of the Orient is also made present in these mummy fictions through its effects on the seemingly innocent female protagonists who inhabit the American domestic sphere. According to scholar Bradley Deane, these mummy stories are different from other gothic approaches to the domestic space, "combining elements of the gothic tradition with familiar elements of domestic fiction, especially … the marriage plot" (391). In all examined pieces of mummy fiction, the aspect of each narrative that is the most negatively affected by the mummy's curse is the romantic relationship between the male and female protagonists; the archaeologist's wife in "The Mummy's Soul" is fatally stung by an ancient insect, Marion endows herself with the scorned princess' poisoned necklace, and Evelyn's obsession with the dead sorceress' seeds eventually poisons her as well. In all works, the male protagonist is left to deal with the fallout of his actions, grappling with the effects of the mummy's curse for the rest of his unhappy life. Modern Egyptologist Jasmine Day attributes both the actions of the male and female protagonists to their hubris and sense of superiority over the ancient dead, noting that the figure of the wife or fiancé "develops a foolish fascination with the mummy's treasures so that she becomes as guilty as her partner" (54). This idea is perhaps most evident in "After Three Thousand Years" as Marion literally commissions Mr. Vance to find her a necklace from the mummy of an ancient Egyptian princess (Austin 23). In Alcott's story, however, Evelyn seems to be even more guilty than Forsyth given how she deceitfully steals and plants one of the mummy's seeds that he begs her not to think about, let alone grow.

Day also claims that each narrative "presents a man and woman sympathetically—despite their mutual hubris—as a couple whose companionship is wrecked by a cruel, unseen force that sadistically turns a beautiful young woman into the likeness of a corpse" (54-55). What Day points out in all of these texts is that the women themselves become mummy-like, transforming

from a beautiful woman into the same corpse-figure that their lover discovered in Egypt. “The Mummy’s Soul” presents this idea quite literally when the archaeologist’s wife, after being stung by the ancient insect, falls ill and the archaeologist is horrified to find that “in everything by form and face, she resembled the mummy in the tomb” (“The Mummy’s Soul” 440). Additionally, the fact that the female mummy he found in Egypt is resurrected in his own bedroom not only depicts the horrors of the malevolent Orient in one’s own home, but the mummy seems to have taken the wife’s place in the bedroom, thereby suggesting a sexual relationship and further disrupting the marriage plot that Deane notes (445). The fates of Marion and Evelyn are not as explicitly described as resembling the mummies found by their lovers, although Austin does draw a connection between the manner of death in which the mummy and Marion were killed, calling her Mr. Vance’s “mistress, royal in death” (Austin 31). Evelyn, on the other hand, lapses into a coma for the rest of her life, suspended in the same state between life and death that the fictional mummies seem to occupy (Alcott 47). Thus, the mummy’s curse, derived from a fear of Orientalism in the domestic sphere, is portrayed in similar ways in these three American short stories.

What lies at the center of these gothic mummy romances is another trope closely connected to the mummy’s curse, focusing on the aforementioned erotic undertones of the narratives, that scholars call ‘the rape of the mummy.’ The way in which each male protagonist discovers the female mummy falls into a pattern as follows: the penetration of an ancient Egyptian tomb, the undressing of a mummy by removal of her wrappings, the desecration of the mummy by partially or fully destroying her body, and the physical violation of the female mummy by stealing her grave goods. Given that the mummy, like other monsters, “is transgressive, too sexual, perversely erotic, [and] a lawbreaker,” means that it “must be exiled or

destroyed" in order to maintain order (Cohen 16). To the male archaeologist, the complacent mummy is all too easily undressed, or, she herself makes erotic gestures by replacing the man's wife or fiancé. The mummy's curse, already established as a gendered weapon, makes the female monster too potent, and thus her destruction by the male protagonist is deemed necessary in order to prevent further harm or disruption. In the next step, Day explains that the grave goods, whether they are objects or jewelry, can be seen as a representation of the mummy's "maidenhead," thus implying that a sexual encounter takes place between the male protagonist and the female mummy (41).

What characterizes this fictional encounter as rape is not only the idea that a dead woman cannot consent to any sexual intercourse, but also the fact that male characters themselves feel a sense of wrongdoing in their encounters with the female mummies. The archaeologist narrator of "The Mummy's Soul," upon inspecting the mummy within the tomb he opened, recounts that he "reproached himself, in a sorrowful, musing mood, for such a sacrilege, when I found it was the body of a woman" ("The Mummy's Soul" 436). The narrator's use of the word "sacrilege" informs the reader that he is aware of his violation of the mummy, and he seems to derive this sense of guilt from the fact that she is a woman. The narrator himself thus realizes the sexual implication of his excavation of the woman's tomb, but this "reproach" does not prevent him from continuing his investigation. The archaeologist unclothes the mummy, noting that as he "unwrapped the long bandages from the breast, a strong gust of wind rushed from the desert … and caused the mummy to crumble into a nauseous powder, that half-choked me with its subtle sense of humanity" ("The Mummy's Soul" 437). Not only does the narrator undress the dead woman, but the fact that he focuses his attention on her breast charges the encounter with an even more erotic undertone. This sexual assault on the mummy is only stopped when a desert

wind destroys her body, which is exposed because of the narrator's actions. In a way, the archaeologist literally and metaphorically dehumanizes the female mummy through his assault on her; on the one hand he reduces the woman to an object of sexual desire, and on the other hand he inadvertently destroys her body, leaving nothing but a pile of dust behind.

While the male protagonist of Austin's story does not destroy the body of his discovered female mummy, there is an even greater sense of violation and immorality given the illegality of his encounter. Mr. Vance tells Marion how "the adventure was not without its peril had we been discovered by the Turkish authorities in opening the sarcophagus, and in removing the innumerable folds of mummy-cloth swathing the occupant" (Austin 22). Not only does Mr. Vance seem to take pleasure in unwrapping and looting the body of a dead woman, but he feels a heightened sense of excitement of doing so in the face of danger from foreign authorities. Further, the problem with the Turkish authorities is emphasized not in the act of breaking into an archaeological excavation, but in the act of opening the mummy's sarcophagus and unclothing her; Mr. Vance is not excited by the violation of a site, he is excited by the violation of a woman's corpse and stealing her possessions in the middle of the night.

"Lost in a Pyramid" presents a very similar account of the violation of a female mummy, though in this story there are two men unclothing and taking her grave goods. While Forsyth is rather reluctant about touching the mummy, Professor Niles urges him to help unwrap her, claiming that "this is a woman, and we may find something rare and precious here" (Alcott 39). As with the narrator of "The Mummy's Soul," there is an emphasis on the fact that the mummy is a woman, which seems to render the mummy more desirable and literally more valuable in the sense that she may have treasures underneath her linen wrappings. Upon undressing the mummy, Forsyth finds the seeds in a golden box that was kept in her hands "folded on her breast" (Alcott

40). Again, there is a focus on the breast of the dead woman, which is exposed to the men as they search her body for more valuable ornaments. As Day claims, the grave goods here can be seen as symbols of the mummy's virginity taken by the two archaeologists; given that the seeds are those from a flower, Forsyth literally "de-flowers" the female mummy. These details create an overtly sexual encounter between the two men and the female mummy who, after being unclothed and violated, is then destroyed by Forsyth's fire. The reduction of the dead woman to mere cinders conveys the same theme of dehumanization that is present in "The Mummy's Soul," though Alcott's mummy is never reanimated.

The reasoning for this somewhat bizarre literary trend in nineteenth-century American gothic fiction is rather complex. Day proposes that this rape metaphor is "a critique of Europeans' control of Egypt" (63). This theory is very plausible given the Americans' general disapproval of European powers meddling in the affairs of the Egyptian government, with some prominent figures even going so far as to call the English and French policies "cruel" and selfish" (Loring iv). The American authors who penned these mummy tales could have shared the same sentiment, looking down upon the contemporary European colonialism and imperialism taking place in Egypt. After all, Cohen describes monsters as literary figures who are "born of political expediency" and who "function as living invitations to action" (13). Furthermore, the authors' destruction of the female mummy's body, particularly in Alcott's narrative, shares the same sentiment as Twain's comment about mummies being used as train fuel; the use of the mummy's body for personal gain—whether it be Forsyth's attempt to escape the Great Pyramid or European businessmen finding cheap fuel—can be seen as a critique of the Western industrial exploitation of Egypt's history and resources. Therefore, the gothic mummy can be seen as a

horrifying figure intended to elicit a physical response from the nineteenth-century American reader, one that was possibly meant to evoke change.

While it is true that all three of the mentioned authors employ a sense of the rejection of colonialism in Egypt, a rejection driven by a lust for Egyptian antiquities, it seems that only the female authors provide this sentiment to the fullest extent. Forsyth, in Alcott's story, is the only male protagonist in all of these fictional narratives that seems to feel true guilt for his violation of the female mummy. Even when Evelyn is frightened by his tale, Forsyth begs, "Nay; don't reject the poor little mummy's treasure. I never have quite forgiven myself for stealing it, or for burning her" (Alcott 40). Unlike Mr. Vance and the narrator of "The Mummy's Soul," Forsyth seems to be aware of the violation and dehumanization he has wrought against the mummy. Thus, Alcott's short story is not only aware of the injustices that it presents, but also condemns this behavior of exploitation and violation of the Orient. Even though Austin's characters are less aware of their dehumanization of the female mummy, Mr. Vance seems to possess a certain degree of guilt for having "rudely disturbed" the mummy's rest (23). This confession about his disruption of the female mummy's privacy may only exist, however, because of his audience: he relates his adventure and discovery of the poisoned necklace to his lover, Marion, and her cousin, Juliette. Nevertheless, Austin, like Alcott, makes a point of emphasizing Mr. Vance's "rude" behavior towards the dead woman.

The gender of the anonymous author of "The Mummy's Soul" still remains unknown and therefore cannot be commented on, but it is clear that the authors who are women, Alcott and Austin, are more acutely aware of the dehumanization and exploitation of the female mummies through the rape metaphor, as shown through the embedded element of guilt within their narratives. In fact, Alcott and Austin overall depict a rather sympathetic view of the female

mummy despite her indirect curse upon the protagonists, whereas the anonymous author fears and despises the female mummy right from the start of the short story. Day explains this phenomenon through the claim that these female writers "might have been more conscious of the Orientalist use of women as a metaphor, and of analogies between economic or political exploitation and rape. [Alcott and Austin] brought a body-consciousness and sexual morality" to the trope of the mummy's curse (171).

The impact of these writers' works was recognized within the nineteenth century, especially by other female authors. In *The Repose in Egypt*, Wallace includes an interesting anecdote:

> Many wild and weird tales have been told of seeds found in the hands of embalmed Egyptians being sown and growing into flowers of matchless beauty, but with a deadly perfume which has destroyed the health of the wearers … I am deeply gratified to see the guide-books unite in testimony. No such gardening has been accomplished, and every such story is false. (69)

Wallace undoubtedly alludes to Alcott's narrative given the detailed reference to a deadly flower that "destroyed the health of the wearers," such as the characters of Evelyn and Professor Niles, whose seeds were taken from a mummy's hand, like the female mummy burned by Forsyth. The terrifying gothic elements of Alcott's short story must have left Wallace frightened by the prospect of visiting Egypt given her relief in finding that the guidebooks were mistaken about this. Although Alcott's short story was published in 1869, Wallace revealed the repercussions of the narrative nearly twenty years later, serving as a testament to the longevity of the gothic mummy story among American readers. In fact, Wallace describes how fictional stories like Alcott's influenced other travelers to Egypt. She recounts that travelers often bought "small

samples of grain offered in tattered rags, by venders, as veritable corn from the granaries of the Pharaoh" (Wallace 69-70). Not only did these travelers mistakenly believe that these seeds would grow once planted, but they also bought the seeds under the belief that they came from the ancient Egyptians themselves, such as the mummy sorceress from Alcott's tale, given that they were wrapped in "tattered rags" that mimicked the linen wrappings of mummies. While Wallace comments on this phenomenon as a scam, she also reveals that Alcott's American work produced a real, physical effect on tourism in Egypt.

While the gothic mummy fiction of the 1860s had an undeniable effect upon their readers even decades after their publication, the anonymous author, Austin, and Alcott were not the first Americans to resurrect a literary mummy. The first instance of a mummy being reanimated in American fiction was penned in 1845 by Edgar Allan Poe. "Some Words with a Mummy" is a short story originally published in the *American Whig Review* journal as a satire of the ongoing phenomenon of Egyptomania and the growing field of Egyptology (Levine and Levine 542). The narrator, as in typical Poe fashion, is an unnamed man who recounts an unusual experience that occurs while he is in a drunken and drowsy state of mind. In his account, or possible dream, he attends his acquaintance's house for a mummy-unwrapping event, attended only by a small circle of highly elite and educated men. In their inspection of the mummy dubbed "Allamistakeo"—a pun that suggests that everything Egyptology has discovered was "all a mistake"—the men accidentally revive the corpse via electricity and engage in a humorous conversation about antiquity and modernity. Allamistakeo proves that ancient Egypt was far more advanced than nineteenth-century America, which ultimately convinces the narrator that he should embalm himself for hundreds of years. What makes this satire so interesting is Poe's commitment to real facts and figures despite the exaggerated fiction of the tale; his description of the mummification

process practiced by ancient Egyptians is incredibly accurate, even explaining to the reader the step-by-step process of the ancient embalming technique (Levine and Levine 542). Furthermore, Poe includes two real-life contemporary figures in the fictional dissection event, George Robbins Gliddon, an American Egyptologist, and James Silk Buckingham, a British journalist and travel writer. Poe presents caricatures of the two men, introducing their skills and knowledge—such as Gliddon's translation of Allamistakeo's name from hieroglyphics—and then tearing apart their credibility as scholars by debunking their published work through Allamistakeo's "true" description of ancient Egypt.

Although the work is classified as satire, "Some Words with a Mummy" still presents certain elements of horror, primarily the mummy's own denial of objectification and the Americans' fear of Oriental superiority. While the aforementioned mummy pseudo-romances continuously objectified female mummies as both commodities and objects of sexual desire, Poe's story has an "anti-objectification" theme that renounces the idea of a mummy as an artifact or a scientific specimen (Day 39). There is a sense of horror in the idea that a mummy is not only a living person but one that can "berate" the scholars that have "poked and prodded him" (Day 39). Perhaps this juxtaposition between Allamistakeo and the gothic mummies lies in the fact that he is a man and thus can be seen as an authoritative figure, unlike the monstrous female mummies who lay curses upon their intruders. The terror of the situation is further related through the response of these scholars to the resurrection of Allamistakeo; the narrator recounts that the elite group of men "made no attempt at concealing the downright fright which possessed them. Doctor Ponnonner was a man to be pitied. Mr. Gliddon, by some peculiar process, rendered himself invisible. Mr. Silk Buckingham, I fancy, will scarcely be so bold as to deny that he made his way, upon all fours, under the table." (Poe 514). The figures of Gliddon and

Buckingham are once again penned as comical caricatures whose work is entirely discredited with the resurrection of the mummy. Unlike the three gothic mummy stories analyzed above, this satire allows us to find humor in the fear of the bumbling characters though they find themselves in such an unnerving situation.

Poe's short story also relates the fear of Oriental superiority. The last section of the narrative is a debate between the scholars and Allamistakeo about the invention and use of technology, with each side desperately trying to prove that their society is more advanced. The men interrogate the mummy about the ancient Egyptians' use of microscopes, astronomy, and railroads, all of which Allamistakeo admits the Egyptians either invented or used. The scholars spend their encounter with Allamistakeo by "explaining and defending the very opinions and convictions on which their experiments [with mummies] were based" (Trafton 136). Unlike the mummies of gothic literature, Poe's mummy is horrifying to nineteenth-century readers not because he sets a curse upon the scholars or carries a poisonous object, but because he is seen as a corrective, authoritative figure who completely dismisses all ideas of modern progress and technology. Allamistakeo is the embodiment of the Americans' view of ancient Egypt as "the marker of the absolute" (Trafton 133). The mummy is also made more threatening through his erasure of the current theories of humankind, ridiculing ideas of polygeny and monogeny; Allamistakeo is a threat to modern ideology because he corrects "the field of nineteenth-century naturalism as a whole, treating the entirety of the achievements of Poe's positivist century as an immature joke" (Trafton 137). Not only does the mummy claim that ancient Egypt was superior in its inventions and progress, but he completely turns the known world on its head and casts the nineteenth century as a backwards society.

The most immediate effect of the mummy's profound yet disturbing claims can be seen in the narrator's inner turmoil and subsequent resolution. While Gliddon and the rest of the scholars are simply dumbfounded by Allamistakeo's claims, Poe's unnamed narrator finds himself "sick of this life and of the nineteenth century in general," and he is "convinced that everything is going wrong" (Poe 522). He then claims that he will go back to Allamistakeo and see how he can temporarily embalm himself like the mummy. While the ending is presented as a rather comical solution to the narrator's disappointment with contemporary society, Trafton instead sees the narrator as struggling "with a profound melancholy of historiographic proportions" (138). Instead of being able to reassert his and the other scholars' beliefs about ancient Egypt and the origin of mankind, the narrator is faced with disgust. In this way, Poe not only satirizes and criticizes the Western view of ancient Egypt's authority over knowledge and progress, but he also presents a real fear of the superiority of Oriental over Western civilization. In Poe's satire, Egypt and its mummified people are both sources of awe and horror.

Laying aside the elements of existential horror and comedic relief, at the core of Poe's short story is a commentary on the movements and studies of the nineteenth century. The culmination of Gliddon's caricature, his studies being rendered useless by the mummy's historical clarifications, and the overall sense of dejection after discovering the "truth" of ancient Egypt creates a critical attack on Egyptomania and Egyptology overall. It is known that Poe read multiple sources on ancient Egypt in order to write "Some Words with a Mummy," possibly taking information from the work of Gliddon himself (Levine and Levine 542). Poe specifically mentions Gliddon's theory about the color of the ancient Egyptians' skin; the real George Robbins Gliddon believed that the substances used in embalming "blackened" and "altered the primitive Caucasian color of [the ancients'] skin" (Gliddon 75). While Allamistakeo is described

as having “reddish” skin, the fictional Gliddon similarly deduces that the embalming chemicals of “camphor and other sweet-scented gums” are what altered the mummy’s skin tone (Poe 514). Interestingly, Poe never reveals what the mummy’s “true” skin color is and seems to entertain Gliddon’s theory rather than “correct” it through Allamistakeo’s explanations.

Gliddon, among other American anthropologists and Egyptologists, published multiple works and held public lectures throughout the United States about the contemporary discoveries being excavated in Egypt and the theories that he and his fellow colleagues produced. In fact, many British Egyptologists and ethnologists attributed the rise of Egyptomania in the United States as a cause of Gliddon’s numerous public lectures (Gliddon 4). From their work with the physical bodies of the ancient Egyptians, each anthropologist describes their own work and provides literary commentary about mummies. Gliddon, as mentioned before in Poe’s short story, primarily focuses on the embalming process; aside from his theories involving chemical composition and the altering of decomposing skin, Gliddon demonstrates an appreciation and admiration for the ancient’s knowledge of chemistry, though it was not as advanced as Poe’s Allamistakeo claims. Gliddon’s mummies, unlike Allamistakeo, are real, physical specimens from Egypt that he brought to lectures and cited in his publications. With these mummified remains in tow, Gliddon makes numerous remarks about the embalming process in a recorded lecture titled *Otia Aegyptiaca* (1849), claiming that various processes, chemicals, and reactions were “known to the Egyptians, from their presence in mummies” (60). Similar to Poe, yet not to the same extreme degree, Gliddon acknowledges the ancient’s impressive knowledge and application of science; once again, there is an idea of Oriental superiority elicited from ancient Egyptian mummies.

At the crossroads of fictional and real-life mummies is a short article written by John Brown Russwurm, called the "Mutability of Human Affairs," that was featured in the African American-owned newspaper *Freedom's Journal*. Russwurm penned the 1827 article in response to his experience at Peale's American Museum and Gallery of Fine Arts, which housed the first ancient Egyptian mummy in New York City (Martin 113). Like Poe's Allamistakeo, Russwurm gives a voice to the ancient mummy in "Mutability of Human Affairs" to criticize an aspect of American society, however, in this case, the mummy is a real artifact of ancient Egypt. To Russwurm, the mummy in Peale's Museum is a symbol of slavery as it was purchased and brought from Africa to be exploited in the United States. Russwurm positions himself as the mouthpiece of the ancient Egyptian mummy as he questions, "Have [the pharaohs] not been torn from their 'vaulted sepulchres,' and exhibited to a gazing world? *Have not they too been bought and sold?* Methinks, the lesson to be derived from this, should warn other potentates" (Russwurm 15). While Russwurm does not explicitly claim that the mummy is black, he uses the fact that it was brought from Africa to craft a metaphor of slavery, emphasizing the idea that the bodies of ancient Egyptians have been "bought and sold." As Poe exhibits Allamistakeo as a cautionary tale about the progress of science, Russwurm uses the museum mummy as a literal "warning" to other African civilizations. A parallel can be seen between Russwurm's use of the "bought and sold" mummy to convey the voice of African Americans and Alcott and Austin's use of their violated, female mummies to express ideas concerning gender and sexual assault. All three authors adapt the ancient Egyptian body to their own bodies, which were mistreated in nineteenth-century America.

In "Mutability of Human Affairs," Russwurm also attempts to channel the idea of Oriental superiority to elicit fear and guilt from white Americans. As literary scholar Charles D.

Martin asserts, Russwurm uses the mummy not only as a cautionary tale for African Americans, but also as "a warning to those who presumed to own the body of another," a message that Russwurm and other African Americans could not articulate at the time (114). Russwurm also attempts to strengthen the superior identity of the ancient Egyptians through his description of them as "a people, who, for more than one thousand years, were the most civilized and enlightened" (15). Writing near the beginning of the Egyptomania craze, Russwurm follows the trend of upholding ancient Egyptian civilization and asserting its greatness as compared to American ideas of progress; yet in this article, he attempts to use it as a weapon against white Americans. Believing that he is descended from these ancient Egyptians, Russwurm claims that the ancient grandeur and knowledge was produced by an African civilization, one that is superior to a modern white civilization. This argument, which will be further explored in the next chapter, and championed later in the nineteenth century by figures like Frederick Douglass and Lydia Maria Child to derive anxiety surrounding the identity of the ancient Egyptians and their uncanny knowledge. The Americans who "bought and sold" the mummy in Peale's Museum should not only feel guilt over their actions, as Russwurm believes, but should also consider their inferiority in comparison to the civilization they now exploit.

Although the ancient Egyptian mummy was a foreign artifact whose identity as object or person is still yet to be determined, nineteenth-century American authors adapted both the idea of the mummy and instances of actual mummies in their works of fiction. Authors like Alcott and Austin, alongside the author of "The Mummy's Soul," set their mummies in gothic tales that cast curses upon American protagonists in response to their violation of the ancient female bodies. These gothic stories convey the strange attraction of Egyptomania in American culture and capitalize on the anxieties surrounding the Orient and its ancient populace. Poe is perhaps

the most effective in displaying related anxieties about American ideas of progress and science, often believed to be “all a mistake” or inferior when compared to the feats of the ancient Egyptians. Poe’s nod to phrenology and race alludes to an ongoing debate, to be discussed further in the next chapter, concerning the racial identity of the ancient Egyptians. Russwurm, using the real-life mummy exhibited in Peale’s Museum, also comments upon the anxieties surrounding ancient Egyptians and their race, as well as their treatment. In these ways, the ancient Egyptian mummy is simultaneously implemented as an object of desire and humanized as a voice of inequality.

Chapter III: Artwork

The artwork of ancient Egypt—consisting of statues, reliefs, and paintings—is another aspect of archeology captured in nineteenth-century American literature. The nature of this art—incredibly ancient yet tangible and well preserved in stone—had a profound impact on American travelers who visited Egypt and encountered this material culture firsthand. To travelers, the many statues scattered around Egypt evoked a sense of timelessness and ancient grandeur. Wallace details the "serene and stately sculptures … which look on with stony, sleepless eyes to all eternity, seeming to say 'while the river runs I stand'" (38-39). The statues, so removed in time yet so familiar in body and face, drove many visitors to use personification when recounting their experiences. Focusing on posture, Wallace observes that "the statues seem all-powerful, with hands resting on their knees in the attitude of repose; and one has a feeling that the giants, serene of aspect, have lost their wish to slay and devour, and now sit, in stony stillness after toils, enjoying the sunshine and ceaseless calm" (66-67). This perceived emotion may have even inspired the title of Wallace's travel book, *The Repose in Egypt*. Loring describes the ancient sculpture in a remarkably similar manner, recalling that the Colossi of Memnon "sit in Egyptian repose, with their hands upon their knees, as though weighted down with mighty thought" (154). As Trafton observes, the all-knowing yet restful statues described by Wallace and Loring convey the nineteenth-century American idea of ancient Egypt as a "slumbering giant of truth" given the sculpture's colossal size and far-off gaze (139). Although these American travelers record their findings with awe rather than with anxiety or fear, there still remains a nod to Oriental superiority in the admired intellectual capacity of the statues and their unknown sculptors.

A more extensive dialogue concerning the emotions evoked by ancient Egyptian artwork opens up when discussing more famous archaeological sites, such as the Great Sphinx of Giza.

In *The Innocents Abroad*, Twain steps out of his generally humorous tone to address the Sphinx as what he calls "the most majestic creation the hand of man has wrought" (455). Twain gives high praise to the ancient sculpture, claiming that "there was a dignity not of earth in its mien, and in its countenance a benignity such as never anything human wore … It was MEMORY—RETROSPECTION—wrought into visible, tangible form" (454-455). Twain is contradictory in his sentiments about the creators of the Sphinx; on one hand he views it as a feat of humanity that has withstood the test of time, yet on the other hand, the sculpture is so grand that it seems nearly impossible that any human should have created it. On par with the idea of ancient Egypt as a "slumbering giant of truth," Twain envisions the Sphinx as an embodiment of human history in his metaphor of "memory" and "retrospection," as if the Sphinx holds the memories of the ancient Egyptians and thinks back towards a long-forgotten past (Trafton 139). However, Twain negates the human qualities of the Sphinx and its creation, almost calling the monument supernatural in its appearance. The Sphinx is, of course, a sculpture meant to represent a beast that is half man and half lion, yet Twain seems to exaggerate the grandness of the monument by pointing to something otherworldly.

Fig. 4. "The Great Sphinx—Gizeh" photograph from William Wing Loring, *A Confederate Soldier in Egypt* (New York: Dodd, 1884; print; 91)

Farman describes the Sphinx, in *Along the Nile with General Grant* (1904), in a remarkably similar way as Twain. Without ever directly calling them ancient Egyptians, Farman imagines:

> the giants of the dawn of civilization [who] erected colossal monuments, and chiseled from the hardest rocks statues with a technical knowledge and skill that have amazed and confounded all modern engineers and artists. And what is more astonishing these gigantic and artistic monuments came forth in the very beginning of history, as if from the hands of supernatural beings. (65)

Farman's lack of attributing the Sphinx or other colossal monuments to a group of people conveys a sense of disbelief that such a grand sculpture could be created by humans. Mentioning "supernatural beings" and "giants of the dawn of civilization" signals a distrust of human achievement and a sense of anxiety over the intellectual and physical capabilities of ancient people. Farman's writing echoes the themes of Poe's "Some Words with a Mummy," published nearly fifty years before Farman's travel narrative; the Sphinx, like Poe's Allamistakeo, seems to shake Farman's preconceived notions of history and civilization, and forces him to imagine an otherworldly scenario as an attempt to explain what he sees. Farman's physical encounter with the Sphinx, then, evokes a fear of Oriental superiority.

Given the skills, power, and intellect required for sculpting such a colossal monument, there was an ongoing debate in nineteenth-century America over the identity of the Sphinx's creators; competition arose among scientists, scholars, ethnologists, and abolitionists to establish the race of ancient Egyptians. Many figures who argued for the idea of black ancient Egyptians focused on the physical features of the Sphinx's face, believing that it portrays that of a pharaoh.

For example, in *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* (1833), Lydia Maria Child weighs the intellectual history of Africans. As well as analyzing ancient Greek and Roman literature, Child looks towards the Sphinx as a sign of the ancient Egyptians' intelligence. Child claims, "The statues of the Sphinx have the usual characteristics of the negro race. This opinion is confirmed by Blumenbach, the celebrated German naturalist, and by Volney, who carefully examined the architecture of Egypt" (150). Although Child does not explain which specific features of the Sphinx depict the "negro race," it is important to note that she bases her claims upon the work of European writers; Constantin Francois de Volney (1757-1820) and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) were among the first travelers in Egypt and wrote extensively upon ruins and people of ancient Egypt. Child references the work of these figures because of their credibility and original opinions as well as Volney's ties to abolitionist movements. Child's main purpose in asserting the Sphinx's black qualities, however, is to "demonstrate that Africans are, indeed, human beings" whose ancestors were capable of creating such monuments (Rusert 75). Other arguments for a black Sphinx were derived from Biblical studies championed by the African American minister Henry Highland Garnet (1815-1882) who claimed that God made Ham the first African. During the middle of the nineteenth century, the idea that Egypt was created by the descendants of Ham was widely believed by Americans (Trafton 63). Echoing the words of Child, Garnet argued that "the gigantic statue of the Sphinx has the peculiar features of the children of Ham" (Trafton 63). Like Child, Garnet does not specifically mention how the features are comparable to black features, however, Garnet adds to the ongoing Afrocentric theories of ancient Egypt by connecting his claims to Biblical theory.

The European studies of ancient Egypt coupled with the abolitionists' claims that the ancient Egyptians were of African origin fueled the anxiety of Oriental superiority among white

American ethnologists and anthropologists. Trafton notes Garnet's writings in particular as "one of the causes for the anxious defenses of the Sphinx by the American school of ethnology," which was spearheaded by none other than Gliddon and Morton (Trafton 63). In 1839, Morton published one of the most influential books of the nineteenth century, *Crania Americana; or, A Comparative View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America*, in which he makes reference to the ancient Egyptians and their Sphinx. Responding to the works of both previous European scholars and abolitionist claims, Morton writes:

> I allude to that hypothesis which classes the ancient Egyptians with the Negro race. Among the advocates of this opinion was Volney, the celebrated traveller. He looked upon the *Sphinx*, and hastily inferred from its flat features and bushy hair, that the Egyptians were real Negroes: yet these circumstances have no weight when we recur to the fact, that the Budhists of Asia … represent their principal god with Negro features and hair, and often sculpted in black marble; yet among the three hundred millions who worship Budha, there is not, perhaps, a solitary Negro nation. (29)

In his comparison of different objects of material culture, Morton acknowledges the possibility of the Sphinx having black features, yet he presents the claim of ancient Egyptians being black as unfounded and "hastily" proved. He continues, "there is no absolute proof, moreover, that the Sphinx represented an Egyptian deity: it may have been a shrine of the Negro population of Egypt, who, as traffickers, servants, and slaves, were a very numerous body" (Morton 29). Not only does Morton degrade the possibility of the Sphinx as a black deity, but he also presents the idea, primarily upheld in the American school of ethnology, that black people were always enslaved throughout human history.

Morton was not the only white American anthropologist concerned with maintaining the European identity of the ancient Egyptians. Afrocentric claims prompted Gliddon to join with American physician Josiah C. Nott (1804-1873) in writing *Types of Mankind; or, Ethnological Researches Based upon the Ancient Monuments, Paintings, Sculptures, and Crania of Races, and upon their Natural, Geographical, Philological, and Biblical History* (1854). To Nott, Gliddon and the American school of ethnology they represented, "race was a matter of truth, civilization was a matter of cranial capacity, and Egypt, properly understood and represented, was the ultimate authority of the ages" (Trafton 48). The understanding of the Sphinx and all other sculpted Egyptian monuments, then, was a necessary tool in establishing the European race as the true, intellectual human civilization. In a letter to Morton, included in the 1854 edition of *Types of Mankind*, Gliddon attempts to deny the notion of a black Sphinx. He writes, "it has been the fashion to quote the Sphinx, as an evidence of the Negro tendencies of ancient Egyptians. They take his *wig* for woolly hair—and as the nose is off, of course it is *flat*. But even if the face (which I fully admit) has a strong African cast, it is an almost solitary example, against 10,000 that are not African" (Nott and Gliddon xxxvii). Gliddon, being one of the few Egyptologists in this ongoing debate, seems to have the most credibility on the matter, especially since he is able to comment on the facial features of the Sphinx in such detail. Gliddon also debases the Afrocentric argument for a black Sphinx by merely referring to the claims as a "fashion." Nowhere in this explanation does Gliddon refer to the ancient Egyptians as black or African, thus ignoring the idea in its entirety and focusing instead on the possible blackness of the monuments, which he also denies in his conclusion. The claims of Morton, Nott, and Gliddon overall can be seen as reactionary to the claims of abolitionists and Afrocentric theorists; the white American

anthropologists, with their fear of Oriental superiority, could not comfortably believe that Sphinx, a monument so grand and awe inspiring, could have been made by a black population.

Using the Sphinx as a subject for debate over the identity of the ancient Egyptians, one can see a duality emerging from the extensive literary corpus produced by travelers, abolitionists, and ethnologists alike. As Trafton claims, Egypt, in the eyes of nineteenth-century Americans, "is the doubled sign of the archaeological" (102). As in the writings of Twain and Farman, ancient Egypt is "at once a sign of the unknown … a space that is unimaginable," whose creations seem to be living stone sculpted by no human hand but perhaps by the supernatural (Trafton 102). Conversely, in the writings of Child, Garnett, Gliddon, Nott, and Morton, Egypt is a land of "the fantastic, of the potential and speculative," and, especially through the lens of imperialism and racial science, the ancients are "imaginable to an infinite degree" (Trafton 102). On the one hand, ancient Egypt and its monuments are so unbelievably grand that no human is seen as its creator, and on the other hand, the identity of the ancient Egyptians was mapped onto then-current racial identities in "speculative" attempts to imagine one's ancestors as the sculptors of such an empire.

The same debate concerning race and identity can be seen in less monumental examples of ancient Egyptian artwork, such as a statue of the Pharaoh Ramses II. To one American abolitionist in particular, the statue was comparable to his own mother. In his 1855 autobiography *My Bondage and My Freedom,* Frederick Douglass focuses on the ancient Egyptian statue as a memory of his lost mother:

> My knowledge of my mother is very scanty, but very distinct. Her personal appearance and bearing are ineffaceably stamped upon my memory. She was tall and finely proportioned … There is in "*Prichard's Natural History of Man,*" the head of a figure—

> on page 157—the features of which so resemble those of my mother, that I often recur to it with something of the feeling which I suppose others experience when looking upon the pictures of dear departed ones. (52)

Douglass alludes to a book written by a British ethnologist, James Cowles Prichard, known as *The Natural History of Man: Comprising Inquiries into the Modifying Influence of Physical and Moral Agencies on the Different Tribes of the Human Family* (1843). Prichard displays an illustration of the statue of Ramses II with a remark claiming that the ancient Egyptian sculpture possessed "Hindoo" features (157). Though Douglass seems to simply use the pharaoh's visage as a reminder of his enslaved African American mother, he deliberately uses his hazy memory of his mother to make a claim about the race of ancient Egyptians. He seems to model the description of his mother based upon the ancient sculpture, even describing her as "tall and finely proportioned" as if she was an Egyptian statue herself. Douglass' comparison of the bust of Ramses II and his mother may also be seen as an example of ekphrasis, as Rusert describes, "the dramatic description of visual objects in text" (66). As African Americans were typically excluded from debates concerning race and ethnology, writers, like Douglass, became interested in engaging with the visual material objects themselves "to reconstruct the forms of relation denied and destroyed by polygenesis" and the American school of ethnology (Rusert 66).

Fig. 5. "Head of Rameses," illustration from James Cowles Prichard, *The Natural History of Man: Comprising Inquiries into the Modifying Influence of Physical and Moral Agencies on the Different Tribes of the Human Family* (London: Hippolyte, 1845; print; 157)

What scholars also find intriguing about Douglass's comparison between the statue of Ramses II and his own mother is his contradictory memory. African American physician and writer James McCune Smith, in his introduction to *My Bondage and My Freedom*, attempts to credit Douglass's claims despite the author's "scanty" memory. Smith not only clarifies Douglass's allusion to the state of Ramses II, but he believes that "the nearness of its resemblance to Mr. Douglass' mother, rests upon the evidence of his memory, and judging from his almost marvelous feats of recollection of forms and outlines recorded in this book, this testimony may be admitted" (Douglass xxx). While it does not seem that Smith takes a side in the debate over the statue of Ramses II, his stance in defending Douglass's memory is used to further the conversation regarding ancient Egyptians' racial identity. Later on in the introduction, Smith makes the bold claim that "the Egyptians, like the Americans, were a mixed race, with some negro blood circling around the throne, as well as in the mud hovels" (Douglass xxx). Smith—alongside other American abolitionists like Child, Garnet, and Douglass—presents yet

another Afrocentric theory, yet he differs from all of these other voices in that he is a trained and licensed medical doctor, the first African American in history to receive such a degree. Smith agrees with some of Morton's claims that ancient Egypt comprised both African and European populations, even including the possibility of poor black Egyptians. However, Smith's statement in *My Bondage and My Freedom* should not be seen as a compromise between black and white arguments but as an educated statement made by a medical professional that the ancient Egyptian pharaohs on "the throne" were of African descent. The same ancient statue of Ramses II, then, is used by Douglass and Smith to promote an Afrocentric theory of ancient Egyptian race that counters Prichard's claims, though each abolitionist takes a different approach to the matter.

Also included in Smith's introduction to *My Bondage and My Freedom* is a reference to another analysis of a statue of Ramses II, displayed and analyzed by Nott and Gliddon in *Types of Mankind*. Although the illustration presented in *Types of Mankind* is of a slightly different bust, it still depicts the same ancient Egyptian pharaoh. Nott and Gliddon label the illustration with "RAMSES II., the *Great*. (His features are as superbly European as NAPOLEON'S, whom he resembles)" (148). Not only do Nott and Gliddon claim that the pharaoh's sculpted face has white features, but they also compare the statue to a well-known and celebrated European figure. Their analysis is very similar to Douglass's in that they use a familiar face to better understand the features and race of the ancient Egyptians. The label, however, forces the reader to compare the illustrated statue of Ramses II with a face they are already familiar with and thus allows for similarities between the ancient pharaoh's face and Napoleon's face to arise. Also similar to Douglass is how the ethnologists use their analysis of Ramses II's sculpted face to further their own theories regarding the racial identity of the ancient Egyptians; while Douglass advocated for an Afrocentric theory, Nott and Gliddon attempted to prove the beliefs of the American school of

ethnology. In their argument for a white Ramses II, Nott and Gliddon also disagree with Prichard who, despite also being a white ethnologist, did not believe that Ramses II was either white or black but "Hindoo" (Prichard 157). As with their arguments concerning the Sphinx, Nott and Gliddon's claims of a white pharaoh can be seen as an anxious response to the growing Afrocentric arguments regarding the "true" race of the ancient Egyptians.

Fig. 6. "Ramses II., the *Great,*" illustration from George Robbins Gliddon and Josiah C. Nott, *Types of Mankind; or, Ethnological Researches, Based upon the Ancient Monuments, Paintings, Sculptures, and Crania of Races, and upon their Natural, Geographical, Philological, and Biblical History* (London: Trubner, 1854; print; 148)

In addition to the sculpted monuments, many nineteenth-century Americans used other examples of ancient artwork, including tomb paintings, in their racial debates. As in the case of the statue of Ramses II, many of the American ethnologists found "evidence" to counter Afrocentric or non-white arguments from European and/or abolitionist scholars. Commenting on the typical red pigment used in ancient Egyptian paintings to depict skin color, Prichard originally proposed that the paint color was meant to literally "represent the complexion of the people," and he concludes that the ancient Egyptians "were of a red copper or light chocolate colour, and that they resembled the reddest of the Fulah and Kafir tribes now existing in Africa"

(155). Interestingly, Prichard does not explicitly attribute a modern race to the ancient Egyptians based on this information but instead proposes a connection between them and modern African groups. Thus, based solely on the ancient artwork, Prichard furthers an Afrocentric perspective on the identity of the ancient Egyptians and does not even consider the possibility of them being European. A year after Prichard's publication, Morton, in *Crania Aegyptiaca*, acknowledges this theory yet attempts to prove it incorrect. Morton writes, "It is not, however, to be supposed that the Egyptians were really *red* men, as they are represented on the monuments. This colour, with a symbolic signification, was conventionally adopted for the whole nation … the kings of the Greek and Roman dynasties are painted of the same complexion" (28). Morton evidently does not take the pigment as a literal indication of the ancient Egyptians' skin color, unlike Prichard, and successfully applies this logic to known European rulers; without explicitly claiming that the ancient Egyptians, as evidenced by tomb paintings, were white, Morton does prove Prichard wrong in certain regards. Following in the footsteps of Morton, Nott and Gliddon use the same theory of red pigment and attempt to further explain this "symbolism." Nott and Gliddon argue that the use of red in the tomb paintings "ennobled" the ancient Egyptians, and the American ethnologists further claim that the ancients "always represented their own males in *red*, and their own females in *yellow*" (152). Rather than being used to portray race, Nott and Gliddon attribute the use of red and yellow pigments as a means to differentiate gender. In this way, Nott and Gliddon side with Morton and collectively uphold the American school of ethnology by denying the idea that the ancient Egyptians were people of color or African.

Another aspect of the ancient paintings that was contested by both Prichard and the American ethnologists was the physiognomy of the figures depicted. In *The Natural History of Man*, Prichard presents a series of illustrations taken from ancient Egyptian fresco paintings and

comments that the figures' "complexion is of the Egyptian red" and "display a physiognomy which is certainly not European" (158). As in the case of the statue of Ramses II and his theory surrounding the paint pigments used in tomb paintings, Prichard once again asserts that the ancient Egyptians were anything but white. He does not specifically describe which features of the fresco signal a non-European appearance, yet Prichard is so sure of his hypothesis that he does not feel the need to clarify his point. Morton, on the other hand, provides the reader with specific measurements and racial "types" that he believes can be used to identify ancient depictions of Egyptians as European. On a particular stele, for example, Morton claims that the engraving of a pharaoh can be considered "strictly Pelasgic," or white, based upon the figure's eighty-degree facial angle (44). Though Morton is somewhat unsure of who exactly the stele depicts, he still asserts that the ancient relief "proves that the artists of those primeval times derived their ideas of the human countenance from Caucasian models" (44).

The comparison of ancient Egyptian monuments to familiar figures was not a phenomenon that existed only among ethnologists and abolitionists. In fact, many American travelers to Egypt compared the monuments, expressed in offhand comments rather than critical claims, to both famous figures and ethnic groups. General Loring recalls in his memoir a certain statue of an ancient Egyptian priest that reminded him of George Washington, especially if the statue was "uniformed in continentals" (94). Although Loring does not use this example, like Nott and Gliddon, to claim that the ancient Egyptians were of a particular race, he uses the same reasoning of the American ethnologists, as well as Douglass, in comparing an ancient statue to a familiar face. Loring's interesting comment also serves as a means of reckoning American history with ancient Egyptian history, using another culture's artwork, especially from a civilization so highly praised, to help historicize and aggrandize the history of the young United

States. The fact that Loring also references Washington's military uniform also supports this idea by placing the American Revolution alongside the history of ancient Egypt as events of immense esteem. Conversely, Loring's comparison may also elevate the esteem of the ancient Egyptian figure. Given the reverence of Washington in nineteenth-century American culture, the unknown identity of the ancient man becomes more intriguing, especially for Loring's American audience. By comparing Washington to an ancient Egyptian figure, Loring casts the president as a legendary, eternal figure whose identity, like the sculpture, will be preserved forever.

Many American tourists did, however, argue over the race of the ancient Egyptians as portrayed in their artwork. For instance, as Nott and Gliddon reference in *Types of Mankind*, travelers often "printed many extravagant theories as to the country and condition" of carved figures on a relief found in Beni Hassan (173). While the American ethnologists do not share any details of "the trashy speculations of mere tourists," it can be assumed from their reaction that some visitors believed the ancient Egyptian figures to be of African descent or of non-white origin (Nott and Gliddon 173). Nott and Gliddon, in their own analysis of the Beni Hassan relief, take care to 'officially' renounce the travelers' theories, especially those who believed that the figures were of Jewish descent; the ethnologists explain that the relief was painted "several generations before Abraham's birth," and turn instead to a "rational account" put forward by a fellow Egyptologist (Nott and Gliddon 173). Nott and Gliddon's arguments against "unscientific tourists" not only showcase the ongoing nineteenth-century American debate over the racial identity of the ancient Egyptians, but they also demonstrate the agitation and anxiety of white ethnologists in maintaining their life's work of proving that the ancient Egyptians were white.

Given that ancient Egypt was seen as the first human civilization in history, Gliddon's works, as well as American Egyptology overall, were evidently "founded on anxiety about

human origin" (Trafton 50). In other words, Egyptology and the American school of ethnology defended traditional European ancestral claims to ancient Egypt against the growing support, primarily among African Americans, for an Afrocentric approach to studying ancient Egypt and its monuments. Years before the Civil War, there was an intellectual war waged between white ethologists and Egyptologists of the American school and abolitionists who championed Afrocentric theories, and both groups used the material culture of ancient Egypt—namely sculpted monuments like the Sphinx or statues of Ramses, as well as reliefs that still retained their paint pigment—as their battleground. To establish these trends of European or Afrocentric claims, many American writers compared the faces of the ancient artwork to contemporary models. Between the offhand comments of tourists and the written manifestos of abolitionists, the white ethnologists of the American school anxiously defended their "scientific" claims of European descent, fueled by an overall fear of acknowledging the idea of the ancient Egyptians as a superior, Oriental people.

Conclusion

Although Egyptomania is arguably still prevalent in the United States today, many American writers began to lose interest in ancient Egypt once modern Egypt became more nationalistic. While some ancient monuments were considered "too ancient to have any possible political association," there was a remarkable shift in literature once Great Britain finally declared Egypt as a protectorate at the outbreak of World War I (Farman 135). This shift in imperial occupation was marked by a complete change in leadership, from popular Khedive to a British-appointed Sultan, and a growing sense of Egyptian nationalism. After 1914, Egypt ceased to be a neutral country open to the West for exploration and visitation of its ancient past, but a country that struggled against the oppression and control of the British Empire. The ancient architecture and its accompanying artwork became less accessible to American tourists, whose own country became involved in the ongoing global war. Gothic literature about ancient mummies changed from works about seductive female mummies to works about malevolent male mummies, no longer romanticizing the Orient as a submissive region (Deane 406). American Egyptomania was put on pause. Another wave of Egyptomania would not reach American shores until 1922, after the discovery of King Tutankhamen, aptly named Tutmania, that manifested itself not only in literature but also in new film technology. Boris Karloff's *The Mummy* (1932) is a prime example of this phenomena, casting a male resurrected mummy as the movie's antagonist. The original wave of Egyptomania, beginning in 1799 with Napoleon's imperial pursuit and ending in 1914 with the outbreak of World War I, encompasses the entire nineteenth century, a time when Egypt reconciled with its past and future, and a time when the United States sought to establish itself as world power.

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