Evolution or Degeneration? Darwin's Influence on R.L. Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and H.P. Lovecraft's "The Shadow over Innsmouth"

by Dimitrios Karagiannis

A dissertation submitted to the School of English, at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

MA in English and American Studies

Dissertation Supervisor: Dr. Maria Schoina

Thessaloniki

February 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract

Charles Darwin's evolution theory, which he analyzes in *On the Origin of Species* (1859), as well as *The Descent of Man, And Selection Related to Sex* (1871), fundamentally shook all pillars of human life, including science and culture. This thesis explores the palpable influence of Darwin and science on two literary works separated both temporally and geographically: R. L. Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr.* Hyde, published in England at 1886, and H.P. Lovecraft's "The Shadow over Innsmouth," published in 1936 in the United States of America. A careful comparison of these two Gothic texts indicates the existence of multiple links and similarities between them which are articulated under the strong and evident influence of Darwin's evolution theory. The tantalizing difference between human evolution and degeneration, a topic much stirred by Darwin's theory, can be singled out as the most noteworthy theme that both of these literary works approach. At the same time, the social background of both late Victorian England and the United States up until the late 1920s is compared and contrasted with regards to how both societies processed the implications and complications of Darwin's evolution theory.

Introduction

The publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*[1] in 1859 brought about cataclysmic changes on all fields of human life. Science, the immediate beneficiary, would go on to place the theory of evolution via natural selection in the highest pedestals of its grand hall, extending even further its influence, to the great dismay of institutionalized religion. The impact of Darwin's scientific theories quickly showed in virtually all areas of life, such as society, economy, politics and culture, provoking vivid and palpable reactions on the minds of those times. With the ensuing publication of *The Descent of Man, And Selection in Relation to Sex*[2] in 1871, Darwin himself directly applied his evolution theory to humans, shocking the civilized world once more and establishing his ideas as paramount for both science and society.

As Darwin himself writes in the very first page of the *Origin of Species*, up until the recent years before its publication, "the great majority of naturalists believed that species were immutable productions and had been separately created" (9). Darwin's theory of evolution was revolutionary in that it refuted those long held beliefs and argued that nature, using the method of natural selection, constantly checked the reproduction rate of all living organisms, similarly to what humans do when breeding animals artificially, leading to the survival of the fittest, or in other words, those that adapted more successfully than others, in a never-ending process of modification and evolution through time. Hence, the survivors of this constant, invisible struggle for existence, would reproduce more often and pass on traits that helped them thrive onto their descendants, while those that failed would either die or produce negligible descendants. This constant adaptation and production of new, evolved species

[1] Henceforth quoted as *Origin of Species*.
[2] Henceforth quoted as *Descent*.

could be traced back to a single, common ancestor of a distant past. Twelve years later, in *Descent* in 1871, Darwin basically explained how his evolution theory applied to humans via sexual selection, that is "the strongest and most vigorous men…would have succeeded in rearing a greater average number of offspring [and they] would generally have been able to select the more attractive women" (vol.2. 368-369). The main conclusions that Darwin reaches in this groundbreaking work are that humans originate from a distant ancestor, shared by other mammals as well, and that they have also separated into distinct races (*Descent* vol.2, 388), all through sex and reproduction.

Darwin's writings seriously challenged people's perception of themselves and human imagination. The literature of those times reflects many of the fears and anxieties that people harbored with regards to the new situation brought about by Darwin's radical theories. This thesis will shed light on the profound influence that Darwin's evolution theory exerted on two major literary works of the Gothic genre, which were separated by fifty years and one ocean: Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*[3], published in 1886 in Victorian England, and Howard Philipps Lovecraft's "The Shadow over Innsmouth,"[4] published in 1936 in the United States of America. The fact that these two texts, despite their temporal and geographical remoteness, convey the Darwinian influence on their writers and societies in strikingly similar forms and tropes is extremely intriguing and merits scrutiny. What is more, this relevance is a testament to the Gothic genre's ability to explore the impact of science on society and encompass social and literary reactions to scientific progress.

Hence, setting off from an exploration of the impact that Darwin's theory had in both Victorian England and America up to the 1920s, since Lovecraft completed "Innsmouth" in

[3] Henceforth quoted as *Jekyll and Hyde*.
[4] Henceforth quoted as "Innsmouth."

1931, this thesis will examine the similarities and differences of these two Gothic novellas and illuminate how both Stevenson and Lovecraft come to terms with the Darwinian theory of evolution. Consequently, I will investigate themes and patterns that both texts share or differ in, which highlight science's, and more specifically Darwin's, far-reaching effect on the social and literary milieux of their times. At the same time, I will demonstrate how the Gothic, with its stock conventions and atmospheric tone, becomes a highly fertile landscape for the articulation of such scientific concerns and debates.

The interplay between literature and science reveals another interesting point, namely that literary minds such as Stevenson and Lovecraft, several decades after Darwin wrote the *Origin of Species,* produced works that poignantly bear the effect of his scientific writings. Notably, as Devin Griffiths points out in his essay "Darwin and Literature," Darwin himself proves a pivotal figure in this intersection between literature and science, because "his science is more descriptive than experimental," containing "audacious leaps of imagination" and placing the results of close scientific observation on paper, with a lot of emotional investment on his part (64). More importantly, Griffiths notes that Darwin "helps us to see our lives as a soaring improvisation over the determinate patterns of the physical world" (63), a statement that is arguably valid in both Stevenson and Lovecraft's cases, since the content of their two Gothic works explores both the nature and role of humans and hints at how humans may very easily exceed their limits and differ from what is considered to be the norm.

More specifically, this thesis will explore the scientific influence of Darwin and its link with the Gothic genre of literature, approaching themes such as degeneration, evolution, abjection and the double in both Stevenson's and Lovecraft's novellas. The texts' recurrent references to these matters, be they explicit or implicit, indicates the shaping influence of

scientific thought on these Gothic literary texts and highlights the transatlantic impact of Darwin's evolution theory, as well as its diachronic nature. I would in fact contend that both *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth" go a step further than merely suggesting a depiction of Darwinian influence on society and literature. It is my belief that, through these texts, Stevenson and Lovecraft masterfully ask their readership whether Darwinian theory and its implications imagine the future of the human race as one of degeneration or evolution. As I argue, both texts demonstrate that scientific progress seems inescapable and awakens fear of degeneration, while at the same time it conceivably creates feelings of excitement before the possibility of human evolution.

It was in Great Britain of the 1860s that Darwin's evolution theory came to reinforce rising questions and debates on human nature and a gradual growth of science's role and impact on society. As Gowan Dawson specifies, "the very term science… was not itself devoid of complexities or ambiguities between 1830 and 1914" ("Science and its Popularization" 170). During the reign of Queen Victoria, which lasted almost seventy years until 1901, there already existed many prominent thinkers in the fields of biology and anthropology, such as Alfred Russel Wallace and Thomas Henry Huxley, who worked on theories of evolution and sought to establish a higher status for science in society. Still, as Robin Gilmour potently states, the procedure "needed a Darwin [that is,] a patently disinterested man and great scientist, someone not embroiled in the politics of Oxbridge [so as] to propose a thesis" that would align scientific methodology with the rudimentary questions centered on human origins that every common man would be able to comprehend and contemplate (130).

This thesis, titled *On the Origin of Species*, provoked shock and controversy to the British public, but was received eagerly and in great numbers. According to Radford's 2008

article in The Guardian, in 1859 the *Origin of Species*, despite competing against books such as Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, was a best seller whose release had its publisher, John Murray, sell all of its 1.250 copies and take orders "for 1,500 even before the publication date, including 500 for a circulation library" ("On the Origin of Species: The Book that Changed the World"). A month after that, Radford writes, 3.000 more copies were produced due to popular demand, which brought Darwin a great deal of anxiety. This was lessened as he saw friends such as Huxley and Lyell publicly defend and support the book, even while anonymous reviewers frequently commented against it ("On the Origin of Species: The Book that Changed the World").

Darwin's unease with regards to the reception of his works was a logical reaction, but it was proven unjustified for a second time in 1871, with the publication of *Descent*. As Dawson explains, despite several delays in publication and a simultaneous civil war in Paris brought about by Prussians which sparked fears of social turmoil to the public, "the initial reception of *Descent* was in fact largely positive," its application of Darwin's evolution to theory to humans being highly anticipated and eagerly read, to the extent that even Darwin called it a book that "sold wonderfully" (*Darwin, Literature and Victorian Respectability* 27).

In scientific circles, Darwin both fulfilled and exceeded the expectations that his work had created, leading Victorian England, which eagerly anticipated progress on all fronts, into a fruitful and eye-opening debate about evolution. Gilmour singles out the intriguing fact that most of Darwin's contemporaries failed to perceive the darker implications of natural selection at that time, because of the ambiguity of concepts such as Nature, "Victorian faith in progress" and the plausibility of his evolution theory in a "world of industrial competition and imperial expansion" (133). It was not until the 1890s that fellow scientists began to "caution against the ethical optimism implied by the phrase 'survival of the fittest,'" as

Huxley did, stressing how those who were fit to survive were not necessarily role models of morality, but of adaptability (Gilmour 138).

Furthermore, Darwin's theory directly countered earlier concepts of man's divinely bestowed morality and superiority in contrast to animals, both of which constituted religious beliefs that were long-held and revered. In his book which examines three centuries of English attitudes about man and the natural world, Keith Thomas writes that ever since "Tudor and Stuart England the long-established view was that the world had been created for man's sake and that other species were meant to be subordinate to his wishes" (ch. 1). Religion was one of the key traits that allegedly separated man from animals, along with the "distinctive human capacity for free agency and moral responsibility" (Keith, ch. 1). Suddenly appearing inside this framework, Darwin's theory expectantly caused discomfort to a considerable portion of the English public of his times and triggered an acute fear of degeneration and regression to savagery and depravity[5]. According to Dawson, it was the *Descent* that particularly gave voice to debates over Darwin, since its "reductive account of man's moral and spiritual faculties" hinted at sexual immorality and corruption in a Victorian society which held high standards of respectability (*Darwin, Literature and Victorian Respectability* 28). Moreover, British imperial expansion, which led to interaction with more primitive tribes and new species, and Darwin's implications about the possibility of sexual mingling between humans and other species[6] gave birth to "anxieties over miscegenation" in Victorian society (Dawson, *Literature and Victorian Respectability* 60).

[5] This discomfort was caused due to the fact that Darwin's theory "put mankind back into nature, implicitly denying the distinction which religion had traditionally set up between humanity and the animals" (Gilmour 131).

[6] In the same book, Dawson states that Africans and other colonized races were frequently portrayed as different species and evolutionary throwbacks in Victorian England (68).

Interestingly enough, Darwin's writings swiftly transcended local status and rose to transatlantic stature, reaching the United States of America and deeply influencing the former colonial states of Great Britain. After the end of the American Civil War in 1865, the newly unified United States of America openly debated evolution theory as well and proved extremely receptive to it, to the extent that USA was dubbed "*the* Darwinian country" (Hofstadter 4). Post-Civil war America, as Richard Hofstadter notes, was "like a vast human caricature of the Darwinian struggle for existence and survival of the fittest," with its swift enlargement and manipulation methods, its unceasing business arenas and its "peremptory rejection of failure" (44). The conclusions drawn by Darwinian debates also fitted well with the dominant trend of conservative political theory. Again, in a second parallelism by Hofstadter, American conservatives were seemingly content to view their society "as an organism," whose correct development should move in a slow pace without any abrupt social reforms that might play against nature and "lead only to degeneration" (7).

Despite the fact that the American Civil War delayed the absorption of Darwin's writings by American scientific circles, it eventually happened. While scholars such as Asa Gray, John Fiske and Edward L. Youmans spearheaded the effort to defend and promote Darwinism, the simultaneous emergence of "biblical criticism and comparative religion" by a more open-minded clergy paved the path for a massive American acceptance of Darwinism (Hofstadter 14). The gradual but quick conversion of scientists towards Darwin's evolution theory impacted the field of universities where reforms were made and science was pushed to the forefront of learning. According to Hofstadter, Darwin's new ideas rapidly "won their way in the better colleges and universities"[7], converting both teachers and students (21).

[7] Hofstadter singles out the creation of the Johns Hopkins University in 1876, "an institution devoted to research and free of obligations to any religious denomination" (21), as the most powerful, forward step for science in USA of those times, among others.

However, this rapid and massive conversion of the American nation from puritan conventions into Darwinism also came with a dark agenda. The taxonomizing of human races that Darwin's writings implied offered fertile ground for the creation of a false sense of "scientific legitimacy" for several ethnic prejudices that would help the average white American identify as an Anglo-Saxon Caucasian, while African Americans would pose as the bottom taxonomic category, Indians would play the part of "savagery yielding to civilization" , Jews would be "conniving," and so on and so forth (Lears 94-95). As Jackson Lears surmises, "the whole concept of race…acquired unprecedented biological authority," grew more organized and eager to prove its scientific legitimacy, seeking to reaffirm its solid roots in a changing world (93). Hence, Darwin's evolution theory rose in popularity because it affirmed such notions of racial awareness and significance in a more serious and potent manner than religion in the eyes of many Americans who held such beliefs.

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote *Jekyll and Hyde* in 1886, at a time when Darwin and several other scientists had successfully elevated the status of science in Great Britain. As Robin Gilmour accurately states, the Victorian period from 1860 till 1900 was "a time of unprecedented confidence in the power of science to solve the problems of life" (134). It is no wonder that the key character Dr. Jekyll is a scientist, a doctor who invests his labors in science in order to concoct a chemical compound that will release his second self, his double, Mr. Hyde, and scientifically prove what he believes to be "the thorough and primitive duality of man" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 49). Gilmour's statement that Victorian science supporters romantically placed excessive confidence in science as a power for goodness and progress, failing to recognize that it could be a "two-edged sword" (136), accurately mirrors Jekyll's fundamentally naive belief that, through science, his inner beast could both emerge and be controlled, with no simultaneous detriment or cost.

Furthermore, Stevenson's text encapsulates a series of anxieties that Darwin's writings generated on the Victorian society of that time. As Sue Chaplin opines, the transformation of Dr. Jekyll into Mr. Hyde directly reflects both Victorian middle-class fears that "man might indeed regress to a more primitive state under the influence of certain social, cultural and scientific forces" , as well as anxieties of an imperialistic nature that centered on how the superiority of the white race could be jeopardized by the possibility of racial miscegenation, that would lead to degeneration (100). Apparently, before Darwin, the British empire and its citizens were eager to conquer and exploit foreign lands and peoples, but after the *Descent*'s publication, the dread of miscegenation via sexual intermingling between colonizers and colonized suddenly grew incredibly vivid.

Approximately forty-five years after Stevenson, in 1931, Howard Phillips Lovecraft completed "Innsmouth," a Gothic novella that features a young explorer filled with scientific curiosity, who visits the bleak port town of Innsmouth and encounters its deformed and mutated inhabitants. Although the direct application of science is absent from the narrative, the unidentified narrator, named Robert Olmstead[8], while not a scientist, he still attempts to rationalize the situation and draw scientific conclusions through his actions. These entail interviewing certain locals, thoroughly exploring the town and observing, listening to or chasing any and all hints that could lead him towards a trail to discover the truth behind Innsmouth and its denizens.

What is more, through Olmstead, Lovecraft puts to pen several notions that matured in the American mind after 1865, as a result of the Darwinian impact. Olmstead is a figure indicative of pragmatism, an American philosophy of practicality, which, as Horton and

[8] Lovecraft mentions the narrator's name in his "Notes to 'The Shadow of Innsmouth'" (251), along with Olmstead's entire family tree. Inside the story, the narrator remains nameless.

Edwards explain, developed mainly due to Darwinism and as a result of how American pioneers “had approximated in their own experience the picture of life as set forth by evolution” (167). Secondly, the unreliable Olmstead, that keeps on looking for clues and questioning his sanity and ancestry, functions as a character-paradigm of the pessimistic outlook that overwhelmed American writers after Darwin’s scientific exploits forced them to form a picture of man as a “bio-chemical phenomenon, a bundle of reflexes responding mechanically and helplessly to stimuli too powerful to be controlled” (Horton and Edwards 260-261). These conditions, which saw literary naturalism in the United States rise to prominence, produced “an attitude of the deepest gloom” (Horton and Edwards 255) in literary circles. Indeed, Olmstead does act and respond to stimuli as though he were a man who had pondered Darwin’s scientific revelations in reluctance and disbelief.

At this point, it is worth asking whether there are many direct references to Darwin’s theory in Stevenson and Lovecraft’s writings. In his personal writings and letters from Victorian England of the 1870s and 1880s, Stevenson fails to dedicate any specific essay or article to the discussion of Darwin and the theory of evolution. Still, in a letter which he writes on September 1873, he mentions that he bought Darwin’s latest book and discussed “the strength of the illustrations” with some fellow travelers (“To Mrs. Sitwell” 23). This is proof of the fact that Stevenson bought and read Darwin, like most Victorians, and came in contact with the scientist’s work.

In contrast to Stevenson, Lovecraft, who was a prolific writer of personal letters and essays, devotes an entire essay in January 1921, to express his admiration towards certain scientific leaders, such as Darwin, Huxley and Haeckel. He notes about Darwin, in particular, that “the exact details of organic progress as described in ‘The Origin of Species’ and ‘The Descent of Man’ may admit of correction or amplification; but to attack the essential

principle, which alone is of universal importance, is pathetic" ("In Defence of Dagon" 52). Eight years later, in a letter addressed to one of his literary friends, Lovecraft goes on to proudly declare, "After Darwin and *my* friend Huxley the residue of unexplained things had begun to shrink so much. By 1900 there was not much intellectual reason to believe in the supernatural" ("To Frank Belknap Long" 270-271). Therefore, it can easily be inferred that Lovecraft was a man that admired the scientific progress of the nineteenth century and approved of the way science had destabilized earlier religious notions and constructs, that he as an atheist scorned.

I will now turn to the two Gothic texts in question, *Jekyll and Hyde* by Stevenson, and Lovecraft's "Innsmouth," and investigate how their startling affinity, despite some differences, betrays their strong Darwinian influence. To that end, I will first dedicate a chapter to compare these two Gothic texts in terms of setting, atmosphere, narrative, motifs, conventions and other relevant aspects that illuminate how the Gothic genre raises pressing questions about the Darwinian influence. In the second chapter, I will focus on the main characters of both novellas, that is, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde as well as Olmstead and the fish-people of Innsmouth, in order to show how their development is influenced by science and Darwin's evolution theory and how both Stevenson and Lovecraft raise important questions about degeneration and evolution through them.

Gothic Darwin

This chapter explores the elements which make the texts of *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth" Gothic. Typically, the question of what classifies a story as Gothic leads to an extensive discussion with ambivalent results. In their introduction to the book *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, Spooner and McEvoy argue that there exists no single answer to this question which, in the past, was usually settled by the existence or not of certain Gothic "dominant tropes such as imperiled heroines, dastardly villains, ineffectual heroes, supernatural events, dilapidated buildings and atmospheric weather" (1). However, as years passed and literary criticism evolved, the delineation of the Gothic grew more sophisticated and intriguing. In her book *Gothic Literature*, Sue Chaplin defines the Gothic in an alternative way, characterizing it as a "mode of writing" that is ripe for the imaginative expression of the not so easily described apprehensions, anxieties and turbulences of the historical contexts in which it is involved (4). Fittingly, Chaplin goes on to mention Darwin's evolution theory and the challenge it set upon religion during the late nineteenth century as one of the crucial, social developments that the Gothic of those times addressed (20). I contend that both *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth" fit into this Gothic framework of both late Victorian England and 1920s America by representing, in complex ways, the implications and complications of Darwin's evolution theory.

Even though both novellas belong to the Gothic genre, they deviate in terms of narrative, mirroring, in a sense, the close correlation that the Gothic had with other literary genres of their respective ages. In Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*, the entire atmosphere of tension and secrecy surrounding Dr. Jekyll and the terrible truth of Mr. Hyde that is hidden

directly reflects the intimate relation between the Gothic and the sensation novel[9], which was rich in mysteries that threatened the stability of the entire Victorian image of a stable, "middle-class family as a place of security, purity and propriety" (Chaplin 86). On the other hand, "Innsmouth," which features Olmstead's visit to a secluded town where nature has not functioned according to common human perception, is a typical example of Lovecraft's self-dubbed Gothic literature of "cosmic horror"[10]. The story is based around the realization of humanity's unimportance in the face of the cosmos, along with the dread that accompanies this epiphany, one which is also, of course, realistically derived from modern scientific strides (Chaplin 115). To conclude, both narratives unveil events that threaten, when exposed, the solid, commonly held assumptions of humans about nature and the world around them. Darwin's evolution theory has to a considerable extent both caused and legitimized these fears of social decay and human displacement that both *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth" convey.

The manner in which *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth" tell their story and unweave the events of their narratives is indicative of their Gothic nature and of both Stevenson and Lovecraft's experimentation with narrative form and credibility. The narratives are multi-faceted, delivered by multiple narrators that are neither always reliable nor implement the same means to tell their story. In *Jekyll and Hyde*, the first half of the story consists of Mr. Utterson's third-person narrative, during which he exchanges information with several other spectators and characters. The second and final half of the story is comprised of two lengthy

[9] A fictional genre popular in Victorian England of the 1860s-70s, focusing on the existence of certain clandestine, felonious events such as bigamy and adultery in the social or family sphere (Chaplin 86).

[10] "A certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present; and there must be a hint…a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the daemons of unplumbed space" (Lovecraft, "Supernatural Horror in Literature")

statements in the form of written wills, letters, of the deceased Dr. Lanyon and Dr. Jekyll. When it comes to "Innsmouth," the first-person narrator, Olmstead, firsthand delivers his subjective viewpoint regarding his entire visit to Innsmouth, which is however interrupted multiple times by smaller narratives by other characters, such as the ticket agent, the grocery store boy and old man Zadok, who each add in their own way to the story of the mysterious Innsmouth and its amphibian creatures. As Chaplin notes, in Gothic literature, the strategic selection of multiple "frame narratives" usually coincides with the existence of multiple narrators endowed with viewpoints and accounts either matching or contradictory to the story's event, which help pin all these narratives on one another (193).

However, there exist fundamental differences between *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth," when it comes to the methods and nature of these multiple narrators. In his story, Stevenson opts to use three seemingly well-respected gentlemen of Victorian society, two doctors and a lawyer, that is, Dr. Jekyll, Dr. Lanyon and Mr. Utterson, with the narratives of the two doctors being put on paper, as officially written statements, letters, documents and wills. The very first sentence of *Jekyll and Hyde* establishes Mr. Utterson's cold professionalism, describing him as "a man of rugged countenance, that was never lighted by a smile" (7). Similarly, Dr. Lanyon is ever the composed doctor, even during the moments when he adhered to Dr. Jekyll's bizarre requests, since, at the same time, he instinctively strove to reach a diagnosis about his friend: "The more I reflected, the more convinced I grew that I was dealing with a case of cerebral disease" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 44). As for Dr. Jekyll, he appears respectable enough to frequently host dinner parties for himself, Mr. Utterson and other "five or six old cronies, all intelligent, reputable men and all judges of good wine" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 19).

Since Mr. Utterson and Drs. Lanyon and Jekyll are depicted as these respectable, high-class figures, their credibility, despite the shocking events that their narratives relay, remains safely established and closely considered. Fred Botting writes that the fragmented narratives in *Jekyll and Hyde* consist of "journals, letters and first-person narratives [which are] combined with legal documents, distinguishing a world dominated by professional men" (139). It seems that Stevenson uses this professional credibility of the three main narrators in order to convey authenticity and appeal to his readership's sense of reason. To add to that, Stevenson's target might have been to display that even the high echelons of Victorian society would not be exempt from a social terror such as the emergence of Mr. Hyde, or, to link it with Darwin, the implications of the evolution theory regarding the possibility of degeneration.

To shift to "Innsmouth," Lovecraft's narrators lack any high professional status or social respectability, with Olmstead being a coming-of-age man, both the ticket agent and the grocery boy being simple, working-class people and old Zadok being Innsmouth's mad drunkard. Furthermore, their accounts are delivered orally, in the form of hearsay, and are marked with subjectivity, weird, local dialects, misconceptions and stereotypes. Olmstead, though steady and fluent in his narration, often blurts out unstable, frenetic statements: "I have an odd craving to whisper about those few frightful hours in that ill-rumoured and evilly-shadowed seaport of death and blasphemous abnormality" ("Innsmouth" 505). The ticket agent offers dubious remarks such as "Queer how fish are always thick off Innsmouth Harbour when there ain't any anywhere else" ("Innsmouth" 508), while the grocery boy reports that "People sometimes heard the queerest kinds of sounds" (518) in Innsmouth. Still, Zadok the old drunkard easily claims first place in the oddness contest, with challenging statements like "Yew want to know what the reel horror is, hey? ... it ain't what them fish devils hez done, but what they're a-going to do!" ([sic] "Innsmouth" 532).

The seeming unreliability of these narrators, this constant wonder of whether they are disclosing the full truth, or any of it, is a common motif in Gothic literature, connected with the portrayal of "textual 'madness' associated with Gothicism (Chaplin 196). What is more, the motif of unreliability creates the impression of the "emotional instability of the protagonist" which is linked with the Gothic pattern of "persecution and punishment" (Chaplin 196). Apart from the blatant unreliability of their accounts, this persistent fear for the other that every single "Innsmouth" narrator reveals directly brings to mind the anxieties that Darwin's evolution theory provoked in an America which had recently experienced what Peter J. Conn dubs "the highest levels of immigration [with] 15 million aliens coming into the country" from 1898 to 1917 (6). The possibility of these immigrants intermingling with American citizens had by then become well established, and as Tracy Bealer explains, this increase in the "likelihood of interracial contact" brought about by these modern historical events filled Americans with an unsureness which is directly manifested in Lovecraft's stories (30). In a sense then, the narrators in "Innsmouth" could arguably stand for the average American of those times who was troubled by these events and possibly affected by the imprint of Darwin's evolution theory.

Additionally, in both *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth," the two key narrators, Mr. Utterson and Olmstead respectively, are besieged by disturbing dreams at night. Stevenson remarks that Mr. Utterson's "imagination was also engaged or rather enslaved; and as he lay and tossed in the gross darkness of the night" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 14), he would see dreams where a Hyde-like figure committed heinous crimes or visited him at nights. Compatibly, Stevenson admits to drawing inspiration for *Jekyll and Hyde* from the dreaming patterns of his student years, when he "began, that is to say, to dream in sequence and thus to lead a double life—one of the day, one of the night—one that he had every reason to believe was the true one, another that he had no means of proving to be false" ("The Dream Origin of the

Tale" 88). In Olmstead's case, some years after the Innsmouth incident with the amphibian creatures, he was constantly tormented by dreams in which "I was one with them; wearing their unhuman trappings, treading their aqueous ways" ("Innsmouth" 552). Through these dreams, Olmstead confirms his ancestry with the Deep Ones, and his realization echoes Lovecraft's rather Darwinian statement that "Aside from the morphological characteristics…determined by aeons of physical evolution…all that we feel, think, say, do, hope and dream—is the sole product of our environmental heritage" ("A Living Heritage: Roman Architecture in Today's America" 119)[11]. Evidently, in both *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth," this recurrent pattern of dreams boosts the unreliable narrator motif and raises the readers' acuity of the terror at hand, be it Hyde or the Deep Ones. Also, dreams represent the purest form of the subconscious expression of anxieties that found fertile ground in British and American societies in the wake of Darwin's evolution theory.

Taking a step forward, it can be observed that the setting of both Gothic novellas stands as a factor of similitude. The dark streets and houses of late Victorian, urban London in *Jekyll and Hyde* meet with the bleak, seaport town of Innsmouth. Stevenson describes the "dismal quarter" of Soho, London, as a "district of some city in a nightmare," "with its muddy ways, and slatternly passengers, and its lamps, which had never been extinguished or had been kindled afresh to combat this mournful reinvasion of the darkness" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 23). Similarly, Lovecraft draws a descriptive canvas of a town "with a portentous dearth of visible life… sagging gambrel roofs and peaked gables conveyed with offensive clearness the idea of wormy decay [with] a bygone lighthouse [a] few decrepit cabins, moored dories [and] ruins of wharves [and] deserted farms in varying stages of ruin" ("Innsmouth" 514). Inescapably, both depictions thrust in front of the readers the question of whether the urban

[11] The essay was first published in the summer of 1935 in the *Californian*, according to editor of *Collected Essays Volume 5: Philosophy, Autobiography & Miscellany,* S.T. Joshi (139).

space that most people inhabit constitutes a space of progress and evolution of the human race or whether these slums and forsaken buildings establish an image more akin to decay and retrogression.

In addition to the question about the role of the urban landscape for humanity, however, both Stevenson and Lovecraft's cities serve as distinct reflections of Darwinian theory with regards to the social coexistence of different species in a territory. Darwin forcefully states:

> Almost every species, even in its metropolis, would increase immensely in numbers, were it not for other competing species… nearly all either prey on or serve as prey for others [and] the range of the inhabitants of any country by no means exclusively depends on insensibly changing physical conditions, but in a large part on the presence of other species, on which it lives, or by which it is destroyed, or with which it comes into competition. (*Origin of Species* 181)

Clearly, the above statement purports that the mechanism of natural selection functions through the interaction and struggle for existence and balance between different organisms that share the same living space. In *Jekyll and Hyde*, this interaction is seen when Mr. Utterson, the respectable lawyer gazes upon "ragged children," "women of different nationalities" (23), as well as Mr. Hyde himself, reflecting an urban London filled with struggles for survival and huge differences in living conditions between the rich and the poor, the gentlemanly and the ungentlemanly. In Lovecraft's "Innsmouth," the seaport town is a living space for "listless-looking people," "dirty-visaged children…certain peculiarities of face and motions" (515), "repellent-looking youngish people" (516), which later on prove to be the direct descendants of a race of amphibian creatures which has long intermingled with the originally human residents of the town. These creatures struggled for existence over the

last few generations with the human population of the town, which has, by the time of Olmstead's narration, dwindled down to very few people, mostly workers commuting from other towns, and Zadok, the old drunkard.

These astonishing depictions of London and Innsmouth, as well as the social classes and species which inhabit them, testify to the power of the Gothic genre to put into play the biological and social implications of Darwin's writings. It must not be understated that the space in which both narratives take place is urban. According to Alexandra Warwick, by the end of the nineteenth century, in Gothic literature, the city had firmly been established as the "Other, dominantly figured as labyrinth, jungle, swamp, ruin… described as blackened, rotten, shadowed and diseased… populated by others who threaten to overrun or undermine the fabric of the imperial metropolis" (34). Even though in *Jekyll and Hyde*, a certain picture of social balance and stability is maintained in London, something which the emergence of the monstrous Mr. Hyde threatens, in "Innsmouth" this overrunning procedure is almost complete, with the struggle for existence having been won by the amphibian creatures and their hybrid descendants, who occupy the entirety of Innsmouth, since they have prevailed over their competing species, humans. Fittingly, Warwick remarks that in the Gothic literature of those times, the other is not merely depicted in terms of class, but of biology and physiology as well, since the Gothic was affected by Darwin's writings which distributed the feeling that evolution might not always be a stable march towards perfection but that it may also entail the potentiality for degeneration (34-35).

On a final note regarding the overall setting of the two novellas, I would investigate their relatability with the following Darwinian statement:

> Nor is the difference slight in… intellect, between a savage who does not use any abstract terms, and a Newton or Shakespeare. Differences of this kind between the

> highest men of the highest races and the lowest savages, are connected by the finest gradations. Therefore, it is possible that they might pass and be developed into each other. (*Descent* vol 1. 35)

I would suggest that Stevenson and Lovecraft's urban spaces of London and Innsmouth serve as experimental grounds for what might occur if the interaction and intermingling of what both authors conceivably viewed at the time as different people and species was put to the test. In the case of Stevenson, as Chaplin notes, *Jekyll and Hyde* is definitely influenced, as I will also discuss in the second chapter, by pseudo-scientific theories and interpretations of Darwin's work which instilled fears of degeneration and theories of class and racial difference in late Victorian England that infused the Gothic genre and caused the creation of physically forceful and repugnant villains such as Mr. Hyde (106). The climax of such theories came with Max Nordau's *Degeneration*, first published in 1896, in which the author described symptoms of degeneracy, arguing that the irregularity of degenerates is both physical and mental, and "[t]hat which nearly all degenerates lack is the sense of morality and of right and wrong" (book 1, ch.3). It could be argued that Victorian London resists Mr. Hyde and the potentially degenerative difference that he represents, and that is why, in the end, he perishes. On the contrary, Lovecraft's primordial, amphibian creatures attain sovereignty over Innsmouth -at least for several decades- and mate with humans, with their achievement supporting Lovecraft's philosophy that "civilization is posited as no more than a contingent configuration of primeval slime that is destined ultimately to dissolve back to it" (Chaplin 116). The fact that Lovecraft adopts these Darwinian concepts regarding humans as species affected by their living environments, in this case Innsmouth, is perhaps indicative of a resurfacing interest in America of the 1920s to apply the Darwinian theory into social issues, under the rudimentary supposition that "if animals and plants adapted to changing

environments so could humans, even if it was so as to live in austerity and to die in wars" (Boulter 147).

Inside the settings of *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth" lies one more thought-provoking Gothic element, that is, the endowment of items with mysterious, abnormal traits which incite tangible effects on characters. As Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock explains, "the darkly wondrous world of the Gothic is first and foremost a world of 'ominous matter'…mysterious objects that exceed their intended purposes and, through their interactions with human characters, become drenched with affect and supersaturated with psychic investment" (65). In *Jekyll and Hyde* for example, the door of Dr. Jekyll's house is "equipped with neither bell nor knocker, was blistered and distained" (8) and Mr. Enfield states that it is "connected in my mind…with a very odd story" (8). The gloomy door then prompts Mr. Enfield into sharing the story in which Mr. Hyde unlocked it after committing a crime against a child. This door, then, arguably serves as Mr. Hyde's entryway to Dr. Jekyll's home and respectability, and provokes distress to Mr. Utterson, with the lawyer exclaiming: "You are sure he used a key?" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 12). In "Innsmouth," a similar door, leading to a church basement, opens to reveal a "rectangle of blackness" (516), occupied by the disturbing figure of a priest who wore a tall tiara, an item which buffeted Olmstead with a "touch of bizarre horror" (516), since he had encountered the same tiara in a museum earlier. In Olmstead's first description, the tiara was filled with incredulity and confusion, since it was "designed for a head of almost freakishly elliptical outline" (510), its "lustrousness hinted at some strange alloy" (510), and he had never encountered any item like it anywhere before. Both items represent the interaction with what is different. Hyde's key unlocks Jekyll's door, while the alien tiara brings Olmstead in contact with something unknown. While in Hyde's case, the readers would mostly feel apprehensive towards the existence of a

door linking him with the respectable Jekyll, Olmstead's tiara sightings convey not only fear, but also a feeling of curiosity and bewildered admiration.

Further links can be found between *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth," if the factor of atmosphere and suspense-building is considered. Apart from the sights of London, Innsmouth and the characters of the two novellas that a reader takes in, sounds and smells play an important role in the weaving of both stories' narratives. While in *Jekyll and Hyde*, explicit references to abnormal or unpleasant smells are altogether absent from the narrative, even in the disreputable Soho district, with London streets being constantly referred to as "clean as a ballroom floor" (15), in "Innsmouth," "Pervading everything was the most nauseous fishy odour imaginable" (515), the nasty smell incessantly harassing Olmstead and causing him discomfort. Both London and Innsmouth are generally quiet, but while in London, street sounds usually consist of "small sounds carried far; domestic sounds out of the houses" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 15), the sporadic, dim sounds that Olmstead picks up in "Innsmouth" come from "indeterminate sources [and are] strongest inside the most rigidly boarded-up facades…creakings, scurryings, and hoarse doubtful noises" (521). It is evident that both Stevenson and Lovecraft wrote with the goal to stimulate not just the eyes of the reader, but his or her ears and nose as well.

Behind these closed, boarded up doors, in both *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth," lurks the unknown, threatening other, in the form of either Mr. Hyde or mutated Innsmouth citizens. In *Jekyll and Hyde*, the final confrontation occurs with the breaking of Dr. Jekyll's laboratory door, which kept a weeping, desperate Mr. Hyde hidden, who lets out a "dismal screech, as of animal terror" (38), before they find him dead. In "Innsmouth," as Olmstead later finds out, the "tightly shuttered condition of many third-storey and attic windows" (521) hosted a legion of mutated creatures that returned Olmstead's gaze and caused him to feel

like “I could not escape the sensation of being watched from ambush [by] staring eyes that never shut” (521). It can be inferred then, that the settings of both *Jekyll and Hyde* and “Innsmouth” contain rather innovative forms of the Gothic castle trope, in which “locked doors, thick walls and darkness thwart progress and enforce isolation; [and] half-heard conversations convey ominous intent” (Weinstock 66). Since Mr. Utterson and the butler break down Dr. Jekyll’s door, uncovering the truth, and Olmsted confirms his suspicions, overcomes the attack of the locals and escapes unharmed from his hotel, it can be surmised that the key characters in both stories successfully overcome the Gothic “castles” planted in them, with all their secrets and dangers. The trauma caused by Darwin’s evolution theory—a menacing Gothic castle which both British and American readers urgently attempted to comprehend and accept—gave rise to new expressions of Gothicism such as monstrosity and duplicity, which we encounter in both *Jekyll and Hyde* and “Innsmouth.”

Although I plan for a more extensive scrutiny of the key characters of both *Jekyll and Hyde* and “Innsmouth” in the following chapter, I find it relevant, under the Gothic spectrum of reference, to mention a few Gothic motifs with regards to them. Undoubtedly, the Gothic figure of the double is encountered in both Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde’s case and Olmstead’s case. Dr. Jekyll confesses in his letter that he eventually reached the conclusion that “man is not truly one, but truly two” (*Jekyll and Hyde* 48), and thus he executed an elaborate plan to transform himself into Mr. Hyde, his other self. In “Innsmouth,” Olmstead undergoes a measured change into an aquatic Deep One, because he is actually descended from one, and in the end of the novel he sounds motivated to let go of his former self and embrace, in a sense, his double: “I do not believe I need to wait for the full change as most have waited” (553). Chaplin explains that in Gothic literature, the double finally “emerges as a monstrous entity that is potentially fatal to the sanity, if not the very life, of the protagonist,” embodying the instability of identity and symbolizing aspects of the self that cannot be easily embraced

(238). This danger to life and sanity is keenly perceived by Dr. Jekyll, who is eventually consumed by the evil Mr. Hyde, when the doctor grievously admits that "I began to spy a danger that, if this were much prolonged, the balance of my nature would be permanently overthrown [and] the character of Edward Hyde become irrevocably mine" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 55). Quite on the contrary, Olmstead adapts to the reality of his situation with a sense of inexplicable eagerness, with his statements, though, pointing to the fact that his mutation into his double has indeed damaged his sanity: " I shall plan my cousin's escape from the Canton madhouse, and together we shall…swim out to that brooding reef in the sea and dive down through black abysses. [There] we shall dwell amidst wonder and glory for ever" ("Innsmouth 554).

The pattern of the Gothic double that both *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth" demonstrate, did not appear randomly in the late nineteenth century and onwards. As Botting explains, the entire range of Victorian problematization about society and science, along with intense apprehensions about degeneration, crime and sex could be tracked inwards and "identified in human nature itself, an internalization that had disturbing implications for ideas about culture, civilization and identity" (136). This newfound turn inwards was undoubtedly intensified by Darwin's writings which contained statements such as "The evidence that all civilized nations are the descendants of barbarians consists, on the one side, of clear traces of their former low condition in still-existing customs, beliefs, languages. Savages are independently able to raise themselves a few steps in the scale of civilization" (*Descent* vol 1. 181). Darwin's contemporaries, therefore, could rationally conjecture that every single person held within himself or herself the potentiality for savagery, crime and retrogression, and were led to question whether the evolution of the human race pointed towards a brighter future.

Operating under this prism of Darwin's evolution theory, it is understandable how Victorian England readers of Stevenson's novella could easily draw lines between Dr. Jekyll, his double, Mr. Hyde, and the Darwinian implications of inner duality, linked with degeneration and primitivism, even when it came to civilized humans such as themselves. Regarding "Innsmouth," Olmstead stares at the mirror revealing his transformation, initially with fear, but quickly afterwards with acceptance and awe[12]. As I already mentioned some paragraphs earlier, the United States welcomed the first decades of the twentieth century with huge waves of immigration, and as Conn notes, "virtually all of the immigrants clustered in cities…also an immense flux of internal migrants, rural Americans [mostly] southern blacks. [There appeared] concentrations within that concentration" (6). American cities, therefore, became places of interaction and communication between a multitude of peoples and beliefs[13]. Bealer writes that Lovecraft's "Innsmouth" captures the concerns regarding this full-scale social alteration which entailed the constant interaction and intermingling of different people and is a story indicative of "a writer working through and considering an empathetic, though still deeply ambivalent, aesthetic response to racial difference" (31). It could be surmised then, that Lovecraft delivers to the American readers of "Innsmouth" an avatar of themselves in the guise of Olmstead. While they observed this modern, melting pot of a changing American society, their emotions were ambivalent and could jump from fear of potential degeneration, exactly like Olmstead who initially felt revulsion towards the Deep Ones, to acceptance, empathy and wonder for a multicultural future. Naturally, Darwin

[12] In *Jekyll and Hyde*, Dr. Jekyll also has a mirror scene in which he first glimpses Mr. Hyde and exclaims: "I was conscious of no repugnance, rather of a leap of welcome. This, too, was myself. It seemed natural and human" (51).

[13] In much similar fashion, writes Walkowitz who discusses its urban pathology and decline, London in the 1880s was "an immense world-city, culturally and economically important, yet socially and geographically divided and politically incoherent… totaling four million inhabitants" (quoted in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, edited by Katherine Linehan, 141)

played a crucial part in the whole process, as Bert J. Loewenberg explains, analyzing the social background of America in the turn of the century, stating that "Darwinism intensified the uncertainties which succeeded rapid social change, while rapid social change exaggerated the threat of Darwinism" (343).

An additional concept that is integral in Gothic literature and is encountered in both *Jekyll and Hyde* and Innsmouth is the concept of abjection. According to Julia Kristeva, the abject is "what disturbs identity, system, order [and] does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (4). Plainly enough, the key characters in both Stevenson and Lovecraft's novellas adhere to the Gothic concept of abjection. As Kelly Hurley writes, the double of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde "breaks down the boundary between self and other" (139). In a similar manner, Lovecraft's "Innsmouth" amphibian creatures which Olmstead is surrounded by, only to later transform into one of them himself, are frequently described as monstrous and abnormal: "They were the blasphemous fish-frogs of the nameless design—living and horrible" (549). Chaplin notes that monsters such as the Innsmouth creatures and Mr. Hyde unsettle those who gaze upon them, like for example Olmstead in the case of "Innsmouth," and she further explains that their "frustration of 'system' and 'order' powerfully evoke the chaotic impulses…that must be repressed if a secure adult identity is to be established and maintained" (253).

Still, the Gothic concept of abjection does not revolve around the abject object or subject, but rather centers on the response that onlookers, or readers, utter when they come into contact with him, her or it. Kristeva powerfully states that

> There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. Desire turns aside;

> sickened [but] simultaneously, just the same, that impetus, that spasm, that leap is drawn toward an elsewhere as tempting as it is condemned. (1)

In the first description of Mr. Hyde, Mr. Enfield describes his dislike of him in mixed terms, claiming that "he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He's an extraordinary looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 11-12). Mr. Utterson becomes captivated by the elusive depiction of Mr. Hyde to the extent that he is repeatedly assailed by dreams of him and he resolves to meet him: "'If he be Mr. Hyde,'" he had thought, "I shall be Mr. Seek.'" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 15). To switch to "Innsmouth," Olmstead cannot stop looking at every Innsmouth person that he encounters, drawn towards them. During the chase that they undergo to capture him, while at first "I began dreading to look at them as they passed" ("Innsmouth" 547), Olmstead's mood swiftly alters to "my resolution to keep my eyes shut had failed [for] who could crouch blindly while a legion of croaking, baying entities of unknown source flopped noisomely past…a hundred yards away?" ("Innsmouth" 548). After this encounter in "Innsmouth," Olmstead succumbs to "a merciful fit of fainting" (549), whereas in *Jekyll and Hyde*, Mr. Utterson, after finally meeting Mr. Hyde in person, feels extremely disconcerted: "the face of Hyde sat heavy on his memory; he felt…a nausea and distaste of life" (18). Both incidents in the two novellas confirm Chaplin's observation that "an experience of abjection is triggered by something…so physically repulsive as to trigger an adverse physical response: nausea, trembling, even vomiting" (252). One could argue that the readers of the two novellas at the time would have also approached the abjection in Mr. Hyde and the "Innsmouth" creatures with a similar degree of fear, rising unsettlement, and yet a weird yearning to read about and gaze upon them nevertheless.

These spirits of abjection, trepidation, fear and horror that can be elicited from both *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth" differ on the level of extremeness. Elaborating on Gothic horror, Hurley states that its "gleeful excessiveness…specializes in not just admixture but multiple and aggravated admixture," arguing that it buffets readers with uncontrollable, consecutive events that provoke disturbance and exceed all limits (142). In "Innsmouth," the prolonged, incessant descriptions of the monstrous Innsmouth citizens lead up to their wild pursuit to capture a horrified Olmstead, who, in rapidly alternating scenes, gets assaulted on his bedroom, then runs on rooftops and along the dark streets of Innsmouth, only to top this all off with an over-the-top climax of him beholding his attackers from a close, but safe, distance: "I saw them in a limitless stream – flopping, hopping, croaking, bleating…in a grotesque, malignant saraband of fantastic nightmare"(548). By comparison, *Jekyll and Hyde* presents events that take place in a subtler manner and slower pace, as the mystery surrounding Dr. Jekyll gradually unfolds with the help of multiple accounts. Nevertheless, the final twenty or so pages of the novella are arguably way more compelling than the previous forty, since the final confrontation with Mr. Hyde and Dr. Jekyll's death immediately leads to the reading of the statements of the two dead doctors, Lanyon and Jekyll, that fully illuminate the mysterious story and deliver a culminating, shocking blow to the readers.

In conclusion, this chapter has explored *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth" under the scope of the Gothic genre and its conventions, displaying how the entirety of their Gothic aspects can be linked with Darwin and the implications of his evolution theory in both Victorian England and the United States of America. A comparison was conducted between the Gothic in late Victorian England and America in the first decades of the twentieth century. I believe that *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth" serve as examples of the continuity of the Gothic genre and its transatlantic nature. Furthermore, the palpable Darwinian influence on several Gothic elements that these texts share proves that the Gothic of the late

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was sensitive to advances in science and society and was fertile ground for the articulation of anxieties surrounding Darwinian ideas and implications.

Scientific Pursuits in London and Innsmouth

In both *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth," science plays a major role in the conception and representation of the two novellas' key characters, Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde as well as Lovecraft's Olmstead and the amphibian creatures of Innsmouth. Darwin's theory of evolution stands as the most obvious scientific influence in both texts, despite their geographical and temporal divergence. Indubitably, Darwin's writings, along with the biological breakthrough that they caused, can be listed under what James J. Bono coins as "changes in scientific thinking and practice whose effects…appear so fundamental or so unexpected as to seemingly transform the very nature of the game that doing a particular kind of science entails" (163). This chapter will explore the aspects of science and the Darwinian strain that are encountered in both Stevenson and Lovecraft's literary novellas, highlighting issues and questions that both writers bring to the forefront with regards to evolution, degeneration and human nature.

For starters, in both *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth," science reigns supreme in the sense that institutionalized religion holds no power in either of the two novellas. In *Jekyll and Hyde*'s London, there is no mention of churches or worship whatsoever and most key characters, like Dr. Jekyll, are people of science that are stimulated by scientific issues of their time. Lovecraft's "Innsmouth" steps even further and delivers a sort of parody of institutionalized religion by presenting a "peculiar secret cult which had gained force there and engulfed all the orthodox churches [called] 'The Esoteric Order of Dagon'" (511), which basically translates to the hybrid creatures of Innsmouth eradicating orthodox religious worship and replacing it with their own pagan rites and gatherings. Understandably, Lovecraft's bold meddling with religion and his clear-cut presentation of its distorted state in the town of Innsmouth can be explained by the fact that in America after the 1890s, "religion

had been forced to share [its] authority with science, and American thought had been greatly secularized. Evolution had made its way into the churches [and] not a single figure [then] ventured to dispute it" (Hofstadter 30). Therefore, Darwin's evolution theory, through its impact on American society, enabled daring moves in the literary field which diminished the role of religion and showcased scientific influence in its stead. I believe that the silent question asked by both Lovecraft and Stevenson is whether this dominance of science over religion constitutes an advantageous development which nourishes evolution, or instead leads to a dimmer path towards degeneration.

Even though Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde* fails to include any form of institutionalized religion, traces of orthodox Christian faith are still found in the scientist Dr. Jekyll, who often calls Mr. Hyde "My devil [the] spirit of hell awoke in me" (56) and is seen "fallen upon his knees and lif[ting] his clasped hands to God" (57) after he returns to his normal self. This ambivalence on Stevenson's part possibly mirrors certain Victorian beliefs that Darwin's evolution theory could be "easily accommodated within a natural theological framework [that] accepted evolution but argued that it was merely a secondary mode -the how-" by which God's plan took place in the world (Dawson, "Science and its Popularization" 170). Indeed, the scientist Dr. Jekyll, who dabbles with notions of duality and evolution and creates Mr. Hyde, calls this second self "wholly evil" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 52), displaying that the viewpoints of science and faith can function simultaneously in a person, even though it is debatable whether Dr. Jekyll's implementation of science is ethically correct on this matter. As Jenni Calder writes about Stevenson, "the reality of evil, its ambivalence, its attractions, had always possessed Louis" (qtd. in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, ed. Linehan, 127). Just like Mr. Hyde assumes the role of the devil in Dr. Jekyll's and others' eyes, in "Innsmouth," several secondary characters call the amphibian creatures "imps out of hell…a whole legion of devils" (506-507). However, these assertions come in the form of

unofficial, local folklore and hearsay, and Olmstead never believes them or views them with religious gravity, especially when they are uttered by old Zadok. On the other hand, in *Jekyll and Hyde*, the respectability of the scientist Dr. Jekyll undeniably bestows his religious statements with a higher degree of credibility.

As evinced by the texts, it is scientific curiosity which drives both Dr. Jekyll towards his double, Mr. Hyde, and Olmstead towards the amphibian creatures of Innsmouth that he hails from. Dr. Jekyll claims that after long reflection and many scientific studies, he ended up becoming convinced in the duality of man, recognizing with scientific humility that "others will outstrip me on the same lines" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 48), and admitting that "the temptation of a discovery so singular and profound, at last overcame the suggestions of alarm" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 50). When it comes to "Innsmouth," Olmstead was already undergoing a journey resembling a scientific quest of data harvesting and processing, in the sense that he aimed it to be "sightseeing, antiquarian and genealogical" (505), and at first mention of the town of Innsmouth, he owns that a rumor-shadowed town which maps and guide books did not include "roused something like real curiosity" (506) in him[14].

This scientific curiosity in both *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth" is promptly translated into scientific action by both Dr. Jekyll and Olmstead, albeit they act in a very

---

[14] It could be argued that these comments made by Stevenson and Lovecraft's main characters reflect Darwin's own scientific curiosity which reached its climax during his voyage to the Galapagos Islands: "When on board H.M.S. 'Beagle', as naturalist, I was much struck with certain facts in the distribution of organic beings inhabiting South America [which] seemed to throw light on the origin of species" (*Origin of Species* 21).

different manner. Hunching over his laboratory table, Dr. Jekyll pursues his reflections through chemistry, with the zeal of a determined alchemist, powerfully declaring that "Certain agents I found to have the power to shake and to pluck back that fleshly vestment" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 49), compounding and consuming a drug that "so potently controlled and shook the very fortress of identity" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 50). Olmstead, on the other hand, after acquiring as much data about the people of Innsmouth as possible, appears intoxicated by a fever of sociology and anthropology, noting that "To my architectural and historical anticipations was now added an acute anthropological zeal" ("Innsmouth" 511). This drives Olmstead to visit Innsmouth and observe it from an anthropological, biological and historical viewpoint, attempting to uncover its mysteries.

When it comes to scientific observation, in both *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth," the other, that is, Mr. Hyde and the Innsmouth people, are examined very professionally in terms of their appearance and demeanor. For example, Mr. Hyde is described by the scientist Dr. Lanyon as having a "shocking expression [in] his face [along] with his remarkable combination of great muscular activity and great apparent debility of constitution" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 44), and as raising in the doctor a feeling of "disgustful curiosity" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 45). Switching to "Innsmouth," Olmstead wonders when he sees the condition of the locals, which he dubs 'Innsmouth look,' claiming that it should be a condition of extreme rarity so as to produce "such vast and radical anatomical changes in an individual after maturity [in] osseous factors as basic as the shape of the skull" (518), noting that it might be "a disease rather than a blood strain" (521). Both Mr. Hyde and the Innsmouth creatures, then, attract scientific attention and receive what could be called a diagnosis by onlookers in both novellas.

A specific quote taken from the *Descent* is of paramount significance in this comparison between Stevenson and Lovecraft's novellas. Darwin notes that "Man is descended from a hairy quadruped, furnished with a tail…probably derived from an ancient marsupial animal, and this through a long line of diversified forms, either from some reptile-like or some amphibian-like creature, and this again from some fish-like animal." (vol 2. 389). Stevenson's Mr. Hyde is "pale and dwarfish [and] the man seems hardly human! Something troglodytic" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 17) while he also displays "ape-like fury" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 22). These descriptions of Mr. Hyde as a vicious, animalistic cave-dweller classify him as "a throw-back to an earlier stage in the development of the species" (Chaplin 100), and more specifically, bring to mind a hairy, primate mammal or the above quadruped that Darwin mentions.

To link the above Darwinian quote with Lovecraft's "Innsmouth," and hence compare the novella with *Jekyll and Hyde*, I would argue that Lovecraft's amphibian Deep Ones and their hybrid descendants can be considered throwbacks to the even earlier evolutionary stage of "some amphibian-like creature, and this again from some fish-like animal" that Darwin describes (*Descent* vol 2. 389). As old Zadok explains, the creatures were "able to live both in an' aout' o'water" ("Innsmouth" 525). After their frantic pursuit of him, Olmstead finally catches a proper look of the creatures and delivers an observation that resonates with intense biological and anthropological vibes:

> Their predominant colour was a greyish-green, though they had white bellies. They were mostly shiny and slippery, but the ridges of their backs were scaly. Their forms vaguely suggested the anthropoid, while their heads were the heads of fish, with prodigious bulging eyes that never closed. At the sides of their necks were palpitating

> gills, and their long paws were webbed. They hopped irregularly, sometimes on two legs and sometimes on four. (“Innsmouth” 548)

The fact that the human residents of Innsmouth mingle with these amphibian creatures and bear hybrid descendants is indicative of a trend in Lovecraft’s work that Patricia McCormack singles out, that is, the “conjoining of unlike entities into combinations unheard of in terrestrial majoritarian instances” (209). In “Innsmouth,” therefore, Lovecraft moves along some Darwinian lines by introducing an ancient, amphibian-fish species which is linked with humanity as a potential distant ancestor, especially since, as “Innsmouth” crudely displays, it can mate and reproduce with humans. By comparison, Stevenson’s Mr. Hyde is significantly less sexually marked, being a product of a chemical experiment instead of sexual reproduction. Still, Mr. Hyde, who hints to a primate ancestor of humanity, perpetrates a series of spontaneous feats of violence, such as his trampling of a young female child and the murder of Sir Carew, which could be interpreted as forms of expression of sexual frustration, hidden desire or impulse. Botting, while discussing *Jekyll and Hyde*, powerfully states that “the horror emanates from the revelation of the extent and power of these buried energies” (139).

These horrible, criminal acts that Mr. Hyde commits in *Jekyll and Hyde* echo Victorian pseudo-scientific notions of biological criminality, linked with degeneration. Cesare Lombroso had at the time developed a highly popular theory that supported this link and claimed that “criminals are evolutionary throwbacks in our midst. Germs of an ancestral past. Innately driven to act as a normal ape or savage would [within] our civilized society” (qtd. in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, ed. Linehan, 133). The Darwinian influence on such notions, and subsequently on Mr. Hyde’s character, is evident. However, the fundamental issue in *Jekyll and Hyde* is the fact that despite Mr. Hyde’s wicked nature and

commitment of criminal acts, the man dresses, acts and talks in a manner similar to any other London gentleman of the time. Jane V. Rago puts it accurately when she suggests that "Hyde does not pass as a gentleman, he *is* a gentleman, and this is precisely where the anxiety of the text is located" (279). Mr. Hyde poses a threat to all the other gentlemen of *Jekyll and Hyde*, as well as its Victorian readership, because his existence implies that any gentleman may harbor such dangerous tendencies inside him. As Rago masterfully notes, to "recognize deviance in Hyde as a gentleman requires knowledge that one should pretend not to have, yet to ignore it is to risk accepting the degenerate into one's own society" (281). In *Jekyll and Hyde*, therefore, Stevenson thrusts the wicked yet gentlemanly Mr. Hyde into the forefront and forces the reader to contemplate whether he represents an evolved version of humanity or a felonious, degenerate figure, in the midst of a civilized society.

The struggle for dominance that takes place in both the urban space of London in *Jekyll and Hyde* and the semi-urban port of "Innsmouth," between characters simultaneously so close and so far from the normal human condition, finds common ground in the *Origin of Species*, where Darwin surmises that:

> The forms which stand in closest competition with those undergoing modification and improvement, will naturally suffer most. It is the most closely-allied forms, - varieties of the same species, and species of the same genus or of related genera, -which, from having nearly the same structure, constitution, and habits, generally come into the severest competition with each other. (121)

While in both novellas, this violent, competitive battle for survival does occur, Mr. Hyde calls on others, talks properly, and his violence is gentlemanly, unfolding subtly within the social network. Conversely, the large majority of Innsmouth's amphibian denizens are mute and cannot use human language, communicating among themselves with "croaking and

jabbering in some hateful guttural patois" ("Innsmouth" 545), while they also exert a more animalistic form of violence than Mr. Hyde, since they wordlessly pursue their target, Olmstead, in large packs, like a hunting party of wild beasts. The way Lovecraft fashions these creatures in "Innsmouth" again raises the question to readers of whether their hybridized, amphibian forms represent a possible evolution for humanity or are simply manifestations of degeneration at a highly advanced state. Interestingly, their frenetic chase of Olmstead, coupled with their hoarse, unintelligible voices calling out, could be viewed as attempts at communication, intended to both help Olmstead realize his ancestry and accept their form as a positive, evolved future for humanity. This fits well with McCormack's deduction that Lovecraft frequently "exceeds the limits and traditional configurations and uses of language in a human way," striving to utter and capture what cannot be uttered by mere human speech because it transcends language (202-203).

It is evident that *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth" differ in terms of anthropocentrism. Mr. Hyde, despite his wickedness and his uncanny figure, could conceivably pass for a regular human being of civilized society, whereas the residents of Innsmouth are repeatedly and powerfully marked for their animality and otherness to humans. As mentioned earlier, there existed several scientific theories and beliefs in *Jekyll and Hyde*'s Victorian London which emphasized the possibility for degeneration and corruption of the human individual, especially criminals. Still, the debauched Mr. Hyde, that forces readers to ponder on the connection between humans and their primate ancestors, would perhaps never have been created as a character if Darwin did not write his groundbreaking texts. Botting states that "Darwin's theories, by bringing humanity closer to the animal kingdom, undermined the superiority and privilege humankind had bestowed on itself" (137). The subhuman, mute creatures of "Innsmouth," created by Lovecraft five decades later, arguably illustrate this loss of anthropocentrism, that saw its first sparks in

Darwin's Victorian England, in a much more refined and rounded level. According to Jessica George, the vivid fear of hybridity and questioning of human nature that Lovecraft delivers in "Innsmouth," is "linked both to the loss of human distinctiveness and supremacy occasioned by knowledge of our descent from 'lower' primates and to contemporary racist discourses around immigration" (167). It seems to me that both Stevenson and Lovecraft utilize this decline in anthropocentrism that their respective eras encouraged to silently inquire whether Mr. Hyde or the Innsmouth hybrids could be an evolved form of humanity, exploring a future in which humans will not be positioned at the center of the world.

The drug that transforms Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde can be related to a key issue that Victorian society faced in the time of *Jekyll and Hyde*: intoxication. As Norman Kerr writes in 1882, more and more people constantly pursued a feeling of temporary elation, with alcohol being the number one choice, followed by "indulgence in opium, chloral, ether," all of which afflicted "consciousness, perception, reasoning power, and conscience" (qtd. in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, ed. Linehan, 138). In *Jekyll and Hyde*, Stevenson uses Dr. Jekyll, who exclaims "I fell in slavery. I had but to drink the cup" (52), to highlight this sensitive issue of Victorian society, with Mr. Hyde standing as an amalgamation of all the dreadful consequences that intoxication and similar addictions can inflict on a person. Through his choice of a drug-agent that is consumed by Dr. Jekyll and unlocks his vicious, seemingly degenerate side, Stevenson masterfully shows that not everything created, or in this case distilled, by science, will necessarily prove beneficial to humanity. Particularly in Victorian London, the advent of science did not prevent specific areas from becoming "notorious for criminal and quasi-legal activities: prostitution, gambling, alcohol and opium consumption" (Chaplin 101).

In rather similar lines, Lovecraft displays his negative outlook on the issue of intoxication in “Innsmouth.” The hybridized denizens of Innsmouth allegedly consume heavy amounts of liquor every day and “lay for most of the daylight hours in an alcoholic stupor” (“Innsmouth” 518), and even old Zadok, who was not a product of in-breeding with the Deep Ones, is a drunkard “unable to resist any offer of his favourite poison” (“Innsmouth” 519). In his personal writings, Lovecraft dedicates several essays against intoxication and advocates for total prohibition, stressing that alcohol was a highly disturbing issue in the United States as well. As early as 1917, while discussing the account of an individual who defeated alcoholism, Lovecraft explains alcoholism by making a rather biological statement that “human creatures long atavistically for the levity of an inferior state and wish to throw off artificially the burden of dignity with which evolution from the simian ape has invested them” (“A Remarkable Document” 28). All in all, in “Innsmouth,” Lovecraft subtly hints at alcohol playing its part in the depraved state of the Innsmouth people, even as Stevenson in *Jekyll and Hyde* creates a Dr. Jekyll who desperately seeks to drink an agent that will lead him towards the atavistic Mr. Hyde. Clearly, both writers fear the degenerative alteration that these scientifically distilled or brewed beverages and potions instill on the individual; but the question is whether they dread this transformation because it might reveal the true nature of humanity or a next step in its evolution.

The aspect of intoxication which links Mr. Hyde and the Innsmouth creatures follows the entire course of any regular addiction, since, apart from capitalizing on the terrible effects that drug consumption produces, both novellas also supply their readers with a depiction of severe withdrawal symptoms, as well as relapse. In *Jekyll and Hyde*, after Dr. Jekyll resolves to never again turn into Mr. Hyde, the immediate result of his short period of rehabilitation is that he violently lapses back to Mr. Hyde without any consumption or warning: “At all hours of day, I would be taken with the premonitory shudder [and] it was always as Hyde that I

awakened" (60). As a result, Dr. Jekyll is driven to preemptively consume the counter-drug in high dosage, in hopes of retaining his own self, exactly like a drug addict or alcoholic that overcomes his addiction via acquiring a new one and becomes "a creature eaten up and emptied by fever, languidly weak both in body and mind" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 60). Botting comments on this power-play between Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, arguing that "the secondary self seems primary, growing in power in inverse proportion to the sickliness of the better self" (141).

In "Innsmouth," by comparison, the withdrawal symptoms appear much later, experienced directly by Olmstead, the narrator. During his trip in Innsmouth, Olmstead cannot cease looking at and becoming repulsed by the 'Innsmouth look' of the citizens, feeling "some sardonic pull from dark, hidden sources" ("Innsmouth" 522) to remain in Innsmouth and maintain his search for what lies beneath this "festering city of death and decay" ("Innsmouth" 522). At the conclusion of the nightmarish pursuit that these creatures undertake to capture him, he finally decides that "I must get away from evil-shadowed Innsmouth" ("Innsmouth" 549), like an addict who realizes that he has to stop indulging in his or her dangerous vice. However, unbeknownst to Olmstead, the mark of Innsmouth and the hybrid creatures which are kin to him remains with him even after more than two years, during which he "fought off these reflections with partial success" ("Innsmouth" 552). Olmstead himself reports that "my health and appearance grew steadily worse, till finally I was forced to … adopt the static, secluded life of an invalid" ("Innsmouth" 553). A short while after, the mirror confirms his most acute fears and suspicions: "That morning the mirror definitely told me I had acquired the *Innsmouth look*" ("Innsmouth" 553). The aftermath of Olmstead running away from his "drug," which in this case is the observation of the repugnant Innsmouth look, is that it returns to haunt and afflict his own body and soul,

representing an “existential threat” that he strives to comprehend and deal with both physically and mentally (Bealer 33).

It is evident that Dr. Jekyll cannot escape from turning into Mr. Hyde, exactly like Olmstead cannot escape from becoming one of the Innsmouth creatures that he initially observed with repulsion. In his *Descent*, Darwin writes that in the process of natural selection, inheritance plays a role, but also “when one part is modified, other parts will change through the principle of correlation [due to] the surrounding conditions of life, such as abundant food, heat, or moisture [and] characters of slight physiological importance [which] have been gained through sexual selection” (vol 2. 387). This phrase explains the origins behind both Mr. Hyde, who is created in strictly scientific conditions, and Olmstead, who carries biological and sexual implications of heredity. In his influential book, *The Mismeasure of Man*, Stephen Jay Gould mentions the concept of recapitulation as fundamental in late nineteenth-century science, stating that all “disciplines were obsessed with the idea of reconstructing evolutionary lineages” (143), seeing the human evolutionary process in all stages of human life; thus, for example “the gill slits of an early human embryo represented an ancestral adult fish” (143). When viewed under this additional biological framework, it could be argued that Dr. Jekyll seeks to create and become Mr. Hyde in order to recreate humanity’s evolutionary link with primate ancestors, while Olmstead is drawn to the Innsmouth look and eventually transforms into an Innsmouth hybrid because the connection between humanity and an amphibian-fish ancestor is, simply put, too powerful to disregard.

Here lies a significant difference in terms of free will between the two main characters of Stevenson and Lovecraft’s novellas respectively, that is, Dr. Jekyll and Olmstead. In *Jekyll and Hyde*, Mr. Hyde reveals a part of Dr. Jekyll’s mind before he displays the transformation

to Dr. Lanyon, accusing the old doctor of having "long been bound to the most narrow and material views [and having] denied the virtue of transcendental medicine" (47). Evidently, Dr. Jekyll willingly pursues, through science, the course that will lead him to Mr. Hyde out of his own ambition to transcend the human limits and usher in new scientific vistas. As he himself admits in his statement, Dr. Jekyll had "learned to dwell with pleasure, as a beloved daydream, on the thought of the separation of these elements" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 49), that is, of himself and his double, as he perceived them. Plainly enough, Dr. Jekyll initially perceives the uncovering of Mr. Hyde as something transcendental, perhaps a potential evolutionary step for the entire human race, instead of a dark specter brimming with savagery and degeneration. That is the reason why the "'civilized' person of Jekyll slips with increasing ease into the ostensibly 'savage' person of Hyde," blurring the lines between civilization and primitiveness (Chaplin 101).

On the contrary, Olmstead in "Innsmouth" generally flinches before the hybrid inhabitants of the dystopian town and wishes till the end to brush aside any and all hints that he may be actually one of them. Though a sense of scientific curiosity does spark his interest and keeps him going in this Innsmouth trip, he is frequently overcome by a "wave of spontaneous aversion which could be neither checked nor explained" ("Innsmouth" 512) in the face of the locals, considering them with blatant contempt as products of "biological degeneration rather than alienage" ("Innsmouth" 513), and running for his life when they hunt him down. As seen at the end of the novella, when he finally realizes the truth about his lineage, he understands that his trip did not occur randomly, or out of his own free will, but was likely triggered by his hereditary nature to mingle with his kinsfolk and meet his destiny. Olmstead delivers an ultimatum of a melancholic, but also strangely hopeful defeat: "This was to be my realm, too – I could not escape it. I would never die, but would live with those who had lived since before man ever walked the earth" ("Innsmouth" 553). The fact that

Olmstead openly embraces his fate, especially since it encompasses what he initially deemed as degeneration, is a highly intriguing and masterful move by Lovecraft, which "challenges the rejection of otherness and privileging of impenetrability found in other canonical modernist texts" (Bealer 35). In fact, Lovecraft goes a step beyond Stevenson in openly suggesting that a transformation such as Olmstead's can be viewed as a potential evolution for humanity.

In order to stress this particular point even further, it is vital to engage with the issue of control when it comes to the two key characters in Stevenson and Lovecraft's novellas. At first, Dr. Jekyll believes that he can control his other self via science and therefore attain new evolutionary heights for humanity, being so enthusiastic and prideful as to utter to Dr. Lanyon via the lips of Mr. Hyde: "Will you be wise? Will you be guided? A new province of knowledge and new avenues to fame and power shall be laid open to you, here, in this room" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 46). Eventually, it turns out that Dr. Jekyll cannot control Mr. Hyde, his other self, and it is the despair regarding this loss of control that probably shifts his perception of Mr. Hyde towards a figure of a degenerate other rather than a stronger, more evolved version of humanity. This prompts Dr. Jekyll to write a final statement, in the guise of a suicide note, where he despondently declares: "I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 62). As Rago notes, throughout Stevenson's novel, "there remains a tendency to posit Hyde as fundamentally different, out of control, the anarchist" (276). The emergence of the inescapable, uncontrollable Mr. Hyde then, pushes the very scientist who created him into abandoning hope of evolution, conceding defeat and openly anticipating what is to be the suicide of his own self, that is, Dr. Jekyll's eventual consumption by Mr. Hyde.

When it comes to Lovecraft's "Innsmouth" and this matter, the similarity with *Jekyll and Hyde* lies solely in the fact that Olmstead does not exercise any control over his destiny, and his transformation into his other, amphibian self, even as Dr. Jekyll, after a certain point, fails to control Mr. Hyde. However, the initial repulsion that Olmstead feels by what he perceives as degeneration in the Innsmouth people and the "kind of terror of my own ancestry" ("Innsmouth" 551) when he begins to realize the truth, is at the end of the narrative terminated, replaced by a sense of acceptance and a boastful, almost jubilant proclamation that he and his cousin "shall go to marvel-shadowed Innsmouth [and] shall dwell amidst wonder and glory for ever" ("Innsmouth" 554). What is more, despite pondering suicide, Olmstead vehemently refuses to go through with it, shifting his mind abruptly: "No, I shall not shoot myself – I cannot be made to shoot myself!" ("Innsmouth" 554). In this case, therefore, unlike *Jekyll and Hyde*, lack of control leads to a sense of liberation and amazement, and Olmstead brilliantly shifts from viewing the "Innsmouth look" and his own mutation as a horrifying degeneration to marveling in awe before what could be considered a next step in human evolution, as he and his cousin will soon become immortal and shall freely swim the oceans and depths of the world. This stunning possibility for amendment that Lovecraft writes in "Innsmouth" speaks volumes about the writer's wish to emphasize the importance of displaying empathy towards the other, despite initial fear and misconception, with Olmstead exemplifying a "more empathetic response to the encounters with racial otherness modern life invites and fosters" (Bealer 36). While "Innsmouth" demonstrates that the biological determinism which rules Olmstead's fate can produce a potentially evolutionary step, I would argue that *Jekyll and Hyde* mostly shows that science cannot be trustworthy in producing humanity's next evolutionary level.

All things considered, what is most fascinating about both Stevenson and Lovecraft's novellas, is that the readers are invited to decide whether Mr. Hyde or the hybrid creatures of

Innsmouth, Olmstead included, stand for representations of degeneration or potential evolution of the human race. That is the crucial question that I believe both *Jekyll and Hyde* and “Innsmouth” ask, despite the fact that the two texts are separated both temporally and geographically. The basic query that both Stevenson and Lovecraft’s novellas entail is whether this mingling with ancestral, amphibian creatures in “Innsmouth” or the throwback to an ape-like, dark ancestor through science in *Jekyll and Hyde* come off as beneficial or detrimental to humanity, potential expressions of evolution or degeneration.

Conclusion

Being a dedicated reader of the Gothic, particularly stories which lean towards sheer horror, I have always felt a keen interest in both classic tales such as the *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by R. L. Stevenson and H.P. Lovecraft's more modern short stories, written in the first decades of the twentieth century. While perusing "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" for the fifth or sixth time, it struck me that several of Lovecraft's short stories of cosmic horror, but especially this one, could be linked with classic Gothic novels of the late Victorian era, and *Jekyll and Hyde* effortlessly came to mind. This thesis, then, is both the product of close and meticulous study, as well as an offspring of my personal literary interests.

Apart from the several, striking similarities and differences between the two Gothic texts that this thesis approaches, the framework of science, centered on Darwin, provides the guiding force. Even in this contemporary era, Darwin and his writings feel incredibly relevant. As Griffiths potently states: "There has never been a better time to study Darwin. Interest in his work is widespread [and] we now have unprecedented access to his manuscript and print writings. We still have a lot of work to do if we are to explain [why] Darwin's writings so moved his peers and why they continue to shape how we think today" (77). Indeed, the evolution theory of the most celebrated scientist of the nineteenth century continues to have a tangible effect on contemporary society. Terms like "natural selection" and "struggle for existence" are still at the forefront of discussion to this day, especially with the widespread rise of social and racial discrimination across a diverse world that teems with poverty, human rights issues and injustice.

Still, to return to the period which this thesis examines, the nineteenth century saw huge strides of scientific progress, whose effects continued into the twentieth century and,

naturally, had a transatlantic bearing. Dawson writes that “the particular scientific colossus [of] the period between 1830 and 1914 is unarguably Darwin” (172-173), whose evolution theory affected “virtually every aspect of nineteenth-century experience” (173). It is my belief that this thesis sheds light on how the milieux of Victorian England as well as the United States of America up until the 1920s reacted to the implications and complications of Darwin’s evolution theory.

Fittingly, the introduction of this thesis explores the anxiety and turmoil that Darwin’s evolution theory caused to the respective societies of both Stevenson and Lovecraft, as well as the reaction of scientific and literary circles in particular. According to Abel Alves, “between the 1860s and 1920s, there were intellectuals trying to reach broad audiences with their diverse ideas concerning evolution [and] the science and culture wars were on” (75). As I note in my introduction, most of these ideas in Victorian England revolved around the rising fear of degeneration, although a significant degree of scientific enthusiasm and moral optimism was also present. Importantly, Darwin’s evolution theory clashed with traditional religious beliefs of man’s supremacy over the natural world, as well as the high standards of respectability that Victorian society held. When it comes to post-civil war America, Darwin’s evolution theory fitted well with American ideas of competition and progress, quickly rising in prominence in universities and all other fields of life, encountering minimal religious resistance. At the same time, the darker implications of Darwin’s theory had the profound effect of reinforcing certain American ethnic and racial prejudices, while they also produced a pessimistic perspective in literature, helping in the advancement of literary naturalism in the United States of America.

The fact that the implications of Darwin’s evolution theory transcended local status and had a transatlantic impact is highly intriguing. Several situations and conditions in

today's world have pushed transatlantic relations to the forefront of research. Laura M. Stevens explains this rise in transatlantic interest as follows:

> Our era is one in which people, commodities, wars and plagues circulate among continents more rapidly than ever before. Scholars would be fascinated now by the ocean as source of both separation and connection…a place that must be passed through rather than settled on. The ocean offers a pliable metaphor for a late modern world understood in terms of permeable boundaries, uncertainty, or flux. (93)

Apart from this accurate observation of the ocean as a space which both links and splits, on principle, what Stevenson and Lovecraft specifically mirror, even though almost fifty years separate their two works of literature, is the transatlantic relation between British and American authors. As Stevens notes, "American and British authors experience the uncanny as they read each other, seeing a culture that resembles but reconfigures their own, and their writing is often a meditation on the distorted reflection they see" (97). I believe that the several similarities and differences between *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth," that this thesis has discussed, perfectly demonstrate the above statement and the relationship between an author of late Victorian England and an author of the American South in the 1920s.

The first chapter of this thesis compares Stevenson and Lovecraft's texts regarding their Gothic nature and attributes. The fruit of this parallel evaluation indicates the existence of what Chaplin also explores and notes in her book as "points of continuity and comparison between the British and American traditions of Gothicism" (5). Hence, the Gothic's transatlantic nature and continuity are illuminated in both the case of late Victorian England and early twentieth century America, in which periods *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth," respectively, take place. I further believe that this chapter demonstrates the capability of the Gothic genre to incorporate scientific and social developments and express the anxieties,

fears and hopes that they provoke. In this case, the two Gothic texts in question are definitely imbued with the influence of Darwin's evolution theory and their content approaches several of its implications, such as the compelling fear of degeneration that it caused to several members of society at the time.

In my second chapter, the comparison of the two texts, *Jekyll and Hyde* and "Innsmouth," is focused mainly on how their key characters display the rising influence of science and scientific progress, instigated by the numerous scientific strides of those times, especially Darwin's evolutionary theory, which has overall been the main focus of my scrutiny. I contend that both Stevenson and Lovecraft's texts opened the gates for their readers to ponder on the silent and subtle implications of the role of science and whether its progress, which proves to be inescapable, generally leads humanity towards degeneration or evolution.

Dr. Jekyll and Robert Olmstead embody this conflict, the anxiety lurking behind the embracing of scientific, biological truth and progress, along with the fear of degeneration, but also the hope for evolution that it encompasses. In retrospection, it would appear that Lovecraft is slightly bolder than Stevenson and leans more towards evolution rather than degeneration, since the ending of "Innsmouth" has Olmstead fully accept his fate as a hybrid descendant of the amphibian Deep Ones, rejoicing at his newfound nature and immortality. Despite his ambivalence towards immigration and other ethnic races in America, Lovecraft allows for Olmstead's transformation to be seen in a positive light, as a potential evolution for humanity. On the other hand, Stevenson does not permit Dr. Jekyll to relish in his successful experiment which turns him into Mr. Hyde for very long. Dr. Jekyll's project initially begins with fervor and faith in the power of science, but ends up tragically, laced with an utter fear of degeneration and loss of control. Nevertheless, it could still be

considered that Mr. Hyde represents a probable evolutionary form for humanity, instead of a throwback, since he comes with several enhanced traits, such as increased strength, tenacity and a powerful will to survive and dominate, despite his questionable morality and evil nature.

When all is said and done, and in spite of the fact that their texts may sometimes come off as discriminatory and audacious in their depictions of physical deformity and mutation, both Stevenson and Lovecraft masterfully reflect the challenges of their times in the fields of perception and morality under the prism of Darwin's evolution theory. In addition to displaying the fear of degeneration, along with the other anxieties which stemmed from Darwin's writings, their texts also entail a certain hope for a better, evolved future of humanity. Through a deep exploration of human nature, both physical and mental, the two writers offer a window into human psyche in a highly realistic and intricate manner, encompassing all the trepidation and pressing questions that members of their societies were filled with, given the monumental scientific developments of their time. Nowadays, several of these issues regarding human nature and the evolution of humanity remain open and highly contested. It is, therefore, noteworthy to observe and compare the efforts and ideas of Stevenson, a late Victorian writer, and Lovecraft, a 1920s American writer, as they approached such sensitive matters so many years ago.

Works Cited

Alves, Abel. “Humanity’s Place in Nature, 1863-1928: Horror, Curiosity and the Expeditions of Huxley, Wallace, Blavatsky and Lovecraft.” *Theology and Science*, vol. 6, no.1, 2008, pp. 73-88, *Taylor&Francis*, www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14746700701806072. Accessed 2 Sept 2019.

Bealer, Tracy. “‘The Innsmouth Look:’ H.P. Lovecraft’s Ambivalent Modernism.” *Journal of Philosophy: A Cross-Disciplinary Inquiry*, vol. 6, no. 14, 2011, pp. 30-36, *ProQuest*, search.proquest.com/docview/855603381?pq-origsite=gscholar . Accessed 2 Nov 2019.

Bono, James J. “Science Studies as Cultural Studies.” *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Science*, edited by Steven Meyer, Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 156-175.

Botting, Fred. “Gothic Returns in the 1890s.” *Gothic*, 1995, pp. 135–143.

Boulter, Michael. “The one culture, 1920s and 1930s.” *Bloomsbury Scientists: Science and Art in the Wake of Darwin*, UCL Press, 2017, pp. 146-158, *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1vxm8sr.15. Accessed 10 Oct 2019.

Chaplin, Sue. *Gothic Literature*. Longman, 2011.

Conn, Peter J. *The Divided Mind: Ideology and Imagination in America, 1898-1917*. Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Darwin, Charles. *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*. vol.1, Murray, 1871, London, *Darwin-Online*, darwin-online.org.uk/converted/pdf/1871_Descent_F937.1.pdf. Accessed 10 Oct 2019.

Darwin, Charles. *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex.* vol 2, Murray, 1871, London, *Darwin-Online*, darwin-online.org.uk/converted/pdf/1871_Descent_F937.2.pdf. Accessed 10 Oct 2019.

---. *The Origin of Species*. Edited by Charles William Elliot, P.F. Collier & Son, 1909, New York, *Internet Archive*, www.archive.org/details/originofspecies00darwuoft. Accessed 2 Oct 2019.

Dawson, Gowan. *Darwin, Literature and Victorian Respectability*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

---. "Science and its Popularization." *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1830-1914*, edited by Joanne Shattock, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 165-183.

Edwards, Herbert, and Rod Horton. *Backgrounds of American Literary Thought*. Prentice Hall, 1974.

George, Jessica. "A Polychrome Study: Neil Gaiman's 'A Study in Emerald' and Lovecraft's Literary Afterlives." *The Age of Lovecraft*, edited by Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, University of Minnesota Press, 2016, pp. 166-182.

Gilmour, Robin. *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature 1830-1890*. Routledge, 1993.

Gould, Stephen Jay. *The Mismeasure of Man*. W. W. Norton & Company, 1996, New York and London, biopolitics.kom.uni.st/Stephen%20Jay%20Gould/The%20Mismeasure%20of%20Man%20(148)/The%20Mismeasure%20of%20Man%20-%20Stephen%20Jay%20Gould.pdf. Accessed 10 Jan 2020.

Griffiths, Devin. “Darwin and Literature.” *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Science,* edited by Steven Meyer, Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 62-80.

Hofstadter, Richard. *Social Darwinism in American Thought*. Beacon Press, 1992.

Hurley, Kelly. “Abject and Grotesque.” *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, edited by Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy, Routledge, 2007, pp. 137-146.

Keith, Thomas. “Human Ascendancy.” *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800*. Penguin Books, 1984, chapter 1, books.google.gr/books?hl=el&lr=&id=qACGVWiq8SIC&oi=fnd&pg=PT2&dq=Man%27s+divinely+bestowed+morality+and+superiority+over+animals&ots=1bbSPNnPZR&sig=hnDQo-yS4vlxQhRG465u0V4ErCk&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false. Accessed 18 Jan 2020.

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez, Columbia University Press, 1982, New York, users.clas.ufl.edu/burt/touchyfeelingsmaliciousobjects/Kristevapowersofhorrorabjection.pdf. Accessed 10 Dec 2019.

Lears, Jackson. *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920*. Harper Perennial, 2010.

Lovecraft, Howard Phillips. “A Living Heritage: Roman Architecture in Today’s America.” *Collected Essays Volume 5: Philosophy, Autobiography & Miscellany*, edited by S.T. Joshi, Hippocampus Press, 2006, pp. 119-140.

---. “A Remarkable Document.” *Collected Essays Volume 5: Philosophy, Autobiography & Miscellany*, edited by S.T. Joshi, Hippocampus Press, 2006, pp. 27-28.

Lovecraft, Howard Phillips. “In Defence of Dagon.” *Collected Essays Volume 5: Philosophy, Autobiography & Miscellany*, edited by S.T. Joshi, Hippocampus Press, 2006, pp. 47-69.

---. “Notes to ‘The Shadow over Innsmouth.” *Collected Essays Volume 5: Philosophy, Autobiography & Miscellany*, edited by S.T. Joshi, Hippocampus Press, 2006, pp. 249-253.

---. *Selected Letters II (1925-1929)*. Edited by August Derleth and Donald Wandrei, 1968, Wisconsin, *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/LovecraftH.P.SelectedLettersIIArkhamHouse1968/mode/2up. Accessed 2 Nov 2019.

---. “Supernatural Horror in Literature.” *The H.P. Lovecraft Archive*, 1927, www.hplovecraft.com/writings/texts/essays/shil.aspx. Accessed 25 Oct 2019.

---. “The Shadow over Innsmouth.” *Necronomicon: The Best Weird Tales of H.P. Lovecraft*, edited by Stephen Jones, Gollancz, 2008, pp. 504-554.

Loewenberg, Bert James. “Darwinism Comes to America.” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol.28, no.3, 1941, pp. 339-368, *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1887120. Accessed 4 Nov 2019.

McCormack, Patricia. “Lovecraft’s Cosmic Ethics.” *The Age of Lovecraft*, edited by Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, University of Minnesota Press, 2016, pp. 199-214.

Nordau, Max. “Diagnosis.” *Degeneration*, William Heinemann, 1898, London, book 1, ch. 3, *Project Gutenberg*, www.gutenberg.org/files/51161/51161-h/51161-h.htm#c15. Accessed 20 Jan 2020.

Radford, Tim. "On the Origin of Species: The Book that Changed the World." *Guardian*, 9 Feb. 2008, www.theguardian.com/science/2008/feb/09/darwin.bestseller. Accessed 20 Nov 2019.

Rago, Jane V. "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: A 'Men's Narrative' of Hysteria and Containment." *Robert Louis Stevenson: Writer of Boundaries*, edited by Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury, University of Wisconsin Press, 2006, pp. 275-285.

Spooner, Catherine and Emma McEvoy, editors. *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*. Routledge, 2007.

Stevens, Laura M. "Transatlanticism Now." *American Literary History*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2004, pp. 93-102, *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3568009. Accessed 31 Jan 2020.

Stevenson, Robert Lewis. "Selected Letters and 'The Dream Origin of the Tale'." *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr.* Hyde, edited by Katherine Linehan, W. W. Norton & Company, 2003, pp. 80-92.

---. *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr.* Hyde, edited by Katherine Linehan, W. W. Norton & Company, 2003.

---. "To Mrs. Sitwell." *Letters and Miscellanies of Robert Louis Stevenson*, edited by Sidney Colvin, 1912, New York, pp. 23-24, *Internet Archive*, www.archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.160774. Accessed 12 Nov 2019.

Warwick, Alexandra. "Victorian Gothic." *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, edited by Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy, Routledge, 2007, pp. 29-37.

Weinstock, Jeffrey Andrew. "Lovecraft's Things: Sinister Souvenirs from Other Worlds." *The Age of Lovecraft*, edited by Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, University of Minnesota Press, 2016, pp. 62-78.