Decolonizing Late-Victorian Cultural Politics

This assignment builds on our recent class readings on degeneration, eugenics, criminology, and early bio-politics in England at the turn of the Twentieth Century. We've already seen how Victorian biomedical and social science normalized and reinforced gendered, sexualized, and racialized biases through the deployment of clinical language.

We have already examined how these issues are put into dramatic play in Bram Stoker's novel, *Dracula*, but now we will complicate our understanding by examining Anglo-Singaporean sources from the "Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen'" project.

You will be tasked with choosing and reading one of two short stories published in the 1898 *Straits Chinese Magazine*, a Singapore based literary magazine that ran at the turn of the century.

You can choose between "A Victim of Chap-Ji-Ki" or "The Awakening of Oh Seng Hong", both published in Volume 2 Issue 6 of the magazine, and available to read online through the "Digitizing 'Chinese Englishmen'" Project here: http://chineseenglishmen.adelinekoh.org/table-of-contents/

After choosing and reading your story, you must complete these two brief written responses:

1. Analytical Application of Critical Concepts

    After choosing and reading your story, you must write a 1-2 page critical analysis of how the short story circulates common Late-Victorian beliefs about sex, gender, and class as they relate criminality and national degeneration. Cite specific passages from your short story and explain directly how they relate to concepts from the readings by Galton, Lombroso, Nordau, or Harris.

2. Personal Reflection

    Please include also a brief .5 page personal reflection on your analysis. Were you surprised at how similar these gendered portrayals of criminality and degeneration were to those you read about in the UK and Europe? How does this view of Chinese-Englishness make you reconsider the scope and effects biomedical or social science in colonial and imperial biopolitics? How does your story make you reconsider their role in *Dracula*?