

## INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

One evening in September 1885, after “a copious supper of bread and jam”,<sup>1</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson had the nightmare which gave him the inspiration for his *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.<sup>2</sup> The next morning he wrote a hasty first draft of the story, over which he and his wife Fanny disagreed; and he burned it. According to Fanny, Stevenson had missed the allegory underlying his own creation, and had written a simple horror story. Stevenson then wrote another draft, correcting his oversight and adding the necessary allegorical layer to the existing framework.<sup>3</sup> With what, then, did Stevenson begin?

In ‘A Chapter on Dreams’ (1888) Stevenson reveals that he “had long been trying to write a story [...] of man’s double being”,<sup>4</sup> and that during a time of financial embarrassment he had a dream:

I dreamed the scene at the window. And a scene afterwards split in two, in which Hyde, pursued for some crime, took the powder and underwent the change in the presence of his pursuers. [...] All that was given me was the matter of three scenes, and the central idea of a voluntary change becoming involuntary.<sup>5</sup>

And the rest?

All the rest was made awake, and consciously, [...]. The meaning of the tale is therefore mine, [...]; indeed, I do most of the morality, [...]. Mine, too, is the setting, mine the characters.<sup>6</sup>

At no point does Stevenson suggest that Hyde’s appearance formed part of his dream; so it is safe to assume that he consciously and deliberately chose all of Hyde’s physical details—in particular, his apishness. Hyde is specifically referred to

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Lang, letter to *The Athenaeum*, 3507 (12 January 1895), 49, in *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew, 8 vols (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), V, 150, n2. (Hereafter *RLS Letters*.)

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed account of the work’s composition and publication, see *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, ed. by Richard Dury (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), pp.174-83. (Hereafter *Dury, Jekyll*.)

<sup>3</sup> Frank McLynn writes of “the absurdity of the suggestion that RLS missed the point of *Jekyll and Hyde* in the first draft until alerted to it by Fanny.” *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1993), p.257. Nevertheless, something in their dispute must have persuaded him to burn the first draft.

<sup>4</sup> *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, Vailima edition, 25 vols (New York: AMS Press, 1974), XII, 231-49 (p.247). (Hereafter *Works*.)

<sup>5</sup> *Works*, XII, 248. The “scene at the window” is the scene in which Utterson and Enfield talk with Jekyll while he sits at the window at the back of his establishment.

<sup>6</sup> *Works*, XII, 248.

as monkey-like,<sup>7</sup> and ape-like (47; 96; 97); his hands are “thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair” (88); and he walks about “chattering” to himself (94)—a behaviour traditionally associated with apes and monkeys.

Why did Stevenson make Hyde ape-like and – as will be argued in a later chapter – take such pains to make him authentically ape-like? For a possible explanation, one might look no further than a *Punch* cartoon of December 1884. The cartoon shows a monkey-like figure wearing a large placard on which is written: “The Maniac-Man-Monkey. New Sensational Christmas Story by B. Bones.”<sup>8</sup> Katherine Linehan writes:

This cartoon may include among its targets the *Pall Mall Gazette*’s method of advertising Stevenson’s “The Body Snatcher” on the streets of London shortly before Christmas 1884: Sidney Colvin reports that the tale was publicized “by sandwich men carrying posters so horrific that they were suppressed, if I remember aright, by the police.”<sup>9</sup>

Stevenson’s letter of November 1884 to Charles Morley<sup>10</sup> shows that he was aware of the sandwich men before the event; so it is highly likely that he became aware of the *Punch* cartoon as well; and, given that his sensational Christmas story for the following year featured a maniac-man-monkey, one would be hard put to argue for the workings of coincidence.<sup>11</sup>

Stevenson had a mischievous sense of humour. When he was a child he would run through his grandfather’s flower beds, then make his footprints bigger in order to throw suspicion on his older cousin.<sup>12</sup> During his time at Edinburgh University he and his friend Charles Baxter played many pranks and practical jokes, both within the University and on the general public.<sup>13</sup> In Samoa he was amused to hear of the rumour that his step-daughter Belle Strong was his illegitimate daughter by “a

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<sup>7</sup> *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Stories*, ed. and intro. by Jenni Calder (London: Penguin, 1979), p.68. Further references from this edition will be given after quotations in the text. The chattering tradition will be explained in a later section.

<sup>8</sup> *Punch*, 87 (27 December 1884), 305.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, ed. by Katherine Linehan (New York and London: Norton, 2003), p.121. (Hereafter Linehan, *Jekyll*.) Colvin’s reminiscence appears as a headnote to Stevenson’s letter of 15 November 1884 to Edmund Gosse, in the Edinburgh Edition of Stevenson’s Letters (I, 339). See the letter also, without the headnote, in *RLS Letters*, letter 1332, I, 33. Mehew quotes the Colvin passage in relation to Stevenson’s letter of November 1884 to Charles Morley of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, q.v., *RLS Letters*, letter 1336, I, 35, n1.

<sup>10</sup> *RLS Letters*, letter 1336, I, 35.

<sup>11</sup> *Jekyll and Hyde* was intended for the Christmas market of 1885, but was held over until January 1886. For details see Roger G. Swearingen, *The Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon, 1980), pp.98-102.

<sup>12</sup> Mrs Dale, ‘Fresh Side-Lights on R.L.S.’, *I Can Remember Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Rosaline Masson (Edinburgh and London: Chambers, 1922), pp.6-12 (p.8).

<sup>13</sup> McLynn, pp.44-45.

Morocco woman”, a rumour which he then actively encouraged.<sup>14</sup> It would not have been out of character for him to have carried on the joke from *Punch*.

But one should also bear in mind Stevenson’s attitude towards the process in which he was involved.<sup>15</sup> He had hopes for himself as a serious writer, yet found himself surviving by contributing to what James Ashcroft Noble in a review of *Jekyll and Hyde* refers to as “a class of literature familiarity with which has bred in the minds of most readers a certain measure of contempt.”<sup>16</sup> Stevenson’s publishers Longmans, apparently above embarrassment in such matters, had been wanting him to write them a “shilling shocker.” Dr Thomas Scott, who was at that time Stevenson’s physician, recalls that the suggestion was “much against his inclination”.<sup>17</sup> Patrick Brantlinger and Richard Boyle observe the conflict in Stevenson’s mind:

Producing a “shilling shocker” for Longmans might disagree with his sense of the higher aims of literature, but it agreed with his desire for financial independence and popularity.<sup>18</sup>

The word “popularity” here contains its own contradictions. In a letter of 2 January 1886 (precisely one week before *Jekyll and Hyde* went on sale), Stevenson wrote to Edmund Gosse a cynical and bitter letter expressing contempt for both the great unwashed public and their lack of taste, and for himself for pandering to it. He begins with what was to prove a most prophetic utterance, given the success of *Jekyll and Hyde* and the speed of its composition:

That is the hard part of literature. You aim high, and you take longer over your work; and it will not be so successful as if you had aimed low and rushed it. [...] Let us tell each other sad stories of the bestiality of the beast whom we feed. [...] I do not like mankind; but men, and not all of these – and fewer women. As for respecting the race, and above all that fatuous rabble of burgesses called ‘the

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<sup>14</sup> *RLS Letters*, letter 2550 to J.M. Barrie, 2 or 3 April 1893, VIII, 44-48 (p.45). In a letter to Charles Stoddard of 21 [February] 1893, Belle writes: ‘Louis was delighted with the idea. ... Introduces me as his daughter, and when he talks about old days in Morocco he is magnificent. He tells me long tales about my mother which invariably wind up with “She was a damned fine woman!”’ (45, n5).

<sup>15</sup> Here I am indebted to:– Patrick Brantlinger and Richard Boyle, ‘The Education of Edward Hyde: Stevenson’s “Gothic Gnome” and the Mass Readership of Late-Victorian England’, in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde after One Hundred Years*, ed. by William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp.265-82, (hereafter *100 Years*); and to Stephen D. Arata, ‘The Sedulous Ape: Atavism, Professionalism, and Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde*’, *Criticism*, 37 (1995), 233-59.

<sup>16</sup> *Academy*, 29 (23 January 1886), 55. Reprinted in *Robert Louis Stevenson: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Paul Maixner (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp.203-05 (p.203).

<sup>17</sup> Masson, p.213.

<sup>18</sup> *100 Years*, p.265.

public', God save me from such irreligion; that way lies disgrace and dishonour. There must be something wrong in me, or I would not be popular.<sup>19</sup>

Stevenson's Puckish sense of humour alone could have provided the impetus for his decision to carry on the joke from the *Punch* cartoon. In that case the decision would not have been directed towards anybody. But Stevenson may have been hurt by the cartoon. His attitude towards his material and his audience suggests that he felt the genre deserved nothing better than a maniac-man-monkey, and neither did his readership. At the same time his self-disgust would have left him vulnerable to any taunts by others. Thus at one stroke he thumbs his nose at his mockers in *Punch* by effectively using their idea against them; he stands aloof from his story by treating it as a joke; and he shows his contempt for the burgesses by giving them the kind of rubbish that they both demand and deserve.

Be that as it may, Stevenson's treatment of his maniac-man-monkey transcended the shilling shocker genre, and turned Hyde into a cultural icon. But did Stevenson simply come upon him by a happy accident; or was his appearance determined by other factors? Could such a potent mythic figure have arisen simply from a one-line gag in a cartoon? Even if that were the case, Stevenson deliberately and methodically added layer upon layer of meaning to Hyde, drawing upon a rich and extensive literature dealing with apes, Wild Men, and other grotesque embodiments of sin and evil. The question then becomes not, What does Hyde do?, or, Why does he do it?; but, What is he?, Why does he look like that?, and, How does he come to be there in Jekyll? This dissertation will attempt to answer these questions by examining works which may not necessarily have influenced Stevenson directly, but which, taken together, provide a context in which to view the figure of Hyde.

Readers and reviewers at the time of the book's publication typically addressed its universal implications. Andrew Lang, for example, writes:

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<sup>19</sup> *RLS Letters*, letter 1510, V, 170-72 (p.171). This letter provides a good example of Stevenson's tendency to invoke other authors: "[L]et us sit upon the ground/ And tell sad stories of the death of kings." (*Richard II*, III, ii, 155-56); "I hate and detest that animal called man, although I hartily [*sic*] love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth." (*The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, ed. by Harold Williams, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963-65), III, 103); "O! that way madness lies." (*King Lear*, III, iii, 21).

Mr Stevenson's idea, his secret (but a very open secret) is that of the double personality in every man.<sup>20</sup>

He goes on:

It is not a moral allegory, of course; but you cannot help reading the moral into it, and recognizing that, [...] every Jekyll among us is haunted by his own Hyde.<sup>21</sup>

James Ashcroft Noble expands on Lang's statement. He writes:

[*Jekyll and Hyde*] is a marvellous exploration into the recesses of human nature; and though it is more than possible that Mr Stevenson wrote with no ethical intent, its impressiveness as a parable is equal to its fascination as a work of art.<sup>22</sup>

Another anonymous reviewer begins with the particular, referring to Jekyll and

this delineation of a feeble but kindly nature steadily and inevitably succumbing to the sinister influences of besetting weaknesses.<sup>23</sup>

But he then immediately goes on to give Jekyll's story a universal application:

[Stevenson] works out the essential power of Evil, which, with its malignant patience and unwearying perseverance, gains ground with each casual yielding to temptation, till the once well-meaning man may actually become a fiend, or at least wear the reflection of the fiend's image.<sup>24</sup>

Julia Wedgwood's review offers the most penetrating response:

Mr Stevenson represents the individualizing influence of modern democracy in its more concentrated form. Whereas most fiction deals with the relation between man and woman (and the very fact that its scope is so much narrowed is a sign of the atomic character of our modern thought), the author of this strange tale takes an even narrower range, and sets himself to investigate the meaning of the word *self*.<sup>25</sup>

Over the years, however, as we have moved further away from the latter end of the nineteenth century, commentators have begun to regard *Jekyll and Hyde* as a document which informs us about either Stevenson's psychology, or the tensions within the society of his day, or simply as a text which can be deconstructed. We find a striking illustration of the range of modern scholarly approaches to the text in the

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<sup>20</sup> *Saturday Review*, 61 (9 January 1886), 55-56. Quoted in Maixner, pp.199-202 (p.200). The review was unsigned. Maixner attributes it to Lang.

<sup>21</sup> Maixner, p.201.

<sup>22</sup> Maixner, pp.204-05.

<sup>23</sup> *The Times* (25 January 1886), 13. Reprinted in Maixner, pp.205-07 (p.207).

<sup>24</sup> Maixner, p.207.

<sup>25</sup> *Contemporary Review*, 49 (April 1886), 594-95. Reprinted in Maixner, pp.222-24 (p.223).

Introduction to Veeder and Hirsch's much-cited collection *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde After One Hundred Years*:

The principal enterprise of our volume is critical. Eight essays reflect in their diverse interests and tactics the breadth of appeal that has made *Jekyll and Hyde* a force in our culture for one hundred years. The essays employ such divergent methodologies as deconstruction, feminism, psychoanalysis, intellectual and cultural history, and genre study, as well as close textual analysis. They evoke diverse theorists: Bakhtin, Barthes, Derrida, and Foucault; Marx, Lukacs, and Jameson; Freud, Lacan, and Kristeva (xiv).

Commentators have also moved away from a fascination with Hyde, to a fascination with Jekyll as representing the hypocrisy and double standards of his period. With this shift has come a tendency to analyze the characters from a very twentieth-century viewpoint. Claire Harman writes: "Many – indeed, most – modern critics have interpreted the novel as a psycho-sexual allegory."<sup>26</sup> And of course, wherever there is a psycho-sexual allegory, a psycho-homosexual allegory is never far away. Elaine Showalter writes that *Jekyll and Hyde* is

a case of male hysteria, not only that of Henry J. but also of the men in the community around him. It can most persuasively be read as a fable of *fin de siècle* homosexual panic, the discovery and resistance of the homosexual self. [It is] a story about communities of men.<sup>27</sup>

Among those who use the text to explore Victorian society at large we find William Veeder:

*Jekyll and Hyde* dramatizes the inherent weakness of late-Victorian social organization, a weakness that derives from unresolved pre-oedipal and oedipal emotions and that threatens the very possibility of community.<sup>28</sup>

He goes on to observe that Stevenson's attention is on

late-Victorian patriarchy; the focus of the story is less on Jekyll's attitude toward Hyde than on the way that the Jekyll/Hyde relationship is replicated throughout Jekyll's circle (108).

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<sup>26</sup> *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Biography* (London: Harper Collins, 2005), p.304. See, e.g., Stephen Heath, 'Psychopathia Sexualis: Stevenson's *Strange Case*', *Critical Quarterly*, 28 (1986), 93-108.

<sup>27</sup> *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Viking, 1990), p.107. Showalter also refers to Stevenson as "the *fin-de-siècle* laureate of the double life" (106).

<sup>28</sup> 'Children of the Night: Stevenson and Patriarchy', in *100 Years*, pp.107-60 (p.107). On this theme, see also Irving S. Saposnik, *Robert Louis Stevenson* (Boston: Twayne, 1974), pp.88-101. Veeder's partly Freudian approach complements Barbara Hannah's Jungian analysis of Stevenson and *Jekyll and Hyde* in *Striving Towards Wholeness* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1972), chap.3.

He refers to this circle as “an emblematic community, a relational network”. He continues:

This network marks a psychological condition as a cultural phenomenon. The cultural and psychological come together in Stevenson’s famous statement of the theme: “that damned old business of the war in the members”.<sup>29</sup> Because members of the psyche are at war, other members must be—family members, members of society, genital members. The resulting casualty is not simply Jekyll/Hyde but culture itself (108).

Richard Gaughan also declares for this approach to the tale:

The very fragmentation and inconclusiveness of the narrative, then, parody Jekyll’s desire to find purity [of personality] and tempt the reader to repeat Jekyll’s mistake by trying to find a single key to the mysteries of the story. The easiest, and most treacherous, way to do this is to follow Jekyll’s lead and read the story as an allegory.<sup>30</sup>

Gaughan acknowledges the allegorical presence, but denies its validity:

Throughout the novel Stevenson tempts the reader with allegory, but he just as consistently frustrates any simple allegorical reading (187).

Furthermore, Gaughan limits Hyde’s potency as an embodiment of evil:

Jekyll repeatedly refers to Hyde as his evil side. This “evil” side, however, is nothing more than a slightly exaggerated form of that part of Jekyll that has always chafed [sic] under the constraints of conventional respectability and Jekyll’s imperious desire to be seen as superior in the eyes of all men. Hyde is less evil than he is the embodiment of pride or, more generally, impersonal will. Read in this way, the story of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde is not a moral allegory but a study of the relationship between will and the various structures (social, psychological, and intellectual) that both express and confine will (187).

And he determinedly redirects the reader’s attention from the universal to the particular:

In this respect, Jekyll’s story is the story of the same ambiguity of human forces that forms the basis of tragedy. But, Jekyll is not a tragic hero. The conflict Jekyll experiences is of a very special kind. The manifestation of will in Hyde is largely determined by Jekyll’s hypocrisy and his desire to master himself by externalizing himself into a series of pure personalities. Hyde is the impersonal

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<sup>29</sup> Letter to J.A. Symonds, March 1886, *RLS Letters*, letter 1571, V, 220-22. Stevenson writes: “*Jekyll* is a dreadful thing, I own, but the only thing I feel dreadful about is that damned old business of the war in the members. This time it came out; I hope it will stay in, in future” (220). Stevenson is alluding to a passage in St Paul’s letter to the Romans, which will be quoted later in this chapter.

<sup>30</sup> ‘Mr Hyde and Mr Seek: Utterson’s Antidote’, *Journal of Narrative Technique*, 17 (1987), 184-97 (p.187).

will to externalize everything, to bring everything under the control of pride and intellect.

Consequently, Hyde cannot be a universal Dionysian urge to destroy constraints. Hyde is only Jekyll's ambition stripped of all sentimentality (187).

A comparison of the immediate responses by reviewers with the passages from the later commentators shows that in the tendency to concentrate on Jekyll's psychology; his sexuality; his relationship with his father; the dynamics of his social circle; on the societal structure which he inhabits;—in the tendency to focus on these, commentators have in fact not broadened the scope of their analysis, but narrowed it. They have narrowed it from an examination of the human condition, to an examination of one man in a particular socio-economic milieu at a particular point in history.

Obviously these are legitimate and illuminating areas of inquiry, but do they, in themselves, do justice to the work as a whole, and, in particular, to Stevenson's intentions? Surely a profounder understanding of *Jekyll and Hyde* lies not so much with the homosexual,<sup>31</sup> drug-addicted<sup>32</sup> onanist<sup>33</sup> Jekyll, or his undignified pleasures (for which one need look no further than Stevenson's own extra-mural activities while he was at Edinburgh University),<sup>34</sup> but with Hyde—or, rather, with the fact of Hyde's existence. Gaughan's assertion that "Hyde is only Jekyll's ambition stripped of all sentimentality" would be well enough if Hyde looked normal. But he does not; and there is enough emphasis on the fact to make it significant. His deformity and hairiness signify something; and since the text is insistent on this point, one must assume that they signify evil. Jekyll, in fact, is quite specific:

The drug had no discriminating action; it was neither diabolical nor divine; it but shook the doors of the prisonhouse of my disposition; and, like the captives of Philippi, that which stood within ran forth. At that time my virtue slumbered; my evil, kept awake by ambition, was alert and swift to seize the occasion; and the thing that was projected was Edward Hyde. Hence, although I had now two characters as well as two appearances, one was wholly evil (85).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Showalter, Veeder, *et al.*

<sup>32</sup> Daniel L. Wright, "'The Prisonhouse of my Disposition': A Study of the Psychology of Addiction in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*", *Studies in the Novel*, 26 (1994), 254-67.

<sup>33</sup> *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, ed., intro. and notes by Robert Mighall (London: Penguin, 2002; repr. 2003), pp.154-56; 177. (Hereafter Mighall, *Jekyll*.)

<sup>34</sup> These consisted of low dives, lower company, and prostitutes with hearts of gold. See, e.g., McLynn, chap.2.

<sup>35</sup> Note that although Jekyll's evil was kept awake by ambition, it was the evil that was projected, not the ambition.

The reader should take this passage seriously as an accurate reflection of Stevenson's intentions, regardless of Jekyll's reliability as a witness, since Stevenson himself corroborates it, giving his assessment of Hyde in a letter to the American journalist John Paul Boccock:

The harm was in Jekyll, because he was a hypocrite – not because he was fond of women; he says so himself; but people are so filled full of folly and inverted lust, that they can think of nothing but sexuality. The hypocrite let out the beast Hyde – who is no more sensual than another, but who is the essence of cruelty and malice, and selfishness and cowardice: and these are the diabolic in man.<sup>36</sup>

This thing that has been prowling around in Jekyll's consciousness, although not an ape, is sufficiently ape-like to suggest not simply evil, but ancient, primitive, timeless evil; an enduring evil which has resisted mankind's rise to civilization; an evil which in Stevenson's day had been given a new and disturbing origin by the writings of Charles Darwin, whose *Origin of Species* appeared in 1859, when Stevenson was nine years old.

#### DARWINISM AND THE BIBLE

When Stevenson was growing up, and as each new scientific discovery contradicted the account of the Creation given in Genesis, every thinking Christian was having to redefine what it meant to be human. Since the eighteenth century, geologists had continued to push the age of the Earth far back before the time of Adam and Eve. Bones of extinct animals had been unearthed; and fossilized sea shells had been found in the peaks of mountain ranges. Charles Darwin's grandfather Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802) entered the lists with *Zoonomia, or the Laws of Organic Life* (1794-96) and *The Temple of Nature* (1803). In 1844 the anonymous *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* appeared to a shocked and horrified public.<sup>37</sup> This "atheistical and blasphemous"<sup>38</sup> work, which, to many readers, advocated "a new theory of creation, and one which was in direct opposition to the account given in the

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<sup>36</sup> *RLS Letters*, letter 1939, November 1887, VI, 56-57 (p.56). See also Maixner, p.231.

<sup>37</sup> For an account of the controversy see Amy Cruse, *The Victorians And Their Books* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1962), chap. 5. The author of *Vestiges* was subsequently found to be Robert Chambers, "the younger of the two brothers who, in 1832, had begun the publication of *Chambers's Journal*, a valuable educational periodical for working men" (Cruse, p.86).

<sup>38</sup> Cruse, p.84.

Word of God,”<sup>39</sup> – namely, that the apes gave rise to humans – created a storm far beyond its scientific merits.

It was denounced from the pulpit, abused in the Press, laughed at by superior persons anxious to exhibit their own scientific knowledge; it was the theme of conversation in fashionable drawing-rooms and in devout religious assemblies; so that even those who had not read it knew something of its theory and purpose.<sup>40</sup>

But not all who read it were horrified. Many young people, “in revolt against a too rigid religious creed that had ruled their upbringing,”<sup>41</sup> embraced it—too uncritically for the then nineteen-years-old Thomas Henry Huxley, who was offended by its lack of scientific scholarship.<sup>42</sup>

Despite its shortcomings, *Vestiges* prepared the ground for the publication of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* (1859) and *Descent of Man* (1871). These two books, tirelessly championed by Huxley, provided the scientific ammunition for an assault on Church dogma which has continued to this day.

Unfortunately this war also drew in the members of the Stevenson household. G.K. Chesterton says:

It is an obvious truth that Stevenson was born of a Puritan tradition, in a Presbyterian country, where still rolled the echoes, at least, of the theological thunders of Knox; and where the Sabbath was sometimes more like a day of death than a day of rest.<sup>43</sup>

The lad Louis, who as a child had been “a tiny religious maniac”<sup>44</sup> who had wanted the Bible read to sheep and horses,<sup>45</sup> later found himself “at the particular modern moment to catch the first fashion and excitement of Darwinism.”<sup>46</sup> J.C. Furnas is more explicit:

[Stevenson] was still in skirts when Darwin and [Alfred Russell] Wallace published the explosive works that would revolutionize the thinking he grew up

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<sup>39</sup> Cruse, p.84.

<sup>40</sup> Cruse, p.85.

<sup>41</sup> Cruse, p.87.

<sup>42</sup> Cruse, p.87. He was still offended thirty-four years later when, in ‘Evolution in Biology’, he referred to it as “that particularly unsatisfactory book.” T.H. Huxley, *Darwiniana, Collected Essays* 9 vols (London: Macmillan, 1894-95), II, 187-226 (p.222). (Hereafter *Collected Essays*) The offence retained its potency; see ‘Science and Pseudo-Science’, *Science and Christian Tradition, Collected Essays*, V, 90-125 (pp.108–10).

<sup>43</sup> G.K. Chesterton, *Robert Louis Stevenson* [1927], 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1929), p.63.

<sup>44</sup> McLynn, p.15.

<sup>45</sup> McLynn, p.16.

<sup>46</sup> Chesterton, p.55.

with and provide a bitter idiom for reciprocally disembowelling battles between himself and his father.<sup>47</sup>

This is no exaggeration. After one nasty episode in September 1873 Stevenson wrote to Mrs Fanny Sitwell, with whom he was in love at the time, quoting his father Thomas's words:

I have made all my life to suit you [...] and the end of it is that I find you in opposition to the Lord Jesus Christ. I find everything gone. I would ten times sooner see you lying in your grave than that you should be shaking the faith of other young men and bringing ruin on other houses as you have brought it on this.<sup>48</sup>

Although Stevenson was desperately unhappy with himself for distressing his parents, he could not submit his reason to the yoke of their orthodoxy. He writes in the notebook which he kept during his time at Edinburgh University:

Faith means holding the same opinions as the person employing the word. It is faith to agree with Dr. Orthodoxy; but it is unbelief to believe in the persistence of force.<sup>49</sup>

[...]

The presently orthodox have a nasty way of using the word *theory*. [...] Mr Darwin is a theoriser; very well, but what are those that adhere so stoutly to the contrary view? merely theorists also. This sounds very trivial; but it is a great truth for all that, and a much neglected truth into the bargain.<sup>50</sup>

The wretched youth Stevenson would have derived much comfort from the following observations by Northrop Frye:

The Bible is the supreme example of the way that myths can, under certain social pressures, stick together to make up a mythology. A second look at this mythology shows us that it actually became, for medieval and later centuries, a vast mythological universe, stretching in time from creation to apocalypse, and in metaphorical space from heaven to hell. A mythological universe is a vision of reality in terms of human concerns and hopes and anxieties: it is not a primitive form of science. Unfortunately, human nature being what it is, man first acquires a mythological universe and then pretends as long as he can that it is also the actual universe. [...]

The secession of science from the mythological universe is a familiar story. The separating of scientific and mythological space began theoretically with

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<sup>47</sup> J.C. Furnas, *Voyage to Windward: The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: Faber, 1952), p.38.

<sup>48</sup> *RLS Letters*, letter 143, 22 September 1873, I, 311-13 (p.312). Quoted in Furnas, p.78.

<sup>49</sup> *Works*, XXV, 28. "Persistence of force" is a term used by Herbert Spencer in *First Principles* (1867). See Herbert Spencer, *First Principles*, 2 vols (London: Williams and Norgate, 1910), I, 154. Persistence of force was central to Spencer's conception of the principles underlying evolution. See *First Principles*, II, 323.

<sup>50</sup> *Works*, XXV, 36.

Copernicus, and effectively with Galileo. By the nineteenth century scientific time had been emancipated from mythological time.<sup>51</sup>

And – he might have said – with the arrival of the theory of natural selection, man had been emancipated from the Fall. The down-side was that he was now just a sophisticated monkey—or, as Stevenson put it, an “ennobled lemur”.<sup>52</sup> It is ironic, and rather sad, that the physical energy and the mental drive which led to the confidence and hubris of Victorian England should have produced the scientists and philosophers whose discoveries and insights left their fellows, not the lords of creation, but beasts of the field.

Stevenson, realizing his parents’ distress, did not abandon his deeply ingrained religious beliefs overnight. Nor, when he had relaxed his grip on the doctrine, did he let go of the poetry and literature that sprang from it. Nor, as he matured, could he entirely let go of the God who had inspired it. In his twenty-seventh year he writes a conciliatory letter to his father, although it begins on an equivocal note:

Christianity is, among other things, a very wise, noble, and strange doctrine of life. [...] I speak of it as a doctrine of life, and as a wisdom for this world. [...] I feel every day as if religion had a greater interest for me; but that interest is still centred on the little rough-and-tumble world in which our fortunes are cast for the moment. I cannot transfer my interests, not even my religious interests, to any different sphere.<sup>53</sup>

But at least he now acknowledges the fountainhead of his religion:

I have a good heart and believe in myself and my fellow men and the God who made us all (241).

And he ends with an observation much in keeping with the views of Charles Kingsley, one of the authors to be discussed later:

There is a fine text in the Bible, I don’t know where, to the effect that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord. [footnote: Romans 8.28.] Indeed, if this be a test, I must count myself one of those. Two years ago, I think I was as bad a man as was consistent with my character. And of all that has happened to me since then, strange as it may seem to you, everything has been, in one way or another, bringing me a little nearer to what I think you would like me

<sup>51</sup> Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 1976), p.14.

<sup>52</sup> ‘Pulvis et Umbra’ [1888], *Works*, XII, 283-92 (p.290). Stevenson’s phrase may derive from a sentence towards the end of *The Origin of Species*: “When I view all beings not as special creations, but as the lineal descendants of some few beings which lived long before the first bed of the Cambrian system was deposited, they seem to me to become ennobled.” *The Origin of Species and The Descent of Man* (New York: The Modern Library, 1927), p.373.

<sup>53</sup> *RLS Letters*, letter 511, 15 February 1878, II, 240-42 (p.240).

to be. 'Tis a strange world, indeed, but there is a manifest God for those who care to look for him (241).

Thus Stevenson progressed through an enthusiastically Christian childhood and a turbulently agnostic youth, to return in manhood to the fold, albeit with an individualized belief. John Kelman sums up Stevenson's belief, beginning with a quotation from *The Merry Men*:

A generous prayer is never presented in vain; the petition may be refused, but the petitioner is always, I believe, rewarded by some gracious visitation. The horror, at least, was lifted from my mind; I could look with calm of spirit on that great bright creature, God's ocean.<sup>54</sup>

Kelman adds:

In these words two things are plain. There is the belief in a direct and personal contact with the Divine; and there is the vision of God through Nature.<sup>55</sup>

Elsewhere Kelman observes that Stevenson's belief in God

was so far removed from any reasoned metaphysical conclusion, that we have described it as the highest form of a spirituality which belongs rather to the Religion of Sentiment than to the Religion of Dogma (265).

However, Stevenson's passage through the dark night of doubt, and his repudiation of dogma, in no way diminished his love of the Bible. Biblical phrases and references sparkle in his writings—including *Jekyll and Hyde*; and the many quotations in his letters from such religious-minded writers as Spenser and Milton – whose works both inform and illuminate *Jekyll and Hyde* – show that they too were never far below the surface of his thought.

But the Bible was one thing, and modern science was another. God may have made us all; but He made us all through a scientifically observable biological process; and man's biological origins were, in Stevenson's word, "appalling." In 'Pulvis et Umbra' he leaves his readers in no doubt as to where they stand in the scheme of things:

We behold space sown with rotary islands, suns and worlds and the shards and wrecks of systems: some, like the sun, still blazing; some rotting, like the earth; others, like the moon, stable in desolation. All of these we take to be made of

<sup>54</sup> *Works*, XI, 11-87 (p.49). This quotation, like most in Kelman's book, has no reference.

<sup>55</sup> *The Faith of Robert Louis Stevenson* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier, 1907), p.150. The vision of God through Nature is a recurring theme in *The Faerie Queene*, *The Water-Babies*, and 'Olalla'.

something we call matter: a thing which no amount of analysis can help us to conceive; to whose incredible properties no familiarity can reconcile our minds. This stuff, when not purified by the lustration of fire, rots uncleanly into something we call life; seized through all its atoms with a pediculous malady; swelling in tumours that become independent, sometimes even (by an abhorrent prodigy) locomotory; one splitting into millions, millions cohering into one, as the malady proceeds through varying stages. This vital putrescence of the dust, used as we are to it, yet strikes us with occasional disgust [...] the moving sand is infected with lice [...].

In two main shapes this eruption covers the countenance of the earth: the animal and the vegetable: one in some degree the invasion of the other: the second rooted to the spot; the first coming detached out of its natal mud, [...] a thing so inconceivable that, if it be well considered, the heart stops.<sup>56</sup>

Ironically, in the debate which raged over the origins of this quintessence of dust, both sides were in agreement on one point: it had indeed *been* dust. The main argument was over what had *animated* it. On the one hand there was the Word of God:

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (Genesis 2.7).

On the other there was T.H. Huxley who, on the 8th of November 1868, when Stevenson was in his second year at Edinburgh University, came to that place and delivered, in “the most publicised event of 1868,”<sup>57</sup> a lecture called *On the Physical Basis of Life*.<sup>58</sup> William Irvine describes what happened on the night:

Appearing before a large audience with a bottle of smelling salts and other familiar, commonplace articles, Huxley declared that he had before him the essential ingredients of protoplasm – the physical basis of life. All life, from the amoeba up to man, is composed of this single substance, which uniformly exhibits the same properties and the same functions. Plants are distinguished from animals by the ability to generate organic matter from inorganic, but as there is no sharp distinction between simple plants and animals, so there is no distinction between simple protoplasm and non-living matter except in a certain arrangement of molecules. In fact, mind itself is but ‘the result of molecular forces’ in ‘the protoplasm which displays it.’ Man is therefore [...] brother not only to the monkey, but to the amoeba, even to the molecule and the atom.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> *Works*, XII, 283-85. This passage is a reworking of a section in ‘Lay Morals’ (written in 1879, but not published until after Stevenson’s death), in which he also uses the word “appalling” to describe the Earth as a place of residence (*Works* XXIV, 198-99).

<sup>57</sup> Cyril Bibby, *Scientist Extraordinary: The Life and Scientific Work of Thomas Henry Huxley* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1972), p.63.

<sup>58</sup> Stevenson was not there. He was home in bed, ill. See *RLS Letters*, letter 72, 17 November 1868, I, 167-72. However, the lecture was published in the following year; so Stevenson could have read it. Bibby writes that “it carried *The Fortnightly* into seven printings” (63).

<sup>59</sup> *Apes, Angels and Victorians* (London: Readers Union, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1956), pp.192-93. Huxley’s words were: “[A]ll vital action may [...] be said to be the result of the molecular forces

The similarities between *On the Physical Basis of Life* and ‘Pulvis et Umbra’ are too close to be accidental, regardless of whether or not the transmission from Huxley to Stevenson was direct. The affinity between ‘Pulvis et Umbra’ and *Jekyll and Hyde* will be examined later.

In the debate between evolution and the Church, the stakes were high on both sides. Cardinal Manning voiced the position of the Roman Catholic Church when he attacked Darwinism as “a brutal philosophy—to wit, there is no God, and the ape is our Adam.”<sup>60</sup> This point is central to the concerns of all the Churches. It was all very well for biologists to declare disingenuously that they were merely describing a process in nature, and that no theological inferences should be drawn from it,<sup>61</sup> but the implications were profound: if man was descended from some ape-like ancestor, then there was no Adam. If there was no Adam, then there was no Fall. If there was no Fall, then the Incarnation of Jesus and his death on the cross were meaningless, and there was no Salvation. The Church’s doctrine was outlined by St Paul in his letter to the Romans:

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

[...]

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

[...]

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

[...]

For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more will they receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

[...]

That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5.8-21).

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of the protoplasm which displays it. And if so, it must be true, in the same sense and to the same extent, that the thoughts to which I am now giving utterance, and your thoughts regarding them, are the expression of molecular changes in that matter of life which is the source of our other vital phenomena” (‘On the Physical Basis of Life’, *Method and Results, Collected Essays*, I, 130-65 (p.154)). It is tempting to link this passage with the line in Stevenson’s *Macaire* (1885): “What are Ideas? the protoplasm of wealth” (*Works*, VI, 285).

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in Cruse, p.95.

<sup>61</sup> See Northrop Frye, *Myth and Metaphor: Selected Essays, 1974-1988*, ed. by Robert D. Denham (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1990), p.142.

St Paul's letter to the Romans in fact provides the cornerstone for Henry Jekyll's Statement, something which has already been alluded to by Veeder—the war in the members. St Paul writes:

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members (Romans 7.23).

Henry Jekyll writes:

And it chanced that the direction of my scientific studies [...] reacted and shed a strong light on the consciousness of the perennial war among my members (81-82).

This biblical reference was of course obvious to contemporary readers; and a contemporary reviewer of *Jekyll and Hyde* in a Christian magazine took it as the text for his sermon:

It is an allegory based on the two-fold nature of man, a truth taught us by the Apostle PAUL in Romans vii., 'I find then a law that, when I would do good, evil is present with me'[7.21]. We have for some time wanted to review this little book, but we have refrained from so doing till the season of Lent had come, as the whole question of temptation is so much more appropriately considered at this period of the Christian year, when the thoughts of so many are directed to the temptations of our Lord.<sup>62</sup>

The reviewer, naturally, finds a universal message in the story:

How many men live out two distinct characters? To the outer world they are the honourable, upright men, with a good professional name, holding a respectable position in society, looked up to and spoken well of by their neighbours. Within, however, the inner sanctum of their own hearts they are conscious of another self, a very different character. So far this is more or less common to all (225).

The reviewer then locates this situation within its Judaeo-Christian context:

It is a result of the Fall of Man that we have ever present a lower nature struggling to get the mastery (225).

Not content with explaining the presence of evil, the reviewer has earlier undertaken to explain the presence of good. Note the use of the term "primitive

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<sup>62</sup> From an unsigned review, 'Secret Sin', *The Rock* (2 April 1886), 3. Reprinted in Maixner, pp.224-27 (p.224). Maixner writes: "'Jekyll and Hyde' became a popular topic in the pulpit. The following review gives some idea of what sermons based upon it must have been like. The 'Rock' (London) was an organ of the Unified Church of England and Ireland" (224). *Jekyll and Hyde* remained a popular topic in the pulpit for some time. In September 1886, eight months after the story's publication,

man”, a term which in the 1880s would usually evoke images of Darwinian primitive man, that is, primitive man who has not fallen from a higher condition, but who has risen from some kind of small furry animal. The reviewer therefore deliberately equates primitive man with God’s Creation, as a provocative rebuke to evolutionary theory:

Of the best of men it can always be said that there is about them an element of evil, whereas with the worst of men there is, if we can only discover it, an element of good – doubtless a relic of primitive man ‘made in the image of God’ before the fall of our ancestors (225).

Curiously, in a review which shows an awareness of the evolution question, the reviewer appears to find nothing Darwinian in *Jekyll and Hyde*:

Though there is nothing distinctively Christian about it, we hope none will suppose that we mean to imply that there is anything antagonistic to Christianity (224).

There were some, however, who at the time not only saw the moral allegory, but also recognized Hyde’s Darwinian implications. And for those who did, in the acrid and unsettling climate generated by the theory of natural selection, Stevenson’s decision to make Hyde ape-like was confronting to say the least. Among the confronted was Stevenson’s friend the scholar John Addington Symonds (1840-93), who writes to Stevenson:

At last I have read Dr Jekyll. It makes me wonder whether a man has the right so to scrutinize “the abysmal deeps of personality.” It is indeed a dreadful book, most dreadful because of a certain moral callousness, a want of sympathy, a shutting out of hope. [...]

The fact is that, viewed as an allegory, it touches one too closely.<sup>63</sup> Most of us at some epoch of our lives have been upon the verge of developing a Mr Hyde.

Physical and biological Science on a hundred lines is reducing individual freedom to zero, and weakening the sense of responsibility. I doubt whether the artist should lend his genius to this grim argument. It is like the Cave of Despair in the Faery Queen.

I had the great biologist Lauder Brunton with me a fortnight back. He was talking about Dr Jekyll and a book by W.O. [*sic*] Holmes, in wh [*sic*] atavism is played with. I could see that, though a Christian, he held very feebly to the theory of

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Stevenson’s mother went to hear the Revd W.W. Tulloch preach on it. See ‘Notes about Robert Louis Stevenson from his Mother’s Diary’, *Works*, XXVI, 285-366 (p.345).

<sup>63</sup> Commentators interpret this sentence as a reference to Symonds’s struggle to conceal his homosexuality. See, e.g., Claire Harman, p.214.

human liberty; and these two works of fiction interested him, as Dr Jekyll does me, upon that point at issue.<sup>64</sup>

Symonds's intent becomes clearer when the preceding letter is compared with one which he wrote to the American scholar Thomas Sergeant Perry (1845-1928), after reading the latter's *From Opitz to Lessing*:

Are you really prepared to deny any scope for individuality, origination, creativeness? Are we naught but the creatures of circumstance? If you really hold this view of art and literature, you must a fortiori apply it to conduct and morality. It seems true that you, with a great many present thinkers, accept Darwin's hypothesis too absolutely as proved. [...]

That theory always strikes me as a most suggestive method for investigation; but by no means as yet demonstrated so irrefragably as to justify its logical conclusions—which involve absolute negation of free will.<sup>65</sup>

Symonds's letter to Perry shows that his "point at issue" in his letter to Stevenson is that, if we are God's creatures, then we have God-given free will to behave justly or unjustly. If we are no more than a highly developed animal, then we always have been, now are, and always will be slaves to our animal nature. The impersonal forces of Nature – not we ourselves – determine our actions. Hyde, representing our animal nature, testifies to our moral doom.

St Paul provides the theological framework for Jekyll's war in the members. Darwinism provides a contemporary scientific framework for Hyde's apish appearance. But what is the mechanism which projects him? James Ashcroft Noble writes in his review of *Jekyll and Hyde*:

The fateful drug acts with its strange transforming power upon the body as well as the mind; for when the first dose has been taken the unhappy victim finds that 'soul is form and doth the body make,' and that his new nature, of evil all compact, has found for itself a corresponding environment.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, ed. by Herbert M. Schueller & Robert L. Peters, 3 vols (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967-69), letter 1522, 3 March 1886, III, 120-21. This letter is also quoted in Maixner, pp.210-11. According to Maixner, Symonds is probably referring to *Elsie Venner* (1861) by Oliver Wendel Holmes, whose eponymous subject grows up with glittering dark eyes, sharp teeth and a hypnotic malevolent presence, having been *in utero* when her mother was bitten by a rattlesnake. Linehan (*Jekyll and Hyde*, p.99) also suggests that Symonds may be referring to Holmes's *The Guardian Angel* (1867).

<sup>65</sup> Symonds, *Letters*, II, 969, letter 1433, 18 November 1884. Perry's book was published in 1885; perhaps he sent Symonds an advance copy. Perry was what Donald Pizer calls an "evolutionary critic"—one who applied evolutionary theory to the study of culture and literature. See 'Evolutionary Ideas in Late Nineteenth Century English and American Literary Criticism', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 19 (1961), 305-10.

<sup>66</sup> Maixner, p.204.

Soul is form. What is form? A form is an archetypal pattern which exists in the realm of Ideas, and has the power to impose itself on matter. According to Socrates, forms (or, in Jowett's translation, ideas),

are, as it were, patterns fixed in nature, and other things are like them and resemblances of them—what is meant by the participation of other things in the ideas, is really assimilation to them.<sup>67</sup>

Noble's choice of quotation is both accurate and ironic: accurate, because it identifies the philosophical source behind Jekyll's transformation into Hyde; ironic, because the line is taken from Edmund Spenser's 'An Hymne In Honour Of Beautie' – the second of *The Fowre Hymnes*, his "most overtly Neoplatonic work",<sup>68</sup> – and Hyde is far from beautiful. Spenser writes:

For of the soule the bodie forme doth take:  
For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make. (132-33)<sup>69</sup>

Here, then, is the third great pillar on which Stevenson has rested his story: Platonism.

#### THE PLATONIC TRADITION

The Platonic tradition begins – obviously enough – with the Greek philosopher Plato (429–347 BC). At the beginning of the Christian era some of his concepts concerning the mind and the soul were incorporated in the writings of St John and St Paul, and have remained part of the foundations of Christianity to this day. In the third and fifth centuries AD certain philosophers – most notably Plotinus (205–270) in Alexandria, and Proclus (?412–485) in Alexandria and Athens – interpreted and enlarged upon Plato's writings, with an especial emphasis on the metaphysical areas of his work.

During the Renaissance Plato enjoyed a renaissance of his own. But, just as he had been enlarged upon in Alexandria, so he and his Alexandrian commentators were

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<sup>67</sup> *The Dialogues of Plato*, translated in English with analyses and introductions by Benjamin Jowett, [1871] 4 vols, 4<sup>th</sup> edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), *Parmenides*, 132d. All quotations from Plato's Dialogues are taken from this edition.

<sup>68</sup> John Roe, 'Italian Neoplatonism and the Poetry of Sidney, Shakespeare, Chapman and Donne', in *Platonism and the English Imagination*, ed. by Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994; repr.2004), pp.100-16 (p.100).

interpreted again by Italian scholars in the fifteenth century; and, by the sixteenth century, in England, according to Lilian Winstanley, “When [Edmund] Spenser proceeded to Cambridge in 1569, [...] all that was intellectual in the University was Platonist”.<sup>70</sup> Spenser’s own Platonism derives mainly from the Continental commentators.<sup>71</sup> Spenser’s influence extends from his immediate successors – notably Henry More and John Milton – through eighteenth-century writers such as Jonathan Swift (whose *Gulliver’s Travels* is the subject of a later chapter); to such nineteenth-century writers as Thomas Love Peacock (who will also appear later), Charles Kingsley, and Stevenson himself. Indeed, it would be hard to overestimate Spenser’s importance as a poet in the Platonic tradition. Herbert Agar writes, in his study on Milton:

During his youth, Milton had been strongly influenced by Spenser, in whose poetry the Renaissance variety of Platonism reaches its high-water mark for England.<sup>72</sup>

So enduring was Spenser’s legacy, that there are at least three separate references to his work by those discussing *Jekyll and Hyde* at and around the time of the book’s publication. Significantly, none is explained; therefore their familiarity and meaning are assumed. The first, from J.A. Symonds’s letter to Stevenson, likens the story to the Cave of Despair in *The Faerie Queene*. The second, the quotation from *The Fowre Hymnes*, used by James Ashcroft Noble, is specifically employed in order to provide a context within which to understand Hyde. The third – by Stevenson himself, also from *The Faerie Queene* – cleverly reprises the Platonic image of the soul putting on a body fit for its own nature and purpose. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

In the Age of Reason people turned away from Plato’s metaphysics, and especially away from that of his later adherents and commentators, who had extended his speculations. Plato remained acceptable as a political and ethical theorist, but little more than that. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the Romantic movement reawakened interest in Platonic spirituality. But leading thinkers were hostile to this

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<sup>69</sup> *Edmund Spenser: The Fowre Hymnes*, ed. by Lilian Winstanley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907). All quotations from *The Fowre Hymnes* are taken from this edition.

<sup>70</sup> *Fowre Hymnes*, p.x.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Thomas Bulger, ‘Platonism in Spenser’s *Mutabilitie Cantos*’, in Baldwin and Hutton, pp.126-38.

<sup>72</sup> *Milton and Plato* (Gloucester, Mass.: Smith, 1928; repr. 1965), p.30. Agar continues: “Hence in his early poems Milton conformed to the seventeenth century type of Platonism. The whole of *Comus* is permeated with this Spenserian Platonism” (30). *Comus* will play a part in the following chapter.

drift away from rationalism, and in the 1830s scholars began to use the term “neo-Platonism” to distinguish between Plato’s writings and those of the Alexandrian school and their Renaissance successors. Since then, the distinction has continued, although it can at times be blurred. Charles Kingsley, for example – a man not known for his consistency of thought – while owning an edition of Plato’s works, and referring to himself as a Platonist, and dismissing Alexandrian neo-Platonism as irrelevant to the concerns of everyday life, nevertheless in *The Water-Babies* draws heavily on Spenser and neo-Platonic theories of the soul and its relationship to the body.

What were the Platonic influences on Stevenson? The deepest and earliest lay in the religion which played such a large part in his childhood. Dean William Inge observes Platonic influences in the Johannine and Pauline writings. Of Paul he says, “his psychology of body, soul, and spirit, in which, as in the Platonists, Soul holds the middle place, and Spirit is nearly identical with the Platonic *Νοῦς* [...] show[s] that Christianity no sooner became a European religion than it discovered its natural affinity with Platonism.”<sup>73</sup> In another work Inge says, “Other examples may be given of St Paul’s affinity with Plato. The use of *νοῦς* in Romans vii, 23 (‘I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind [*νοῦς*])’ is Platonic.”<sup>74</sup> Therefore the cornerstone of *Jekyll and Hyde*, previously seen as biblical, is now found to be Platonic as well.

This interweaving of Platonic and Christian thought can still be seen clearly in the writings of modern commentators on *Jekyll and Hyde* when they come to discuss Utterson’s response to his first encounter with Hyde. Utterson concludes that Hyde’s awful ugliness is “the mere radiance of a foul soul that thus transpires through, and transfigures, its clay continent” (40), which is a Platonic concept. Jerrold Hogle writes that Utterson has to explain Hyde to himself, and “therefore fixes on the old Platonic *and Christian* [my emphasis] notion of a “foul soul” emanating its nature toward and into its bodily enclosure.”<sup>75</sup> Stephen Arata, however, overlooks the

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<sup>73</sup> William Ralph Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, 2 vols, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (London: Longmans, Green, 1948), I, 11. (Hereafter *Plotinus*.)

<sup>74</sup> William Ralph Inge, *The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought* (London: Longmans, Green, 1926), p.12.

<sup>75</sup> ‘The Struggle for a Dichotomy: Abjection in *Jekyll and His Interpreters*’, in *100 Years*, pp.161-207 (p.192).

Platonic component entirely, and describes the “foul soul” concept as “familiar Christian imagery” (234).

Stevenson undertook an intensive study of Philosophy as part of his Law course at Edinburgh University, during which time he read *Lectures on Greek Philosophy* by James Frederick Ferrier (1808-64). This was one of several books which he read outside the course because “he wanted to know Philosophy enough to disagree with his friend James Walter Ferrier”.<sup>76</sup> Although he was reading Classics and Philosophy, Stevenson was no Greek scholar. He enrolled in a Greek class, but honoured it more in the breach than the observance. Shortly afterwards, he lost his Greek dictionary and felt no need to replace it. He could, of course, have read Plato in translation, which he did in later life (see below), but given his religious and literary background, it would have been possible for him (as it had been for others) to absorb the Platonic tradition without ever approaching it at its source: Stevenson would have found Platonic thoughts and images among such poets as Spenser, Milton, Pope, Blake, Coleridge, Shelley, Tennyson and Wordsworth; and among such prose writers as Ruskin and Emerson.<sup>77</sup>

Of the authors appearing in this dissertation, Henry More was one of the so-called Cambridge Platonists; Swift was interested in Plato, and drew on him (negatively) for Gulliver’s voyage to the land of the Houyhnhnms; Peacock owned books by Thomas Taylor “the Platonist” (1758–1835) – whose translation of Plato’s works (1804) contained mainly neo-Platonic annotations – and counted him among his closest friends;<sup>78</sup> Kingsley was not only a committed Platonist from his days at Cambridge (his mentor Frederick Denison Maurice was also a Platonist), but a devoted reader of Spenser and Milton.

Interest in Plato had waned during the eighteenth century. Although the Romantics took him up through the writings of Thomas Taylor, and although there was much enthusiasm for Hellenic thought and culture during the first half of the nineteenth century, serious scholarship on Plato was both limited and of varying competence. This began to change in the mid-century; and in 1871 Benjamin Jowett’s *Dialogues*

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<sup>76</sup> Reverend Archibald Bisset, ‘Personal Reminiscences of the University Life of Robert Louis Stevenson’, in Masson, ed., pp.48-56 (p.51). Revd Bisset tutored Stevenson in Classics and Philosophy.

<sup>77</sup> Baldwin and Hutton include such Platonist writers as: Chaucer; Sir Thomas More; Sir Philip Sidney; Shakespeare; Chapman; Donne; Spenser; the Cambridge Platonists; Milton; Marvell; Vaughan; Traherne; Blake; Coleridge; Wordsworth; Shelley; Carlyle; Arnold.

of Plato were published. Did Stevenson read any of them? He may have done. He spent two winters in the Swiss health resort of Davos, where he met and spent a lot of time discussing literature with the consumptive John Addington Symonds. Symonds had studied under Jowett at Oxford; and was himself a classicist. Jowett visited Symonds at Davos, on one occasion missing Stevenson by several days. In April 1886, having missed the Stevensons on yet another occasion, Jowett invited them to Oxford, but Stevenson eventually declined.<sup>79</sup> Stevenson's loose association with Jowett through Symonds may have provided the motivation for Stevenson to read the *Dialogues*. Symonds could have lent them to him during one of his stays in Davos. On the other hand, Stevenson's failure to meet with Jowett when invited could equally suggest that he had not read them.<sup>80</sup>

The mid-century also saw a revival in Plato as an ethicist and social theorist—and, unexpectedly, as the main target of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*.<sup>81</sup> This is highly ironic, given that Darwin's grandfather Erasmus looked to Plato's disciples for inspiration in his studies. Henry Fairfield Osborn writes:

As to the origin of life [Erasmus] drew from the Greeks, especially from Aristotle, limiting spontaneous generation, however, to the lowest organisms; they also gave him the fundamental idea of Evolution, for he says, "This idea of the gradual formation and improvement of the Animal world seems not to have been unknown to the ancient philosophers."<sup>82</sup>

Erasmus's embattled grandson, however, had to contend not only with outraged Christian creationists but also – and in particular – with an important prevailing scientific opinion, passed down through history from Plato to Aristotle; to Plotinus and the other neo-Platonists; to Carl Linnæus; to the French biologist Georges Cuvier and his intellectual disciple Louis Agassiz; and to the great English opponent of Darwin and Huxley, Sir Richard Owen. This received wisdom stated that each species is the physical expression of a form that was conceived by the Creator in the

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<sup>78</sup> George Mills Harper, *The Neoplatonism of William Blake* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), pp.13; 26; 15; 28.

<sup>79</sup> See *RLS Letters*, letters 1598; 1622. Claire Harman (290) claims that Stevenson did meet Jowett, but does not cite a source.

<sup>80</sup> In a letter from Samoa Stevenson tells Sidney Colvin that he is reading "a crib to *Phaedo*"; which unfortunately leaves us little the wiser. See *RLS Letters*, letter 2357, October 1891, VII, 178-83 (p.179).

<sup>81</sup> See Frank M. Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), chap.8.

<sup>82</sup> *From the Greeks to Darwin: An Outline of the Evolution Idea* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1894), p.142.

world of Ideas. Therefore each species is, as James Moore puts it, “a discrete act of the divine intellect and, as such, none can be related to another by physical descent.”<sup>83</sup> According to Moore:

The belief in fixity, likewise of pre-Christian origin, persisted in the post-Darwinian period largely as an amalgam of biblical literalism and neo-Platonism, the latter deriving from German romantic philosophy through the idiosyncratic and widely influential teaching of Louis Agassiz [at Harvard. ...] The anti-Darwinian element in Christian Anti-Darwinism may thus in fact have had little to do with Christian doctrines. Perhaps, after all, what conflicted with Darwinism were the philosophical assumptions with which the Christian faith had been allied (215).

So pervasive was the Platonic belief in fixity, and so entrenched, that the anti-Platonic Darwin’s energies were directed as much against countering it, as against the theological attacks on his theory by the Church.<sup>84</sup>

The attack on Platonic science did not begin with Darwin. In October 1858 – a year before the publication of *The Origin of Species* – Herbert Spencer writes:

In so far as his theory of the skeleton is concerned, Professor Owen is an avowed disciple of Plato. At the conclusion of his *Archetype and Homologies of the Vertebrate Skeleton*, he quotes approvingly the Platonic hypothesis of ἰδέα, “a sort of models, or moulds in which matter is cast, and which regularly produce the same number and diversity of species. The vertebrate form in general [...], or else the form of each kind of vertebrate animal [...], Professor Owen conceives to exist as an “idea”—an “archetypal exemplar on which it pleased the Creator to frame certain of his living creatures.”<sup>85</sup>

Spencer goes on to argue that Owen “carries the Platonic hypothesis much further than Plato does” (550). And he condemns Owen for subscribing to a theory which would later provide the intellectual background to *Jekyll and Hyde*. In Owen’s writing, claims Spencer, there is

implied the belief that the typical [i.e., the archetypal “idea”] vertebra has an abstract existence apart from actual vertebræ. It is a form which, in every endoskeleton, strives to embody itself in matter (551).

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<sup>83</sup> James R. Moore, *The Post-Darwinian Controversies: A Study of the Protestant Struggle to come to Terms with Darwin in Great Britain and America 1870-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.208.

<sup>84</sup> See Walter F. Cannon, ‘Darwin’s Vision in *On the Origin of Species*’, in *The Art of Victorian Prose*, ed. by George Levine and William Madden (New York, London, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp.154-76 (pp.159-60).

<sup>85</sup> ‘A Criticism on Prof. Owen’s Theory of the Vertebrate Skeleton’, *British & Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review*, (October 1858). Repr. in Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Biology*, 2 vols, rev. and enlarged (London: Williams and Norgate, 1898), II, 548-66 (p.550). Revd Bisset recalls that Stevenson had read this work of Spencer’s (along with his *First Principles* and *Theory of Evolution*) by the time that their sessions began. See Masson, p.52.

In other words, archetypal forms existed before matter, and express themselves in matter which they mould after their own shape. The next chapter will explore the world of Ideas.

In Stevenson's day there existed no greater threat to the sense of self than the theory of evolution. It confused and disturbed the individual, estranged families and provided an intellectual justification for great social ills. Stevenson grew up in and reflected this turmoil. He wrote *Jekyll and Hyde* in a Darwinian intellectual environment; but he also wrote it in the still-foaming wake of Renaissance neo-Platonism and Platonic Romanticism, during the middle of the Victorian Platonic revival. With *Jekyll and Hyde* he articulated not only his personal vision of mankind, but, by weaving into it a strange antagonistic blend of Darwinian, Platonic, and biblical imagery, raised it from the personal to the biological and finally to the cosmic.

And yet, if he had written it one, two, or three centuries earlier, his readers would have interpreted Hyde in the same way. Hyde is a traditional, pre-Darwinian figure whose origins stretch back to Classical Greece. His appearance in a Darwinian landscape obliges the reader to take Darwinism into account, but that may be ultimately incidental to Stevenson's purpose. Although evolution is implicit in the text, Stevenson is not making a point about mankind's origins, but about mankind's capacity for evil. Stevenson knew his Darwin; he would have been well aware of the fundamental differences between Platonism and Darwinism. Hyde may be apish, but Stevenson's language consistently presents him as a Platonic expression of the evil element in Jekyll's soul; and Darwinism does not concern itself with questions of good and evil.

At the same time, however, there is a strong Darwinian theme in the story: not Hyde's apishness, but Jekyll's revelation – in his famous “slime of the pit” passage (95) – about inherited characteristics. Darwin was talking about inherited physical characteristics and behaviour; Stevenson's writings show him grappling with the problem of inherited sin and evil. In his essays he jokes about primitive memories and instincts lingering in the minds of modern people, one of whom was his grandfather, the Reverend Lewis Balfour:

What sleeper in green tree-tops, what muncher of nuts, concludes my pedigree?  
Probably arboreal in his habits. ...

And I know not which is the more strange, that I should carry about with me some fibres of my minister-grandfather; or that in him, as he sat in his cool study, grave, reverend, contented gentleman, there was an aboriginal frisking of the blood that was not his; tree-top memories, like undeveloped negatives, lay dormant in his mind; tree-top instincts awoke and were trod down; and Probably Arboreal (scarce to be distinguished from a monkey) gambolled and chattered in the brain of the old divine.<sup>86</sup>

But even in his moods of apparent lightness, Stevenson raises the spectre of biological determinism which so worried J.A. Symonds. He describes:

a certain low-browed, hairy gentleman, at first a percher in the fork of trees, next (as they relate) a dweller in caves, and whom I think I see squatting in cave-mouths, of a pleasant afternoon, to munch his berries—his wife, that accomplished lady, squatting by his side: his name I never heard, but he is often described as Probably Arboreal, which may serve for recognition. Each has his own tree of ancestors, but at the top of all sits Probably Arboreal; in all our veins there run some minims of his old, wild, tree-top blood; our civilised nerves still tingle with his rude terrors and pleasures; and to that which would have moved our common ancestor, all must obediently thrill.<sup>87</sup>

And in *Jekyll and Hyde* and ‘Olalla’ (written almost immediately after)<sup>88</sup> he approaches his theme with an almost biblical sense of doom. In *Jekyll and Hyde* it is not stated clearly; but in ‘Olalla’, as we shall see, it is quite explicit.

There are three major influences bearing on *Jekyll and Hyde*: Platonism, Christianity, and Darwinism. To view the text through the lens of one of these alone is to risk misinterpreting the figure of Hyde, because Hyde is drawn from all three. However, where these influences are concerned, *Jekyll and Hyde* scholarship has tended to neglect the first and, to a lesser degree, the second, and focus on the third.

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<sup>86</sup> ‘The Manse’ [1887], *Works*, XII, 84-93 (p.93). “Probably arboreal” is a term used by Charles Darwin, who writes: “By considering the embryological structure of man,—the homologies which he presents with the lower animals,—the rudiments which he retains,—and the reversions to which he is liable, we can partly recall in imagination the former condition of our early progenitors; and can approximately place them in their proper place in the zoological series. We thus learn that man is descended from a hairy, tailed quadruped, probably arboreal in its habits, and an inhabitant of the Old World” (*The Descent of Man*, p.911). Darwin goes on to trace the origin of all vertebrata back to a marine animal “like the larvæ of the existing marine Ascidians”—a possible literary ancestor of the flopping thing in the dying ocean shallows of *The Time Machine*. Note also Stevenson’s use of “chatter” for both his own primitive ape-like ancestor’s language, and that of Hyde when agitated.

<sup>87</sup> ‘Pastoral’ [1887], *Works* XII, 72-83 (pp.81-82). “Common ancestor” is another term used by Darwin. See *The Origin of Species*, p.86.

<sup>88</sup> *Jekyll and Hyde* was written in September-October 1885. Andrew Lang writes: “as to the date of this work, Mr Charles Longman informs me that his letter to Mr Stevenson, acknowledging the MS., was written on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1885” (Letter to *The Athenaeum*, 3511 (9 February 1895), 187). Stevenson then began ‘The Misadventures of John Nicholson’, but laid it aside. By the first week of November 1885 he had begun work on ‘Olalla’, which appeared in the Christmas 1885 edition of the *Court and Society Review*. For details see Swearingen, pp.102-03.

Irving Saposnik sees Hyde as a “creature of primitive sensibilities.”<sup>89</sup> Julia Briggs sees man as a “descendant of the beasts,” with a “bestial inheritance within him which he must learn to sublimate and restrain.”<sup>90</sup> David Punter sees Jekyll’s transformation into Hyde as “the reversion of the species.”<sup>91</sup> Ed Block, drawing our attention to the friendship between Stevenson and the evolutionary psychologist James Sully, interprets the tale as a “depiction of psychological aberration treated in evolutionist terms.”<sup>92</sup> Stephen Heath interprets Hyde as being symbolic of Jekyll’s hidden animal (i.e., sexual) urges which surface in times of extreme emotional stress, and express themselves in violent perverted acts. He refers to Jekyll’s use of the term “ape-like” as “Stevenson’s evolutionary reference word.”<sup>93</sup> Veeder notes Stevenson’s interest in Darwin and other scientific thinkers. He writes:

That Jekyll’s chemical tastes liberate Hyde’s animality (beast as ape, [...]) is revelatory not only of the doctor and the patriarchy but of late-Victorian society as well. In this period arise the sciences of anthropology and psychology. Darwin’s tracing of human anatomy back to animal origins is complemented by anthropological and psychological attributions of social practices and emotional states to comparably archaic sources.<sup>94</sup>

Donald Lawler writes that Hyde “represents pre-evolved man in his atavistic, degenerated physical and psychological state”, and he regards the novella as a “case study of degeneration.”<sup>95</sup> Christine Persak discusses the text in the light of Herbert Spencer’s doctrine of moral evolution, which saw man evolving psychologically and morally as well as physically. She equates Hyde’s appearance with that of Spencer’s Primitive Man.<sup>96</sup> Robert Mighall sees Hyde as “the physical expression of moral lowness according to Post-Darwinian thought”.<sup>97</sup> Julia Reid describes the tale as

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<sup>89</sup> *Robert Louis Stevenson* (Boston: Twayne, 1974), p.98.

<sup>90</sup> *Night Visitors: The Rise and Fall of the English Ghost Story* (London: Faber, 1977), p.20.

<sup>91</sup> *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day* (London: Longmans, 1980), p.244.

<sup>92</sup> ‘James Sully, Evolutionist Psychology, and Late Victorian Gothic Fiction’, *Victorian Studies*, 25 (1982), 443-67 (p.458). (Hereafter Block, *Sully*.)

<sup>93</sup> ‘Psychopathia Sexualis’, p.103.

<sup>94</sup> *100 Years*, pp.121-22.

<sup>95</sup> ‘Reframing *Jekyll and Hyde*: Robert Louis Stevenson and the Strange Case of Gothic Fiction’, in *100 Years*, pp.247-61, (p.252).

<sup>96</sup> ‘Spencer’s Doctrines and Mr Hyde: Moral Evolution in Stevenson’s “Strange Case”’, *Victorian Newsletter*, 86 (1994), 16-18 (p.16). Stevenson mentions Spencer’s Primitive Man in a letter of 18 January 1875 to Fanny Sitwell. See *RLS Letters*, letter 355, II, 109.

<sup>97</sup> Mighall, *Jekyll*, p.xxiv.

representing “the atavism unveiled by evolutionist psychiatry, which focused on the survival of primitive elements in human consciousness.”<sup>98</sup>

Fewer commentators address the biblical theme. William Veeder devotes a section in his essay to an examination of “what critics have never discussed—Stevenson’s manifold allusions to Genesis”;<sup>99</sup> Larry Kreitzer discusses *Jekyll and Hyde* in the light of the Bible, in particular St Paul’s “war in the members” passage in his letter to the Romans;<sup>100</sup> Kevin Mills also discusses Jekyll and St Paul;<sup>101</sup> Katherine Linehan explores Stevenson’s various intertextual allusions. Linehan writes: “The best-developed and least appreciated set of orchestrated references revolves around the many biblical echoes in the tale.”<sup>102</sup> As for Platonism, Mills also notes the Platonic element in Paul’s (and, by implication, Jekyll’s) duality which has already been mentioned by Dean Inge;<sup>103</sup> and refers to “a Platonic-Pauline tone in the description” of the effect of Jekyll’s drug.<sup>104</sup> Aaron Perkus equates Jekyll’s permanent transition into Hyde with the Platonic movement of the soul from man to beast. He also argues that Hyde represents Jekyll’s feminine nature, and likens Jekyll to Adam, and Hyde to Eve.<sup>105</sup> Hogle mentions “the old Platonic and Christian notion of a “foul soul” emanating its nature toward and into its bodily enclosure”.<sup>106</sup> This mention, however, is simply about Utterson’s attempts to define Hyde, and no reference is made to Jekyll’s specific Platonic assessment of Hyde. Hogle also examines the tension in Jekyll’s Statement between Jekyll’s “religious” rhetoric and his “evolutionary” rhetoric (by which means Jekyll tries to distance himself from his ape-like other half), and thereby at least mentions Plato, the Bible and Darwin in his essay.<sup>107</sup> Douglas Thorpe, one of the few who examine both the scientific and religious

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<sup>98</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *Science, and the Fin de Siècle* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p.97.

<sup>99</sup> *100 Years*, p.137.

<sup>100</sup> ‘R.L. Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Romans 7.14-25: Images of the Moral Duality of Human Nature’, *Journal of Literature and Theology*, 6 (1992), 125-44.

<sup>101</sup> ‘The Stain on the Mirror: Pauline Reflections in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*’, *Christianity and Literature*, 53 (2004), 337-48.

<sup>102</sup> ‘The Devil Can Cite Scripture: Intertextual Hauntings in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*’, *Journal of Stevenson Studies*, 3 (2006), 5-32 (p.6). (Hereafter Linehan, *Devil*.)

<sup>103</sup> See Inge, *Plotinus*, I, 11.

<sup>104</sup> Mills, p.343.

<sup>105</sup> ‘Dr Jekyll Hydeing in the Garden of Eden’, *Mythos*, 6 (1996), 35-43. The article is a revised chapter from Perkus’s ‘Where the Wild Things Are: The Male Uterus and the Creation of Monsters’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Binghamton University, 1994). I shall argue that Stevenson deliberately invokes Milton’s Adam and Eve, but not for the reason given by Perkus, i.e., that Hyde represents Jekyll’s feminine nature (Perkus, p.36).

<sup>106</sup> *100 Years*, p.192.

ingredients, anticipates the thrust of this dissertation, but does not include Platonism in his examination. “Hyde”, he writes, “has a complex pedigree and it should be clear that it is no simple matter to tag *the* source for Stevenson’s conception.” Hyde “is born of chemicals, Calvinism, folklore, myth, and the scientific speculations of the Industrial age [to which] the controversy surrounding evolution adds the blurring of animal and human nature.”<sup>108</sup> There would seem to be an overall lack of scholarly research in the biblical and Platonic contribution to *Jekyll and Hyde*. This dissertation is an attempt to remedy the imbalance. However, just as Stevenson scholarship has moved on to contemporary concerns, and away from the subjects of humanity’s place in the natural world and humanity’s relationship to God, so scholarship in other authors has done so as well. Accordingly this dissertation, in examining the authors who precede Stevenson, will frequently turn to earlier commentators who were dealing with these fundamental concerns. The dissertation thus on the one hand looks back to some well ploughed scholastic fields, and on the other hand looks forward to providing a much needed synthesis of the three identified themes in *Jekyll and Hyde*.<sup>109</sup>

As the Darwinian commentaries listed above suggest, the Darwinian analysis necessarily leads to questions of degeneration, devolution, and reversion. But this approach serves only to answer part of the riddle that is Hyde. Although Jekyll may appear to degenerate, devolve, or revert to a more primitive form, in fact he does not; he first encourages, then unsuccessfully tries to resist, then finally succumbs to the true expression of the evil within him—and that is not a Darwinian process. Indeed Stevenson’s language reveals the weight which he gives to his various influences. Hyde is referred to as ape-like three times (47, 96, 97), and monkey-like once (68). He chatters (like a monkey or ape) once (94). He is associated with an animal twice (69, 92); and is referred to as a brute once (94). So much for the Darwinian aspect. His diabolical side is mentioned more often. He is a devil (90, 93); and Satanic (32, 40); and his evil is mentioned fourteen times (56, 68, 82, 84, 84, 84, 84, 85, 85, 85, 87, 90, 91, 92). He is referred to as deformed on no less than seven occasions (34,

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<sup>107</sup> *100 Years*, pp.182-85.

<sup>108</sup> ‘Calvin, Darwin, and the Double: The Problem of Divided Nature in Hogg, MacDonald, and Stevenson’, *Newsletter of Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada*, 11.1 (Spring 1985) 6-22 (p.18). Thorpe does not address the issue of the Platonic blurring of animal and human nature.

<sup>109</sup> In order to maintain a consistent focus on works which preceded *Jekyll and Hyde*, I have drawn exclusively on translations which were published before 1885, e.g., Jowett’s translation of Plato; Pope’s translation of the *Iliad*.

34, 40, 50, 66, 84, 95). Deformity is not a Darwinian concept, but, as the following chapters will show, has a Platonic association with spiritual and moral delinquency. Stevenson employs it in this traditional manner. Towards the end of his Statement Jekyll writes:

I became, in my own person, a creature eaten up and emptied by fever [...] and solely occupied by one thought: the horror of my other self. [...] I would leap almost without transition [...] into the possession of a fancy brimming with images of terror, a soul boiling with causeless hatreds, and a body that seemed not strong enough to contain the raging energies of life. The powers of Hyde seemed to have grown with the sickliness of Jekyll. And certainly the hate that now divided them was equal on each side. With Jekyll, it was a thing of vital instinct. He had now seen the full deformity of that creature (95).

Obviously, then, Hyde's physical deformity (which no one can specify) reflects his moral deformity (which is transparent to Jekyll because they share "some of the phenomena of consciousness").

The aim of the dissertation is to locate Edward Hyde within the strand of the history of ideas that deals with mankind's origins and mankind's relationship to the beasts. Modern commentators are inclined to regard the hairy ape-like Hyde as an embodiment of early mankind, and, having invoked the name of Darwin, continue their inquiries within that theoretical framework. For them, Hyde thus represents the primitive beastly urges which present-day humanity is yet to overcome. Others interpret Jekyll's duality within the context of the biblical "war in the members" addressed by St Paul in his letter to the Romans. A few give passing mention of the Platonism underlying Hyde's hateful effect on those around him.

This dissertation will argue that, while the Darwinian interpretation is inescapable, Stevenson's concerns with human duality are far deeper and far more complicated, investigating not just mankind's origins, but mankind's enduring capacity to sin. Mankind is a highly evolved ape, but man is also a Biblically fallen creature, the understanding of whose soul owes as much to Platonic philosophy as to Judaeo-Christian theology. This does not imply a rejection of the Darwinian interpretation, so much as an enrichment by showing how it interacts with this other much older tradition. There is, moreover, an important distinction which should be borne in mind: the Darwinism is making one point (human origins), and the Platonism is making another (the evil soul). Stevenson employs them both because they both apply and are inseparable in his vision of mankind.

The conceit of one man swallowing a potion and turning into another came to Stevenson in a dream; Edward Hyde did not. Every aspect of Hyde's appearance and character – especially the explanation for his existence – arises from a conscious intellectual choice by Stevenson, each choice being informed and determined by Stevenson's cultural inheritance. The task, then, is to explore that cultural heritage and show how Stevenson drew on it for his portrait of Hyde.

This dissertation will examine earlier literature involving apes or ape-like creatures, thereby revealing a tradition which deals with mankind's burden of evil; a tradition in which evil is portrayed in ugly, deformed, and beastly bodies; a tradition which explores and questions the origins of mankind – theological, philosophical, and scientific – in an attempt to account for the presence of our lower impulses; a tradition which links humanity with the beasts—very often, although not exclusively, with the apes. The chosen texts will show that, as time passes and knowledge of the natural world increases through exploration and scientific learning, earlier ways of looking at the world, instead of being replaced by new ideas, come to serve as a mythic or poetic way of accommodating such new ideas, absorbing the new and incorporating it into the old mythological framework.

Accordingly, the dissertation begins with an examination of some Platonic poetry by Spenser, Henry More, Milton, and Donne dealing with the nature of the soul; its relationship to the physical body; the soul's progression from form to form; the accumulation of sin; moral degeneration; and its deforming influence on the body.

The Platonic relationship between soul and body having been established, the discussion then moves on to *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and in particular the Yahoos, the most notorious example of deformed and degraded humanity. These bizarre creatures are likened to various animals, especially to apes. Swift draws on a variety of sources for his portrait, ranging from the Old Testament, to Classical authors, to travellers' tales of primitive peoples, to scientific treatises on apes. His debt to Plato is apparent in both his description of the Houyhnhnms' society, and his portrayal of the Yahoos' physical deformities.

Another source which Swift draws on is the Wild Man tradition. This tradition, which dates back at least as far as ancient Mesopotamian legends, continued on, unchanged in some aspects, and constantly evolving in others, until by Stevenson's day it had developed three co-existing but physically distinct representatives: the Wild Man, the Noble Savage, and the Child of Nature. The figure of the Wild Man,

and the imagery surrounding him, play an important and ongoing role in representations of apes, including the ape-like Edward Hyde.

Thomas Love Peacock's *Melincourt* (1817) brings together the ape, the Wild Man, the Noble Savage and the Child of Nature, together with Classical mythology, Platonism, more travellers' tales, and late-eighteenth-century theories of evolution. *Melincourt* shows a progression of the debate as more scientific information becomes available; and offers a satiric inversion of values, in which the ape – now represented as the original man – is physically and morally superior to the degenerate specimens of modern humanity about him. However, as the ape's links with mankind become more firmly established, the imagery surrounding him, instead of becoming more scientific and prosaic, draws even more heavily on ancient myth and Wild Man lore. Sir Oran Haut-ton in his naive innocence and natural goodness corresponds not only to the relaxed and amicable anthropoids who begin Stevenson's family tree in his essays, but also to Spenser's Salvage Man in *The Faerie Queene*, who, when roused, displays a terrible fierceness. Sir Oran's contemplative nature and customary benignity, however, militate against a purely Darwinian interpretation of Hyde's viciousness.

Charles Kingsley's *The Water-Babies* (1862) prefigures Stevenson's method in *Jekyll and Hyde*. Kingsley was a scientifically trained clergyman, writing at the height of the excitement generated by Darwin's theory of natural selection, as scientists, philosophers and theologians struggled to come to terms with humanity's place in the universe. *The Water-Babies* brings together Platonism, Christianity and Darwinism in an attempt to harmonize them all in one grand theory. Yet again it is clear that traditional language and imagery not only survive the shock of Darwinism, but within their own larger narrative manage to incorporate Darwinism as no more than a mechanism of God's design, mediated through a Christiano-Platonic system described by Spenser at the end of *The Faerie Queene*—a mechanism, moreover, which also turns lazy, self-indulgent humans back into apes.

These texts and their sources provide a context within which to examine Hyde: firstly within the Wild Man tradition; then from a Darwinian viewpoint; next within a biblical framework; and finally as a Platonic expression of Jekyll's soul.

*Jekyll and Hyde* demonstrates that there is within mankind a duality which can be explained theologically, philosophically, and scientifically; that down through history it has been portrayed in much the same way; and that mankind's relationship to the

ape has always been a matter of unease and inquiry. *Jekyll and Hyde* is, however – as the many commentaries testify – an oblique and elusive text, and does not provide enough information within itself for an adequate understanding of one of its key expository passages—the “slime of the pit” passage (95). This understanding is provided by ‘Ollalla’, in which Stevenson more transparently deals with the themes of degeneration and the inheritance of evil which play such a fundamental role in his more famous story. Yet again one finds images of the Wild Man and the Child of Nature; yet again, biblical language and imagery; yet again, Platonic sentiment; and yet again, the theme of degeneration, which can be either Darwinian (as expressed by Kingsley), or pre-Darwinian (as expressed by Swift). Written one after the other, *Jekyll and Hyde* and ‘Ollalla’ form a complementary pairing, each illuminating an understanding of the other. ‘Ollalla’ clarifies the presence of Hyde in Jekyll; and *Jekyll and Hyde* gives a shape to the evil which lurks within Ollalla’s pure soul.

By the time he came to write *Jekyll and Hyde*, Stevenson had a cultural heritage at his disposal which stretched all the way back from the most recent scientific discoveries, to God’s command to Let there be light. Stevenson’s story, dealing as it does with the timeless theme of evil within the human soul, employs language and imagery from this heritage; language and imagery which were familiar and accessible to the educated readers of his day, but which have become increasingly remote and unrecognizable with the passage of time. The object of this dissertation is to provide a literary background from which to interpret the figure of Edward Hyde, and his importance as a traditional emblem of evil; and to offer an interpretation of his role which brings together that literary background and the more commonly recognized Darwinian element in order to provide a fuller and more complex reading of the text.