"There is no death, only change.": Science and the Supernatural in H. Rider Haggard's *The Days of My Life* and *She.*

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Avenging ghosts, a near-immortal woman who claims to possess lost scientific knowledge, and mummies awaiting reincarnation assume a prominent position in H. Rider Haggard's novel, *She: A History of Adventure* (1886/87). But how do we read the mummies or the near-immortal Ayesha's Eastern "scientific" knowledge that appears more akin to sorcery than science? A strategic reading of *She* with an eye on Haggard's autobiography, *The Days of My Life* (1925), yields intriguing insights into the author's fascination and fear of the occult, which he sought to reconcile with prevailing scientific thought. These ideas reverberate through the mummies and Ayesha, expressing Haggard's unique and syncretic understanding of reincarnation that accords with contemporaneous shifts in scientifically informed religious ideologies.

Haggard's interest in connecting religious concepts to evolution, scientific materialism,[4] and the nascent field of psychology adumbrates cultural shifts occurring at the fin de siècle as Christian theological positions on death and the afterlife were reimagined. The cultural contest between Eastern and Western knowledge emerges when examining how Haggard draws on ancient and modern Eastern religious concepts, new Western scientific theories, and particularly through his grudging acknowledgement that some Eastern thought was valid. Both texts intervene in the contemporaneous discourse on the tenuous distinction between Eastern and Western knowledge and "legitimate science" and "pseudo-science" that was liberally deployed to explain death, immortality, the subconscious mind, and past-life memories.

[4] Scientific materialism posited that only physical matter exists, denying supernatural beliefs in an immortal soul. Spiritualists revised the theory to argue that the soul or spirit is energy that cannot be destroyed (i.e. the First Law of Thermodynamics), and therefore, it survives physical death.

Current Readings of Haggard's *She*

Haggard's *She* has typically been investigated for its imperialist and political underpinnings, which are unambiguously prevalent throughout the text. Bradley Deane contends that mummy fiction gestured to New Imperialist ambitions to maintain control over their interests in Egypt, particularly in respect to the Suez Canal, which many believed was crucial for maintaining the Empire for an indeterminate time. He succinctly illustrates how the tenuous "marriage plot" between East and West is allegorized in the mummy's seductive, exotic, and Orientalized images that appeared in political cartoons in *Punch* (171-74). According to Deane, mummy stories anticipate a union or marriage; however, the consummation of the marriage is deferred to an indeterminate time, rendering an unresolved ending to the plot. Deane equates Ayesha's indefinite vigil for her lost lover's return with Britain's indeterminate involvement in Egypt that was framed as a "sensual-political allegory of marriage" (175). Expanding on Deane's assessment, I propose that the notion of "deferment" also provides a context for the spiritual significance of the mummy, whose story is suspended in time until the indeterminate moment of reincarnation. While Deane's assessment of Ayesha and the mummy's allegorical meaning in terms of the Egyptian Question is undeniably plausible, the overdetermined nature of these figures provokes multiple interpretations.

Ayesha's imperial power has been interrogated through feminist perspectives that argue Haggard's novel reacts to anxieties regarding the rise of the New Woman, which ostensibly threatened to dismantle social order. While my focus in this article is specifically on Haggard's interest in science and the occult, death and the afterlife, and the privileging of Western thought over Eastern knowledge, Julia Reid's analysis of the novel offers fresh perspectives that inform my work. Reid challenges feminist readings that view *She* as a "matriarchal dystopia" and

Ayesha's power over her subjects as an exemplar of dangerous feminine misrule[5] (362-63). Instead, Reid cogently asserts that in *She*, Haggard subverts the prevailing "matriarchal theories"[6] that were championed by some Victorian anthropologists. Reid argues that Ayesha's atavistic and cyclical view of history undermines the linear concept of time proposed in the matriarchal narratives, which is associated with progressive masculinity. Instead, Ayesha's "cyclical temporality" is inscribed in her intrinsically feminine power (367-68). According to Reid, Ayesha's belief in reincarnation and her knowledge of ancient science and magic is complex in its association with both a scientific future and a primitive past. For Reid, Haggard does not confine female potency to a primordial past, arguing that through Ayesha, matriarchy has the potential to re-establish itself in the modern world (371). This is clearly expressed, first through Ayesha's ambitions to conquer Britain, and then through her final words that affirm her belief that death is not the end and that she will return. Reid's insights illustrate how Ayesha's magic and scientific knowledge destabilize the boundaries between past and present, East and West, and the ancient and modern worlds, illuminating Haggard's ambivalent attitudes toward the resurgence of ancient occult practices that proliferated at the fin de siècle.

Patrick Brantlinger attends to how alternative spiritualities, transported to Britain through contact with the East, moved beyond Christian orthodoxy on the afterlife. He writes: "Impelled by scientific materialism, the search for new sources of faith led many late-Victorians to telepathy,

[5] Reid refers to feminist literary critics, such as Sandra Gilbert, who argues that Ayesha's female power encapsulated masculine anxieties regarding matriarchal rule at the *fin de siècle*. Gilbert asserts: "She was an odd significant blend of the two types – an angelically chaste woman with monstrous powers, a monstrously passionate woman with angelic charms. Just as significantly, however, She was in certain important ways an entirely New Woman: the all-knowing, all powerful ruler of a matriarchal society" (Gilbert 124-25). See Sandra Gilbert, "Rider Haggard's Heart of Darkness" *Reading Fin De Siècle Fiction.* (ed.) Lyn Pykett, 2013, pp.124-25.

[6] The matriarchal theory was proposed by some Victorian anthropologists who posited the existence of primitive matriarchal societies that were replaced by progressive patriarchal civilizations. J. J. Bachofen argued that "all cultures has passed through a matriarchal age, which preceded the patriarchal era." He proposed a theory that human culture developed from "a primal state of promiscuity" to a patriarchal state that was moral (Reid 359).

séances, and psychic research," as a new frontier to conquer (*Rule* 228). His analysis exposes how the language of imperial exploration enters investigation into the occult and the subconscious mind, which became new unchartered territory for exploration as imperial expansion reached its zenith and opportunities for adventure declined. He notes how a backsliding into "primitive" cultural expressions of spirituality indicates multiple anxieties as the supernatural became linked to cultural regression (229). These connections emerge in Haggard's novel through the contest between Eastern knowledge framed as superstition and sorcery and Western science that is rational and, therefore, deemed superior. While these critical assessments underscore the racial biases rampant at the fin de siècle, Brantlinger's assertions regarding shifts in spiritualities open avenues for investigating how new hybridized beliefs appear in *She*.

Building on Brantlinger, Jeffery J. Franklin examines the sweeping changes in religious thought during the nineteenth century as traditional religious beliefs converge with reconfigured scientific theories and aspects of Eastern religions. Franklin asserts that, throughout the nineteenth century, a host of alternative religious positions proliferated. These included unorthodox Christian beliefs, European esotericism, new spiritual movements that embraced science, and modified Buddhist doctrines that incorporated Western beliefs, among others (xii). Recognizing Haggard's interest in these emerging epistemologies, Franklin provides a fresh reading of a well-examined text. He asserts that while Haggard is read in terms of its commentary on empire, race, or sexuality, "few have given due consideration to the fact that his 'occult and religious interest [was] the subject of a lifetime's reading and reflection' and that understanding his religious references is essential to a complete reading of his novels" (157). These observations offer a critical perspective for reading *She* since the occult assumes a prevalent position in the novel. The overarching themes of reincarnation and supernatural power provide the thrill typically expected in Gothic romance

fiction, yet such ideas were central to many new forms of Spiritualism,[7] which Haggard interrogates in his autobiography.

In *The Days of My Life*, Haggard articulates his complex relationship with Christianity, Spiritualism, and non-Western religions that formed his conviction that the dead continue to impact the living (45). These speculations provide insights into his ambivalent beliefs about the paranormal, particularly regarding summoning the dead, which he emphatically rejected, believing the practice to be the devil's work (247). However, he was influenced by the way Spiritualists re-conceptualized reincarnation, providing context for his connection to ancient Egypt. Norman Etherington expounds on Haggard's interest in the ancient world, stating that Haggard believed that in previous lives he had visited public sites of history, which were parts of his private past (13). While acknowledging Haggard's imperialist ideologies, Etherington attends to the author's fixation on ancient Egyptian mysticism to facilitate a less-examined aspect of Haggard's work.

As scientific materialism contested the belief in an afterlife, Spiritualists ironically turned the tables on their critics, citing scientific materialism to defend their beliefs in the presence of a transcendental soul. According to Franklin, new spiritualist religions invoked science to: "produce a scientific spirituality and a spiritual science, thereby dissolving the spiritualism/materialism dichotomy without collapsing either side to the other" (xiv). Franklin illuminates the lengths to which Victorians strove to find consensus between two seemingly disparate subjects, regardless of how fraught such an endeavor appeared. For many who sought spiritual enlightenment, these reconfigurations and conflations allowed them to adapt their beliefs to fit the cultural context that turned to science and new syncretic religions to reimagine Christian doctrines that had lost some

[7] Jeffery Franklin cites Theosophy and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn as two spiritualist movements that drew on ancient and Eastern spiritualist beliefs. See *Spirit Matters: Occult Beliefs, Alternative Religions, and the Crisis of Faith in Victorian Britain* (143).

of their purchase. Franklin comprehensively examines how Theosophy, influenced by ancient Egyptian monotheistic religion, hybridized spiritual concepts with science, providing a contextual understanding of new occultism. In this article, I build on Franklin's assertion that the Gothic-romance novel articulated the ubiquitous tensions between Natural Theology and scientific materialism central to Victorian cultural discourses (186-89) by focusing on how Haggard's experiences and interest in new occultism articulated in his biography are given expression in *She* (xiv).

Haggard's Views on Death and the Afterlife

In 1925, a year after his death, Haggard's autobiography, *The Days of My Life*, dedicated "to my dear Wife and to the memory of our son whom now I seek," was published. He added a chapter, "A Note on Religion," written in 1925, refuting many of his earlier thoughts on Spiritualism. Recognizing reader interest in his religious views, Haggard penned the final chapter explaining his foray into Spiritualism and his journey back to Anglicanism. Religious belief during this era ranged from orthodoxy to heterodox syncretic beliefs, so it is not surprising that Haggard disagreed with Anglicanism's position on praying for the dead. Instead, he espoused beliefs more consistent with Roman Catholicism's practice of praying for the soul's repose. He writes: "The Protestant Faith, seems vaguely to inculcate that we should not pray for the dead. If so, I differ from the Protestant Faith, and hold that we should not pray for them but to them, that they will judge our frailties with tenderness and will not forget us who do not forget them" (25). Haggard's conviction that he will reunite with his wife and son in the afterlife elucidates his belief in an immortal soul; however, when he recorded these ideas, his quest to contact the dead through séances or to prove mediums to be charlatans had been repudiated in favor of more conventional

Christian beliefs.[8] His disavowal of occult practices did not emerge from skepticism but rather from his views that such practices are "harmful and unwholesome," and a subject to be investigated by scientists rather than by the curious (41).

The repudiation of some mediums may have influenced Haggard's disenchantment with Spiritualism; however, what appeared to trouble him more was the inability to expose some of his encounters as fraudulent. Haggard's experiences with the occult and his deployment of those encounters in the novel reveals a desire to rationalize what seemingly defies rationality. An avid supporter of evolutionary science, Haggard relates an occasion where a medium's physical appearance changed and "evolved" in ways that resonate with quasi-Darwinian notions of regression. The medium, swathed in "a kind of white garment which covered her head," undergoes a transformation whereby her beautiful hair disappears to reveal a bald, shrinking head, and her neck elongates before she disappears entirely (*Days* 39). The medium's seeming physical regression as her beautiful appearance devolves into a hairless nonhuman shape alludes to evolutionary science. In this way, Haggard invokes a scientific concept and vaguely ties it to inexplicable supernatural occurrences that he claims to have witnessed. This experience clearly had a profound impression on Haggard since this visual representation of physical regression appears in *She* through Ayesha's spectacular regression at the end of the novel. The white garment that veiled the medium's beautiful hair is reminiscent of Ayesha's mummy-like wrappings, gesturing to a similarity between the medium's and the fictional character's positions that transgress the boundaries between the worlds of the living and the dead.

[8] By "conventional beliefs," I refer to doctrines that tended to be common to all denominations, such as the belief in resurrection.

Haggard presents the supernatural as a subject for scientific investigation through his insistence that all he experienced were the products of genuine, if unexplained and unexplored phenomena:

> To this day I wonder whether the whole thing was illusion, or, if not, what it can have been. Of one thing I am certain—that spirits, as we understand the term, had nothing to do with the matter. On the other hand I do not believe that it is a case of trickery; rather I am inclined to think that certain forces with which we are at present unacquainted were set loose that produced phenomena which, perhaps, had their real origin in our own minds, but nevertheless were true phenomena. (39)

He does not deny the existence of spirits, nor does he suggest that what he witnessed were parlour tricks, claiming instead that all he experienced has a rational, albeit unknown, cause. He suggests that psychological science may hold the key since supernatural episodes may proceed through dreams, the subconscious, or the illusions produced by the mind. During the late nineteenth century, the evolving field of psychology was a marginalized subject since it was initially concerned with the connection between spirit and matter, but Haggard frequently turned to science-adjacent subjects to validate his beliefs. (I will explore the relevance of psychology later). For Haggard, séances and telepathic experiments were "unwholesome" for the amateur, but he nonetheless believed that "spiritualism should be left to the expert and earnest investigator," indicating a presumption that empirical science can, in time, provide answers for the unexplained (41).

Although Haggard returned to the Anglican Church, he continued to legitimatize his beliefs in reincarnation. Like Etherington, Brantlinger expounds on Haggard's fixation with ancient Egypt, re-counting Haggard's belief that "in two previous incarnations" he may have been ancient

Egyptians[9] (*Taming* 161). In his biography, Haggard ponders how, although no proof exists, "vague memories" of ancient cultures, attractions and repulsions, and affinity for certain people one meets may explain past life remembrances (*Days* 241). Cognizant that his beliefs in reincarnation deviated from orthodox Anglicanism, Haggard took great pains to reconcile his beliefs with scripture, claiming that since Jesus identified John the Baptist[10] as Elijah's reincarnation, this proves that reincarnation is consistent with Christianity. He argues that such biblical references validate ideas "that we, or at any rate that some of us, already have individually gone through this process of coming into active Being and departing out of Being more than once –perhaps very often indeed" (241). Norman Etherington attends to Haggard's theological inconsistencies by describing his reworkings of Christian text as an attempt to provide a plausible argument that "the moral perfection demanded of Christians was to be achieved over the courses of several successive existences," cogently exposing how Haggard reframes Christian teachings of the afterlife to suit his syncretic ideas (17).

Haggard's conviction that "moral perfection" may be obtained in subsequent lifetimes differs considerably from Christian teaching on the resurrection; however, the language of evolutionary theory is apparent. Variations on the theme of continued evolution after physical death were not unique to Haggard since scientists like Alfred Russel Wallace also contemplated the afterlife in evolutionary terms. In *Miracles and Modern Spirituality* (1875), Wallace revises Darwin's theory to propose that the soul evolves beyond physical death. He argues that after death,

[9] Kate Holterhoff offers a nuanced understanding of the tension between science and archeology during the late nineteenth century. Holterhoff asserts that relics were meticulously scrutinized, categorized, and assessed for their significance, which was frequently indeterminate. Artifacts suspected of having a ceremonial or occult purpose upset the boundary between scientific objectivity and the imagination. Haggard's inclusion of the ancient sherd of Amenartes illustrates this tension in that its historical value is of interest to historians and archeologists, yet its contents regarding an eternal flame and an immortal woman indicates the occult association with ancient Egyptian occult practices. See "Egyptology and Darwinian Evolution in Conan Doyle and H. Rider Haggard: The Scientific Imagination." *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920,* vol. 60, no. 3, 2017, pp. 314-40).

[10] Haggard alludes to Matthew 11:14.

an ethereal body continues its evolution, claiming that even as the organic world is subject to change through survival of the fittest, "[In] the spiritual world, the law of 'progression of the fittest' takes place, and carries on in unbroken continuity that development of the human mind which has been commenced here" (109). Conflated spiritual and scientific evolutionary motifs were common, and according to Franklin, "All responded to the profound impact of the Darwinian revolution, adapting to it in fashioning various adaptations of it, whether as progressive spiritual development in this life or as spiritual evolution over the course of multiple lifetimes" (186). Haggard's suggestion that multiple lifetimes are required to achieve moral perfection resonates with evolutionary language and adaptations of scientific materialism, which posits the soul as an indestructible energetic force.

Haggard's conflation of scientific and spiritual concepts illustrates what Martin Fichman refers to as a "malleable border between scientific and non-scientific discourse" employed by Victorians to define the flexible boundaries between "legitimate" and "pseudo-science" (94). But legitimate science and pseudoscience were not always clearly defined. Alison Winter argues that what we presently regard as pseudoscience may not have been judged as such during an era where no definitive accepted view existed (26). It is imperative, then, to read Haggard's work within the context in which he wrote, attending to how he exploits the permeable boundaries between science and science-adjacent subjects to explain his belief that mystical occurrences were genuine, and to this end, he turned to notable scientists who explored the paranormal.

In *Days*, Haggard relates how he published a letter and corroborating testimonials in *The Times* (July 21, 1904) regarding a strange experience he had in connection with his dog, Bob, who was killed by a train. Haggard, with the assistance of witnesses, ascertained that Bob communicated with him through a dream three hours *after* its death, leading him to conclude that

if such an experience could be proven, "it would solve one of the mysteries of our being, by showing that the spirit of even a dog can live on when its mortal frame is destroyed and physical death has happened" (165). Haggard submitted the letters to *The Journal of Psychical Research* in October 1904, to which the editor responded, "Mr. Rider Haggard deserves the gratitude of psychical researchers for having collected all the available evidence so promptly and completely and put it at the disposal of the scientific world" (162). Haggard then meticulously constructed a case for scientific enquiry into telepathic communication with the dead, prompting him to contact physicist Sir Oliver Lodge, a renowned scientist with a keen interest in the supernatural (166). After examining Haggard's case, Lodge replied that he is "absolutely convinced of persistence of existence," and he regards death as "an important episode—the reverse of birth—but neither of these episodes really initial or final. One is the assumption of connection with matter, the other is the abandoning of that connection" (166). Lodge's assertions indicate how scientific materialism was reimagined by paranormal investigators who theorized that matter and the immaterial soul might continue to coexist after death in a completely mysterious way as "after we have abandoned matter we can . . . occasionally continue to act on it" (166). He claims that in his "judgement, the evidence points to the existence of some indistinct and undeveloped power of this sort" that may explain telepathic communication among the living and another form of communication with the dead (166). Despite Lodge's endorsement of his theories, Haggard continued to vacillate between doubt and absolute belief in the paranormal for the remainder of his life.

"There is no death."

She illustrates the extent to which science becomes embedded in Victorian culture, but more significantly, it articulates the complex ways it intervened in spiritual matters to defend a

belief in an immortal essence that survived physical death. While Haggard's writing authenticates the degree to which Eastern beliefs, conflated with modern scientific theories, gained popularity, his convictions regarding Western superiority emerge from the text through his characters' ambivalent ponderings. The notion that the East is backward, exotic, and prone to superstitious ideas associated with sorcery, is often subverted by suggestions that some Eastern ideas are valid. Jeffery Franklin analyzes Haggard's writings as representations of the prevailing contest between spirit and matter, contending that Haggard's Gothic-romance novel, with its grotesque imagery and cathartic melodrama, effectively captures the Victorian crisis of faith (141). In agreement with Franklin, I argue that this religious/spiritual crisis reverberates in *She* on several fronts, as characters challenge conventional ideas about death, the afterlife, and telepathy, illuminating a wide range of attitudes that differ from orthodox Christian teachings.

The story of an adventure into the heart of Africa where Ayesha, an ancient and near-immortal queen, wields formidable power is narrated through a fictional editor whom Andrew Stauffer asserts is a "version of Haggard himself" (13). Haggard's convictions regarding death, the afterlife, and the permeability between the worlds of the living and the dead are also narrativized first through Leo Vincey Sr. and later by Ayesha and L. Horace Holly who, in varying degrees, echo quasi-scientific discourses prevalent at the fin de siècle.

The theory that the dead can impact the living appears early in the novel when Holly, a skeptical man "not unacquainted with the leading scientific facts" and "an utter unbeliever in hocus-pocus that in Europe goes by the name of superstition," promises his friend, Leo Vincey Sr., to care for his soon-to-be-orphaned son (156). The plot runs as follows: Vincey entrusts to Holly a casket containing an ancient sherd that implores the recipient to reach out across time and exact revenge on the near-immortal Ayesha. Amenartes, an Egyptian princess and the Vincey

family's ancestor who swore to avenge the murder of her spouse, Kallikrates, inscribed the sherd. The sherd recounts Ayesha's supernatural power and unnatural longevity acquired by passing through a mysterious pillar of flame,[11] her murder of Kallikrates, who spurned her romantic advances, and Amenartes's escape with their unborn son. The motif of retribution from beyond the grave reiterates Vincey's warning that "if you betray my trust, by Heaven I will haunt you . . . remember that one day I shall ask for the account of your oath, for though I am dead and forgotten, yet I shall live. There is no such thing as death, Holly, only change" (45). While Amenartes's vengeance requires human agency, Vincey's revenge is contingent on a ghostly return to settle scores should Holly break his vows. Vincey's conviction that he can transgress the boundaries between life and death is qualified when he states that "there is no such thing as death, only change," an assertion that alludes to scientific materialism's theory on the conservation of energy. While scientific materialists repudiated the existence of a transcendental soul, Vincey's argument gestures to reconfigured scientific concepts to endorse ensoulment by positing the soul as an indestructible energetic force, much like theories posited by Sir Oliver Lodge (*Days* 166).

Vincey expresses Haggard's belief in an indestructible life force, and these ideas closely resemble new occultist precepts formulated by hybridizing and conflating quasi-scientific concepts with Eastern traditions, such as Buddhism. According to Franklin, these conflations were endemic to an era where "forms of holism according to which all things physical and spiritual are unified and interconnected in the divine-natural continuum of the universe, what Oliver Lodge summarized in 1905 as 'ultimate identity of matter and spirit'" (187). Decades before communicating with Lodge, Haggard had already pondered the possible interconnections between spirit and matter. This is conveyed in *She* as convictions that even when separated from the body,

[11] While the pillar of flame closely resembles the flame of Exodus that guided the Israelites to freedom, it also alludes to a powerful source of energy that sustains life.

the spirit can continue to impose its will on the living. Such ideas endorse theories of scientists, such as William Crookes, who, like physicist Sir Oliver Lodge, posited a link between spirit and matter to explain supernatural phenomena.

William Crookes, a well-respected chemist and physicist, investigated the properties of matter as atoms, the "building blocks of nature," which were gradually understood as mutable, leading to questions regarding the relationship between matter and the spirit (Lyons 105-6). Crookes endeavoured to legitimize psychic phenomena, associating it with physical science and applying these nascent ideas to the field that would become psychological science (105). He claimed that "a deep understanding of the brain would provide the connecting link between mind and matter," a theory that sought to explain psychic phenomena such as telepathy, dreams, and communication with the dead. (Crookes qtd. in Lyons 109). The quest to explain an afterlife through physical science illustrates the obscure delineation between what was considered to be "legitimate" science or "pseudo-science," and these concepts are clearly articulated in the novel.

Holly, the Uncanny, and Psychological Science

References to psychology permeate *She* through Holly, a character who, at times, appears to be Haggard's alter ego. In *Days*, Haggard ventures to explain dreams,[12] premonitions, and uncanny sensations in psychological terms by positing them as products of a disturbed mind, as "nerves and imagination play strange tricks" (41). While his appeal to psychology suggests a scientific explanation for supernatural experiences and sensations, the field of psychology was, at

[12] Haggard's interest in dream interpretation and early psychological sciences clearly had a reciprocal effect on early psychological sciences, since according to Mark Doyle, the dreamlike quality of the novel made it a "natural source for Freudian dream interpretation" (A62). He states that since Haggard wrote the novel at a frenzied pace, "many critics argue that its imagery bypassed his conscious mind and tapped onto his unconscious wishes as a waking dream" (A63). (see "Ustane's Evolution Versus Ayesha's Immortality in H. Rider Haggard's *She*" *Philosophy and Literature,* vol. 38, no. 1A, 2014).

this juncture, more aptly defined as a "pseudo-science" because of its connection to mystical beliefs in an immortal, transcendental soul or consciousness. As Spiritualists attempted to forge a link between the mind/spirit and matter to authenticate beliefs in ensoulment, they found some support in the scientific community, albeit on a small scale. According to Jeffrey Franklin, William James, author of *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), classified the study of the mind as the "religion of healthy mindedness" that was later viewed as the "science of the soul", a term that validated scientific discussions about the soul (Franklin 187-89). James's theories illustrate how the evolving field of psychology aligned itself with spiritual "health," suggesting an association with health sciences. Although not universally accepted, these scientific inquiries into the interconnection of the mind and matter facilitated ways of thinking about the supernatural as a new frontier for scientific study.

Psychological sciences would eventually sever ties with the paranormal, but the initial intersection of science and mysticism captured the imagination of late Victorians like Haggard. Given this new area of study's position in the scientific world, Haggard's allusions to psychology need to be contextualized. His conviction that disturbances of the mind could stimulate the imagination superficially appears to negate supernatural explanations for heightened senses; however, Haggard's deployment of psychology carries nuanced allusions to prevailing ideas that conjoin the spirit to matter. Nascent psychological theories echo Haggard's description of premonitions, dreams, and supernatural sensations as "uncanny," a term fraught with ambiguity and ambivalence.

The "uncanny"[13] is a term Sigmund Freud borrowed from Haggard to describe the anxiety that occurs when there is uncertainty as to whether "an object is living or inanimate" (229) or in

[13] Freud translated the word to "*unheimlich*" or "unhomely."

the case "when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced" (243).[14] The uncanny may commonly be interpreted as frightening, mysterious, unfamiliar, or supernatural. However, it also indicates a sense of intense mental disturbance predicated on the inability to discern what is real or imagined (*She* 143). This is evident in Holly's inability to fully understand Ayesha's being, which is alive, but also "unreal." When recounting the episode involving his dream about Bob, Haggard divulges how the experience was frightening, upsetting, and uncanny (13), and he later refers to Spiritualism's practice of communicating with the dead as "uncanny knowledge," which suggests "dangerous knowledge," since he believes the practice to be "a device of the Devil" (*Days* II 162, 250). The range of meanings associated with the word and the complex ways Haggard deploys it to suggest psychological turmoil when faced with the inexplicable emerges in the novel when Holly, at times, ventriloquizes the author's mental state and uneasiness toward the supernatural. Holly's uncanny sense is significant in all its connotations since, on meeting Ayesha, he experiences fear, disconnection from the comfortable and mundane life he has until now enjoyed, and an inability to fully discern fact from fantasy.

At first, Holly reasons that he, an Englishman, does not need to fear a "savage" Arabian queen who uses trickery to control her subjects; however, this strategy fails when confronting Ayesha. His first meeting with Ayesha reveals a beautiful woman "wrapped up in soft white, gauzy material in such a way as at first sight to remind me most forcibly of a corpse in its grave-clothes;" however, he sees her apparel as an artifice and concludes that she is not a ghost (143). Until this point, Holly has rebuffed notions of immortality; however, confronted with the spectacle of a living mummy, his resolve falters as fear replaces rationality. He admits that he "felt more

[14] See "The 'Uncanny'. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVII (1917-1919): An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, 217-56. I include Freud's definition here, because, although written much later, Freud was influenced by both Andrew Lang and Haggard's *She*, which he names in his 1899 publication *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Oxford UP, 1999 (359)).

frightened than ever," and his "hair began to rise" upon his head, signalling that he is "in the presence of something that was not canny" (143). The acute physical sensation of fear he experiences is primal, and even when Ayesha queries him on the source of his fear, he cannot respond, yet she insightfully recognizes that "thou wast afraid because mine eyes were searching out thine heart" (144). Instinctually, and perhaps unwillingly, Holly is aware of Ayesha's power to read his thoughts and emotions, and as a skeptic who rejects telepathy, Holly finds this development to be unsettling. Ayesha's ability to telepathically see his inner turmoil is compounded by her "being" that appears to be suspended between past and present and between life and death.

The otherworldliness Holly perceives lies in Ayesha's appearance, and the uncanny aura is heightened by her archaic speech patterns, her proficiency in ancient languages, and her detailed, first-hand knowledge of ancient history,[15] which authenticate her displacement in time. Ayesha's intrusion into Holly's modern world creates both intense fear and fascination, and he is momentarily distracted by his academic curiosity in receiving first-hand historical knowledge. Despite his desire to converse with this otherworldly figure, he is anxiously aware that her existence authenticates the sherd's contents regarding her immortality, which validates theories he previously rejected as superstition. The grave clothes provide a visual representation of her liminality, and her assertion that "there is no such thing as Death, though there be a thing called Change," curiously echoes Vincey's words (148). While Holly initially attributes no supernatural powers to this woman, he becomes more aware that the uncanny sensations he experiences are not only the mind's disturbances precipitated by the fear of the unknown, but that they proceed from

[15] Julia Reid asserts that Ayesha's connection to the past, and her assurances that death does not annihilate the soul, subvert notions regarding linear progress and modernity's obliteration of connections to a primitive, matriarchal past. Reid argues that Ayesha's longevity and her vast knowledge of ancient history and languages authenticate her liminal existence as an "animated corpse" (370).

a subconscious part of his being uncontrolled by logic. In this respect, Holly's encounter with Ayesha closely resembles Haggard's experience with the medium, which causes him much anxiety. Apart from the medium's and Ayesha's similar appearance and liminality, Holly's experience of Ayesha's mirrors Haggard's. Haggard's sense of displacement and inability to discern whether what he experienced was imagination or an actual occurrence reverberates through Holly when Ayesha shows him the mummies, and he travels to the past through either his imagination or a past-life memory.

The perfectly preserved mummies provoke in Holly a spontaneous and uncanny sense of recognition—a *déjà vu* that draws him into the story of the dead. As he gazes at the corpses, he unconsciously constructs a tragic story filled with hope for reunion beyond death. Holly is troubled when he finds the corpses of two young lovers who lie together beneath a rock that bears an inscription, "Wedded in Death," and removing their shroud he sees the fatal dagger wounds (178). Moved by the tragic scene, Holly closes his eyes "and imagination taking up the thread of thought shot its swift shuttle back and forth across the ages, weaving a picture on their blackness so real and vivid in its details that I could almost for a moment think that I had triumphed o'er the Past, and that my spirit's eyes had pierced Time's mystery" (178). He vividly imagines a wedding celebration cut short as the young woman, repulsed by her intended groom, is about to be rescued by the young man she loves. He sees the couple's murder and hears the mourning cries of those present at the solemnity of marriage that has become a funeral dirge. These visions invoke uncanny sensations as unfamiliar emotions appear to indicate past-life experiences in which he intimately was embroiled as he grapples with discerning fact from fantasy and imagination from memory:

> Let him who reads this forgive the intrusion of a dream into a history of fact. But it came so home to me—I saw it all so clear in a moment as it were; and, besides, who shall say

> what proportion of fact, past present, or to come, may lie in imagination? What is imagination? Perhaps it is the shadow of the intangible truth, perhaps it is the soul's thought. (179)

By questioning how imagination may subconsciously draw on past-life memories, Holly articulates contemporaneous theories that integrated a spiritual component into scientific explorations of the mind. He ponders that his visions of the distant past were experienced through his "spirit eyes," a suggestion that gestures to Spiritualist ideas of holism that posited an inextricable link between the physical and the spiritual. Holly appeals to science to explain the source of these vivid thoughts, gesturing to prevailing theories that advance beliefs that memories of previous existences do not emerge from the brain's physical structure but from the spirit-self or soul.

Haggard's interest in the mind-soul connection also alludes to Carl Jung's theory of the "historical aspect" of the *anima* or soul. Throughout the novel, historical facts and artifacts abound, particularly through the mummies, skeletons, and cave writings of a lost civilization that impose itself on the present. Matthew Fike analyzes Ayesha through a Jungian lens, citing Jung's assertion that "the anima is conservative and clings in the most exasperating fashion to the ways of early humanity. She [the anima] likes to appear in historical dress, with a predilection for Greece and Egypt" (Jung qtd. in Fike 105). By expanding Jung's assessment of Ayesha to the mummies, who are quintessentially relics from a forgotten civilization awaiting reanimation, Holly's confusion and his visceral response in the form of a dream or a memory alludes to Jungian theory that "dreams may be historical and that imagination may be the soul's thought" (Jung qtd. in Fike 106). Furthermore, Fike proposes that Jung's view of history gestures to theories that posit time as not

fixed, but as occurring simultaneously within the collective unconscious, explaining Holly's *déjà vu* moment as he is transported through time (106).

Through Holly, we see Haggard's propensity for rationalizing the unexplained in ways that were endemic to an era wherein science and spirituality were not mutually exclusive and supernatural experiences potentially had a rational explanation. Although contemporaneous intellectuals, such as William James, Freud, and Jung contemplated the mysteries surrounding the connection between the mind and the soul and between dreams and the imagination, these theories were not universally accepted. Haggard's uneasy union of Eastern spiritualism and Western science is not a comfortable alliance, for as we see in his interactions with Ayesha, Eastern wisdom is frequently framed as superstition over and against views that privileged Western ideologies as rational.

Ayesha's "Science"

Western origins of subjects like chemistry and physics that had some foundations in the East were contested by Western scientists who denied or undermined such connections. This privileging of the West over the East appears in the text as Ayesha's scientific knowledge is perceived to be, on one hand, wonderous and advanced practice, while on the other hand, sorcery. Holly's ambivalence reveals the tenuous line between "legitimate" and "pseudo-science," which was not always distinguishable due to the complex ways scientific concepts were reconfigured and applied to supernatural phenomena. This tension arises at several points in the text when Holly believes Ayesha's powers to be Eastern sorcery. Ayesha's insistence that her scientific knowledge is yet to be understood or accepted as such in the West alludes to marginalized scientific theories

posited by a group of scientists, such as Crookes, Wallace, and Lodge, who drew on Eastern mysticism to speculate on the connection between spirit and matter.

The tension between scientific materialism and the reconfigured scientific theories employed by new occultists is expressed through Ayesha's ability to perform marvels that she claims are based on Eastern "scientific knowledge" acquired in ancient Egypt and Arabia. The contest between Eastern superstition and enlightened Western ideologies is narrativized through Holly's response to Ayesha's demonstrations that sometimes appear to be magic tricks, while at other times seem to be based on legitimate scientific practice. Her powers confound Holly, whose skepticism towards what he perceives as primitive knowledge dwindles, and he begins to believe that Ayesha's powers are magic, despite her claims that magic is superstitious ignorance. In a surprising reversal, Ayesha, the ostensibly "savage queen," is astounded that Holly, a modern academic, holds what she deems as primitive ideas about death and the secrets of Nature that animate the world. The reversal of their positions is intriguing since it inverts Holly's conservative views of racial inferiority attributed to this "savage" queen. Although Holly judges Ayesha as primitive, he grudgingly admires her scientific knowledge, which she claims originated in the East. This ambivalence is evident in Holly's estimation of what can be viewed as science and what is relegated to the subject of sorcery as he witnesses her powers.

To demonstrate her powers of surveillance, Ayesha shows Holly how she observed their arrival by having him gaze into the water contained in "a font-like vessel" (150). Holly recognizes the images as an accurate replay of their landing and, in an odd reversal, is convinced that what he sees is the result of magic. Ayesha assures Holly that "it is no magic, that is a fiction of ignorance. There is no such thing as magic, though there is such a thing as a knowledge of the secrets of Nature" (150). Despite Ayesha's claims that such powers are not magic, she never reveals how

she transfers the images from the mind to the water, nor does she provide a sound scientific explanation or methodology. Instead, she claims that her abilities derive from an "old secret" she acquired from ancient Arabian and Egyptian sorcerers. Holly, previously skeptical of the "hocus pocus" presented as science, doubts his convictions as he makes accommodations for Ayesha's powers, later concluding that Ayesha's telepathic ability, although limited, is a result of her ability to "photograph upon the water what was actually in the mind of someone present" (201).[16] Despite Holly's vague allusion to the science behind photography, his conclusions gesture to investigations into telepathy, a subject that fascinated Haggard. In this instance, Ayesha resembles the mediums Haggard encountered, whose demonstrations brought his skepticism to the fore; however, as he relates in *Days*, these phenomena were not always easily debunked. While Holly is awed by Ayesha's demonstration that he considers magic, her powers also prove to be based on sound scientific knowledge that she researched and practiced during her two thousand years of isolation in the caves of Kôr.

Holly's equal fascination and horror of Ayesha's powers do not prevent him from believing she possesses the power to save Leo, who suffers grievous injuries sustained during a violent encounter with Ayesha's subjects, the Amahagger. Ayesha proves her medical competency as she assesses that since Leo's fever is on the third day, she should wait another day before she administers her medicine, which is "of a sort to shake the life in its very citadel" (151). Recognizing Holly's anxiety, Ayesha reassures him that she will "use no magic," reiterating that

[16] Fike provides a plausible argument that, although Jung did not offer any thoughts on Ayesha's use of the font to see past and present events, "he would suggest that it parallels the anima's historical nature and that of the psyche more generally" (108). Fike bases his claim on Carl Jung's theory that "[t]he collective unconscious contains, or is, an historical mirror-image of the world. It too is a world, but a world of images." That "the unconscious is not just a reactive mirror-reflection, but an independent, productive activity'" corresponds to Ayesha's use of mirror-gazing to see beyond the walls of Kôr" (108). Although Holly uses no device, he too is ensnared by the past as he gazes at the mummies. His experience draws on notions of the collective unconscious.

"there is no such thing as magic, though there is such a thing as understanding and applying the forces which are in Nature" (184). In this instance, the "forces in Nature" are derived from her knowledge of how the immune system functions in healing, but it also refers to her competency in effectively distilling and administering medicinal botanical compounds. Holly writes in an addendum: "Ayesha was a great chemist, indeed chemistry appears to have been her only amusement and occupation. She had one of the caves fitted up as a laboratory, and, although her appliances were necessarily rude, the results that she attained were . . . sufficiently surprising" (184). While Holly acknowledges Ayesha's chemical knowledge and healing capabilities, it is worth attending to how he simultaneously undermines Ayesha's scientific experiments, noting that her laboratory is "crude," in contrast to Western laboratories fitted with modern equipment. Holly's reactions to Ayesha's scientific knowledge carry a host of implications for reading the complex line between legitimate science and pseudoscience. The disavowal of the links between ancient Eastern and modern Western science is evident through such references.

According to Susan Hroncek, Ayesha's acquisition of Eastern knowledge, her Arabian ethnicity, and her gender places her as inferior in Holly's estimation, hence his belief that much of her science is sorcery. Hroncek writes:

> [H]er practice of chemistry will always appear to him, as a British academic, as more akin to sorcery or witchcraft than to the "modern" chemistry of Victorian laboratories and factories. Ayesha's dangerous combination of the Eastern, feminine, and occult would prove a popular means of fictionalizing sources of concern regarding the origins of chemistry beyond the borders of Western materialist practice. Such fictional representations were significantly influenced by contemporaneous histories, popular science articles, and occultist discourses that characterized chemistry, its origins, and its

> relationship to the occult within frameworks that largely supported British Victorian perceptions regarding how science was defined, including what constituted "legitimate" scientific practice. (213)

Hroncek cogently articulates how Haggard frames these discourses within the text. However, Holly's views of Ayesha's power and knowledge are more nuanced when reading *She* alongside Haggard's biographical writings. While I concur that *She* articulates contemporaneous discourses around what constitutes legitimate science and pseudoscience in addition to the desire to distance modern science from its ancient Eastern roots, it is crucial to recognize that Haggard, despite his overt racial chauvinism, acknowledged some Eastern mysticism as potentially valid knowledge. This aspect of his work illustrates prevalent epistemologies that drew on Eastern mysticism and modern Western science. Despite his revulsion for occult practices, he nonetheless consulted scientific practitioners who conflated Eastern and Western knowledge to explain paranormal phenomena, such as telepathic communication and the existence of an immortal soul that retained memories of previous lives. While Haggard admired some Eastern philosophies that corresponded to his beliefs, it is evident that such accommodations were at odds with his notion of Western superiority.

"Immortal Entanglements"

In *She*, Haggard conflates Eastern and Western religious concepts that present reincarnation as a means to resolve past-life transgressions and frustrated romantic involvements. Norman Etherington asserts that Haggard believed that in his current lifetime, friendships and romantic relationships were immortal entanglements that were reiterated through numerous lives spanning many centuries; however, Etherington was also cognizant that while Haggard's fervent

religious convictions informed his beliefs about the immortality of the soul, he also expressed, with equal intensity, the view that life was meaningless, and death ended all (13).

Haggard's doubts may be partly grounded in his misunderstanding of Buddhism, which influenced his belief in reincarnation. He writes, "I like the Buddhists, am strongly inclined to believe that the Personality which animates each of us is immeasurably ancient, having been forged in many fires, and that, as its past is immeasurable, so its future will be" (*Days* 241). Despite his insistence that the "Personality which animates each of us" continues to be reborn, he argues that Buddhism, unlike Christianity, which leads to eternal life, is ultimately a religion of death. Here he appears to misunderstand Buddhism's belief in a karmic cycle that leads to a state of *Nirvana* or enlightenment.[17] While Buddhists believe that the soul or *atman* achieves a state of enlightenment as it merges with the Oneness, Haggard interprets this as an annihilation of the soul, explaining his fear of death.

Haggard's recounting of unresolved romantic relationships, found in *Days,* expresses his regret at the painful loss of his first love through parental disapproval and then through death. The motif of failed relationships seeking resolution through rebirth is articulated through Holly and Ayesha, and as Brantlinger astutely notes, Holly's uncanny moment of *déjà vu* when viewing the mummies indicates Haggard's "erotic longing and unattainable romance" (*Taming* 176). He asserts that when writing *She* and the sequels, Haggard reflected on his own romantic and sexual relationships that were a source of disappointment, which is evident in *Days,* wherein he reveals a profoundly personal outpouring of his deepest hopes that could not be realized in his present life (176).

[17] Buddhists affirm that once a soul reaches perfection it is released from the karmic cycle (*moksha* or *Nirvana*) it may return to assist other souls to attain enlightenment. The individual *atman* is not destroyed, but rather becomes a part of the One reality.

Holly, a self-proclaimed misogynist and skeptic who rejects romantic entanglements after being rebuffed by a woman in his youth, experiences a profound sense of loss when viewing the mummies (41). The mummies evoke in Holly a "memory" whereby he receives a second-hand experience of tragic and untimely death never experienced in his current life (98). For Holly, the mummies represent an ultimate immortal entanglement, yet even as he begins to contemplate immortality, Ayesha expresses doubt. Ayesha imagines the moment when "Day and Night, and Life and Death, are ended and swallowed up in that from which it came" (180). Traces of Haggard's certainty followed by momentary lapses into despair are articulated through Ayesha as she contemplates an ultimate *telos* that betrays a fleeting ambivalence towards the concept of immortality in much the same way Haggard expresses doubts that "life had no meaning and that death ended all" (Etherington 13).

In Ayesha's desire to resolve her troubled history with Kallikrates, we see Haggard's belief that reincarnation can facilitate a "do-over" in the case of frustrated romantic entanglements. Ayesha is embroiled in her own "immortal entanglement" as she awaits the return of Kallikrates, sometimes exhibiting absolute conviction that he will return while at other times expressing bitter grief at the prospect that such an event might not transpire. Ayesha's near-immortality places her in an untenable position of loneliness and grief as she awaits liberation from her "living death" (163). Having killed the object of her obsessive love in a jealous rage, Ayesha's two-thousand-year vigil for Kallikrates's return leads her to bitterness as she curses her rival, but even as she does so, she momentarily doubts her powers: "It is of no use . . . who can reach those who sleep? Not even I can reach them . . . Curse her when she should be born again … Let her be utterly accursed from the hour of her birth until sleep finds her . . . for then shall I overtake her with my vengeance, and utterly destroy her'" (161-2). These embittered words illustrate doubts as to her

power to reach the dead. Her hatred overcomes this lapse as she vows to curse and *destroy* Amenartes, illustrating the disconnection between utterly believing that the life essence is indestructible and conversely suggesting that there are forces that can annihilate the soul. Such disparities are not uncommon in the novel, as Eastern and Western ideologies converge and are reconfigured. This is evident in the way Haggard revises Christian views on the reward of heaven or the punishment of hell with a version of reincarnation that rationalizes the immortal soul as an indestructible energetic force recycled through time. But even as Haggard embraced contemporary ideas on reincarnation, his revulsion for occult practices of summoning the dead is expressed through Ayesha's desire to perform a sacrilegious act.

Only his return can resolve Ayesha's emotional entanglement with Kallikrates, so she attempts to reanimate the corpse that lies before her, but even as the "quiet form beneath the covering began to quiver . . . [s]uddenly she withdrew her hands" (163). At that moment, Ayesha realizes, "Of what use is it to recall the semblance of life when I cannot recall the spirit? Even if thou stoodest before me thou wouldst not know me . . . The life in thee would be my life, and not thy life, Kallikrates" (163). Ayesha recognizes that her power is limited to reanimating a corpse devoid of a soul or personality, and witnessing this act, Holly is repelled by Ayesha's power. Through Holly's reaction, Haggard's distaste for occult practices of summoning disembodied souls to seek closure for grieving loved ones reverberates. More significantly, in her inability to raise the dead, Haggard alludes to the notion that reincarnation is a mysterious event wherein the soul alone has the agency to determine the time and circumstances of its return. As presented in *She,* reincarnation illustrates a modified version of Christian concepts of resurrection. This syncretic version emerges when it becomes evident that the mummy's purpose is redundant since the soul does not require the original body for reincarnation to occur.

Reincarnation and the Mummy

For ancient civilizations that practiced mummification, the mummy is emblematic of the promise of immortality through rebirth that involved the corpse's revivification. However, Haggard reconfigures ancient understandings, positing that a body is unnecessary. In this way, he gestures to Christian concepts of the resurrection of the body[18] as a spiritual rather than literal occurrence, illustrating his penchant for reframing and revising several religious concepts regarding the afterlife. Rather than a vessel that will receive the spirit, the mummy becomes a commemorative symbol of the past and a hope for immortality. The notion of rebirth is explored through the mummies and Ayesha, a living mummy who has deferred physical death[19] by passing through the eternal flame. The mummies tell a poignant story of loss, yet paradoxically, their staging and meticulous preservation illustrates a conviction that their story continues, and a new existence is possible. But Haggard is never afraid to shy away from ambiguities and ambivalences, so he undermines the notion of deferral and possibility inscribed on the mummy, and reincarnation is reconceptualized as the mummy is rendered superfluous.

Ayesha fully expects Kallikrates's body to receive his soul again, so she keeps vigil at his side. When she sees Leo for the first time, she recognizes him as her lost lover reincarnated, his spirit enshrined in a new and almost identical body. This realization amends her assumptions regarding reincarnation as she learns that the mummies are but relics of a past life, and reincarnation is not contingent on a preserved and fully intact body. Ayesha does not reveal any consternation that the mummified body she venerated serves no purpose, but rather she accepts

[18] Although resurrection is concerned with the immortal soul rather than a temporal body, it should be noted that credal formulations continue to include the idea that the body will be resurrected. The proclamation that asserts: "I believe in the resurrection of the body," however, is not present in the Nicene Creed.
[19] Bradley Deane's interpretation of the "marriage plot" in terms of Britain's position in Egypt that remains unresolved may also be expanded to the mummy. While the mummy is suspended in time, so is British interest in Egypt.

Leo's physical appearance as proof that her vigil has ended. Finding no practical purpose for Kallikrates's mummified corpse, she destroys it.

Fully convinced that she holds the secrets of immortality, Ayesha attempts to confer immortality on Leo by having him pass through the flame. Perceiving Leo's fear, she enters the flame to demonstrate its harmless power and is unexpectedly destroyed by the very substance that gave her longevity and unsurpassed beauty. The flame's reverse effects ironically illustrate her limited knowledge of the secrets of Nature and her pride and hubris at assuming a power she could not fully understand, which proves to be her downfall.[20] Through Ayesha's ruin, Haggard's caution against encroaching on dangerous knowledge reverberates, but his Darwinian influence and modified belief in reincarnation are also apparent. Ayesha regresses to a mummy form, then a monkey-like creature, eventually crumbling to dust in a perverse Darwinian-like "devolution" reminiscent of Haggard's medium that seemingly morphed into an inhuman specter. Ayesha's destruction offers a cautionary tale against what Haggard viewed as unwholesome acts practiced by some Spiritualists while reiterating his contention that death is not permanent, since as she disintegrates, Ayesha promises to return, which she does, in Haggard's sequel, *Ayesha: The Return of She* (1905).

Conclusion

A deconstructed reading of the supernatural, the near-immortal Ayesha, and the mummies yield multiple anxieties rife at the *fin de siècle*, explaining the discursive approaches to *She*. When

[20] Julia Reid suggests that, in light of the men's cowering before the "phallic" pillar of flame that ultimately destroys her, Ayesha demonstrates 'strength through fiery trial', which Reid argues is "transformative," alluding to the power of the pillar of flame as a "divine presence" (371-72). While I concur that the pillar of flame is reminiscent of the flame in Exodus, Ayesha's destruction appears to be a punishment for her hubris since she does not foresee the effects of the entering the flame. Her entering the flame is not sacrificial since she expected to enjoy a new life with Leo.

read through a sociopolitical lens, Ayesha and the mummies expound on crucial discourses around race and gender, and given Haggard's conservativism, it is not surprising that such ideologies permeate the novel. But Haggard's interest in ancient and modern religions, and his attitude towards scientific research into the paranormal, indicates significant cultural shifts as new spiritualist beliefs found value in reconceptualized scientific theories. Such a reading illustrates the myriad religious positions and the highly individualistic way believers altered and shaped their beliefs to address scientific materialism's threat to beliefs in a transcendental soul. Moreover, racial chauvinism emerges through the tension between Western and Eastern knowledge, influencing what might be accepted as legitimate science and what was relegated to the margins as pseudoscience. Considering Haggard's anxieties about death and the afterlife and his appeal to marginalized science to provide a rational explanation for paranormal phenomena, a less examined aspect of *She* emerges, elucidating his conviction that both Eastern and Western sciences hold the key to solving these mysteries.

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