# PART ONE

## BODY AND SOUL

## SIN AND DEFORMITY

# CHAPTER TWO

## PLATONIC EVOLUTION: SPENSER, MORE, MILTON, DONNE

The previous chapter introduced Spenser's phrase from his *Fowre Hymnes*,"soul is form and doth the body make". This chapter will explore the soul's relationship to the physical body. In so doing, it will examine works by Spenser, More, Milton, and Donne, which deal with this theme. (Although Milton's contribution to this chapter is slight, he will come to play an important role in the final reading of *Jekyll and Hyde*.) The writings of Spenser, More, Milton, and Donne reveal a fusion of Platonism and Christianity which continues on through English literature and finds ongoing expression in the writings of Stevenson. Moreover, both Platonic and Christian thought provide an ancient and traditional explanation for the bestial presence of Hyde in Henry Jekyll. Let us begin with the author of the phrase "soul is form".

### EDMUND SPENSER

Edmund Spenser (1552-99) was a Cambridge man. Lilian Winstanley writes that:

> Cambridge represented for sixteenth century England both the most ardent spirit of the Reformation and the most zealous study of Plato. When Spenser proceeded to Cambridge in 1569, the religious enthusiasm in the University was almost wholly Puritan in tone and certainly all that was intellectual in the University was Platonist; the identification of Cambridge with Platonism lasted, in fact, for well over a century.[1]

What does it mean to say that Spenser was a Platonist? According to Einar Bjorvand and Richard Schell:

> Elizabethans like Spenser commonly derived their knowledge of Plato through two channels: medieval Neoplatonism and the Florentine Neoplatonists [of the fifteenth century]. The antiquity of Neoplatonic ideas in Spenser's time and milieu and his apparent unconcern with scholarly precision renders unwise the naming of any one source for what Spenser may have found in several places. In most cases the more popularly read sources would be the most likely.[2]

However, scholars are more specific about the provenance of particular works.

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[1] *Fowre Hymnes*, p.x.

Thomas Bulger writes:

> Given the subject matter and phrasing of the *Fowre Hymnes*, it is virtually certain that Spenser read [Marsilio] Ficino's commentary on Plato's *Symposium*, the well known *De Amore* [1469]; and it may well be that Spenser read Ficino's 1492 translation of the *Enneads* [by Plotinus], thus making Spenser one of the first English authors to read Plotinus directly.[3]

*The Fowre Hymnes* is based on the proposition that the soul, when it comes into the natural world, takes on a body which represents and exemplifies the soul's beauty. Spenser writes in his 'Hymne In Honour Of Beautie':

> Thereof it comes, that these faire soules, which have
> The most resemblance of that heavenly light,
> Frame to themselves most beautiful and brave
> Their fleshly bowre, most fit for their delight,
> And the grosse matter by a soveraine might
> Tempers so trim, that it may well be seene,
> A pallace fit for such a virgin Queene.
>
> So every spirit, as it is most pure,
> And hath in it the more of heavenly light,
> So it the fairer bodie doth procure
> To habit in, and it more fairely dight
> With chearefull grace and amiable sight.
> For of the soule the bodie forme doth take:
> For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make. (120-33)[4]

The beauty of the beloved's soul may therefore be inferred from her outward appearance; and the true lover dwells on her external form in loving contemplation of the divine spark within.

Hyde of course provokes the opposite reaction. People dwell on his external form in loathing of the foul soul within (40). His pallor, his dwarfishness, his hairiness, his unexpressed deformity, are not mere physical shortcomings, but, as Socrates says, a sign, because the body is "the index of the soul, because the soul gives

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[2] *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser,* ed. by William A. Oram (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). (Hereafter *Yale Spenser*.) Introduction to *The Fowre Hymnes* by Einar Bjorvand and Richard Schell, p.685.

[3] Baldwin and Hutton, p.127.

[4] Spenser is playing with two meanings of the word *form*. The body takes its form (i.e., its shape) from the soul, which is form (i.e., the creative principle).

indications to […] the body."[5] Similarly Plato's unnamed Athenian says:

> that the soul is in all respects superior to the body, and that even in life what makes each one of us to be what we are is only the soul; and that the body follows us about in the likeness of each of us.[6]

This raises the question—How does one come by such an unattractive soul? Socrates explains that, just as the body is ravaged by sin and abuse, so is the soul. He goes on:

> [W]hen the soul is stripped of the body, everything in it is laid open to view—all its natural features and all the characteristics it has acquired in each of its various activities. And when they come to the judge, as those from Asia come to Rhadamanthus, he stops them and inspects them one by one quite impartially, not knowing whose the soul is: often he may lay hands on the soul of some king or potentate such as the Great King, and discerns no soundness in him, but a soul marked with the whip, and full of the scars of perjuries and crimes with which each action has stained him, and all crooked with falsehood and imposture, and without straightness, because he has lived without truth. Him Rhadamanthus beholds, full of the deformity and disproportion which is caused by licence and luxury and insolence and incontinence, and dispatches him ignominiously to his prison, and there he undergoes the punishment he deserves.[7]

Henry Jekyll begins his Statement by describing his "certain impatient gaiety of disposition", his "pleasures", which have led to "a profound duplicity of life." However, they then become "irregularities", and we are told at last that they occurred when he "laid aside restraint and plunged in shame" (81). Here is a soul warped by deception, and distorted and ugly from private licence and public arrogance. This duplicity has in fact begun to stamp itself upon his body as well. In his introductory scene he is described as "a large, well-made, smooth-faced man of fifty, with something of a slyish cast perhaps" (43). Even the smooth face is a bad sign; Hyde's housekeeper in Soho has "an evil face, smoothed by hypocrisy" (49).

In his other writing Stevenson continues to link Jekyll and Hyde with Platonic thought, in particular, the soul assuming the appropriate form. In 'A Chapter on Dreams' he writes:

> I had long been trying to write a story on this subject, to find a body, a vehicle, for that strong sense of man's double being which must at times come in upon and overwhelm the mind of every thinking creature. [...] The meaning of the tale

[5] *Cratylus,* 400c. Jowett offers an alternative translation:– "Or: 'gives indications with the body'."
[6] *Laws,* XII, 959a.
[7] *Gorgias,* 524d-525a.

> is therefore mine, and had long pre-existed in my garden of Adonis, and tried one body after another in vain.[8]

Stevenson is being highly specific in his allusion. John Cooper explains that "Gardens of Adonis were pots or window boxes used for forcing plants during the festival of Adonis."[9] Stevenson thus presents the image of himself desperately attempting to force the flowering of his muse; but his primary meaning – as the mention of bodies shows – derives from the Garden of Adonis in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, in which souls continually incarnate and reincarnate in form after form.[10] Here then is the third Spenserian reference in association with *Jekyll and Hyde*, the first two being by Symonds[11] (the Cave of Despair in *The Faerie Queene*), and James Ashcroft Noble[12] ("soul is form" from *The Fowre Hymnes*).

A likely source for Spenser's Garden may be the tale told by Er, the son of Armenias, in Plato's *Republic*. Er died in battle, but revived after several days, and related what he had seen in the other world:

> He said that when his soul left the body it went on a journey with a great company, and that they came to a mysterious place at which there were two openings in the earth; they were near together, and over against them were two other openings in the heaven above. In the intermediate space there were judges seated, who commanded the just […] to ascend by the way up through the heaven on the right hand; and in like manner the unjust were bidden by them to descend on the lower way by the left hand […]. Then he beheld and saw on one side the souls departing at either opening of heaven and earth when sentence had been given on them; and at the other two openings other souls, some ascending out of the earth dusty and worn with travel, some descending out of heaven clean and bright (*Republic*, X, 614c-d).

The souls are taken on a long journey, finally being brought into the presence of the Fates, where they are addressed by a speaker who tells them, "Mortal souls, behold a new cycle of life and mortality" (*Republic*, X, 617d). The souls are then given lots to determine the order in which they will choose their next lives. The speaker

> placed on the ground before them the patterns of lives; and there were many

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[8] *Works*, XII, 247-48.
[9] Plato, *Complete Works*, ed., intro. and notes by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), p.553, n67.
[10] Stevenson also dropped quotations from *The Faerie Queene* into his correspondence. See *RLS Letters*, vol. III, letters 681; 910.
[11] *Letters*, letter 1522, 3 March 1886, III, 120-21. Maixner, pp.210-11.
[12] *Academy*, 29 (23 January 1886), 55. Maixner, p.204.

> more lives than the souls present, and they were of all sorts. There were lives of every animal and of man in every condition. [...] The disposition of the soul was not, however, included in them, because the soul, when choosing a new life, must of necessity become different (*Republic*, X, 618a-b).

No one elects to continue in their former condition. Men become women; women become men; humans become birds; birds become human:

> And not only did men pass into animals, but I must also mention that there were animals tame and wild who changed into one another and into corresponding human natures—the righteous into the gentle and the unrighteous into the savage, in all sorts of combinations (*Republic*, X, 620d).

The souls then proceed to the Plain of Forgetfulness and camp beside the River of Unheeding, whose waters they must drink:

> and each one as he drank forgot all things. Now after they had gone to rest, about the middle of the night there was a thunderstorm and earthquake, and then in an instant they were driven upwards in all manner of ways to their birth, like stars shooting (*Republic*, X, 621a-b).

In the Garden of Adonis Spenser depicts the incarnating souls as naked babies, waiting to be clothed in flesh before being sent out into the world:

> In that same Gardin all the goodly flowres,
> Wherewith dame Nature doth her beautifie,
> And decks the girlonds of her paramoures,
> Are fetcht: there is the first seminarie
> Of all things, that are borne to liue and die,
> According to their kindes. Long work it were,
> Here to account the endlesse progenie
> Of all the weedes, that bud and blossome there;
> But so much as doth need, must needs be counted here.
>
> It sited was in fruitfull soyle of old,
> And girt in with two walles on either side;
> The one of yron, the other of bright gold,
> That none might thorough breake, nor ouer-stride:
> And double gates it had, which opened wide,
> By which both in and out men moten pas;
> Th'one faire and fresh, the other old and dride:
> Old *Genius* the porter of them was,
> Old *Genius*, the which a double nature has.
>
> He letteth in, he letteth out to wend,
> All that to come into the world desire;
> A thousand thousand naked babes attend

About him day and night, which doe require,
That he with fleshly weedes would them attire:
Such as him list, such as eternall fate
Ordained hath, he clothes with sinfull mire,
And sendeth forth to liue in mortall state,
Till they againe returne backe by the hinder gate. (III.6.30-32) [13]

In keeping with the principle of metempsychosis the naked babes don all kinds of fleshly weeds:

Infinite shapes of creatures there are bred,
And vncouth formes, which none yet euer knew,
And euery sort is in a sundry bed
Set by it selfe, and ranckt in comely rew:
Some fit for reasonable soules t'indew,
Some made for beasts, some made for birds to weare,
And all the fruitfull spawne of fishes hew
In endlesse rancks along enraunged were,
That seem'd the *Ocean* could not containe them there. (III.6.33)

The tale of Er and the Garden of Adonis combine descriptions of metaphysical and natural processes, involving the progression of souls from form to form. The process in each case is ordered, complying with a divine design and a cosmic purpose. In *Jekyll and Hyde*, however, Jekyll's selfish, unscrupulous indifference to any moral system violates this order. He forces (in the horticultural sense) something un-natural, simply because he is irked and thwarted by the human condition. In effect, when he changes into Hyde he is reincarnating himself; and he is aware that this is what he has done. He refers to the transformation as a "dissolution" (85), during which he experiences "a horror of the spirit that cannot be exceeded at the hour of birth or death" (83); and then he specifically refers to the process as "these agonies of death and birth" (85). The drug has the power to disturb and dissociate the elements (earth, air, fire and water) that make up the body of Jekyll. During this brief period of dissolution the lower qualities in his soul reconfigure the elements to fashion a more appropriate housing. When the process is complete, Jekyll has "died" and Hyde has been "born." Jekyll writes:

I came to myself as if out of a great sickness. There was something strange in my

[13] Edmund Spenser, *Works: A Variorum Edition*, ed. by Edwin Greenlaw and others, 11 vols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1932; 3rd repr. 1961). *The Faerie Queene* occupies vols I-VI. All *Faerie Queene* quotations are taken from this edition. The Garden of Adonis will play an important part in *The Water-Babies*.

> sensations, something indescribably new and, from its very novelty, incredibly sweet. I felt younger, lighter, happier in body (83).

There are two Platonic influences bearing on this process. The first (the ugly soul), has already been described. The second has to do with Jekyll's unfulfilled sinful desires, which are not unlike those of the souls in the story of Er:

> Most curious, he said, was the spectacle—sad and laughable and strange; for the choice of the souls was in most cases based on their experience of a previous life (*Republic*, X. 619e).

Er goes on to describe how souls choose lives either to avoid unwanted associations from their former lives, or to fulfill unrealized desires and ambitions from their former lives.

It is the same with Jekyll. He writes:

> I had learned to dwell with pleasure, as a beloved day-dream, on the thought of the separation of [my two natures]. If each, I told myself, could but be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable; the unjust might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin; and the just could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path (82).

But his real desire is to be unjust, as he admits later:

> Had I approached my discovery in a more noble spirit, had I risked the experiment while under the empire of generous or pious aspirations, all must have been otherwise, and from these agonies of death and birth I had come forth an angel instead of a fiend (85).[14]

The fiend has come forth; and the fiend is ape-like. His fury is ape-like (47); his spite is ape-like (97); his tricks are ape-like (96); Jekyll's butler Poole describes him as "like a monkey" (68); and he walks through the streets "chattering" (94), a behaviour traditionally associated with apes and monkeys.

In a way Hyde is like one of the rabble in Milton's *Comus* (1634). They are described as "a rout of Monsters headed like sundry sorts of wilde Beasts, but otherwise like Men and Women."[15] They become like this after drinking a potion brewed by Comus, the son of Bacchus and Circe, both famed for their ability to turn

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[14] "Come forth" is a term associated with birth, e.g., "he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels." (Genesis 15.4)

men into beasts:[16]

> Within the navil of this hideous Wood,
> Immur'd in cypress shades a Sorcerer dwels
> Of *Bacchus*, and of *Circe* born, great *Comus*,
> Deep skill'd in all his mothers witcheries,
> And here to every thirsty wanderer,
> By sly enticement gives his banefull cup,
> With many murmurs mixt, whose pleasing poison
> The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
> And the inglorious likenes of a beast
> Fixes instead, unmoulding reasons mintage
> Character'd in the face. (520-30)

This could just as well be a description of the Fall – in fact it nearly is. As described by Milton in *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve, after eating the forbidden fruit, fall prey to lust, then fall asleep. When they awake,

> they in mutual accusation spent
> The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning,
> And of thir vain contest appeerd no end. (IX.1187-89)

The Lord in the person of the Son comes to the garden and calls for Adam:

> He came, and with him *Eve*, more loth, though first
> To offend, discount'nanc't both, and discompos'd;
> Love was not in thir looks, either to God
> Or to each other, but apparent guilt,
> And shame, and perturbation, and despaire,
> Anger, and obstinacie, and hate, and guile. (X.109-14)

Their debased condition is now written on their countenances. Like Hyde, "Satan's signature" (40) is on their faces. Likewise the types of animals on the heads of the rabble in *Comus* reflect the inner nature of the victims, one of whom is a proverbially lascivious "bearded Goat" (line 71)—a suitable follower for Comus, whose energies are directed against the heroine's chastity. All of these transformations reflect the emergence of vices which were already present in the

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[15] *The Poetical Works of John* Milton, ed. by Helen Darbishire (London: Oxford University Press, 1958; repr. 1960), stage directions following line 92. All Milton quotations are taken from this edition.

[16] Cf. *The Odyssey*, Bk X, in which Circe turns Odysseus's men into swine. Cf. also *The Faerie Queene*, in which the wild beasts in Acrasia's Bower of Bliss are revealed to be

> Whylome her louers, which her lusts did feed,
> Now turned into figures hideous,

rabble. One could say as much about Hyde and leave it at that; but Adam and Eve, and Comus's rabble were all enticed into falling – Jekyll alone chooses deliberately to debase himself. And so begins his Platonic descent into apishness.

One of the earliest recorded cases of this phenomenon is that of a Greek named Thersites who fought in the Trojan war. He was an impudent, rascally, nasty troublemaker who finally went too far, and received such a blow from Achilles that he died.[17] Pope describes him:

> Thersites only clamoured in the throng,
> Loquacious, loud, and turbulent of tongue:
> Awed by no shame, by no respect controlled,
> In scandal busy, in reproaches bold;
> With witty malice studious to defame,
> Scorn all his joy, and laughter all his aim.
> But chief he gloried with licentious style
> To lash the great, and monarchs to revile.
> *His figure such as might his soul proclaim:* [my emphasis]
> One eye was blinking, and one leg was lame:
> His mountain-shoulders half his breast o'erspread;
> Thin hairs bestrewed his long misshapen head.
> Spleen to mankind his envious heart possessed,
> And much he hated all, but most the best.[18]

The soul of this strange creature sinks down into the underworld, and joins the throng of souls described by Er in *The Republic*, who are waiting to be reincarnated. As has already been mentioned, their choice of future life depends upon the character of their former life. Er watches as one by one the souls make their choice, some changing sex, some changing into animals or birds:

> and far away among the last who chose, the soul of the jester Thersites was putting on the form of a monkey (*Republic*, X.620c).

Thersites's soul, which has scarcely managed a human existence before – and then behaved grossly – elects to inhabit the body of a beast, yet still to retain the travesty of a human form. But this has not been arbitrary – it is part of God's design as

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> According to their mindes like monstruous. (II.12.85-87)

[17] Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths,* 2 vols (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966-67), II, 313.

[18] *Pope's Iliad of Homer*, ed. and intro. by A.J. Church, illust. by Wal Paget (London: Cassell, 1910), II.255-68. Note Pope's Platonic introduction (line 263) to the description of Thersites's body. Shakespeare includes him among the Greeks in *Troilus and Cressida.* In the *Dramatis Personae* he is given as "a deformed and scurrilous Grecian." In his very first scene he is beaten by Ajax (II.1). He survives the events of the play by running away when he is challenged on the field of battle (V.7).

outlined by Plato in the *Timaeus*. Timaeus explains that the maker of the universe created individual souls which are composed of the same ingredients that make up the soul of the universe. These are equal in number to all of the stars, and each soul has been assigned its own star. The maker then

> showed them the nature of the universe, and told them of their future birth and human lot. They were to be sown in the planets, and out of them was to come forth the most religious of animals, which would hereafter be called man. The souls were to be implanted in bodies, which were in a perpetual flux, whence, he said, would arise, first, sensation; secondly, love, which is a mixture of pleasure and pain; thirdly, fear and anger, and the opposite affections: and if they conquered these, they would live righteously, but if they were conquered by them, unrighteously. He who lived well would return to his native star, and would there have a blessed existence;[19] but if he lived ill, he would pass into the nature of a woman, and if he did not then alter his evil ways, into the likeness of some animal, until the reason which was in him reasserted her sway over the elements of fire, air, earth, water, which had engrossed her, and he regained his first and better nature (*Timaeus*, 41-42).[20]

In this passage and the story of Thersites one should keep two points in mind: there is a divine plan operating; and within that plan souls make choices. These choices either advance or retard the souls' progress.

Jekyll, of course, makes the wrong choice, and, as he says, "The movement was thus wholly toward the worse" (85). He then compounds the offence by willfully and persistently making the wrong choice until he forfeits the power to choose, and turns himself permanently into a beast.

## HENRY MORE

Edmund Spenser and his "greatest descendant"[21] John Milton are known as poets

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[19] Cf. also *Paradise Lost:*

> Witness this new-made World, another Heav'n
> From Heaven Gate not farr, founded in view
> On the cleer *Hyaline*, the Glassie Sea;
> Of amplitude almost immense, with Starrs
> Numerous, and every starr perhaps a World
> Of destind habitation. (VII.617-22)

[20] Aaron Perkus quotes from this passage while arguing that Jekyll passes from man (Jekyll), to woman (Hyde as Jekyll's feminine aspect), to beast (entirely Hyde) (p.37).

[21] Thomas P. Roche, Jr., *The Kindly Flame: A Study of the Third and Fourth Books of Spenser's Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p.118.

whose writings are informed by Platonism.[22] However, it would be fair to say of Henry More (1614-87) that he is known as a Platonist and theologian, some of whose philosophical writings are in verse. More belongs to a group of scholars collectively referred to as the Cambridge Platonists.[23] He entered Cambridge in 1631 (Milton left in 1632), and lived there for the rest of his life, taking holy orders in 1641.

More had three great passions: Spenser, Christianity, and Platonism.[24] He manages to include them all in the preface to his poem *Psychozoia, or The life of the Soul* (1647),[25] which he describes on the title page as *A Christiano-Platonicall display of LIFE*:

> Now this Eternall life I sing of, even in the middest of Platonisme: for I cannot conceal from whence I am, *viz.* of Christ: but yet acknowledging, that God hath not left the Heathen, *Plato* especially, without witnesse of himself. Whose doctrine might strike our adulterate Christian Professors with shame and astonishment; their lives falling so exceeding short of the better Heathen. How far short are they then of that admirable and transcendent high mystery of true Christianisme? To which *Plato* is a very good subservient Minister; whose Philosophy I singing here in a full heat; why may it not be free for me to break out into a higher strain, and under it to touch upon some points of Christianity; as well as all-approved *Spencer* [*sic*], sings of Christ under the name of *Pan*?[26]

This passage gives an indication of the interweaving of Platonic and Christian

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[22] See, e.g., Josephine Waters Bennett, 'Milton's Use of The Vision of Er', *Modern Philology*, 36 (1939), 351-58.

[23] Benjamin Whichcote (1609-83); John Smith (1616-52); Ralph Cudworth (1617-85); Nathaniel Culverwell (1618?-51); Peter Sterry (d. 1672); Henry More.

[24] As with Spenser, "More's approach to Platonism, like that of most Renaissance scholars, was quite unhistorical. He saw none of the differences between Platonism, Neo-Platonism, Alexandrian mysticism, theurgy, Cabbalism, and modern Italian commentary." *Philosophical Poems of Henry More: Comprising Psychozoia and Minor Poems,* ed., intro. and notes by Geoffrey Bullough (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1931), p.xxii.

[25] *Psychozoia* was originally published in 1642. More soon had to admit that it was too esoteric. He made revisions, and for the benefit of his readers appended *The Interpretation Generall,* being a comprehensive dictionary of terms used in *Psychozoia* and its sequels, together with a section of explanatory notes, and it was republished in 1647 with the other poems dealing with the soul, under the general title *Psychodia Platonica: or A Platonicall Song of the Soul. The Interpretation Generall* and the full Notes can be found in *Henry More: The Complete Poems,* ed. by Alexander B. Grosart (Edinburgh University Press, 1878; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1969). Bullough includes excerpts from the *Interpretation* and the *Notes* in his book. Bullough's introduction and textual notes are very useful; one would do well to consult both works. Bullough writes of More: "Almost the last of the Spenserian succession in form, he is also an extreme exemplar of the Neo-Platonic tradition. [...] Henry More, having the most intimate of themes, the story of his own soul, [...] produced in *Psychodia Platonica* a series of hybrid poems [...] explicitly extolling the Neo-Platonic theory of soul" (lxxvi). Bullough notes More's debt to Spenser's poetry, especially *The Faerie Queene*, *The Fowre Hymnes*, and *Mother Hubberd's Tale* (xlii). More's Notes in the text are taken from Grosart.

thought from the earliest days of Christianity;[27] and More saw links going back even further than that. He was a Cabbalist—one who believed that Greek philosophy derived from Moses. Platonism therefore became for him simply another part of the ancient Judæo-Christian tradition.[28]

In *Psychozoia* More describes *Psyche*, the World Soul or Universal Soul, from whom the individual souls in the natural world come forth. *Psyche* is the third in the Plotinian Triad, the first two being: *T'Agathon* (the Good, or the One), and *Æon* (the intellectual world, or eternal life). In a passage reminiscent of Spenser's Garden of Adonis, More represents Psyche clothed in a mantle of layers, or films, reaching down to the earth:

> The first of these fair films, we *Physis* [Nature] name.
> Nothing in Nature did you ever spy,
> But there's pourtraid: all beasts both wild and tame,
> […].
>
> Snakes, Adders, Hydraes, Dragons, Toads, and Frogs,
> Th'own-litter-loving Ape, the Worm, and Snail,
> Th'undaunted Lion, Horses, Men, and Dogs,
> Their number's infinite. (cant. I, st. 41-42)
>
> *Physis* is the great womb
> From whence all things in th'University
> Yclad in divers forms do gaily bloom,
> And after fade away, as *Psyche* gives the doom. (II.13)

From this great womb the souls pass into the land of *Psychania*, or the Land of Souls, (II.24), which is divided into two kingdoms: *Autæsthesia*, or Self-Sensedness; and *Theoprepia* (II.25).[29] Each kingdom is peopled by one of two kinds of soul. More writes in his note to this stanza:

> Let *Psychanie* be as big or little as it will, *Autæsthesia*, and *Theoprepia*, be the

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[26] Grosart, p.10.

[27] Charles Kingsley refers to St Paul as, "Saint Paul the Platonist, and yet the Apostle." See *Alexandria and Her Schools* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1854), p.93. (Hereafter *Alexandria*.) He also observes the influence on St John of the Alexandrian Jewish Platonist Philo (b. 20 B.C.), p.81.

[28] For more detail see Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), pp.84-85; 424. Kingsley, while pointing out the weaknesses in Philo's thought, is still able to write, "I cannot think that he had to treat his own sacred books unfairly, to make them agree with the root-idea of Socrates and Plato" (*Alexandria*, 86).

[29] "*Theoprepia,* is a condition of the soul, whereby she doth that which would become God himself to do in the like cases, whether in the body, or out of the body" (More, note to *Psychozoia*, II.26, Grosart, p.143). More may have in mind St Paul: "whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth" (II Corinthians 12.3).

> main parts of it, and exhaust the whole. Let souls be in the body or out of the body, or where they will, if they be but alive, they are alive to God, or themselves, and so are either *Theoprepians*, or *Autœsthesians*.[30]

Theoprepia becomes the goal of a pilgrim's progress for More's own soul, named Mnemon, borrowed from the *Faerie Queene* (III.9); but first he passes through Autœsthesia, which More divides further into two:

> One province cleped is great *Adamah*
> Which also hight *Beirah* of brutish fashion;
> The other Providence is *Dizoia*;
> There you may see much mungrill transformation,
> Such monstrous shapes proceed from Niles foul inundation. (II.25)

More's note explains the Dizoians:

> [T]heir condition is as this present Stanza declares, mungrill, betwixt Man and Beast, Light and Darknesse, God and the Devill, *Jacob* and *Esau* struggle in them.[31]

Stevenson employs the same imagery. Jekyll writes that:

> man is not truly one, but truly two. [...] It was the curse of mankind that these incongruous faggots were thus bound together — that in the agonised womb of consciousness these polar twins should be continuously struggling (82).

Here then is the essence of the human condition, the war in the members, outlined by both More and Stevenson: the divine soul, a spark of the One, hampered by brute nature in its attempts to reunite with its source. Those who are immersed in God, More calls Israelites; those who are immersed in themselves, he calls Edomites.[32]

More introduces Dizoia in order to make the point with which he concludes *Psychozoia*—that God is indivisible goodness, while evil takes many forms. He writes of:

> the biformity
> Of the *Dizoians*; What mongrill sort
> Of living wights; how monstrous shap'd they be,
> And how that man and beast in one consort;
> Goat's britch, mans tongue, goose head, with monki's mouth distort. (III.70)

And ends with:

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[30] Grosart, p.143.
[31] Grosart, p.143.
[32] Jacob became known as Israel. Esau became known as Edom.

> Suffice it then we have taught that ruling Right,
> The Good is uniform, the Evil infinite. (III.71)

The second province in Autœsthesia is called Adamah, otherwise known as Beirah (Hebrew for 'brute'). More's hero Mnemon asks his travelling companion Psittaco (parrot) what the name *Beirah* means. The reply is, "The brutish nature, or brutallitie" (II.49). More writes, in his note to II.25:

> [T]hey that are wholly alive to themselves, their abode is named *Adamah*, which signifieth the corrupt naturall life, the old *Adam*, or *Beirah* because this *Adam* is but a brute, compared to that which *Plotinus* calleth the true Man, whose form, and shape, and life, is wisdome, and righteousnesse: [...] But that low life in the body is but [...] a mixture of all brutish lives together, and is the seat or sink of wickednesse. [...] For vice is congenit or connaturall to beasts.[33]

More provides a catalogue of Beironites (II.136), whose natures, behaviour, and even appearance reveal their animal selves. Among them are the "All-imitating Ape" and "crafty Fox famous for subtilty." Mnemon even encounters a foolish youth called Pithecus (Ape), who is on his way home to his country of Pithecuse (Land of Apes).[34] In More's scheme the ape is a figure of insincerity, ignorance and folly, who gets by in the world by imitating proper behaviour, or whatever he takes to be wiser or better—in this case Pithecus is impressed and persuaded by the nonsense prattled by Psittaco.

Pithecus is thus not unlike the Ape in Spenser's *Mother Hubberd's Tale* (1591), in which a fox and an ape,[35] down on their luck, undertake a succession of bold and increasingly improbable impersonations until they usurp the sleeping Lion's throne. Although "both were craftie and unhappie witted" (line 49)[36] – that is, mischievous – Spenser makes it clear that the Fox is the smart one, and the Ape merely his willing accomplice. In fact they are complementary to each other: like Jekyll does with Hyde, the Fox dreams up the escapades but relies on the Ape for their execution. Conversely the Ape is dependent on the Fox for direction.

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[33] Grosart, p.143.
[34] Horst Janson mentions a tale from Ovid in which "the Cercopes, tailed, dwarf-like creatures", are turned into apes. Janson adds: "[T]he Pithecusae islands were supposedly named after them." H.W. Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (London: Warburg, 1952; repr. Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus, 1976), p.96. For more detail on this story, see Graves, II, 162-67.
[35] A traditional pairing dating back to the Classical period. See Janson, pp.37-40.
[36] Quotations from *Yale Spenser*.

The discontented Fox declares his sad plight to the Ape, who then realizes that his own circumstances are the same, and asks how they should be remedied. The Fox advises that they should beg in the guise of old soldiers, but, he tells the Ape:

> Be you the Souldier, for you likest are
> For manly semblance, and small skill in warre:
> I will but wayte on you, and as occasion
> Falls out, my selfe fit for the same will fashion. (199-202)

Spenser describes the Ape's disguise, and includes an ape's traditional item of equipment—a stick, or club:

> But neither sword nor dagger did he beare,
> Seemes that no foes revengement he did feare;
> In stead of them a handsome bat he held,
> On which he leaned, as one farre in elde. (215-18)

A yeoman offers the Ape a labouring position, which he declines on account of his health, but instead offers himself and his dog (the Fox) as shepherds for the yeoman's flock. The Fox of course begins to eat the sheep, and the Ape soon follows. They flee to escape punishment. After some more adventures they come upon the Lion sleeping in the forest, and the Fox persuades the Ape to steal the Lion's crown, sceptre and royal pelt. It is at this point that Spenser draws the distinction between these two villains. They begin to argue about which of them should wear the crown:

> I am most worthie (said the Ape) sith I
> For it did put my life in jeopardie:
> Thereto I am in person, and in stature
> Most like a man, the Lord of everie creature;
> So that it seemeth I was made to raigne,
> And borne to be a Kingly soveraigne.
> Nay (said the Foxe) Sir Ape you are astray:
> For though to steale the Diademe away
> Were the worke of your nimble hand, yet I
> Did first devise the plot by policie;
> So that it wholly springeth from my wit:
> For which also I claime my selfe more fit
> Than you, to rule: for gouvernment of state
> Will without wisdome soone be ruinate.
> And where ye claime your selfe for outward shape
> Most like a man, Man is not like an Ape
> In his chiefe parts, that is, in wit and spirite;
> But I therein most like to him doo merite
> For my slie wyles and subtill craftinesse,

> The title of the Kingdome to possesse. (1027-46)

In keeping with their characters, the Fox and the Ape arrange to share the spoils: the Ape wears the royal trappings, while the Fox wields the power behind the throne. The Ape begins to believe that he actually is the king, while the Fox brings the kingdom low with his corruption. At last Jove, driven to wrath, sends Mercury to wake the Lion, who, enraged, enters the palace. The Fox rushes to the Lion and blames the Ape. The Lion strips the Fox of his spoils and lets him go; but he cuts off the Ape's tail and trims his ears,

> Since which, all Apes but halfe their eares have left,
> And of their tailes are utterlie bereft. (1383-84)[37]

This is a curious ending. The Fox is acknowledged as the "first Author of that treacherie" (line 1379), yet his only punishment is public humiliation and the confiscation of his plunder—he ends up no worse off than he was at the beginning, and free to carry on his criminal activities. It is as if the rule of law has no power over slie wyles and subtill craftinesse, those characteristics that are at once both fox-like and yet essentially human; humanity can govern itself only so far.

The fate of the Ape seems appropriately harsh and humiliating. But ultimately it is self-defeating, as William Oram observes:

> Commentators have often noted that the Fox escapes unpunished in this final episode, but it is equally important that the punishment of the Ape has a cosmetic value. Without his tail and with his ears cropped he will be harder to unmask because he will resemble all the more closely the human beings he imitates.[38]

This is true; but surely more telling is the fact that, if it is harder to tell an ape from a human, then it is also harder to tell a human from an ape.

More makes this point in *Psychozoia*. The Beironites seek to distinguish themselves from beasts by the fact that they walk upright; therefore their own name

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[37] Janson writes: "The ape's lack of tail had, of course, been noted in classical times, but it was not until the advent of Christianity that this member—or the absence of it—achieved metaphysical significance. Had not the Lord himself, according to Leviticus XXII.23, declared the tail to be a necessary part of every animal by pronouncing those that lacked one unfit for sacrifice? […] Clearly, then, possession of a tail meant that the 'end' of its owner had been properly determined by the Lord, so that it was 'against nature' for any animal to be without one; only man, free to choose between good and evil and thereby to decide his own end (within the limits set him by Original Sin) was legitimately ecaudate" (18-19). From the time of the Early Christian writers until the mediaeval period the ape was associated with the devil because, among other reasons, neither had a tail. See Janson, pp.19-22.

for their country is *Anthropion* ("uprightnesse of body or looking up").[39] But Mnemon refutes this distinction:

> Baboons, and Apes, as well as th'Anthropi
> Do go upright, and beasts grown mad do view the sky.
>
> Then marken well what great affinitie
> There is twixt Ape, mad Beast, and Satyrs wild,
> And the Inhabitants of *Anthropie*,
> When they are destitute of manners mild,
> And th'inward man with brutishnesse defil'd
> Hath life and love and lust and cogitation
> Fixt in foul sense, or moving in false guile. (II.47-48)

In the two provinces of Dizoia and Beirah More presents two grades of sinful humanity. The Dizoians, being a hybrid of man and beast, have yet the capacity to turn away from their lower selves and attain an awareness of God, but are constantly being led astray by their innate sinful tendencies. The Beironites, being unalloyed brute, are lost in their lower selves, and have no other pursuit than their own desires.

Where does this sin and evil come from? It begins with Dæmon, the King of Autœsthesia, "the fount of foul duality" (II.26). More describes him:

> Or for that he himself is quite divided
> Down to the belly; there's some unity:
> But head, and tongue, and heart be quite discided;
> Two heads, two tongues, and eke two hearts there be.
> This head doth mischief plot, that head doth see
> Wrong fairly to o'reguild. One tongue doth pray,
> The other curse. The hearts do ne're agree. (II.27)

More writes in his explanatory note to II.28:

> *Dæmon*, that is, the authour of division of man from God, born of self-sensednesse. [Plotinus says that] the first cause of evil to the soul was [...] that they would be their own or of themselves. So delighted with this liberty, they were more and more estranged, till at last like children taken away young from their parents, they in processe of time grew ignorant both of themselves and of their parents.[40]

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[38] *Yale Spenser*, p.332.

[39] *Interpretation Generall*, Grosart, p.159. Janson (81) quotes the thirteenth-century encyclopaedist Thomas of Cantimpré: "Man alone is capable of raising his face towards the heavens, so that he may clearly perceive the source of his salvation." (*De Naturis Rerum*, lib.IV, cap.96). Janson writes: "This concept is derived from the Early Christian etymology of ανθρωπος [anthropos] as "he who looks upward (to God)" (103, n31).

[40] Grosart, p.143.

Dæmon has two sons: Autophilus – "a lover of himself" – who rules in Dizoia; and Philosomatus – "a lover of his body" – who rules in Beirah. [41]

More's types have such universal application that one can readily read Jekyll as a Dizoian, and Hyde as a Beironite. Jekyll, the Dizoian mungrill, writes in his Statement, "all human beings, as we meet them, are commingled out of good and evil" (85). And he acknowledges his own condition almost immediately:

> It was on the moral side, and in my own person, that I learned to recognise the thorough and primitive duality in man; I saw that, of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both (82).

Later he writes:

> Hence, although I had now two characters as well as two appearances, one was wholly evil, and the other was still the old Henry Jekyll, that incongruous compound of whose reformation and improvement I had already learned to despair (85).

And he calls himself "a composite" (89), with "two natures" (89).

Jekyll takes after Autophilus, the lover of himself. He begins his Statement by telling us that he has been born to a large fortune, endowed with excellent parts, inclined by nature to industry, and so on. All of his problems arise because he wishes to appear more noble and virtuous in the public eye than he really is. "And indeed," he writes,

> the worst of my faults was a certain impatient gaiety of disposition, such as has made the happiness of many, but such as I found it hard to reconcile with my imperious desire to carry my head high, and wear a more than commonly grave countenance before the public (81).

His self-image prevents him from indulging his passions. But he is also not without a religious impulse. After the murder of Sir Danvers Carew, Jekyll resolves to have no more to do with Hyde, and to atone for his sins.

> He came out of his seclusion, renewed relations with his friends, became once more their familiar guest and entertainer; and whilst he had always been known for charities, he was now no less distinguished for religion (56).

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[41] *Interpretation Generall*, Grosart, pp. 160; 163.

But, as he writes:

> I was still cursed with my duality of purpose; [...] and it was as an ordinary secret sinner that I at last fell before the assaults of temptation.
>
> [...] And this brief condescension to my evil finally destroyed the balance of my soul (92).

By now he is more Hyde than Jekyll; and doomed to enact the scene on the bench in Regent's Park.

Jekyll is sitting there, recognizing only in retrospect that he is poised not only between his two Dizoian selves – the animal and the spiritual – but between his two Autœsthesian selves – the Dizoian and the Beironite, the mungrill and the brute:

> I sat in the sun on a bench; the animal within me licking the chops of memory; the spiritual side a little drowsed, promising subsequent penitence, but not yet moved to begin. After all, I reflected, I was like my neighbours (92).

At this point he has had enough reasons to reform. One would hope that he has learned his lesson, has begun to move away from sin towards charity, good works and prayer; and has accepted that, being of a dual nature, he will have occasional lapses – although from now on as himself – but that his energies now will be mainly directed towards the good side of his nature. His realization at this moment is that he is no better than anyone else. He should have been humbled by his experience:

> and then I smiled, comparing myself with other men, comparing my active goodwill with the lazy cruelty of their neglect. And at the very moment of that vainglorious thought, a qualm came over me (92).

This moment of Pharisaic hubris plunges the Dizoian Jekyll into the Beironite Hyde.

Why? What is Stevenson up to? The moment would be just as dramatic – and more poignant – if Jekyll were severed from humanity while he was feeling closest to it. But this moment of undeserved pride is in keeping for a thrall of Autophilus, who "is the souls more subtill and close embracements of her self in spirituall arrogancy."[42]

If Jekyll is a typical hybrid Dizoian autophile, Hyde is a typical unalloyed Beironite somatophile. Jekyll recognizes the difference as soon as he sees Hyde in the mirror:

> In my eyes [the ugly idol] bore a livelier image of the spirit, it seemed more express and single, than the imperfect and divided countenance I had been hitherto accustomed to call mine (84-85).

[42] More, note to *Psychozoia*, II.28. Grosart, p.143.

Hyde is the beast who walks upright, declaring himself a man. He is in reality "a Beast clad in mans cloths,"[43] which he becomes literally after the transformation in Regent's Park, and he is forced to spend the day in Jekyll's clothes. Hasty Lanyon describes the effect:

> This person (who had thus, from the first moment of his entrance, struck in me what I can only describe as a disgustful curiosity) was dressed in a fashion that would have made an ordinary person laughable […]. Strange to relate, this ludicrous accoutrement was far from moving me to laughter. Rather, as there was something abnormal and misbegotten in the very essence of the creature that now faced me – something seizing, surprising and revolting – this fresh disparity seemed but to fit in with and to reinforce it (77-78).

Hyde's ape-like qualities have been noted. Jekyll refers to him as a "brute" (94), and an "animal" (92), who has "nothing human" (94). Just as the Ape is the agent with which the Fox commits his crimes, so Hyde is the body with which Jekyll acts out his base fantasies. Jekyll writes:

> Men have before hired bravos to transact their crimes, while their own person and reputation sat under shelter. I was the first that ever did so for his pleasures. I was the first that could thus plod in the public eye with a load of genial respectability, and in a moment, like a schoolboy, strip off these lendings and spring headlong into the sea of liberty (86).

Jekyll's pleasures are, as he writes, "undignified; I would scarce use a harder term" (86). He presents the image of himself as a reckless schoolboy indulging in naughty pranks. But he is worse than that. He has deliberately – calculatedly – removed the human restraints from his bestial surrogate so that he might freely indulge all of his forbidden appetites, the dark appetites of his Beironite mind that his Dizoian mind could not even admit to itself.

Did Stevenson have *Psychozoia* in mind when he was writing *Jekyll and Hyde*? Or was he merely dealing with universal themes and imagery which make comparisons inevitable? The latter, most probably. More, as he himself declared, was not being original. A possible source for his compound creatures occurs in Plato's *Republic* (in which Plato himself is drawing on even more ancient sources). Socrates says:

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[43] More, note to *Psychozoia*, II.137. Grosart, p.144.

> Let us make an image of the soul […].
> […]
> An image like the composite creations of ancient mythology, such as the Chimera or Scylla or Cerberus, and there are many others in which two or more different natures are said to grow into one.
> […]
> Then do you now model the form of a multitudinous, many-headed monster, having a ring of heads of all manner of beasts, tame and wild, which he is able to put forth and metamorphose at will.
> […]
> Suppose now that you make a second form as of a lion, and a third of a man; but let the first be far the largest, and the second next in size.
> […]
> And now join them into one, and let the three somehow grow together.
> […]
> Next fashion the outside of them into a single image, as of a man, so that he who is not able to look within, and sees only the outer case, may believe the beast to be a single human creature (*Republic*, IX. 588b-e).

This description surely applies to Henry Jekyll, who describes himself as an "incongruous compound"(85), with an "animal within" (93); who believes that "man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens" (82). Indeed, Stevenson's language is reminiscent of Jowett's translation.

Two points remain concerning More's understanding of the soul. More, drawing on Plotinus, and following on from Spenser, also held that soul is form and doth the body make. In *Psychathanasia*, *or The Immortality of the Soul*, the second poem in *Psychodia Platonica*, he devotes much of Book III, Canto 1 to describing how the soul goes about this process:

> the soule doth frame
> This bodies shape, imploy'd in one long thought
> So wholly taken up, that she the same
> Observeth not, till she it quite hath wrought. (III.1.15)

He also claims that the soul is present in every living thing—plant, animal and human:

> Thus have I trac'd the soul in all her works,
> And severall conditions have displaid,
> And show'd all places where so e'r she lurks,
> Even her own lurking's of her self bewray'd,
> In plants, in beasts, in men, while here she staid:

> And freed from earth how then she spreads on high
> Her heavenly rayes, that also hath been said.
> Look now, my Muse, and cast thy piercing eye
> On every kind, and tell wherein all souls agree. (I.2.23)

JOHN DONNE

It may seem curious to find a clergyman intruding heathen philosophy into theories of the soul; yet More was not alone, and had a notable precedent in John Donne's "most ambitious and most disappointing poem,"[44] 'The Progresse of the Soule' (or 'Metempsychosis', written 1601, published posthumously 1633). Helen Gardner argues that around the time of the poem's composition (which was never completed), Donne's reading was "highly speculative and unorthodox: cabbalistic, neo-Pythagorean, rabbinical, and Neoplatonic."[45] And Murray Roston makes the by now familiar point about the transmission of Platonic thought:

> Of [Donne's] familiarity with such tenets of Neoplatonism and his indebtedness to the Renaissance form of it, there can be no doubt. […] By the time of Donne, Platonism had been sufficiently assimilated by Christianity for him to have no need to turn directly to Plotinus, and the similarities discernible in his own outlook show how much he had in common with the philosophical school as a whole, as well as with its contemporary revival.[46]

Donne introduces his poem in an "Epistle":

> [T]he Pithagorian doctrine doth not onely carry one soule from man to man, nor man to beast, but indifferently to plants also: and therefore you must not grudge to finde the same soule in an Emperour, in a Post-horse, and in a Mucheron, since no unreadinesse in the soule, but an indisposition in the organs workes this. And therefore though this soule could not move when it was a Melon, yet it may remember, and now tell mee, at what lascivious banquet it was serv'd. And though it could not speake, when it was a spider, yet it can remember, and now tell me, who used it for poyson to attaine dignitie. However the bodies have dull'd her other faculties, her memory hath ever been her owne.[47]

One would not expect to find other clergymen among the admirers of this

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[44] R.C. Bald, *John Donne: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p.123.
[45] John Donne, *The Elegies, and the Songs and Sonnets*, ed., with intro. and commentary by Helen Gardner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p.lix, n1.
[46] *The Soul of Wit: A Study of John Donne* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p.131. Roston goes on to argue, however, that Donne should not be regarded as a neo-Platonist: he was temperamentally unsuited to accept the Platonic harmonious equation between the Ideal and the sensible world. See pp.130-41. 'The Progresse of the Soule' and its "Epistle" are taken from this edition.
[47] Roston, p.26.

"disgusting burlesque on the Pythagorean doctrine of metempsychosis",[48] – or, indeed, to find people who regarded it as a religious work – and yet in 1836 Richard Cattermole and Henry Stebbing, two "clergyman authors", included a stanza from it in an anthology of seventeenth-century religious poetry;[49] and in 1847 Edward Farr, who "wrote on religious topics and compiled books for children", also included a stanza from the poem in an anthology of Jacobean religious verse.[50]

Having established the Pythagorean principle of metempsychosis, Donne then audaciously incorporates it into the story of Adam and Eve (the numbers are the stanza numbers). The soul begins her first life in the apple on the Tree of Knowledge (9). After the apple is plucked and eaten by Eve its soul passes into a mandrake, a vegetable whose root is shaped like a human (13-17). [51] The soul then passes into a sparrow, which exhausts itself and dies through its traditionally promiscuous behaviour (18-22), and passes into a fish:

> a female fishes sandie Roe
> With the males jelly, newly lev'ned was,
> For they had intertouch'd as they did passe,
> And one of those small bodies, fitted so,
> This soule inform'd, and abled it to rowe
> It selfe with finnie oares, which she did fit.(23)

Here Donne is restating Spenser's "soule is forme, and doth the bodie make." Thus it is clear that not only does this soul move freely from body to body, but she moulds each body according to her requirements for that life.

Having been eaten by a swan (24-25), the soul passes into another fish (25-30); then into a whale (31-36); then into a mouse (38-40); then into a wolf, which mates with Abel's sheepdog (41-43); then into the resulting pup embryo (44-45):

> and now just time it was
> That a quick soule should give life to that masse
> Of blood in Abel's bitch, and thither this did passe.

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[48] Adolphus William Ward (1858), quoted in *John Donne: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by A.J. Smith (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp.430-31 (p.431). (Hereafter A.J. Smith, *Donne Heritage*.)
[49] A.J. Smith, *Donne Heritage*, pp.357-58.
[50] A.J. Smith, *Donne Heritage*, p.412.
[51] In Classical literature it was thought that mankind originally sprang fully formed from the ground. See, e.g., Plato, *Protagoras*, 321c.

> Some have their wives, their sisters some begot,
> But in the lives of Emperours you shall not
> Reade of a lust the which may equall this;
> This wolfe begot himselfe, and finished
> What he began alive, when hee was dead;
> Sonne to himselfe, and father too. (43-44)

One may ask how this could be, since a soul cannot reside in two bodies at once. True, but in Donne's day the soul was thought to enter the body only after the limbs were formed.[52]

Having progressed through the vegetable world and successive lives in the airborne and aquatic worlds, the soul now passes into her final incarnation in the animal world, in a body which is still fully animal yet approximates to the ultimate goal of a human form:

> It quickened next to a toyful ape, and so
> Gamesome it was, that it might freely go
> From tent to tent, and with the children play,
> His organs now so like theirs he doth find,
> That why he cannot laugh, and speak his mind,
> He wonders. (46)

Here Donne is stressing the defining difference between humans and beasts—only humans can talk. The ape may resemble man in many ways; but he will always lack the power of speech.

Our gamesome ape now falls in love with one of Adam's daughters. Donne has fun with him by making him not only the type of the fashionable lover, but the "wisest of that kinde"(46). This is doubly satirical, given that apes are notorious for imitating humans: the fashionable lovers are actually imitating an ape. Unhappily for our ape, he is killed while attempting to show his romantic feelings in a very direct way (46-49). "The poem", writes R.C. Bald,

> is thus a rapid succession of brief episodes, and the life of each creature provides an opportunity, not, as in a medieval bestiary, for moralizing of a naively serious kind, but for terse and savage satire directed at court and public life through parallels with the activities of the beasts (124).

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[52] See *John Donne: The Satires, Epigrams and Verse Letters,* ed., intro. and commentary by W. Milgate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p.186, note to lines 428-30, 429-30; p.189, note to lines 504-05. Milgate points out that in this instance Donne "telescopes the process" (186) by having the soul pass from the wolf into the pup's body while it is yet a "masse/ Of blood". Donne's description of the soul's eventual progression into a human body (st.50-51), is "orthodox" (Milgate, 189).

Nevertheless, Donne's beasts are selected for and exhibit their traditionally associated behaviour.

At last the soul gets a human birth, passing into another one of Adam's daughters. Unfortunately the soul's first human birth is not very auspicious:

> keeping some quality
> Of every past shape, she knew treachery,
> Rapine, deceit, and lust, and ills enow
> To be a woman. *Themech* she is now,
> Sister and wife to *Caine, Caine* that first did plow.(51)

Here Donne claims that the soul carries with her from life to life the negative or evil characteristics of each previous life, gradually accumulating sin upon sin, until by the time she gains a human birth she is more beast than human; or, as Bald puts it, "when the soul achieves its human habitation, it brings with it its full heritage of bestiality" (125).[53] In *Jekyll and Hyde* Stevenson applies a variant of this theme to explain the presence of Hyde within Jekyll: instead of an individual soul accumulating sins from life to life, each generation carries over and accumulates the sins of its ancestors.[54]

With the first human birth Donne's poem ends. The fragment, being incomplete, describes only the progress of the soul from lower forms upwards through the Great Chain of Being, that system posited, refined, and expanded upon in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, which states that there is an unbroken series of living forms stretching from the Creator to the lowest form of life down to the inanimate. The highest form of a particular class approximates closely to the lowest form of the next higher class, so there is naturally some overlapping. Thus some marine organisms may appear to be animals, yet pass their lives attached to rocks, in the manner of plants. Likewise seals are animals, yet live partly in water; and bats are

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[53] Not all readers interpret the poem in this way. "G.O." – probably Giles Oldisworth (1619-78) – a "royalist divine and poet", annotated, in verse, his copy of Donne's poems. Alongside 'The Progresse of the Soule' he adds a note which may help to explain in part how clergymen have been able to regard it as a religious poem:

> The sum of *this booke* you shall find to bee
> More sin, then [sic] Soule keeping some qualitye
> Of every vile beast.

Quoted in A.J. Smith, *Donne Heritage*, pp.127-29 (pp.127;129).

[54] Stevenson describes the process more clearly in 'Olalla'.

animals, yet fly like birds. And the ape is an animal, yet looks and behaves somewhat like man, who is the sole representative of his class. Therefore something of each link in the Chain is shared with the succeeding link, until man contains within him a vestige of all the inferior links.[55] Although in the poem the soul moves in only one direction, Donne's "Epistle" makes it clear that the soul can move in any direction, as is also the case in the writings of Spenser and More. Moreover the Platonic soul moves freely and easily within a Judæo-Christian universe, which is itself partly defined by Platonic cosmology. Life after life the soul retains the dominant (sinful) characteristic of each form that it inhabits – the lechery of the sparrow; the tyranny of the whale; the rapacity of the wolf; the lust and folly of the ape – until a human such as Henry Jekyll feels himself to be no more than "a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens" (82); or finds himself, like the man described above by Socrates, inhabited by "a multitudinous, many-headed monster" (*Republic* IX.588c). "Man", writes Donne,

> is a lumpe, where all beasts kneaded bee,
> Wisdome makes him an Arke where all agree;
> The foole, in whom these beasts do live at jarre,
> Is sport to others, and a Theater;
> Nor scapes hee so, but is himselfe their prey:
> All which was man in him, is eate away,
> And now his beasts on one another feed,
> Yet couple'in anger, and new monsters breed.[56]

Milgate lists the several influences acting upon this passage. The "lumpe" derives from St Paul's reference to man as a lump of clay in Romans 9.21.[57] Milgate writes:

> The biblical idea is combined with the legend that Prometheus moulded man out of clay, giving him the qualities of different animals (Horace, *Odes*, I.xvi.13ff.; cf. Plato *Protagoras*, 320d, etc.).[58] This was further linked with the theory that,

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[55] I am indebted to Arthur O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1936; repr. 1961). See, in particular, chap.2, pp.24-66.

[56] 'To Sir Edward Herbert, at Julyers' (1610), lines 1-8.

[57] "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?"

[58] It is said that Prometheus to man's primal matter
Was compelled to add something from each living creature
And thus from the wild lion he took
Rabid virus to place in our gall.
Trans. by Edward Bulwer Lytton (London and New York: Routledge, 1872), p.41.

Plato's version is somewhat different. In *Protagoras* "the gods fashioned [mortal creatures, including man] out of earth" (320d). Epimetheus distributed the "proper qualities" to all the animals (320d), but had exhausted the supply by the time he arrived at man (321b-c). Prometheus therefore, to

> just as the rational [human] soul absorbs the inferior souls of sense [animal] and growth [plant] and retains their qualities, so in the Chain of Being each stage possesses the qualities of beings at a lower stage. […]
>
> These theories account for the *fact* of man's animal qualities. The allegory of the beasts in man (his animal passions, etc.) begins with Plato's *Republic*, ix.588-90, and becomes a commonplace in the [Church] Fathers (239).

Ever since the time of the Fathers this commonplace has served as a potent image in the writings of those who concern themselves with the nature of humanity. In the Great Chain of Being the highest members of a species begin to share features in common with the lowest members of the species above them. Conversely the lowest members of a species begin to take on characteristics of the highest members of the species below them. Man stands midway in the Chain between the Creator at the summit and inanimate matter at the bottom. Man therefore shares qualities with both the angels and the apes. If he aspires to God he will take on angelic qualities. If he turns away from God he will take on the qualities of apes, and, if he continues to degrade himself, he will take on the qualities of the quadrupeds. It is interesting to observe that in pre-Darwinian literature man degrades himself, and becomes apish as he descends the Great Chain of Being; after Darwin (in, for example, Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies*) man degrades himself, and literally reverts to the ape from which he has risen. In both cases the progression is the same, but the mechanism is quite different. Here, then, is an unbroken literary tradition continuing on through a momentous scientific and philosophical upheaval.

Donne addresses man's degradation in his sermons, one of which he bases on Psalm 32.9: "Do not as the horse, or the mule, who have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." Donne stresses the unique and privileged position which man occupies in the Creation; and his consequent responsibility to both himself and his Maker:

> This whole world is one Booke; And is it not a barbarous thing, when all the whole booke besides remains intire, to deface that leafe in which the Authors picture, the Image of God is expressed, as it is in man? [59]

In a brilliant passage Donne likens man's position in the Creation to that of a king

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compensate the naked and vulnerable man, "stole the mechanical arts of Hephaestus and Athene, and fire with them […] and gave them to man" (321d).

[59] *The Sermons of John Donne*, ed., with intro. and critical apparatus by Evelyn M. Simpson and George R. Potter, 10 vols (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958; repr. 1962), IX, Sermon 17, pp.371-90 (p.373). Further references are given after quotations in the text.

who debases himself from his natural rank, and thereby throws his whole kingdom into confusion:

> God brought man into the world, as the King goes in state, Lords, and Earles, and persons of other ranks before him. So God sent out Light, and Firmament, and Earth, and Sea, and Sunne, and Moone, to give a dignity to mans procession; and onely Man himselfe disorders all, and that by displacing himselfe, by losing his place (373).

Donne goes on to explain that the rest of Creation keeps its place; and the beasts and plants maintain their several natures—whether it be for good or for ill to their fellows. Man, however, by falling from his original nature, so corrupts the natural order (and his place in it) as to threaten the very fabric of the Great Chain of Being. And he wonders:

> whether if it were possible for Man to doe so, it were lawful for him to destroy any one species of Gods Creatures, though it were but the species of Toads and Spiders, (because this were a taking away one linke of Gods chaine, one Note of his harmony) we have taken away that which is the Jewel at the chaine, that which is the burden of the Song, Man himselfe (373-74).[60]

Donne identifies our dual nature with our loamy origins, invoking both Classical and Christian imagery:[61]

> [W]e all follow our Mother, we grovell upon the earth, whose children we are, and being made like our Father, in his Image, we neglect him. […] We are not

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[60] Cf. Pope's *Essay on Man*:

> Vast chain of Being! which from God began,
> Natures ethereal, human, angel, Man,
> Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
> No glass can reach; from infinite to thee,
> From thee to nothing. On superior powers
> Were we to press, inferior might on ours:
> Or in the full creation leave a void,
> Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroyed:
> From Nature's chain whatever link you strike,
> Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike. (I.237-46)

*Pope's Essay on Man*, intro. and notes by F. Ryland (London: Bell, 1898).

[61] The Roman poet Lucretius (of whom more in the following chapter) wrote that, because we are sprung from the earth, she is our mother. Cf. again Pope's *Essay on Man*:

> Presumptuous Man! the reason wouldst thou find,
> Why formed so weak, so little, and so blind?
> […]
> Ask of thy mother earth. (I.35-39)

Donne refers to "the earth our mother" in 'To Mr Tilman after he had taken orders', line 52. Stevenson also writes: "Children we are, children we shall be, till our mother the earth hath fed upon our bones." *Prayers written at Vailima*, 'For self-Forgetfulness', *Works*, XXVI, 156.

> onely inferior to the Beasts, and under their annoyance, but we are our selves become Beasts (374).

As we turn away from our Father we depart further from his image in which we are made; and as we depart further from his image we become comparatively more ugly and deformed. Our deformity is spiritual and moral, but it is reflected in our physiognomy. This is an important point to bear in mind when considering the deformity of Edward Hyde. Donne, in 'Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward', applies this image of spiritual and physical deformity to himself. He is riding towards the west, but his "soul's form bends towards the east" (line 10)—the direction of Jerusalem and the scene of the Crucifixion, at which moment Christ paid the ransom for our sins. Donne cries out:

> O Saviour, as thou hang'st upon the tree;
> I turn my back to thee, but to receive
> Corrections, till thy mercies bid thee leave.
> O think me worth thine anger, punish me,
> Burn off my rusts, and my deformity,
> Restore thine image, so much, by thy grace,
> That thou mayst know me, and I'll turn my face. (36-42)[62]

In his sermon Donne explains that first the angels fell, then man. "It seemes this fall", he writes,

> hath broake the neck of Mans ambition, and now we dare not be so like God, as we should be. Ever since this fall, man is so far from affecting higher places, then his nature is capable of, that he is still groveling upon the ground, and participates, and imitates, and expresses more of the nature of the Beast then of his owne (372).

And he makes the telling point:

> There is no creature but man that degenerates willingly from his naturall Dignity (372).

Do not degenerate from your natural dignity, warns Donne; be not as the horse, or the mule, who have no understanding. If you degenerate willingly from your natural dignity you will cease to reflect God's image and you will grovel in your deformity like a beast upon the ground.

This is precisely what Jekyll does. He deliberately sets about providing himself

[62] John Donne, *The Complete English Poems*, ed. by A.J. Smith (London: Lane, 1974).

with a fleshly vehicle in which to indulge his lusts. And he openly confesses:

> I had voluntarily stripped myself of all those balancing instincts by which even the worst of us continues to walk with some degree of steadiness among temptations (90).

In the end the balance is permanently destroyed. The deformed beastly Hyde takes over. Finally even words fail him. As Poole and Utterson break down Jekyll's cabinet door, all they hear from within is a "dismal screech, as of mere animal terror" (69).

The writings of Spenser, More, and Donne present a soul that is a vital agent, actively moving from life to life, and deliberately choosing, then moulding, then inhabiting an appropriate body in a species suitable for its drives and inclinations. In its travels the soul retains the dominant characteristic of each previous life, so that a human being is "a lumpe, where all beasts kneaded bee". Likewise, on the Great Chain of Being, there is a mingling of characteristics between the highest members of a species and the lowest members of the species immediately above it; so that an ape and a human have more in common than the human would like to admit. As we pollute and degrade ourselves we fall from our human state towards that of the ape, who, generally, is not a symbol of evil so much as a symbol of mischief and folly; a symbol of humanity stripped of wisdom, discretion, understanding, morality, and restraint. However, when these virtues have been lost, what remains to a human but the vices? What remains but Edward Hyde?

In his sermon Donne describes a Creation under threat from humanity's constant and unrelenting debasement; a Creation in which the Great Chain of Being could be broken at any time by humanity's abdication from its rightful place. The animals, such as the horse and the mule, have no understanding, yet they serve to maintain order by remaining faithful to their natures. Imagine then the confusion and horror that a traveller would experience upon encountering a land where the entire natural order had been disrupted—a country in which not only had the humans degenerated from their natural dignity and become deformed, but the horses had also deviated from their natural place and had apparently gained understanding. In the following chapter Lemuel Gulliver will enter such a land: the land of the Yahoos and the Houyhnhnms.

# CHAPTER THREE

## QUO VADIS, MAIAH YAHOO?

From the day of their first public appearance in 1726, the Yahoos of *Gulliver's Travels* have continued to worry and disturb their readers. In each of his four voyages Gulliver encounters – and reflects upon – degeneration of one kind or another. The Yahoos are by far the most extreme example. How did Swift come by them?

Swift's concerns in the first two voyages are not so much with humanity *per se* as with the kinds of societies which humans produce; hence the size differences between the Lilliputians and the Brobdingnagians, who are both extreme examples of the principle of "soul is form and doth the body make." The Lilliputians are tiny because their bodies reflect their moral stature. The Brobdingnagians are big because they, as "the least corrupted" nation, [63] reflect an ideal (if still necessarily flawed) social and political stability which mankind could attain. As Gulliver notes, "there is a strict universal Resemblance between the natural and the political Body" (160). But in the Fourth Voyage to Houyhnhnmland the focus changes. Here Gulliver encounters talking horses endowed with reason, whose society greatly resembles Plato's Republic.[64] These horses are handsome, dignified, athletic, and free from the diseases which afflict mankind. They have healthy minds in healthy bodies which are fit vehicles for their noble souls. So much for the dominant species and its polity.

Gulliver also finds another animal sharing the country with the Houyhnhnms, whose bodies very much represent the condition of their souls.

> At last I beheld several Animals in a Field, and one or two of the same Kind sitting in Trees. Their Shape was very singular, and deformed, which a little discomposed me, so that I lay down behind a Thicket to observe them better (193).

They are hairy and repulsive. They smell. Their habits are filthy. Gulliver writes:

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[63] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels,* ed. by Robert A. Greenberg (New York: Norton, 1961), p.256. Further references are given after quotations in the text. This edition is "substantially that of Volume III of the Dublin edition of Swift's works, published in 1735 by George Faulkner" (viii).

[64] For commentators who deal with this aspect, see, e.g., Allan Bloom, 'An Outline of *Gulliver's Travels*', in Joseph Cropsey, ed., *Ancients and Moderns: Essays on the Tradition of Political Philosophy in Honour of Leo Strauss* (New York: Basic Books, 1964) pp.238-57. See also John F. Reichert, 'Plato, Swift, and the Houyhnhnms', *Philological Quarterly,* 47 (1968), 179-92.

> Upon the whole, I never beheld in all my Travels so disagreeable an Animal, or one against which I naturally conceived so strong an Antipathy (193).

But when the Houyhnhnms bring Gulliver to their house and stand him next to one of these animals which has been domesticated, Gulliver receives a nasty shock:

> My Horror and Astonishment are not to be described, when I observed, in this abominable Animal, a perfect human Figure; […] [We were] the same in every Part of our Bodies, except as to Hairiness and Colour (199).

And although he cannot admit it at the time, in retrospect he reveals that, from the beginning, he has been uncomfortably aware of his kinship with these brutes:

> For as to these filthy *Yahoos,* although there were few greater Lovers of *Mankind* [my emphasis], at that time, than myself; yet I confess I never saw any sensitive Being so detestable on all Accounts; and the more I came near them, the more hateful they grew, while I stayed in that Country (199).

But Gulliver's language suggests that the Yahoos are in the process of drifting beyond the realm of the human to that of the ape. As has been noted already, they sit in trees (193). Gulliver writes that, when he went among the herds of Yahoos,

> They would approach as near as they durst, and imitate my Actions after the Manner of Monkeys (231).

Traditional descriptions of monkey behaviour – examples of which will shortly be given – involve grinning and chattering.[65] In Brobdingnag a monkey discovers Gulliver when no one else is about. It skips into the room, then comes and looks into the tiny house in which Gulliver is living. Gulliver writes:

> After some time spent in peeping, grinning, and chattering, he at last espyed me; […] and dragged me out (98).[66]

Likewise, when the Yahoos become intoxicated by sucking a particular root,

> It would make them sometimes hug, and sometimes tear one another; they would howl and grin, and chatter, and reel, and tumble, and then fall asleep in the Mud (228).

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[65] This tradition survived until at least 1920. In 'This Simian World' the American humourist Clarence Day writes: "We simians naturally admire a profession [the law] full of wrangle and chatter." *The Best of Clarence Day* (New York: Knopf, 1948; repr. 1956), pp.375-428, (p.386).

[66] The monkey carries Gulliver up to the roof of a building, and, taking him for a baby monkey, begins feeding him with food from its cheek pouches.

Of the female Yahoos Gulliver writes:

> At other Times, if a Female Stranger came among them, three or four of her own Sex would get about her, and stare and chatter, and grin, and smell her all over; and then turn off with Gestures that seemed to express Contempt and Disdain (230).

It is interesting to compare this episode with a letter written to Swift by Esther Vanhomrigh (Vanessa) in June 1722, after she had read in manuscript the sequence with the Brobdingnagian monkey:

> [O]ne day this week I was to visit a great lady that has been a travelling for some time passed where I found a very great Assembly of Ladys and Beaus (dressed as I suppose to a nicety) I hope you'l pardon me now I tell you that I heartily wished you a Spectator for I very much question if in your life you ever saw the like scene or one more Extraordinary the Lady's behaviour was blended with so many different character's I can not possibly describe it without tireing your patience but the Audience seemed to me a creation of her owne they were so very Obsequious their form's and gestures were very like those of Babboons and monky's they all grin'd and chatter'd at the same time and that of things I did not understand the room being hung with arras in which were trees very well described just as I was considering their beauty and wishing my self in the countrey with —— one of these animals snatched my fan and was so pleased with me that it seased me with such a panick that I apprehended nothing less than being carried up to the top of the House and served as a friend of yours was but in this one of their owne species came in upon which they all began to make their grimace's which opportunity I took and made my escape.[67]

Vanessa quite casually represents her fellow guests as some kind of anthropoid animal more akin to the ape than the human. She does this in order to place a comic distance between herself and them. Swift on the other hand has Gulliver (although not immediately) identify himself with the Yahoos for satiric effect.

Swift subtly reveals the similarity between Gulliver and the Yahoos even before Gulliver or the reader becomes aware of it. During his first contact with the Yahoos, Gulliver is approached by one of the males, who "lift[s] up his fore Paw" (193). Shortly after, Gulliver meets his first Houyhnhnm, who is startled, and stares at him. Gulliver writes:

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[67] *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift,* ed. by Harold Williams, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963-65), II, 428-29. Williams adds a note: "Vanessa's description of the company she met at the house of the 'great lady' suggests, though not decisively, that some part of the voyage to the country of the Houyhnhnms had been seen by her. On the other hand, the allusion to Gulliver's misadventure with the monkey is evidence beyond question that in some form she had seen chapter five of the voyage to Brobdingnag" (428, n6). Maybe so, but the Voyage to the Houyhnhnms was not completed

> We stood gazing at each other for some time; at last I took the Boldness, to reach my Hand towards his Neck, with a Design to stroak it (194).

Ironically Gulliver, who will later report how the Yahoos would "imitate [his] Actions after the Manner of Monkeys" (231), finds himself unconsciously imitating the action of the Yahoo. But, tellingly, whereas the Houyhnhnm "softly" removes Gulliver's hand, Gulliver responds violently to the Yahoo by striking him with the flat of his hanger.

The Houyhnhnms, having no other frame of reference, assume that Gulliver is a Yahoo—but a special one. His clothes confuse them; but upon viewing him naked, his master declares that:

> it was plain I must be a perfect *Yahoo;* but that I differed very much from the rest of my Species, in the Whiteness, and Smoothness of my Skin, my want of Hair in several Parts of my Body, the Shape and Shortness of my Claws behind and before, and my Affectation of walking continually on my hinder Feet (205).

Quite a few differences, to be sure. However, the Houyhnhnm elects to ignore them,

> because he was more astonished at my Capacity for Speech and Reason, than at the Figure of my Body, whether it were covered or no (205-06).

The Houyhnhnm acknowledges other differences, Gulliver

> being much more cleanly, and not altogether so deformed; but in point of real Advantage, he thought I differed for the worse (209).

Gulliver lacks the physical attributes which make for a successful Yahoo. But his shortcomings echo the deficiencies which the Brobdingnagian scholars find in him:

> They all agreed that I could not be produced according to the regular Laws of Nature; because I was not framed with a Capacity of preserving my Life, either by Swiftness, or climbing of Trees, or digging Holes in the Earth (82).[68]

The Houyhnhnm's assessment of Gulliver is comprehensive and quite unfair. He begins by listing Gulliver's failings as a Yahoo – his nails are too short; his fore-feet (hands) are too soft to walk on – then moves seamlessly into his shortcomings when

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until the following year. Perhaps Vanessa's letter suggested the female Yahoo behaviour to Swift while he was writing that Voyage.

[68] Elsewhere the Houyhnhnm observes, as Gulliver writes: "That I could neither run with Speed, nor climb Trees like my *Brethren* (as he called them) the *Yahoos* in this Country" (225). Also, "Nature hath taught them to dig deep Holes with their Nails on the Side of a rising Ground" (232).

compared with a horse – the flatness of his face; the position of his eyes – and finally moves on to his failings when compared with both Houyhnhnm and Yahoo – his body is lacking a hairy coat.

These superficial resemblances and differences are, however, not where the ultimate similarity lies. Gulliver learns that the Houyhnhnm has been comparing him with the Yahoos, "to observe what Parity there was in our Natures" (228); and he has discovered "a Resemblance in the Disposition of our Minds" (226). Europeans, according to the Houyhnhnm, are merely physically degenerate Yahoos:

> A Sort of Animals to whose Share, by what Accident he could not conjecture, some small Pittance of *Reason* had fallen, whereof we made no other Use than by its Assistance to aggravate our *natural* Corruptions, and to acquire new ones which Nature had not given us (225).

This is even more damning than the Brobdingnagian King's assessment of Gulliver's countrymen:

> I cannot but conclude the Bulk of your Natives to be the most pernicious Race of little odious Vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the Surface of the Earth (108).

The King, although a giant, is still a human, and is condemning fellow humans of another race. The Houyhnhnm is condemning the entire human *species.*

Gulliver feels shock and horror at both witnessing the behaviour of the Yahoos and admitting his kinship with them. This shock and horror had been experienced on many occasions by explorers and travellers in other countries, such as Africa and parts of the New World, when encountering the natives and their habits; but the travellers, like Vanessa in her letter, instead of identifying with the natives, distance themselves from these strange peoples by identifying them with monkeys and apes.[69] R.W. Frantz in his analysis of travel accounts which may have provided material for the Fourth Voyage – such as William Dampier's *A New Voyage round the World* (1697), mentioned by Gulliver in his letter to his cousin Richard Sympson – quotes

[69] This attitude did not begin with the voyagers of the sixteenth century. The thirteenth-century encyclopaedist Albertus Magnus, in his *De Animalibus*, equates pygmies with apes. Horst Janson writes: "In the anthropological scale of Albertus, man forms a category by himself, since he is the only animal perfect in mind and body, while all the others, the 'brutes', are imperfect in various degrees. These fall into two groups: the man-like creatures (*similtudines hominis*) represented by the pygmy and the ape, and the mass of 'ordinary' animals" (*Apes and Ape Lore*, p.85).

from the travellers' journals as they struggle to come to terms with peoples who, despite having a human body, to the European mind have little else to recommend them for membership to that species.[70] The Hottentots of Southern Africa were of particular concern. Frantz writes:

> In truth, every characteristic, physical and mental, of the Hottentots seemed to discover them as beings who ought hardly to be looked on as rational. Many a voyager considered them as "the next to Beasts of any People on the Face of the Earth,"[71] and as scarcely deserving "to be reckon'd of the Human Kind."[72] Daniel Beeckman explicitly said that they could hardly be accepted as rational beings. [Quotation from Beeckman] […] John Ovington […] more than any other voyager, stressed the Hottentots' low mentality, and he took the important step of assigning to them a place in the chain of being midway between men and the more highly developed of brute creatures. Giving over an entire section of his *A Voyage to Surat* (1696)[73] to a description of the Cape of Good Hope and its inhabitants, he pointed out that the latter are "Bestial and sordid,"[74] and "mean and degenerate in their Understandings,"[75] and that they "are the very Reverse of Human kind […] so that if there's any medium between a Rational Animal and a Beast, the *Hotantot* lays the fairest Claim to that Species."[76]
>
> It is no wonder that these savages came to be associated in the minds of the voyagers with apes and monkeys. Sir Thomas Herbert, for example, tells us that their language is "apishly sounded."[77] He is not speaking loosely, for he is thoroughly convinced that not least among the amazing attributes of the Hottentots is their remarkable similarity to the Troglodytes. […] And he even suggests that they "mixe unnaturally" with the great Apes.[78] Daniel Beeckman tells us that in appearance, too, the Hottentots are like apes. After giving a most vivid portrayal of them, he says with some emphasis: "They are not really unlike monkeys or baboons in their gestures and postures, especially when they sit sunning themselves, as they often do in great numbers".[79]

This extended quotation has not been given simply to persuade the reader that the Yahoos sprang from a series of ripping yarns. The point here is that while the mood

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[70] R.W. Frantz, 'Swift's Yahoos and the Voyagers', *Modern Philology,* 29 (1931), 49-57.
[71] William Funnell, *A Voyage round the World* (1710), in *A Collection of Voyages* (London, 1729), IV, 198-99.
[72] Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage round the World* (1712; 2nd edn, corrected, London, 1726), p.420.
[73] Gulliver's Second Voyage was bound for Surat (63).
[74] John Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat* (1696), repr., ed. by H.G. Rawlinson (London, 1929), p.284.
[75] Ovington, p.286.
[76] Ovington, p.284.
[77] Sir Thomas Herbert, *Some Years Travels into Divers Parts of Asia and Afrique* (London, 1638), p.18.
[78] Herbert, p.18.
[79] Frantz, pp.55-56. The final quotation is from Daniel Beeckman, *A Voyage to and from the Island of Borneo, in the East Indies* (1718), in *A General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels in All Parts of the World*, ed. by John Pinkerton, 17 vols (1808-14) (London: Longman

of the times, and the culture, was to distance the European from the savages by representing them as beasts, Swift goes entirely against the tide by bringing Gulliver into contact with beasts, and having him not only accept them as human, but admit, strangely embrace, and steadfastly cling to his kinship with them—not only for himself, but for all his fellow humans. In fact his fellow humans in one regard are even worse than Yahoos. Gulliver writes:

> When I thought of my Family, my Friends, my Countrymen, or Human Race in general, I considered them as they really were, *Yahoos* in Shape and Disposition, perhaps a little more civilized, and qualified with the Gift of Speech; but making no other Use of Reason, than to improve and multiply those Vices, whereof their Brethren in this Country had only the Share that Nature allotted them (243).

In another place Gulliver is more specific:

> I expected every Moment, that my Master would accuse the *Yahoos* of those unnatural Appetites in both Sexes, so common among us. But Nature it seems hath not been so expert a Schoolmistress; and these politer Pleasures are entirely the Productions of Art and Reason, on our Side of the Globe (230).

Of this passage C.M. Webster comments, "Here Swift makes the Yahoo, for a moment only it is true, partake of the qualities of the Noble Savage."[80] This moment may be brief, but it introduces, conveniently, the question of origins:– Are the Yahoos degenerate, or are they natural?

The origins of mankind were a subject of as much debate in Swift's day as in any other. In Shaftesbury's 'The Moralists' Theocles summarizes the argument:

> For either man must have been from eternity or not. If from eternity, there could be no primitive or original state, no state of nature other than we see at present before our eyes. If not from eternity, he arose either all at once (and consequently he was at the very first as he is now) or by degrees, through several stages and conditions, to that in which he is at length settled, and has continued for so many generations.[81]

Swift, of course, held definite views on this subject. He writes:

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and others, 1812), XI, 96-158 (pp.152-53). Beeckman's turn of phrase is reminiscent of Vanessa's, "their form's and gestures were very like those of Babboons and monky's."

[80] C.M. Webster, 'Notes on the Yahoos', *Modern Language Notes,* 47 (1932), 451-54. The history of the Noble Savage will be dealt with in the next chapter.

[81] Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, etc.,* ed., intro. and notes by John M. Robertson, 2 vols (Gloucester, Mass.: Smith, 1900; repr. 1963), II, 80.

> The Scripture-system of man's creation, is what all Christians are bound to believe, and seems most agreeable of all others to probability and reason.[82]

The meaning of "reason" seems to depend very much upon the users and the contexts in which they use it. For example, according to Basil Willey:

> Milton, like the Cambridge Platonists, exalts 'Reason' as the godlike principle in man, meaning by this term, again like them, the principle of moral control rather than of intellectual enlightenment.[83]

Swift nuanced the term as the argument demanded. Kathleen Williams writes:

> The reason here [i.e., in the quotation above from Swift] invoked is a limited faculty enough and is commonly appealed to in the sermons of […] other Anglican divines; the elaboration of Swift's opening statement shows that the probability and reasonableness of the scriptural account of man's creation and fall lie in its truth to experience. It is convincing because it accounts for the degenerate nature of man, an observed and experienced fact, and it is not considered as an event probable or improbable in itself. It is reasonable to accept the account not only because it is revealed by an infallible God but because it is true to life: the nature of animals is constant, "But men degenerate every day, merely by the folly, the perverseness, the avarice, the tyranny, the pride, the treachery, or inhumanity of their own kind."[84]

The question of the origin of the Yahoos has exercised the Houyhnhnms for many years; and they have developed some theories to explain their unwanted neighbours. General opinion has it,

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[82] 'Further Thoughts on Religion', *Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. by Herbert Davis, 14 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957-68), IX, 264.

[83] Basil Willey, *The Seventeenth Century Background: Studies in the Thought of the Age in Relation to Poetry and Religion* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), p.242.

[84] Kathleen Williams, *Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1959), pp.36-37. The quotations from Swift are from 'Further Thoughts on Religion', *Prose Works*, IX, 264. Cf. Donne's sermon: "There is no creature but man that degenerates willingly from his natural Dignity" (*Sermons*, IX, 372). Of interest also is Swift's statement, paraphrased by Williams as "the nature of animals is constant". Some animals, writes Swift, "are strong or valiant, and their species never degenerates in their native soil, except they happen to be enslaved or destroyed by human fraud". Here (with a qualification) he is echoing Donne's, "They [beasts] are not departed from their native and natural dignity, by any thing that they have done" (*Sermons*, IX, 373). The Houyhnhnms, therefore, by acquiring reason and speech, have departed from their original nature as much as the Yahoos have from theirs. This surely must be a significant factor in any assessment of the Houyhnhnms. Moreover, their reasoning powers are seriously flawed, so they have not managed their elevation with much success. Here I should declare myself on the "soft" side of the debate about the Fourth Voyage. Put at its simplest, the "hard" school see the Houyhnhnms as an ideal against which mankind is judged and found wanting. The "soft" school regard the Houyhnhnms as targets for Swift's satire. For an overview of this debate, see James L. Clifford, 'The Eighteenth Century', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 26 (1965), 111-34. Clifford coined the terms "hard" and "soft" for the two opposing approaches.

> That those creatures could not be *Ylnhniamshy* (or *Aborigines* of the Land) because of the violent Hatred the *Houyhnhnms* as well as all other Animals, bore them; which although their evil Disposition sufficiently deserved, could never have arrived at so high a Degree, if they had been *Aborigines,* or else they would have long since been rooted out (237).

This leaves two alternative traditions; of which the first is:

> That many Ages ago, two of these Brutes appeared together upon a Mountain; whether produced by the Heat of the Sun upon corrupted Mud and Slime, or from the Ooze and Froth of the Sea, was never known. That these *Yahoos* engendered, and their Brood in a short time grew so numerous as to over-run and infest the whole Nation (236-37).

Some of the Houyhnhnms feel that there is "much Truth in this Tradition" (237). Nor are they alone in this supposition. Andrew D. White, in his survey of Western Evolutionary thought, discusses the Christian belief – based on Genesis – that:

> While man was directly moulded and fashioned separately by the Creator's hand, the animals generally were evoked in numbers from the earth and sea by the Creator's voice.[85]

And where did this belief come from? White continues:

> The vast majority of theologians agreed in representing all animals as created "in the beginning," and named by Adam, preserved in the ark, and continued ever afterward under exactly the same species. This belief ripened into a dogma. Like so many other dogmas in the Church, Catholic and Protestant, its real origins are to be found rather in pagan philosophy than in the Christian Scriptures; it came far more from Plato and Aristotle than from Moses and St. Paul.[86]

Milton describes the process of creation:

> And God said, let the Waters generate
> Reptil with Spawn abundant, living Soule:
> And let the fowle flie above the Earth, with wings
> Displayd on the op'n Firmament of Heav'n.
> […]
> […] The Waters thus
> With Fish replenisht, and the Aire with Fowle,
> Ev'ning and Morn solemnized the Fift Day.
> The Sixt, and of Creation last arose
> With Eevning Harps and Mattin, when God said,
> Let th' Earth bring forth Soule living in her kinde,
> Cattel and Creeping things, and Beast of the Earth,

[85] Andrew D. White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Religion in Christendom,* 2 vols (New York: Dover, 1896; repr. 1960), I, 30.
[86] White, I, 30-31.

> Each in their kinde. The Earth obeyd, and strait
> Op'ning her fertil woomb teemd at a Birth
> Innumerous living Creatures, perfet formes,
> Limbd and full grown: out of the ground up rose
> As from his Laire the wilde Beast. (*PL*, VII.387-457)[87]

On each day God speaks, then the creative process occurs. Fish appear swimming in the sea; fowl appear flying in the air; beasts emerge from the earth fully formed and in their familiar shape. This is the creation of everything that existed before the Fall.

The alert reader of Milton's Creation will notice that nowhere does Milton mention Yahoos. This is because, as the Houyhnhnm tradition suggests, they were not there. Their creation was of a different order. White explains:

> Thoughtful men of the early civilizations which were developed along the great rivers in the warmer regions of the earth noted how the sun-god as he rose in his fullest might caused the water and the rich soil to teem with the lesser forms of life. In Egypt, especially, men saw how under this divine power the Nile slime brought forth "creeping things innumerable." Hence mainly this ancient belief that the animals and man were produced by lifeless matter at the divine command, "in the beginning," was supplemented by the idea that some of the lesser animals, especially the insects, were produced by a later evolution, being evoked after the original creation from various sources, but chiefly from matter in a state of decay.[88]

Among the early Greek philosophers who pondered the origins of life, Thales (624-548) held that life began in the ocean. Anaximander (611-547) proposed also that life began in the ocean, but that humans were the first life form, although they began as fish, and, at a suitable stage of development, came onto land where, like a butterfly emerging from a cocoon, they emerged as humans; and thereafter the species continued a terrestrial existence. Anaximenes (588-524) conceived the theory that all life was produced by the heat of the sun on primordial slime. Thus H.F. Osborn, in his analysis of the history of Evolutionary thought, observes:

> This idea of the aquatic or marine origin of life, which is now a fundamental principle of Evolution, is therefore an extremely ancient one.[89]

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[87] Milton has been forced to make a choice here for dramatic reasons. According to White (I, 51): "It is true that these sacred accounts of ours contradict each other. In that part of the first or Elohistic account given in the first chapter of Genesis the *waters* bring forth fishes, marine animals, and birds (Genesis,i,20); but in that part of the second or Jehovistic account given in the second chapter of Genesis both the land animals and birds are declared to have been created not out of the water, but *out of the ground* (Genesis,ii,19)".

[88] White, I, 52.

[89] Henry Fairfield Osborn, *From the Greeks to Darwin: an Outline of the Development of the Evolution Idea* (New York: Macmillan, 1894), p.33. I am indebted to Professor Osborn for the

White and Osborn both go on to trace the survival and development of the ocean-slime idea through Christian thinkers such as St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas.

Among the literary Christian thinkers, Spenser held this idea:

> For, all that from her [the Earth] springs, and is ybredde,
> How-euer fayre it flourish for a time,
> Yet see we soone decay; and, being dead,
> To turne again vnto their earthly slime:
> Yet, out of their decay and mortall crime [corruption],
> We daily see new creatures to arize;
> And of their Winter spring another Prime,
> Vnlike in forme, and chang'd by strange disguise:
> So turne they still about, and change in restlesse wise.[90]

So did Donne:

> See, Sir, how as the sun's hot masculine flame
> Begets strange creatures on Nile's dirty slime.[91]

So did Henry More:

> Two mighty Kingdomes hath this *Psychany,*
> The one self-feeling *Autæsthesia;*
> The other hight god-like *Theoprepy,*
> *Autæsthesia's* divided into tway:
> One province cleped is great *Adamah*
> Which also hight *Beirah* of brutish fashion;
> The other Providence is *Dizoia;*
> There you may see much mungrill transformation,
> Such monstrous shapes proceed from Niles foul inundation.[92]

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information on the Greek philosophers. Socrates refers to heat producing life from putrefaction in *Phaedo,* 96b.

[90] *Mutabilitie Cantos, FQ*, VII.7.18.

[91] 'To E. of D. with Six Holy Sonnetts', lines 1-2.

[92] *Psychozoia,* II.25. More explains the Dizoians in his Notes: "Their condition is as this present Stanza declares, mungrill, betwixt Man and Beast, Light and Darknesse, God and the Devill, *Jacob* and *Esau* struggle in them" (Grosart, p.143). The Yahoos are not even at the level of the Dizoians. *Psychozoia* shows that, although he may be a stranger in a strange land, Gulliver is treading familiar ground. More's hero, old Memnon, recounting the story of his travels, comes to the land called Behiron (or Behirah, or Beirah), and is told: "This same word *Behiron* doth signifie/ The brutish nature, or brutalitie," (II.49). Here he finds the "swelling hatefull Toad," the "Lascivious Goat," the "All-imitating Ape," the "crafty Fox," and the "Majestick Horse" (II.136). The frog-like, goat-like, ape-like, fox-like Yahoos would be the natural inhabitants of such a place. Commentators have mentioned the influence of More's other writings on Swift. See, e.g., Phillip Harth, *Swift and Anglican Rationalism: The Religious Background of A Tale of a Tub* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1969). Swift mentions More in *A Tale of a Tub.* Ernest Tuveson examines the Voyage to the Houyhnhnms in the light of More's *Divine Dialogues* (1668). Tuveson writes: "I do not claim More as a 'source,' although Swift was interested in More's ideas, and had his works in his library. Rather, More serves as a valuable indication of what was in the air." 'Swift: The

And so did Milton, who describes how, after seducing Eve and bringing about the Fall, Satan returns to Hell, where he and his followers find themselves changing into serpents:

> dreadful was the din
> Of hissing through the Hall, thick swarming now
> With complicated monsters, […]
> […]
> […] but still greatest hee the midst,
> Now Dragon grown, larger then whom the Sun
> Ingenderd in the *Pythian* Vale on slime,
> Huge Python. (*PL*, X.521-31)

Here the authors employ increasingly dark uses of the one idea. Spenser employs the conceit neutrally, merely to outline the natural process of birth, growth, death, decay, and new birth. Donne regards the slime as "dirty" and begetting creatures which, although they may be part of the natural order, are yet "strange". More suggests that the process brings forth monsters and corruption out of corruption. Milton, drawing on Greek mythology, associates the slime-engendered serpent Python with the doubly-fallen serpent Satan—the embodiment of sin. Thus Swift's use of this traditional conceit would seem to imply the corrupt, monstrous and sinful nature of the Yahoos.

More than that, Swift shows that the contemptuous attitude of the Houyhnhnms towards the Yahoos is reflected in the belief which the Houyhnhnms hold about their own origins. Gulliver explains that the Houyhnhnms have no fear of death; and relates the incident of a Houyhnhnm matron whose visit to Gulliver's master is delayed by the death of her husband,

> Who, as she said, happened that very Morning to *Lhnuwnh.* The Word is strongly expressive in their Language, but not easily rendered into English; it signifies, *to retire to his first Mother* (240).

This is in keeping with the philosophy of the Roman poet Lucretius (c.98-c.55), who writes:

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Dean as Satirist', in *Swift: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Ernest Tuveson (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), pp.101-10 (p.103, n3).

> It follows that with good reason the earth has gotten the name of mother, since all things have been produced out of the earth. [93]

And he goes on to be more specific and exclusive:

> Wherefore again and again I say the earth with good title has gotten and keeps the name of mother, since she of herself gave birth to mankind and at a time nearly fixed shed forth every beast that ranges wildly over the great mountains, and at the same time the fowls of the air with all their varied shapes.[94]

Creatures generated from slime and ooze are of a lower order in creation than creatures generated from the earth (and are usually unpleasant nuisances like flies and mosquitoes). Therefore if the slime tradition is correct, the gulf between the earth-born Houyhnhnms and the slime-born Yahoos is even deeper than their circumstances suggest. Which leads to the Houyhnhnms' second tradition:

> That the two *Yahoos* said to be first seen among them, had been driven thither over the Sea; that coming to Land, and being forsaken by their Companions, they retired to the Mountains, and degenerating by Degrees, became in Process of Time, much more savage than those of their own Species in the Country from whence these two Originals came (237).[95]

This tradition, in keeping with Swift's theme of degeneration, can also be seen as a short and miniature history of mankind since the Fall—Adam and Eve, cast out of Eden, begetting generation upon generation of children born in sin.

The Houyhnhnms have therefore narrowed the debate over the origins of the Yahoos down to two theories: one of which corresponds with the pagan theory of aquatic or marine origin; and one which corresponds with the Christian belief in ongoing degeneration as a result of the Fall.[96] At the time of Gulliver's arrival, the Houyhnhnms have no way of determining which is correct, because the latter explanation depends on knowledge acquired through revelation, which, of course, is not given to horses. But the debate is about to take a new turn.

In each of his former voyages Gulliver has encountered degenerate humans. In Lilliput "the degenerate Nature of Man" (41) has produced the current political system; in Brobdingnag he reads a book whose theme is "that Nature was

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[93] Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things,* trans. by H.A.J. Munro [1860] (London: Routledge; New York: Dutton [1907]), Bk V, lines 795-96 (p.175).
[94] Lucretius, Bk V, lines 821-25 (Munro, p.176).
[95] Not a nice reminder for Gulliver. Like the original Yahoos in this tradition, he has been driven thither over the sea and forsaken by his companions.
[96] Tuveson's essay examines the question of Original Sin.

degenerated in these latter declining Ages of the World" (112); and in Luggnagg he ponders "that continual Degeneracy of human Nature, so justly complained of in all Ages" (180).[97]

And so it is in Houyhnhnmland. Gulliver's arrival, so similar to that of the two original Yahoos in the second tradition; his uncanny physical resemblance to the Yahoos, which he at first disguises by keeping his clothes on; his success in persuading his master that foreign Yahoos rule in their lands as the Houyhnhnms do in theirs; all this has convinced his master that the Yahoos are degenerate humans.[98] (But of course without the authority of revelation his conviction must remain provisional.)

The Yahoos therefore are not a separate anthropoid species, but a race of degenerate humans. But their degeneration is of a particular kind. In the first three voyages Swift deals with corruption and degeneration within the convention of size—humanity is degenerating, therefore it is becoming smaller, less robust, less healthy, and so forth;[99] but, despite this constant falling off, the humans remain human. Soul is form and doth the body make, but the souls remain human, with all of their human vices and virtues, and continue to make for themselves recognizably human vehicles.

But the Yahoos are not immediately recognizable as humans. They have degenerated to the point where all the virtues have gone, and all that remain are the vices.[100] Reason and speech – the two defining human capacities – have also gone, and all that remains is the flesh, which has an inherent drive towards evil.[101] According to Roland Frye:

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[97] For political and societal degeneration see Jeffrey Hart, 'The Ideologue as Artist: Some Notes on *Gulliver's Travels*', *Criticism*, 2 (1960), 125-33. For the corruption of human nature see Douglas J. Canfield, 'Corruption and Degeneration in *Gulliver's Travels*', *Notre Dame English Journal*, 9 (1973), 15-22. For gradual physical diminution see Dirk F. Passman, 'Degeneration in *Gulliver's Travels*: Excavations from Brobdingnag', *Swift Studies: The Annual of the Ehrenpreis Centre,* 1 (1986), 46-50.

[98] Gulliver also leans towards this theory. In the first edition of the *Travels* he surmises that the two original Yahoos may have been English. This was deleted in the Faulkner edition.

[99] One can see the beginnings of this convention in the Old Testament: "There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown" (Genesis 6.4).

[100] This is debatable: the females obviously care for their young; and when Gulliver picks up the infant Yahoo, others come running when it begins squalling (231-32).

[101] "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7.25).

> The human body was traditionally understood to represent man's natural depravity; it is a logical representation of this tradition, therefore, that the Yahoo has "a perfect *human* figure." [Frye's italics] According to this view, the Yahoo would then represent those elements in his nature which man must distrust, and which, in Christian terms, he must seek to subdue. The Yahoo is that fleshly element in human nature which cannot be disavowed, which may in fact degrade man to the level of the brute beasts.[102]

Frye argues that not only do the Yahoos represent fallen man and the flesh, but that this particular flesh exists in a more degraded and polluted condition. Citing Leviticus, he shows that not only is the Yahoos' diet of carrion, asses, dogs, cats, weasels and rats unclean, but they themselves are unclean:

> Leviticus 11.27 declares unclean "whatsoever goeth upon his paws, among all manner of beasts that go on all four, these are unclean to you […]." The connection is made much clearer by Bishop Simon Patrick's 1698 commentary on this text: "*Leviticus* 11.27. [*And whatsoever goeth upon his paws, etc.*] Hath feet with fingers like unto a hand; for so it is in the Hebrew, *Whatsoever goeth upon his hands:* Such as the Ape […] etc. whose forefeet resemble hands."[103]

But the Yahoos are more than simply apelike. Gulliver writes that, "Their Shape was very singular, and deformed" (193). Frye notes:

> The Yahoo may not only be related to Christian symbolism of the flesh, but may also be seen as embodying many of those elements of filth and deformity which are emblematic of sin throughout the Scriptures, beginning with the Levitical pollutions and carrying on far into the New Testament (210).

He follows this with several pages of persuasive examples, adding that:

> The tradition here illustrated, a tradition which employed filth and deformity as symbolic of sin, was part of the intellectual climate in and before Swift's time (215).

And he concludes with:

> What Swift has done is to appropriate ready-made symbols and a Christian rhetoric apt for his purposes (217).[104]

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[102] 'Swift's Yahoo and the Christian Symbols for Sin', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 15 (1954), 201-17 (p.208).

[103] Roland Frye, p.216. The italics are Frye's. Whilst in Houyhnhnmland Gulliver occasionally eats rabbit – another unclean animal.

[104] Not only was this Christian rhetoric apt for Swift's literary purposes, it was in harmony with his own obsessive interest in filth and excrement.

One would think, then, that Swift's readers would have taken the point. But many of them did not, to the extent that in 1784 Thomas Sheridan felt the need to provide a summary of Swift's intentions:

> In your merely animal capacity, says [Swift] to man, without reason to guide you, and actuated only by blind instinct, I will show you that you would be degraded below the beasts of the field. That very form, that very body, you are now so proud of, as giving you such a superiority over all other animals, I will show you owe all their beauty, and all their greatest powers, to their being actuated by a rational soul. Let that be withdrawn, let the body be inhabited by the mind of a brute, let it be prone as theirs are, and suffered like theirs to take its natural course, without any assistance from art, you would in that case be the most deformed, as to your external appearance, the most detestable of all creatures.[105]

How does this deformity come about? Platonically it comes about because the body is the physical representation of the soul. An ugly, sinful soul produces an ugly, deformed body. Theologically it comes about because man is made in the image of God. Therefore, as man departs further from God in thought, word, and deed, so he also departs further from the image of God. Gulliver himself, being a fallen creature born in sin, is also prey to this latter malady.[106] After his Houyhnhnm master has seen him naked, he does not regard Gulliver as the norm from which the Yahoos have degenerated, but merely finds him "not altogether so deformed" (209) as the Yahoos.

Although commentators have concentrated on the religious significance of the Yahoos, they have neglected their Platonic implications. As the Yahoos have departed further from the image of God, their souls have become more brutish, and consequently they have also begun to assume the characteristics of certain animals whose qualities they share. When Gulliver first sees them he observes that:

> Their Heads and Breasts were covered with a thick Hair, some frizzled and others lank; they had Beards like Goats, and a long Ridge of Hair down their Backs, and the Fore Parts of their Legs and Feet; but the rest of their Bodies were bare, so that I might see their Skins, which were of a brown Buff Colour. They had no Tails, nor any Hair at all on their Buttocks, except about the *Anus;* which, I presume Nature had placed there to defend them as they sat on the Ground; for

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[105] Thomas Sheridan *The Works of the Rev. Dr Jonathan Swift, Dean of St Patrick's, Dublin*, 17 vols (London: Bathurst, Strahan, and others, 1784), I, *The Life of the Rev. Dr Jonathan Swift, Dean of St Patrick's, Dublin,* p.508. See also *Swift: The Critical Heritage,* ed. by Kathleen Williams (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p.236. Thomas Sheridan (1719-88) was the son of Swift's friend Dr Thomas Sheridan (1687-1738).

[106] Cf. Donne's deformity in 'Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward.' See above, chap.2, n64.

> this Posture they used, as well as lying down, and often stood on their hind Feet. They climbed high Trees, as nimbly as a Squirrel, for they had strong extended Claws before and behind, terminating in sharp Points, and hooked. They would often spring, and bound, and leap with prodigious Agility. The Females were not so large as the Males; they had long lank Hair on their Heads, and only a sort of Down on the rest of their Bodies, except about the *Anus,* and *Pudenda.* Their Dugs hung between their fore Feet, and often reached almost to the Ground as they walked.[107] The Hair of both Sexes was of several Colours, brown, red, black and yellow (193).

The Yahoos have grown hair like animals; they walk alternately on their legs or on all fours, in the manner of apes or monkeys. Ashley Montagu argues that Swift may have invoked Edward Tyson's description of the chimpanzee for such physical details as the colour of the Yahoos' skin, the lack of a tail, and the face. Tyson, a physician and anatomist, arrived at an important scientific conclusion. Montagu writes:

> In his *Orang-Outang* [1699] Tyson gave a detailed description of the anatomy of a juvenile chimpanzee together with an account of its habits. […] While not regarding the creature as human […] Tyson pointed out that a detailed study of its structure and habits showed it to be an animal, nay *the* animal which in the whole kingdom of animate Nature stood nearest to man, that in the Great Chain of Being it constituted a link between man and the lower animals.[108]

Swift, aware of Tyson's work, is thus incorporating the latest scientific discoveries in his description of the Yahoos. He is in fact describing a process of devolution, which places the Yahoos in the twilight zone between man and beast; but all that is left of the humanity is the vices.

Gulliver takes a close look at a Yahoo:

> My Horror and Astonishment are not to be described, when I observed, in this abominable Animal, a perfect human Figure; the Face of it indeed was flat and broad, the Nose depressed, the Lips large, and the Mouth wide: But these Differences are common to all savage Nations, where the Lineaments of the Countenance are distorted by the Natives suffering their Infants to lie grovelling on the Earth, or by carrying them on their Backs, nuzzling with their Face against the Mother's Shoulders (199).

So successful is Swift in blurring the distinction between animal and human when describing the Yahoos, that, while Montagu likens them to apes:

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[107] Observed among Hottentot women when weeding. See Frantz, p.54.

[108] Ashley Montagu, 'Tyson's *Orang-Outang Sive Homo Sylvestris* and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*', *PMLA,* 59 (1944), 84-89, (p.85).

> In fact the external characters of the Yahoos would seem to have been derived from the engraving of the Pygmie [i.e., chimpanzee] which appeared in Tyson's book;[109]

Frantz likens them to primitive humans:

> Nauseating descriptions of the depraved Hottentots, whose faces, like those of the Yahoos, were "flat and broad, the Nose depressed, the Lips large, and the Mouth wide," appeared in print with striking frequency throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[110]

The Yahoos in some ways occupy the same position as that of the early men described by Lucretius. These early men were more robust, but lived as the other animals, without language, without tools, without arts, without clothing or shelter, without any kind of society, digging in the ground for food, hunting the other animals with stones and clubs, and living in fear of predators. Lucretius observes:

> And they were unable to look to the general weal and knew not how to make a common use of any customs or laws. Whatever prize fortune threw in his way, each man would bear off, trained at his own discretion to think of himself and live for himself alone.[111]

Shaftesbury, who refers to Lucretius in his *Characteristics,* in 'The Moralists' has Theocles refer to this stage of human development as,

> that which we suppose of man ere yet he entered into society, and became in truth a human creature. 'Twas the rough draught of man, the essay or first effort of Nature, a species in the birth, a kind as yet unformed; not in its natural state, but under violence, and still restless, till it attained its natural perfection (II, 79).

The Yahoos, however, have degenerated below this stage.

Not only are Yahoos physically ape-like, but their dominating character is ape-like. Swift drives this point home through his use of language. In one of his poems he writes:

> Thus think on Kings, y$^{e}$ Name denotes
> Hogs, Asses, Wolves, Baboons & Goats,
> To represent in figure just

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[109] Montagu, p.89.
[110] Frantz, p.53.
[111] *On the Nature of Things*, Bk V, lines 958-61 (Munro, p.180).

Sloth, Folly, Rapine, Mischief, Lust.[112]

In his poem Swift equates baboons with mischief. Likewise, one of the dominant characteristics of the Yahoos is mischief. Gulliver describes how a Yahoo approaches him and lifts up its paw, "whether out of Curiosity or Mischief, I could not tell" (193). In each herd of Yahoos there is a dominant male who is "always more *deformed* in Body, and *mischievous* in *Disposition,* than any of the rest" (228). (Note how the deformity of the body worsens with the deformity of the character, even among the Yahoos themselves.) Gulliver's Houyhnhnm master declares that Yahoos have "the strongest Disposition to Mischief" (203). And, "It is observed," writes Gulliver, "that the *Red-haired* of both Sexes are more libidinous and mischievous than the rest" (232).

The Yahoos however are not merely ape-like in their tendency to mischief; they are the products of the Platonic "mungrill transformation" described by Henry More, and exhibit characteristics of other animals mentioned by Swift in the passage quoted, as well as those of other unclean animals. In Swift's poem above, goats represent lust; and one of the first things Gulliver notices about the Yahoos is that they have "Beards like Goats." They climb trees "as nimbly as a squirrel." This commonplace is no mere figure of speech in this instance; the reason they can do so is because they have "strong extended Claws before and behind, terminating in sharp Points, and hooked." And the squirrel, according to Leviticus, is an unclean animal.

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[112] 'On Poetry: A Rhapsody'*, The Poems of Jonathan Swift,* ed. by Harold Williams, 2nd edn, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), II, 659. It is worth placing these lines in their context, in which Swift is describing the true nature of kings:

> For in those [former] Ages Kings we find,
> Were Animals of human kind,
> […]
> Thus all are destin'd to obey
> Some Beast of Burthen or of Prey
> Tis sung Prometheus forming Man
> Thro' all the brutal Species ran,
> Each proper Quality to find
> Adapted to a human Mind,
> A mingled Mass of Good & Bad,
> The worst & best that could be had
> Then from a Clay of Mixture base
> He shap'd a King to rule ye Race
> Endow'd with Gifts from every Brute
> That best ye regal Nature suit,
> Thus think on Kings, ye Name denotes
> Hogs, Asses, Wolves, Baboons, & Goats
> To represent in figure just
> Sloth, Folly, Rapine, Mischief, Lust.

Perhaps Prometheus had some clay left over, and made a Yahoo.

On another occasion when Gulliver is holding a Yahoo child – which he refers to as an "odious Vermin" – he observes "the young Animal's Flesh to smell very rank, and the stink [to be] somewhat between a *Weasel* and a *Fox*" (232). Both these animals are unclean. If the yahoos have come to smell like weasels, it is because their minds and bodies have taken on aspects of weasels and foxes; and indeed another of their major characteristics is their "cunning" (232). Henry More writes of "The Crafty Fox famous for subtilty."[113] The Yahoos' delight in "Rapine" (227) – associated by Swift with wolves – suggests that the long ridge of hair down their backs might be lupine in origin.

Gulliver also records a very significant talent of the Yahoos: "They swim from their infancy like Frogs, and are able to continue long under Water, where they often take Fish, which the Females carry home to their young" (232). Again, Gulliver is recording not their swimming ability but the manner in which they swim. These strange crepuscular creatures, having degenerated into a kind of ape with the characteristics of goats, wolves, and various vermin, are now in the process of moving back into the water. As has been mentioned, Swift subscribed to the story of Creation as it appears in the Bible; even so, one could feel justified in thinking that here Swift is hinting at the next phase in the inexorable decline of unregenerate man back into the primordial sea of the ancient Greek philosophers. Tragically, even as the Yahoos move back into the water, they remain unclean; according to Leviticus:

> And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you (11.10).

And of course the frog is another unclean animal.

Having established that Yahoos like to frolic in the water, Gulliver, adding a deliberately linking "And upon this occasion," passes on immediately to relate the incident in which a Yahoo maiden, inflamed with desire for the body of a naked Englishman (surely Swift's most ironic moment), jumps on Gulliver as he is bathing in a river. Gulliver writes:

> This was a Matter of Diversion to my Master and his Family, as well as of Mortification to my self. For now I could no longer deny, that I was a real *Yahoo,* in every Limb and Feature, since the Females had a natural Propensity to

[113] *Psychozoia,* II.136.5.

> me as one of their own Species: Neither was the Hair of this Brute of a Red Colour, (which might have been some Excuse for an Appetite a little irregular) but black as a Sloe, and her Countenance did not make an Appearance altogether so hideous as the rest of the Kind; for, I think, she could not have been above Eleven Years old (233).

The first item to deal with in this Nabokovian moment is the Yahoo's age; she is not as hideous as the rest of the herd because she is young. From this we learn that, in keeping with Platonic principles, not only are the Yahoos born deformed in keeping with their brutish souls, but the depraved lives that they lead render them increasingly ugly as they age and their load of sin accumulates.

The second item is Gulliver's final acceptance that he is a Yahoo, because the females – (how many have there been?) – desire him as one of their own species. This argument simply will not do. In the episode with the Brobdingnagian monkey, he reports that it holds him "as a Nurse doth a Child she is going to suckle; […] like a Baby in one of his Fore-Paws, and feeding me with the other, […] and patting me when I would not eat" (98-99). And he writes, "I have good Reason to believe that he took me for a young one of his own Species" (98).[114]

Where is the difference? The maternal monkey and the libidinous Yahoo maiden both take him for one of their own species; yet at no stage does it occur to him to think of himself as a monkey. The reason which Gulliver gives is therefore not the real reason for his mental surrender. The real reason demands an admission which he is unable to make: deep down, some part of him is attracted to her. He writes: "her Countenance did not make an Appearance altogether so hideous as the rest of the Kind," which is a back-hand way of saying that he finds her somewhat good looking. And there is one curious omission from his narrative. He writes: "She embraced me after a most fulsome Manner" (233). But he does not mention that she smelt. He reports that the maids of honour in Brobdingnag give off "a very offensive Smell" (95); that the infant Yahoo smells "very rank" (232); and he relates his master's observation,

> that a Female-*Yahoo* would often stand behind a Bank or a Bush, to gaze on the young Males passing by, […] at which time it was observed, that she had a most *offensive Smell* (230).

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[114] The ape was traditionally fond of babies, and was represented pictorially abducting them from their cradles. See Janson, pp.173-74.

Likewise Gulliver's paramour is introduced "standing behind a Bank", from where she watches while, as Gulliver writes, as though describing a scene from a pastoral romance, "I […] stripped myself stark naked, and went down softly into the Stream" (232). The circumstances are virtually identical; yet she has no smell. Gulliver's own family, however, smell so bad when he returns to England that he cannot bear them to be near him.

Gulliver describes the attack by the Brobdingnagian monkey as, "the greatest Danger I ever underwent in that Kingdom" (97). He is carried to the top of a roof, "five Hundred Yards from the Ground, expecting every Moment to be blown down by the Wind" (99). In Glubbdubdrib he is surrounded by ghosts who make his "Flesh creep with a Horror [he] cannot express" (166). He has been pursued by giants, shipwrecked, attacked by pirates, abandoned at sea; and yet, when he finds himself in the amorous embrace of a juvenile female Yahoo who intends him no harm, he reports that, "I was never in my Life so terribly frighted" (233).

This is not Gulliver's first close encounter with the fair sex in the course of his travels. In Lilliput he and the Treasurer's wife, Mrs Flimnap, become the subject of court gossip. Gulliver is at great pains in his memoirs to deny any impropriety in their relationship; and explains in minute detail that never on any occasion were they alone together. What he does *not* address is the rumour that "her Grace had taken a violent Affection for [his] Person" (45). How, then, one may ask, does Mrs Flimnap differ from the Yahoo maiden? And why, then, does Gulliver not assume that he is a Lilliputian?

In Brobdingnag the encounter is much closer. The Queen's maids of honour,

> Would often strip me naked from Top to Toe, and lay me at full Length in their Bosoms […].
> […] They would strip themselves to the Skin, and put on their Smocks in my Presence, while I was placed on their Toylet directly before their naked Bodies […]. The handsomest among these Maids of Honour, a pleasant frolicksome Girl of sixteen, would sometimes set me astride upon one of her Nipples (95-96).

Of the bodies of these maids of honour, Gulliver writes that he "was much disgusted; because, to say the Truth, a very offensive Smell came from their Skins" (95); and that the scene was, "very far from being a tempting Sight, or from giving me any other Motions than those of Horror and Disgust" (95). Meanwhile, of the female

Yahoo, all he can say is that her hair is as black as a sloe, and by Yahoo standards she is a beauty. Of the antics of the frolicksome maids of honour, Gulliver righteously declares: "I was so much displeased, that I entreated *Glumdalclitch* to contrive some Excuse for not seeing that young Lady any more" (96). However, this righteousness develops a hollow ring when we look more closely at this sequence. Gulliver writes:

> The Maids of Honour *often* [my emphasis] invited *Glumdalclitch* to their Apartments, and desired she would bring me along with her, *on Purpose to have the Pleasure of seeing and touching me* [my emphasis]. They would *often* [my emphasis] strip me naked from Top to Toe […].
> […] The handsomest among these Maids of Honour, a pleasant frolicksome Girl of sixteen, would *sometimes* [my emphasis] set me astride one of her Nipples (95-96).

He seems to have borne this particular cross for quite a length of time.

Commentators are greatly amused by Gulliver's lengthy chivalric defence of Mrs Flimnap's honour, given that the size difference renders any sort of physical liaison between them impossible. But does it? Gulliver adds an intriguing detail about the frolicksome maid of honour: she would

> sometimes set me astride one of her Nipples; *with many other Tricks, wherein the Reader will excuse me for not being over particular* (96). [my emphasis]

Gulliver may well be able to return home to his wife, the patient Mrs Mary Burton, and solemnly declare, "I did not have sex with that woman;" but one cannot help thinking that the distinction could well be uncomfortably nice.

Be that as it may, the embrace of the sloe-haired nymph provides the first opportunity – or threat – for Gulliver to have a sexual encounter which could be consummated. *This* is why he is "so terribly frighted" (233). And of course he declines the offer. Had he succumbed, he would have been sinning; but which sin would he have committed? Would he have offended against Exodus 20.14 – "Thou shalt not commit adultery" – or against Leviticus 18.25 – "Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith"? In Gulliver's mind it is surely the latter. And the thought haunts him. He writes that, upon his eventual return home:

> My Wife and Family received me with great Surprise and Joy, because they concluded me certainly dead;[115] but I must freely confess, the Sight of them filled me only with Hatred, Disgust and Contempt; and the more, by reflecting on the near Alliance I had to them. […] And when I began to consider, that by copulating with one of the *Yahoo*-Species, I had become a Parent of more; it struck me with the utmost Shame, Confusion and Horror (253-54).

Past and present, human and Yahoo merge, as Gulliver's hapless wife re-enacts the scene in the river in Houyhnhnmland:

> As soon as I entered the House, my Wife took me in her Arms, and kissed me; at which, not being used to the Touch of that odious Animal for so many Years, I fell in a Swoon for almost an Hour (254).

Gulliver's callous reminiscence (recollected five years after the event) becomes more callous by the use of the term "odious animal", which he has used formerly to describe the Yahoos. It becomes even more callous, and equally ironic, when we consider the context:

> I expressed my Uneasiness at [my master's] giving me so often the Appellation of *Yahoo,* an odious Animal, for which I had so utter an Hatred and Contempt (205).

Gulliver prepares to live out the remainder of his life by purchasing a couple of horses, with whom he sits in his stable. "My horses understand me tolerably well," he writes; "I converse with them at least four Hours every Day" (254). [116] But the members of his family do not fare so well. He will not let any of them take him by the hand; and five years elapse before he will allow his wife to sit at the dinner table with him—at the far end. What has brought a once normal man to this pass?

In Brobdingnag Gulliver's self-image collapses under the onslaught of the giants' contemptuous attitude towards him because of his size. In Houyhnhnmland the pressure is more pernicious—here the pressure is aimed at his character. After giving his master an account of European civilization, Gulliver writes:

> The Reader may be disposed to wonder how I could prevail on my self to give so free a Representation of my own Species, among a Race of Mortals who were

[115] Which, in a way, he is.

[116] Gulliver here is not simply deluding himself, but has also forgotten his Bible (and possibly Donne's sermon as well). The Psalmist writes: "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding" (Psalm 32.9). James Wilson lists this among several Biblical passages which may have been on Swift's mind during the writing of the Fourth Voyage. See 'Swift, the Psalmist, and the Horse', *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, 3 (1958), 17-23. Wilson makes no mention of Donne's sermon.

> already too apt to conceive the vilest Opinion of Human Kind, from that entire congruity betwixt me and their *Yahoos*. But I must freely confess, that the many Virtues of those excellent *Quadrupeds* placed in opposite View to human Corruptions, had so far opened my Eyes, and enlarged my Understanding, that I began to view the Actions and Passions of Man in a very different Light; and to think the Honour of my own Kind not worth managing; which, besides, it was impossible for me to do before a Person[117] of so acute a Judgment as my Master, *who daily convinced me of a thousand Faults in my self, whereof I had not the least Perception before* [my emphasis], and which with us would never be numbered even among human Infirmities (224).

Just as in Brobdingnag Gulliver had become unable to endure the sight of himself in a mirror, now:

> When I happened to behold the Reflection of my own Form in a Lake or Fountain, I turned away my Face in Horror and detestation of my self; and could better endure the Sight of a common *Yahoo,* than of my own Person (243).

Why should the sight of a common Yahoo be preferable? It is because Gulliver is in the process of redefining himself to his own advantage. In Brobdingnag he had felt respect for the Brobdingnagians. In Houyhhnmland he feels much more:

> I admired the Strength, Comeliness and Speed of the Inhabitants; and such a Constellation of Virtues in such amiable Persons produced in me the highest Veneration (243).

In Brobdingnag he could not wait to return home to his family, because finally he was fed up with the Brobdingnagians' attitude towards him, and what he came to regard as their insularity and parochialism. But in Houyhnhnmland he has grown to worship the Houyhnhnms. Therefore:

> When I thought of my Family, my Friends, my Countrymen, or human Race in general, I considered them as they *really* [my emphasis] were, Yahoos in Shape and Disposition, perhaps a little more civilized, and qualified with the Gift of Speech; but making no other use of Reason, than to improve and multiply those Vices, whereof their Brethren in this Country had only the Share that Nature allotted them (243).

In this passage Gulliver is parroting, almost verbatim, the words of his equine master. And that is not all:

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[117] Gulliver is beginning to regard the Houyhnhnms as the true humans. Later he refers to them as "people" (240), and "persons" (243).

> By conversing with the *Houyhnhnms,* and looking upon them with Delight, I fell to imitate their Gait and Gesture, which is now grown into a Habit; and my Friends often tell me in a blunt Way, that *I trot like a Horse;*[118] which, however, I take for a great Compliment: Neither shall I disown, that in speaking I am apt to fall into the Voice and manner of the *Houyhnhnms,* and hear myself ridiculed on that Account without the least Mortification (243-44).

Gulliver has decided to define himself as a species with a representative of one. He has determined to divorce himself as much as possible from the human race. The Yahoos are anthropoids without reason; the Europeans are anthropoids with a tincture of reason which debases them even further. Gulliver cannot help being an anthropoid with a tincture of reason, but he will be one who walks and talks like a Houyhnhnm; and one whose reason is properly directed:

> I had not been a Year in this Country, before I contracted such a Love and Veneration for the Inhabitants, that I entered on a firm Resolution never to return to human Kind, but to pass the rest of my Life among these admirable Houyhnhnms in the Contemplation and Practice of every Virtue; where I could have no Example or Incitement to Vice (224-25).

This sounds a worthy ambition; but the reason for Gulliver's resolution is less worthy:

> At first, indeed, I did not feel that natural Awe which the *Yahoos* and all other Animals bear towards them; but it grew upon me by Degrees, much sooner than I imagined, and was mingled with a respectful Love and Gratitude, *that they would condescend to distinguish me from the rest of my Species* (243). [my emphasis]

Gulliver's master refers to him as "a certain wonderful *Yahoo*" (237); and describes how:

> He observed in me all the Qualities of a *Yahoo,* only a little more civilized by some Tincture of Reason; which however was in a Degree as far inferior to the *Houyhnhnm* Race, as the *Yahoos* of their Country were to me (238).

Gulliver therefore finds himself in a unique position in Houyhnhnmland—he is on the side of the angels. As long as he stays there he is above all the other Yahoos (his fellow Europeans would debase his newly minted coinage).

Gulliver reveres the Houyhnhnms, but their reason cannot comprehend his true nature, and, fearful lest he may turn feral and employ his reason to incite a Yahoo

[118] A slip on Swift's part. At the time of writing, Gulliver is too misanthropic to have any friends.

uprising, they expel him. A party of them come down to the shore to see him off, "out of Curiosity, and perhaps […] partly out of Kindness" (247). They watch the beginning of "this desperate Voyage" (247) with equanimity, all except Gulliver's companion the Sorrel Nag who, being of the servant caste and therefore with a less perfectly developed faculty of reason, continues to call after him, "*Hnuy illa nyha maiah Yahoo,* Take Care of thy self, gentle *Yahoo*" (248).

When Gulliver is forced to leave Houyhnhnmland his world falls apart; he has invested too much in his new identity, and his mind is now set on that course. In the land of the Houyhnhnms, humans had merely been a potential threat to his uniqueness. Now they become a reality. His only method of coping is to stop regarding himself as a Yahoo (albeit an ennobled one), and instead to begin regarding himself as an honorary Houyhnhnm. He turns all of his disappointment and frustration on those whose existence unwittingly reminds him constantly of both the standing which he has lost and his own appalling origins. But in the end he remains unique—walking and talking like a horse, and sitting for hours on end happily chattering on to his two uncomprehending stallions. And in the end he is not only unique, but maintains his superiority over all the English Yahoos:

> I write for the noblest End, to inform and instruct Mankind, over whom I may, without Breach of Modesty, pretend to some Superiority, from the Advantages I received by conversing so long among the most accomplished *Houyhnhnms* (257).

Gulliver feels that he has risen above his condition by his long and fruitful association with the noble Houyhnhnms. But a couple of lines from Donne's sermon may help to put Gulliver's boast in perspective. Donne writes, "Descend not to the qualities of the Horse and the Mule."[119] And what is the quality of the horse which Donne singles out for condemnation? Donne writes:

> Here we may contract it best, if we understand Pride by the Horse, and Lust by the Mule; […] Though both sins, pride and lust, might be taxed in the horse, yet pride is proper to him.[120]

And he goes on to make a point that is applicable to both Gulliver and Henry Jekyll:

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[119] *Sermons*, IX, 375.
[120] *Sermons*, IX, 377.

> It is not much controverted in the Schooles, but that the first sin of the Angels was Pride. But because (as we said before) the danger of man is more in sinking down, then in climbing up, in dejecting, then in raising himselfe, we must therefore remember, that it is not pride, to desire to be better. […] The Angels sin was pride; but their pride consisted not in aspiring to the best degrees that their nature was capable of: but in this, that they would come to that state, by other meanes then were ordained for it.[121]

Gulliver, then, foolishly thinking that he has been acquiring reason from the Houyhnhnms, reveals in the end that he has simply acquired their pride.

In some ways Gulliver's predicament in Houyhnhnmland is not unlike that faced by Jekyll. Gulliver and Jekyll both partake in mankind's dual nature; whereas the Yahoos are pure beast and Hyde is pure evil. Gulliver is confronted by living examples of two conditions—the life of brute sensation, and the life of detached reason. He distances himself from the former, and attempts – without success – to embrace the latter. But of course, while sharing aspects of both, he conforms absolutely to neither. Likewise Jekyll attempts to "dissociate" the "unjust" from the "upright" (82), naively expecting that he will be left with an uncontaminated higher self. Both are deluded. In the end Gulliver walks like a Houyhnhnm and talks like a Houyhnhnm, but he knows that with his clothes off he still looks like a Yahoo. And in the end Jekyll not only fails to separate himself from Hyde, but becomes him.

Were the Yahoos an influence on Stevenson's conception of Hyde? Even if (as seems unlikely) Stevenson had not read *Gulliver's Travels,* and even if (as seems even more unlikely) he had never heard of the Yahoos, he was influenced by the religious, philosophical, and literary conventions from which they sprang. They are hairy; Hyde is hairy. They are ape-like; Hyde is ape-like. They chatter; Hyde chatters. They are deformed in an unspecified way; Hyde is deformed in an unspecified way. They are creatures entirely given over to the lower passions; so is Hyde. Gulliver detests them on sight; people detest Hyde on sight. The vices which produce the Yahoos over many generations break forth all at once in the same degraded form, as Hyde. Swift's conceit, derived from the Greeks, absorbed by the Church, broadcast from the pulpit in his day, justified and enlarged upon by his supporters and generations of interpreters, finds re-affirmation in the words of one of

[121] *Sermons*, IX, 377-78.

Stevenson's literary heroes, Sir Walter Scott—words which could equally epitomize the thesis of *Jekyll and Hyde*:

> The picture of the Yahoos, utterly odious and hateful as it is, presents to the reader a moral use. It was never designed as a representation of mankind in the state to which religion, and even the lights of nature, encourage men to aspire, but of that to which our species is degraded by the wilful subservience of mental qualities to animal instincts, of man, such as he may be found in the degraded ranks of every society, when brutalized by ignorance and gross vice. In this view, the more coarse and disgusting the picture, the more impressive is the moral to be derived from it, since, in proportion as an individual indulges in sensuality, cruelty, or avarice, he approaches in resemblance to the detested Yahoo.[122]

What, then, are the Yahoos? Their ugliness and deformity is an outward expression of their foul souls, within both Platonic philosophy and Christian doctrine. But where do they stand in the scheme of things? On the Great Chain of Being they could stand between man and the apes; or just below the apes and just above the quadrupeds; or somewhere between land animals and water creatures. But how did they arrive at any of these points? Did they evolve according to heathen natural philosophy, or did they fall according to the word of God in the Bible? After debating the issue Swift of course makes it clear that they are in fact degenerate humans, and that they are incapable of improvement. With the Yahoos Swift shows that being ape-like and deformed is the outward expression of moral and spiritual delinquency, that it occurs within a traditional religious framework, and in itself implies nothing about mankind's origins. The existence of such a notion clearly has implications for the proposed reading of *Jekyll and Hyde*.

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[122] Sir Walter Scott, *The Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D.,* 19 vols (Edinburgh: Constable, 1814), I, 337-38.