

CRADLES IN SPACE:  
THE CHANGELING IN FOLK NARRATIVE  
AND MODERN SCIENCE FICTION

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CRADLES IN SPACE: THE CHANGELING IN FOLK NARRATIVE AND MODERN  
SCIENCE FICTION

by

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation considers how modern science fiction (SF) has continually employed elements of European folk narrative to explore subaltern and subterranean culture—meaning, both the politically disenfranchised and biologically deformed figures who threaten to emerge from their underground habitations and infiltrate the most cherished institutions of the upper world. According to legends deriving from England, Wales, Cornwall, Scotland, Ireland, and Scandinavia, it was common practice for the fairies, also called the “Good People” or the “little people,” to abduct human children and leave withered and cantankerous fairies, known as “changelings,” in their place. I argue that the changeling emerges as a “conceptual persona” in the nineteenth century when folklorists and scientists alike began to interpret changeling tales as unsophisticated diagnoses of congenital diseases—before the medical lexicon of “congenital malformation” was even available. The changeling provided the absent lexicon, which was specifically adopted by Victorian British society as an explanation of insubordinate behaviour among children, women, the lower classes, and the non-white races. My five chapters discuss the figure of the fairy changeling as it appears in British and other European legends and as it is adapted in several SF novels of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To begin, I suggest that these European folk legends describe a “fairy economy,” in which two species engage in various forms of trade and exchange (Chapter 1). Through detailed readings of such folktales as “The Fairy Wife” and “The Speckled Bull” and such legends as “The Caerlaverock Changeling” and “Johnnie in the Cradle,” I argue that the changeling enunciates a particular set of issues that surface in the Victorian period, concerning childcare, reproduction, cross-cultural and cross-species relations, and hybridity, and which are further explored in the realm of modern SF. Both Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* re-imagine the changeling as a representative of the lower-class mob, the atavistic criminal population, and the Gothic underworld (Chapter 2). Shelley’s and Stevenson’s monsters are also clearly prototypical SF creations, related as they are to early speculations on the biologically engineered human. In both *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, H. G. Wells modifies these gothic/scientific fictions and their folkloric antecedents by exploring, on the one hand, the future devolution of the species into a two-nation world consisting of fey-like “little people” and monstrous underlings and, on the other hand, a near future hybridization of the species through the radical vivisection of various animal types (Chapter 3). Wells’s two works present vivid attempts to conceptualize a “symbiotic” community, clearly hinted at in the legends involving human-fairy interactions. As I argue through these first three chapters, the changeling narrative presents a fictional narrative that explores human origins through the interaction and exchange with a nonhuman species. Viewed through the lens of SF, the changeling legend conceptualizes species evolution and speculates on the utopian possibilities of cross-breeding cultures and species. Providing an Eastern European perspective, Karel Čapek explores the folkloric-cum-evolutionary notions of hybridity and symbiosis, first, in *R. U. R.*, a craftily disguised melodrama about artificially grown workers called “Robots” and, second, in *War with the Newts*, a satirical scientific parable about salamanders conditioned and bred to function as a labour force (Chapter 4). In both

scenarios, the engineered entities possess the “changeling” instinct to infiltrate and undermine human authority but also present the nightmarish results of co-opting monsters for profit and war. Olaf Stapledon develops this twentieth-century folkloric-cum-evolutionary exploration, first, in two “cosmological” fictions, *Last and First Men* and *Star Maker*, which contemplate the future development of the human species and the potential function of symbiotic communities. Adapting these original far-future visions, *Odd John* and *Sirius* return us to the quaint environment of folk narrative, conceptualizing new changelings in the form of a mutant superman and a hybrid man-dog. Together, Stapledon’s “composite” fictional world testifies to the resilience of the folkloric tradition and the religious or supernatural fascination with the fearful symmetry of the human organism. Such science-fictional speculations enable us to discover that legends contain within them subversive undercurrents associated with both a rural underclass as well as a “little folk” driven underground by colonization and industrialization. From this perspective, there are some fascinating intersections between folklore and SF, including the crossover between the “alien” and the “fairy,” the abduction motif itself, and the cultural significance of physical metamorphosis as it is consistently presented in changeling narratives and in “alien encounter” SF.



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Introduction—The Convergence of “New and Alien Racial Groups”: The Changeling in  
Folk Narrative and Modern Science Fiction

As science-fiction author and critic Brian Aldiss has argued, if the “Alien” is “the essential American obsession,” the “‘submerged-nation’ theme” is the essential “British obsession” (*Billion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction* 132). While Aldiss associates this theme with the fantastic fictions of Lewis Carroll, S. Fowler Wright, and John Wyndham, the “submerged nation” also has its source in the dark and subterranean realm of the fairies as depicted in British folk legend. If there was, as Walter Houghton argued back in the 1950s, a discernible “Victorian frame of mind,”<sup>1</sup> it was surely dominated by a literary fascination with fairy lore, as evidenced in some of the major literary works of the period: William Allingham’s “The Fairies” and Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin Market,” Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* and Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, Charles Dickens’s *The Old Curiosity Shop* and Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. As Carole Silver elaborates:

The Victorian study of fairy lore acts as an excellent reflector of both the dominant ideas and the concealed anxieties of the era. The specific areas and problems in fairy faith and fairy lore that preoccupied Victorian folklorists and believers are revelations of social and cultural concerns perhaps shown elsewhere, but never in such sharp relief. Concerns about change and growth in children, about the status of women in marriage and divorce, about the discovery of new and alien racial groups, and about the sources of evil, occult and natural, are all revealed in the lore the Victorians chose to emphasize and how they “read” and used it. (57)

There is much to suggest that fairies functioned for the Victorian fantasy, gothic, or realist writer in much the same way as aliens would for twentieth-century American SF authors: as metaphors, if not analogies, for outsiders and the subversive elements in society. Like

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<sup>1</sup> See Walter E. Houghton’s *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*.



aliens, fairies operate as vehicles of social criticism and, more crucially, as estranging parallels to the humans that supposedly inhabit the same geographical space.

This dissertation broadly considers how modern SF has continually employed elements of Western European folk narrative to explore subaltern and subterranean culture—meaning, both the politically disenfranchised and biologically deformed figures who threaten to emerge from their underground lairs (caverns, cellar dwellings, laboratories, industrial underworlds) and infiltrate the most cherished institutions of the upper world. While Chapter 1 concerns the larger context of folk narrative, individual forms like the legend and the folktale, and the particular importance of the fairy changeling in British Victorian culture, subsequent chapters focus on the science-fictional exploration of the terrain of Western European legend in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Chapter 2 considers Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818) and Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), each of which anticipate the “generic idea [of science fiction] that did not come into being until well after [they were] written” (Rose 5). Chapter 3 then considers H. G. Wells’s *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), which, along with his other scientific romances of the 1890s, helped to create a “mental location” for what would come to be called “science fiction” (Rose 6-7). Chapter 4 concerns the Czech author Karel Čapek whose *R. U. R. (Rossum’s Universal Robots)*, 1920) and *War with the Newts* (1936) constitute vital contributions to a genre—“science fiction”—that was relatively new. Finally, Chapter 5 considers British author Olaf Stapledon whose *Last and First Men* (1930), *Star Maker* (1937), *Odd John* (1935), and *Sirius* (1944) collectively

influenced the generation of science-fiction authors that included Robert A. Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke, and Isaac Asimov.

While this study focuses largely on the “Victorian” context of fairylore and the “British” dissemination of utopian/SF texts that derive from the folk legend tradition, it also broadens its view to consider the wider European interest in the residual significance of folk traditions in modern society. Indeed, the specific legends I discuss in Chapter 1 (“The Caerlaverock Changeling,” among others) are known internationally, while a number of specific texts by British authors (*Frankenstein*, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, *Last and First Men*, and *Star Maker*) are set in places outside of England or, indeed, beyond our blue planet, Earth. Additionally, Chapter 4 presents an Eastern European perspective, while the Conclusion considers two representative American authors. Moreover, the larger goal of this project is to 1) begin with a study of British preoccupations with fairy legend and then 2) consider the further development of similar folk motifs in other cultures and societies.

If Chapters 2 through 5 track the early development of science fiction, they also demonstrate the crucial ways in which additional genres like the folk legend and folktale contributed to the creation of the novel worlds that functioned as defamiliarizing parallels to the actual worlds in which the writers composed their works. The important discovery of the relationship between SF and folk narrative forces us to reconsider the accepted distinction between “fantasy” and “reality” and, specifically, the degree to which these generic forms challenge the “stability” and “present order of things” (Rose 21).

In his classic study, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, Tzvetan Todorov argues that the “fantastic” requires a hesitation on the reader’s part

between “total faith” and “total incredulity” (31); in this sense, the fantastic “is defined by the reader’s own ambiguous perception of the events narrated” (31). In such a scenario, where s/he has become integrated into the fiction-making process, the reader considers the world of characters presented in the fiction as a world of living persons, and hesitates between natural and supernatural explanations (33). As we will see, both folk narrative and SF are concerned with this tension between fantasy and reality, and each genre involves the creation of imaginary worlds, some of these corresponding analogously to the “real” or empirical world. But before we continue on with this comparative investigation, it is important to note that “folk narrative” itself generally consists of two basic oral forms—the legend and the folktale—and that each has a different relation to “reality.” According to Jacob Grimm, whereas the folktale draws “freely out of the fullness of poetry,” the legend “has almost the authority of history” (qtd. in Dégh 72). Lutz Röhrich elaborates on this distinction in the following way:

Legendary figures belong to a real otherworld; folktale figures have become part of a fantasy world and are no longer truly ‘demonic,’ and therefore not truly ‘otherworldly’ in the same sense as the legend.

[...]

The legend lives in two worlds; the *tension* between them becomes life-threatening for humans. (23-24; original emphasis)

There is something more “local” and “homelike” about the legend (Jacob Grimm, qtd. in Dégh 72), even if the supernatural does intrude on the domestic realm from time to time. But, then, that is the point: in the legend, the supernatural intrudes on and perhaps comes to dominate the mundane human world, whereas in the folktale, the supernatural has been almost domesticated. We might add that the legend enables us to *see* the transformation that has already taken place before the folktale begins. In other words, it is

almost as if the legend and the folktale exist as part of the same sequence, with the legend functioning as the explanatory text of the folktale: *this is how that fantastical world came to be*. Moreover, these apparent distinctions at the same time reveal the important link between the two folk narratives: in regards to Jacob Grimm's distinction between poetry and history, Linda Dégh argues that the two forms "correspond to primary attitudes in human culture and by their very nature merge and blend into each other" (59). Röhrich, too, admits that the distinctions do not really constitute hard and fast rules: "the same narrative text can be a believed 'legend' for one person and a fabled folktale for another" (10). Chapter 1 offers examples of both forms, and while I give preference to the legend, since the changeling seems to appear most often in this form, I also argue that the two forms frequently share a common interest in the "unknown" elements that constantly change the shape of mundane human existence. Both sorts of folk narrative can be poetic and historical simultaneously, depending on how readers interpret the text or tale placed before them. The two folk forms could then be viewed as part of a composite genre, "folk narrative," which contains supernatural and historical ingredients. If the folktale bears a general formal resemblance to other fictional narratives, particularly the romance, and if its interest in the creation of imaginary worlds draws parallels to the genre of fantasy, the folk legend's closer allegiance to an empirical horizon, in which the miraculous intrudes upon and exists in tension with the human world (Röhrich 23), anticipates the genre of science fiction.

Most critics of the genre insist that SF is, or at least should be, distinguished from other forms of fantastic literature, such as myth, folklore, and horror. Darko Suvin, perhaps the most influential contemporary theorist of the genre, argues that SF is

determined by a “common denominator the presence of which is logically necessary and which has to be hegemonic in a narration in order that we call it an SF narration” (*Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* 63). For Suvin, this common feature is the “novum” (a term he borrows from Ernst Bloch), which is a “cognitive innovation” that deviates in some way “from the author’s and implied reader’s norm of reality” (63-64). Suvin further stresses that, in SF, the author’s environment should be “identifiable” from the text’s formal structure; for this reason, he maintains, SF is an “*historical genre*” (64; original emphasis). SF’s historicity specifically derives from its fictional exploration of innovations (gadgets, techniques, technological inventions, new relationships) that are plausible in the given society. For the reason that this relationship between a novum and an empirical environment welds together “science” or “critique” and “fiction,” Suvin designates SF as the “literature of cognitive estrangement” (4, 7-8). The narrative dominance of the verifiable novum does not, at least as a rule, operate in folk narrative and especially in the folktale: Suvin is, in fact, very forthright about proving such a point (8). There is neither a distinct historical context nor a distinct scientific/technological novum identified in these originally oral forms, which frequently have no identifiable author and no date of composition. Our comparative task is complicated further by the very fact that the “novum” itself—as defined by Suvin—is “postulated on and validated by the post-Cartesian and post-Baconian scientific *method*” (64-65; original emphasis). While it would be presumptuous to assume that science or philosophy could not have come into play in the composition of a particular folk narrative, it would be very difficult to prove that the opposite is true. SF, on the other hand, is written out of a specific historical context, which places the narration in a dynamic relation with a specific



scientifically informed audience; for example, the content in *The Time Machine* dealing with the theory of the fourth dimension indicates a very specific and dominant novum that was popular in both scientific and non-scientific forums in Wells's day. The powerful impact of such a narrative is that it has the ability to engage with and critique current scientific progress, so that, to use the example of Wells again, "science is no longer, as it was for Verne, the bright noonday certainty of Newtonian physics" (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 210). In this instance, of course, SF can be distinguished from folk narrative since its themes derive from very specific historical trends that often do not concern folk artists or storytellers.

All the same, I would reiterate that SF—as defined here by Suvin—depends on a fundamental "critique" that is inherent in any exploration of the unknown. While folk narrative is not the same as history, it can participate in such a critique "by providing that extremely important undercurrent of human thought, feeling, and expression" that history often ignores in its focus on dates and national events (Toelken 350-51); SF and other fictional forms stand out for exactly the same reason. While "myth" and the folk genres I am specifically concerned with may not express an explicit engagement with identifiable technological innovations, their investigation of the elements "beneath [...] the empiric surface" (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 7) means that they can and frequently do play an important part in the creation of "cognitive estrangement." Following Fredric Jameson's analysis in "Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre," we might say that, as a "contract" between writers and readers (or story tellers and listeners), genre can oscillate between the "semantic," which defines by comparison with other genres, and the "syntactic," which defines by the exclusion of other genres (Jameson 135-37). While folk narrative

still does not formally resemble SF, the folk legend's engagement with estranging experiences means that it can semantically cross over with the plots and themes of the SF narrative. In other words, genre is not a static category but is part of an ongoing negotiation of terms, in which the participants (writers/readers, tellers/listeners) sustain or modify the structural rules, and the genre itself changes as a result. More specifically, this dynamic between the writer and what could be called the "social addressees" produces change over time and is therefore embedded in social history (136). Due to its contractual engagement with social addressees who often have an intimate relation to the very production of novel experiences, folk narrative is always "re-created with each telling," is therefore a "creation of the moment," and, as a result, "crystallizes around contemporary situations and concerns, reflecting current values and attitudes" (Oring 123).

The basic generic category of folk narrative is not usually associated with the "real world" or even with possible changes in that world. And yet, my primary goal in this dissertation is to demonstrate that this limited view of folkloric genres is a major blind spot in contemporary literary criticism, and in particular, contemporary SF criticism. So I reject, for example, Mark Rose's premise that "reading a story about elves reinforces the conviction that elves do not exist in the world" (21). This is as wrong-headed as the claim that reading a story about aliens somehow confirms the absence of aliens in the world: as I argue in Chapter 1, the "elf" (or, for that matter, the "dwarf," "fairy," or "changeling") can function equally as a vehicle for the exploration and/or critique of a particular social milieu. Folk legend in particular may not even warrant the category of "fantasy," so closely tied is it to a particular conception of empirical worlds—concerns "about change and growth in children, about the status of women in marriage

and divorce” (Silver 57). In other words, if a legend did not derive from a particular historical moment, this does not eliminate the possibility that the very same legend might inform an understanding of a historical moment after it has occurred. As Rose himself admits, “At issue in [the] distinctions [between fantasy and realism] is not, of course, the literal possibility or impossibility of the fictional world but, rather, the kind of relationship between the text and the empirical world that the story asks the reader to pretend to be true” (20). Working from this stronger premise, we then need to ask a series of questions: Who is reading/telling the story? Who is repeating it, and to which audience? What is the context of the reading/telling? What if, in the context of the telling of this story about elves, a child is born with “elfin” features? Might it then be possible to interpret the story as a parable about the physical changes of an infant in a particular empirical environment? The questions change, but always as a repetition with a difference, every time we substitute the particular narrative agent (elf, alien, fairy, and so forth).

The obvious structural differences between a folktale and a science-fiction narrative should not discourage us from finding other points of correspondence. Specifically, the nineteenth-century anthropological interest in indigenous cultures found a parallel in folkloric accounts of human encounters with a hidden or submerged civilization. The burgeoning discipline of ethnology certainly bolstered the popular interest in “savage” cultures and provided good material for fiction writers with a scientific turn of mind. We need only glance through Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Lost World* (1912) to see the effects of such a folkloric-scientific interplay: when Doyle’s journalist narrator Malone catches sight of the lost world, he describes it as a “fairyland”

and “the most wonderful that the imagination of man could conceive” (Doyle 60). Moreover, the folktale and the legend converge with SF in a particular social milieu (the nineteenth century, and particularly, the Victorian period), during which time folklore and science found common ground through their mutual interest in “new and alien racial groups” (Silver 57). But the popularity of the anthropological discourse was not simply the result of widely held racist beliefs; for, as Christine Bolt has argued, many anthropologists in the last quarter of the nineteenth century were highly critical of both sensationalized reports on “savage” cultures and racially prejudiced depictions of “a monster class of which nothing yet is known” (Charles Dilke, qtd. in Bolt 6). Especially after the establishment of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland in 1871 (which combined the originally separate fields of anthropology and ethnology), practitioners wanted to legitimize their study of indigenous cultures as scientific and informed, so that rather than isolating the differences between, say, British and Ashanti society, anthropological studies could discover “unsuspecting links between past and present, barbarous and civilized peoples” (Bolt 5). This is to say that anthropology was concerned with correspondences as much as divergences between cultures. Modern SF clearly finds something fundamentally significant in a discipline whose “field work” provides plot material for tales about alien worlds, especially if those worlds provide estranging reflections of the culture that has sent out the explorers in the first place. We need look no further than the massive corpus of folk narratives involving human-fairy encounters to find possible prototypes for such “alien encounter” SF.

My more specific argument in the dissertation is that folk belief—and its primary vehicle, folk narrative—is an expression of a subaltern culture whose voice remains

“submerged” in the midst of modern culture. As it should be evident now, my focus is on particular but variable “environments” and the figures that inhabit these spaces and, inevitably, induce fundamental changes. The larger corpus of “fairy legends”<sup>2</sup> describes a wide variety of underground creatures, ranging from the “fairy people” associated with a fairy kingdom, fairy markets, and human-fairy trade; “tutelary fairies,” which include benevolent/malevolent creatures like the brownie and the boggart who are generally attached to a human household; the “nature fairies,” such as water spirits, and dryads, associated with “seas, rivers, lochs or bogs” (Briggs, *Personnel of Fairyland* 15); and “monsters, witches, and giants,” usually associated with ghosts or “lost races” (16). Early in her work, *The Personnel of Fairyland: A Short Account of the Fairy People of Great Britain for Those Who Tell Stories to Children*, Katharine M. Briggs states that these are simply “rough divisions for the sake of convenience”: the truth of the matter is, “Fairyland” is a vast swarming community of various species, which overlap and intermix despite the folklorist’s attempt to designate class and social distinctions. There is, of course, a consistent distinction made between the underground nonhuman community of legend and the upper-world human society of so-called “reality.” This may explain why legends about the fairies are so similar to those concerning the dead: it is easier for one to make a designation between a living, breathing, animate “person” and a ghostly, immaterial, inanimate “thing.” Nevertheless, the persistence of folk narratives treating the human-fairy relation—whether this involves human encounters with the

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<sup>2</sup> The most comprehensive collection is probably Katharine M. Briggs’s *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales in the English Language, Incorporating the F J Norton Collection*, Part B: Folk Legends, Vol 1, which includes well over two hundred pages (pp. 175-411) of legends concerning changelings, brownies, and other sundry human-fairy encounter tales.



elegant “fairy people” or with the more uncouth brownies and giants—suggests a long established human interest in the chaotic undercurrents of lived experience. For, as numerous folklore scholars have consistently shown, the fairy folk live “alongside” or “side-by-side” humans and participate in similar sorts of activities, such as marriages, births, funerals, and wars. This is to say that the ghosts, fairies, and witches of folk legend conceptualize and enunciate “concrete social events and occasions” (Geertz 30) that either have no previous articulation or, on the contrary, find a *new* articulation to counter the mundane human one. A particular haunting, for example, may offer a model for social rebellion; a witch’s “expropriation” of objects in a household for the purpose of working magic on an intended victim (Jenkins 310) may offer a model for the guerrilla tactics of seizure or abduction. As the anthropologist Clifford Geertz has argued, “social actions are comments on more than themselves,” and “where an interpretation comes from does not determine where it can be impelled to go. Small facts speak to large issues, winks to epistemology, or sheep raids to revolution, because they are made to” (23). As indicated by folk legends and the science-fictional works that adapt them, Fairyland offers a conceptualization of that “something” that constantly eludes us, like the “lost treasure” of past revolutions (Arendt 4-5).

Since I have identified the articulation of imagined worlds as a relationship between an environment and the narrative agents that populate it, I would now add that these “worlds” (and indeed the treasures they possibly contain) cannot be contemplated without the agency of “conceptual personae.” Following the description of French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, if the “concept” has the components of a “possible world, [an] existing face, and real language and speech” (17), the conceptual

persona is the agent through which these components come to life for us. In a certain sense, the use of such concepts and personae is a philosophical practice, even while the conceptual persona “reintroduce[s] into thought a vital relationship with the Other” that precedes the philosophical plane (4), in the same way that folk belief (re)introduces pre-philosophical ideas through its conceptual personae. As Deleuze and Guattari elaborate, if philosophy “constantly brings conceptual personae to life” or “gives life to them” (62), “conceptual personae carry out the movements that describe the author’s plane of immanence, and they play a part in the very creation of the author’s concepts” (63). To put it another way: thought requires a vehicle in order to move in a particular direction, and so we constantly send out personae in search of concepts and worlds that would otherwise remain undiscovered.

The changeling is one such “conceptual persona.” According to British folk legend, it was common practice for the fairies, also called the “Good People” or the “little people,” to abduct human children and replace them with fractious and deformed fairies known as “changelings.” If, for example, we have trouble distinguishing between a boggart and a brownie (since, as Briggs notes, the only difference appears to be that the former is nastier than the latter [*The Personnel of Fairyland* 193]), our task is much more difficult when it comes to the ubiquitous changeling. The main reason is that the changeling does not designate a species or group of fairy but is, rather, a description of a particular operation and its mechanism: the changeling is that which is substituted for

another.<sup>3</sup> *The central claim of my dissertation is that the changeling is analogical to the crossover and perversion of biological and conceptual boundaries, for, as the legends consistently demonstrate, this divergent creature straddles the human and nonhuman realms and is associated with multiple fairy races.* The changeling's changeable nature speaks to the problems of classifying and drawing strict boundaries. Accordingly, the changeling relates to the artificial dichotomy between the natural and the supernatural, for changeling legends always depict a creature that appears as a human anomaly—a frightening variation on the human form and, therefore, the result of a supernatural intervention. These two initial interpretations are related if we consider the impact that both Darwinian theory and medical science had on the folklore scholarship in the nineteenth century: if, for the parents, the changeling was a monster, something awe-inspiring and therefore unnatural, for doctors and anthropologists alike, it was also a physical regression of the human form, an evolutionary throwback. Added to this cluster of interpretations is the historical fact that, throughout the nineteenth century, countless young children and women were abused or killed because their parents or husbands suspected them to be changelings. In this instance, the changeling assumes the operation of an estranging novum, and in particular, the role of the outsider, the insubordinate, and the unwanted human. Moreover, the fundamental significance of the changeling is its manner of linking the human and nonhuman worlds, for it is a fairy that frequently insinuates itself into a human home by assuming the appearance of a human child. Much of the drama in such legends relates to the difficulty of determining the changeling's

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<sup>3</sup> See the entry in the online *Oxford English Dictionary* (<http://dictionary.oed.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/entrance.dtl>), an excellent electronic source, which I have used for my discussions of "monster," "robot," and "subterranean."

origin, but one theme is quite consistent: fairies depend upon humans for their livelihood. The changeling not only supplies a mechanism for exchange between “alien” groups but also offers an analogy to the state of actually being an outsider. Finally, the changeling also enunciates a fundamental human anxiety about the unpredictable nature of life and of the strange denizens that seem to compete with us for territory.

While the changeling is, on occasion, associated with specific races such as elves and dwarves, it is more accurate to say that it derives from the larger community of fairy folk that inhabit the subterranean world of Fairyland. As W. Y. Evans-Wentz once argued, Fairyland is “peopled by more species of living beings than [the human] world, because [it is] incomparably more vast and varied in its possibilities” (52). Such a description resituates folk legend in a particularly utopian light despite its relative brevity. Since the legend tends to end with a sort of cognitive dissonance in which the previous boundaries of the human and nonhuman, the supernatural and the natural have been violated (Röhrich 13), we might surmise that it invites its readers/listeners to fathom the possibilities or the “possible worlds” briefly conceived but never fully articulated. Two possible worlds here are Fairyland and the empirical world in which it lies submerged. The “existing face[s]” are the very denizens that emerge at once as individual personae (dwarves, elves, and brownies) and as a collective assemblage (the fairy folk, the Good People, and so forth). As I have suggested, the changeling is both separate from this crowd, in that there are specific legends about it, and an integral part of the larger community, in that it provides the fullest articulation of the function of the fairy community: to promote trade, exchange, transformation, metamorphosis, and symbiosis. The changeling is the conceptual persona par excellence because it both precedes the

birth of fairy races (as the progeny of this dwarf community or that elfin community) and deviates from these forms (as the hybridized progeny of this or that human community). For, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, a single persona “has several features that may give rise to other personae”; in other words, personae “proliferate” and “constantly bifurcate” (76). What appears in the folk legend as a deformed fairy becomes in the SF story a hybrid human-animal or human-machine.

Folk legend is one point of origin for the changeling, the fragrant subterranean realm from which this human-fairy organism emerges into the light of day for folklorists and anthropologists alike. As Raymond Williams has reminded us, however, any “emergence” carries with it traces of a past or “residual” process (122), and is not bound by a particular space or time but, as Bakhtin might say, operates within the interstices of space-time.<sup>4</sup> Who knows when the changeling first appeared on the scene, or in what form? The folkloric changeling of the Victorian period appears to us in the already hybridized form of a demonic-monstrous-insubordinate-deformed child; and we can only comment on the particular conceptual influences (pagan, popular, or Christian religion; folklore, anthropology; pre-Darwinian, Darwinian, or post-Darwinian natural science) that comprise this dynamic and divergent organism. Moreover, the changeling’s origin changes depending on which matrix or era (such as Victorian, Romantic, or Medieval) we consider.

Chapter 1 considers the changeling’s emergence in the Victorian period when it becomes, before the advent of the SF “mutant,” the most effective enunciation of metamorphosis and change. The relation between humans and fairies, as depicted in folk

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<sup>4</sup> Bakhtin defines “chronotope” as the “intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships” (84).

narrative, says much about relations between insiders and outsiders, the familiar and the strange, the self and the other. In this sense, folk legends narrativize the difficulties of offering hospitality to strangers and especially to those perceived as hostile; Jacques Derrida provides an additional insight into an interpretation of both changeling tales and their real-life parallels, which reinforce the ordeal of housing, looking after, and being overtaken by one's potential enemies ("Hostipitality" [2002] 380). The close proximity between the fairy folk and human communities is reinforced by the precedence of what Briggs calls a "fairy economy" in which the two species engage in various forms of trade comparable to but nevertheless distinguishable from the modern capitalist model. Through the analysis of five folk narratives, the bulk of the chapter focuses on the changeling figure who, as a substituted (human/fairy) child, demarcates the impasse of the fairy economy but who also establishes Fairyland as a realm of transformation rather than stasis. While folk legends supplied a metaphorical language for dealing with the transgression of established moral boundaries, they also offered intelligent attempts to comprehend the human capacity for intolerance and violence (Briggs, "Johnnie in the Cradle" and "A Fairy Changeling: I"). The legend's emphasis on the atrophied body of the changeling (Briggs, "The Caerlaverock Changeling" and "The Fairy Changeling: II") suggested also a parent's interpretation of a physically deformed child: "this can't be our child—our child was stolen away" (Eberly 232). The new relations established between changeling and child, human and fairy races, lower and upper worlds are possible only through a radicalized understanding of "hospitality" in which the "exchange" initiates the perversion of purity. Associated as it is with the intermixture or hybridization of the human and fairy worlds, and the unregulated "becomings" that characterize entities that

manage to straddle two kingdoms, the changeling conceptualizes the primacy of the “alliance” as a contingent relation between disparate groups. My closing discussion of a folktale structured around the animal-human transformation motif (O’Sullivan, “The Speckled Bull”) establishes the changeling legend as a nexus around which several concepts constellate. For folk narrative explores the dynamics of crossing territories and *species*, and discovers in these geographical and biological aberrations new relations for the changeling.

The chapters that follow this initial foregrounding chapter offer the general premise that both folk narrative and SF present conceptual models for the practical biological experiments since the early nineteenth century. I begin with the late Romantic period in which the gothic romance appears to function as an additional component in the shaping of the folkloric personae that dominate the Victorian period. While not every fictional narrative under examination in these chapters explicitly explores the changeling persona described in folk legend, each one is concerned with the issues of biological metamorphosis, the mutation or hybridization of the species, and biological engineering—issues that the changeling motif/narrative has anticipated. Classic SF—by which I mean fictional works that contributed to the development of the genre—reinforces the cognitive function of folk genres and folkloric personae.

Chapter 2 considers how in the nineteenth century folk narrative became transformed by novelistic treatment, and how, as a result, Fairyland assumed the shape of the sublime “sea of ice,” the busy metropolis, and even the laboratory. In Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde* the fairy folk, in turn, assumed the shape of the lower-class mob, atavistic criminals, and gothic/science-fictional monsters. Given

the gothic sublime's interest in the fearful symmetry of the body, I argue that it shares an important correspondence with "cognitive estrangement," which, as a central feature of SF, manifests itself as a "shock" to the reader's own cognitive norms (Suvin, *Positions and Presuppositions in Science Fiction* 142). In the first instance, Shelley reproduces her own form of the monstrous sublime in the figure of an engineered human who articulates new social relations among the deformed lower classes in the post-Revolutionary period. In the second instance, Stevenson offers an urbanized variation on the changeling motif in his depiction of a human's metamorphosis into a dwarf, even as he returns to the Romantic gothic themes of class deformation, illegitimacy, and monstrosity. I conclude by suggesting that the proto-science-fictional elements of *Frankenstein* and *Jekyll and Hyde* enable us to rethink the "monstrous sublime" (gleaned from both Edmund Burke and Thomas Malthus) in terms of a "cognitive estrangement." Modifying the definition somewhat, I suggest that Shelley and Stevenson each introduce a gothic monster as the "novum" (agent) of their work in order to resituate the changeling and the doppelganger as biological possibilities.

Chapter 3 argues that Wells's *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Dr. Moreau* employ the gothic-cum-folkloric motif of the underground nonhuman community as a configuration of the "submerged nation," which threatens to supplant the ruling class in society. Wells's use of folkloric figures such as the Eloi and the Morlocks in *The Time Machine* acknowledges the cognitive possibilities of the folktale and the sociological possibilities of remapping Victorian England as a "Fairyländ" consisting of two nations. While they are biologically distinct species, the Morlocks and the Eloi are bifurcated members of a single species, *Homo sapiens*, and therefore operate as the changelings in



this futuristic world; this is Wells's first notable articulation of such an SF persona. After all, the folkloric changeling is associated with the always shifting boundaries between individual fairy groups, and between individual classifications of human and fairy, human and animal. *Moreau* carries on the Wellsian project of adapting and modifying popular genres for the purpose of scientific speculation, using a folktale-parable form to narrativize the process by which the human *becomes* beast and vice versa. While the narrator Prendick calls Moreau's vivisected "Beast Folk" "inhuman monsters," the sympathetic Montgomery sees them simply as "men" who seem to possess more humanity than *Homo sapiens*. I conclude by distinguishing the Traveller's obvious revulsion towards the Morlocks from Prendick's more ambiguous attitude, noting that *Moreau* presents a more advanced stage of Wells's neo-Darwinian thought since it exchanges the gothic terror of the bestial reversion for the folkloric wonder of the unexplained and potentially liberating transformation. Because it becomes associated with the "accidental" nature of evolution, sudden, unforeseen alterations in the human organism, and the crossing over of the human and animal kingdoms, the changeling may be the conceptual persona par excellence in SF.

Chapter 4 considers Čapek's *R. U. R.* and *War with the Newts*. Like the figures in Wells, Shelley, and Stevenson, Čapek's characters appear to be further variations on folkloric personae (Robots, Newts), combining as he does the folk motif of metamorphosis with the "hard" scientific facts about evolution and biological mutation. In *R. U. R.*, genetically engineered humans in the form of "Robots" emerge as tacticians, incorporated as they are into the labour force and the military: here we have another key evolutionary leap in which artificially produced changelings assume significant positions

in society—although, as it turns out, at the expense of society’s human inhabitants. The play’s final evocation of Genesis parodically subverts the Christian/humanist notion of the “dominion” of one species over the other, particularly since the new “men” and “women” who inherit the earth are actually the product of a hybrid human-Robot intermixture. In my discussion of *War with the Newts* I consider the inevitable problems of recruiting or co-opting the changelings of twentieth-century society: in this instance, a sea captain and a businessman employ a contingent of highly evolved salamanders first to hunt for pearls and then to assume the collective role as a world-wide labour force. Inevitably, the exploited Newts, who have since learned how to use underwater drills, literally turn the tables and begin to submerge the major continents of the world. This scenario reflects Čapek’s keen awareness of the Nazi threat in his own Czechoslovakia, and the ways in which class and racial deformities of the “little man” can lead to powerful and obsessive reactionary behaviour. In the end, Fairyland has been ransacked and redesigned by the capitalists, while its inhabitants have been armed and deployed as a host to frighten even the most “modern” of families. Despite this dystopian conclusion, Čapek nevertheless returns us to the “plebeian” concerns of the “little people” by exposing the sham of “free enterprise” as well as the limitations of “hospitality.” There is, moreover, a subtle Darwinian lesson implied in Čapek’s work: that the beautiful complexity of a single society becomes savage, destructive, and ultimately sterile when it attempts to impose its creativity and inventiveness on other societies; when it, in other words, prefers automatism over variability. My discussion of both texts considers the important differences between *natural* spontaneous mutations, of which the “changeling”

is a key example, and *unnatural* or engineered mutations, of which Frankenstein's monster is a representative example.

Chapter 5 considers four works by Olaf Stapledon: *Last and First Men*, *Star Maker*, *Odd John*, and *Sirius*. In contrast to the pulp writers of his era (John W. Campbell, Edmond Hamilton, A. E. van Vogt), Stapledon presents the most sophisticated attempt to “vary [the] surface” of Wells's original paradigm, as established in both *The Time Machine* and *Moreau* (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 242), conceptualizing two changelings: one, a deformed superman, and the other, a hybrid man- dog. Following Čapek's engagement with the fascist “little men,” Stapledon employs the changeling as an antidote to the Nazi “Superman” and the ideology of racial perfection. Stapledon's cosmological fictions, *Last and First Men* and *Star Maker*, constitute the author's first attempts to articulate the philosophical notion of “personality in community,” which turns out to be a variation on the concept of symbiosis. The first work explores a variety of human species over an evolutionary span of some two thousand million years, but I focus on a few notable societies in which the changeling appears to be a prototype for societal mutation. The second work explores inter-planetary relations over an even longer span of time, but again I focus on a few fascinating instances of symbiosis, including that between a “fish-like” race, the Ichthyoids, and a “crustacean” race, the Arachnoids. While we find no recognizable folkloric changelings in either text, we do discover the metamorphoses at work in the crossing over of kingdoms within the alien biospheres—operations that characterize all changeling tales, whether they be found in European folklore or SF. I next consider *Odd John*, which constitutes Stapledon's most deliberate evocation of the changeling persona: a deformed superman who infiltrates a variety of

human institutions and who strives to form his own colony of “supernormals.” But as he begins to distance himself from *Homo sapiens*, in his newfound philosophy of spiritual transcendence, he also loses touch with his human heritage. Because Odd John completely rejects the human world, I argue that he is just one vital coordinate in a “composite” persona. As I argue in the final section of the chapter, Sirius completes the composite changeling persona by reintroducing the animal, which would return to the earth while the superman would wish to transcend it. The additional importance of Plaxy, the female human who engages in sexual relations with the “man-dog” Sirius, is such that she enables a *woman-becoming-animal*, which we witness for the first time since “The Speckled Bull.”

Stapledon is perhaps one of the first SF authors to self-consciously incorporate the folk motif of changelingism. If SF, like that of Čapek and Stapledon, adds plausibility to the changeling tale by providing a scientific explanation for biological engineering, the folk narrative returns us to an almost primitive reverence for the body and its sometimes unpredictable processes. From this perspective, the changeling persona in both folk narrative and SF actually has a significant religious component; for the changeling’s supernatural origin—as a species of the unknown—is what constantly undermines the scientific reduction of the anomaly to a set of symptoms (congenital malformations, and so forth). Indeed, what frees the human from the clutches of the “factories of pain” (Gomel 404), so prominent in Nazi and Stalinist Europe, is the notion that the human is worthy of *worship*. As Theodore Sturgeon once remarked, sex and worship are the two prime motivating forces of the human species (“Science Fiction, Morals, and Religion” 99). For this reason the old folkloric changeling, with its origin in the syncretism of

popular religion, is a vital persona in contemporary SF since it reasserts the marvel of conception (Eberly 228), which always comes in the form of an intrusion or seizure. The changeling may constitute the pagan version of the divine intervention, which paralyzes its hosts with an ethical command: *worship me!* But this command is not bound by an ideological investment in biological purity or by a belief in the sanctity of a particular racial type. On the contrary, the command to worship is also a command to be hospitable, to allow the stranger into the home, and to enable the intermingling that may occur as a result. Despite its divergence from the Christian path of righteousness, the changeling has the potential to be an ethical figure and the convergence of “new and alien racial groups,” with humans thrown into the mix, its main source of divinity.

## Chapter 1—Becoming Monstrous, Becoming Divergent, Becoming Hybrid:

### The Changeling in Victorian Folklore<sup>5</sup>

We are the fairies' children!

—Martha Williams, qtd. in Gwyndaf 181

#### Introduction

One of the classic misconceptions about folktales and folk legends, including the supernatural figures that populate them, is that they derive wholly from the insular “superstitions” and “popular beliefs” of a primitive peasant society.<sup>6</sup> On the contrary, folk narratives conceptualize inter-group relations, which concern the material circumstances of raising families, dealing with poverty, disease, and war, and learning to adapt to changes in both the environment and in the economy. Folk belief, and fairy belief in particular, can be understood as a “conceptual world” (Appiah 94) that was dynamic rather than static and that derived its idiom, metaphors, and narratives from its intimate (and sometimes violent) relation with and not its indifference to so-called “civilized” society. If, in the British tradition, fairies have been identified as the primitive inhabitants of ancient Britain or the prehistoric Celtic realms, the persistence of belief in these otherworldly creatures suggests that they are contemporaries—nay, perhaps even subterranean neighbors—of the same “folk” who tell stories about them. Fairies are not simply an invisible race but have, for centuries, manifested themselves in various forms,

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<sup>5</sup> This chapter derives from a smaller article, entitled “Hybridity, Hospitality, and the Changeling in Contemporary Irish Culture,” *Working Papers in Irish Studies* 5.2 (2005): 3-32.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, André Jolles's *Einfach Formen* (trans. as *Simple Forms*), which, as Dan Ben-Amos argues, classifies folklore genres as “primitive, even primeval” forms of “human verbalization,” which are ultimately supplanted by “written forms” during the “transition from orality to literacy” (Ben-Amos ix). See also Richard Dorson's discussion of the “cross-cultural” approach to folklore in such authors as Edward B. Tylor, Andrew Lang, and Edwin Sidney Hartland, for whom folklore “represented survivals of primitive beliefs held by races of men at the lower rungs of the evolutionary ladder” (Dorson 38).

including most notably, “changed” children. According to the informants of changeling legends, it was common practice for fairies to abduct human children and leave withered and cantankerous fairies in their place. According to the Victorians, however, “on some level at least, the changeling phenomenon was a mysterious and frightening occurrence that could, if successfully probed, provide explanations for sudden death or disappearance, mysterious illness, and eccentric and bizarre behaviour” (Silver 60). While fairies, and especially changelings, “belong to the margins, and so can serve as reference points and metaphors for all that is marginal in human life” (Bourke, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary* 32), they also display, particularly for the Victorians who studied and feared them, the ability to infiltrate even the most dominant—and sacred—facets of human life.

This chapter argues that the changeling of nineteenth-century European folk narrative can be understood as a “conceptual persona” in that it articulates the “psychosocial types” (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 64) that dominated Victorian British society. As a “persona” rather than a “character,” the changeling is not merely a *symbol* but becomes the embodiment of or the diagnosis for existing social behaviours, particularly in the Victorian period. “In philosophical enunciations,” Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari write, “we do not do something by saying it but produce movement by thinking it, through the intermediary of a conceptual persona. Conceptual personae are also the true agents of enunciation” (*What Is Philosophy?* 64-65). As popular figures of folk legend in the nineteenth century, changelings have important links to folk religious beliefs (Dégh 77) and therefore become central in the legend’s general attempt to negotiate a particular “truth” (Oring 125). Moreover, the persona is constructed

as the “unknown” of the philosophical problem (Deleuze and Guattari 81). So, then, what “problem,” or set of problems, does the changeling explore?<sup>7</sup> While it was certainly a figure popular in Ireland, Scotland, and Scandinavia, the changeling enunciates a specific set of issues that surface in nineteenth-century England and concern childcare, reproduction, cross-cultural and cross-species relations. For this reason, the changeling is perhaps the most effective enunciation of metamorphosis and social change in the milieu of the Victorian period. The relation between humans and fairies, as depicted in the literature, says much about relations between insiders and outsiders, the familiar and the strange, the self and the other.

The first, and perhaps most fundamental, problem the changeling explores is the human concern with origins, and fairies were generally considered to be a devious tribe in the conceptual world of *all* Victorians (lower, middle, and upper class). As the work of Briggs suggests, the ambiguity of the fairy folk may result from the numerous and often conflicting “theories of fairy origins.” Fairies may be spirits of the dead, fallen angels, or elementals, as Theosophists argued in the later nineteenth century; they may also be the souls of unbaptized babies, called “piskies” (a variant on “pixies”) (Briggs, *A Dictionary of Fairies* 318), or “the diminished and conquered Tuatha de Danann” who were the original inhabitants of Ireland (*The Fairies in Tradition and Literature* 74). The most consistent “theory” is that the fairy people as a whole live lives parallel to humans: they eat, sleep, marry, die, sell, steal, and work to ensure a genetic future. As Briggs has

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<sup>7</sup> C. F. Goodey and Tim Stainton’s illuminating article “Intellectual Disability and the Myth of the Changeling Myth” suggests that both the changeling figure and the child substitution motif derive from medieval theological texts. While my historical focus in this study does not go back any further than the early nineteenth century, I do acknowledge the earlier religious and philosophical influence of the motif (for example, in Luther or in Locke) in order to reinforce the mixed ancestry of the changeling



convincingly shown, fairy legend confirms the presence of a “fairy economy,” which relies upon the hospitality of human communities, even while it appears to violate the rules of hospitality in the process of the exchange. It was well known, for example, that trooping fairies, known as *sluagh si*, often raided farms for cattle in order to steal the precious milk. As I suggest in my discussion of one folktale, “The Fairy Wife” (O’Sullivan),<sup>8</sup> the fairy economy underscores the difficulties of offering hospitality to strangers, and especially those whose origin or legitimacy is in question.

Because fairies live lives parallel to humans, as folk narrative continually demonstrates, they provide an imaginative way of dealing with human problems, including those that prove especially challenging, like insubordination, disease, deformity, death, and relations with outsiders perceived to be hostile. The changeling, as I describe in the second section of the chapter, is often portrayed as an unusually contrary newborn child whose insatiable appetite, eccentric behaviour, and ability to speak identify him as an interloper. Indeed, while the changeling is consistently identified as a child of the fair “Good People,” in its rough and sallow features it also bears some resemblance to lower forms such as dwarves, boggarts, and, arguably, brownies. This sort of changeling, featured in the legend “Johnnie in the Cradle” (Briggs), indicates the fear of the precocious child who refuses to submit to parental authority. In most cases, the intruder is driven out of the home through an elaborate ritual, which often involves fire or some other violent method. In “The Fairy Changeling: I” (Briggs), as an additional example, a parson advises the parent to slap her child until it cries and thereby reveals its fairy

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<sup>8</sup> While this narrative is included in a collection entitled *Folktales of Ireland*, its “local” and “homelike” atmosphere, not to mention its lack of explicit supernatural content, strongly suggests that we are reading a legend. See my discussion of the distinctions between folktales and legends in the Introduction

identity. As a reflection of the degree to which folk narratives crystallized around “contemporary situations,” as Oring suggests (123), there are reported cases in the nineteenth century of parents who abused suspected changelings, often relying on the religious hierarchy to further justify their actions. As Silver suggests, the characteristic violence of changeling narratives reflects the belief in the aggressive nature of changelings themselves. “For the fairies who most frightened the folk and fascinated the collectors were the ones perceived as cruel participants in antisocial acts” (149). If the changeling was treated cruelly, it was only to ensure the safety of the human child: the theory was that if the parents followed the procedure correctly, their real child would be returned safely.

As Susan Schoon Eberly and Joyce Underwood Munro argue, the changeling legend may have offered parents an explanation for child deformity, and so vigilance against fairy intrusion could be understood in this framework as the attempt to ward off disease or to find a cure. This additional interpretation, which I treat in the third section of the chapter, adds a new dimension to our conceptual persona: by the end of the nineteenth century, the changeling was employed by the medical profession to explain otherwise inexplicable birth defects. Changelings, like those featured in “The Caerlaverock Changeling” and “The Fairy Changeling: II” (Briggs), are often noted for their unhealthy skin, hairy bodies, and deformed limbs: in many of those reported occurrences of child abuse in the nineteenth century the assaulted children suffered from similar afflictions. The regularity of these instances prompted Victorians to associate fairy belief with marginalized cultures, including the Irish and gypsy population, although it was abundantly clear that changeling narratives provided titillating entertainment for the vast

majority (Silver 70). Further, and more to the point, “Victorian folklore collections provide a set of insights into the ways in which a culture sought to externalize evil” (149). Those who believed in fairies—whether they acted on their belief or not—were regarded with the same revulsion imparted to changelings. If changelings, and the innocents stigmatized as such, were conceptualized by the Victorians as primitive justifications for otherwise unexplained misfortune, the “stranger” or the “foreigner” has assumed the role of the scapegoat in our own era: it/s/he has become, in other words, a child of unknown parentage, monstrous in appearance and behaviour.

As I argue in the fourth and final section of the chapter, the changeling also became associated with the disenfranchised, primitive underclass and, through its attendant significations of deformity, monstrosity, and insubordination, a figure of hybridity. I argue that this originally folkloric figure is a nexus around which several concepts constellate, but that no single interpretation (folkloric, scientific, philosophical) can suffice on its own. One final folktale, “The Speckled Bull” (O’Sullivan), reinforces the conflicting human responses to the changeling and the affiliated anxieties surrounding marriage, reproduction, and legitimacy, as first witnessed in “The Fairy Wife.” In both legends and folktales, the changeling becomes closely associated with both the subhuman and the animal-human, both the abnormal and the supernatural. By Darwin’s account, we can gauge the development of the changeling persona in terms of the “modification” of the species by natural selection; however, by Deleuze and Guattari’s account, we can gauge such modifications not simply as the shedding of primitive nature but as the creation of new divergences and new alliances between disparate forms.

I do not intend to suggest that we can verify the changeling’s development as a

series of definitive steps. While I have identified the Victorian period as my *historical* frame of reference, my focus on the conceptual nature of the changeling also requires me to acknowledge a *geographical* or *geological* frame of reference. As Deleuze and Guattari elaborate, the concept “is not object but territory” (101), and the conceptual persona constitutes a “becoming,” or event, that operates in a particular territory—hence their term “geophilosophy” (85-113). As a vehicle for conceptual creation, the folk legend itself presents a moment of becoming, the event of the arrival of the changeling. As a way of registering such an event, I reconceptualize the changeling motif as an exemplary case of “deterritorialization.” As Deleuze and Guattari write:

We already know the importance in animals of those activities that consist in forming *territories*, in abandoning or leaving them, and even re-creating territory on something of a different nature (ethologists say that an animal’s partner or friend is the ‘equivalent of a home’ or that the family is a ‘mobile territory’). All the more for the hominid: from its act of birth, it deterritorializes its front paw, wrests it from the earth to turn it into a hand, and reterritorializes it on branches and tools. A stick is, in turn, a deterritorialized branch. We need to see how everyone, at every age, in the smallest things as in the greatest challenges, seeks a territory, tolerates or carries out deterritorializations, and is reterritorialized on almost anything—memory, fetish, or dream. (*What Is Philosophy?* 67-68)

Granted, this description seems to echo Chevalier de Lamarck’s fallacious evolutionary notion of spontaneous generation, or the belief that an organism’s development can be propelled by a sheer act of will (see Darwin, *Origin of Species* 6-7). In this instance, however, Deleuze and Guattari are playfully using the Lamarckian notion to reinforce the hominid’s ability to adapt to particular alterations in the environment rather than willfully change its physiology (as in Lamarck’s now infamous explanation of the giraffe’s elongated neck). Moreover, deterritorialization/reterritorialization is a conceptual variation on evolutionary “gradualism” in that it implies more prolonged changes in an

organism: an animal “wrests” its paw from the earth only insofar as its physiology allows it to, and only *much later* does it “turn into a hand”—and even then, this change simply occurs without the organism’s help. In other words, deterritorialization is not *done* but simply *happens*; the result, however, often enables the organism to develop new methods of mobility and new tactics of survival. That being said, Deleuze and Guattari place great emphasis on the sudden or eruptive changes that evolutionary gradualism, and certainly Spencerian progressionism (see section IV below), cannot entirely account for. Following this description, then, the changeling is a deterritorialization, or sudden biological mutation, of the human, even while it is itself reterritorialized, or conceptualized *negatively*, as a child with congenital disease or as “mutant” of some sort. If the changeling takes a leap forward when it becomes a human child, it also experiences an atavistic “reversion,” as Darwin might say, when it assumes the role of the deformed or monstrous child or a metamorphosed human-animal. In other words, “history” requires the mapping out of the changeling’s various territories, as well as its reterritorializations and deterritorializations, in order to show *where* the changeling has been. While it is clearly aligned with specific fairy communities, the changeling also tends to oscillate between the animal and the hominid and therefore marks out the path of human evolution as it carries out its operations. Changeling tales, then, indicate a primordial desire on the part of humans to discover their origins and their relation to the others that intrude on their familial realm. Both changeling tales and their real-life parallels reinforce the violent implications of hospitality, or as Jacques Derrida describes, the ordeal of housing, looking after, and being overtaken by one’s potential enemies (“Hostipitality” [2002] 380). The powerful message of these tales is that the “other” may be an ancestral relative, separated

by space and time, but resembling humans in character and gesture. Let me now begin with an examination of where the changeling has been and how it has evolved from European folk narrative.

## I: Fairy Origins, Fairyland, and the Fairy Economy

My investigation of folk narrative excludes what are now called “fairy tales” for the simple reason that, while they seem “to imply the presence of fairies[,] the great majority of such tales have no fairies” (Thompson 4). To be sure, the *Märchen*, derived from the Grimms’ *Kinder-und Hausmärchen*, has been translated as “fairy tale,” although most folklorists today prefer the translation “wonder tale” or “magic tale.” *Märchen* might then be seen as comparable to the “folktale” since the former is defined as a tale of “some length involving a succession of motifs or episodes,” which “moves in an unreal world without definite locality or definite characters and [which] is filled with the marvelous” (Thompson 8). This description broadly fits that of the folktale. However, the *Märchen* that we read today are frequently the literary imitations of folktales and are usually “the product of one individual’s craft and creative imagination” (Altmann and de Vos xx). Unlike these sorts of tales, folktales are distinctly identified as a species of oral literature, as the recited or written version of a much older tale, originally recited or written down in some earlier generation or era. Folklorist Stith Thompson elaborates on this important distinction:

In contrast to the modern story writer’s striving after originality of plot and treatment, the teller of a folktale is proud of his ability to hand on that which he has received. He usually desires to impress his readers or hearers with the fact that he is bringing them something that has the stamp of good authority, that the tale was heard from some great story-teller or from some aged person who

remembered it from old days. (4)

It would be naïve to assume that the fairy tale does not, on occasion, cross over with the folktale; the very fact of transmission—the passing on of oral traditions through ritual recitation; the recording, translation, and transcription of recited tales—enables the fairy tale to become an oral narrative once again, or, vice versa, enables a recited folktale or legend to become a thoroughly literary narrative. Nevertheless, the strong association of “wonder tale” with “fairy tale” through a couple centuries’ worth of folklore scholarship on such tale types as *Cinderella*, *Snow White*, and *Hansel and Gretel* suggests that we might do better simply to opt for the safer or more accurate *folktale* and *folk legend*. Heroes, villains, and other supernatural creatures find their way into the Grimms’ and Hans Christian Andersen’s collections, but, with rare exception (see my note 18), fairies and changelings do not. Finally, folk narrative, and the folk legend in particular, has a more intimate connection with local belief systems and the creation of corresponding conceptual worlds.

As Diarmuid Ó Giolláin has argued, any account of fairy origins and the “fairy faith” in particular must take into consideration the relationship between “popular” and “official” religion. By citing the evidence of both pagan and Christian religious sites that dot the Irish countryside, Ó Giolláin in fact demonstrates that popular religion itself was characterized as a “syncretism” of both pagan and Christian beliefs (“The Fairy Belief and Official Religion in Ireland” 203). Such a belief system meant that supernatural, or at least extraordinary, events could be attributed to a combination of agencies. As Ó Giolláin elaborates,

Anything which upset the natural order of the community tended to be linked to

the disorderly world outside. The diagnosis of misfortune identified the culprits as fairies, or evil spirits, or people in league with them, or individuals who occupied ambiguous, unordered social roles. Various categories of outsiders could be easily confused since the only important distinction was between insiders and outsiders. (201)

This certainly explains why, in so many changeling tales, for example, the method for driving out the changeling took the form of an *exorcism*. In fact, Ó Giolláin demonstrates convincingly that fairy belief was neither eliminated nor wholly preserved but has existed since the modern period as a hybrid combination of Christian and pagan beliefs. In fact, even by the middle of the nineteenth century, there “was no conflict between belief in the fairies and belief in the saints. Both belonged to the same popular religion and inhabited the same mythical universe” (202). For example, especially in legends, while some families would splash the suspected changeling with holy water, a recognized Christian ritual performed by priests, others might just as likely resort to a mixture of new milk and herbs (Bourke, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary* 89), a recognizably pagan ritual performed by “fairy doctors.” This is to say that the authority of the church was important sometimes only as a *default* measure (Ó Giolláin, “The Fairy Belief and Official Religion in Ireland” 203), so that fairy doctors as well as “wise women” (village experts on the fairies) might be called upon in lieu of a priest.

Certainly the rise of folklore—and the invention of the term by William John Thoms (Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Culture* 46)—in the mid-nineteenth century helped to situate fairy belief as a legitimate field of study. Further, while the religious hierarchy, particularly in Ireland, was able to drive pagan beliefs to the margins of society around the same time (“The Fairy Belief and Official Religion” 205f.), new forces in modern culture were competing for the rights to make fairy belief and fairy legend fashionable



again. The shift in the later nineteenth century to “spiritualist” interpretations that the fairies were in fact “elementals” or governing spirits (Silver 38) reflected this diminishing power of the Church, particularly in the wake of evolutionary theory. In fact, some Theosophists in the Victorian period felt that the great development of science in the second half of the nineteenth century “could prove that the fairies did exist” (51). The folklorist Jacob Grimm had already speculated early in the century that “there was once a widely diffused dwarf population all over northern Europe,” and Sir Walter Scott himself believed that the Oriental Lapps were “one of the sources of the fairies” (47). This initial enthusiasm was encouraged by the post-Darwinian argument that the fairies exemplified a separate branch of evolution, and Charles Leadbeater, in *The Hidden Side of Things* (1913), sketched out such an “unnatural natural history” (Silver 52), crafting a diagram that placed fairies in between the mineral world and the angelic realm (see Silver 53). Moreover, well into the twentieth century, both scientists and folklore scholars were convinced that fairies were “real” in some fashion. Arthur Conan Doyle himself became caught up in the sensation known as the “Cottingley fairies,” the diminutive creatures that two young girls claimed to have captured with their camera in 1920. Moreover, those whose studied “fairy belief” throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries oscillated between a religious/pseudo-philosophical interpretation and a scientific/anthropological one.

The often conflicting interpretations of the function and origin of the fairies, while frequently dependent upon religious and scientific prejudice, indicated that the fairy “character” was not easy to define. Folklore itself, which comprised Christian, mystical, and anthropological interpretations (or combinations of all three), was a complex field of

study that had its competing schools of thought. Moreover, at any given moment in the nineteenth century, when fairy belief was at the height of its popularity, fairies, and changelings in particular, designated several things—philosophies, beliefs, doctrines, and numerous other scientific and pseudo-scientific matters. For that matter, the “scientific” study of the fairy peoples in the mid to late nineteenth century was related to a more general critique of the very boundaries imposed on scientific enquiry, and reinforced the need for a more “fruitful interaction between different branches of science” and perhaps even the possibility of promoting a “speculative natural philosophy” in which the average layperson could participate (Yeo 22-23). More than this, such a “synthetic” approach translated well in folkloric studies where the subject of enquiry seemed to exist in so many registers and to simultaneously cut across so much social strata.

Dáithí Ó hÓgáin describes the fairies as the “otherworld community which, according to Irish folklore, inhabits the countryside side by side with, but usually invisible to, the human race” (185). This general description derives from the popular notion that Fairyland was an “immaterial place” but not “the same as the world of the dead” (Evans-Wentz 73). Nevertheless, ghost lore has sometimes been confused with fairy legend for the reason that fairies were often understood to be a community of the dead living in burial chambers. As evidence of this, some believers note the phenomenon of “ring forts,” or the circular impressions all across the Irish countryside that mark the foundation of ancient ruins: for many, these are actually *sidh* or “fairy forts,” and they designate the passageway to the submerged community of the fairy folk. Visitors to this realm, usually tricked or lured into Fairyland by dazzling lights, distant music or a sudden, world-weary fatigue, often awaken to see “subterranean streams” and enchanted

orchards (Briggs, *The Fairies* 23 and “The Fairy Dwelling on Selena Moor” 225), or perhaps “temples and palaces [...] of gold and silver,” “lakes full of gold and silver fish,” “trees laden with fruit and flowers,” and “lovely garden[s]” (Briggs, “Anne Jefferies and the Fairies” 176-77). Because time works differently in Fairyland, and because tasting these unearthly pleasures often ends tragically for the human, the legends about the submerged world of the fairies remain ambivalent. But if the legends eschew happy endings, they frequently remain open-ended,<sup>9</sup> for, in almost every case, the human visitor (or *abductee*) eventually returns to her own mundane world and, in a many instances, pines for the exotic country that appears to be always just out of reach. It is no surprise, then, that a number of legends, including “The Fairies of Merlin’s Craig” (Briggs 215-17) or “The Fairies of Rothley Mill” (Briggs 217), depict Fairyland as an odd impression or “ring” in the earth, as the hill or fort that exists on the margins of the human world—neither *here* nor *there* but *somewhere*. W. Y. Evans-Wentz puts it in these terms: “Fairyland actually exists as an invisible world within which the visible world is immersed like an island in an unexplored ocean,” and it is “peopled by more species of living beings than this world, because incomparably more vast and varied in its possibilities” (52). Moreover, despite its undercurrent of darkness and mystery, the otherplace of the little people appears to be a better version of the upperworld of nineteenth-century European society, which was becoming tarnished with the coal-dust and machinery of the industrial revolution.<sup>10</sup> It is my basic argument in subsequent

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<sup>9</sup> Unlike the folktale, whose happy ending restores order to the world, the legend most often “ends with unresolved dissonance” (Röhrich 13)

<sup>10</sup> As William Morris writes in his utopian poem, “The Earthly Paradise” (1865),

Forget six counties overhung with smoke,

chapters that utopian fiction and SF of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries explore the territory of the legendary Fairyland as a variation on the Elysium, Otherworld, or Earthly Paradise popular in European mythology.

The dwellers of this submerged realm are believed to be remnants of the ancient inhabitants of Ireland, the Tuatha de Danaan, the “heroic” fairies of Celtic mythology who are most associated with the Earthly Paradise motif in folk legend. Such belief is consistent with the Christian interpretation insofar as the fairies are not celestial spirits but an earth-dwelling and subterranean species (Hartland 95; Briggs, *Dictionary* 131; *The Fairies* 6, 8, 12, 23, 24). Briggs elaborates by suggesting that this theory indicates the “memory of a more primitive race driven into hiding by the invaders, lurking in caves or fens, some of them half-domesticated and doing chores about the houses” (*Dictionary* 394). This description constitutes an “anthropological” perspective, which strengthens the argument that fairies may have been understood as a “real” but imperceptible race or species that possessed certain characteristics comparable to the human race. Together, the various theories of fairy origins undoubtedly contributed to a classification system, which included the elegant fairy folk, also called the “Good People” or the “little people,” as well as a whole contingent of lower species, such as bogies, beasts, brownies, tutelary spirits, hobgoblins, imps, dwarves, gnomes, and elves. In *The Personnel of Fairyland*, Briggs identifies the three larger categories of fairies as the “heroic,” the “trooping,” and

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Forget the snorting steam and piston stroke,  
Forget the spreading of the hideous town;  
Think rather of the pack-horse on the down,  
And dream of London, small and white and clean . (ll. 1-5)

Expressing the sentiment of Morris’s poem, the literati of the Victorian period sought in the sparkling visions of Fairyland a means to transform the dystopian scenario in which nature is at the mercy of the factory.

the “homely” sort, the first resembling the much older, aristocratic remnant of ancient Ireland or Britain (14), the Tuatha de Danaan, the second resembling a more ordinary version of the first (15), and the third resembling the “common people of fairyland who do not go to court” (83). As her description suggests, however, these classes were not entirely stable, and the term “fairy” is variously used to refer to the most elegant as well as the most monstrous creature. As Briggs elaborates, “The different types of fairy melt into each other so much from place to place, and the name of a fairy in one locality is so often used for quite a different type in another, that it is very difficult to dogmatize about the fairies” (13). The changeling in particular, while usually identified as the progeny of the fair Good People, resembles members of the “lower” species such as the spiteful boggart or the domestic brownie; changelings, dwarves, and brownies are all generally characterized as a dark, hairy, ugly, and often irascible lot. All of these denizens struck fear into their human counterparts because they were either *unidentifiable*—points of light on the horizon, diminutive creatures dancing under the moonlight—or, on the contrary, because they sometimes closely resembled humans. As Richard P. Jenkins notes, the Irish fairies were understood to be a

“society outside society,” with its own leaders, the King and the Queen, and its own particular problems—the need for healthy children, women to suckle and raise them, healthy cattle to feed their folk and safe habitations to house them. It is no surprise that these were the same concerns as those of the peasant family. The fairies were in part recruited from the peasantry since they were thought to include dead ancestors. (314)

If Fairyland was indeed “immaterial,” as popular belief would have it, its proximity to the human world nevertheless reinforced the possibility that the utopian “nowhere” was actually “nowhere” in the form of a model for new social relations. By both Ó Giolláin’s

and Jenkins's accounts, then, the fairies provided an insight into non-Christian morality and, perhaps, a certain form of *fairy ethics*. In such a scenario, humans negotiate claims with the fairies in order to ward off disease, produce healthy offspring, and thereby maintain economic prosperity.

In traditional folk narratives involving human economic exchanges with fairies, the particular transaction is always characterized as a gesture of hospitality on the part of the human. The demand for such a gesture may reflect the "heroic" origin of the fairies, for the Tuatha de Danaan were closely associated with the dark and mysterious rites of the underworld, and they demanded a reverence comparable to mythological gods. Nevertheless, the "fairy economy" is characterized by the more "prosaic" activities of the trooping or homely fairies (Briggs, *The Personnel of Fairyland* 83), and involves the "social structure" of "weddings and love-makings between mortals and fairies, fairy markets and fairy visits to human markets, of fairy visits to mortal houses, of mortal visits to Fairyland, of lending and borrowing and fairy skills" (Briggs, "The Fairy Economy: As it may be deduced from a Group of Folk Tales" 533). Such trade and exchange requires a human to oblige the request made by one of the fairy contingent, even if the request does not fall in the human's immediate favour. "[A]s always in dealing with the fairies," Briggs argues, "politeness and modesty are well paid" (533). Briggs further theorizes that, while humans—often quite cautiously—attended fairy markets in the hopes of gaining favour with the Good People, possibly trading their good grain or cattle, fairies tended to visit human markets in order to steal. This may be the reason, Briggs conjectures, why "fairies, like the Leprechaun, are credited with great stores of wealth," and also why fairies were able to exchange with gold in the first place (534). And yet, neither the

monetary nor the barter system could be viewed as the norm, especially since the frequency of “borrowing” fundamentally undermined the notion of any proper system, and since fairies themselves were difficult to classify, often because they could not always be distinguished from their human hosts.

As a further example of this unusual economy, humans were expected to prepare for the imminent arrival of a fairy host by keeping their houses tidy, well stocked, and well-heated and by keeping themselves in bed (Gwyndaf 169). “Then the fairy ladies would come and wash their babies in the water set ready for them, warm themselves by the fire and eat the bread and milk left for them” (Briggs, “The Fairy Economy” 535).<sup>11</sup> Such nightly visitations to mortal homes, Patricia Lysaght claims, were likely associated with legends about the activities of the dead who were said to haunt the houses of the living (32). These visitations also underscore the importance of fairy invisibility and the taboo against interfering in their affairs. The key point here, however, is that the fairies initiated situations where such taboos might be broken; the trooping fairies’ demand for “order” (Briggs, *The Personnel of Fairyland* 55) was often coupled with the homely fairies’ penchant for mischief (83). This unpredictable behaviour confirms Briggs’s theory that the three categories of fairy folk “may well be three aspects of the same people” (14). For example, a human host might not be prepared for the fairy host and leave her house in disarray, in which case “pinching was the best [she] could expect” (“The Fairy Economy” 535). Any attempts to prevent such “expropriations,” as Jenkins calls them (310), were usually met with recurrences of such activity, or simply bad luck—

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<sup>11</sup> Briggs’s summary of the tale “Betty Stogs and the Fairies” makes mention of the tradition in the “high countries” in the west of England that “fairies often take away the children of lazy, dirty mothers, and care for them tenderly before returning them” (178).

meaning, the loss of fairy trade, the loss of cattle, and bad milk. “They can bring disease on crops, animals, and humans,” Bourke notes, “but by and large, if treated with neighborly consideration, they mind their own business and even reward favors” (*The Burning of Bridget Cleary* 32). The implication of all this is that the fairies depended upon human economy in order to refashion it in their own terms, and so the actual “exchange” was often asymmetrical: a human would lose a crop, a cow, or even a child, while the fairies would gain one or all of these items. As Ó Giolláin elaborates, “Tradition held that they called to the door to borrow meal, they enlisted the help of mortal midwives, they lent their cows, they saved people from death and bestowed magical gifts” (“The Fairy Belief and Official Religion” 201). For, as numerous folklorists have argued, fairies desire to extract the essence of human nourishment: the “vitamins and nutrients called ‘foyson’ from our milk or cheese or grain” (Rojcewicz 492) and the vigour of human blood (493). Moreover, the fairies desire to instigate a cultural transaction, and so this requires an even greater sacrifice from the human race.

Bourke reinforces this argument, noting that “fairies resemble humans and live lives parallel to theirs” (*The Burning of Bridget Cleary* 31). One particular legend, “The Fairy Wife,” demonstrates the delicacy of the human-fairy economy and the additional human taboo against intimate human-fairy relations. While a man is straining potatoes one day, a woman visits him on three separate occasions. Upon each visit, the man invites the woman into his home; she finally agrees after the third occasion, marries him and bears him a son (Briggs, “The Fairy Wife” 171-72). The man visits the harvest fair a year later, hoping to commune with some of his relations, but discovers that they do everything in their power to avoid him. When he finally approaches them and asks for an



explanation, one uncle retorts, “Why shouldn’t we avoid you [...] when we hear that you have married a fairy woman? If you had come to us first, we would have got a good wife for you, and you needn’t have taken up with her at all” (172). The uncle then buys his nephew a knife and instructs him to kill his wife. The nephew promptly refuses, throwing the knife in a nearby lake. When the husband returns, the woman tells him that she knows what has transpired, acknowledges her fairy identity, and instead of congratulating the man on his chivalry takes up the child and departs from the house—presumably to avoid any further threat of violence but more likely as a punishment for his family’s inhospitable behaviour.<sup>12</sup> But before she leaves, she instructs her human mate in the following way: “Every night when you are going to bed, I want you to leave a light burning and some food on the table for me. The child and myself will come and eat it” (173). As promised, the fairy woman begins to visit the house with her child, and on every occasion eats at the kitchen table, which is adjacent to the bed, where the man and his new human wife sleep. Upon the second consecutive visit, the man’s new wife laughs at the woman and her child, and in retaliation, the fairy woman places a curse on the man’s stock. He loses all but one foal and, in the hopes of saving his household, visits the fair once again in order to sell the foal for cash. On his way, he meets a young boy who comes out through a door in a cliff on the side of the road. The boy offers to buy the foal if the man cannot sell it for more than five pounds. Unable to attract a higher offer at the fair, the man promptly returns to the boy. When he meets up with the child again, the man is invited inside the cliff where he sees his first wife. She instructs the lad to give him

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<sup>12</sup> Sean O’Sullivan suggests that the tale employs the motif F302.3.3.1, “Fairy avenges herself on inconstant lover (husband)” (“Notes to the Tales” 272), but I would argue that it does not fit the situation: the man’s refusal to kill his wife suggests his *constancy*.

three times the amount promised, tells him the boy is his own, and announces that it “won’t be long until you are well off again” (174). As it happens, the man becomes prosperous and is “snug till the day of his death.”

There are several items of note here. Primarily, we should recognize the emphasis on hospitality throughout: the man invites the woman into his home, mates with her, and, when she departs, follows through on her request to prepare the home for her imminent return; similarly, the man accepts the offer of the young boy—presumably a fairy-human “hybrid”—in an economic transaction; however, the man also refuses the request of his own family to kill the fairy woman; finally, the man’s new wife interrupts the privacy of the fairy woman and mocks her quiet ritual. The last two examples underscore the tension between the fairy and human worlds and particularly the fear that the “little folk” could quite easily infiltrate the human economy and the sacred institution of marriage. These instances also indicate the limits of hospitality: 1) a human can potentially alienate himself from his own kind if he shows too much hospitality to the fairies; 2) on the other hand, a human can alienate himself from the fairies if he shows too much loyalty to his own kind. If hospitality relates to the breach of a familial or communal code, as I have suggested here, the breach was often manifested in other ways, including disease and famine. In folktales that focus on the “people of the otherworld”<sup>13</sup> we find a consistent motif of fairy-related afflictions and diseases: “fairy-struck” children or adults, which meant that individuals had been hit with the “blast,” or the host of fairies that rush down certain lanes or pathways in the Irish countryside; “fairy-struck” cattle (Jenkins 315-18), which meant that cows had been afflicted by a disease that would debilitate or kill them,

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<sup>13</sup> The sub-section of O’Sullivan’s *Folktales of Ireland* in which we find “The Fairy Wife.”

and ultimately deprive the family of one important source of sustenance. In the case of the present tale, the disturbance and mockery of a very intimate fairy ritual lead to retaliation in the form of a curse on the husband's cattle. The ritual of hospitality then (for example, allowing a woman to warm herself by the fire and feed her child) could be understood as a way of acknowledging the vulnerability of life, especially given the delicacy of an economy based largely on agriculture, where crops were at the mercy of the elements and where crop failure could mean poverty and death to the afflicted family. In many ways, rural life was dependent on favours and gifts, especially since famine (in Ireland, for example) was an inevitable part of life.

The vulnerability of the economy was such that familial and social relations were held under close scrutiny: if a man made a bad deal or exchange, he could bring ruin to his household; similarly, if a man made a poor choice of a wife, her ineptitude or proficiency could spell ruin (either from an error in judgement or a deliberate deception). Indeed, the fairy wife poses a major threat to the uncles who claim to know what a "good wife" means (O'Sullivan, "The Fairy Wife" 172): presumably, a woman who would not be so assertive as this one, but more importantly, a woman who would not have so much power to come and go as she pleases, to make demands on men, and to ultimately control the terms and conditions of household finance. As is typical with legends, we do not get much in the way of characterization, and yet it is apparent that the man is the dupe of the fairy woman, a little witless in the ways of the world, especially considering that his uncles need to inform him that his wife is not human. On the other hand, the husband does not wish to cause the fairy woman or his own household (including his new witless wife) any further harm and resumes the flow of the economy through that final

transaction with his hybrid son.

This newly enunciated relation is constructed on the principle of hospitality, which is most effectively presented in “The Fairy Wife” as the territorial conflict between fairy and human. At the same time, this struggle reinforces the inherent problem of a certain *kind* of hospitality—one that is bound by conditions:

[the] law of hospitality [...] violently imposes a contradiction on the very concept of hospitality in fixing a limit to it, in de-termining it: hospitality is certainly, necessarily, a right, a duty, an obligation, the *greeting* of the foreign other [*l'autre étranger*] as a friend but on the condition that the host, the *Wirt*, the one who receives, lodges or *gives asylum* remains the *patron*, the master of the household, on the condition that he maintains his own authority *in his own home*. (Derrida, “Hostipitality” [2000] 4; original emphases)

Derrida, of course, is speaking of the “hospitality” that we generally understand, the kind we offer to friends, and even to foreigners, providing they express their gratitude and do not impose upon our generosity. In the ideal situation, hospitality occurs when one “host” receives another with a laugh and a smile, happy or joyous (“Hostipitality” [2002] 359). Further, even at its basic level as a form of neighbourly kindness, hospitality is structured around a figure of authority—a “master of the house,” in Derrida’s description. As we saw in “The Fairy Wife,” the husband’s relations urge him to enforce his domestic power and to be ruthlessly vigilant against fairy intrusions. To assume such authority means that one has the power to evaluate each and every request for asylum (*you are welcome, but you are not!*), demarcate a specific location for that asylum (*you can sleep here, but not there!*), and determine the duration (*you are welcome as long as you leave tomorrow!*). Moreover, in returning to the question of responsibility and obligation, Derrida reminds us of the essential tyranny and violence of selfhood, and of the “*being-oneself in one’s own home*” (“Hostipitality” [2000] 4; original emphases) that displaces rather than

welcomes the other. The new social relation described above, and especially outlined in subsequent sections, undermines this authority of the “host” by redefining hospitality as a form of parasitism, a “radical hospitality,” as Derrida describes elsewhere, which consists in “*receiving without invitation*, beyond or before the invitation” (“Hostipitality” [2002] 360, original emphasis). The husband in “The Fairy Wife” apparently perceives the tyranny of a rule-bound hospitality and, with the patience and passive kindness of a Job, relinquishes his mastery to the invading “host,” the fairy woman. As I demonstrate below, the changeling (to which category we must add the fairy wife and her hybrid child) initiates such a radical hospitality since it is *not* invited and since it continues to demand hospitality long after it enters the home, we host the this *other* and become, in turn, its hostage.

## II The Changeling as Naughty or Precocious Child

At the aporia of all transactions in the fairy economy is the changeling, which reinforces the notion that Fairyland is a realm of transformation rather than stasis. As Briggs describes, the changeling was a fairy secretly exchanged for a human child at infancy (*Dictionary* 70). One variation of the motif<sup>14</sup> can be described as follows. A fairy couple visits a specially selected human couple and calls upon them for an emergency favour, usually a request to feed their hungry, wailing child. While the fairy husband distracts the parents’ attention, the fairy wife sneaks into the human infant’s room,

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<sup>14</sup> Stith Thompson’s *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* is the basis for most scholarly discussions of general “categories” (or themes) and specific “motifs” in folk narrative. The large six-volume compendium includes the following major categories: A Mythological Motifs, B Animals, C Tabu, D Magic, E The Dead, and F Marvels. It is this last category that mostly concerns me since it includes such individual motifs as F200, Fairies, F210, Fairyland, F251, Origin of fairies, and F321 1, Changeling.

snatches him from his cradle, and substitutes the changeling in his place (116-17). The implication here is that the substitution serves the purpose of acquiring nourishment that is unavailable in the fairy realm (Skjelbred 220; Eberly 234; Jenkins 315), and it was theorized that fairies specifically required human milk (Briggs, *The Fairies* 116). Tales that actually describe the details of the abduction, and identify the culprits in the moment of the exchange, were less frequent, and in most cases the parents only discover that a switch has been made after the fact, when the child begins to exhibit strange behaviour. For the most part, it is only the changeling, and not the fairies themselves, that make an appearance in the legend. In any event, the human understanding of hospitality is radically undermined. As the vehicle for the truth claims in legends (Oring 125), and as the intermediary for philosophical enunciation (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 64-65), the changeling begins to answer the fundamental questions, “What is it? Why is it so? What can be done about it?” (Dégh 74). Despite its relation to other, fantastical figures of the *Märchen* or folktale, the changeling is in a certain sense the *persona* par excellence of the legend, for, while it poses as a double or deformed substitute, it enunciates primordial human questions through recognizably human speech and action. The changeling is the most human of the nonhuman personae featured in such folk narratives; but we still want to know, “What is it?”

Silver offers a fairly comprehensive description of this creature.

If the changeling, as was most usual, took the form of a child, the child had an old, distorted face, a small or wizened body, and dark or sallow skin, and was often backward in learning to walk or speak. Some changed children were active though monstrous little beings; others were immobile, doll-like wooden creatures who soon lost all semblance of life, becoming ‘stocks.’ But whether child or adult in form, the changeling was a creature noteworthy for its gluttony and peevishness, its lack of heart or soul, and its strange, malicious, or ungovernable spirit. (60)

The suggestion here is that the fairy folk, despite their frequent indulgence in merry-making and dancing, are quite dependent upon the human race and, in fact, survive by constantly infiltrating the human community (Briggs, *The Fairies* 95). Most fairy births, as the legends indicate, are unsuccessful unless a human midwife is present to deliver the child and give suck to it; even then, the infant often languishes in the early stages, and displays all the signs of a failure to thrive: the shrivelled and atrophied limbs, the darkened or hairy skin, and the fractious and ill-tempered behaviour. And so, we might ask, “Why is it so?” My subsequent discussion of four changeling legends offers at least two answers. At its most basic level, the changeling undermines the human domestic realm by imposing upon the parents and by refusing to abide by their authority, or their mastery in the household, as Derrida says. Accordingly, the first two legends I discuss present the changeling as simply an uncommonly naughty child. And yet, the particular brand of disobedience in each case is interpreted as an aggressive act of anarchy.

“Johnnie in the Cradle” tells of an infant who was “always crying and never satisfied.” During market day, his mother asks her neighbour, a tailor, to mind the child for the day. While he is sitting by the fire, the child, who is only a few months old, asks if his mother and father are away. Then he asks for a bottle of scotch from the press. Then he asks for a set of pipes and, when the request is granted, plays a lovely little tune. The tailor is convinced that the child is a fairy and tells the parents when they return. The father responds by setting the griddle on high flame until it is red hot, then throws on a bagful of horse manure; he then threatens to grab the changeling, but it escapes and flies up the chimney, crying out as it flees, “I wish I had been longer with my mother. I’d a

kent [known] her better” (Briggs, “Johnnie in the Cradle” 290).

The opening of this tale seems to indicate a mundane, domestic drama, and the “changeling,” as it appears here, is simply an extremely naughty child that is also quite ill. However, his demand for whisky and his delight in music suggest adult and, as we discover, notable *fairy* pastimes. Moreover, the tale illuminates the ambiguous social position of the fairies: they are at once an aristocratic collective and a plebeian contingent. While one of their euphemistic titles is the “Good People” or “the gentry,”<sup>15</sup> which automatically associates them with the heroic fairies of ancient Britain, they are also obviously associated with the more mischievous, “homely” sort that engage in common or household activities. The individual changeling—original “fairy stock,” but now on its own and vulnerable to the same threats as any human child—demystifies the notion of a fairy *host*, especially associated with the heroic or trooping fairies. For it was assumed by many Victorians, at least unconsciously, that fairies operated as a collective and carried out their tasks as a “faceless mob” (Silver 166); the fairies are indeed a “host,” in the Derridean sense, but also manifest themselves quite visibly and individually in the form of changelings. On the one hand, Johnnie, as the child substitute, functions as the primary mechanism in an exchange that would clearly benefit the fairy collective: fairies require healthy human children in order to reinvigorate their ailing race, and they will steal children to suit these needs. On the other hand, Johnnie is a vulnerable fairy child, detached from his parents and his people and subject to all manner of abuse. Where do our sympathies lie in this case: with the substitute in the home or with the original

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<sup>15</sup> According to Ó Giollán, both “the good people” and “the gentry” were terms of respect indicating the “taboo known in many societies on mentioning sacred names” (“The Fairy Belief and Official Religion” 201-02).



child who has been abducted? The point here is that a substitute is not easy to identify, especially since, in most changeling narratives, the actual abduction has already taken place before the story begins. As I suggest in the previous section, this ambivalence is necessary for the “transaction” to run smoothly. However, this does not mean that a violent conflict is inevitable. Rather, the tale reminds us that hospitality is not possible without conflict and, on occasion, violence. A happy outcome—the return of the original—is only possible after the threat of violence, and even then the substitution itself has undermined the preconceived notion of a human-fairy distinction.

Another tale, “A Fairy Changeling: I,” further underscores this dilemma of determining origins by introducing supernatural elements. Pyramus Gray and his wife Milly Herne have a child named Potamus. One day while she is working, Milly leaves her child on the grass near her. The next day, she goes “begging” with the four-month-old child and discovers that, when she takes her eye off it for a matter of seconds, nuts and cakes mysteriously appear in its little jumper. After numerous recurrences of this event, Milly begins to fear that her baby is a “fairy child.” One day while crossing a river, she slips on a stepping-stone and falls in to her waist. “Oh dear, we shall be drowned!” she says. The child looks up into her face and responds, “Oh, no, Mammy, we shan’t!” Now that she is convinced the child is a fairy, she asks the parson for advice. He tells her to spank the baby until it cries and hide behind a bush for a quarter of an hour. She spansks the child, and when she returns, “the baby was black and blue, but it was her own child. There were no more cakes, and the baby did not speak till it was the right age” (Briggs, “A Fairy Changeling: I” 221).

Like the previous tale, the changeling in this one has a name which initially

identifies its human origin. “Potamus” seems a rather pleasant little baby who happens to be the focal point of a mysterious occurrence. While she is well-behaved, the appearance of the food in her clothes identifies her as a mischievous trouble-maker. The mother, Milly, is of course very suspicious, and her assumptions are confirmed by the child’s precocious ability to speak. Indeed, the sudden exclamation, “Oh, no, Mammy, we shan’t!” with the child looking up into the mother’s face, has an eerie ring to it and clearly evokes in the parent a certain feeling of horror. The precocious speech may also signify demonic possession, which, if we recall Ó Giolláin’s description above, was part of the same “popular” interpretation of the supernatural. Such an interpretation is confirmed if we consider that the mother seeks the assistance of the local parson. Presumably skilled in the knowledge of the spirit world as well as that of the fairies, the parson nevertheless advises a punishment fit for a disobedient child. In what appears to be the great irony of the narrative, the mother and her religious advisor treat benevolence as an aggressive act and the exotic gifts as an insidious form of trickery. How do we account for this response? Certainly, as Briggs and others have noted, the fairies were known to offer gifts on occasion, and many considered such an occurrence with great anticipation. However, it was also believed that fairies offered food in particular as a way of luring humans into Fairyland, where, in some instances, the particular abductee is trapped for years or for the rest of his life (Bourke, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary* 121). On the other hand, not partaking of the unearthly pleasures frequently leads the returned abductees to pine for Fairyland for the rest of their mortal lives. While it is difficult to discern the significance of the mysterious food in “A Fairy Changeling: I” (beyond the initial suggestion that it identifies fairy agency), I would argue that it has a definitive, and therefore dangerous,

meaning for the human mother: if the food is being offered to *her*, then the gesture is potentially aggressive since she may succumb to the fairy power and fall into “oblivion” (Bourke 121). As with the previous tale, we may feel that such a reaction constitutes paranoia, even while, as I have stated earlier, folk legends such as these may have functioned as warnings against overstepping certain established boundaries. In particular, these two legends offer warnings to children who step out of line—who complain too frequently, speak out of turn, or behave in an eccentric manner—and to parents who allow them to do so. Taking our prompt from Linda Dégh, we might now ask: What, indeed, “can be done about” (74) the changeling?

In a general way legends like “Johnnie in the Cradle” and “A Fairy Changeling: I” supplied a metaphorical language for dealing with outsiders or those within the community that had transgressed established moral boundaries. An adult who was behaving promiscuously or who had odd habits might be called a “fairy” or said to be “in the fairies” (Narváez 343), while a child who was overly cranky or precocious beyond his years might be called a “little changeling.” Though the frequency of such epithets may suggest habitual communal response, the treatment of some “fairies” and “changelings” were sometimes violent if not downright cruel. Bourke (*The Burning of Bridget Cleary* 37-39), Eberly (232-33), and others cite numerous cases from the 1820s through to the 1890s of suspected changelings throughout Britain and Ireland who were starved, burned, whipped, or butchered. Yet it would be hasty to admit such evidence as an indication of “barbaric” behaviour, or at least to isolate these tales as an indication of a certain group’s barbarism. Indeed, even in our contemporary period “satanic or ritualistic abuse” is “still widespread” (Bottoms, Shaver and Goodman 1), and there are plenty of “fictional”

examples (particularly in films like *The Exorcist* [1973]<sup>16</sup> and *Frailty* [2001]<sup>17</sup>) to suggest, if not the connection between fantasy and reality, at least the figurative attempt to comprehend such occurrences of abuse, ritual or otherwise. So, while changeling tales may have been intended in some instances as cautionary messages, I would argue that they were also intelligent attempts to comprehend insubordination as well the human capacity for intolerance and violence.

We pity Johnnie because he is a threatened child—a fairy changeling, yes, an upstart, certainly, but also an infant who is beguiled into friendship only to be driven out of his new home with the hot flame of a griddle. He is monstrous because he behaves almost like an adult human—an old man in an infant’s body; and yet his humanity comes out in his final pathetic lament: “I wish I had been longer with my mother. I’d a kent [known] her better.” Whose “mother” might he be referring to—his adopted one, or his “fairy” mother? While Johnnie’s departure may give the parents—and the audience—a sigh of relief, we should remember that no *human* child reappears. This is certainly an ominous gap, and it may lead us to wonder who (or where) the real child is and, if, in fact, Johnnie was the original, despite the apparent revelation of his fairy ancestry. Consider also the conclusion to the other tale. The real Potamus is returned, we are told, but she is covered with bruises: while the mother only intends to abuse the alien child, she winds up hurting her own. One of the “messages” in these two tales might be that true hospitality

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<sup>16</sup> In this film, the demon-possessed child, Regan, is subjected to a ritualized exorcism—holy water, deprivation, isolation, and physical abuse—that has striking similarities to the changeling tale.

<sup>17</sup> In this film, a father enlists the help of his two devoted sons in order to destroy the “demons” that have infiltrated small-town America (as a sign of the Apocalypse). After an angelic vision, the father tells his sons that they have been invested with “special powers” that will enable them to “see the demons,” and that they will be provided with “magical weapons” in order to carry out their holy task. He makes a point of explaining to the boys that “destroying demons is a good thing,” while “killing people is bad ”

cannot be restricted to one's family, community, or racial group. Understood in this way, hospitality provides the space for "philosophical enunciations," as Deleuze and Guattari say, and the crossover of conceptual personae (70-71). According to this perspective, both the changeling and the child emerge as conceptual personae, especially as they each contend for a particular territory: the home. I return to this issue in subsequent sections, especially as I move closer to a discussion of "hybridity," which provides an additional way of conceptualizing the crossover effect of personae and an additional way of answering the questions, "What is it? Why is it so? What can be done about it?"

### III: The Changeling as Monster

As Briggs's description of the fairy economy reminds us, the fairies were often as vigilant in their own attempts to demarcate boundaries as were their human counterparts. And yet, the changeling motif locates the moment where particular borders are crossed and codes of conduct breached. Further, while it is true that Victorian "fiction, folklore, and painting all depict fairies at war with each other," and while the "internecine battles" in such depictions "become symbolic of fairies' anarchical tendencies" (Silver 162), the folk legends I discuss suggest the alternate view of a marginalized race or species attempting to survive the inroads of human morality and industry. As J. A. MacCulloch had suggested back in the 1930s, the popular legends about "dwarfs, or elfins, migrating usually because of men and their ways" suggest "the oppression and expulsion of an actual aboriginal race by newcomers" ("Were Fairies an Earlier Race of Men?" 371).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> MacCulloch does not indicate within the essay who he is quoting in this instance, although his last cited source, Sr. H. H. Johnston, is a likely possibility.

Moreover, both the Victorian portrayals and the individual folk legends underscore the primary disadvantage of a group that may be on the verge of extinction: child substitutions certainly suggest acts of desperation, however ugly or unpleasant they appear to the victims and their parents. At the same time, and given the subtlety of legends like the two previous ones, fairies do not act only out of revenge or desperation. Abductions, while inherently violent, also indicate the fairies' intention to negotiate with human communities. The changeling may then be understood as both the impasse and the opening up of future relations—the failed progeny on the one hand (fairy substitute), and the thriving progeny on the other (human infant). If the fairy economy is a human creation and represents human anxieties, as suggested in “The Fairy Wife,” then the changeling legend speaks to communities and perhaps individuals that also feel marginalized and vulnerable to the effects of declining economy and health. While the disobedient or precocious child in “Johnnie in the Cradle” or “A Fairy Changeling: I” may evoke in the parents a certain sense of outrage, the sick or deformed child in other versions of the legend certainly evokes in the same parents a definite sense of awe and horror. Moreover, the changeling *seemed* to demarcate a congenitally afflicted child whose disease was itself emblematic of the tension between a residual primitive world view that employed myth to articulate mysterious phenomena and a dominant scientific world view that sought to diagnose what otherwise remained unutterable.

Two brief examples can help to elaborate on this link between changelings and physical monstrosity.

“The Caerlaverock Changeling” tells of a newborn infant “observed on the second day after its birth, and before it had been baptized, to have become fractious, deformed,

and ill-favoured.” At times, the child would bite at his mother’s breasts, and on other occasions he would lie eerily still in her arms or in the cradle. The mother asks the servant girl to mind the child for the day. She complains aloud in the child’s presence that now she will be unable to tend to her regular chores. Without hesitation, the newborn jumps out of its cradle and sets to work on the chores (winnowing the corn, grinding the meal, and so forth). The mother is worried when she is told of this, but the servant girl knows what to do. That same night, she blows up the fire until it glows, undresses the infant and tosses it onto the blazing coals, then exclaims: “In the name of God, bring back the bairn.” Immediately, the window flies up, the real child is laid on the mother’s lap, and the “wee de[v]il” flies up the chimney laughing (Briggs, “The Caerlaverock Changeling” 194).

“The Fairy Changeling: II” tells of a baby that never grows, is always hungry, never satisfied, and lies in its cradle year after year, unable to walk. Also, its “face [is] hairy and strange-looking.” The mother’s older son comes home from war and notices the change: this is not his brother, the older son tells her. He gets an egg, blows out its contents, fills it with malt and hops, and then begins to brew it over the fire. At this, a laugh comes from the cradle. “I am old, ever so old,” says the “changeling,” “but I never saw a soldier brewing beer in an eggshell before.” When the soldier goes for him, the child gives a shriek, jumps up out of the cradle, and vanishes through the door. When the soldier goes out after him, he meets his “long-lost brother,” now a “fine and healthy” young man of twenty-four. As the young man tells them, the “fairies had kept him in a beautiful palace under the rocks, and fed him on the best of everything! He should never be so well off again, he said, but when his mother called him, he had to come home”

(Briggs, “The Fairy Changeling: II” 221-22).<sup>19</sup>

Both the children in these tales exhibit eccentric behaviour and suffer from debilitating illnesses, and therefore provide both inward and outward signs of supernatural agency. As a further indication of the “syncretism” of popular religion, the deformed bodies of the unnamed changelings may have signified the work of Satanic forces, as Jenkins has said in regards to nineteenth-century interpretations. Back in the sixteenth century, as it has been well-noted by a number of scholars, Martin Luther described a changeling he had seen in Dessau, Germany that possessed similar characteristics, and felt with much conviction that the creature was “diabolical in origin”; in fact, he made no clear distinction between the incubus and the changeling (Hartland 109; Munro 264; Silver 61). Both tales beg for this interpretation given the fact that the child in “The Caerlaverock Changeling” is specifically described as not having been baptized, while the “nameless” child (which we find in both tales) also indicates that it has not been christened (Munro 256): the baptism of a newborn child was considered an important ritual in both the Christian and pagan religion, for the reason that an unchristened child was vulnerable to both demonic and fairy powers (Skjelbred 215-26). Moreover, it is a special mark of the changeling’s persona that its physical deformities in particular designate it as *unnatural*, and, given Luther’s testimony, explain why it has the capacity to proliferate into other forms. Indeed, to adapt what Deleuze and Guattari have

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<sup>19</sup> This legend is often identified by the motif, “The Brewery of Eggshells.” While some scholars attribute the tale to British collector Ella Mary Leather (1876-1928) or the Australian folklorist Joseph Jacobs (1854-1916), others attribute it to the older Irish folk popularizer, T. Crofton Croker (1798-1854). See, for example, W. B. Yeats’s *Irish Fairy and Folk Tales*, pp. 66-68. As a “migratory legend” (see Dégh 56), the “brewery of eggshells” was clearly a variant known to the Grimms, for a tale very similar in structure to “The Fairy Changeling: II” is to be found among their other *Haus-Märchen* (see *Complete Fairy Tales*, No. 12, p. 37).



said in regards to conceptual personae, both the child and the changeling, once they have been exchanged, refer simultaneously to each other (*What Is Philosophy?* 70). And if we consider those first two changeling tales, such proliferation makes it difficult to identify each persona: this changeling presented for the Christian, as it did for the pagan, a chimera—or, to be more precise, a *monstrosity*.

While the various religious interpretations presented here (including the “spiritualist” ones fashionable in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) are part and parcel of “fairy belief,” there was an additional interpretation that could perhaps make the best claim for veracity. As both Eberly and Munro discuss in provocative articles, folk legends about changelings were considered by doctors to be explanations for birth defects. After citing several legends similar to the two described above, Eberly poses the question: Is it legitimate, at least from a scientific point of view, to argue that the children/changelings featured in these tales actually have congenital disorders? Citing scientific evidence—“today [early 1990s] about one baby in twenty is born with a congenital anomaly” (235)—Eberly asserts that “changelings” were likely folk descriptions of children that suffered from mental retardation, central nervous system disorders, and physical malformation. For example, the “wild dance” of the changeling in tales where the creature is partial to music “may in fact describe the movements of a person with severe cerebral palsy” (236). Eberly offers further examples: spina bifida, which leads to an enlarged head, often due to hydrocephaly or “water on the brain,” may correspond to another common changeling feature: an ugly and enlarged head (235); progeria, a premature aging syndrome, may correspond to the changeling’s “old man” appearance; Williams’s syndrome, hypercalcemia, or “Elfin facies” syndrome, may

explain the changeling's pretty, elfin, but retarded appearance (237); lastly, Hurler's and Hunter's syndromes (formerly called "gargoylism"), which involve gradual transformations over time, where the "normal" child changes to a ugly, hairy, sallow, and retarded one, may in fact explain to some degree the sickly and hairy appearance of the changeling (237). As a final note, it was observed in the medical profession of the twentieth century that a child with Williams's, Hurler's, or Hunter's syndrome bore more resemblance to another similarly afflicted child than to its own parents. "Perhaps," Eberly conjectures, "it was in drawing conclusions about the similarities among such 'different' children that people arrived at their descriptions of some of the fairy 'races'" (237).

Here, then, the changeling comes more into view for us: s/he is not simply a naughty child but a *monstrous* one, and both religion and science can claim to offer proof on the matter. In fact, Munro in particular demonstrates how medical science in the first half of the twentieth century appropriated the "changeling" as a convenient *diagnosis* for the otherwise inexplicable phenomenon of congenital disease: before this time, doctors could only identify such children as cases of "a failure to thrive" (265-75). If we come back to the last two legends discussed, we find curious descriptions of a child who is "fractious" and "deformed" ("The Caerlaverock Changeling), and of another who "never grows," "never walk[s]," is "always hungry," and whose "face was hairy and strange-looking" ("The Fairy Changeling: II"). According to Eberly's description, while the first series of characteristics may correspond to any number of congenital diseases (spina bifida perhaps?), the second series may very well refer to the once very common condition of a "wasting disease" like polio and tuberculosis, which had the linked symptoms of "ravenous appetite, irritability, failure to thrive, [and] small size" (Eberly

238). Additionally, it is very possible that this second changeling suffered from a case of Hurler's or Hunter's disease, considering its hairy appearance. The folk legend-scientific parallel is, then, striking and, to some degree, convincing. Munro notes that appropriate medical treatment was often not widely available in the nineteenth century, and that the foundling hospitals of the early twentieth century—intended as asylums for real “changelings”—were so poorly organized that, of the children who were admitted before the age of one year, “almost one hundred percent did not live until their second birthday” (Munro 265). Such facts may encourage a more nuanced view towards changeling tales and the real-life stories of changeling abuse, and should reinforce the idea that the legends functioned at least partially as traditional *diagnoses* of conditions that otherwise had no name (279). An unnamed disease that was simultaneously manifested made the changeling a *visible* threat. The very fact that there was a “standardized” description of changeling children—i.e., particular physical and mental characteristics that clearly identified a “changeling” as such—offers some support for the argument that parents were *already* diagnosing what the physicians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries could not yet name. Taking their cue from these legends and the parental interpretations, Munro says, doctors could tackle the problem of congenital disease by accumulating the already established list of recurring features, and then go one step further and establish names, diagnoses, and possible treatments. Moreover, like the congenital afflictions that involve transformation (e.g., Hurler's or Hunter's syndrome), the conceptual persona of the changeling experiences a metamorphosis under the “medical gaze” (Munro 253), now branching off into an additional persona: the monster.

Referencing David J. Hufford's argument, Munro argues that modern medicine's

“relatively recent concern with the failure to thrive syndrome suggests that in this case, ‘folk knowledge is sometimes well in advance of scientific knowledge’” (252). Such an assertion denotes the *historical* frame of reference in which the changeling operates, giving us a sense of the chronological passage from one taxonomy to another. However, medical science’s “appropriation” of folklore could not have only been a one-way transaction. In fact, rather than confining the changeling to a single new paradigm, medical science adds a new complexity to this conceptual persona by both contributing a new taxonomy (“cerebral palsy,” “Hurler’s” and “Hunter’s” syndromes) and acknowledging the legitimacy and value of an older taxonomy (the “fairy changeling”). Eberly’s and Munro’s arguments for a parallel between the two “fields” of knowledge denote also the *conceptual* frame of reference in which the changeling operates, giving us a sense of the movements from one terrain to the next, and, most notably, the potential for crossover and fusion. In other words, our second attempt to answer the questions, “What is it?” and “Why is it so?” does not eliminate our original answer; and we should refuse to believe, as Munro does, that changeling tales relate *primarily* to “the failure of the parent-infant bond” (252), which is itself a psychiatric imposition that would eliminate the complexity of the legends we have already considered. When we look back to the two legends, “The Caerlaverock Changeling” and “The Fairy Changeling: II,” we can identify individual personae: the child, who is “ill-favoured,” “never satisfied,” and who upsets the entire household with its irritability and its “long crying sessions”; the fairy, who in one instance magically flies up the chimney, and in another gives an eccentric speech on its age before it vanishes out the door; and the monster, who frightens the parents with its peculiar hairy face. The more interpretations we introduce, the more conceptual personae

appear. So, if, by the mid-nineteenth century, “changeling traits, physical ugliness—especially large heads and stunted bodies—sallow skin and dark hair, gluttonous appetites, and disruptive behaviour were, in effect, codified” (Silver 62), the individual laws, rules, and classifications formulated by the medical profession depended upon collective personae to give them form. If most dictionaries define “changeling” as a child secretly exchanged for another at infancy or a person of deficient intelligence,<sup>20</sup> they identify two important features of the changeling: it has both human and nonhuman qualities, and for this reason is a species either beneath or beyond human scientific knowledge. Therefore, far from narrowing the range of investigation, changeling tales that feature visible deformities actually expand our view; and if we opt for a more powerful microscope, we are still forced to follow in terrible tangents the personae scurrying under the lens.

The similarities between the afflicted children that contributed to the conceptualization of “some of the fairy ‘races’” (Eberly 237) also contribute to the potential alliance between the changeling and its related personae (child, fairy, and monster). As Silver suggests, the noted changeling traits that were taken to be descriptions of congenital malformation indicate that this entity was something akin to the dwarf who was generally described as “ancient-looking,” ugly, hairy, and wizened. “Often responsible for changelings,” Silver adds, “they were sometimes themselves the substitutes” (124). The abductions, then, reinforce the tricky nature of the fairy folk and the difficulty of categorizing them into social or racial classes. The “good” people, moreover, were not always fair in appearance, and so the emphasis on the apparent

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<sup>20</sup> See note 3.

deformity of the changeling indicates once again the popular—and usually *colonial*—strategy of stigmatizing the racial “other.” But the changeling remained a resilient persona for the reason that, in the larger corpus of British narrative, it generally signified *change, substitution, and exchanging one thing for the other*, rather than a particular racial type. Moreover, if as Carl Haffter notes, “The changeling was the child of nature demons of semi-human form which lived under the earth or in the water, of brownies, pixies, fairies and the ‘good people’” (56), it was also, by definition, a human substitute, or the healthy infant abducted and carried away into Fairyland. The changeling, that is, enunciates the dynamic alliance between conceptual personae.

A tale such as “The Fairy Changeling: II” moves closer to what Derrida calls a *radical* hospitality by underscoring the limits of hospitality as it is usually understood (and here I echo a point made earlier): while a human can potentially alienate himself from his own kind if he shows too much hospitality to the fairies, he can alienate himself from the fairies if he shows too much loyalty to his own kind. While the younger son is ultimately recovered—from both his affliction and the “custody of the fairies” (Munro 260)—he expresses some regret at having to leave his benevolent hosts who “fed him on the best of everything!” This regret may also signify the “recovery” of the human-fairy relation, which at the beginning of the tale was characteristically hostile, and a redefinition of the boundaries that would normally constrain the interaction of both human and fairy. Even if we can isolate singular movements of each persona, the movement of one corresponds to that of another; and if we translate “changeling” into “child” (deformed or not), we cannot banish the one without doing the same to the other, especially when we look back to a tale like “A Fairy Changeling: I” where both

changeling and child suffer from the mother's lashing. By this account, then, we cannot go the other way and translate "child" into "changeling," at least not without humanizing the changeling in the process. Moreover, changelings have this remarkable feature: by initiating a breach in codes of conduct, they also initiate the perversion of *purity*. It is this perversion that allows us to sympathize with the insubordinate or deformed changeling-as-fairy, and to sympathize with the subaltern fairy community's fertility problems (Bourke, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary* 41): reading these legends quite literally, we can say that the fairies abduct human children because they are rarely able to produce their own healthy infants. Reading the legends metaphorically, we discover a narrative about *human* fertility problems. The changeling, then, simultaneously straddles the human and fairy worlds: it is a substitute, waiting in limbo, detached from its fairy parents, and finding neither comfort nor care from its adopted parents. It is truly, according to the definition, a *monster*: an "imaginary creature that is large, ugly, and frightening"; "an amazing event or occurrence; a prodigy, a marvel"; "a fetus, neonate, or individual with a gross congenital malformation, usually of a degree incompatible with life."<sup>21</sup> The changeling's nonhuman origin makes it possible to conceive of the human and underscores the notion that any *origin* as such is "monstrous" since we are, all of us, substitutes of substitutes—not spontaneous creations but bloody, pulpy works in progress, "formless, mute, infant, and terrifying" (Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" 534). The human comes in the form of the nonhuman. The changeling tale, then, presents a fictional narrative that explores human origins through interaction and exchange with a nonhuman species.

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<sup>21</sup> See entry in the online *OED*.

#### IV: The Changeling as Hybrid

Given the prominence of the theory that the “fairies were in part recruited from the peasantry since they were thought to include dead ancestors” (Jenkins 314), it could be further argued that these folk legends narrate the very process of human evolution, from an ancient and legendary species to a modern one. On the one hand, this belief seemed to be reinforced by a Social Darwinist view: “In both fantasy and reality,” Silver argues, “changelings were increasingly associated with the Darwinian notion of groups or races that had not ultimately triumphed, particularly with ‘inferior human experiments’ of which only a few examples had ‘survived’” (85-86). This perspective also gave rise to the belief that the peasantry who believed in such tales was therefore a primitive underclass, uncivilized and barbaric in its behaviour, capable of the type of anarchy and savagery described in fairy legend. In fact, the well-documented cases of “changeling abuse,” which occurred among poor or working-class Irish and British families, helped to bolster “feelings of superiority” among the Anglo-Saxon peoples: “The barbarous tests to which members of ‘inferior’ groups subjected children were really proof of how backward and primitive they themselves still were—evidences of their kinship to savage tribes and even to lower primates” (67). On the other hand, Silver does *not* mention the fact that Darwinian theory posed a threat to the entire social order by undermining the biblical account of creation and the theory of separate and specialized variations, and that *all* humans were the product of the slow and sometimes unforeseen modification of formerly *nonhuman* species. As Darwin writes: “Indefinite variability is a much more common result of changed conditions than definite variability, and has probably played a more



important part in the formation of our domestic races” (*Origin* 26). The arbitrary acceptance of only certain kinds of variation (i.e., Anglo-Saxon, Caucasian, and Christian) was therefore a clear sign of racial and moral prejudice, which consisted in the arbitrary acceptance of *some* forms of violence (the colonization and oppression of “lower” races) and rejection of other forms (ritual abuse derived from pagan beliefs among the “lower” races). I have already noted this hypocrisy above. Darwin himself, early in the *Origin*, had once characterized the conflict between indigenous groups and their oppressors with some sympathy: “And as foreigners have thus in every country beaten some of the natives, we may safely conclude that the natives might have been modified with advantage, so as to have better resisted the intruders” (111). In such a scenario, the *human* attempt to impose its will on the environment is undermined by *nature*’s “preservation” of valuable characteristics and survival skills; as Darwin adds, nature “cares nothing for appearances, except in so far as they are useful to any being.” Such a theory, which helped to “relate man to the ‘under-world of life,’” was useful to the underclasses in Britain (Desmond and Moore 508), as well as those throughout the British Isles that chose to believe in the fairies—another underclass whose methods (abduction, for one) had all the markings of tactical warfare.

Silver’s remarks on *Social Darwinism* do not, however, miss the mark if we consider the degree to which fallacious theories of evolution influenced the study of pagan religious customs and ultimately helped to justify imperial expansionism in the second half of the nineteenth century. While Christianity may have ultimately lost its authority, the scientific authority that replaced it (and permeated everything from folklore to the legal system) often had little sympathy for the groups that were considered to be

culturally obsolete. To begin with, evolutionary science from the 1840s onward was heavily influenced by “progressionism,” or “ideas of biological progress [...] extrapolated from ideas of social progress” (Amundsen 515). The Swiss-American palaeoichthyologist, Louis Agassiz, had apparently discovered, some years before the publication of the *Origin*, a “unifying thread” of “progress” in the evolutionary development of the species—“from simple to complex, from the uniform to the highly differentiated, from monad to man” (Ruse 112). With such a schema, it became possible “to order beings along some kind of *scala naturae*, from the invertebrates up through the primates, and eventually to humankind.” Herbert Spencer was instrumental in popularizing the progressionist perspective, offering his own notion of “dynamic equilibrium,” “a kind of progressive force upwards, from simplicity to complexity, from the valueless to the valued” (61). Certainly, by the mid-1860s, Darwin himself accepted the Spencerian view “that the optimal outcome of human natural selection would be the triumph of ‘the intellectual and moral’ races over the ‘lower and more degraded ones’” (Claeys 237); such a view, which was influenced by socio-economic theories of the “survival of the fittest,” ultimately made Darwin a progressionist and, by proxy, a Social Darwinist. In fact, references to “savages” as “lower forms” scatter the pages of Darwin’s later work, *The Descent of Man* (see, for example, 62, 125, 134, 148, 158-59, 227, 608, 621, 623). The problem, then, is that Darwin began to speak of “savage” and “civilized” as separate species, even while his theory of natural selection (first sketched out in the *Origin*) actually contradicted this. Intelligence, like a physical characteristic, is the product of a very gradual process of modification and selection, but, as Darwin would have to admit, *does not always assume the same form*. True, there is a certain consistency

in a society whose combined tastes and habits push evolution in a particular direction. By Darwin's account, however, the *dominant* tendencies (say, industrial, class-based) tend to minimize the success of other, less dominant tendencies (say, agricultural, tribal-based): only *after the fact* did Darwin make the conclusion that this "struggle for existence," and the concomitant victory over certain variations (i.e., races), was what *ought to be* in the grand scheme of things. Any diligent Darwinist would likely cite Hume's "naturalistic fallacy," and note that Darwin's theory of natural selection, as "proposition," is related to an "*is or is not*" rather than an "*ought or ought not*" (see Rachael's 67). First, I would assert that Darwin's acceptance of progressionism implied a moral view, even if his propositions could still exist as facts outside his preference. Second, I would note that by insisting on the distinction between "savage" and "civilized," Darwin could not or refused to see the facts: that every human variation has "savage" tendencies, and that "intelligence" was likely a crucial factor in the development of each variation (*Descent* 633-34).

Despite the limitations of Darwin's—and Darwinist—theory, it provides a way of perceiving the differences among similar groups (those between the human races) as well as the similarities among different species (those between humans and nonhumans). As I have suggested, in acknowledging our monstrous origin we can account for the second relation and for the fact that monstrosity itself is a form of species variation:

At long intervals of time, out of millions of individuals reared in the same country and fed on nearly the same food, deviations of structure so strongly pronounced as to deserve to be called monstrosities arise; but monstrosities cannot be separated by any distinct line from slighter variations. All such changes of structure, whether extremely slight or strongly marked, which appear among many individuals living together, *may be considered as the indefinite effects of the conditions of life on each individual organism*, in nearly the same manner as the

chill affects different men in an indefinite manner, according to their state of body or constitution, causing coughs or colds, rheumatisms, or inflammation of various organs. (*Origin* 26; original emphases)

Such a description may explain why changelings were identified by late nineteenth-century scientists as species “reversions,” “missing links,” and microcephalic “idiots” (Silver 83), even while it also reinforces the notion that all species proceeded by “strongly pronounced” variations. Doesn’t the Neanderthal look monstrous to the human? Here lies a pronounced variation. Doesn’t the Down’s syndrome child look monstrous to another human? Here lies another variation. John Langdon Haydon Down, in the 1860s, came up with the diagnosis of “Mongolian idiocy,” a theory which argued that cretinism in white Caucasian children represented an “evolutionary throwback” resembling Africans, Malays, American Indians, and Orientals (Silver 82-83). While the “resemblance” is likely accurate, it does not entail a “throwback,” especially since Africans, Malaysians, American Indians, and Orientals (meaning “Asians”) all represent intraspecies variation, just as a congenital disease does. “Species” itself, Darwin argues, can be defined as “the unknown element of a distant act of creation” (*Origin* 65), an unforeseen series of modifications and proliferations. As Deleuze and Guattari have said, evolution consists in a relation between “territory” and “earth” (*What Is Philosophy?* 86) in which both the animal and hominid “wrest” themselves from the earth in order to create and recreate territories (67-68). Humans, monsters, and animals (as I discuss below) are not so much the product of their environment as they are that environment’s *production*—the organisms that populate and give shape to that environment. The changeling, another interesting variation, carries with it the deterritorializations and reterritorializations that have marked its evolutionary path, from child to monster to animal.

While I have suggested that “radical hospitality” reinforces the common experiences of both fairy and human (disease, deformity, reproductive problems), it also reinforces the contingent unions of disparate forms. It would be inaccurate, then, to say that radical hospitality, and the relation between human and monster or human and animal, succeeds by finding correspondences discovered at the level of descent or a common genetic structure (in the way that evolutionary progressionists confidently ascribe stages to the “descent of man” from ape to Neanderthal to *Homo sapiens*, and then speak of these earlier stages as “regressions” if they appear in a later stage). If this chapter proceeds by way of finding *relations* among various personae, it does so not in order to claim a common *descent* (i.e., changeling>child or vice-versa) but rather to claim a tactical alliance. While I have assembled my personae in a particular order—child, monster, and animal—there is no intended gradation or stratification. While the changeling tale narrates a stage of human growth, before the infant matures and assumes the usual human characteristics, and offers a concentrated version of species evolution, from primitive to civilized primate, it also disrupts these easy scientific explanations by suggesting that the changeling, as “hybrid” production of fairy and human, may be an advancement in human evolution rather than a “throwback” or reversion. By “advancement” I mean both in the biological sense that a *new form* is now made possible and in the philosophical sense that a new alliance has been fashioned. Moreover, the political implications of the changeling-insurgent, as seen in tales like “Johnnie in the Cradle” and “A Fairy Changeling: I,” are reiterated with new emphasis on the monstrous anarchical *body* in “The Caerlaverock Changeling” and “The Fairy Changeling: II.” The hybrid body is effective inasmuch as it functions as a foil to the dominant systems of the

family and the State.

Postcolonial theory since Homi Bhabha has interpreted the marginalized or othered identity as both emergent and belated, that is, in an “in-between” or “hybrid” state. First popularized by Bhabha in essays such as “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse” and “Signs Taken For Wonders,” and rearticulated throughout his immensely popular book *The Location of Culture*,<sup>22</sup> the concept of cultural “hybridity” was conceived as a foil to the notion that colonized subjects were passive victims and did not take any initiative in identity formation during the colonization process. As defined by Bhabha in “Signs Taken For Wonders,” hybridity is “the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects,” and it “displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination” (112). The moment of hybridity occurs when the representation of the colonized subject is revealed to be *in excess* since the colonial powers require the native to mimic white Christian ways (the example Bhabha uses). As Bhabha frames it, this “excess” constitutes the “failure” of the colonial project, even while colonization continues to work on more subtle levels, displacing and rupturing the wholeness of originally “native” communities. And yet, Bhabha’s key argument is that the colonial process demands wholeness, “identity, stasis,” even while the “counter-pressure of the diachrony of history” produces “change, difference” (86). The great irony here is that “hybridity is intrinsic to colonial discourse itself, and consequently colonial discourse potentially undoes itself” (Coombes and Brah 11). Hybridity, then, signifies the

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<sup>22</sup> The earlier essays are included in *The Location of Culture*, and all my citations of Bhabha’s work come from this later text.

phenomenon in colonialism where the organizing principle of “Truth,” at least as the colonizing power understands it, is radically displaced by inassimilable voices (Bhabha 105). This displacement occurs when the colonized “other” articulates the discourse of colonial enlightenment with different accents, emphases, and sounds, transforming the originary language (English, for example) into a mongrelized or hybridized one.

This critical perspective owes something to Raymond Williams’s description in *Marxism and Literature* of the traditions, institutions, and formations of the cultural process. His use of the terms “dominant,” “residual,” and “emergent” to describe the “internal dynamic relations of any actual process” (121) has been influential on postcolonial studies of dominant post-enlightenment culture, for example, and the residual effects of this domination on the bodies of colonial subjects in the decolonization period as well as disenfranchised subjects living under the dominant rule of the State. By “residual” Williams means something that has been formed in the past “but is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present” (122). The residual may be confused with the “archaic,” Williams notes, in the very celebration of cultural difference, which national cultures currently categorize as “multicultural.” But if an identity is residual, it is neither whole nor can it be completely effaced since it leaves its traces in the very institutions that comprise “dominant” culture. Dominance necessitates and requires the incorporation of the residual (123) as the very sign of its power in the historical process. As I have suggested, the fairy economy is one of the more notable examples of such a residual process, but it also pushes the limits of the system through which it finds its expression and its operations. In particular, the changeling persona exploits the system for its own

ends, gathering its allied personae, or its “pack,” as Deleuze and Guattari would say (*A Thousand Plateaus* 241), in order to infiltrate the residual territories and create new ones. After all, domination always leaves a residue of some original identity or marginal mode of production, and perhaps it is this notion of partiality that Bhabha speaks of in his articulation of cultural hybridity.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the “emergent” is precisely what attempts to break free of the dominant, to come into view as an oppositional, and not merely a “novel,” practice (Williams 123-24); as an extension of the residual, the emergent is precisely what rejects incorporation, which articulates itself as “recognition” and “acceptance” (125).<sup>24</sup>

What all of this suggests is that hybridity, in its very condition of heterogeneity, cannot be restricted to a single meaning since it is both a violent imposition and a transitory state that opens up rather than closes off relations between “hosts” and “guests” and between conceptual personae. For the purposes of the present discussion, however, I specify hybridity<sup>25</sup> as a(n enforced) mode of production linked specifically to the fairy economy, which involves, among other transactions, the exchange of fairy children for

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<sup>23</sup> See particularly “Of Mimicry and Man” where he discusses “‘partial’ presence” (86) and “the ‘partial’ diffusion of Christianity” (87). Bhabha acknowledges the importance of Williams’s terminology in at least two places in *The Location of Culture* (148, 252), but the terminology seems to resonate throughout the whole work, as I have attempted to show.

<sup>24</sup> In his discussion of the “diversionary tactic” of “*la perruque*,” which means “to borrow,” Michel de Certeau seems to approach the question of the residual and the emergent, as they function *within* a dominant system of production. He asks, “on what grounds can we call this ‘art’ [i.e., *la perruque*] *different*?” (*The Practice of Everyday Life* 24). Perhaps, as Williams suggests, it is a matter of distinguishing between the residual “borrowing” from the hegemonic structure and the emergent “bricolage” or “making do” with the fragments of that structure that have broken free in the process.

<sup>25</sup> I emphasize my own specification here and do acknowledge a whole other range of scholarly study on the concept of hybridity that this chapter could not address in full. An impressive example is Charles Stewart’s analysis of the “vocabularies of mixture” in “Syncretism and Its Synonyms: Reflections on Cultural Mixture.” See also the special issue on hybridity in *The Journal of American Folklore* 112 (Summer 1999), an example of which—Brian Stross’s “The Hybrid Metaphor: From Biology to Culture” (254-67)—I have referenced briefly. Another notable contribution is *Hybridity and Its Discontents: Politics, Science, Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000), edited by Avtar Brah and Annie E. Coombes.



human ones. The folkloric sense of “hybridity” refers to a kind of “supernatural intervention” and a belief that “human beings can, and frequently do, have sexual relations with nonhuman beings to produce offspring” (Eberly 230). This plot provides an additional explanation of the changeling motif: the encounter, identified usually as an abduction, leads to the birth of a hybrid product of the “union.” Each group experiences ruptures and breaches (of moral codes, of established contracts, of the physical body itself) but each group also borrows something from the other. In some cases, moral pressure forces the breach to end the transaction. This is at least partially the case in “The Fairy Wife” where the husband alienates himself from his community by marrying a foreigner and ultimately producing a hybrid child. As Briggs has noted, fairies “*are near enough in kind to mate with humans—closer in fact than a horse is to an ass*, for many human families claim a fairy ancestress” (Briggs, *The Fairies in Tradition and Literature* 95; emphasis added). This proximity “in kind” is reinforced by the fact that women were frequently abducted for the purpose of suckling fairy children (O’Sullivan, “Notes to the Tales” 273), which confirms the notion that fairies also required human aid. In terms of Darwinian evolution, fairies are interested in perfecting (by variation) rather than purifying (by similitude) their stock, and we could interpret fairy abductions as a program of genetic mutation in which children are abducted, acculturated in the new culture, and eventually paired up with a fairy man or woman: the changeling is the successful hybrid of such a program (Rojcewicz 493). While the husband in “The Fairy Wife” is rebuked for allowing one of the fairies to insinuate herself in the community, we can consider the fairy wife’s departure, with child in hand, as a successful abduction. At the same time, however, this man, whom I have (perhaps uncharitably) described as a “dupe,” can be

seen as playing an important role in sustaining the human-fairy relation. The storyteller makes no mention of any additional children, so we might also add that the fairy woman herself plays an important role in sustaining a bloodline and providing the man with his only heir.

Hospitality, then, is fundamentally concerned with hybridity since it involves, in at least one description, the hosting of the stranger in the body and the contingent blending of two entities. The changeling, which in European folklore is the substitute for the human child and thus the breach in the filial chain (Derrida, "Hostipitality" [2002] 412), is the ultimate test to the host because it pushes the limits of what is normally understood to be hospitality. The abduction of a child in this scenario means a gain for the fairies whose ailing stock can now be invigorated with healthy human blood. On the other hand, the birth of a changeling means a loss for the human whose bloodline is considered either contaminated by foreign genes or diseased by some inexplicable mutation. Changelings then signified both the frailty of human life and also the possibility of defying such limitations. Thus, my anticipation of genetic mutation (which I discuss in subsequent chapters) is relevant here: hybridity, to come back to my discussion of Bhabha and Williams, delineates a residual loss and an emergent gain, a loss of purity and an increase of (hybrid) vitality. The fairy realm is the height of human potential. Similarly, the changeling is the positive alternative: a withered child that could be nurtured and nursed to the point of rejuvenation. Additionally, the adoption of the changeling can allow two species to thrive.

One folktale, which I discuss at length below, offers an initial example of hospitality as the conflicted response to hybridity, which, in its first sequence, takes the

form of a mysterious foundling. The second sequence presents a further variation on the changeling motif in that characters assume forms that we have not encountered so far: animals. Given its elaborate structure and its profusion of fantastical occurrences, “The Speckled Bull” is notably distinct from the other, more homely changeling legends. As Röhrich argues, “Legendary figures belong to a real otherworld,” while “folktale figures have become part of a fantasy world and are no longer truly ‘demonic,’ and therefore not truly ‘otherworldly’ in the same sense as the legend” (22). Accordingly, while part of the drama in legends derives from the very encounter with the “otherworldly,” the tension between the human and nonhuman elements seems to be almost non-existent in the often highly stylized folktale. But “The Speckled Bull” is a special case, for its first sequence proceeds without any suggestion of magical happenings, only the interactions between mortals, while its second sequence includes a number of magical transformations that suggest an altogether different genre. While it is not categorized under “animal” tales or tales about the “people of the otherworld” (as “The Fairy Wife” is), it draws on both by including animals, changelings, human-animal transformations, couplings, and hybrids. As Briggs reminds us, fairies are reputed to be “the dead, or certain of the dead, some fallen angels, some nature spirits, and some ‘spiritual animals’” (“Fairies” 175): for this reason, the title character may in fact be one of the fairy folk in animal form. While “The Speckled Bull” cannot be identified distinctly as a “changeling” tale, its focus on reproduction and monstrous children suggests that it at least shares a thematic commonality with legends such as “The Caerlaverock Changeling” and “Johnnie in the Cradle.” Because the tale is rather lengthy, I will discuss it in two parts, beginning with the substitution of a child.

The tale tells of a king's son who is sought after by all the women of Ireland. He becomes particularly friendly with two sisters, but ultimately chooses and marries the younger, and perhaps more nubile, of the two. The older sister becomes jealous, and when the younger one gives birth, while her husband has gone hunting, she abducts the child and throws it into the river. When the prince arrives home, she explains that her younger sister has given birth to a kitten and that she has disposed of it. He accepts the story and grieves for his wife. A short time later, when he is also conveniently hunting, his wife gives birth to another healthy child, and the older sister steals it once again and sets it down the river in a basket. This time, when the prince arrives home, the older sister tells him that his wife has given birth to a puppy, that she has once again disposed of it, and adds, "If you had married me[,] things wouldn't be this way [...] I'd have borne proper children" (O'Sullivan, "The Speckled Bull" 119). Convinced by the woman's concocted tale, the prince banishes his wife and marries her older sister. When the prince is once again out of sight, his new wife casts a spell on her sister, making a "green stone of her." Meanwhile, an elderly fisherman finds the second discarded child caught up in bushes on the bank of the river (a scenario reminiscent of the story of Moses) and takes it back to his frugal home where he and his wife decide to adopt the foundling. Because the couple has been childless for so long, news of the child spreads until the prince's new wife gets wind of the discovery. She decides to visit the fisherman's wife, determined to eliminate the proof of her betrayal. When she enters the home, she discovers the child "lying in a cradle near a fire" and begins her trickery anew:

"Isn't he a fine child, God bless him?" said she.  
"He's a good boy, thank you," said the fisherman's wife.  
"What a pity that he isn't your own," said the other.

“Of course, he’s my own. ’Tis unmannerly of you to come into my house and say a thing like that. I don’t know who you are or where you’re from.”

“I’m not telling any lie,” said the prince’s wife. “And to prove it, you will have to kill that child. You think that he is a normal child of this world, but he isn’t. He’s a changeling that the hill folk have left with you, and unless you take my advice, you’ll regret it for many a long day.” (120)

Upon convincing the fisherman’s wife that the child be removed, the prince’s wife promptly takes the child away and slits its throat.

Like the changelings discussed above, this substituted child signifies both a gain and a loss. It provides (at least the appearance of) a miraculous fertility for the elderly couple and fills a real void in their lives; and yet its absence provides the older sister with a substitute story of a monstrous birth and, by default, proof of infertility since the younger sister has nothing to show for her pregnancy. For a short time the changeling also raises the status of the rural family, signifying as it does a fusion of noble and peasant blood. Further, the adoption is a gesture of hospitality, as Derrida describes, where a stranger is taken in from the cold with no questions asked. That they may experience “regret,” as the prince’s wife suggests, may mean that this supposed changeling has contaminated the home with his foreign heritage. The only regret, of course, is losing the child in the first place—the ultimate experience of both the younger sister and the elderly couple. This tension between loss and gain is, we will recall, related to the function of hybridity. As with “The Fairy Wife,” “The Speckled Bull” comments upon the consequences of blending of two cultures, or more accurately, two social classes: a peasant family and a noble family. From the elderly couple’s perspective, the fusion adds a certain vigour to their lives, even while it likely disturbs the prince’s wife who is aggressive in her assertion that this child is not their own, *could* not be their own, since it

is nobly born.

The most notable detail in this piece is the way in which a character uses the changeling tale as a manner of expression. This self-conscious story telling may be a response to the charge that folk legends were uncouth responses to the inexplicable mysteries of life; after all, a noblewoman, not a peasant, uses a folk motif to justify violence. Interestingly, the prince's wife forgets (or does not know?) that a changeling would not stand being so close to a fire! (Consider "Johnnie in the Cradle" and "The Caerlaverock Changeling.") Then again, this is no ordinary changeling. In any event, the tale includes subtle commentary on class hierarchy in its depiction of a gentry that banishes and murders babies. While the audience would know that the child is a "changeling" only in that it has changed hands, listeners of this tale also see the irony of the situation: that a lowly fisherman's wife is scolded when she is actually more suitable to care for a child of the gentry than the gentry itself. The changeling, however, is "illegitimate" for several reasons: it was stolen from its original cradle; it is not naturally the son of the fisherman and his wife; it is associated with monstrous births; and it is not a "normal" child since it has the capacity to incriminate a respectable individual. As an example of another "bifurcation" (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 76), the "changeling" does not appear in the form of a fairy but rather as a signifier—as the expression of jealousy over a woman's fertility, but more particularly as a means to designate illegitimacy. This bifurcation also leads to the creation of new personae: animals, in the form of a kitten and a puppy. Of course, as far as we are told, the prince's original wife did not *really* give birth to two animals. However, since the child in question has been substituted, and since the kitten and the puppy briefly assume the role

of the substitutions (the fictional remainder of the woman's birth), these animals may be understood as changelings themselves, reterritorializations of the child and additional conceptual personae.

The title, "The Speckled Bull," refers to the magical progeny of a speckled cow. This birth comes about in the following way. After the murdered child is buried, a tree grows up from the plot bearing many different kinds of fruit. This tree is located within the grazing area of the prince's cattle, and one specimen, a curiously speckled cow, eats of the fruit and, without the help of a bull, gives birth to a male speckled bull-calf. The prince's wife hears of this new bull and its supernatural qualities (including its ability to fly), and realizes that the truth of her treachery may yet be revealed. She then pretends to be ill and bribes a doctor to tell the prince that she may only be saved if she is given the heart and liver of a speckled bull. However, the prince's men fail to capture the bull and it escapes all the way to the "east," where it is discovered by the King of the Eastern world. This king's daughter, who is "under geasa"—that is, "solemn injunctions of a magical kind" (O'Sullivan, "Glossary" 289)—"never to leave the palace unless her eyes were covered" lest she marry the first man she sees ("The Speckled Bull" 123), faints when she sees the bull, telling her father when she is revived that he is actually a strikingly handsome man. She is then obligated to marry the speckled bull and discovers that he, too, is under geasa to remain a bull for half the day (although it is not exactly clear who is responsible for the injunctions in either case). He gives her the option of being a bull in the day or at night, and she chooses the day, making love with him as a man in the evening. After consulting a druid, the King of the Eastern world discovers a way to transform the speckled bull back into his original form for good. Once the prince assumes

his original form, he returns to his homeland in the west and elicits a confession from the treacherous woman who was responsible for his metamorphosis in the first place. When her treachery is finally uncovered, the prince's wife is granted the opportunity to choose her own punishment: perhaps as a reflection of her abandonment/murder of those children, she asks to be "put up on the highest chimney top of the palace, faced towards the wind, and [to be] given no food but whatever small grain the wind might blow to her and no drink but whatever drop of rain she could catch on her tongue" (129). The punishment is duly granted. No one hears of the prince's wife thereafter, while the prince's son and his new wife, the daughter of the King of the Eastern world, live out the rest of their lives contented.

The tale, however, ends on a rather inhospitable note when the narrator concludes, "I can't say what happened to the woman that was left on the chimney top, but if she suffered what was laid down for her, she well deserved it and nobody would have any great pity for her" (O'Sullivan, "The Speckled Bull" 130). In many ways, then, this woman is an aberrant form, a woman-monster who perverts the sacred institution of marriage and reproduction by producing, conceptually or virtually, monstrous children. However, her initial alliance with the changeling "pack" (child-kitten-puppy) ultimately fails when she tries to liquidate it (in two attempted drownings and one successful murder) in order to strengthen a filial tie (by marrying the prince). If the tale does not end on a note of forgiveness, the prince's wife makes a gesture of hospitality by substituting her own legitimacy when she puts herself in the position of the abandoned and the abducted; she is a changeling but, as the narrator concludes, never the *foundling*.

But "The Speckled Bull" is abundant with other becomings. It is worth noting



how much animals play important roles in the movement of the plot, providing the prince's wife with the story of a monstrous birth (*woman gives birth to kitten and puppy!*), and then becoming the central focus of a potentially monstrous union (*woman mates with speckled bull!*). One presumption to be made—although the narrator never clarifies this—is that the speckled bull is, in fact, the murdered child. Another possibility is that the blood of the dead child somehow brings about the birth of another child/calf, the speckled bull. Either way, the changeling-child (already disposed of by the older sister) has the ability to cross over the threshold of death and assume another form. However the title or tale may be interpreted, the speckled bull itself is clearly a hybrid creation: based on the (somewhat ambiguous) description of his birth, he is the hybrid product of a dead human child and a speckled cow who, we might suggest, ingests some of the child's blood or flesh when she eats of the bountiful fruit that grows up out of the grave. This magical birth returns us to the opening sequence of the story, although we discover that the union (between dead child and cow?) is successful and that the hybrid itself is welcomed, despite the third attempt to do him in.<sup>26</sup> This persona, then, possesses a “hybrid vigor” (Stross 256-57), which allows it to proliferate into several forms and into the aberrant becoming-child-changeling-kitten-puppy-bull. Abductions, hybrid births, and magical transformations all suggest the work of the “little people,” and even while the narrator never suggests this, there are enough similarities between “The Speckled Bull” and other, less ornate tales, to suggest that the former is indeed a changeling tale, which concerns a fairy that assumes the form of a “spiritual animal” (Briggs, “Fairies” 175).

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<sup>26</sup> If we are to believe that the speckled bull is the child who is first discovered by the fisherman, then he has been disposed of twice already and survives the third attempt when the King of the Eastern world returns him to human form through a magic ritual.

More than this, supernatural interventions associated with changeling legends were sometimes attributed to the “pairing of humans with animals [...] to produce offspring” (Eberly 230). Further, as we have already seen, changelings were considered “borderline creations” and “species midway between humans and the brutes”; “their howls, snarls, grimaces, inability to use language, and destructive actions revealed their kinship with the lower vertebrates” (Silver 83). But what Silver takes to be a disparaging association, we might interpret as an optimal alliance. In any event, the changeling motif runs throughout the tale, beginning with the abducted child in that first, relatively unadorned section, and ending with the hybrid bull-human, in the richly ornate section. Despite the predominance of magic in this tale, there is still a notable tension between the human and fairy worlds and between the human and animal worlds, reinforced by the suggestion that the “hill folk” *may or may not* be responsible for the mysterious appearance of the changeling child. Also, the hybridized man-bull in the second sequence is still neither really a bull, nor is he imitating one. There is an alliance between the two, which becomes more “imperceptible,” Deleuze and Guattari would say, as it becomes more “intense”:<sup>27</sup> it appears too man-like to be a bull and too bull-like to be a man. And yet, the story’s conclusion includes a final transformation as the man is released from his *geasa*. The original alliance has been reterritorialized since, unlike the older sister in the tale, the recovered man-bull returns to his family and opts for an “affiliation” by marrying a human.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The subtitle of chapter 10 of *A Thousand Plateaus* is “Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible.”

<sup>28</sup> “The Speckled Bull,” like most folktales involving human-animal marriages, including all of those found in the Grimms, does not depict bestiality. As Röhrich says in regards to tales about man-animal

Despite these shortcomings, the sophisticated style of story telling, discovered in the wry self-conscious use of the changeling narrative itself, also indicates a sophisticated “conceptual world” that requires a multiplicity of interpretations. The conceptual personae from the previous sections have undergone changes so that, in my discussion of “The Speckled Bull,” the *changeling* itself (that “withered,” “wizened,” atrophied creature of fairy origin) has become a nearly unrecognizable and imperceptible persona. But it is “recognition” that oppresses in the first place, as Bhabha has argued, based as it is on definable categories, taxonomies of type, classification, and even “motif.” The changeling tale has now revealed its tendency to branch off and proliferate—not simply by altering its focus (from insubordinate children to magical fairies to frightful monsters to animals) but by refusing to be bound by its type, by its motif. “The Speckled Bull” moves beyond the restrictions of its genre in its appropriation of the changeling motif and in its discovery of new uses for the conceptual persona of the changeling.

## Conclusion

The present chapter has argued that the changeling, as its name suggests, became a vehicle for exchange between the fairy and human communities in the Victorian period. To be sure, as Marcel Mauss has noted, “the market is a *human* phenomenon [...] familiar to every known society. Markets are found before the development of merchants, and before their most important innovation, currency as we know it” (2; emphasis added). However, the fairy market, as one component of the little folk’s economy, functions as a

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transformation, “no marriages between a human and an animal are consummated. It always turns out ‘really’ to be a marriage between a man and a woman, and transformation back into human form occurs *before* they actually consummate the marriage” (Röhrich 83).

parallel to the human institution, for it underscores the fact that the items in our habitual “exchanges” are not only material goods but “courtesies, entertainments, ritual, military assistance, women, children, dances and feasts” (3). In other words, the fairies were more interested in sustaining hospitable relations than in accumulating or circulating wealth. The fairy economy, then, is a rather residual institution since it became incorporated into the human economy and, thereafter, modified. Conrad Arensberg’s description of folk “survivals” in Irish culture suggests that elements like the fairy economy and the “good people” are residual because they have an important role in the “organization of human lives” (163).<sup>29</sup> As the changeling legends suggest, the fairy economy enunciated the problem of offering hospitality to complete strangers, especially if they appeared hostile or unwilling to follow the household rules. But the continual engagement with fairy legend in the Victorian period indicates the possibility of *negotiation*—between social groups as well as species.

While folklore scholars do not make any such claim, I would contend that the fairy economy consists of a conceptual exchange where one belief system (that of the human, the familiar, the habitual) is overturned by another (the arcane, the unfamiliar, and the unusual), and where new concepts are introduced as a result. Folk narratives, according to this perspective, comprise smaller units called “concepts,” which enact the flows and transfers, breaks and ruptures between human and fairy, speaker and listener. Moreover, rather than simply a “model of the symbolic universe,” as Bourke suggests

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<sup>29</sup> Indeed, his explanation of the resilient nature of folk belief sounds very much like Williams’s description of the “residual”: “The anthropologist [Robert Ranulph] Marrett said once: ‘Survivals are no mere wreckage of the past, but are likewise symptomatic of those tendencies of our common nature which have the best chance of surviving in the long run’” (qtd. in Arensberg 163).

(*The Burning of Bridget Cleary* 31), these narratives present a schemata or diagram of lived existence, which can only be expressed through impressions, notions, and ultimately theories about what that existence signifies. The schemata, the legend itself, is a configuration of concepts, which are naturally borne of previous ones that have, at one point or another, crossed and fused with each other, exchanged and changed (as witnessed in the series of tales I have discussed). Such is the nature of an economy that works through insinuation, expropriation, and borrowing. If, as Deleuze and Guattari describe, a “concept” has the following components: “possible world, existing face, and real language and speech” (*What Is Philosophy?* 17), it is my argument that 1) folk legend becomes the filling out of this world, this face, and this speech, and that 2) this concept-creation is a philosophical practice.

The legends that comprised the “survivals,” which so fascinated folklorists and anthropologists in the nineteenth century, contained scenarios and characters that were not completely unrecognizable to the general populace in England, Ireland, Scotland, and elsewhere. Indeed, as negotiators of truth claims, the legends gave expression to anxieties regarding the position of children whose insubordination was seen as a symptom of an awful transformation. Related to this domestic concern were the precarious infertility and infant mortality rates (see Woods), not to mention the rising occurrence of congenital malformations. That the legends featured both insubordinate *and* deformed children suggested a general belief that deviance could be physically manifested and therefore easily diagnosed. Not surprisingly, these changeling monsters provided a new lexicon for the medical profession who could make the invisible visible (Munro 252-53).

Consequently, the naughty child, who had transformed into a dwarf or brownie and then

into a medical monster, finally became equated with lower forms on the evolutionary scale. Moreover, folklore collectors, scientists, and the original disseminators of fairy legend collectively understood that changelings were no mere fantastical creatures but were analogous to children, subalterns, medical monstrosities, and individuals of hybrid identity. But, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, we can go further than this, for conceptual personae are not mere metaphors or even models for social behaviour; rather they “carry out the movements that describe the author’s plane of immanence, and they play a part in the very creation of the author’s concepts” (*What Is Philosophy?* 63). For the Victorians, the child was, in fact, a “changeling,” or could *become* one if certain precautions were not taken; at the same time, and as part of this conceptual exchange, the changeling would become something entirely different—no longer simply a folk entity but, as in the case of Pinocchio, *a real boy* (or *girl*). “Social fields,” Deleuze and Guattari elaborate, “are inextricable knots in which the three movements [of seeking a territory, carrying out deterritorializations, and reterritorializing] are mixed up so that, in order to disentangle them, we have to *diagnose real types or personae*” (*What Is Philosophy?* 68; original emphasis). The point here is that the “persona” is vital for the enunciation of the “type”; and so I have spent three sections delineating at least three *types* of changelings, *or* three types that the changeling persona enunciates: the child, the monster, and the animal. If we find certain important distinctions between the child and the monster, say, or the child and the animal, it is also accurate to say that the monster helps define or redefine the child, just as the animal gains a new clarity as a result of its proximity to the child: children could be better understood as “little monsters” since they seemed so distinct from their human parents who were more physically and mentally developed. Similarly, the child’s

early development was a reminder of the vital “animal” element in the human organism since it made no bones about howling or regressing if it served a tactical purpose. The child was a nexus of concern for the Victorians, but so was the changeling whose hybrid identity aligned it with the social and racial underclasses of the society, and whose primary tactic was the deterritorialization of previously occupied territories.

In some ways, deterritorialization/reterritorialization is an evolutionary or, to be more accurate, “neoevolutionary” concept (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 239) that gauges the ways in which humans and animals alike (and therefore conceptual personae) become attached to various territories and then move off from them to create new ones, or new unforeseen pathways branching off from these territories. “Divergence” itself first manifests itself in the form of a reterritorialization: we fall back or become temporarily *immobile*, and this enables us to move in a new direction; the next move, however, completes the process of divergence as long as it proceeds along the new path and refrains from simply going *backwards*, which would constitute a kind of absolute reterritorialization. “Becoming” is the contingent moment in which a conceptual persona is moving away from one territory (one conceptualization) towards another, falling back in order to move off in a new direction; as I indicate in my introduction, this becoming is not so much an act of will as it is a tactical *reaction* to a given territorial (or indeed, evolutionary) change. Conceptual personae like the changeling appear to be always in a state of becoming—neither *here* nor *there*—because of the intensity of their deterritorializing and reterritorializing campaigns: they are attached to other personae and so move about in several divergent directions, making new alliances along the way. While such personae are divergent, they also frequently form packs and hence

concentrate, or intensify, their efforts within territories, as guerrillas might swarm an occupied camp. An alliance would then be the opposite of an affiliation since no single conceptual persona can be said to be attached or connected to another. Packs are not affiliations; otherwise they would be institutions (like the family). Rather they are disparate groups of personae that can diverge from the current path or territory at any moment.

Williams's three terms—the dominant, the residual, and the emergent—have provided a further way for us to gauge the various “becomings” of conceptual personae as they infiltrate, emerge, and reemerge in various forms (child, monster, animal, and so forth). The changeling pressures the dominant systems (the family, the Church, the State), but is not bound by affiliation or the problems of reproduction since it creates its own divergent art through “contagion” (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 247). This is to say that “hybridity” concerns contingent unions that are fruitful only once, and result generally in sterility and, on occasion, *mutation*. Recall the fairy tactic of abduction: substitutions never lead to the further propagation of either humans or fairies, but plentiful *deviations*, or hybridizations of both species. Such a tactic, demonstrated most notably in “The Caerlaverock Changeling” and “The Fairy Changeling: II,” allows the fairies (and therefore humans) to proliferate “over and over again every time, gaining that much more ground” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 241) because they are not bound by filial ties. Once again, abduction and the infiltration of the changeling initiate a breach and thereby open up new territories, new alliances. The emergent subject might then be understood as the acknowledgement of the fact “that *no mode of production and therefore no dominant social order and therefore no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all*



*human [and fairy] practice, human [and fairy] energy, and human [and fairy] intention*” (Williams 125; original emphases, my interpolations). In terms of the fairy economy, hybridity could then be understood as “an ethics of *tenacity*,” as “countless ways of refusing to accord the established order the status of a law, a meaning, or a fatality” (de Certeau 26; original emphases). The six previous folk narratives reinforce such an interpretation by showing that hybridity has a certain dynamism when it is allowed to flourish. Heterogeneity is what gives hybridity its particular force. As Deleuze and Guattari might say, hybridity as a concept contains great “intensities” (*Anti-Oedipus* 20, 39), shifting components of various speeds, with the added complexity of tensions between disparate components (or the “parent groups” that initiate the union in the first place). For this reason, the most vigorous personae are those that carry with them the most divergent characteristics, such as the changeling-as-deformed child, which consists of the series changeling-child-monster. Further, changelings are “the demonic animals, pack or affect animals that form a multiplicity, a becoming, a population, a tale” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 241), and leave behind their bastard, nomadic tribe.

The final remarkable tale, “The Speckled Bull,” explores the dynamics of crossing thresholds—life and death, the human and fairy communities—and discovers in this aberrant path new territories for the changeling; and explores the dynamics of crossing *species*—humans and animals—and discovers in these biological aberrations new relations for the changeling. The tale’s focus on radical hospitality brings forth, in great abundance, new, and sometimes fabulous, forms. These forms can be understood as *bifurcations* (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 76) of the changeling, and they problematize the notion that conceptual personae proceed by cause-and-effect; on the

contrary, they proceed by rupture and discontinuity, branching off and proliferating in unforeseen directions (66, 71).

Deleuze and Guattari make it abundantly clear that philosophy is neither meditation nor reflection and that it continually strives towards the “nonphilosophical” (*What Is Philosophy?* 41). For philosophy to work, it needs to create concepts, and it must search for new components or, more accurately, previously ignored components of older concepts. I have attempted to traverse the plane of folklore as the source for an old concept: *changelingism*. That this neologism appears in the language of ideology indicates the history of its being, its roots in a doctrine of inferiority and evolutionary degeneracy. Yet, if the concept reveals its historicity it must then be part of an active process, a practice, as well as a state or condition; this we must acknowledge if we are to understand the full sense of the suffix “ism.” My interest in the “changeling” is two-fold. First, “changeling” denotes a folkloric or supernatural figure and has yet to be really conceptualized beyond a phenomenon in contemporary medical science:<sup>30</sup> a changeling today denotes a person with deficient intelligence (Goodey and Stainton 223), a child with a congenital disease, or a child who has been exchanged for another. These various personae reflect, in fascinating ways, the memories, fetishes, and dreams (*What Is Philosophy?* 68) of the Victorians. It is my contention that it can (and does) denote much more: accordingly, in subsequent chapters I consider science fiction as the genre that reconceptualizes the folklore changeling as the *mutant*. Second, studies of the changeling

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<sup>30</sup> Karen O'Connor-Floman's dissertation, *The Naturalized Changeling in Victorian Literature of Childhood: Fairy Raids on Realism* (2005), is perhaps one of the few full-length studies of the changeling as a cultural phenomenon in the Victorian period. The main body of her study considers what she terms “the ‘naturalization’ of the changeling, a process whereby the folkloric changeling is accommodated to the conventions of realism and used to explore a particular ‘otherness’—bodily or mental, class or socio-economic, and racial or national—that the folkloric changeling already embodies” (2-3).

are dependent upon notions of miscegenation, interbreeding, and hybridization on the one hand, and folk interpretations of generosity and hospitality on the other. Fairy belief involves the transfer of disparate beliefs and philosophies, which, when fused, create a certain hybrid energy and a creativity for future exchanges. Accepting the changeling comes in the form of a certain conceptualization. Evans-Wentz, a notable early twentieth-century scholar of Irish fairy belief, once remarked that in “the internal aspects of the Fairy-Faith the fundamental fact seems clearly to be that there must have been in the minds of pre-historic men, as there is now in the minds of modern men, a germ idea of a fairy for *environment* to act upon and shape” (26; emphasis added). We could add that the fairy—and the changeling—has, in turn, acted upon that very environment, that plane of immanence, which I have located in Victorian culture, in order to set out forthwith and establish new territories, operations, and alliances with the monsters and hybrid children of modern SF. Moreover, this chapter initiates its own concept-creation. The economy I have described requires the various breaches and ruptures that the conceptual persona introduces in order to open up relations (between humans and changelings) and to find them again in the future.

## Chapter 2—Sublime Changelings in Gothic Fairylands:

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr.*

*Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

[W]hat will your drivelling, unintelligent, intractable changeling be? Shall a defect in the body make a monster; a defect in the mind (the far more noble and, in the common phrase, the far more essential part) not? Shall the want of a nose or a neck make a monster, and put such issue out of the rank of men; the want of reason and understanding not? [T]his is to place all in the shape, and to make the measure of a man only by his outside.

John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* 489-90

The creature appeared quite horrible with his monstrous head and little body, as he rubbed his hands slowly round, and round, and round again—with something fantastic even in his manner of performing this slight action—and, dropping his shaggy brows and cocking his chin in the air, glanced upward with a stealthy look of exultation that an imp might have copied and appropriated to himself.

Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* 69

### Introduction

The changeling is, as I have suggested, the persona par excellence of the legend because it answers fundamental questions about human origins and the “others” that occupy the same space or plane. Because the actual answers to these questions necessarily expand our perspective, the changeling is not the only persona that concerns us, and the legend not the only “plane of immanence.” To begin with, the legendary changeling—outside its attendant personae, the child, the monster, the animal—comprises multiple fairy personae: the dwarf, the goblin, the boggart, the elf, and so forth. We might say that personae like the boggart and the dwarf comprise the component parts of the changeling's performance, given that they each contribute notable “changeling traits” (Silver 62), such as a wizened, hairy, and deformed appearance, a contrary personality, an insatiable appetite, an ambiguous ancestry, and an ambivalent relation to the domestic realm; and

that boggarts were frequently attached to homes, while dwarves would enter the home in order to steal human children (124). But the changeling is also associated with the sometimes symbiotic relationship between the human and animal kingdoms, if we consider “The Speckled Bull.” The latter tale especially reinforces the fact that a single conceptual persona has “features that may give rise to other personae” and that most personae tend to “proliferate” and “bifurcate” (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 76). This dynamic aspect leads to the inevitable crossover of conceptual planes: the legend is just one of these, even while it remains crucial to the larger investigation. Like the folklorists of the same period, novelists in the nineteenth century became fascinated with the “truth” claims of folk narrative and began to adapt some of the well-known legends about the fairy folk and their changeling offspring. Some notable bifurcations of the folkloric changeling in the Victorian novel include the dwarfish Daniel Quilp from Dickens’s *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841), the elfin title character of Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847), the demonic Heathcliff from Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847), the hybrid human-fairy Tom in Charles Kingsley’s *The Water Babies* (1863), and the dwarfish Mr. Hyde in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). These literary changelings are the savage substitutes of human organisms, and, for the most part, they assume the characteristics of “lower” forms: while Quilp has inhuman appetites (Dickens 86) and Heathcliff is known for his cuckoo nature (Brontë 26), Tom acquires “external gills” (Kingsley 54) and Hyde is said to exhibit “ape-like spite” (Stevenson, *Jekyll and Hyde* 70).

Changelings in Victorian fiction reflected the combined traditions of an older, gothic interest in heredity and degeneration and the more modern anthropological interest

in the “savage” elements of certain racial types. As I suggest in the first section of the chapter, this crossover of fantasy and empiricism produces some of the first notable examples of science fiction, and it is *these* bifurcations of the changeling that most concern me. The unnamed “monster” of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) is itself a variation on the folkloric changeling, a more “homely” sort of fairy creature (Briggs, *The Personnel of Fairyland* 83) formed in the laboratory rather than in the womb. His deformed appearance also hints at his status as a congenitally afflicted child, another lower form that would, however, substantiate the new scientific possibilities of automation in the era of the industrial revolution. Hyde’s emergence at the end of the century reinforces both the residual power of European folk legend and the dominant influence of both the biological sciences and evolutionary theory in British fiction. The changeling, then, enunciates the crossover and intermixing of categories, promises the revaluation of individual modes, such as the folk legend and the gothic romance, and anticipates the creation of new ones, such as SF.

Among other notable texts of the nineteenth century, *Frankenstein* and *Jekyll and Hyde* demonstrate the ways in which—to adapt Deleuze and Guattari again—the folk personae of British legend “proliferate and branch off, jostle one another and replace each other” (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 71). As I argue in section II, this process is vividly presented in Shelley’s work through the cross-section of multiple bodies that comprise the monster’s fearful symmetry; as I argue in section III, this process is presented in Stevenson’s work through the linked “polar twins” (*Jekyll and Hyde* 56) that comprise the entity Jekyll-Hyde. In each case, multiple personae seem to jostle for position within the same body, like a Leviathan splitting apart at the seams as it refuses

the unification imposed by its “artificer” (Hobbes 19). Drawing on the influence of the “ghost story” (Shelley, “Introduction” 170) and the contemporary scientific treatise (171-72), Shelley orchestrates the “shapeless substances” of thought out of chaos (171) in order to send forth her “hideous progeny” (173), which could function as the representative of lower-class discontent in the early nineteenth century. For, as H. L. Malchow has argued, “It is now commonly accepted that the Gothic literary genre of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries represents, if remotely and unconsciously, the central tensions of an age of social liberation and political revolution” (90). Through Shelley’s novel, the changeling becomes incorporated into the segment of European society that, in the wake of the failed French Revolution and the dashed liberal hopes for a “world reborn” (Wein 109), occupied the position of the corpse-in-the-cradle (Shelley, “Introduction” 172)—not so much *dead* as *deformed* upon arrival. In this way, Shelley’s monster crosses over with the folk changeling, posing as both a “solitary fairy” who infiltrates the domestic realm (Eberly 242) and a congenitally afflicted automaton (or “stock”) whose position is clearly subaltern. While it is likely that Stevenson’s persona is an “urban gothic” (Spencer 200-201) variation on Shelley’s monster, Hyde can also be viewed as an entirely separate bifurcation of the folk changeling, another fairy of the homely sort who is all the more subaltern because he poses as a bourgeois Victorian gentleman (Rago 77). In a way the Hyde persona is more complex, for Stevenson himself identified the “body” or “vehicle” for his tale as the “sleepless brownies” that “manage man’s internal theatre” (Stevenson, “A Chapter on Dreams” 139, 141). Stevenson’s artistry relies largely on the performance of his conceptual personae who, the author seems to suggest, may run rampant across the stage if they so desire it. The conjured evil entity Mr. Hyde, with his “wicked-looking”

and “ape-like” appearance, evokes for the alert reader a post-Darwinian changeling whose deviant tendencies are reminiscent of the spiteful dwarves of British folklore (*Jekyll and Hyde* 16, 41). Following this second conceptual plane, Stevenson’s atavistic persona refigures the class deformation inspired by Thomas Malthus’s paranoid body politics: Hyde enunciates, on the one hand, the moment in which the lower-classes and the “non-British community” threaten the “essential ‘soundness’ of the British race” (Dryden, “Stevenson’s Gothic London” 255) and, on the other, the space in which the “faceless mob” (Silver 166) of folk legend becomes the vehicle for a subterranean/subaltern eruption. In his evocation of Shelley’s biologically engineered bogie, Stevenson refigures London as a gothic Fairyland.

Given my outline so far, it should be no great surprise that novels such as *Frankenstein* and *Jekyll and Hyde* have been enjoyed as both good old-fashioned tales of terror and highly sophisticated “science-fictional” parables. The first section of the chapter attempts to specify the ways in which the gothic and SF genres contribute to a richer understanding of the changeling persona as an *emergent* conceptual persona, or as the filling out of worlds, faces, and enunciations (territories, roles, and events) in the late Romantic and Victorian periods. It was the intent of the previous chapter to emphasize, as far as possible, that while the changeling had assumed particular “roles” or “functions” in Victorian society, it also could not be easily separated from the Victorians themselves: the changeling was no mere metaphor for subversive or monstrous behaviour but was part of the very fabric of daily life. While we may hesitate to agree that changeling tales offered literal “explanations” for congenital diseases and sexual promiscuity, we cannot simply ignore the reality that, to a certain degree, changelings did exist—in the unofficial



medical lexicon of the late nineteenth century, in the households of peasant and working-class families alike where “changelings” were frequent visitors. The human deviations of the Romantic period were, in Edmund Burke’s terminology, “sublime” creations, in which, as the philosopher felicitously argues, “beauty is found indifferently [...] without quitting its common form” (*Enquiry* 90). For all of his conservative views, Burke anticipated the natural science of Erasmus Darwin (1790s), the teratological work of Etienne and Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1820s and 1830s), and the updated evolutionary theory of Charles Darwin (1850s to 1870s): each of these scientists possessed the “sense of wonder” that derived from the Romantic and Burkean fascination with the sublime, that later characterized the best SF of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and, most importantly for the present discussion, that confirmed the theory that “monsters” were, if not the same as us, at least “part of us, of our flesh” (Aldiss, *Billion Year Spree* 135).<sup>31</sup> I turn now to Burke’s and Erasmus Darwin’s era where the articulation of the monster and the changeling is inextricably tied up with the philosophical concept of the sublime and, more particularly, the *monstrous sublime*. In many ways, the gothic novel retreats to the mythical and pagan realm of the folktale; but what emerges in both Shelley’s and Stevenson’s works is a far more complex organism than anthropologists or folklorists have encountered before.

## I: Nineteenth-Century “Gothic SF” and the “Monstrous Sublime”

I have already suggested in the previous chapter that the changeling was a great

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<sup>31</sup> Aldiss’s comment is actually about Wells, but I appropriate it here in order to suggest that Shelley and Stevenson were exploring a similar theme in their work. These shared interests in monstrosity and in the subversive potential of hybrid personae become more evident in the next chapter.

source of fascination and fear for the Victorians, a figure of astonishment who defied religious as well as medical authorities with its savage behaviour and terrifying form. Romantic writing in the early nineteenth century supplies some philosophical conceptualizations of this fear, revealing that the radical shift in attitudes towards science in the previous century had begun to redefine the boundaries between the “monster” and the “human,” and more generally, what practical steps one could take to determine these differences. The human body became the new subject of scientific study as philosophers began to theorize on its inner “essence” or “innate principles,” which Locke had considered to be beyond the scope of human knowledge (1-25). As Robert Olorenshaw argues, “[t]owards the end of the eighteenth century new taxonomic principles were forged that were determined not so much by visible surfaces but by the inner dynamics of living beings” (162). A major consequence of this development, heralded by Georges Cuvier’s studies in comparative anatomy and Erasmus Darwin’s creation of a system of pathology, was that the human organism lost its distinction as a sacred vessel, as the temple of God. All the same, the burgeoning interest in the biological sciences enabled its practitioners to confirm the biblical premise that the mortal creature was indeed “fearfully and wonderfully made”: beneath the surface of our bodies there lurked a dark abode of fibrous contractions, arterial circulations, and chemical convolutions, all of which opened up the possibilities of further research and therefore further discoveries. And a work such as Darwin’s *Zoonomia* (1794-96) really did open up the body to the intellectuals of the day: the breathtaking first sections on the “motions” of the human organism must have provided one of the lightning flashes for the Byron-Shelley group who gathered in

Geneva in 1816.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, if the Romantics succeeded in dislodging the transcendent divinity of the body, their writings presaged the “eruption of imminent forces” *within* (Olorenshaw 162-63); and this philosophical shift became one of the guiding principles of the most popular genre of the period, the gothic novel, which played a crucial role in introducing psychological terror as well as “scientific romance” to the nineteenth-century world. And so if the bogies and spirits of the Medieval and Renaissance periods could be dismissed by the authority of the British empiricists in the seventeenth century, other popular figures of fantastic literature gained new prominence as the result of Enlightenment and Romantic science and the “fearfully” new presentation of the human body.

The gothic novel was the first fictional genre to capitalize on this exciting era of scientific discovery; however, it did not simply produce a scientific fantasy (comparable to Wells’s works of the late-nineteenth century) but rather a “hesitation” between “natural” and “supernatural” phenomena, as Tzvetan Todorov describes in his definition of the “fantastic” (33). As one form of the fantastic, the gothic, or at least early genres of “horror,” produce in the reader emotions of fear and terror (33-34, 92). In the first preface to *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), in which the author Horace Walpole employs the fictional persona of a translator presenting an anonymous work to his reading audience, we are given the first basic principle of the gothic, as we now know it: “Terror, the author’s principle engine, prevents the story from ever languishing; and it is so often

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<sup>32</sup> See, for example, the provocative description of “sensorial motions” and, in particular, this suggestive passage. “When we recollect, that the electric fluid itself is actually accumulated and given out voluntarily by the torpedo and the gymnotus electricus, that an electric shock will frequently stimulate into motion a paralytic limb, and lastly that it needs no perceptible tubes to convey it, this opinion seems not without probability; and the singular figure of the brain and nervous system seems well adapted to distribute it over every part of the body” (Vol. I, p. 10).

contrasted by pity, that the mind is kept up in a constant vicissitude of interesting passions” (100). The second preface to *Otranto*, in which the author shyly admits his authorship, reinforces the idea that Walpole’s novel and gothic fiction itself is a different species than pure—that is, *medieval*—romance: “It was an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance: the ancient and the modern. In the former, all was imagination and improbability; in the latter, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with success.” He then offers what may be the slogan of the eighteenth-century gothic romance when he states that he wishes to “conduct the mortal agents in his drama according to the rules of probability” (102). Here Walpole strives to emphasize how romance itself was changing from pure “imagination” to a mixed combination of fantasy and empirical speculation. Moreover, if science appears to be outside the realm of the gothic, it nevertheless hovers over the framework of the gothic novel (as invented by Walpole) in the form of *occulted* knowledge, or the forbidden territory of the Faustian enterprise.<sup>33</sup>

A key concept related to this genre was the *sublime*, which was later used to describe the atmosphere of *terror* in works such as Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, William Beckford’s *Vathek* (1786), and Anne Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). Here is Burke’s preliminary definition, as offered early in his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757): “Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any

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<sup>33</sup> This motif is especially prevalent in William Beckford’s *Vathek An Arabian Tale* (1786), in which the title character gives up his soul in exchange for supernatural powers, and in Lord Byron’s play *Manfred* (1817, published just a year before *Frankenstein*), in which the sage-like title character defies both social convention (including most notably the Church) and the seven spirits he conjures before he is finally vanquished. Perhaps not surprisingly, Byron claimed that *Vathek* was his “Bible” (Aldiss, *Billion Year Spree* 18).

sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling” (36; original emphasis). Walpole and his literary inheritors strove to employ this powerful engine in their fictional works—but always with an ambivalent attitude, that is a *hesitation*, towards the “terrible” object of enquiry. For the sublime is related to the “astounding” and the “awe-inspiring,” which may refer to some divine or, on the contrary, “terrifying” object; of course, one might just as well be terrified by the divine as by the *monstrous*, and the former was quickly losing ground to the latter with the burgeoning interest in the biological sciences and comparative anatomy.

The fantastical creatures of folk legend had been assimilated into the popular imagination long before they found a place in the medical lexicon, but Burke’s *Enquiry* is a notable early scientific appropriation of such conceptual personae. Indeed, his description of the sublime itself articulates a sort of gothic *character*; or rather, it finds its best expression in the form of the “monster” who seemed to inspire both divine terror and primordial horror. Consider, for example, the following passage:

There is a dwarfish size of men and women, which is almost constantly so gross and massive in comparison of their height, that they present us with a very disagreeable image. But should a man be found not above two or three feet high, supposing such a person to have all the parts of his body of a delicacy suitable to such a size, and otherwise endued with the common qualities of other beautiful bodies, I am pretty well convinced that a person of such a stature might be considered as beautiful; might be the object of love; might give us very pleasing ideas on viewing him. The only thing which could possibly interpose to check our pleasure is, that such creatures, however formed, are unusual, and are often therefore *considered as something monstrous*. The large and gigantic, though very compatible with the sublime, is contrary to the beautiful. It is impossible to suppose a giant the object of love. *When we let our imaginations loose* in romance, the ideas we naturally annex to that size are those of tyranny, cruelty,

injustice, and every thing horrid and abominable. We paint the giant ravaging the country, plundering the innocent traveller, and afterwards gorged with his half-living flesh: such are Polyphemus, Cacus, and others, who make so great a figure in romances and heroic poems. The event we attend to with the greatest satisfaction is their defeat and death. (*Enquiry* 143; emphasis added)

While his final admission grants a certain revulsion towards such monsters, Burke expresses a certain degree of sympathy towards these beings who, despite their monstrous forms, express a finer sense of intellectual capacity (as Shelley's monster would in the next century). We may interpret Burke's tone as patronizing, but we should also take note of his subtle criticism of his contemporaries: he is aware that diminutive or large men and women are "considered" to be monstrous and that such social stigmas are perpetuated when we "let our imaginations loose." At the same time, he designates them with alternate terms, "dwarf" and "giant," which partake of the "romance" he then weaves into his academic performance. This constitutes a certain *hesitation*, which becomes more prominent in Burke's later political writings as an ambivalence but which manifests itself here as a spirited and open-minded conceptualization of a new conceptual persona: the *sublime monster*. This awe-inspired hesitation in the presence of the sublime body constitutes an intelligent critique of romance, which characterizes the Romantic gothic novel in Shelley's era.

But the gothic genre had a significant conservative strain, hence its association with "patriotic indoctrination" (Wein 3) and the paranoid fears of demonic and/or foreign contamination. And so a discussion of the sublime and the monstrous sublime would not be complete without a brief mention of Malthus and the "dismal science" of his population theories (Boulding vii). Malthus's *Essay on Population* (1798) is significant for the present discussion because it enunciates the late eighteenth-century fear of the

mass uprising, which was manifested graphically after 1793 in France. In a sense, Malthus was able to reaffirm the later conservative reaction to the Revolution in Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), but from the vantage point of the late 1790s, when the Reign of Terror had successfully transformed the country into the "monstrous tragicomic scene" that Burke had foreseen (Burke, *Reflections* 11). Of course, Malthus wrote his *Essay* with all the passionless style of an economic report, as dry and fact-ridden as Swift's "A Modest Proposal" (1729) and with the same attention to the unpleasant but inevitable *body horror* that comes with an ever-growing mass of a lower-class population. So while his eye was on the Revolution in France it was also on the daily threat of overpopulation in his own England. But he did not possess the passionate sympathy of a Swift, nor was his satire directed towards the true source of the "evil" in his society—as Godwin accurately argued in his *Political Justice* (1793), the government institutions that not only starved their own but placed formidable "checks" on the development and self-government of the colonies they acquired. Malthus's central argument, which he reinforces mercilessly, is that 1) if population increase leads to the greater degradation of humankind, then sexual abstinence is a positive (necessary) evil; that 2) sexual promiscuity therefore produces a series of "conspicuous" evils (23); and that 3) this situation requires "moral restraint." While he argues that it is possible to alter the outcome of the current human misery if "some decided change [could] take place in the physical constitution of our nature" (49), he continually returns to the dystopian view that the "vices of mankind are active and able ministers of depopulation" (42), that "selfishness would be triumphant" anyhow (58), and that even the poor laws "spread the evil over a much larger surface" (89). The growing insistence of his melancholy view

leads to the recurrence of the “gothic” trope of *immeasurable population growth*, suggesting that the monstrous appetites of the lower classes have the capacity to completely unhinge society. Moreover, as Clara Tuite argues, Malthus was fully engaged with a Burkean gothic sublime or at least found in the “principle of population” a “new formula for the monstrous sublime” (148). While I have given more space here to Burke, and especially the *younger* Burke’s more optimistic writings, Malthus’s *Essay* remains an important *footnote* in the chapter, especially considering the resurgence of interest in his ideas in late Victorian culture (and particularly, in Stevenson and Wells), when his prophecies appear to have come true.

So it is, then, that, by the early nineteenth century, the gothic became more closely associated with speculations on the future and, in particular, the sublime possibilities of humanity’s evolution as a species. In one of the pioneering essays toward Shelley’s literary rehabilitation in the 1970s, Ellen Moers insists that Walpole may have placed too much emphasis on the “ancient” elements of romance in his definition of the gothic—and perhaps not enough on the more modern understanding of the “sublime,” as first analyzed by Burke in the 1750s. As a matter of correction, Moers argues that the intent of gothic is not to “reach down into the depths of the soul and purge it with pity and terror (as we say tragedy does), but to get to the body itself, its glands, epidermis, muscles, and circulatory system, quickly arousing and quickly allaying the physical reactions to fear” (Moers 214). Her reference to the anatomy rather than the soul directs attention to the primordial desire to scare and to be scared, suggesting that the best kind of horror makes our heart beat fast or our blood coagulate in the veins. But Moers may also be referring to Shelley’s unique emphasis on the *body as an empirically validated organism*, which has specific parts



(glands and muscles and a circulatory system) that function a certain way, according to close scientific inspection, and which has a certain principle, “according to the rules of probability” (Walpole 102).<sup>34</sup> In her evocation of these anatomical images, Moers also underscores the ways in which Shelley’s gothic anatomy *re*-presents the human body in a defamiliarizing way—as a monstrosity. But such a (re)presentation diverged from the dystopian vision offered in Malthus’s *Essay* and underscored the radical possibilities of *detritorializing* a traditionally conservative genre. Shelley’s incorporation of the Burkean gothic sublime and rejection of the Malthusian geometrical sublime anticipated if not SF itself, then the aesthetic and philosophical circumstances—the new emphasis on empirical proof or *science*, as well as the motif of the “monstrous” sublime—that would prepare the way for fiction dependent upon scientific speculation or extrapolation. Reflecting in particular the burgeoning scientific interest in evolution and monstrosity, Shelley discovers that science itself can produce and name the horrors that the gothic novel still seeks to identify. We are, then, not far from the focus of the last chapter, which considered the various ways in which the horrors of infant insurgency and congenital disease were given a name in the form of the “changeling.” For this reason, we could say that SF implicates its own discourse of knowledge in the process of its narrative: science is offered as the both the explanation of the disease and its very source. Far from being the handmaiden of technological advance, or a conservative literature that functions as a sort of “research and development arm” of governments (Malzberg 7), SF—or its

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<sup>34</sup> In his illuminating study *Alien Encounters: Anatomy of Science Fiction*, Mark Rose reinforces this connection between the gothic genre and the science fiction genre by specifying the historical conditions that would enable a “scientific romance” to emerge out of the previous “romance” genre, already popularized by gothic fiction. As Rose argues, Walpole’s attempt to fill “the space between [...] the ‘two kinds of romance’” is comparable to the nineteenth-century critic’s attempt to fill “the space between the opposed forms of the new realism and ‘pure’ fantasy” (19-20).

prototypes, the scientific gothic romance and the scientific romance—has consistently critiqued uncontrolled scientific progress. Both Shelley and Stevenson cause science to undergo a significant change through their gothic fictions, employing the folkloric changeling in order to further occult the scientific progress of their eras.

Critics since the 1970s have based their definitions of SF on the degree to which a novelty or innovation dominates a science-fictional narrative, indicating how other genres such as fantasy and gothic contribute to or, indeed, diminish the quality of the work. My primary example, with which I engage throughout this and subsequent chapters, is Darko Suvin's now famous axiomatic claim that "*SF is distinguished by the narrative dominance or hegemony of a fictional 'novum' (novelty, innovation) validated by cognitive logic*" (*Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* 63; original emphasis). In particular, Suvin elaborates, SF is a "*literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment*" (7-8; original emphases). Throughout the first part of his study, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*, Suvin strives to elaborate upon his central terms "estrangement" and "cognition" in order to distinguish SF from other literary genres such as the folktale, the gothic, and fantasy. These other genres, he maintains, tend to depend largely on "anti-cognitive" devices, such as supernatural occurrences and magical weapons, and they are usually bound by a fixed or pre-ordained world view that either remains unchanged by the fictional "novum" or changes in a manner that cannot be scientifically explained. Such genres are at the far extreme of realism and have a tendency to descend into pure infantile sensationalism,

whereas, Suvin stresses, “significant” SF is legitimized by a “scientific validation” (68) that anticipates and comments upon “the future of human societies and relationships” (77).

Perhaps we could place Walpole and the “giant helmet” of his gothic romance in the category of the “anti-cognitive,” whereas Shelley would seem to reside in the “cognitive” category, despite the lack of an explanation of Frankenstein’s scientific method. How might we categorize the six folk narratives discussed in the last chapter, given the oblique rather than direct references to fairies, Fairyland, and fairy magic? There is a subtle sense that these references operate in a coded way, perhaps superstitiously, for the purpose of warding off what cannot be easily explained. However, it is notable that in these tales *fairies appear only in the form of human-like creatures or, we might legitimately argue, “humanoids.”* In other words, in reading the folk legend (perhaps more than even hearing it, where the general audience is largely “in the know” and may have already assumed supernatural agency), we are given very little detail to confirm the presence of the supernatural: indeed, part of the tension in every tale is whether or not fairy involvement can be proven, and therefore whether or not the “creature” should be treated as an *alien* or as part of the family. “The Speckled Bull” reinforces this tension by having a character—the prince’s second wife—employ the changeling motif for the purpose of working mischief. Here “estrangement” is operating in a rather sophisticated way, and for this reason, Chapter 3, using Wells as support for the argument, offers a critique of Suvin’s disparaging remarks on the folkloric and fantasy genres. However, a more subtle critique is initiated here through the discussion of Shelley’s gothic-cum-folkloric-cum-science-fictional *Frankenstein* and Stevenson’s

similarly hybrid *Jekyll and Hyde*. As Suvin himself argues, Shelley's critique of "‘objective’ post-Baconian science," which would exclude from its philosophical system warm fellow-feeling as well as politics, required the generic—and anti-cognitive—"horror" theme in order to conceptualize the Promethean "overreacher" (read: scientist) whose creation is "demonically destructive of all values" (*Metamorphoses* 129). Similarly, Stevenson's engagement with criminal anthropology, which was predisposed towards Malthus's dystopian view of the degenerate mass (that is, *lower class*) population, re-imagines the Frankenstein figure Jekyll as the demonic source for his creation, Hyde. In both cases, gothic and folktale elements introduce estranging novelties for the purpose of transforming the author's "empirical environment."

Suvin's further elaboration of his terms, particularly in later studies, allows us (despite his insistence to the contrary) to find in both gothic and folktale elements new and perhaps "residual" ways of both critiquing society and imagining "possible new relations among people" (Suvin, *Positions and Presuppositions in Science Fiction* 47). It is with this additional modification in mind that I turn to one final element of Suvin's definition, which seems to have something in common with Deleuze and Guattari's designation of the conceptual persona as the philosophical vehicle for real discoveries in the material world. Suvin states, "When we read a text we should understand *not only* its internal narrative articulation *but also* its relation to wider paradigms. The result is that the text inescapably amounts to a given *interpretation* or model of the extra-textual universe" (46; original emphases). As he had argued in the previous work, the "novum," which could include an invention, setting, agent, or relation (*Metamorphoses* 64) that is extrapolated through the scientific method, transgresses an ontological norm by entering a

plane of existence that is parallel but also “alternate” to the author’s environment (70-71). Examples of this transgression would include the exploration of alternate times (time warping, time-travel), places (travel to new continents or planets), species (discovery of extraterrestrial races, such as Martians), and genetic mutation (biological engineering, hybridised progeny of a union between different species). “Significant” SF uses a “cognitive logic” (the scientific method or existing scientific developments in the author’s epoch) in order to verify connections between the “active forces” (protagonists of the SF tale) and the “obstacles to be reduced” (the novum) (79). In other words, any SF text that, for example, introduces a gadget or exotic species for sensational purposes—to avoid plausible explanation of a phenomenon, catastrophic or not; to avoid broaching the question of human-alien or self-other relations—limits the opportunity for the author to view his/her own environment from a new and critical perspective. Once again, for Suvin, the particular novum still needs to be validated through its correspondence to a “scientific paradigm” (81), and this requirement leads him to the conclusion that Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde* is an “early example of ‘science fantasy’” (69). This assessment has much to do with the pseudo-scientific use of the magical potion, which is discussed in more detail in section III. I would insist, however, that 1) the novel is more accurately an example of “urban Gothic SF” and that 2) Jekyll’s chemical experiment is not as significant as Stevenson’s psychological experiment, which amounts to saying that, like Shelley, Stevenson was engaging with the new sciences of his day, however feebly he managed the older sciences (or hocus-pocus) of yesteryear. Moreover, it is Hyde himself (just as it is the monster in Shelley’s work) who constitutes the “novum” (agent) in the work rather than the specific scientific materials involved in the experiment. What Brian Aldiss has

argued in regards to *Frankenstein* we could also say in regards to *Jekyll and Hyde*: that the narrative is precariously “balanced between the old and the new” (*Billion Year Spree* 26), with one foot, as it were, in the world of gothic romance and the other in the world of scientific speculation.

From the “geophilosophical” point of view (Chapter 1, Introduction), these two works contain a vast cross-section of interrelated themes, not the least of which includes a vital current of gothic “terror” infused with Burkean sublime. The monstrous sublime, as derived from Burke’s youthful indulgence in proto-Romantic aesthetics (*Enquiry*) and his later curdled reaction to the chaotic Revolution (*Reflections*), becomes a popular trope in both Romantic and Victorian writing, especially as evolutionary theory gains new popularity in the mid-nineteenth century. On first appearance, the “sublime” seems to be operating on a very different plane than “estrangement” for the reason that the former traditionally indicates a *supernatural* force that seizes us in a sort of traumatic paralysis. But as Burke’s *Enquiry* suggests, the sublime also offers the possibility of a physical transformation, validated in some way by the complex but “invariable” laws of nature. The gothic novel after Walpole tended to emphasize the “terror” element of the sublime, using the supernatural as its main generator of a traumatic *intrusion* or *invasion*. The Romantics, however, made it their task to re-explore the sublime in its fullest Burkean sense, believing that science and evolution had a major impact on the contemporary world’s *terrible* and *astounding* events, including the catastrophic French Revolution, the discovery of the inner volition of human bodies (E. Darwin’s *Zoonomia*), and the burgeoning science of biological monstrosity or “teratology” (Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire’s *Philosophie anatomique*). As the central expression of the philosophical shift

towards “cognition,” Shelley’s novel of reanimation provided a new vehicle for the gothic sublime, *science fiction*, which employed a scientific discovery or a sudden environmental change as the novel basis for a fictional narrative.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, in light of Shelley’s repositioning of the gothic as an exploration of physical/social metamorphosis and monstrosity, the sublime now appears to have some affinity with Suvinian “estrangement.” Indeed, Suvin himself suggests that estrangement manifests itself as a “shock” to the reader’s own cognitive norms (*Positions* 142).<sup>36</sup> Having revisited the realm of the Burkean sublime, Shelley and Stevenson lay out a new conceptual plane: a gothic Fairyland populated with folkloric personae like the solitary fairy and the dwarf.

## II. *Frankenstein*: Solitary Fairy or Revolutionary Insurgent?

Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* marks the first notable “science-fictional” conceptualization of the changeling. First of all, Shelley enters the generic realm previously occupied by Walpole, Clara Reeves, and Radcliffe, but refuses to employ the gothic merely as “the gentler face of patriotic indoctrination” (Wein 3), choosing instead to employ a deformed pseudo-human (and, by proxy, foreign) entity as the reluctant *spokesperson* for a re-imagined national identity. Second, Shelley’s engagement with the Rev. Malthus’s geometrical notions of population increases and checks, and the inherently destructive character of “nature” (Malthus 58, 61, 207-08, 213-15), anticipates the (Social) Darwinist preoccupations of both Victorian folklore and SF, including

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<sup>35</sup> I follow Aldiss’s argument that “the greatest successes of science fiction are those which deal with man [and woman] in relation to his [and her] changing surroundings and abilities: what might loosely be called *environmental fiction*” (original emphasis). I would also agree with his follow-up claim that “the basic impulse of science fiction is as much evolutionary as technological” (*Billion Year Spree* 12).

<sup>36</sup> In a similar vein, J. P. Vernier argues that Wells’s emphasis in his early scientific romances was not on “moral and social consequences” but on “shocking his readers out of their complacency” (75).

especially texts by Kingsley, Bulwer-Lytton, Butler, Stevenson, and Wells. By incorporating and re-evaluating Burke's *Enquiry* and Malthus's *Essay*, Shelley reproduces her own form of the monstrous sublime, which, as Tuite accurately notes, engages with the "relocation of monstrosity from aesthetic discourse (as grotesque or sublime) to medical discourse and the public spectacles of natural science" (150). I would suggest, following Marie-Hélène Huet's study, *Monstrous Imagination*, that *Frankenstein* gathers into its narrative the necessary materials for a "science of monstrosity," and therefore anticipates the creation of teratology in the 1830s (Huet 108). Shelley's combined interest in both gothic and scientific monstrosity reproduces a British national identity that is haunted by its double, that is, by the excess of its own fetishistic dreams in the post-revolutionary period. Some scholars have circled around the teratological angle by discussing female monstrosity (Gilbert and Gubar 221-47, Huet 129-62), monstrous birth (Moers 214-24), and the doppelganger motif (Dryden, *Literary Doubles* 38-40)—all concepts that, as Chapter 1 has shown, are associated with folk legends concerning human-fairy encounters and British preoccupations with *origins* and the state of the burgeoning empire. It is these speculations (on motherhood, reproduction, monstrosity, exchange, and the production of monstrous species) that give rise to the additional interpretation that Shelley's monster is a changeling: it comprises a grotesque hotchpotch of human parts and is therefore a mimic-human; it infiltrates human domestic life and, while it intends only to learn by imitation and mimicry, disrupts the order of the family by its very perverse and unaffiliated origin; its subsequent insurgency threatens to proliferate new monstrous forms and thereby constitutes a revolutionary gesture. More than this, as a conceptual persona, the monster does not simply *express* his author/creator's thought but



comprises the very movement of thought: he is the necessary agent for both Shelley's larger philosophical enunciation and the enclosed (changeling) narrative to Walton; and the monster (rather than Frankenstein) is also the creative spark (the sublime estrangement) that gives life to the whole assemblage of constituent personae comprising Shelley's post-Enlightenment/Romantic gothic preoccupations.

Victor Frankenstein begins his narrative by first establishing his own legitimacy and his family's distinction (*Frankenstein* 17f.), thereby setting us up for a dramatic reversal of fortune and, more importantly, the intrusion of an *illegitimate* agent. For Victor's intention to penetrate the boundaries of empirical knowledge requires him to shed his affiliation with the accepted norms and values of his society by isolating himself in his laboratory in Ingolstadt and devoting his time to modern works of "natural philosophy" (27). While he eventually abandons these outmoded texts for modern ones, Victor's pursuit is monstrous because it seeks to probe the mystery of birth, which, as male philosophers had consistently argued, is itself a monstrous process (Huet 1-7). When he has accomplished his chimerical experiment, he describes the human he has pieced together from the corpses of numerous bodies:

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! –Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips. (*Frankenstein* 34)

The suggestive quality of the narrative has already allowed us to conceptualize the monster as an imitation-human, a doppelganger, or interloper. The yellow skin, while

clearly associated with the complexion of previously dead tissue, also evokes the image of the changeling's sallow and sickly countenance. We should note here that Victor is expressing both the motherly horror of giving birth to a deformed child and the general parental paranoia of raising an unruly son. Additionally, Victor's reaction establishes the character of the "mad scientist" of subsequent SF who either fails to build the creature he has sketched or is simply unable to define or "delineate" the creature at all: the result is an abortion, a monster, a nonhuman travesty—indeed, a changeling. This connection is reinforced by the fact that changelings were linked, in medical theory, with children who failed to thrive and, in folkloric theory, with the dead—and it is quite likely that the corpses Victor unearths bear the marks of jaundice and other consumptive diseases.

As Eberly has argued, changeling narratives may also have provided another form of grieving for a deformed or dead child. "The actual time of birthing," she notes, "was seen as fraught with dangers, physical as well as spiritual, no doubt because death in childbed was so common" in the nineteenth century (231). High mortality rates for pregnant women and newborns were even more common in the eighteenth century, a fact that is underscored in that most famous description of the monster, as well as the equally famous passage that describes Victor's dream of embracing his dead mother:

I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her; but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features *appeared to change*, and I thought I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed: when, by the dim yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. (34-35; emphasis added)

In a certain sense, the dream presents an inversion of Victor's act of creation, by

describing a transformation from “the bloom of health” to the “livid” “hue of death”; although it is apparent that we are meant to see parallels between the monster himself, monstrous births, and the monstrosity of the female form here. And yet, it does not matter that this passage comes right on the heels of the previous one: there is no doubt that Victor identifies his experiment as an act of reproduction. He has created life, and in that creation, a means to destroy life; the vision of his dead fiancée and mother is also the image of dead *creators*, female givers of life.<sup>37</sup> While these may not be unique interpretations (see Moers, Gilbert and Gubar, Johnson, and Mellor), they also correspond to the folkloric belief that physical transformations could be attributed to a supernatural agency. Elizabeth’s alteration, which is initiated by the “embrace,” is a figurative way of comprehending Victor’s perverse conception of a “changed” child: he has abducted bodies (from their graves) and fashioned them into the “stock” likeness of a human being, which, while it has some of the characteristics of humanity, bears also the frightening signs that it is actually a *substitute* for a human. It is at this point, where folklore and science meet, that we find the gothic, and particularly Shelley’s appropriation of the gothic tradition, operating most notably: Victor’s study of the sublime human body, much akin to Burke’s youthful dalliance with physical forms in the *Enquiry*, produces its own

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<sup>37</sup> One conspicuous issue, which I can only note in passing here, is Victor’s gesture of appropriating the female reproductive function. There is certainly no shortage of studies of this sort, especially since the 1970s when authors such as Ellen Moers, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, and Mary Poovey (see Works Cited) began the pioneering work of constructing a feminist poetics, which was grafted onto the largely male-dominated canon of European literature. More recently, Steven Lehman argues that “womb envy” and the subsequent appropriation of female “procreative power” are *the* central concerns in the novel (49-50), and he, in fact, goes on to privilege this reading over other political and philosophical readings—by Gilbert and Gubar, U. C. Knoepfelmacher, and Kate Ellis. However, my focus is bound to the investigation of generic correspondences and the intersection of specific motifs, such as those found in changeling tales and gothic novels. I am well aware that another chapter of this sort could be devoted to the theme/motif of *female monstrosity*. In any event, my concern is with the (frequently male) changeling figure rather than only the details of his/her/its birth

excess, so that the human form is not only replicated but magnified—in size, strength, and emotions. Appropriating the powers of Fairyland, the laboratory has now become the main apparatus of metamorphosis. But, like the folkloric changeling, the monster becomes the very site of physical transformation and a hybridized presentation of the human and nonhuman: the metaphor has become *flesh*.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, if Victor is the initial source of the monster's volition, the monster's sublime form exceeds the boundaries of parental authority as well as scientific extrapolation: his monstrosity is continually presented in the form of excess, failure, perversion, and the powerful intrusion of an exterior force.

While it is certainly Shelley's point that the monster is the *spirit of rebellion* that Frankenstein himself conjures up from his own soul, or his "own spirit let loose from the grave" (*Frankenstein* 49), this metaphor is discovered to be a disguise—if not for a *literal* truth, then perhaps for an *analogical* one: creator and creation are physically linked through an act of artificial procreation. Shelley employs the Burkean theory of the sublime in order to contemplate both the terrible powers of human ambition and the terrifying interruption of that ambition by a monstrous entity. But, as the works of numerous Romantics demonstrate,<sup>39</sup> *science* could be both the analytic tool for the

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<sup>38</sup> For this reason, the monster is not so much a "psychic manifestation [ ] of trauma" (Peterson 16) as he is a physical anomaly, analogous to the sideshow freaks, medical subjects, and deformed children of Shelley's day

<sup>39</sup> Particularly in Byron's *Manfred*, the gothic genre has been revised as a Romantic vehicle for a Promethean rebellion in the midst of the new era of conservatism in post-Napoleonic Europe. In a declamation that will be echoed by Victor Frankenstein, Manfred boldly rebukes the spirits who doubt his superhuman will: "The mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark,/The lightning of my being, is as bright,/Pervading, and far-darting as your own,/And shall not yield to yours, though coop'd in clay!" (1.1 154-57). Here we have the slogan of the new Prometheus, the new Faustus, for the new gothic era, which prophesies a new world and a new people conjured not by mere magic but by the "lightning" of scientific discovery. Earlier in the scene, the Seventh Spirit's speech announces to us that we are no longer in the world of medieval gothic (or pre-Ptolemaic philosophy)

sublime discovery and the very source of the sublime; the human itself, with its unexpected physical alterations, is a biological testimony to the fact that the sublime is simultaneously a power from without (it is beyond our control, out of our hands) and a power from within (we, in a sense, *produce* it or engender it). For these reasons, the Romantic gothic sublime, as it is presented in *Frankenstein*, establishes the conditions for a *science-fictional* art and accomplishes this through the conceptual persona of the changeling, now “made over” into an artificial human, a transformation that anticipates Jekyll’s conjured doppelganger Hyde (section III), Moreau’s vivisected and programmed Beast-Folk (Chapter 3), and the Rossums’ engineered Robots (Chapter 4).

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The star which rules thy destiny  
 Was ruled, ere earth began, by me:  
 It was a world as fresh and fair  
 As e’er revolved round sun in air;  
 Its course was free and regular,  
 Space bosom’d not a lovelier star.  
 The hour arrived—and it became  
 A wandering mass of shapeless flame,  
 A pathless comet, and a curse,  
 The menace of the universe;  
 Still rolling on with innate force,  
 Without a sphere, without a course,  
 A bright deformity on high,  
 The monster of the upper sky!  
 And thou! beneath its influence born—  
 Thou worm! whom I obey and scorn—  
 Forced by a power (which is not thine,  
 And lent thee but to make thee mine)  
 For this brief moment to descend,  
 Where these weak spirits round thee bend  
 And parley with a thing like thee—  
 What wouldst thou, Child of Clay! with me? (1.1.110-31)

The metaphorical analogy here of the flaming comet is pure scientific romance woven into a dark gothic fantasy; and if Manfred is the “worm” born under this blazing cosmological opera, he is also the bold conductor, the “monster” and the “deformity” itself reaching for the stars. Having adapted the central character from Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* and the Faustian plot from Beckford’s *Vathek*, Byron steers the gothic closer to the form that Mary Shelley would produce one year later, motivated as it is by “Philosophy and science, and the springs/Of wonder” (*Manfred* 1.1.13-14), “sciences untaught” (2.2.84), and a “long pursued and superhuman art” (2.2.148). The dark brooding nature of the play also acknowledges its engagement with the sublime—that unfathomable life force or “spark” that characterizes the evolutionary impulse.

The crucial point in all of this is that Shelley's monster does not simply shed the characteristics of past personae, and past territories: if we find the "scientific" details of Victor Frankenstein's experiment a little unsatisfactory, we should still remember that both the gothic and folktale genres have informed his conceptualization of the monster. The third narrative sequence of the novel, in which the monster relates his experiences to Frankenstein (*Frankenstein* 68-97), introduces the second conceptual influence, and Victor's gothic imposition is delayed by the intrusion of a solitary fairy.

After being spurned by both his creator and the villagers he first encounters upon fleeing the laboratory, the monster conceals himself in a hovel adjoining a small cottage, where he observes the "gentle manners" of simple folk. He longs to "join them," but his memory of his treatment at the hands of the "barbarous villagers" (*Frankenstein* 73) makes him hesitate before revealing himself. He therefore begins his career as an invisible and "solitary being" (74): he hides in order to conceal his ugly appearance but absorbs all he sees and hears in order to compensate for that ugliness through his own "gentle manners." He begins to perform labours for the family, collecting firewood and clearing away snow, gestures that lead the De Lacey family to believe that they have been aided by a "*good spirit*" (77; original emphasis). This choice of epithet may anticipate the moment where the monster discovers that he is rather akin to the "evil" spirit, Lucifer, but it also suggests the "popular" belief in fairies common throughout Europe in the eighteenth century. According to Eberly's description, the monster resembles the "solitary fairy" "who lived, usually, by a well or stream; who hunted, fished, or scavenged for sustenance; and who was a sort of *genius loci* to a particular place" (242). Such figures, Eberly argues, seem to be related to the "person who has mental retardation and who is

often physically different as well; the different person whose nature was believed to be supernatural, if only in that he or she received unusual respect as a ‘luck-bringer’—whether to a farm, a particular pool, moor, or orchard.” One notable example of such a fairy is the boggart, “A squat hairy man, strong as a six-year-old horse, with arms as long as tackle poles, and not too bright” (243). Pleased by the family’s response to his labours, the monster continues to perform tasks around the cottage, and, through his efforts, he helps the family to thrive despite their apparent poverty. To any observer, the monster would have appeared to be both deformed and retarded (or “differently abled”), especially given his crude grunts and articulations as he learns to speak their language. If he differs physically from the boggart, the monster is still something of a “nature fairy,” attached to a place rather than to a specific family, and likely cautious about revealing himself or becoming affiliated with anyone. Also, the monster is a “luck-bringer”; but there are, of course, limitations to this comparison since the monster is only respected as long as he remains hidden. Moreover, Shelley’s monster-changeling possesses a certain cunning that may remind us of the clever (if mischievous) fairies featured in “The Caerlaverock Changeling” and “The Fairy Changeling: II.” In fact, this “solitary fairy” is more cautious in his movements and, instead of simply invading the home for comfort and sustenance and inflicting “pain on the cottagers,” he “obtain[s], and satisfie[s] [him]self with berries, nuts, and roots, which [he] gather[s] from a neighbouring wood” (*Frankenstein* 74). Like his folkloric counterpart, the monster tries to initiate a certain kind of hospitality, with the added difference that he does not make *demands* on the household. However, he discovers, to his great anguish, that the De Lacey hospitality is limited by the rather predictable human aversion to otherness.

As I have suggested, the monster is only “solitary” as long as he *has* to be: his initial desire is to be loved and accepted, like the blind old man he observes from his hovel. Reflecting the Romantic preoccupations of Shelley’s day, the monster is clearly a changeling of “fine sensations”—a trait that even Victor perceives by the time the creature has concluded his narrative (*Frankenstein* 99). Given his preference for fellowship, the monster also bears a likeness to the “social fairy” of British legend who “lived in close company with humankind” (Eberly 243). Yet, already fearful of intruders, given the fact that the family members are themselves political exiles, the De Lacey’s are not prepared to host anything that appears to threaten their livelihood. While the monster is not aware of this inherent human trait, he is conscious of the impact that his deformed appearance might have on the family. Shortly after his arrival at the cottage, he happens to see his reflection in a puddle, and, in anticipation of his one and only encounter with the family, exclaims, “Alas! I did not yet entirely know the fatal effects of this miserable deformity” (*Frankenstein* 76). As readers, of course, we recall Victor’s vivid description of the monster’s “yellow skin,” “shrivelled complexion and straight black lips” (34), and then imagine what it would be like to encounter this creature and hear it speak our own language. The horror of such an event is comparable to the moment when the changeling first speaks. It is no surprise, then, that he chooses to first approach old De Lacey himself whose blindness would at least initially prevent him from *perceiving* the monster’s deformity. Moreover, he discovers that the poor “that stopped at their door were never driven away” (89), and so comes to believe that he will receive the same treatment, despite his appearance. While the old man is the only De Lacey who is sympathetic towards the monster, we can say that his blindness deceives him into believing that the



monster is a “human creature” (91) and that, as Locke would say, the body is not the only “measure of a man.” Before the creature is able to finish the “particulars of his tale,” Felix returns with his wife Safie and immediately attacks and drives him from the home. Like the tales featured in the last chapter, this domestic sequence ends with the changeling’s exorcism. There is no torture, no elaborate ritual involved, and yet the banishment itself is torturous enough.

Before his banishment, the monster is in a delicate position:

[W]here were my friends and relations? No father had watched my infant days, no mother had blessed me with smiles and caresses; or if they had, all my past life was now a blot, a blind vacancy in which I distinguished nothing [...] I had never yet seen a being resembling me, or who claimed any intercourse with me. What was I? (*Frankenstein* 81)

We might again recall a similar moment in “Johnnie in the Cradle,” where the changeling laments, “I wish I had been longer with my mother. I’d a kent [known] her better” (Briggs 290). We are not certain *who* Johnnie’s “mother” actually is: in his present circumstance, he is an abandoned child with no relations, no benevolent host to bless or caress him, and no “being” that resembles him or wishes to converse with him. The monster’s speech, of course, is directed to the creator himself who once fancied that his “new species” would “bless” him (*Frankenstein* 32): now, and especially after the monster makes his demand for a companion “of the same species” (97), Victor is disturbed and infuriated by the monster’s stubborn mimicry of human behaviour and his refusal to conform to the role of the gothic “demon.” After all, unlike his creator, the monster does not possess a name, and like the folk changeling, he is therefore *unchristened*, which casts suspicion on his ancestry and marks him as a vehicle for demonic activity (Munro 256; Skjelbred 215-26). At the same time, the monster is composed of multiple identities, multiple personae, and

so possesses the ability to proliferate into different forms when the circumstances require it. Like Johnnie and other changelings, the monster will “cause fear” if he cannot “inspire love” (*Frankenstein* 98); yet, while he is “inflamed” by an instinct for revenge (which perhaps marks him as more *human* than the average changeling), the monster’s ultimate desire is to be left alone, if he cannot be tolerated. This is to say that his vengeful feelings function, as they have for humans, as a primitive method of *survival*. He would like to be accepted among humankind, but understands that he would find more acceptance from a being “as hideous” as himself (99). Not uncharacteristically, Victor initially accepts the proposal but only on the condition that the creature promises “to quit Europe for ever” (100).

Moreover, it is not enough that the creature is deformed—an abomination that Victor should have destroyed as soon as he brought it to life; it is not enough that the creature has tried to insinuate himself into human society—a further perversion in that the creature does not *look* like a human and yet tries to behave like one in his actions and speech: now the creature wants to be left to his own devices, to have a mate, and to possibly produce more monstrous beings like himself. As Victor contemplates, “one of the first results of those sympathies for which the daemon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth, who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror” (*Frankenstein* 114).

Paranoia aside, Victor’s response indicates the natural revulsion to a being whose ambitions threaten to pervert the “natural” ties of filiation and the sacred institution of marriage. This perversion is fully manifested when the monster, who is robbed of his future after Victor destroys his potential female mate (115), strangles Elizabeth on their

wedding night (135-36). The dream-prophecy on the eve of the creature's birth has now been fulfilled, even while it is apparent that Victor's greatest evil is not the creation of a monstrous child but rather his refusal to be a father to it. As Moers has argued, "[m]ost of the novel, roughly two of its three volumes, can be said to deal with the retribution visited upon monster and creator for deficient infant care" (218). However, the monster's "failure to thrive" (Eberly, Munro) is not the result of a lack of *familial* sentiments but rather the naturally oppressive nature of the family itself which cannot abide aberrant forms. Moreover, whether or not the creature is sterile, as most "monsters" were thought to be (Huet 108), his basic threat is to English moral and political values: he mirrors lower class discontent as well as the combined lower- and upper-class violent excesses (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 128), but he also parodies the paranoid gothic plot of conservative thinkers like the later Burke and Malthus both of whom relied upon the concept of the monstrous sublime and therefore the conceptual persona of the monster to enunciate their philosophical investigations. For the reason that Shelley implicates the monster's birth in the discourse of both radical and conservative politics, the potent exploration of "new social relations" (Suvin, *Positions* 45), and the possibility of a hybrid vigour in the form of a monstrous progeny, is not simply "borne away by the waves, and lost in darkness and distance" (*Frankenstein* 156).

Perhaps as an ironic nod to Shakespeare, Shelley's monster also echoes Caliban's threat in *The Tempest*, that he will "people" "else this isle" with monsters. In the wake of the French Revolution and Malthus's influential study of population increase, overpopulation was frequently viewed as "problem of illegitimacy, and as a specific problem of the labouring class" (Tuite 149). As most scholars have acknowledged,

Frankenstein's fear of the monster's potential reproductive urges mirrors—or, as I would suggest, *schematizes*—the post-Revolutionary fear of “the mob” and the growing mobility of the lower classes. Considering the gothic emphasis on the hereditary nature of sins, as first established by Walpole in the original preface to *The Castle of Otranto* (100),<sup>40</sup> we could say that Victor Frankenstein effectively brings a curse on his entire family but also appears to reproduce his dark Faustian desires in the monstrous laboratory experiment. At the same time, and as an indication of Shelley's break from the older gothic tradition, the monster confirms his own break from the family structure by first adopting a new family in the form of the De Laceys and then by eschewing *all* relations in his ascetic flight to the ice-world. If he does carry out an act of vengeance that resonates with the old gothic family curse, he does so as both an insider/interloper (as a deformed changeling child or solitary fairy) and as an outsider/revolutionary, exiling himself from the sedentary, affiliated lifestyle of the Frankensteins in order to carve out a nomadic existence in the sea of ice where, we might imagine, he rarely rests but quite literally leaps from ice floe to ice floe. In such a scenario, Fairyland has been transformed once again—this time, into a sterile, barren realm in which, however, the warm and

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<sup>40</sup> As Walpole states in the first preface to his *Otranto*, the premise of his tale is that “*the sins of the father are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation*” (100; original emphasis). This, the second part of Walpole's definition of the “gothic,” specifies a particular plot element, which we could paraphrase as *the hereditary nature of sin*—a now recognizable element in Radcliffe's Italian romances and even in the Victorian gothic works of the Brontë sisters. This element, which Walpole understands to be a weak premise for a fictional work, not only underscores the Gothic obsession with the family structure and its vulnerability to the changing sexual mores of European culture in the late eighteenth century (Backus 93), but also anticipates the nineteenth-century interest in the hereditary transmission of *biological* characteristics. Indeed, the *hereditary nature of sin*, or the biological transmission of degenerate characteristics, becomes a prominent theme in key SF novels of the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries, including not only *Frankenstein* and *Jekyll and Hyde*, but also Wells's *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) and Karel Čapek's *R U R* (1920). In these latter two works (discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, respectively), the “mad scientists” evoke, through their biological experiments on animals and humans, the Frankenstein complex and, therefore, the potentially terrifying—and therefore “gothic”—element of any new scientific discovery.

cloying intimacy of the earthly family is exchanged for the cool and unearthly alliance with the sublime elements of Chamounix. As Victor reflects in his resuming narrative, “a creature who could exist in the ice caves of the glaciers, and hide himself from pursuit among the ridges of inaccessible precipices, was a being possessing faculties it would be vain to cope with” (*Frankenstein* 100). By this account, the monster dwells within the gothic realm but continues to *exceed* it, just as the sublime resists all attempts to control it.

Despite Suvin’s hesitation to grant the novel a position as “representative for world trends” (*Positions* 75), I would insist that the novel is well ahead of its time, not for its “scientific” content so much as its philosophical probing of the post-Revolutionary family unit. The revolutionary’s declaration of a new fraternity, and its violent manifestation in the Terror (with the added warning, *ou la mort!*), is recast in the novel when the new species of humanity (as initiated by Victor Frankenstein) is degraded to the position of a monstrous mob (“a race of devils,” as Victor proclaims). Further, *Frankenstein* strives towards the exploration of its own “empirical environment” (as Spivak has asserted, the British imperialist project [262-63], and as we could add, post-Revolutionary politics and proto-Darwinism) by juxtaposing it to an alternative one (a world of “social engineering” [Spivak 264] and, in its focus on “natural philosophy,” *biological* engineering). From the SF purist’s point of view, the novel’s weakness may lie in its reliance on supernatural pre-destination, which effectively pre-determines the plot outcome: Victor’s dream turns out to be a prophecy. The very condition for Shelley’s speculations—the gothic novel form—would then undermine both the scientific and philosophical vision of an *unknown* future, and delimit the ability of the “thought-

experiment” to proliferate into new forms and new species. On the one hand, the text’s evolution from the 1818 edition to the revised 1831 edition indicated the unfortunate effects of Shelley’s own gradual “conservative” leanings (Poovey 252), which were related in part to the conservative tendencies of the gothic genre itself. On the other hand, the excisions (and the moralistic 1831 Preface) do not efface the fact that Shelley had built her monster from radical political and social philosophies, and that her *literary* creation is part and parcel of a powerfully conceived conceptual persona, one of whose “integral and constituent parts” (Deleuze 17) is the *changeling*. This first “literary” (gothic, science-fictional) excursion, following the folkloric one of Chapter 1, moves *through* and sometimes *beyond* the territories of the changeling persona into those of the “natural man” (Locke), the “noble savage” (Rousseau), Adam, Eve, and Satan (Milton), Prometheus (P. Shelley), and Manfred (Byron). The changeling, in turn, moves through and beyond these territories, reiterates himself in the new languages, and, when he has exhausted all attempts to fit a pleasing mould for his creator (“Remember, that I am thy creature: I ought to be thy Adam...”), chooses the default role of evil (“I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed [...] I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend” [*Frankenstein* 66]). But even these personae are abandoned when the monster discovers that they only serve to reinforce the theological model of “good” and “evil” and the conservative doctrine of the “monstrous sublime.” Indeed, every evocation of “nature” “appears to produce only the monstrous” (Brooks 591), as when Victor calls upon the “[w]andering spirits” of the “aerial summits” of Mont Blanc only to discover the approach of the “wretch whom [he] had created” (*Frankenstein* 65). The monster’s ultimate feat lies in his subversive *repetition* of the whole assemblage

(English literary and religious motifs, especially in Milton; Enlightenment and Romantic philosophy/aesthetics), a perverse parody in the form of grotesquely eloquent speech reminiscent of some of the greatest minds in the Age of Reason. While he falls back on the Miltonic narrative of the Fall, his own rebellion amounts to a reiteration of Rousseau's *Social Contract*: *You may be my creator*, the monster tells Frankenstein, *but remember that* "children remain attached to the father only so long as they have need of him for their preservation. As soon as this need ceases, the natural bond is dissolved... [T]he family itself is kept together only by convention" (Rousseau 8). The monster has already mocked Locke's pious belief in the *spiritual* "measure of man" (Locke 490), has assumed the role of the empiricist "changeling" but only insofar as he is "intractable": the cannibalization of various texts and philosophies suggests also the intense and divergent quality of his (and thus Mary Shelley's) *intelligence*. Further, by infiltrating the domestic realm and the institution of the family, the monster finds more comfort in the brief communication with old man De Lacey; this is an *unnatural* bond since De Lacey is not the monster's father, but it is also an alliance since the old man is also a wounded (blind) exile.

### III. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*: Degenerate Dwarf or Evolutionary Ape?

Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde* offers an urban variant on the changeling tale, even as it returns to the Romantic gothic themes of class deformation, illegitimacy, and monstrosity. Adapting the style of the detective novel, while also incorporating the crowded-city complex that Malthus had anticipated in Shelley's day, Stevenson

concentrates his tale into a “white hot” pace that can be contrasted with the slower, brooding progression of Shelley’s narrative. One reason for this difference in tonality and rhythm may be attributed to the special chronotopic conditions of the *novella* form, which concerns itself with a “secret” rather than the “discovery” of some event in the past. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, the novella “evolves in the element of ‘what happened?’” because it places us in a relation with something unknowable and imperceptible (and not the other way around: it is not because it speaks of a past about which it can no longer provide us knowledge)” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 193). The final revelatory chapters answer the question of “What happened?” on the one hand, by unravelling the theories about Jekyll/Hyde that have constituted the bulk of the narrative and, on the other, by questioning the validity of Jekyll’s own testimony, which is itself, after all, a *theory* (*Jekyll and Hyde* 57, 58). The other reason for the stylistic differences in Stevenson’s work lies in the urban setting of the novel, which we might understand as a conceptualization of the “nightmare city” predicted by Malthus and feared by many bourgeois Victorians. Having imbibed the traditions of Romantics like Radcliffe and Shelley and early Victorians like the Brontë sisters, Stevenson constructs a tale whose chiaroscuro evokes an exotic gothic space now partially illuminated by the gas lamps of the *fin de siècle* city. In other words, this “modern” gothic, prominent in other novels such as Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897), “shifts the geographic location of such horror fiction from the remote landscapes and ancient ruins of earlier forms to the streets and structures of the modern metropolis” (Dryden, *Literary Doubles* 16). Thomas Alva Edison’s invention of the first practical incandescent lamp in 1879 promised to make the streets safer and crime detection more



effective, but it also responded to the larger scientific attempt to penetrate the dark chaos, to shed light on the most gothic of locales: the human mind. Accordingly, British scientists and law enforcement officials eagerly adopted the ideas of the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso, who argued that crime detection was most successful when it sought the nature of the criminal rather than the crime. As Lombroso states in the third part of his final work, *Crime: Its Causes and Its Remedies*, “The born criminal shows in a proportion reaching 33% numerous specific characteristics that are almost always atavistic,” and many of “the characteristics presented by savage races are very often found among born criminals” (365). *Jekyll and Hyde*, then, registers the full impact of the “relocation of monstrosity from aesthetic discourse (as grotesque or sublime) to medical discourse and the public spectacles of natural science” (Tuite 150). Understood as a conceptual plane, Stevenson’s novella schematizes the concentration of urban space in late nineteenth-century London, presenting through an atavistic “ape-like” persona the image of an overpopulated, impoverished, and morally repressed society. As the science-fictional novum of the work, Mr. Hyde performs the function of a psychological experiment, which, while it appears to confirm Lombroso’s criminological synthesis, also reveals the resurgent bourgeois cravings for sensational monsters. This “dual” function corresponds analogically to Jekyll’s own position as a “double-dealer” (*Jekyll and Hyde* 55) and his society’s own fear of the “beast within” (Dryden, *Literary Doubles* 16). But like Shelley’s monster, Mr. Hyde assumes various roles, including the gothic demon, the Darwinian “throwback,” and the folkloric dwarf, each of which intersect and branch off as the situation demands, each of which add a new dimension to our changeling persona. Hyde’s mimicry, infiltration, and perversion of the Victorian family also constitutes a

revolutionary gesture since it threatens the staid institution cherished by the engineers of the British imperial enterprise in the second half of the nineteenth century. As an indication of the bourgeois gentleman's delicate position, Jekyll's "account" comes at the very end of the tale, after we have followed the nearly imperceptible and largely untraceable trajectories of Mr. Hyde, and after Jekyll's friends have tried—and failed—to protect his reputation.

An exemplary passage from Stevenson's work—involving the lawyer Utterson's first attempts to find the connection between the gentleman Jekyll and the rogue Hyde—will serve the purpose of demonstrating the great intensities of this taut narrative, which seems to anticipate the development of the cinematograph ten years later. In particular, the passage exemplifies Stevenson's conceptualization of the city and announces a return of the repressed Malthusian "monstrous sublime" (Tuite 148) in the form of a degenerate inner-city dweller:

Six o'clock struck on the bells of the church that was so conveniently near to Mr Utterson's dwelling, and still he was digging at the problem. Hitherto it had touched him on the intellectual side alone; but now his imagination also was engaged or rather enslaved; and as he lay and tossed in the gross darkness of the night and the curtained room, Mr Enfield's tale went by before his mind in a scroll of lighted pictures. He would be aware of the great field of lamps of a nocturnal city; then of the figure of a man walking swiftly; then of a child running from the doctor's; and then these met, and that human Juggernaut trod the child down and passed on regardless of her screams. Or else he would see a room in a rich house, where his friend lay asleep, dreaming and smiling at his dreams; and then the door of that room would be opened, the curtains of the bed plucked apart, the sleeper recalled, and lo! there would stand by his side a figure to whom power was given, and even at that dead hour, he must rise and do its bidding. The figure in these two phases haunted the lawyer all night; and if at any time he dozed over, it was but to see it glide more stealthily through sleeping houses, or move the more swiftly and still the more swiftly, even to dizziness, through wider labyrinths of lamplighted city, and at every street corner crush a child and leave her screaming. And still the figure had no face by which he might know it; even in his dreams, it had no face, or one that baffled him and melted before his eyes; and thus it was that there

sprang up and grew apace in the lawyer's mind a singularly strong, almost inordinate, curiosity to behold the features of the real Mr. Hyde. If he could but once set eyes on him, he thought the mystery would lighten and perhaps roll altogether away, as was the habit of mysterious things when well examined. (*Jekyll and Hyde* 13)

Stevenson does a masterful job of rendering the increased intensity of Utterson's dream—his obsession growing “apace” as he tries to follow the swift and dizzying traversals of his object of pursuit. The language of the passage may suggest “the mechanization, jerkiness, and rush of modern times,” as depicted in cinema (Kern 117), but it also focuses the movement of thought through the conceptual persona of the *doppelgänger* Hyde who “melts before” Utterson's eyes even as he reappears in a new street in this lamplighted city. In the remarkable whirl of this multi-claused, labyrinthine paragraph we have a schematic of both 1) the late Victorian city (which Robert Mighall has described as an “‘allegorical’ approach to London geography” [xxxii]) and 2) Stevenson's conceptual plane upon which—and through which—images of the city and city-life cross and criss-cross at a sometimes dizzying pace. This is not to forget the novels (such as Joyce's *Ulysses* [1922], Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* [1925], and Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* [1925], among others) that attempt to dislocate the reader from the linearity of chronological time through rapid snap shots of city-life. Stevenson's “intensities” lie in the simple method of layering concrete images through the connective tissue of repeated words and sudden shifts in direction: “He would be aware of the great field of lamps of a nocturnal city; *then* of the figure of a man walking swiftly; *then* of a child running from the doctor's; and *then* these met, and that human Juggernaut trod the child down and passed on regardless of her screams. *Or else* he would see a room in a rich house.” Appropriately, the last clause in the first sentence piles up the action (of the Juggernaut's

trampling) with three quick conjunctions (*and—and—and*), giving a picture of trampled child, trampled narration, and trampled thought. Consider another passage: “and if at any time he dozed over, it was but to see it glide more stealthily through sleeping houses, or move the more swiftly and still the more swiftly, even to dizziness, through wider labyrinths of lamplighted city, and at every street corner crush a child and leave her screaming.” Stevenson’s use of repetition, alliteration, and assonance bring the narration to a heady pitch, which, rather than unwinding or spending itself, becomes all the more tangled up in the “*labyrinths of lamplighted city*” and in the sudden encounters with *several* Hydes rather than simply *one*. Unable (or afraid) to anticipate Hyde’s manipulation of space, Utterson is utterly stumped.<sup>41</sup>

The nightmare image of Hyde invading Jekyll’s bedroom and commanding him to act on his behalf may also remind us of Victor Frankenstein’s own fears that his conjured monster will rebel against the creator and even enslave him. And yet, this revealing fantasy (which, we must remember, has been conjured by another “respectable” man, Utterson) offers a reversal of the city environment in which the lower classes are themselves “trampled” by overpopulation (Malthus would insist that this was related to uncontrolled sexual appetites in the labouring class [261-62]), and reflects the new fashion among architects for constructing crowded ghettos on the outskirts of the rich and commercial districts. While this particular nightmare is conjured by Mr. Utterson and represents his own superimposed fears, Stevenson suggests that the nightmare reflects *every* respectable gentleman’s fears—of the unruly, unpredictable lower classes; of the ways in which scandal may *touch* an individual to his core when he least expects it; and

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<sup>41</sup> As Jane V. Rago puts it, “Utterson fails to utter Hyde” (282).

of the ways in which the disclosure of scandal may degrade the gentleman's position to the level of his inferiors (Rago 279). In the first chapter, "The Story of the Door," the very suggestion that Hyde has entered Jekyll's house (through the dingy, unkempt back door) casts a shadow of suspicion on the good doctor. That Jekyll has a "very great interest in poor Hyde," a "great, a very great interest in that young man" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 20), suggests both his sympathy for the man's fate and his intimate association with London's dark underworld. The particular images in this passage of a "great field of lamps of a nocturnal city" and of the "labyrinths of lamplighted city" emphasize how much the city, or at least its less savoury districts, were associated with sin and iniquity, and with the hellish afterlife promised to those who would not repent. Hyde, of course, begins to present for Jekyll a demonic force in his own living hell on earth, and carries out his operations, Mr. Enfield suggests, as cool as Satan (*Jekyll and Hyde* 8).

The nightmare city, with Soho as its realistic geographical representative, may very well function as an "inverted world" for Stevenson, and certainly Hyde is the entity that allows its effects to be felt on the surface world of upper class respectability. The sudden appearance of a "dwarf" in London underscores the deforming atmosphere of an industrial society expending its energies on capital accumulation, as in the case of Dickens's *Quilp*; but it also enunciates the ambivalent side of Fairyland, with its alternative time and its unearthly pleasures. In the latter scenario we find the popular folkloric and also gothic motif of the subterranean world in which chthonic and primitive undercurrents (fairies or the "little people," including dwarfs; demon-lovers, caliphs, or vampires) threaten to taint a modern civilized society through the abduction and subsequent hybridization of its inhabitants (usually women and children). As a variation

on the demonic persona, already introduced in *Frankenstein*, Hyde offends Victorian sensibilities by refusing to adhere to the rules of the rationalized “terror” of gothic romance and the sanitized violence of the fairy tale (which was often a toned down version of the folktale).<sup>42</sup> All the same, Hyde is more of a reproductive threat than Shelley’s monster; but his promiscuity is intended to be analogous to the increasing geometrical ratio of population growth in the fin de siècle—the increase, that is, of birth deformities, of poverty and disease, and, therefore, of scientific investigations (psychology and criminology). The thirst for romance in the same period (Spencer 201-203; Dryden, *Literary Doubles* 20-24; Reid 8, 14) generated the need for new monsters, and so we have Utterson’s nightmare in which *several* Hydes crush *several* little match-girls. The “fuzziness” of Stevenson’s narrative “nucleus” (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 69) lies in the difficulty of distinguishing *where* Hyde really resides: in the urban ghetto or in the paranoid minds of respectable gentlemen. The relationship between Jekyll and Hyde offers a metaphorical—nay, an *analogical*—rendering of the passage between the two seemingly disparate worlds. Hyde’s particular strength lies in his ability to manipulate space *horizontally* (to move *across* segregated districts) in order to achieve *vertical* supremacy over his surprised opponents (to suddenly “pop up,” in rhizomatic fashion, in *this* wealthy house or in *that* dingy apartment). As a subversive force, Hyde invades the rich houses, secure bedrooms, and wealthy districts of these men—Utterson, Lanyon, Jekyll, Carew—and even enters their “smiling” dreams.

In other words, the crowded and intensified landscape of the city offers new

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<sup>42</sup> As Jack Zipes argues, “[T]he fairy tales for children [in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries] were sanitized and expurgated versions of the fairy tales for adults, or they were moralistic tales that were aimed at the domestication of the imagination” (*Fairy Tale as Myth/Myth as Fairy Tale* 14).

potential for subversion, especially as Jekyll's conjured changeling has access to all of the pleasures and possibilities of the upper class: unlike Shelley's monster, whose body is cobbled together over a period of time and who must conceal himself on the borders of the civilized world, Hyde *simultaneously* occupies the same space as his creator, and the intrusion of space becomes absolutely imperceptible. In his swift movements from gentlemen to degenerate, from upper to lower class, from celibate to sexual pervert,<sup>43</sup> and from bourgeois reformer to proletariat anarchist, Hyde *deforms* the straight lines and well-defined borders of the class hierarchy. Certainly Hyde's deformed appearance marks his degeneracy and lower-class position, and yet Utterson and others search in vain for the right description: Mr. Hyde gives "an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation." As Utterson reflects to himself after seeing Hyde for the first time, "God bless me, the man seems hardly human! Something troglodytic, shall we say? [...] O my poor old Harry Jekyll, if ever I read Satan's signature upon a face, it is on that of your new friend" (16). The elusive Hyde is frequently "collared" (7) by these random and hesitant diagnoses, reflecting the almost habitual absorption (and rhetorical combination) of "popular psychology" and Christian morality in the standard Victorian lexicon: Hyde assumes the persona of the prehistoric cave dweller from the pages of Darwin's *Descent of Man*, and the demon from Christian mythology. But the diagnoses do not stop here. Elsewhere, Hyde is described as "small and particularly wicked-looking" (23), and, at both the beginning and end of the tale, as a "dwarf" (7, 41). Additionally, Hyde is the result of a physical metamorphosis, resulting from the consumption of a strange chemical

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<sup>43</sup> Two excellent articles that consider the "queer" and "perverse" side of things in *Jekyll and Hyde* are Andrew M. Butler's "Proto-Sf/Proto-Queer: The Strange Cases of Dr. Frankenstein and Mr Hyde" and Chris West's "Perverting Science Fiction. Thinking the Alien Within the Genre "

concoction (again, a revelation that is only given at the *end* of the novel). In this way, the folkloric changeling makes its appearance once again, with many of its recognizable (but also *unrecognizable*) related personae—the child, the doppelganger/double, and the Darwinian monster.

To begin with, Hyde is associated with the rebellious “youth” of his society—a younger, more reckless, and evidently anarchical segment that threatens to supplant the old bourgeois order. A variety of men, including Jekyll’s loyal butler Poole (*Jekyll and Hyde* 17), the lawyer Utterson (19) and the good doctor himself (20), emphasize Hyde’s youth with the half amused, half disapproving tone of the elder whose authorial position becomes dubious the longer Hyde frustrates or de-articulates their “medico-juridico-scientific” diagnoses (Rago 282). Indeed, this triad of authority figures automatically implies a parental function, which not only advocates suggested punishment but invents domestic “cures” for insubordinate children, as evidenced in the legends discussed in the previous chapter. But Hyde’s partial resemblance to these men and especially Jekyll forces them to question their vigilance: for Hyde is, in a certain perverse sense, *one of their own*. This connection between the crotchety bourgeois and youthful lower-class is certainly reinforced by Jekyll’s own testimony that the Hyde form made him feel “younger, lighter, happier in body,” and that he was acutely conscious of a “heady recklessness” (57). The “child” here conceptualizes the “father”’s parental neglect but also its own subsequent tactic of parasitism. By Jekyll’s own description, the Hyde personality is understood as a changeling-like figure that lives in the body of Jekyll and feeds off the host. He is, moreover, a double or deformed substitute “bound together” with the original: but this is the “curse of mankind,” “that in the agonized womb of



consciousness, these polar twins should be continuously struggling” (56). At this stage in his testimony, Jekyll seems to suggest that this “curse” is also in some way a blessing in disguise—a perpetual reminder of how tightly bound humans are to each other, despite class or racial categories, but also an acute warning about the dangers of assimilating types, of trying to re-organize society into a single cellular unit. The “racking pangs” of Jekyll’s first experimentation (57) reinforce the fundamental separation of child and parent during birth, when the little parasite bursts out of the mother’s body to find its freedom. Subsequently, this separation necessitates “bonds of obligation,” which would corral the disparate parties—parent and child—and form an alliance. Indeed, as a parent, Jekyll *requires* such an alliance for the reason that his infant Hyde cannot be controlled as an automaton might. As Jekyll writes later on in his testimony, “That part of me which I had the power of projecting had lately been much exercised and nourished; it had seemed to me of late as though the body of Edward Hyde had grown in stature, as though (when I wore that form) I were conscious of a more generous tide of blood” (62). *Hyde’s* divergence is easily noted by any who come into contact with him, but here (in the slower unravelling denouement of the tale) Stevenson reveals the fact that Hyde derives from *Jekyll’s* own deviation from the norm, as a result of his hospitality towards this hostile “other.” Stevenson discovers that in order to “disentangle” the “inextricable knots” of the “social field,” “we have to *diagnose real types or personae*” (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 68; original emphases). But despite the initial attempt at a controlled experiment, Stevenson’s conceptual persona turns out to be a “polity” of “denizens” (*Jekyll and Hyde* 56)—not so much “sleepless brownies” as anti-social dwarves.

Hyde’s dwarf-like characteristics, of course, reinforce his position as a

changeling, especially given his “pale” (*Jekyll and Hyde* 16) and hairy appearance, his striking deformity, his apparent gluttony and “ungovernable spirit” (Silver 60). A substitute himself, he is also the mechanism for the substitution (124). As a sublime monster, then, Hyde simultaneously embodies the folkloric stigma of the dwarf and critiques it by refusing to remain submerged in folk legend. Recalling what Silver has said regarding the Social Darwinist influence on interpretations of folktales and folk belief, Shelley’s and Stevenson’s monstrous personae are (in both their authors’ terms and through the rhetoric and ideologies of their respective eras) “associated with the Darwinian notion of groups or races that had not ultimately triumphed, particularly with ‘inferior human experiments’ of which only a few had ‘survived’” (85-86). As I argued in the fourth section of Chapter 1, the *Social Darwinist* perspective emphasized a controlled or “directed” evolution that had clear and distinct aesthetic tastes—for uniformity, sameness, and structural perfection—when “nature” itself demonstrated a consistent penchant for variability, which often manifested itself in deviations and “monstrosities” (Darwin, *Origin* 26, 65, 604; *Descent of Man* 46, 51, 59, 127, 443). Further, while such a view celebrated the great profundity of nature and encouraged procreation, the fact remains that “increase” is always checked by “unperceived hostile agencies” (*Origin* 451): both Shelley and Stevenson attempted to give these agencies a form.

Hyde’s deformity may be intended as a sign of his racial or biological inferiority, but it also indicates the wider class (de)formation, or the “deforming dynamic of resentment” (Tuite 142) that, in Shelley’s day, threatened to reproduce the frightening “mob” of the French Revolution. Indeed, the “nightmare city” of Stevenson’s text is an

extension of Malthus's original doctrinal views.<sup>44</sup> The nightmare city is also an anticipation of the "bloody" affairs of the Trafalgar massacres (one year after *Jekyll and Hyde*'s publication) and the "Jack the Ripper" sensation (two years after the book's publication), which, as Mighall has remarked in regards to the latter, encouraged authorities to link the event to the "criminality and poverty of the district" ("Diagnosing Jekyll" 157). What is characteristic about these two events and others like them in Stevenson's day is that the victims (in the first case mentioned) and the perpetrator (in the second one) evoked fear in the authorities through their ability to *proliferate*—in terms of sheer numbers (in the first instance) and in terms of mobility and quickness (in the other instance). Yet, if a "Hyde" persona could be easily superimposed on the Whitechapel murderer (as he indeed was [Mighall, "Diagnosing Jekyll" 157-61]), from whom an entire society (upper, middle, and lower class alike) could completely dissociate themselves, this same persona loses some of his distinct characteristics when associated with a larger, variable collective, with whom many (if not most) of that same society (the middle and lower classes) would largely identify. The point here is that Mr. Hyde's characterization as both an "atavistic" criminal (Mighall, "Diagnosing Jekyll" 160) and a "double" or "multiple" personality automatically associates him with the large and usually shapeless "mass" that bourgeois and aristocratic Victorians could only understand through "diagnosed" "types." "Popular" psychology, influenced by the eighteenth- and early

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<sup>44</sup> I would argue that Stevenson's text is concerned with the more protracted outcome of the Anatomy Act (1832) and the Poor Laws (1834), as well as the consequences of the legislators' act of "displacing responsibility onto the already stigmatized medical profession, which could offer a scientific pretext not only for institutionalizing social inequity but for recategorizing a problem of social justice—how to deal with urban poverty—as a purely instrumental problem about the availability of corpses for inspection and research" (Tuite 151-52). Certainly, Stevenson's "Body Snatcher" (1884) is an even earlier indication of his progressively *Malthusian* preoccupations.

nineteenth-century theories of Malthus and others, consciously or not made a link between the supposed disintegrated mind and the *unintegrated* lower classes (including new immigrants and other dislocated individuals hoping to escape poverty) who threatened to collapse a social hierarchy based on uniformity. Like Shelley's monster, who comprises numerous bodies and whose engineered structure provides strength and agility, Stevenson's Hyde has the ability to be in two places at the same time (*here* in the form of Jekyll and *elsewhere* in the concealed form of Hyde), and of being two personalities simultaneously. However, as Jekyll surmises in his final statement, it is likely that "man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 56). Hyde's ability to occupy upper and lower class positions simultaneously is characteristic of many "denizens" of Fairyland whose social classifications were nearly impossible to pin down. While Hyde is hardly a "heroic" fairy, his upper-class associations allow him to separate himself from the "homely" fairies when he conceals himself in Jekyll's body. Indeed, as we discover, these "different types of fairy melt into each other" (Briggs, *The Personnel of Fairyland* 13). Hyde's imperceptibility increases with every diagnosis or categorization, escaping the authorities by entering the streets and houses and dreams of respectable gentlemen, and by assuming these various roles: demon, ape, atavistic criminal, deformed "dwarf"—truly a changeling extraordinaire.

Like Darwin before him, Stevenson tried to imagine the effects of increased population, overcrowding, and the inevitable jostling together of peoples of different class and race. Moreover, perhaps it is more accurate to say that, in his obsessive need to "diagnose real types or personae," Jekyll (and also Stevenson) inadvertently

“disentangles” the “inextricable knots” of the “social field” and finds the once ordered Victorian environment overrun by a deviant mob-like force.

To return to the argument above, Stevenson’s novella conceptualizes and schematizes the populous city of late nineteenth-century London, depicting a nightmare city that is comparable to “the subversive, lower-class form of ‘inverted world’” and offering the possibility of “truly *other* relationships” (Suvin, *Positions* 55). This subversion is initially accomplished as his persona uses his distorted and undecipherable *signature* to mark each and every new territory he traverses. The brief but crucial scene where Utterson and the clerk Mr. Guest (who is described as a “great student and critic of handwriting”) compare the signatures of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is another indication that Hyde deforms the “straight” lines of his society: as Guest remarks, the signatures are “identical” but “differently sloped” (*Jekyll and Hyde* 29). As in all things, then, Hyde’s *character* shows a slight resemblance to his master—his tastes for wine and silver, for example, as indicated in the description of his quarters in Soho (24). His imitation is similar but “differently sloped,” and his path is aberrant, labyrinthine, queer, and perverse. Moreover, Stevenson’s is the most striking of nineteenth-century science-fictional “changeling” tales, at least in its use of the motif of bodily substitution. Hyde’s deformed figure and monstrous birth (as described by Jekyll in the final chapter [56-57]), and his manner of infiltrating upper class spaces and imitating upper class lifestyles marks him as a late Victorian changeling. Silver circles around this notion by suggesting that Hyde may be the “dark amalgam of the aboriginal pygmy, the primitive anthropoid, and the little goblin man that lurks within” (143), but I would add that these personae have already attached themselves to the changeling, as shown in Chapter 1. Recast in neo-

gothic form, Hyde is a social parasite whose divergent characteristics (rude speech, slouching walk, debauched tastes, and perverse love of violence) may both recall the demon lovers and changelings of the Brontë sisters' novels,<sup>45</sup> and anticipate the biologically engineered Beast-Men of Wells's fiction.<sup>46</sup> Jekyll's initial attempts to banish his alter-ego Hyde are undermined by the changeling's persistence in thriving on its master-host's own vitality. Gleefully accepting the roles he is assigned, Hyde becomes his master's source of creativity, the persona through which the author explores the context of criminality, justice, class hierarchy, and urban life in late Victorian society, and the conceptual planes of atavism, Social Darwinism, and physical/psychological metamorphosis.

However, this creative source also reveals itself to be part of the controlled experiment of an author (Jekyll... and Stevenson?) whose fascination with abomination (to which Conrad's Marlow would also succumb) seems to serve the purpose of illustrating a moral lesson: Hyde's apparent suicide at the end of the main third-person narration (*Jekyll and Hyde* 44-45) seems to have been the result of *Jekyll's* guilt-ridden conscience. Unlike Shelley's monster, Hyde's transgressive art (evoked most vividly in his "differently sloped" signature and in his anarchical act of burning Jekyll's scientific papers [24]) is finally decoded in the manner of a detective solving a crime. If, as it was noted above, Jekyll's final statement *unravels* the previous theories offered by the other

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<sup>45</sup> Emily is discussed in Silver 13, 59, 60, and 68, while Charlotte is discussed in Silver 34, 59, 68, 106-07, 194

<sup>46</sup> Moreover, another tension implied in the novel is that between a gothic conservatism, in which the demon-haunted patriarch consumes his own children in order to maintain the old aristocratic bloodlines, and a scientific radicalism, in which the oppressed child transgresses natural law in order to create new and aberrant bloodlines. A similar tension exists in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) where the Count can stand for the old, incestuous aristocracy, or the new, radical underclass threatening to infect the old order

characters (Utterson, his kinsman Enfield, and Dr. Lanyon, not to mention Mr. Guest and the police), it also proceeds by *extraction*, that is, by plucking out each theory as it is introduced, in deductive manner, until the “strange case” is reduced to a single diagnosis of “morbid psychology.” Stevenson’s novella explores perversity only through innuendo and, ultimately, repressed (if *revealing*) references to corruption, sin, “irregularities” (55), and sensual pleasure. Throughout the novel, and especially in the final statement, it is strongly suggested that Jekyll’s “sin” is of a sexual nature and that his potential fear of “blackmail” (9) is that of a man engaged in an “indecent,” and perhaps homosexual, relationship (Mighall, “Introduction” xix-xx). In perhaps one of the more suggestive passages, Utterson contemplates that Hyde may be “the ghost of some old sin, the cancer of some concealed disgrace: punishment coming, *pede claudo*, years after memory has forgotten and self-love condoned the fault” (*Jekyll and Hyde* 17). In terms of Stevenson’s aesthetic technique, this description is fairly accurate, although the “nature” of the “crime” is never uttered. This game of partial disclosure is played out in the conflicts between the author/creator’s “productions” and the monstrous “creations”: the act must be performed but the evidence of the act must be concealed (Mighall, “Diagnosing Jekyll” 154). However, in the moralistic denouement of *Jekyll and Hyde*, Hyde is revealed to be an instrument of allegory and his multiple (and linked) personae are reduced to mere “representations” of an *essential* evil—the “devil” that comes “roaring” out of the “good” gentleman (*Jekyll and Hyde* 64). We should recall from Chapter 1 that changelings were thought to be the product of a Satanic influence, even while the popular belief often put the blame on the “Good People.” When Hyde’s recklessness turns out to be more than Jekyll bargains for, he falls back on Christian theology and identifies the

agency as demonic. But this is *Jekyll's* theory, and it is already contested by the possibility that the human organism consists of a "polity" of personalities or, I would argue, *conceptual personae*.

Stevenson, then, presents a very difficult "case" for us, since his post-Darwinian changeling seems to function as an allegorical figure of "evil" or sinfulness. And so there are two ways of reading Jekyll's final synthesis. *On the one hand*: As a way of measuring *Jekyll and Hyde's* "success" as an "optimal" thought-experiment, we could suggest that the author/creator compensates for "lack of control" in his experiment (Suvin, *Victorian Science Fiction* 94) by reaching for pseudo-scientific strategies, derived from the then-current "criminal anthropological" works (mainly by Lombroso). While it is true, as recent SF critic Chris West has noted, that "the absolutely other always lurks as a potential" in Stevenson's novel (107), the conceptual persona of Jekyll/Hyde (who is "perverse" and, to a certain degree, "queer") is reterritorialized in the manner of the folkloric changeling whose fate it was to *diagnose* mental deficiencies. Ultimately, the creations (lesser-evolved men in Victorian England and Stevenson's allegorized "essence of evil," Hyde) lose out in this struggle not only through their creators' decision to embrace popular applications of Spencerian Social Darwinism (as adopted by criminal anthropology and "morbid psychology") but also through the resulting disconnection between the imaginative world and the author's empirical environment. In other words, because Stevenson resists a full Darwinian exploration of primitive "man," Hyde becomes a proper Sunday school lesson of moral uprightness, and a ghoul for the fetishes of the Victorian reading public. The initial "estrangement" of Stevenson's empirical environment does not readjust late Victorian conventional views but adopts them as



convenient ways of “expressing” and “representing” certain “types” of “evil.” This is, at least, one side of the story. *On the other hand*: If Stevenson’s writing appears to be tinged by such gothic paranoia, it puts both the monster and its creator(s) on display: Jekyll’s secret protects his reputation, but his final statement reveals the fact that Hyde is an intimate part of Jekyll, and that he is as much at home in Jekyll’s body as he is in sordid Soho. Further, the scanty details of the experiment (*Jekyll and Hyde* 56-57) indicate both the impossibility of pinning down “evil” through a scientific apparatus and the necessity of producing *theories* of human behaviour, which, as I argued in Chapter 1, are dependent upon fantastical tropes—not simply gothic tropes of monstrosity and demonology but folkloric tropes of metamorphosis. Moreover, if Stevenson was placing emphasis on Jekyll’s final statement as the affirmation of a particular “truth,” he effectively undermines both Malthus’s and Lombroso’s theses; for Hyde is an intimate part of the society that tries to drive him out: Jekyll *produces* Hyde and is a moral hypocrite for then blaming his creation for the resulting misery, degradation, and degeneration.

## Conclusion

While it is true that *Frankenstein* and *Jekyll and Hyde* have occupied ambiguous positions as “limit case” SF, given their reliance on gothic themes and moral allegory (Suvin, *Positions* 75 and *Victorian Science Fiction* 94), the dalliance with these “anti-cognitive” genres (*Metamorphoses* ix, 7-11) produces “fruitful couplings” and suggests the potential to find “pleasure in the confusion of boundaries” (Haraway 150). The contamination of the boundaries of genre and category constitutes some of the best science-fictional forays, as demonstrated in our two examples. The SF novel, as it

emerges out of the gothic and urban gothic landscapes of *Frankenstein* and *Jekyll and Hyde*, constitutes a new “plane of immanence” for the changeling persona’s divergent couplings and alliances, especially given SF’s larger focus on the effects of new technologies on social organization and its re-imagining of the “Good People’s” program of genetic mutation (Chapter 1, Conclusion). The concept that emerges from this folk motif of abduction/substitution is *changelingism*, which, as I stated in the previous chapter, was intended to indicate both the Victorian ideology of degeneracy (fleshed out to a degree in the present chapter) and the scenario in which a human is abducted by fairies, which itself leads to a process of transculturalization, hybridization, and mutation when human and fairy mate and produce a “hybrid” child. Shelley’s and Stevenson’s “mad scientists” carry on the work of their fairy ancestors, but now have the power to conjure up new changelings for the purpose of exploring the possibilities of a human and nonhuman alliance and, perhaps, a *symbiosis*—one of the concepts employed in subsequent chapters as a more general variation on “changelingism.” These experiments—conservative, in the sense that they seek to control or engineer; radical, in that they unintentionally initiate unforeseen alliances—also succeed in producing conceptual personae and in hybridizing genre in the process. Enter the SF changeling.

Beginning with Shelley, we see a radical philosophical vision at work: a *tearing away* of the old gothic form through science—an initial evocation of divine destiny and the natural world as the source of goodness and morality, and a subsequent anti-social and almost anarchical rejection of the established authorities of Church, Academy, and Family. At the same time, Shelley’s evocation of evolutionary theory (Malthus, Erasmus Darwin) *reterritorializes* the superstitions of old in the form of Victor Frankenstein’s

programmed biology, which is, from a certain (perhaps retrospective) position, an anticipation of the Social Darwinist (and therefore criminal anthropological) belief in a directed evolution—the return to a pseudo-religious enthusiasm for power, control, and family resemblance. All the same, the monster’s failure to achieve an alliance with his creator and the human world does not diminish the great conceptual force of the monster as a deterritorialized “natural man” (Locke)—or as a deterritorialized “man,” period—who diverges into a Darwinian monstrosity, which needs to be understood as the sudden leap that characterizes evolution as an unforeseen, if roughly calculated, process. In this scenario the proto-Darwinian changeling defies his own engineered biology by exhibiting *undirected* evolutionary adaptation that is the state of play in the origin of all species: not simply the struggle for existence, but the “survival of the most divergent” (Deleuze 248).

Recent studies by Robert Mighall, Linda Dryden, and Julia Reid have argued convincingly that Stevenson’s tale was critically engaged with the fin de siècle obsession with “degeneracy” and was not simply a passive receptacle of contemporary psychological theory. Very recently Reid has insisted that Stevenson was offering a critique of evolutionary theories of degeneracy: “Implicitly questioning the power of heredity, the tale explains devolution rather in terms of environmental influence” (97). She goes on to argue that “Stevenson uses Jekyll’s dilemma to exemplify the hypocrisy of a professional class whose idol is reputation, and whose business is to deny the primitive or animal side of human nature” (98). Especially in his final statement, Jekyll expresses the desire to separate the two sides of his personality, ultimately isolating his “animal” self through a ritual deriving from folklore: transformation via magic potion. But Jekyll remains inconsistent in his attitude towards Mr. Hyde, describing him in one instance as

“natural and human” and as a “livelier image of the spirit” (*Jekyll and Hyde* 58), and in other instances as a “child of Hell” (67) and as “inorganic” (69). To be sure, Jekyll is registering his own devolutionary slide from “a large, well-made, smooth-faced man” (19) to the “slime of the pit” (69); but this realization only underscores the fact that Jekyll’s environment, with its repressed mores, is the source of the degeneracy rather than only the hereditary transmission of characteristics. Further, the Jekyll-Hyde entity involves a territorial conflict between two worlds and the subsequent transgression of the boundaries that separate them: Hyde assumes the folkloric role of the “wicked” fairy interloper, making demands on his human host. Such a “relation” constitutes what Derrida has called “radical hospitality”: a situation in which a “hostile” force is welcomed and housed by the “master” of the house who, by accepting the “hôte” (or the guest as invading host) undermines his own authority (“Hostipitality” [2002] 360). Alternatively, in undermining the very possibility of “hospitality” (by “hosting” the uninvited guest), Jekyll initiates an alliance, which emphasizes a contingent partnership rather than a long-lasting affiliation that demands “house rules.” His oblique reference to others who “will follow” and “outstrip” his psycho-chemical studies (56) suggests that there is more work to be done (a notion that contemporary literary critics have seized upon), and that his own theory is too limited, too narrow, and too dependent upon contemporary science: Jekyll’s experiment ultimately looks to the future, even if it gets caught up in the present (Lombroso and morbid psychology) or the past (the paranoid gothic plot).

On the one hand, the gothic expresses a revolutionary spirit that haunts the established structure of authority, and we discover that Shelley’s pseudo-human figure, while it certainly constitutes an element of the “monstrous sublime” associated with the

gothic, is also very much the product of 1) political upheaval in the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, and 2) philosophical speculation in this same period on the nature of the human organism and the consequences of its physical and spiritual *metamorphoses*. On the other hand, as Margot Gayle Backus and Toni Wein have argued, the gothic also presents the paranoid fears of a threatened familial and, by analogy, governmental authority, and is, therefore, *conservative* in nature since, considered from this perspective, the pseudo-human figure reaffirms the necessity of order and population control. Both *Frankenstein* and *Jekyll and Hyde* tip the balance in the direction of the conservative outcome, leaving us with just a fragment of hope in the form of the monster's dubious ice-raft and Jekyll's doubtful survival (only *Hyde's* body is recovered at the end of the main narrative). These texts are not, then, completely "open-ended" in the sense that the radical novelties in each case fail to spark the further development of "new social relations." Nevertheless, these proto-SF works are influential in establishing the changeling as *an agent of evolutionary change*—a motif that is further developed by Wells and by twentieth-century SF authors. While Shelley's novel was published too early to respond to the cataclysmic discovery of the evolutionary mechanism, "natural selection," it does engage with "the quasi-evolutionary idea that God is remote or absent from creation" and that "man therefore is free to create his own sub-life" (Aldiss, *Billion Year Spree* 29). The very open-endedness of evolution, which would "progress by its own inherent activity and so without divine intervention," promises that the *concept* of an engineered "sub-life" that attempts to form its own divergent community will live on. Stevenson's novel confirms the conceptual power of Shelley's vision and the manner in which the changeling persona evolves over the course of the

nineteenth century. During this same gestation period for what we now identify as modern SF (1810s to 1890s), the changeling—without strict acknowledgement—became a variation on the “culminating ape” that, for Wells, represented “natural man” (“Human Evolution: An Artificial Process” 217). In response to Locke’s question two centuries before, “what will your drivelling, unintelligent, intractable changeling be?” Wells answered: a dominant narrative agent in SF and the always evolving promise of new articulations for new social relations.

As it becomes especially apparent in Wells’s writings, the Darwinian evolutionary mechanism did not describe a series of directed linear progressions but rather an undirected series of movements forward and backwards, reflecting the “bewildering and disruptive nature of the process” (Reid 109). Nature, as Jekyll himself proves in his fatal experiment, proceeds by the perpetual splitting and branching of the unicellular into the molecular. In *Frankenstein* and *Jekyll and Hyde*, the changeling is conceptualized as a figure of molecular force, deforming, doubling, and multiplying. The first two phenomena are very much rooted in the gothic fascination with monstrosity and with *doppelgänger* figures; we might then consider the monster and Mr. Hyde as the demonic doubles that have, in a certain manner, stepped out of their masters’ bodies as deformed repetitions. The third phenomenon adds an additional, Darwinian dimension, which treats the biological/philosophical result of hybrid unions, deformed progeny, and the unchecked multiplication of organisms. We should recall that Jekyll’s own studies suggest that the human organism consists of multiplicities (again, even if he does not proceed further with his theories): we can take this as truth, at least *conceptually*. This divergence from one figure (persona) into two or multiple figures (personae) does not

indicate an evolution (that is, a *becoming-more-divergent*) from one text to another, for the conceptual persona is not bound by the “packs” it sometimes forms; if it was, the original alliance would become an affiliation, reterritorialized on the abstract rule of the Law (as we will see in the case of Dr. Moreau’s Beast-Men before they revert). In this sense, my focus has been on the divergent characteristics in an *individual persona*; the relation between the rigid biological laws established by creators (Frankenstein and Jekyll) and the repetition of them by the creations (the monster and Hyde); and, finally, the attempts and subsequent failures to form symbiotic relations between creators and creations. The initial creator/creation dichotomy, enforced by Frankenstein and Jekyll, is only artificially intact, and we see each of these human figures mutate into the monsters they conjure or engineer. Despite their apparent flaws, the enduring nature of these thought-experiments is apparent in Wells’s respectful homage, which underscores the socio-political possibilities of the “scientific romance,” now shifting its glance from the demons of the supernatural world to the changelings of the natural world.

Another sort of schema, then, arises out of the consideration of these “SF” novelists’ conceptual worlds, and may be taken as a useful (if always shifting) paradigm for the larger discussion of conceptual personae in both folklore and SF: 1) the initial *deformation* of the system (moral, religious, philosophical, aesthetic, and so on) through the repetition of orthodox beliefs and attitudes (Hyde’s *use* of the Jekyll entity as a counter to Jekyll’s *use* of the Hyde entity) ruptures and leads to 2) a subsequent *doubling* effect whereby a single enunciation (Jekyll’s moral philosophy, for example) simultaneously implies/echoes its opposite (Hyde’s *immoral* philosophy of debauchery); 3) the result is not simply a “dialectic” in the Hegelian sense, where “two self-conscious

individuals” engage in a “life-and-death struggle” in order to find the “truth” of their own selfhood (Hegel 113-14), but rather a “double articulation” in which the larger whole, understood as “society,” also and at the same time reveals itself to be a teeming reservoir of “molecular” voices or *multiplicities* (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 40). As I have argued above and in the previous chapter, repetition, mimicry, and parody are strategies of creativity and invention, and while each of these tactics (in some ways synonymous with each other) force the writer/artist to inhabit the dominant spaces of society for a brief time, they also provide the materials and contingent procedures for striking off on a new path. “In every respect,” Deleuze argues, “repetition is a transgression. It puts law into question, it denounces its nominal or general character in favour of a more profound and more artistic reality” (3). This schematic series, deformation-doubling-multiplication, corresponds to the nineteenth-century scientific interest in the biological sciences, evolutionary theory, and teratology, as well as the Romantic interest in the sublime body and the Victorian fascination with degeneracy. If the primordial “terror” of exotic gothic and its “barbarous” contents was replaced by the naturalism and realism of the Victorian novel, the geometrical increase of urban population encouraged the development of “urban gothic” as a way of registering the horror of modernity. Both Malthus and Burke conceptualize this terror in terms of a monstrous doubling, and we see in their writings some of the first articulations of the gothic *doppelgänger* figure who haunts or parasitizes his aristocratic (Walpole, Radcliffe, and Shelley) or bourgeois (Stevenson) host. The proto-SF elements of *Frankenstein* enable us to rethink the gothic sublime and even the “monstrous sublime” (gleaned from both Burke and Malthus) in terms of a “cognitive estrangement,” as Suvin describes.



Modifying the definition somewhat, I suggest that Shelley and Stevenson each introduce a gothic monster as the “novum” (agent) of their work in order to *resituate the doppelganger, and therefore the changeling, as a biological possibility.*

### Chapter 3—Rediscovering Fairyland as the “Submerged Nation” in H. G. Wells’s

#### *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Dr. Moreau*

Obligate relationships are common in biology. Higher eukaryotes host a vast array of obligate parasites and mutualists that include both microbes and larger organisms. For example, numerous bacteria are obligate pathogens or symbionts, many bird species are obligate brood parasites and a variety of insects are social parasites that rely on workers of another species to raise their offspring. These radically distinct obligate systems share the common theme of dependence on a host or partner (which might be of the same or of a different species) for evolutionary success despite their divergent mechanisms and strategies.

—Fiegna, N. Yu, et al., “Evolution of an Obligate Social Cheater to a Superior Cooperator” 1

Absurdities they are to us, e.g. the idea of talking animals, but let us remember that just such things are real and possible to the savage.

—J. A. MacCulloch, “Folk-Memory in Folk-Tales” 308

[Mary] stood away from him and put out a finger at him. “Joe! *You* aren’t by any chance a sort of fairy changeling? Not—not one of these Martians?”

...

“You were star-begotten,” he said, “and so was I.”

She nodded in agreement. If he wished it, so be it.

“Starry changelings both,” he said presently. “And not afraid—even of the uttermost change.”

—H. G. Wells, *Star-Begotten* 171-72

#### Introduction

While it is apparent that the changeling persona is not bound to a single genre or era, its consistent folkloric trappings signify its emergence in the nineteenth-century fascination with fairies and in the Victorian interest in the subterranean realm of British society. The concomitant interests in folk culture and in the theory that “lower forms” on the evolutionary scale represented the anarchical elements in society (Silver 149-55) reflected an older gothic interest in heredity and the unstable nature of the aristocratic institution of the family. As we have seen in both the folk narratives and novels discussed in the previous two chapters, the family unit itself, consisting of sometimes contingent

alliances between disparate groups and brief “matches” contrary to parental dictates, presents a challenge to a dominant society’s authority on “convention” and “natural rights” (Burke, *Reflections* 67-68). Indeed, both Shelley and Stevenson employ the gothic mode to explore the social unrest in nineteenth-century European society. Particularly in Stevenson’s day, the division between the capitalist and the labouring classes had helped to create an ever-growing labyrinth of urban slums, which, by all appearances, were truly the realm of the damned, capable of producing an entity such as Edward Hyde. Moreover, the socio-political landscape of folk narrative is such that we find the institutions of Victorian culture curiously parodied. The most prominent example would be the fairy economy and its quaint “market” practices of lending and borrowing. Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde* in particular demonstrates the critical potential of conceptualizing a “gothic Fairyland” in which the lower orders rise up and appropriate the position of their masters. While it is true, as Briggs tells us, that the fairy races are difficult to classify (*The Personnel of Fairyland* 13, 14), British authors like Dickens, Brontë, and Stevenson saw the socio-political possibilities of depicting two sorts of fairy folk and therefore two sorts of “Fairylands” in late Victorian culture. On the one hand, there is the dark abode of monstrous goblins and dwarves, and on the other, there is the lavish underground kingdom of the beautifully elfin “Good People,” the fairy Queens and Kings. Nevertheless, despite the appearance of a class hierarchy, it was well-known that the Good People relied upon and recruited some of their population from the peasantry (Jenkins 314), abducting healthy human infants and replacing them with their own deformed children who appeared more dwarfish than elfin, and sometimes more human than dwarf. Moreover, the changeling constitutes a transitional stage between the lower

and upper, between the fairy and human worlds. It is in the complex intersection of the gothic underworld and the folkloric otherworld that we also find some of the most stimulating science-fictional forays of the second half of the nineteenth century. As a sort of companion piece to the first section of Chapter 2, which focused largely on the gothic genre, the first section of this chapter returns to folk narrative in order to suggest that modern SF, especially since Wells, has consistently explored the changeling motif as a further method of what Suvin calls “cognitive estrangement.” Like the changeling itself, then, the SF novel of the *fin de siècle* is the hybridized product of a generic interchange.

Sections II and III, which constitute the core part of the chapter, consider how H. G. Wells’s *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) employ the gothic-cum-folkloric motif of the underground nonhuman community as a configuration of the “submerged nation” (Aldiss, *Billion Year Spree* 132), which threatens to supplant the ruling class in society. Like “non-state nations,” which have the structure of nation-states but are not recognized as such (Bertelsen 2), submerged nations behave as sovereign states even while in international politics they remain invisible or *submerged*. The Fairyland of folk narrative schematizes such a submerged position, especially given the ways in which its subterranean inhabitants enunciate the political dissatisfaction of the “real” types living on the surface world of Victorian England. As “liminal” figures (Narváez 337-38) who straddle the human and nonhuman worlds, fairies “force us to face the problems of the relativity of knowledge and human estrangement from the world” (Rojcewicz 481). For this reason the fairy—long before the *alien*—became crucial in the science-fictional exploration of “cognitive estrangement,” which gauges the spatio-temporal co-ordinates of “new social relations.”

While Wells was aware of the gothic genre's socio-political potential, exemplified with particular skill in Shelley's *Frankenstein*, he was intent on replacing the alchemy of Frankenstein's laboratory with an "ingenious use of scientific patter" (Wells, "Preface" viii). Accordingly, *The Time Machine* employs the device of the time-travelling machine and its attendant theory of time as the "fourth dimension," while *Moreau* explores radical experiments in animal vivisection and related theories of the "plastic" qualities of mammalian superstructure: both romances offered speculations on the future development of physics and biology. In the first novel, which I discuss in Section II, a bourgeois scientist-adventurer who travels to the year 802,701 initiates a conceptual shift in conventional notions of time and the theory of evolution, both of which were understood especially in Social Darwinist terms to be linear and progressive. The Traveller discovers that this futuristic world consists of what appears to be a two-world system of the plutocrats and the proletariat, who have developed into two distinct races, the fey-like Eloi and the ape-like Morlocks. In a horrific reversal of the Victorian class hierarchy, the monstrous and deformed underground dwellers are revealed to be the predators and the delicate leisurely upper-worlders the prey. Returning to the socio-biological lexicon in its exploration of a surgeon's radical experiments on animals, *Moreau* takes us into the well-known SF realm of biological engineering. Unlike *Jekyll and Hyde*, however, *Moreau* is fully entrenched in the scientific spirit of the late nineteenth century, and the "Beast Folk" are no more evil spirits than the deformed entities littering the laboratories of England's colleges (in both Shelley's and Stevenson's eras as well). Despite its exotic island setting, *Moreau* narrows the distance between the textual and "extra-textual" worlds by specifying the plausible ways in which the lower

orders of society could be successfully engineered. As a sort of thematic sequel to *The Time Machine*, however, *Moreau*'s return to a subterranean motif, when the protagonist Prendick encounters the Beast Folk living in a sort of hellish underworld, reveals both the variety of the animal kingdom and its varied hybridized forms, and therefore reinforces the blurred boundaries between the "two nations" of "man" and "beast."

Despite and because of these "urban gothic" and folkloric elements, both novels offer further conceptualizations of the SF changeling, in all of its radical "deterritorializations": reaffirming the "submerged nation" as the site of transformation, the Morlocks shed their subservient roles as mechanical automatons and assume the insurgent position of Fairyland's lower orders (goblins, brownies), parasitizing the more politically powerful class that has oppressed them for eons; in a still more subversive gesture, Moreau's Beast Men employ their newly acquired gait and speech in order to produce a revolutionary "becoming-*man*" that is more hopeful than Swift's pessimistic conclusion to the Age of Unreason. As I argue below, the significant link between *The Time Machine* and *Moreau* is their similar concern with "mutation," genetic manipulation, and, more generally, the anxious response to spontaneous human metamorphosis, described so vividly in changeling legends. As Brad Buchanan has argued more recently, the "loss of confidence (no doubt spurred by the decline of religious authority and the rise of evolutionary biology) produced a profound anxiety about the problem of how to recognize and represent humanity" (33). Focused as they were on the predator-prey relationship in a highly industrialized England, Wells's thought-experiments were responses to Darwinian theory and Thomas Huxley's prodigious scholarly analysis of Darwin's work in the second half of the nineteenth

century. Throughout his several scientific romances, especially those published between 1895 and 1904,<sup>47</sup> Wells offers one of the most sustained attempts to apply this same scientific-cum-sociological lexicon to the creation of fictional worlds. In particular, *The Time Machine* and *Moreau* imaginatively develop Wells's own scientific reflections as a way of re-imagining the gothic doppelganger and the folkloric changeling as biological possibilities and revisiting the sublime biological series, evolution-revolution-monstrosity. If we argue that *Frankenstein* has had a dominant influence on SF of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, then we must concede the possibility that *Frankenstein*'s monster contributed—and continues to contribute—to the conceptualization of all the aliens, robots, and changelings of later SF. Indeed, in Wells's *The Time Machine* and *Moreau* we should recognize the subterranean revolt of the Morlocks and the savage reversion of the Beast Folk as an echo of the monster's demonic rebellion. Regardless of (and perhaps *due to*) Moreau's biological tampering, the Beast Folk in particular act out the revolutionary gestures of the Romantic-era automaton, for they resemble the engineered working-class labourers whose very limbs have been enslaved to the machine of the industrial revolution.

Friedrich Engels's great anthropological study *The Conditions of the Working Class in England* (1845, 1892), which preceded (in its first edition) his collaborative effort with Marx by just a few years, confirms the fact that the ape-like (or *brownie*-like) industrial aggregate featured in *The Time Machine* and the hybrid human-animal automatons featured in *Moreau* are conceptual enunciations of the human complement

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<sup>47</sup> These include *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), *The Invisible Man* (1897), *The War of the Worlds* (1898), *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), *The First Men in the Moon* (1901), and *The Food of the Gods* (1904)

forced to live in “cellar” dwellings in the great industrial towns of the mid-nineteenth century (Engels 68-110). Indeed, the “submerged nation” theme, which SF author and critic Brian Aldiss associates with a British tradition of imaginative writing throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (*Billion Year Spree* 131-32), had one of its sources in the appalling conditions of England’s urban centres, including the poor ventilation, sanitary conditions, and sewage systems that were the norm of industrial workers’ housing in the mid-nineteenth century. Engels’s description of the dense population of workers who inhabit “subterranean dens” in the “manufacturing towns” of Manchester (83) is echoed later in the Traveller’s discovery that “the Morlocks, subterranean for innumerable generations, had come at last to find the daylight surface intolerable” (*The Time Machine* 67). The *Oxford English Dictionary* suggests that “subterranean” has historically signified both “natural” and “man-made” structures and has alternately referred to “animate” persons and “inanimate” objects, “natural” and “supernatural” underground dwellers. In other words, in their respective evocations of working-class conditions, Engels and Wells explore a conceptual plane that reveals a teeming reservoir of jostling and proliferating personae (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 71)—underground workers (colliers, tinsmiths), devils and spirits, mythological and folkloric figures, natural but abysmal creatures, all of whom suffer the conditions of the lower stratum. Both Engels and Wells were acutely aware of the imminent revolt of these den dwellers as well as the inevitable cross-over of classes and populations. Moreover, Engels’s modification of Malthus’s theory of geometrical population increase, echoed once again a half-century later by the Traveller, was shrewdly aware of the evolutionary forces at work in his own day: “The workers have taken it into their heads that they, with



their busy hands, are the necessary, and the rich capitalists, who do nothing, the surplus population” (282). We may rightly say, then, that a new slogan presents itself in the wake of such a discovery: *Subterranean creatures of the world, unite!* Evolutionary theory, which had become the new *modus operandi* of Victorian SF authors such as Edward Bulwer-Lytton and Samuel Butler, not to mention Stevenson, provided a new cognitive locus for utopian speculation and what Wells himself called the “rediscovery of the unique,” which, in the case of *The Time Machine* and *Moreau*, meant the eruption of an insurgent segment of British society genetically altered by the long sojourn in an industrial Fairyland.

#### I. The Changeling as Emergent SF “Agent”

As it was argued in Chapter 2, both the gothic mode and folk narrative constitute two imaginative strategies for subversive social commentary and, in the enunciation of occulted worlds that intermittently come into view, two forms of “cognitive estrangement.” Such an argument may contravene Suvin’s axiomatic delimitation but only insofar as it expands the definition of “estrangement” in order to allow for its implicit meanings to come to light. As noted in Chapter 2, Suvin argues that SF is a “*literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical environment*” (*Metamorphoses* 7-8; original emphases). Suvin continually stresses in his two critical studies that cognitive estrangement cannot effectively operate in a narrative whose main formal device uses imagined worlds, agents, and relationships for the purpose of

substituting one novum for another rather than placing the imagined and actual worlds side by side (*Positions* 142). In such a scenario, in which the occulted world or agent simply fades from the narrative without affecting the actual world, that is, without pointing towards the cognitive limitation of the author's empirical world, the novum itself has only a sensational purpose. As Tatyana Chernysheva has argued, there "was a time when mentioning the folktale and science fiction in one breath would have seemed silly, or even blasphemous" (35), for the presence of such literature implied a "baseless" set of ideas or hypotheses, which could only serve the purpose of entertainment. The suggestion here is that the persistence of the folkloric influence on SF throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries implied an impurity in the genre, a fantastical element that perhaps also indicated SF's immaturity. However, because SF (according to Suvin) depended on a certain tension between the fantastical anomaly and the proven scientific fact, it could be argued that this impurity was part of its strength, that is, the very basis for its best plots and most sophisticated ideas. More than this, SF was in competition with the mainstream "realist" novel, and, despite a well-documented period of "optimal development" between 1893 and 1900 (Suvin, *Victorian Science Fiction* 263), the burgeoning genre, like the folktale, usually fell short of the realm of "serious" literature. The appearance of the changeling persona in late nineteenth-century SF anticipated a new era of folklore influence and proved that the genre's strength lay in its ability to adapt, modify, and even *pervert* mainstream literature, just as the folktale had previously absorbed and modified elements of the legend. Further, the science-fictional use of folk narrative implied a paraliterary and, to a certain degree, subaltern strategy of estranging a rationally and empirically determined world. More than this, the emergence of the changeling persona in

the late Victorian period demonstrates a conceptual *force* that effectively transformed both folk narratives and SF narratives into vehicles of social change.

Of course, the general consensus on folktales has been that they operate on a supernatural or “metaphysical” principle that cannot be validated except through a pseudo-mythological belief system. Suvin has elaborated upon this notion in the following way:

Estrangement differentiates SF from the “realistic” literary mainstream extending from the eighteenth century into the twentieth. Cognition differentiates it not only from myth, but also from the folk (fairy) tale and the fantasy. The *folktale* also doubts the laws of the author’s empirical world, but it escapes out of its horizons and into a closed collateral world indifferent to cognitive possibilities. It does not use imagination as a means of understanding the tendencies latent in reality, but as an end sufficient unto itself and cut off from the real contingencies. (*Metamorphoses* 8; original emphasis)

There is no doubt that the folktale “doubts” the rules and regulations of the empirical world, especially as that world-view functions as a centralizing force in dominant culture. However, this refusal to adhere to established “cognitive possibilities” is often an unavoidable result of the folktale’s status as oral literature, or as a version of a folk legend. Since folktales are often oral transmissions, there is no author per se, nor is there a particular central text, only versions, variations, renderings, translations, retellings, and transcriptions.<sup>48</sup> When we study a folktale, our analysis tends to focus on the details of one version or variation, which is likely a retelling of a retelling. Moreover, the cognitive laws that are supposedly violated may actually reflect a particular version’s violation: the fantastical element that is “indifferent” to logic may have been added by a particular story teller and may not reflect the original intention (i.e., of the *legend*). Considering that

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<sup>48</sup> In *Theory and History of Folklore*, Vladimir Propp considers the issue of authorship in his discussion of “folklore and literature” (5-9).

Suvin has conflated the “environments” of the folktale and the (rather stereotypical) fairy tale (using the “flying carpet” as a representative example of the former [*Metamorphoses* 8]), he has already determined the direction and purpose of the fantastical elements to be found in the folktale: to “escape” logic and the “real world,” to be blithely indifferent to the logic *of* the real world. What Suvin has failed to notice is that the folktale—and its allied form, the legend—was appropriated by religion, medical science, and evolutionary theory, and that it became associated with the empirical worlds and cognitive possibilities of the Victorian period and of the contemporary period. As the well-known folklorist Stith Thompson has argued, “Literary critics, anthropologists, historians, psychologists, and aestheticians are all needed if we are to hope to know why folktales are made, how they are invented, what art is used in their telling, how they grow and change and occasionally die” (6). While Suvin is right to point out the cognitive limitations of the folktale, he fails to take into account its close association with the legend and its philosophical influence on distinctly “cognitive” works, such as those by Wells. If folk narratives must be disparaged for their lack of “cognitive logic,” let us reconsider their—sometimes earnest, sometimes mischievous—attempt to assimilate elements of the “real world”: Johnnie’s appeal (“Johnnie in the Cradle”) lies in his inelegant parody of human speech, and our laughter is the nervous kind that sees a little “realism” in the changeling’s insubordinate, deformed rage.

This is to say that folktales and folk legends focus also on the “mundane” aspects of quotidian life and not only the fantastical elements that have no direct relation to the *folk* (whether this include the rural peasant, rural proletariat, or artisan class). In the particular corpus of tales that have concerned us (Chapter 1), the tension is between a

familiar and an unfamiliar horizon, and escaping the former realm is not easily done, or at least not without a profound consequence (including transformation and/or death). As Stephen L. Clark has argued, some SF tales “urge what folklore also urges: it is folly to wish for more than can be naturally provided” (22). The textual/empirical environment of the folktale, which Suvin would disavow, contains within it subversive undercurrents associated at once with a rural underclass and a “little folk” driven underground by colonization as well as industrialization. Suvin himself argues early in *Metamorphoses* that the history of SF corresponds to the history of paraliterature, or the “popular, ‘low,’ or plebeian production of various times, particularly since the Industrial Revolution” (vii). The folktale is very much the product of a plebeian or lower-class art and must therefore be understood as another form of paraliterature. As Vladimir Propp has argued, “Folklore is, first and foremost, the art of the oppressed classes, both peasants and workers, but also of the intermediate strata that gravitate toward the lower social classes” (5). As it turns out, the visions, or as Suvin would say, the “cognitive horizons,” (*Positions* 51, 59, 87) of folk narrative and SF frequently intersect in interesting ways.

The changeling persona is not restricted by genre, and has the true “novelistic spirit” (Bakhtin 22) in its penchant for mimicry, parasitism, and proliferation: it imitates for a while, then moves onto a new form in order to draw from it (new human forms, new expressions), and finally spreads out, trailing behind it and before it the traces of past and future forms. Indeed, the remarkable feature in the changeling is its ability to assume various voices (the author’s, a human child’s, and so forth). The subsequent sections of this chapter examine how the Victorian SF novel in particular provides the *heteroglossic*

materials for a changeling voice to be heard once again.<sup>49</sup> As I argue, the impact of Wells's folkloric adaptations is such that the abbreviated form of the folk legend undergoes a transformation into a "full-fledged" metaphorical structure in which "new meaning, accessible to us in no other way, is [...] formed and thus explored" (Suvin, *Positions* 188). Indeed, the strength of the legend lies in its repetition of an ambiguous denouement—the exorcism of the changeling and, in some instances, the failure of the human child to return—and its brevity, both of which leave much to the imagination: the legend therefore always remains in a certain sense *the seed of a larger idea*. This "seed" can be connected to the "subterranean" theme of both folk legends and nineteenth-century British SF, and Wells has been largely responsible for watering this seed even as it nourishes his own works with startling and estranging novelties.

## II. *The Time Machine*: the Changeling as Subterranean Proletariat

Wells himself was no slave to genre, for he employed the Romantic gothic model in order to carve out his own mode of fictional art: the scientific romance or "scientific

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<sup>49</sup> Of course, thematically the changeling has always had a voice within the literary trope of *metamorphosis*. As Bakhtin has noted,

The folktale image of man—throughout the extraordinary variety of folkloric narratives—always orders itself around the motifs of transformation and identity (no matter how varied in its turn the concrete expression of these motifs might be). The motifs of *transformation* and *identity*, which began as matters of concern for the individual, are transferred to the entire human world, and to nature, and to those things that man himself has created (Bakhtin 112, original emphasis)

One way of gauging the development of the changeling motif from folktale to novel (including its prominence in nineteenth and twentieth-century SF) is to consider how the larger plot of metamorphosis altered from a mythological account of miraculous transformation to the development and maturation of the individual—and *human*—self (Bakhtin 114-15). For the changeling itself signified both a supernatural creature and a deformed human, and anticipated the kind of psychological metamorphosis explored by late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century novelists, including especially Hardy, Conrad, Lawrence, Kafka, and Joyce. Metamorphosis may then be understood as the folkloric figure's deterritorialization of its own origin, as a tearing away (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 109) of its oppressive identity in order to find a new pathway for survival.

fantasy,” as Wells’s critics called them (“Preface” ix). Wells discovered that the gothic was not “gothic” at all but rather a domesticated version of the fantastic, and that the gothic body was not ghostly but rather composed of flesh and blood (albeit deformed and artificially constructed): the scientific romance, as loosely defined by Wells in 1933 in his now well-known “Preface,” constitutes this very discovery. “Hitherto,” Wells states, “except in exploration fantasies, the fantastic element was brought in by magic. Frankenstein even, used some jiggery-pokery magic to animate his artificial monster. There was some trouble about the thing’s soul. But by the end of the last century it had become difficult to squeeze even momentary belief out of magic any longer” (viii). Clearly, Wells is referring to the gothic form here and Shelley’s employment of a certain kind of “magic” to construct her monster, but he is also noting the shifting critical response to the gothic form and his own society’s refusal to believe an impossible possibility. This is to say that, while Shelley’s gothic offered some cognitive possibilities (i.e., in the novel presentation of reanimation), most versions of the genre did not. Wells, of course, inverts the typical gothic principle by offering his readers a possible impossibility: “It occurred to me that instead of the usual interview with the devil or a magician, an ingenious use of scientific patter might with advantage be substituted. That was no great discovery. I simply brought the fetish stuff up to date, and made it as near actual theory as possible.” What better example of this new form than *The Time Machine*, which shrinks the distance between the textual and extra-textual worlds by first setting us down in the midst of an informal lecture on physics and time as the fourth dimension. While it is perhaps reminiscent of Jekyll’s “full statement,” the Time Traveller’s “patter” in the first chapter is more thoroughly engaged in the empirical manipulation of the

impossible, especially since we are allowed to gauge the initial reaction of the Traveller's gentlemen audience and their final response to his complete narrative. As Wells suggests, such a narrative intends to hold its listeners as well as any "good gripping dream" ("Preface" vii). Once the connection, or the "identity" of the setting, has been established, Wells has his Traveller send us reeling into the future. But what we discover is not so much urbanized gothic—for the initial setting is fairly lacking in the urban sprawl of the Traveller's world—as an urban world that has been gothicized from within by the proletariat segment who have now assumed the old role of the "night-time horror" (Dryden 159), the demonic doubles of their aristocratic betters. In Wells's version of the urban gothic, the city has been submerged beneath the earth as a sort of hellish industrial underworld. As inheritors of the class division of *fin de siècle* England, and as the plausible products of a biological devolution projected some eight hundred thousand years into the future, the Eloi and the Morlocks constitute the penultimate personae of the urban gothic text.

In his dedicated exploration of Darwinian themes, and in his imaginative displacement of a bourgeois gentleman in a sort of insidiously paradisiacal arcadia, Wells made another important discovery: instead of the usual gothic apparatus of demonic or supernatural horror, the *folktale* could "with advantage be substituted." For, as the Traveller discovers, the London of the eight thousandth and third century is a vast garden filled with ruined magisterial structures and studded with curious circular wells, beautiful fey-like little people and deformed dwarfish creatures: this constitutes the conceptual plane of a society whose declining birth-rate, racial anxiety, and political subservience to capitalist masters was enunciated in the language of traditional folk narrative. Again, in



Wells's hands, the "gothic" becomes unrecognizable, since it is related to what he calls "scientific patter" and guided by a folkloric sensitivity to the dark hither side of hospitality. Wells would really perfect his grafting techniques when applied to Moreau's vivisectioning laboratory, but we catch a glimpse of this deft skill in his manner of welding together gothic, scientific, and folkloric elements in *The Time Machine*.

More recently *The Time Machine* has been identified as a species of "imperialist romance," in that it involves an "intrepid British explorer[']s encounter [with] an exotic civilization" and "with strange and often bizarre customs that seem the antithesis of the European way of life" (Cantor and Hufnagel 37). Certainly Wells drew upon such a tradition in his depiction of the indigenous Eloi and the Morlocks, but these exotic subalterns also clearly have prototypes in the older folk traditions of England. Accordingly, *The Time Machine* is also often interpreted as a parable adapted for the purpose of scientific speculation (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 224), or as a species of what Patrick Parrinder calls the "scientific fairy-tale" ("Introduction" 10).<sup>50</sup> I modify these claims somewhat by suggesting that Wells constructed his future world of the year 802,701 with the components of British folk narrative in mind. The folktale, as I have noted above, overlaps the category of "legend," which always involves the negotiation of truth claims. The British folk narratives discussed in Chapter 1 appear to present a supernatural element in plausible terms or a mundane occurrence in supernatural terms. In the case of the legend, the supernatural element frequently escapes from our direct view

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<sup>50</sup> As Parrinder writes in his introductory essay to *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*, "Zamyatin, an unorthodox ex-Bolshevik who had been trained as an engineer, saw Wells as a writer of urban fairy-tales based on a quintessentially modern combination of science and a heretical socialism" (28). As Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr. affirms, Zamyatin "intended the phrase precisely and admiringly" (1).

or fades as soon as we attempt to scrutinize it, like the Fairy People themselves, who invade and retreat imperceptibly. Accordingly, legend introduces a sort of speculative tension between two worlds, the human and the nonhuman and, in the case of the changeling motif, the ambiguous blending of the two worlds. This tension is made possible by the fact that fairies generally appear in the guise of the human, or we might say in science-fictional terms, the *humanoid*, for they possess characteristics akin to *homo sapiens*: with the exception of diminutive stature and perhaps a distinct “elfin” appearance, they possess eyes, nose, mouth, hair, two arms and two legs, sentient minds and social manners. Wells’s use of folkloric figures such as the Eloi and the Morlocks acknowledges the cognitive possibilities of the folktale and the sociological possibilities of remapping Victorian industrial England as a Fairyland consisting of two nations.

The scientific-cum-folkloric element is soon apparent when we consider how Wells structures his futuristic tale. Sitting amongst his audience of bourgeois gentlemen, having piqued their interest in his “dusty and dirty” clothes (*The Time Machine* 14), as well as his apparent “lameness” and “blood-stained socks” (15), the Traveller begins his extraordinary tale; but to do so, he must descend retrogressively into the past even as his narrative lurches forward into the future. On the one hand, the telling of the tale instigates a conceptual shift in the conventional understanding of space-time, where the listeners remain physically fastened in their seats but are analogically thrust forward and beyond the spatio-temporal coordinates of their entrenched scientific thinking: such, we might say, is the Traveller’s way of coming through on the promise that he “will have to controvert one or two ideas that are almost universally accepted” (1). On the other hand, the telling of the tale analogically points to the unexpected *reverse* progress of evolution,

or the devolution of the species in the year 802,701, as well as the traumatic shock of having descended into an otherworld (as in the case of Odysseus's or Dante's sojourn). Given that the tale is encapsulated within a larger first-person narrative, the Traveller's story is presented as a first-hand account or memorate offered *second-hand*, providing some distance for readers as well as the faint suggestion of a well-aimed scientific parable. Suvin has famously linked parable to SF narratives, although his definition brings to mind the folk narrative's creation of a fictional world parallel to the actual one. The "ultimate aim" of the parable, Suvin argues, "is the shock of estrangement reorienting the reader's perception—in modern times, making her recognize the alienated world she lives in. It is not an allegory in that it does not substitute one thing for another [...] but *sets one thing by the side of another*, the explicit by the side of the implicit" (Suvin, *Positions* 142; original emphases). The Traveller achieves this aim by introducing his listeners, and ultimately Wells's Victorian readership, to a juxtaposed "two-world system" (Huntington, "The Science Fiction of H. G. Wells" 35), or what Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr. calls a "two-world universe divided between the everyday and the extraordinary" (3). In a general way, he sets his own extraordinary narrative alongside the everyday scenario of the drawing room, with its clocks and mantelpieces, its late dinners and its accompanying intellectual discussions: this is the attention-grabber, the hook, and the story teller's basic technique. In a more specific way, after he has gained his audience's complicity, the Traveller establishes another set of parallel worlds that exist within his own story and therefore within the drawing room world in which he narrates and therefore within Wells's late Victorian world: the upper world of the Eloi and the underworld of the Morlocks. The shocking sight of the bloody socks in the drawing room

is meant to be analogical to the Traveller's own shock in the world of his tale, but it is also meant to be placed alongside the blood-shod feet of the subterranean workers of Wells's day. In other words, these encapsulated narratives (Wells's, his first-person narrator's, the Traveller's) function less as nested eggs, in which the first shell is never touched by the third, and more as linked coils, in which the first one sends a shockwave through both the second and third and receives a shock in turn. In this analogy I intend to suggest that the Traveller's fantastical tale works on his audience, and has the *capacity* to work on Wells's audience, through its "residual" effects, that is, through its function as a seemingly harmless piece of paraliterature deployed for the purpose of entertainment. The tale of the future is residual because it sounds vaguely *familiar*, like a folktale told and retold generation by generation, and because it is therefore already part of a cultural tradition, sustained by virtue of the feedback loop that maintains its popularity.

The Traveller, then, *reintroduces* his audience to a recognizable formula—the folk legend scenario in which a human discovers what appears to be a hidden world of beautiful, elegant little folk, and the utopian scenario in which a world-weary traveler encounters an earthly paradise. In a move that reinforces Wells's fundamental break from the gothic form, the Traveller describes how, when he is first thrown violently from his time machine onto a plot of grass in the middle of storm, the sight of a massive "winged sphinx" (*The Time Machine* 23) and "other vast shapes—huge buildings with intricate parapets and tall columns" (24) had at first "seized" him with a "panic fear"; and then how, upon seeing his hosts, he "suddenly regained confidence" (25). Indeed, the recognizably gothic "shapes" are not at all what they appear: when the storm passes and his sight is clear, the Traveller discovers that they are the mere skeletal remains of an

older civilization and play no imperial role in the lives of the new one. But his hosts do present to this “old-world savage animal” (24) a picture of elegance and nobility, as indicated in his initial descriptions of the Eloi he encounters. His first encounter is with a male member of the race: “He was a slight creature—perhaps four feet high—clad in a purple tunic, girdled at the waist with a leather belt” (25). As he then surveys the larger community of the Eloi, the Traveller summarizes his first impression: “something in these pretty little people [...] inspired confidence—a graceful gentleness, a certain childlike ease” (26). In these brief passages the Traveller establishes a vague folkloric connection, emphasizing the diminutive height, slender shape, and childlike appearance often associated with the fairy folk, especially in the British (and specifically Welsh) tradition (Gwyndaf 160). He also reiterates the idea that these gentle folk—like their grand but crumbling structures—do not inspire dread or awe, but display only a quaint sense of a “Dresden-china type of prettiness” (*The Time Machine* 27). His subsequently more detailed description of the Eloi’s physical features confirms Wells’s deference to the British folk tradition with which he was evidently quite familiar:

Their hair, which was uniformly curly, came to a sharp end at the neck and cheek; there was not the faintest suggestion of it on the face, and their ears were singularly minute. The mouths were small, with bright red, rather thin lips, and the little chins ran to a point. The eyes were large and mild; and—this may seem egotism on my part—I fancied even that there was a certain lack of the interest I might have expected in them. (27)

The pointed and “sharp” features here suggest an elfin quality once again coupled with the other “minute” characteristics, ultimately aligning them with the children of the Traveller’s own world. This repeated emphasis on the childlike and fragile qualities of this race begins to construct for us a basic outline of the Eloi’s social structure, but the

emphasis on the “mild” and uninterested eyes confirms that the Eloi are a very leisurely and indolent culture; and the Traveller states this explicitly after he has spent more time with them (31). If we recall Briggs’s description of the “fairy economy” (Chapter 1, section I), these secondary characteristics suggest that Wells’s “little people” are notable departures from their legendary prototypes. While it is true that the Good People often maintain a superficially aristocratic demeanor in their dealings with humans, they are also a very industrious race. To be sure, there are indications that a class hierarchy is at work in the fairy world, but folk narrative continually emphasizes that the fairy folk exist alongside or “side by side” humans (Ó hÓgáin 185; Bourke, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary* 31; Jenkins 314) and that they engage in typically *plebeian* activities involving typically lower-class or working-class trades and routines. There is no such visible “transaction” or traffic involved in the Eloi’s social structure, and this is the first sign of the declining culture of future humanity.

Through the course of his initial discoveries, the Traveller is able to conclude that, despite the indolence and indifference of this fey-like race, their paradisiacal world suggests a utopia, perhaps even a “communist” one (*The Time Machine* 32). This conclusion, which constitutes the Traveller’s first theory, nods obliquely to William Morris’s *News from Nowhere* (1891) in which the protagonist, William Guest, discovers an earthly paradise composed of a leisurely, communistic society (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 212), existing in a future London (as in *The Time Machine*). But the Traveller’s subsequent theory that he is witnessing humanity “on the wane” (*The Time Machine* 34) suggests a critique of utopia, even before the Morlocks arrive to confirm the Traveller’s suspicions. Unlike their folktale counterparts, the Eloi live a rather static life, seemingly bereft of

burdens or fears; they are also clearly deficient in intelligence (27, 28) or intellectual vigour (37): they are, in fact, the intellectual equivalent of “five-year-old children” (27) or perhaps the intellectually effete classes of Wells’s day. If the Traveller’s discovery that they are still affected by the old-world fear of “the dark” (50) introduces a certain ambivalent element in their society, it only serves to reaffirm their passivity and “purposeless energy”: the “shadows” and “black things” strike fear into the Eloi but do not spur them on to action or change, and so their life continues on in a consistent (if gruesome) routine. In a certain sense, then, Wells flips the two-world division of “the everyday and the extraordinary” in his futuristic world by having the Traveller first encounter the “extraordinary” world of the Eloi. His acclimatization to the new environment sets him up for a shock when he encounters the “everyday” world of the Morlocks, whose monstrosity is such a contrast to these fragile creatures of “hectic beauty” (25). Further, and this constitutes another of Wells’s modifications: the static nature of the initially extraordinary world of the Eloi demotes it to a rather mundane topography—really, less a *nowhere* than a *still-here*. The effect of this inversion domesticates the Eloi to such a degree that they really are like “five-year-old children” (27), indeed, like the ineffectual plutocrats of Wells’s own society, rather than the ambiguous fairy folk of British legend. The most notable departure from folk tradition is really the most apparent one: these “little people” live *above* ground, not *below*. And this begs the question for the Traveller, “what was hidden down there [...]?” (54) The curious sight of “circular wells” and “subterranean ventilation” (46) prepares us for the author-narrator’s next twist: the true “fairies” and “changelings” of this society are those which the aristocratic segment wishes to keep hidden but who insist on emerging nevertheless.

While it is true that there are several theories regarding fairy origins, there seems to be some consensus that the fairies are not celestial spirits but rather an earth-dwelling and subterranean species (Hartland 95; Briggs, *Dictionary of Fairies* 131 and *The Fairies* 6, 8, 12, 23, 24). In this respect, Wells's depiction of the Morlocks is in keeping with the British folktale tradition, although he was evidently aware of the specific gradations that occurred within Fairyland, including the suggestion of a sort of class hierarchy. The degree to which other, lowly segments within the fairy population are enlisted for the less pleasant jobs (tinsmithing and especially the various sorts of mining) has been noted by folklorists and is evident in certain branches of folktales, such as those concerning "buccas" or "knockers," who inhabit caves and engage in mining (Briggs, "The Fairy Tools or Barker's Knee" 242-43), or brownies, who tend to engage in household chores.<sup>51</sup> The brownie in particular tends to be a helpful but rather uncouth creature, while the knockers are often irascible and rather careful to prevent humans from spying or intruding on their work. As Briggs notes, the influence of Romantic folklorists such as Sir Walter Scott and James Hogg, coupled with the burgeoning interests in the Irish and Scottish Highland folklore traditions, led to the dissemination of fairy traditions and the popularity of fairy personae like brownies in the Victorian period (Briggs, *The Fairies* 170). Briggs's description of the plebeian contingent of Fairyland suggests that the Morlock design may have been based in part on the British brownie (and not just *Moloch*, the Canaanite and Phoenician deity). The later form of the British brownie was "small,

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<sup>51</sup> See, for example, "The Brownie," "The Brownie of Bodsbeck I," "The Brownie of Bodsbeck: II," "The Brownie of Cranshaws," "The Brownie of Dalswinton," "A Brownie Legend from Lincolnshire," "The Brownie and the Midwife," and "The Brownie and the Milk-Bowl," all included in Briggs's *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales in the English Language, Incorporating the F J Norton Collection*.



wizened and shaggy, clad in rags or naked”; it “often took animal form” and was “generally grotesque to look at”; tended to resemble a small child, “naked or wearing a white tunic”; was often invisible but also mainly an “expert in hiding and lurking that [it] hardly need exercise it”; was highly industrious; and finally, was often “moved by personal friendships and fancies” (38). This “later” brownie was likely the best-known sort of *lurking* fairy in the Victorian period, considering George MacDonald’s familiar use of these creatures in his subversive fairy tales and the casual reference to them in the work of Charlotte Brontë and Robert Louis Stevenson.

It is tempting to suggest that Wells had at least some of these brownie “traits” in mind when he fashioned his Morlocks, especially given their pale or white skin, their naked, hairy bodies, their animal appearance, and finally their position as underground labourers. Further, while the boggart seems to fit the Morlocks’ temperament better, since, as Briggs’s notes, it “is like a mischievous type of brownie” (*The Personnel of Fairyland* 193), there are indications that the Morlocks are, in fact, less aggressive than the Traveller makes them out to be. At the least, the Traveller’s early impressions of the Morlocks suggest a variation on one of the lower-order, subterranean fairies, who likely exhibited some of the “subhuman characteristics” associated with racial inferiors (Tuerk 520). One day when he seeks out shelter from the heat in a “colossal ruin,” the Traveller suddenly sees amidst the shadows a “pair of eyes, luminous by the reflection against the daylight without, [...] watching me out of the darkness” (*The Time Machine* 52). When he gets a better look at the creature, he notes that it “was a dull white,” “had strange large grayish-red eyes,” and “flaxen hair on its head and down its back” (53). When he later reflects on their strange eyes, and thinks of the “White fish of the Kentucky caves,” cats

and owls, he concludes that “[p]lainly, this second species of Man was subterranean” (55). This theory is confirmed when the Traveller discovers the significance of the circular wells that dot the landscape like ancient fairy forts and when he discovers that his time machine has been hidden within the hollow of the white sphinx. This discovery, in turn, leads the Traveller to develop his second theory (as a modification of the utopian socialist one [32]) that Morlocks are the “have-nots” of this world, the resentful, malicious changelings and therefore a sort of folkloric “submerged nation.” Indeed, this folkloric connection is strengthened when we consider that the Traveller also theorizes that the Morlocks are the end result of some species modification, a uniformly *congenitally* afflicted race. Nodding now towards Marx (rather than the utopian Morris), we have the new theory: the Eloi are the capitalists and the Morlocks the working-class labourers (56). That the Traveller frequently compares the Morlocks to animals indicates Wells’s Darwinian preoccupations, even while for the moment the Traveller maintains, in his scrupulous way, a clear zoological division: Man had “differentiated into two distinct animals” (54). If Wells’s “little people” happen to live *above* ground rather than *below*, this only confirms the fact that *these* fairies were linked in Wells’s mind with the same humans who ruled the upperworld in 1890s England, while the *other* fairies—the brownie-like Morlocks—were linked in his mind to the subterranean humans forced to live in “cellar” dwellings in Manchester and Liverpool.

But the strict Marxist theory survives only as long as it takes the Traveller to descend into the Morlocks’ realm and catch a glimpse—albeit a fleeting one—of the “artificial Under-world,” which seems to provide the Eloi with their comfortable lifestyle (*The Time Machine* 55). After he clammers down a “shaft of perhaps two hundred yards,”

having left behind his little Eloi friend, Weena, the Traveller presents to his bourgeois audience perhaps the most estranging vision of all. As he describes: “The thudding sound of a machine below grew louder and more oppressive. Everything save that little disc above was profoundly dark, and when I looked up again Weena had disappeared” (61). After his strenuous descent, he nearly falls asleep in a “slender loophole in the wall” until he is approached by some of the Morlocks.

Living, as they did, in what appeared to me impenetrable darkness, their eyes were abnormally large and sensitive, just as are the pupils of abysmal fishes, and they did not seem to have any fear of me apart from the light. But, so soon as I struck a match in order to see them, they fled incontinently, vanishing into dark gutters and tunnels, from which their eyes glared at me in the strangest fashion. (62)

Then we are given the hazy image of big machines appearing out of the gloom, and the “dim spectral Morlocks” moving about. The peak of this unpleasant adventure seems to be marked by the sight of a large “red joint” at the Morlocks’ eating table (63), after which we notice the increasing shrillness of the Traveller’s voice, characterized by the repeated exclamatory sentences: “It was all very indistinct: the heavy smell, the big unmeaning shapes, the obscene figures lurking in the shadows, and only waiting for the darkness to come at me again!” (63). The culmination of this horror is reached when he finally comes face to face with the inhabitants: “You can scarce imagine how nauseatingly inhuman they looked—those pale, chinless faces, and great, lidless, pinkish-grey eyes!” (64). As he weakly clambers back up the deep shaft to the bright upper-world, the Traveller carries with him the components of a new conceptual world to taint his complacent faith in his own world.

This most striking sequence may confirm the Traveller’s Marxist theory of a proletariat-capitalist division but it also offers physical evidence that the hierarchy is not

quite what it appears. On the one hand, this connection between a subterranean nonhuman species and the subaltern position of disenfranchised groups in contemporary England is clearly one of the benchmarks of Victorian SF, an achievement not quite equaled in Wells's day, even by Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race* (1871) and Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872), utopian works which also explore the "submerged nation" theme. The success of this analogy between the fantastical and real worlds is established through the brief but suggestive details of a highly mechanized culture that seems to enslave rather than liberate the workers who operate it. While it is never explicitly spelled out, it is strongly implied that the Morlocks provide the Eloi with clothing and perform the menial tasks necessary for the luxurious society of the upper-world to run smoothly. The ominous "thudding" of the machines accentuates the oppressive and seemingly automated lifestyle of these pale grotesque creatures. On the other hand, Wells was not content to see the world in strictly Marxist terms since it could not account entirely for nature's continual modifications: the *emergent* nation of the Morlocks is the natural consequence of a subterranean eruption. If proto-SF authors like Bulwer-Lytton and Butler were satirizing the violence implied in the evolutionary "struggle for existence," Wells (at the prompting of T. H. Huxley) was satirizing the belief that the struggle for existence would always favor the so-called "higher species." The larger picture in *The Time Machine* hardly convinces us of a passive aggregate of subservient labourers and instead emphasizes the tactical flight of a "molecular" population, "vanishing into [the] dark gutters and tunnels," which supply both escape routes and points of attack. The zoological references also furnish the idea that the Morlocks are not even human, and the Traveller ultimately links the "red joint" to two subsequent theories: 1) the Morlocks have

reversed the hierarchy and effectively rule the society composed of both lower and upper worlds; 2) the Morlocks and Eloi exist in a predator-prey relationship in which the Morlocks run the operation of society in exchange for a regular supply of Eloi meat. Significantly, the second theory reveals the fact that the Morlocks and Eloi are *distinct species*. This discovery means that we cannot simply call the Morlocks cannibals, for they seem a combination of human and animal, and require the flesh of their docile prey in order to survive, just as lions may feed on different species such antelopes, gazelles, or zebras. The grotesque symbiosis between the two species may indicate the workings of a capitalist supply and demand, but the “relation” is also strongly tied to the “struggle for existence” that has arisen out of the environmental conditions and is not simply a depiction of “class war.”<sup>52</sup> It is apparent, then, that these modified folkloric personae subvert the system through their aberrant appetites and physical characteristics rather than their consciously *proletariat* position.

Despite Wells’s departure from the strict view of a “fair” “Good People” residing beneath the earth, his portrayal of a subhuman underground community that rules from below is in keeping with the traditional belief in the dark side of the fairy “character”—the *barbarian* tendency of a community whose formation frequently resembled a “mass” or *horde*. How does one single out a “changeling” who is both part of a collective and who is, by definition, always in a state of flux, always changing? If fairy legend informs a

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<sup>52</sup> As Paul Cantor and Peter Hufnagel argue in their insightful article, “The Empire of the Future: Imperialism and Modernism in H. G. Wells,” *The Time Machine* presents a “re-orientalized” London which has succumbed to the same environmental pressures that distinguished the exotic locales depicted in imperialist “South Seas” narratives. Wells seems to be suggesting that “Britishness may be more an accident of climate than anything inherent in the British national character” (Cantor and Hufnagel 43).

politically subaltern voice, it achieves this through the deformed bodies of its narrative agents who resist strict affiliation with either the human or fairy worlds.

While the Traveller's accumulated descriptions demarcate the Morlocks as the fairy equivalent of goblins or brownies, or as the dark counterparts to the fair, elfish Eloi, they also emphasizes the opacity of this division: the Morlocks are, after all, frequently described as "white," "gray," and "creatures of the half-light" (*The Time Machine* 51), and their world as "indistinct" (63). I would argue, then, that the Morlocks operate as the "changelings" in this futuristic world and therefore as Wells's first notable articulation of such SF personae because *the changeling was associated with the always shifting boundaries between individual fairy groups, and between individual classifications of human and fairy, human and animal*. If Wells was consciously modifying the folkloric topos for scientific purposes, that same topos also informed his world view in a feedback loop that was inevitable. As I have suggested, changelings disrupt the notion of class divisions, given the fact that they often functioned as the intended substitutes for human peasant children (Jenkins 314). In other words, while they are initially presented as the dispossessed segment of society, they also occupy the ambiguous and shadowy corners of this paradisial world. If they are sensitive to light and remain largely submerged beneath the earth's surface, they clearly have the mobility and curiosity to cross the threshold of the lower and upper strata and obviously abduct individual Eloi on occasion. The abductees of culture have become the abductors, but the reversal leaves the two races utterly transformed, as the physical evidence suggests. For example, the Morlocks are variously described as "grayish animal[s]," "ape-like creatures," "creatures of the half-light," "ghosts," "white figures" (*The Time Machine* 51), "human spider[s]" (53),

“worms,” and “vermin” (58); they are also “ant-like” (72) and possess “strange large grayish-red eyes” and long “flaxen hair” (53). Here Wells has interspersed both gothic and folkloric imagery to add a certain metaphorical richness to his text, but he is also intent on emphasizing the Morlocks’ morphological (read: *analogical*) relation to lower creatures on the evolutionary scale.

In regards to this developing Darwinian lexicon, there are a few items to note. First of all, Wells’s lexical shift from folktale descriptors to biological ones is more pronounced in his presentation of the Morlocks, and this, I would argue, indicates the particular sociological—or socio-biological—role of these monstrous figures. While the Eloi move languidly in their wispy way, the Morlocks leap about, Hyde-like, with ungraceful but vigorous and very *purposeful* energy. The Traveller’s scattered descriptions, ranging from gothic to folkloric to biological or anthropomorphic references, indicate a larger portrait of a monstrous species but are in no way as definitive as his detailed sketch of the Eloi (*The Time Machine* 27). Despite his abject horror, then, the Traveller involuntarily gives deference to the “bleached, obscene, nocturnal Thing,” which “was also heir to all the ages” (54). Here we can see that, as Suvin has argued, Wells intended to use his “powerful biological species as a rod to chastize Victorian man” (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 209). However, in the depiction of a give-and-take relationship, in which the Morlocks supply labour while the Eloi supply nourishing meat, Wells posits these modified folkloric personae as agents of *symbiosis*. In a certain sense, Wells actually rescues the concept of “symbiosis” from the “socialistic sentiment” of what he calls in one of his essays “pulpit science” (“Bio-Optimism” 208), which would render the “harmony” of nature as simply part of God’s plan, and returns it back to the evolutionary

context, which would reassert the sometimes beneficial and sometimes harmful relations between God's creatures—both great and small. From a biological perspective, Wells demonstrates that the symbiotic relationship in nature is sometimes mutual and sometimes parasitic. The Morlocks are the parasites in *The Time Machine*, as the Traveller describes at one point: "These Eloi were mere fatted cattle, which the ant-like Morlocks preserved and preyed upon—probably saw to the breeding of" (72). But while they are not a passive aggregate, as the passage certainly underscores, their parasitism can hardly be classified as "socially exploitative," a sociological term that has been incorporated into contemporary science writing (see Fiegna, N. Yu, et al. 1).

On the one hand, the symbiosis is *natural*, since it commonly occurs in nature; on the other hand, the symbiosis is *unnatural* in that the two species have apparently devolved from a single and probably more superior species, and therefore the parasitism seems wrong in some way, seems outside of nature. The Morlock-Eloi society represents a biological divergence that has split an entity into two: the result is that the two races are "disjoined segments," "the pieces of a broken social machine" (Manlove 229-30). Moreover, the Morlocks may not be so distinct from the Eloi, despite some of their more obvious physical differences. As Tuerk argues, despite the Traveller's aversion to these uncouth creatures, they, much like the Eloi, respond to him in "gentle ways" (521). The Traveller himself describes how, when he falls asleep in the loophole of the wall, he is "roused by a soft hand touching [his] face" (*The Time Machine* 62) and then, a little later on, how his clothes are "gently" plucked (64). We may say that the Morlocks and the Eloi are the necessary parts of the *same* conceptual persona, now split apart, segregated as a result of the "anxieties produced by racial and cultural intermixture" (Buchanan 34). The



Time Traveller's eventual war against these "nauseatingly inhuman" creatures, in defense of the fragile Eloi, aligns him with the Empire who could justify exploitation on the basis of the *monstrous* appearance or appetites of its subjects (Tuerk 520-21). In other words, even the Traveller's shift from sociological to biological terms has its limitations, as his tendencies to anthropomorphize encourage him to side with the Eloi who are, he feels, more "human" than the Morlocks (*The Time Machine* 57-58). As presented by Wells, then, Fairyland is arbitrarily divided into the two common colonial stereotypes of the "good tribe" and the "evil tribe" (Cantor and Hufnagel 38): on the one hand, the elegant, childish, and indolent subaltern, whose quaint culture is simply a matter of curiosity; on the other hand, the uncouth and atavistic subaltern, whose savage customs revolt and justify punitive measures, including extermination. I would suggest here that Wells was engaged with what Homi Bhabha has called the "forked" tongue of colonial discourse (Bhabha 85) which situates the "other" as almost human but "*not quite*" (86). As Bhabha elaborates, however, the repetition of such "hybrid" identity only serves to underscore the colonizer's failure to represent since it relies upon either an exaggerated or "partial" portrait of the other. The Traveller's own "hazy" narrative can only offer such a partial view, even while it is strongly suggested that the complete view is actually a *composite* one of a "bifurcated" persona.

Set side by side as evolutionary models of biological advance and retreat, the worlds of the Eloi and the Morlock imply the *third* option of the Traveller's own world, which, according to our previous description, can complete the narration by adding the "absent paradigm," as Marc Angenot argues, and thereby allowing the SF-cum-folkloric narrative to accomplish its cognitive estrangement. As Angenot writes, the SF writer

“leads the reader to believe in the possibility of reconstituting consistent paradigms—whose semantic structures are supposedly homologous to those in the fictive textual ‘world’” (13). The Traveller at least partially achieves this goal by first formulating and presenting a set of plausible rules, i.e., the theory of the fourth dimension, and then subsequently reversing expectations (of linear time, of social progress) by offering another set of plausible rules, i.e., the theory of evolutionary regression or devolution. These paradigms are effective because they are a recognizable part of Wells’s empirical world (in physics, biology, and so forth) and because they enclose the absent paradigms of time-travel and *extreme* biological regression: as a result of Wells’s subtle modifications, the sociological thrust of the Eloi-Morlock episode is successful because it is now entirely possible, within the new SF paradigm, to imagine a future where the rich could become fatally indolent and the poor monstrously resentful. The Morlocks are horrible but they have been forced to live in horrible conditions. Cognitive estrangement occurs when the science-fictional world causes the reader to both *identify* and *shudder*; the shock itself, that is, the subsequent reformulation of the SF paradigms offered, constitutes the *third* option, the reader’s own world, which is now transformed in a significant way. As we have suggested, the cognitive shudder is first initiated by the Traveller himself who spares no affection for the Morlocks with their “pale, chinless faces, and great, lidless, pinkish-grey eyes.” Further, the Traveller’s decision to defend the Eloi, to invade and set fire to the Morlocks’ world, may lead us to question how far the Morlocks are successful in their insurge and to what degree the Traveller’s interference will affect the outcome of the Morlock-Eloi relation. On the one hand, the devolution of the species has already begun and will continue with or without the

Traveller's help: this is what seems to be suggested by the bleak conclusion, in which, during his desperate escape from the Morlocks, the Traveller accidentally travels thirty million years into the future to find the human species entirely extinct and replaced by giant crabs (*The Time Machine* 94-97), and then, after a further leap, the organic world on the verge of extinction (97-99). On the other hand, the Traveller embraces the paranoid gothic plot in which the subterranean demons must be vanquished in order to find honour and to reassert manly (and in this case *Victorian*) values. His joyous bloody battle with the Morlocks, which finds these spider-monkeys nearly as helpless in a fight as the Eloi (84-89), reaffirms their subaltern position and effectively reverses the folktale scenario in which the hero *defends* the downtrodden and oppressed. Further, his final discovery of the time machine hidden inside the hollow sphinx statue, oiled and partially repaired (92), suggests that the Morlocks are not simply stupid brutes: despite their apparent inhumanity, the Morlocks possess the lion's share of *intelligence* in this world of 802,701 and are therefore—ironically—the more *human* of these two divergent species.

This description of cognitive estrangement, which clearly relies upon the dual structures of the folk narrative and the scientific investigation, can be broken down into the following loose formula: *folk narrative*+*science*=*scientific parable*. As we have argued, the legend is “open-ended” because it is *brief* (section I). All the same, the longer narrative structure of *The Time Machine* allows Wells to develop more fully the parabolic possibilities inherent in the legend: accordingly, Wells achieves this effect by using scientific “patter” but not necessarily scientific “validation.” To be sure, “estrangement,” as Suvin understands it, refers to the utopian thought of Ernst Bloch and therefore to a specifically Marxist or socialist paradigm (see *Metamorphoses* 6-7, 39, 42; *Positions* 34,

42, 58, 76-77). In his own way, without using these precise terms, Wells understands estrangement as a socialist theme, especially given the way it informs the Traveller's own theory of the class division. Consider, for example, the Traveller's reflection, which occurs before he has descended into the Morlocks' world: "Even now, does not an East-end worker live in such artificial conditions as practically to be cut off from the natural surface of the earth?" (*The Time Machine* 56) This rhetorical question once again invites the Traveller's gentlemen audience, the narrator's implicit audience, and Wells's bourgeois readership to add in the absent paradigm: *East-enders*=*Morlocks*, ergo, *Morlocks*=*East-enders*.<sup>53</sup> Significantly, this sort of cognitive estrangement through the translation of a conceptual world is much more successful in *The Time Machine* than in *Jekyll and Hyde*, since the latter still relies so heavily on moral allegory. *The Time Machine* is perhaps the first really consistent articulation of this new narrative agent, the *SF changeling*, because it offers the most thorough exploration of the folkloric conceptual plane from which it acquires its "submerged nation" theme. But this is only half the story here, for the Traveller's descriptions of the Morlocks (perhaps more so than those of the Eloi) are couched not only in Marxist but in Darwinian terms. The estranging qualities of the scene also derive from the Traveller's discovery that a sociological and even a strict evolutionary theory cannot account for the unforeseen deviations and regressions of species, the terrible pull of cosmic forces on human agency. Wells—at least in his early SF thought-experiments—offers his own conceptualization of what Deleuze and Guattari

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<sup>53</sup> As Elaine Showalter argues in her article, "The Apocalyptic Fables of H. G. Wells," the East end was strongly aligned in the Victorian mind with other dark and labyrinthine "eastern" locales. Given the framing device of *The Time Machine*, in which the protagonist sees the future nightmare "in the London streets," "the world elsewhere is a nightmare projection of the domestic world" (70-71).

call “geophilosophy” or the process of reterritorialization-deterritorialization”: “living species have varied along divergent lines from intermediate forms, and [...] not necessarily in an upward direction” (“Zoological Retrogression” 159).

### III. *The Island of Dr. Moreau*: the Changeling as Animal-Human Hybrid

As a sort of thematic sequel to *The Time Machine*, *Moreau* carries on the Wellsian project of adapting and modifying popular genres for the purpose of scientific speculation, but it removes itself further from the old gothic and perhaps even the newer “urban gothic” in its fusion of Darwinian theory and folkloric motifs. This shift, already apparent in the earlier work, comes in the novel’s emphasis on science as the legitimate tool for a utopian world-creation. As Bernard Bergonzi has argued, Wells’s conceptual grafter, Moreau, is “Frankenstein—the would-be creator of life—in a post-Darwinian guise” (108); I would suggest that he is also Jekyll—the would-be social engineer—in a post-Darwinian guise.<sup>54</sup> By evoking these two generic “mad scientists,” Wells announces that his adaptation of the gothic “jiggery-pokery” of *Frankenstein* and *Jekyll and Hyde* will also be something new under the sun—in effect, a changeling persona of different stripes, a hybrid animal-human whose physiological as well as cosmetic makeover owes something to Darwin as well as Aesop. But while the Beast Folk of Moreau’s island walk upright and speak, they are no mere stand-ins for human foibles, for they analogically present the end result of biological engineering, or the grafting of skin and bone for the

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<sup>54</sup> Robert M. Philmus argues that, at least in his earliest draft of the story, Wells “clearly meant *The Island of Doctor Moreau* to be a gothic mystery on the model of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*” (“The Satiric Ambivalence of *The Island of Doctor Moreau*” 2). But Wells was not content to merely imitate Stevenson, and, in his final draft of *Moreau*, he saw fit to eliminate the “moralizing” tone that made his early draft “appear as an allegorical abstraction” (6).

purpose of transforming mammalian morphology and physiology. For this reason, I would insist that the *folktale* and *folk legend* rather than the fable provide the conceptual plane for Wells's world-creation in *Moreau*. The novel certainly has elements of the "animal tale," as featured in European folklore: such tales focus on the "symbiotic relationship between man and animal in terms of their sympathetic connection" (Röhrich 73). However, we also should recall from Briggs that fairies themselves were often "reputed to be [...] 'spiritual animals'" ("The Fairies" 175), but also that the animal is a notable bifurcation of the changeling persona and a crucial vehicle for narrative modes like the *parable*. There is a sense, then, that Wells's personae in *Moreau* derive from more than one form of folk narrative. Accordingly, Wells uses a first-person narrator in order to present a sort of memorate or first-hand account of an adventure; but, unlike the Traveller, Edward Prendick, our noble protagonist, does not offer his tale as an illustration of a scientific theory, which would have the purpose of "controvert[ing]" "universally accepted" ideas (*The Time Machine* 1). He is, on the contrary, simply adding information concerning "the loss of the *Lady Vain*" or, to be more precise, information about the four men who were supposed to have perished after the shipwreck (*Moreau* 1). Moreover, if anything, Prendick's narrative promises to be an adventure tale,<sup>55</sup> which is all the more effective in that it conceals the shocking discovery of the island and its inhabitants and therefore the *implied* scientific parable. In terms of the previous description (section II), the parable "*sets one thing by the side of another*" for the purpose of altering the reader's complacent views (Suvín, *Positions* 142). The *scientific* parable, it

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<sup>55</sup> As Deanna Kreisel has argued more recently, the "shocking events" involving "animalism" serve as "a kind of antidote to ennui" (21), which, we might say, is characteristic of other "modernist" texts of the period, including especially Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899).

was suggested above, combines an otherworldly landscape of the folk legend with a *this-worldly* landscape of scientific extrapolation. Placed side-by-side, these modes do not replace one another but are, through the process of the narrative, altered; the narrative agents are, in turn, altered as a result. The brilliance of *Moreau* lies in its manner of not simply setting “man” beside “beast” (as in *The Time Machine*) in the form of “ironic balances and oppositions” (Huntington, “The Science Fiction of H. G. Wells” 40) but of also narrativizing the process by which man *becomes* beast and vice versa. For this reason, the changeling represents the possibility of *devolution*, which runs counter to the progressionist trend of Victorian culture. The changeling, who analogically points to the “accidental” nature of evolution, the possibility of sudden, unforeseen alterations in the human organism, and the close proximity of the human and animal kingdoms, is perhaps the conceptual persona *par excellence* in significant (meaning cognitively estranging) Victorian SF.

Through the medium of a scientific parable disguised as an adventure, *Moreau* explores the sociological application of scientific theories regarding the evolutionary links between humans and animals. In his adaptation of the “man-animal” transformation motif (Röhrich 73-92), Wells reinforces the notion that folk narratives depict the very process of human evolution, from an ancient and legendary species to a modern one. These evolutionary links are subtly suggested through the first five chapters (*Moreau* 1-16) in which Prendick describes how, as the lone survivor of the three men confined to a dinghy, he was eventually picked up by a vessel, the *Ipecacuanha*, containing a drunken belligerent captain, a jovial but mysterious trader named Montgomery, and his “black-faced,” “misshapen” companion (6). Here we are presented with more than one “stage” of

evolutionary progress, although the remaining chapters work towards undermining the belief in progressive biological development. When Prendick arrives on the unnamed island and finally meets the enigmatic doctor, he is presented with a scientific lexicon that begins to name the horrors that he witnesses. Based on the progressionist premise that humans are higher on the evolutionary scale (see Chapter 1, section IV), Dr. Moreau proposes to use human-derived moral principles to condition these “lower types”—pumas, monkeys, apes, dogs, boars, and others. Of course, the great proliferation of “laws” in human society urges Moreau to apply the same moral structure in the animal kingdom, using the relative success of the institution of “the Law” as a justification for its success in any and all situations. While the bemused narrator, Prendick, condemns the vivisection of the animals, their mutilation is on a level with the branding that all humans experience under the force of the Law. And the Law, of course, demands the complete obedience of the bodies it has claimed under its jurisprudence. Each and every humanized animal has the mark of Moreau:

*His is the House of Pain.  
His is the Hand that makes.  
His is the Hand that wounds.  
His is the Hand that heals. (43)*

Moreau is an exoticized Dr. Jekyll, a creator, witch-doctor, and “hollow-man” who anticipates the fetid horrors of Conrad’s “heart of darkness” (Cantor and Hufnagel 53): *his* is the hand that initiates the metamorphosis of the animal, and that moulds and fashions new changelings in this wild vegetable world. Moreau’s creations may appear to be fabulous monstrosities, fancies conjured up by the overwrought narrator, Prendick, and yet the doctor’s scientific extrapolations allow these horrific creations to walk upright: his



*program of genetic mutation* is genuine, anticipated for centuries in British folk narrative but re-imagined through the persona of a modern “fairy doctor” whose “cure” is perhaps no less brutal than those depicted in folk legends and sensational changeling “cases.” Moreau succeeds in his experiments by grafting the human onto the inhuman, a manifestation of Wells’s own “sui generis game of ‘possible-impossible’” in which “a plausible explanation of strange, almost miraculous events [...] is immediately retracted” (Chernysheva 36). This juxtaposition between “exotic” and “quotidian” aspects indicates once again the workings of a “two-world system,” already implied by the generic intermixture of folk narrative and science. At the first peak of the novel’s rising action, where Prendick escapes the claustrophobic world of the biological station only to find himself subject to the insane ceremonies of the Beast Folk’s cave world, Wells has begun to work out a Darwinian “struggle for existence” between the human scientists and the island’s quasi-human inhabitants whose proliferations and aberrations make them as unpredictable and changeable as the entities in “The Caerlaverock Changeling” or “The Speckled Bull.”

As an indication of the novel’s folkloric whimsicality, both Montgomery and Moreau enunciate Wells’s game of “possible-impossible” by teasing the beleaguered Prendick with partial truths, successfully occulting the island’s horrific experiments until Prendick takes the initiative to uncover them. Having already caught sight of Montgomery’s disfigured “black-faced” companion, he is then followed through the forest by “bestial-looking creatures” who “gibber in unison” (Moreau 29). When he later demands to know what these “things” are, Montgomery goads him: “From your account [...] I’m thinking it was a bogle” (35). As Briggs describes in *The Personnel of*

*Fairyland*, a “bogle” is the Scottish version of the “boggart,” which itself is a “mischievous type of brownie” (193). If we cross-reference this once again, we discover that the brownie itself is a diminutive but industrious “ragged and shaggy” hobgoblin, attached usually to a specific locale and, in most cases, a particular household (194). This rare explicit reference in *Moreau* indicates Wells’s subtle adaptation of the folktale form, as the Beast Folk version of the bogle derives from a specific locale, becomes attached to a “household” of sorts, but is also artificially *induced* to perform these tasks. All the same, if Prendick’s folkloric interpretation is wrong, so is his conventional evolutionary one: “I did not know yet how far they were from the human heritage I ascribed to them” (*Moreau* 40). In a sequence that parabolically echoes *The Time Machine*, Prendick attempts to clarify his muddled perceptions of the Beast Folk’s heritage by descending into their lair. Unlike the Traveller’s descent, Prendick’s is inspired by a truly speculative search for an alternative to the static upper world, ruled by the fanatical and inhumane scientist Moreau and his own heritage of “mad” extrapolation. This means that the “submerged nation” of the Beast Folk may very well be not so much a parallel of the Morlocks’ subterranean world but possibly the “absent paradigm” or *third option* suggested in the Morlock/Eloi opposition. Consider the following passage, which highlights through color-patterns, geological and physiological detail some fundamental differences between the subterranean abodes found in each text:

The path coiled down abruptly into a narrow ravine between two tumbled and knotty masses of blackish scoriae. Into this we plunged.

It was extremely dark, this passage, after the blinding sunlight reflected from the sulphurous ground. Its walls grew steep, and approached one another. Blotches of green and crimson drifted across my eyes. My conductor stopped suddenly. “Home,” said he, and I stood in a floor of a chasm that was at first absolutely dark to me. I heard some strange noises, and thrust the knuckles of my

left hand into my eyes. I became aware of a disagreeable odour like that of a monkey's cage ill-cleaned. Beyond, the rock opened again upon a gradual slope of sunlit greenery, and on either hand the light smote down through a narrow channel into the central gloom. (41)

While it is true that the Morlocks' realm obfuscates and blurs the boundary lines between the upper and lower worlds through its pattern of grays and shadowed light, the pathway described here is full of greens and reds and even "sunlit greenery," suggesting the organic quality of their "home" and its healthy animal vitality. Absent here are the dreary "machines," replaced in this passage by "blackish scoriae," or volcanic rock, which promise *natural* eruptions, both geological and metamorphic. As a way of confirming this transformation from human to animal kingdom, Prendick instinctively knuckles his eyes, a distinctive animal gesture that appropriately leads to the next olfactory image of the monkey's cage.

These preliminary proceedings are followed by yet another passage that seems to offer a curious parallel to the Morlock episode. As Prendick describes: "Then something cold touched my hand. I started violently, and saw close to me a dim pinkish thing, looking more like a flayed child than anything else in the world" (*Moreau* 41). Compare this to the Traveller's shrill description of the "nauseatingly inhuman" Morlocks who are also described as pale and pink (*The Time Machine* 64): instead of moving us retrogressively from the human to animal (from Eloi to Morlock), Prendick goes in the opposite direction, humanizing this creature and comparing it to a tortured child. Despite their monstrous appearances, the Beast Folk evoke images of humanity and, in particular, the liminal states between organisms and personae. The sloth-like creature that becomes his "conductor" into this strange underworld is, conceptually, comparable to the

changeling and its related personae, the child, the animal, and the monster, for it is a composite of all three entities and, for all Prendick knows, a “bogle” (*Moreau* 35) or “spiritual animal” (Briggs, “Fairies” 175). Similarly, the other “horrible cripples” he meets during the frenzied recitation of Moreau’s Laws (*Moreau* 43) possess, in their own fashion, elements of the infantile human and the beast, and the supernatural aura of monstrosity. And herein lies Wells’s own sympathy and satire: that the beast of the jungle could find humanity while the human in the jungle would simultaneously *lose* it. This scientific-cum-folkloric satire is carried much further in the subsequent sequence in which Prendick finds himself caught up in the chanting of the Laws, which, while indicative of the Beast Folk’s current enslavement to an ideological ideal, exposes the ludicrous claims that these creatures are indeed “men” and therefore questions Prendick’s own humanity. Transformed, at least for the moment, Prendick flees not from the insane and bestial ritual (43-45), which after all displays the variety of the animal kingdom and its aberrant crossover into the human one, but from the “dark” and “awful” figure of Moreau himself (45), the prophet of biological *uniformity*.

As the first of his many “reversions,” Prendick ultimately returns to the sphere of his human hosts, having failed to find pleasure in his brief alliance with the animal-human hybrids. The chapter entitled “Doctor Moreau Explains” (*Moreau* 51-60) analogically halts the pace of the narrative and effectively puts a stop to Prendick’s rebellion: he re-emerges from the submerged bestial nation.<sup>56</sup> However, fuelled as it is by

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<sup>56</sup> It may also be worth mentioning here that, as Bergonzi has noted (104), this chapter was originally published by Wells as an essay, entitled “The Limits of Individual Plasticity,” and may very well indicate Wells’s own shift towards the artificial process of conditioning human evolution. Indeed, from a certain perspective, *Moreau* presents the utopian possibilities of biological engineering as an alternative to the

both a Darwinian and folkloric sense of biological wonder, there are still more eruptions to occur in a text that seems to be constructed as an artful game of deterritorialization-reterritorialization. As Moreau explains to Prendick, in his description of his three-part procedure, “There is building up as well as breaking down and changing” (*Moreau* 52). His rational explanation of the typical operation is more lucid and cognitively plausible than anything offered in either *Frankenstein* or *Jekyll and Hyde*, although Prendick is all the more horrified by the implications: “Monsters manufactured!” he exclaims (53). Moreau responds by legitimizing the “operations of those mediaeval practitioners who made dwarfs and beggar cripples and show-monsters,” although it was not uncommon for *Victorian* practitioners to display such changelings in “circus sideshows” (Silver 61). Further, Moreau’s monstrosities correspond to the actual monsters studied by scientists in Wells’s day: the “real-life cases of feral humans” were additional examples of “animal-human hybrid[s]” (Kreisel 23) and, therefore, late-Victorian changelings. While *Frankenstein* succeeds in creating a veritable sideshow freak, *Jekyll* manages to conjure up a half-domesticated ape-man whose form is still that of a dwarf and cripple.<sup>57</sup> Both amateur anatomist and amateur chemist are, after all, using primitive and “impure” science in an age that demands radical change to compete with industrial progress.

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environmental influence on human society as depicted in *The Time Machine*. But if we acknowledge that such a philosophical shift precipitated in Wells’s programmatic utopian thinking, we should also remember that there was clearly a time-lag in the transition from *scientific proposition* to *artistic or philosophical conceptualization*, and that even the enthusiastic science of vivisection and biological engineering is countered by the parabolic structure of *Moreau*.

<sup>57</sup> It is apparent that Wells is deliberately inserting Moreau into this genealogy of “mad science” but specifically for the purpose of demonstrating the “sharp break brought about by Darwinism and the emergence of bio-ideologies” (Gomel 416). Moreover, Moreau perfects the work of Victor Frankenstein by using *living* subjects with active minds and functioning organs, and perfects the work of Dr. Jekyll by “burning” out the savage instincts of the animal-man and tempering the former “impurities” of the experiment with the latest chemical transfusions. Again these are described with plausible technical detail.

Moreover, despite the sophistication of the conceptual worlds, Shelley's and Stevenson's personae are in some ways still of the order of the *codified* changeling, which, as a sign of its link to medical as well as religious doctrine, reveals its ancestry at every turn: in the monster's initial desire for "relations" and in his infiltration of the domestic realm; in Hyde's "dwarf"-like stature and in his monstrous "birth" *out* of the body of a human parent.

What Moreau has accomplished, on the other hand, is a new race of metamorphosed animals, using his advanced knowledge of comparative anatomy to "transplant tissue from one part of an animal to another or from one animal to another, to alter its chemical reactions and methods of growth, to modify the articulations of its limbs, and indeed to change it in its most intimate structure" (*Moreau* 53). Anticipating a work like Olaf Stapledon's *Sirius* (1944), in which the embryo of a female dog is genetically altered in order to create a hybrid species that has a human conscience, Wells establishes a new conceptualization of the folkloric "transformation," which led to a new resurgence in the more "cognitively"-based SF works of the day (Chernysheva 39-47). As Chernysheva argues, "the very thought of man's transformation into animal, or vice versa, stems not only from Darwin's theory of evolution, but also from the most ancient folktale metamorphoses" (38). As it was suggested in the previous chapter, the changeling motif is linked to *folkloric*, *scientific*, and *novelistic* enunciations of metamorphosis: as presented in *Moreau*, the changeling persona re-emerges in an entirely new form (just as "The Speckled Bull" stands out among most folk narrative renderings of the changeling motif), no longer exhibiting its usual fairy- or dwarf-like appearance, no longer associated with a distinct "domestic" realm, and no longer obsessed with discovering the origins of

its birth. At the same time, the cognitive (or empirical) world of these Beast Men is estranged through the introduction of a metamorphosis, the effects of which are still *unforeseen*. However, as a way of maintaining control over this shifting paradigm, Moreau's parley with his most "dictatorial guest" (*Moreau* 51) is designed to *sell* this island of vivisected changelings, and, in a certain manner, to promote the enlightened practices of biological engineering and demystify the shadowy and fantastical nature of the apparently exotic locale. The good doctor's lecture (51-60) also has the purpose of liberating the imagination from the shackles of traditional science (Chernysheva 39) and demonstrating the utopian possibilities of vivisection. Despite the frightening implications of Moreau's genetic manipulation, he is playing up the Wellsian "sui generis game of 'possible-impossible'" and daring his "materialist" guest (*Moreau* 54) to scoff at the wonders that his fantastic science is now capable of producing.

In a language refined by the lectures of T. H. Huxley, Wells convinces us that 1) Moreau's experiments are entirely plausible within the realm of the current field of biology, chemistry, and comparative anatomy, and that 2) Moreau's experiments have both a "rational" and a "utopian" basis. After all, Moreau's project is to pursue "the extreme limit of plasticity in a living shape" (*Moreau* 56), a pursuit that evokes both the scientific impetus as well as the folkloric/fantastical possibilities of metamorphosis. On the other hand, like his conceptual predecessors Frankenstein and Jekyll, Moreau wants a "controlled experiment," unchecked by nature's tendency to vary or "revert."<sup>58</sup> As Elana Gomel argues, however, unlike Frankenstein, who clearly has some sympathy towards his

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<sup>58</sup> I would reiterate my earlier remark that, at least in this early scientific romance, Wells was still testing out his scientific propositions.

monstrous creation, Moreau “is brutally indifferent to the Beast Folk,” and instead of striving to conceptualize the “split psyche,” like his Romantic heir, Moreau intends to fashion a new self that is “unified, impermeable, [and] supreme” (416). Moreau ultimately takes the “religious” view that animal instincts require purging, and that the violent tendencies which characterize thousands of years of human evolution are ultimately evil and should be cleaned away as one might remove a stain. But it is the good intentions of this mad scientist that facilitate the mad lurchings and aberrant perversions of the Beast Folk. The “seat of the emotions” (*Moreau* 58), which psychologists and philosophers might identify as the portion of the human mind that first articulates its sense of *freedom*, is, for Moreau, an evil tide that requires suppression—“a strange hidden reservoir [that will] burst suddenly and inundate the whole being of the creature with anger, hate, or fear” (58) if it is not first burned out by vivisection (59). Moreover, by manipulating the “struggle for existence,” Moreau attempts to establish *man*’s dominance over the animal kingdom, consequently delimiting the “cognitive horizon” that would allow “truly *other* relationships” (Suvin, *Positions* 55) in the form of animal-men. However, despite the heinous brutality of Moreau’s vivisections, they help to foster hybrid relationships between humans and animals, and powerful alliances the likes of which we see in the remarkable folktale “The Speckled Bull.” *Moreau* also has the added feature of a first-person narrator who is *not* a title character, and who is, in fact, often at odds with the eponymous protagonist. Prendick’s narrative perspective and *moral* position, which shifts between disgust and fascinated sympathy, reinforce the conflict of Wells’s “two-world” system and, through the ironic twists that comprise the tale’s



denouement, the possibility of bridging (Huntington, “The Science Fiction of H. G. Wells” 39) these seemingly dichotomous environments.

As we follow Prendick’s perambulations from the biological station to the dense forest to the volcanic cavern of the Beast Folk, we are able to gauge the degree to which the submerged nation has altered the two-world structure by blurring the boundaries between civilization and savagery. But unlike the non-state nation (see Bertelsen), the Beast Folk’s world is not completely bound by sovereignty or autonomy; despite Moreau’s best efforts to hypnotise them (*Moreau* 61), they maintain fairly loose alliances with both other beasts and with the humans who have given them their guttural speech. If Moreau has appeared to impose his will on the wild jungle, the jungle in turn is constantly encroaching upon the scientific enterprise so that a “station” is hardly distinguishable from a “den”: they are both outcrops of the natural environment, burrows for scientist and subject alike. More so than the Morlocks, who emerge from their subterranean abode during the nocturnal hours and then only infrequently, the Beast Folk are both wild indigenes and members of the island project. For example, M’ling, a bear-dog-ox hybrid (63), is Montgomery’s chief assistant but is only artificially separated from the other Beast Folk who inhabit dens while he occupies a “kennel.” Prendick insists on classifying the inhabitants as “inhuman monsters” (60) in an exaggerated attempt to maintain the biological distance from these creatures; but the proximity of the two worlds remains, as indicated in the environment itself. As an echo of the earlier sequence in which the protagonist ritually descends into the folktale underworld, Prendick learns from Montgomery that the entire island is of “volcanic origin” and that, on occasion, “a faint quiver of earthquake [could] be sensible” (61). Again, there is a suggestion that both

geological and biological eruptions are inevitable as the Beast Folk are “perpetually breaking” the Laws that Moreau has tried to implant in their minds. These subterranean and subaltern eruptions are not only contagious among the Beast Folk themselves but also among the human inhabitants as well. Indeed, Prendick himself discovers his morphological relation to some of the Beast Folk: “my eye became habituated to their forms, and at last I even fell in with their persuasion that my own long thighs were ungainly” (62). This “persuasion,” which we might call *Houynhnmesque* since, in this instance, a human patterns himself after a talking beast (as in *Gulliver’s Travels*), underscores also the “law of sympathy” between humans and animals, as featured in folktales (Frazer 12; Röhrich 57-60, 64-67, 73). Prendick repeats that he has truly become “habituated” to the Folk, adding that he is even “affected” by Montgomery’s sympathy towards them (*Moreau* 63). Montgomery himself has become so habituated to the altered beasts that he no longer recognizes nor likes “men.” The *degree* to which Prendick is “affected” by such sentiments becomes clear as the story reaches its climax, but it is apparent that he has, in the eyes of the Beast Folk themselves, undergone certain changes since he was picked up by the *Ipecacuanha*; for he is twice identified as another beast-man (40, 65).

It may be accurate to say that Prendick constantly “reverts” in his attitude towards the Beast Folk—at times sympathizing with their plight, and seeing something human in the “gleam” of their animal eyes (*Moreau* 72), at other times shivering in cold disgust at their “horrible caricature” (75) of the human form. He begins his sojourn on the island in complete ignorance, and condemns the experiments he knows nothing about; yet, while he at first objects to Moreau’s rationalization of the project as a scientific mission of

enlightenment (51-60), he comes to understand the necessity of Moreau's use of force and of the bodily branding of the "Law" (64-72). In many ways, then, Prendick exhibits the "animal" fear of pain that Moreau wishes to extinguish from the human form: this at times "dictatorial guest" cowers in his first hovel when he is set adrift by the mad captain of the *Ipecacuanha* and is forced to swim ashore, then escapes to the forest; hides in fright from the Beast Folk, then boldly shoots three or four of them "between the eyes" (73, 81, 90, 99)—certainly a gesture of cold, rational, and brutal human superiority, but in a basic, primordial sense, a tactical expression of the animal survival instinct (which the Beast Folk themselves "remember" in their eventual reversions). As Moreau himself seems to suggest, one of the things that distinguish men from animals is the presence of *claws* in the latter: "The human shape I can get now," he explains to Prendick, "almost with ease, so that it is lithe and graceful, or thick and strong; but often there is trouble with the hands and claws—painful things that I dare not shape too freely" (58). And yet, one of the marked developments in human evolution is the acquiring of weapons, which, from Deleuze and Guattari's perspective, can be understood as a reterritorialization: the organism relies upon (or *falls back on*) objects in order to carry out an operation. Even more so than the animal, the human reverts by *resorting to* tools that do not derive from the body; the animal, on the other hand, evolves by carrying out its operations through its basic locomotion and its ability to wrest itself from the earth, testifying to the resilient nature of *duration*. In any event, both animal and hominid, through their linked evolutionary struggles, allow us to see that the "more we study the nature of time, the more we shall comprehend that duration means invention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new" (Bergson 11). It is the follow-up

detrterritorializations that both emancipate and animalize the human. In one of his optimistic reversions, after the Leopard Man has been killed for disobeying Moreau, Prendick takes the Darwinian view of the beautiful complexity of the “tangled bank” (Darwin, *Origin* 648-49) and all of its reterritorializations and detrterritorializations. Despite the “grossness” and “grotesqueness” of the Beast Men’s forms, Prendick confesses, “I had here before me the whole balance of human life in miniature, the whole interplay of instinct, reason, and fate in its simplest form” (*Moreau* 73-74). In this brief moment of sympathetic contemplation, the narrator can respect the Beast Folk’s vicious will to survive despite—or because of—their physical deformities.

After both Moreau and Montgomery are killed, during the bloody “revolt” of the Beast Folk (*Moreau* 75-87), the narrator’s sympathies shift again. To be sure, we are more likely to *believe* in Prendick’s horror and rationalize his violent and terribly effective mode of self-defence—the revolver, which he uses to kill several Beast Folk, including the remaining organisms left in the laboratory (82). The “struggle” here is not an allegorical one, but resembles in some way the God-less and uncontrolled environment of Shelley’s “sea of ice” (Aldiss, *Billion Year Spree* 29) and, of course, the deceptively automated world of the Morlocks. As David Y. Hughes has argued, “To contemplate the cosmopoietic energy [of the ‘garden’] is edifying and beautiful. To be sentiently involved in it—as in fact man is—may well be a nightmare of pain and suffering” (50). We feel Prendick’s horror and pain when he is stranded in his dinghy and forced to contemplate cannibalism (*Moreau* 1-3), when he is picked up and then stranded again by the *Ipecacuanha* (14-17), when he is forced to shoot the Beast Men, and when Montgomery, in his own reversion, burns the boats to prevent anyone from escaping the island (88). We

also feel the Beast Folk's pain through Prendick's description—the puma whose screams can be heard throughout the island (25-26, 34), not to mention Moreau's other "mistakes." Perhaps one of the more compelling aspects of *Jekyll and Hyde* is the way in which the eponymous characters are linked through the shared experience of *pain*: each metamorphosis—from Jekyll to Hyde, and from Hyde back to Jekyll—produces the "most racking pains": "a grinding in the bones, deadly nausea, and a horror of the spirit that cannot be exceeded at the hour of birth or death" (*Jekyll and Hyde* 57). Similarly, the Beast Folk's metamorphosis from animal to man and back again produces a painful dislocation, which is linked to parallel scenes where Prendick, Montgomery, and Moreau are each forced to "trespass" the very same laws that supposedly demarcate the "human" (Huntington, *The Logic of Fantasy* 65). Of course, like Frankenstein, Moreau trespasses the boundary between human and "beast" in the instant of his "monstrous" experiment: he assumes the role—and inhabits the textual/extra-textual world—of the "primitive underclass" whose "barbarous tests" (changeling exorcisms—cf. Silver 66) are duplicated in his own attempt to exorcize the animal from the man (as Jekyll tries to extricate his own animal nature). Ultimately, however, in the aftermath of their revolt (*Moreau* 88), Prendick claims that the Beast Folk have been punished for giving into the instincts that constitute their being; while for him this statement is a survival tactic, in the larger scheme of things, his reference to (and reverence for) the "Laws" reaffirms the religious authority that Moreau established in his House of Pain. Prendick gains power insofar as he is able to reduce the Beast Folk to a menagerie gone wild. Like Moreau, and like Jekyll, Prendick jeopardizes the "new social relation" in every instance that he reaffirms the singularity of the "human": his dismissal of Montgomery for his animal behaviour

(“You’ve made a beast of yourself” [83]), for example, constitutes an “exorcism” in its own right.

Within the spectrum of utopian fiction since the Renaissance, Wells’s work operates as a tension between bleak nihilism (Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* [1726]) or ideological recuperation (Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* [1888]), especially in *Moreau* where the Morlockian revolt of the lower orders, as presented in the “far future” sequence of *The Time Machine*, comes to fruition in the “near future” sequence of Wells’s later text. The narrator Prendick foreshadows this revolt with his own ambivalent statement about *Homo sapiens*: “But I asked him [Moreau] why he had taken the human form as a model. There seemed to me then, and there still seems to me now, a strange wickedness in that choice” (*Moreau* 54). What exactly is so wicked about this act? Is it that these inelegant creatures are being tortured with the promise of a higher evolution, or is it that they are perverted by law-loving humanity? Prendick answers this question for us later on, when he notes that the Beast Folk were in the “shackles of humanity” (74), perhaps one of his more philosophically enlightened moments: the human mind itself, he suggests, is a torture device for the animal and creates the utmost horror for the hybrid Beast Folk. Wells presents for his readers a potential *changeling* revolution in which the monstrous creations of the civilized laboratories turn the adaptations (“amputation, tongue-cutting, excisions” [52]) to their own ends, biting the “Hand” that “makes” and “wounds” and “heals.” The moment of their revolt is stimulated by their reversion back to their animal instincts—a reversion, I would argue, that is more properly a transformation and a metamorphosis that allows the Beast Folk to escape the shackle of humanity. However, Wells’s Swiftian conclusion that man’s animal nature needs to be purged, since it has the

capacity to foul his “shining soul” (104), devolves Moreau’s experiments into ridiculous and dangerous scientific games, like the fruitless novelties of the Grand Academy of Lagado. On another plane, Prendick fails to see that the Frankensteinian mistakes (M’ling, Hyaena-Swine, Leopard Man, the Hairy Grey Thing) serve the purpose of new—if monstrous—social relationships, and that the Hyde-like reversions provide the physical means to resist oppressive affiliations and “family resemblances.”

Prendick’s final escape from the island drives home for the protagonist the necessity to “burn out” the animal, and his initial sympathy for the Beast Folk turns to revulsion for the abominable creations that they are. However, while he has returned to his original and familiar environment, Prendick has not escaped the nightmare of Moreau’s island, and we are given every reason to believe that its horrors (“estranging” novums that do not, however, come to fruition) are firmly imprinted on the narrator’s mind as he concludes his tale. We do not forget the words of Moreau’s most fascinating (if *unofficial*) Beast Man, Montgomery: “We can’t massacre the lot,—can we? I suppose that’s what *your* humanity would suggest? ... But they’ll change. They are sure to change” (Moreau 83). Already, and now again, Wells uses his conceptual personae to evoke and disarticulate (and, in fact, *distintegrate*) the “human” by suggesting multiple notions of that category: whatever Prendick has assumed about Montgomery’s “humanity,” in this moment (in which Prendick himself could easily be shot between the eyes), Montgomery proves to be the most *humane*. And the other Beast Folk *will* change, as changelings do, despite Moreau’s (or Prendick’s) best efforts to civilize them. For this reason, I would disagree with Michael Pinsky’s argument that “Moreau creates the population, *providing them with subject status (making them ‘human’)*, even as he

exercises his skill at vivisection upon them, *diminishing their singularity*” (63; my emphases). In a certain sense, Moreau attempts to codify a population (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 52), which, he feels, is collectively susceptible to the precise cuts of his scalpel; but he in no way gives them “subject status” since their reversion ultimately refuses subjectivity and the anthropomorphic imposition of the “human.” Moreover, while it is true, as Gomel also suggests, that Moreau *attempts* to “diminish singularity,” he actually succeeds in proliferating new divergences of single organisms.

As a way of both concluding this section and reiterating my argument since Chapter 2, I would note that divergence from space or place, from institution or affiliation, cannot lead ultimately to freedom if the struggle itself is abandoned; that is, the formation of alliances and packs in particular may come about as an attempt to flee—and therefore find *freedom*—from some confining organization (political, familial, or otherwise) but may end up leading to the mobilization of new ideologies. If the excessive violence of the French Revolution led Shelley to conceive of her monster as an embodiment of the revolutionary masses run amok (Suvín, *Metamorphoses* 128), that same original upheaval provided one of the “divine sparks” through which the monster could enunciate the “radical rhapsody,” as Suvín calls it, of fraternity and, as I would see it, the unfettered alliance between disparate groups. The monster is certainly a revolutionary but he is not an obsessed militant: the monster only gradually turns to violence, and even then commits his heinous acts as an (albeit *savage*) expression of his will to survive and hopefully reproduce. The case of Mr. Hyde suggests, on the one hand, the puerile tricks of the most banal changeling type, and on the other, the ingenious



subterfuge of the most revolutionary changeling type, as seen in Shelley's creation. Yet, because Jekyll's experiment is rooted in an attempt to purge the animal from himself, his changeling remains (at least in the space of Stevenson's brief narrative) an ape-like conjuration with no *future*. Nevertheless, in the case of both the monster and Mr. Hyde, the individual entity threatens because he deforms the uniformity of thought and consequently doubles the original articulation—of morality, of truth, of anything singular or universal (see Chapter 2, Conclusion). Of course, with small exception (Old De Lacey's brief sympathy with the monster, Jekyll's original "great interest" in Hyde), the missing ingredient in each case is the successful formation of an alliance or a series of alliances. *Moreau* may be understood as an initial attempt to remedy this situation, even while Wells shrewdly understood the consequences in his day of coding populations of rebels and revolutionaries, and of courting a "revolution of the body," which would bring about a "New Man" only at the expense of genocide (Gomel 394-95). Moreover, despite (or because of) the fact that Moreau has assumed, and quite noticeably perfected, the role of the inventor-scientist-adventurer, before which both Frankenstein and Jekyll must bow with reverence, Moreau's Beast Men are the nightmarish manifestation of Frankenstein's fears that the engineered monster might succeed in proliferating itself and forming a whole community of mimic-men. The key advancement for Moreau is the (at least initially) successful creation of pseudo-religious "Laws," through which the Beast Men become a frightening menace of *controlled* savagery. Prendick rightly regards the attempted conversion as a "wicked" enterprise, and we must view his position as comparable to that of the Traveller who witnesses with horror the economic devolution of the future in which the beast-like Morlocks (a fully independent tribal community of

spider-monkeys) feed on the fey-like Eloi (a dependent commune of delicate “little people”). In other words, the far future upside-down world may very well begin with Moreau’s near future island of vivisected men. Animal savagery, once used for survival, has now been directed towards moral perfection: had the experiment not failed, had they not reverted, the Beast Men may have decided that it was morally good to annihilate those who were their inferiors. At the peak of Moreau’s power, then, the original biological alliance of beast and man has been reterritorialized as a binding affiliation, with Moreau at the head of the family. In the end, however, the Beast Folk’s reversion unsettles Moreau’s hierarchical position and deterritorializes the controlled violence into a vital struggle for survival once again.

## Conclusion

The notion of a “changed” or “changeable” organism certainly dominates all manner of folklore, SF, and fantasy, but finds a connective tissue in *Frankenstein*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *The Time Machine*, and *Moreau* through the conceptual persona of the *changeling* whose characteristics are a tendency towards variation as well as a proliferation of perversity and “contagion.” Indeed, as Röhrich has shown, the motif of “contagious magic,” in which a human maintains an intimate connection with an animal through some “part” of it (saliva, hair, blood), is widely diffused in numerous European folk traditions (58-60). While sexual alliances between the species rarely occur in such tales, since the animal ally frequently turns out to be “really” a human after all (83), the recurrence of the contagious connection indicates a traditional fascination in a conceptual “bond” between the kingdoms (75). Perhaps best illustrated in Wells’s *Beast Men*, whose

hybridized forms would have shocked the bourgeois public, changeling “perversity” (as argued and reiterated in the final section of Chapter 1) is “fruitful” even while it does not reproduce itself. Alliances may be (and very frequently involve) sexual relations, but usually lead to hybridized and therefore *sterile* progeny. The point of these relations is not to proliferate from a single and uniform source but to advance spatially, to find new relations in new territories, to leave *no* offspring, and to move on to other territories, repeating the same procedure, but always with *different* results (for who knows who one might meet if one keeps *moving?*).

But the changeling has “features that [...] give rise to other personae” (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 76): the subsequent authors that I explore in Chapters 4 (Karel Čapek) and 5 (Olaf Stapledon) evoke the changeling motif through the familiar personae of the lonely/ambivalent “symbiote” (Čapek’s *The War with the Newts* [1936]) and the deformed/special child (Stapledon’s *Odd John* [1935]). Writing in a post-Wellsian era, these authors (among a larger cluster that includes Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, Theodore Sturgeon, John Wyndham, James Blish, Philip K. Dick, and Octavia E. Butler) nevertheless resume the exploration of “new social relations,” as Suvin has described, now in the context of the inter-war years and the Nazi rise to power (Čapek), and WWII and the consequences of controlled genetic mutation and atomic power (Stapledon). Such social relations, again following the paradigm established in Wells, are often the manifestations of “thought-experiments,” and are usually “tested” on a small community, sometimes artificially constructed, sometimes located on an unmapped island (a scenario played out in nearly *all* the subsequent novels under consideration). The

exploration for new social relations, then, seems to have reached a new intensity in Wells and in the “submerged nation” motif.

Throughout his writing career Wells continued to revisit what has now been identified as the folkloric motif of *changelingism*, or the hybridization of the human species through contact with an otherworldly or extra-terrestrial species. If Wells was concerned with fleshing out a new Fairyland, he was also intent on giving plausible shape to biological experiments aided by the ever-advancing field of genetics, which had begun to blossom especially in the 1930s. In anticipation of this direction in the Wellsian oeuvre, the third epigraph for this chapter comes from a much later work of Wells, when he was writing his programmatic utopias and when the changeling persona had been subsumed in order to fulfill the role of the socially and biologically engineered human. To be sure, *Star-Begotten* (1937) constitutes Wells’s most direct exploration of the changeling persona, for the word “changeling” appears in at least two places (31, 171-72) and functions more obliquely throughout the work as a concept for societal change, hence its subtitle, *A Biological Fantasia*. For example, in the second chapter, which is entitled “Mr. Davis Learns about Cosmic Rays,” Davis imagines that the Martians themselves have already planned a programme of genetic mutation: “Suppose they say up there: ‘Let’s start varying and modifying life on the earth. Let’s change it’” (49). Here, Wells has resorted to *discussions* of science-fictional themes and has almost completely abandoned the artistic vehicle of the scientific romance. Admittedly, the work does not present Wells at his best, and I would agree with Bergonzi, Hillegas, Suvin, and

Huntington<sup>59</sup> that, especially in *The Food of the Gods* (1904) and perhaps as early as *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), Wells had begun to reduce his early scientific speculations into more rigid extrapolations of the perfect society. And the changeling motif, presented in *Star-Begotten* in almost mawkish fashion (“Joe! *You* aren’t by any chance a sort of fairy changeling? Not—not one of these Martians?” [171]), seems to have been reduced to the role of the children’s fairy tale, now co-opted once again by bourgeois society as a convenient representation of a fetishized *otherness*. Indeed, this new sentimental investment in fairy-tale and folktale figurations seems to have grown in proportion to Wells’s abandonment of the scientific romance form, written mostly between 1895 and 1901. *The Sea Lady* (1902), “Mr. Skelmersdale in Fairyland” (1906), and “The Door in the Wall” (1906), for example, employ a folk motif (the discovery of a mermaid, the discovery of Fairyland or an otherworldly Elysium) as an embarrassing or nostalgic intrusion of the adult world. At the same time, tales like these reflect the degree to which Wells was growing restless with his own society’s game of translating the mysterious into the “commonplace” and the “matter of fact,” and reducing it to “a matter of authentic and reasonable motives and of sound solid sentimentality” (*The Sea Lady* 41). In his oft-quoted preface to *Seven Famous Novels* (1933), republished later as *H. G. Wells Science Fiction Treasury* (1979), Wells complained: “It becomes a bore doing imaginative books that do not touch imaginations, and at length one stops planning them” (“Preface” x). Such an attitude suggests that the author’s later engagement with fairy tale or folktale themes may have been part of a larger satirical project, aimed at reproducing

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<sup>59</sup> See Bergonzi, *The Early H. G. Wells*, pp. 139, 142; Hillegas, *The Future As Nightmare: H. G. Wells and the Anti-utopians*, pp. 56-57; Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, pp. 218-19; and Huntington, “Utopian and Anti-Utopian Logic: H. G. Wells and his Successors,” p. 122.

such sentimental figures as the Victorian mermaid (*The Sea Lady*), the genteel Fairy Lady (“Mr. Skelmersdale in Fairyland”), the otherworldly “Playmate” (“The Door in the Wall”), and the “starry changeling” (*Star-Begotten*) in order to expose the dreary course of modern progress. Each of these figures constitute domesticated versions of the more frightening or at least ambivalent figures encountered in works like *The Time Machine*, *Moreau*, *The War of the Worlds* (1898), and *The First Men in the Moon* (1901): it is a measure of the philosophical distance between the novels of the 1890s and those of the 1930s that the Martians of *The War of the Worlds* reappear in *Star-Begotten* as disembodied voices (49), as benevolent autocrats for the perfect society. Returning to Wells’s preface again, I would insist that, even in his less speculative and more cynical novels, Wells was still at his game of domesticating “the impossible” (“Preface” viii), only that now, in a work like *Star-Begotten*, he was demonstrating the more rigidly defined parameters of his domesticating strategies. If British society could not be altered through the slow and painful process of an undirected evolution, as presented in *The Time Machine*, Wells was satisfied to suggest some possible methods for inducing a more rapid and therefore *artificial* evolutionary modification.

As Wells was writing *Star-Begotten* a younger generation of European SF writers was already exploring the reemergence of changelings as a co-opted labour force and as the “little men” of fascist dictatorships.<sup>60</sup> But if authors like Eugene Zamyatin in Russia,

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<sup>60</sup> Anticipating Gomel’s analysis of the “biological sublime” in *Moreau*, Kenneth Sherman argues that “Moreau’s island is a totalitarian state and Moreau himself a fascist; his values seem based upon the Nazi perversion of Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* philosophy” (871). Elsewhere Sherman suggests that Moreau is “most comparable to his heirs—those SS doctors in the concentration camps who performed bizarre and needless experiments on innocent victims” (872). Perhaps it is more accurate to say that Wells *anticipates* these trends, as Hitler’s fascism only surfaced in the 1930s. In any event, I would support Sherman’s

Karel Čapek in Czechoslovakia, Olaf Stapledon, Aldous Huxley, and George Orwell in England were “attacking the Wellsian utopia,” they were also “greatly indebted to it since much of their attack consist[ed] of parody and caricature” (Hillegas 57). Of these five authors, two in particular—Čapek and Stapledon—were eager to show readers and critics of the 1930s that Wells’s “messianic delusion,” as H. L. Mencken called it (qtd. in Hillegas 56, 83), should not diminish the power of his early scientific romances. Accordingly, Chapters 4 and 5 discuss particular works by Čapek and Stapledon which expand upon Wells’s earliest SF models, motifs, and radical novelties, that is, his central *novum* of challenging the supremacy of *Homo sapiens* and speculating on the advantages of cross-breeding or mutating that same species. Moreover, we can go back to Wells’s earlier works to discover the first traces of his sociological theories, the early speculative use of folk narrative or what Suvin has called Wells’s “folk taxonomy” (*Metamorphoses* 233), where the changeling still has the capacity to shock the bourgeois world and where it seems more likely to successfully insinuate itself into late Victorian society *as both a new and undirected force of evolutionary divergence*; that is, before Wells had given up on the notion of an undirected and open-ended evolutionary process. I would offer *Star-Begotten*, then, as the most direct piece of evidence that Wells was active in fashioning an “SF changeling,” even while the novel (and its suggestive passages) also reinforce for the attentive reader the fact that Wells had invested much, if not in the *term* “changeling” at least in the *concept* of biological “change,” mutation, and the ethics of artificially altering the structure of *Homo sapiens* in many of his best works.

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general view that, in Moreau, “Wells has provided us with an astonishingly exact and detailed analysis of the fascistic personality” (871).

This ethical tension, I have argued, receives its fullest and richest articulation in the scientific parables *The Time Machine* and *Moreau* and specifically in the human representatives and story tellers, the Time Traveller and Prendick, which have been placed here side by side. While Prendick's attitude towards the Beast Folk is divided between sympathy and revulsion, the Traveller's attitude remains sympathetic to the indolent Eloi and even finds a certain perverse pleasure in the pummeling strokes of his crowbar, which kill and maim several of the Morlocks during his final battle. One factor here might be the *distance* involved in each case: while Prendick witnesses the beast-human mutation in process, the Traveller witnesses a post-mutation scenario in which the bestial side of humanity is most prominent, and he can only speculate as to the conditions that brought this change about. As an indication that Wells was working through his neo-Darwinian paradigm over the course of the two works, the second work reinforces both the bestial nature of humanity *as well as* the difficulty of defining boundaries between the human and animal kingdoms; after all, the most remarkable metamorphosis occurs in the personage of Montgomery, perhaps Wells's most fascinating "changeling": if Prendick himself falls back on the conclusion that Moreau's experiment was a noble enterprise after all, and that man should in fact attempt to extricate his animal instincts, Montgomery exhibits the most extraordinary "character development" in that he effectively works on both sides of the struggle, operating on the one hand as Moreau's hired henchman, and on the other as a champion of the Beast Folk's cause. In contrast, the Traveller is almost immediately seduced by the bourgeois dream of the paradisial utopia of the Eloi, and, despite his strong sense that they have devolved at least in intelligence and in the animal struggle that characterizes his own nineteenth-century society, he becomes the sole



champion of their passive “struggle” with the Morlocks. In effect, the Traveller destroys a more bestial version of the human type that he actually admires;<sup>61</sup> but he also exposes his own revulsion at the lower classes by first invading their subterranean world and later setting fire to it. In this ironic twist of the paradise-hell scenario, it is the noble-hearted human, and not the demonic pseudo-human, that manifests destruction: the Traveller himself brings the fire down to the Morlocks’ world and, in effect, transforms it into a living hell. The Traveller’s initial analysis of the two-world situation (to which he still adheres after he discovers the truth about the prey-predator relationship) “represents [...] a romantic and pessimistic variant of orthodox Marxist thought; the implications of the class-war are accepted but the possibility of the successful proletarian revolution establishing a classless society is excluded” (Bergonzi 52). To be sure, Prendick is not given the choice of *either* paradise or hell (as much as the Traveller realizes that the two boundaries in the world of 802,701 might soon become blurred): he is, from the start, thrust into a world of pain and bestiality, and he is forced to accept the struggle for existence as the only philosophy of life. The difference, I would now insist, is that the struggle for life on Moreau’s island unsettles the dichotomy that is so rigid in the two-world structure of the Eloi/Morlocks; it is therefore more variegated and suggests some of the finer moments of Darwin’s evolutionary philosophy, including nature’s beautiful adaptations and the possibilities of unforeseen variations in the human-animal structure. If we can say that *The Time Machine* presents a shock to the bourgeois fantasy of a linear evolutionary progression towards physical perfection, *Moreau* presents a *series* of shocks,

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<sup>61</sup> The greatest irony is that he even admits that it is “inhuman [...] to want to go killing one’s own descendents!” (*The Time Machine* 78).

which prolong the nightmare of a life struggle by refusing to provide for the protagonist an easy escape route—such as a time-travelling device. Once again, *Moreau* presents a more advanced stage of Wells's neo-Darwinian thought since it exchanges the gothic terror of the bestial reversion for the folkloric wonder of the unexplained and potentially liberating transformation.

In the end, however, each work needs the other, for the beautiful adaptations and wondrous reversions of *Moreau* could only be appreciated in light of the grotesque cannibalisms and routine indolence of *The Time Machine*. As I have suggested, Wells goes further than either Shelley or Stevenson (and especially the latter) by introducing a nightmarish reversal of the bourgeois fantasy of control-by-diagnosis and control-by-exorcism, placing his conceptual personae within the believable, if *novel*, scenario of two “submerged nations”: a futuristic exoticized London and a biological station, each overtaken by monstrous “experiments.” While Dr. Moreau's explorations of new knowledge and new science heartlessly expend the lives or livelihood of numerous animals, the good doctor's experimental hybridization of human and animal leads to an unforeseen and potentially revolutionary alliance between two species, and in that alliance, a new conceptualization of the folkloric changeling. Of the three novelists, then, Wells offers the best possibility for a “new social relation,” which means for me, *the development of a community of unlike peoples, animals, organisms in which cooperation between disparate groups rather than dominance of one over the other becomes the organizing principle*. A reading such as mine entertains the possibility that folk narratives, and particularly their residual presence in SF, comment upon *this-worldly* and not only *otherworldly* alliances, including especially the often troublesome relations

between the colonized and the colonizers (Silver 57) or between non-state nations and Nation States. Such a reading, moreover, allows us to discover the otherworldly within the mundane, the “submerged nation” within the visible one.

## Chapter 4—Karel Čapek’s “Little Men”: Changelings for a New Fairyland or

### “New Men” for a Technotopia?

Meet the new boss  
Same as the old boss  
—The Who, “Won’t Get Fooled Again”

Fascist mentality is the mentality of the subjugated “little man” who craves authority and rebels against it at the same time. It is not by accident that all fascist dictators stem from the milieu of the little reactionary man. The captains of industry and the feudal militarist make use of this social fact for their own purposes. A mechanistic authoritarian civilization only reaps, in the form of fascism, from the little, suppressed man what for hundreds of years it has sown in the masses of little, suppressed individuals in the form of mysticism, top-sergeant mentality and automatism. This little man has only too well learned the way of the big man and now gives it back, enlarged and distorted. The Fascist is the top-sergeant type in the vast army of our sick civilization.

—Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* xi

This one’s optimistic  
This one went to market  
This one just came out of the swamp  
This one dropped a payload  
Fodder for the animals  
Living on an animal farm  
—Radiohead, “Optimistic”

## Introduction

Considered today to be one of the most significant Czech writers of the first half of the twentieth century, Karel Čapek was the author of numerous short stories and essays, several plays, and a handful of novels; his reputation, however, still rests on the futuristic melodrama *R. U. R. (Rossum’s Universal Robots)*, which was written in 1920 and first staged in 1922, and the satirical, dystopian novel *War with the Newts*, which was written in 1936, just two years before his death. While he is usually placed within the history of science fiction—somewhere between H. G. Wells and the so-called “Golden Age” of American SF in the 1940s (see, for example, Scholes and Rabkin 28-31)—Čapek

had a wider field of interest that included philosophy, journalism, and his own Eastern European folk traditions. Indeed, Čapek's life-long interest in traditional oral storytelling (Doležel 17) and his fascination with the magical transformations of the fairytale (for example, *Nine Fairy Tales and One More Thrown in for Good Measure*, written with his brother Josef) are abundantly apparent in his depiction of artificial humans brought to life in a factory (*R. U. R.*) and salamanders who learn to walk upright and speak human languages (*War with the Newts*). It seems likely that *R. U. R.* in particular was partly inspired by the Jewish/Czech figure of the "golem," the clay statue brought to life through a magic ritual. Čapek's use of such folktale elements also places him among the ranks of other SF writers (Shelley, Stevenson, Wells) who have employed folkloric concepts and conceptual personae. Moreover, Čapek's oeuvre suggests an intellectual relationship between Eastern and Western Europe. On the one hand, Čapek's plays and novels were a distillation of his own Eastern European background, shaped continuously by the tumultuous events such as the Nazi rise to power and its threat to the liberty of his Czechoslovakia. As Darko Suvin has suggested, "some of [Čapek's] most stubborn values and prejudices can be traced back to traditional peasant confidence in the immediately available, secure, everyday things and relationships of the little people, as opposed to the *hubris* of the hustling and bustling modern industry and the swift changes it brings about" (*Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* 270). On the other hand, Čapek's examination of the exploitation and co-option of the "little people" in his society indicated his familiarity with the diminutive and grotesque figures of Wells's *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. Indeed, in both *R. U. R.* and *War with the Newts*,

Čapek explores the Wellsian nightmare in which bourgeois society finds itself in the role of passive prey of the monstrous labouring classes.

Like his predecessors, Čapek creates personae that appear to be further variations on the changeling persona (Robots, Newts), combining as he does the folk motifs of metamorphosis with the “hard” scientific facts about evolution and biological mutation. These personae form the basis for a philosophical investigation of the mechanisms of evolution and invention, and modern economic and political systems. As suggested in the three previous chapters, the changeling has oscillated between ideological recuperation and radical reinvention, in each case embodying the most frightful visions of traditional class and racial anxieties. On the one hand, the changeling has served the purpose of edifying “man” (*Jekyll and Hyde*); on the other, he has threatened the dominance of “man” (*Frankenstein* and *The Island of Dr. Moreau*). But “reversion” does not always constitute *recuperation*, especially given the fact that deformities, monstrosities, and mutations frequently disrupt notions of linearity and controlled progress—the sought-after mechanisms of any dominant State. Moreover, Čapek’s Robots and Newts explore the dynamics of burgeoning political ideologies—Communism, National Socialism, and global capitalism—and the possibility of new social relations, that is, in particular, *the development of a community of unlike peoples, animals, organisms in which cooperation between disparate groups rather than dominance of one over the other becomes the organizing principle*. The persistence of the changeling, or at least its constituent parts (attributes, significations, enunciations), is bound up with the plebeian upheavals and moments of discontent in the past, which, as Raymond Williams has rightly noted, are the residual elements of critique and protest struggling to *emerge* as utopian responses to

persisting societal ills (126). As Suvin has argued, “paraliterature” has thrived as the “popular, ‘low,’ or plebeian production of various times, particularly since the Industrial Revolution” (*Metamorphoses* vii). Whatever can be said of Suvin’s objections to folk narrative (Chapter 3, section I), this genre has had an important role in the formation of SF both within and outside the academy. Moreover, if, as Suvin argues, SF “has always been wedded to a hope of finding in the unknown the ideal environment, tribe, state, intelligence, or other aspect of the Supreme Good (or to a fear of and revulsion from its contrary)” (5), the folktale has contributed much to SF since it first conceptualised the *Otherworlds*—the Elysiums, Lands of the Dead, and Fairylands—that the later genre has since re-configured.

For the Victorians, there was a correlation between the anarchical behavior of the fairies, as depicted in art and literature (Silver 162), and that of the discontented underclass, which quickly lost ground to the rising middle class in the second half of the nineteenth century. Another view of folktales and legends suggests a utopian striving towards a better world and a fairer economic system: while Fairyland itself presented the impossible fantasy of perpetual bliss, echoed in the Terrestrial or Earthly Paradises of late Victorian SF (see Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 170-204), its inhabitants (the Good People) brought the message of this land and, through the exchange of their progeny, the possibility of communion between worlds. The new slumps and depressions throughout Europe in the 1880s and 1890s, as well as the new technological devastations of the first quarter of the twentieth century, brought the old liberal vision of equality to a crisis point, and subsequently made both “fairy” and utopian literature somewhat suspect. Čapek’s writings of the 1920s respond to the dystopian scenarios of factory labour and the search

for an “absolute” in a period of increasing religious doubt (see not only *R. U. R.* but also *The Factory of the Absolute*, also translated as *The Absolute at Large* [1922], and *Krakatit*, also titled *An Atomic Phantasy* [1924]). His habitual employment of the folk motifs of metamorphosis and symbiosis respond to the upheavals of a new plebeian segment, the mimic-men who would replace the exhausted labourers or “little men” and who would be employed by the “middle men,” the businessmen and factory managers of the hyper-industrial age. These “middle men” exploit the weak, the deformed, and the unaffiliated—in short, the changelings of their society. Čapek’s middle men—the engineers and managers who run the universal Robot production in *R. U. R.*, the business tycoons who exploit the salamanders in *War with the Newts*—have, in a sense, supplanted the roles of the “mad scientist” so prevalent in Shelley, Stevenson, and Wells. In terms of their “utopian” vision, they surpass all of these Romantic and Victorian scientists and conjurers, focused as they are on exploiting as far as possible the radical novelty (Robots, Newts), first conceptualized in the realm of folk narrative, for the purpose of mass-producing a race of pseudo-humans.

The next two sections offer an elaboration of these issues, focusing in particular on Čapek’s exploration of the radical novelty and of the metamorphoses (evolution) of humankind. In the first section on *R. U. R.* I consider the issue of scientific and technological innovation and its ability/failure to transform an already degraded society. In twentieth-century SF, and first in Čapek’s works, changelings emerge as tacticians, incorporated as they often are into the labour force and the military: here we have another key evolutionary leap in which changelings are not simply driven out but assume significant positions in society. In the next section I consider the inevitable problems of



such recruitment, or *co-option*, as it occurs in *War with the Newts*, and the overwhelming force of the “mass movement”—the original molecular aggregate that becomes absorbed as an apparatus of the State. In the form of political critique and satire, a form and style that Čapek uses to great effect, the changeling appears in reterritorialized form both as a manipulated tool of fascism (as developed in Italy and Germany) and as an original *menace* (Nazism) that was nurtured rather than rejected. Perhaps in the spirit of Nietzsche, Čapek explores the ways in which class and racial deformities of the “little man” lead to a powerful and obsessive *ressentiment*. In Čapek, then, changelings (Robots or Newts) are both empowering and enslaving conceptual personae, enunciating the beginning of the “Unnatural Pseudo-Man” and the end of “Natural Man” (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 270).

### I. *R. U. R.*: the Changeling as Automated Human

While it is true that Čapek’s failure to find an “Absolute” amid the ash and smoke and drudgery of modern life had led to a “discovery of a sympathy for man” (Harkins 62), it also led to a discovery of man’s petty and exploitative nature. *R. U. R.* is Čapek’s major theatrical contribution to modern SF and his first major attempt to answer Swift’s question, “What is Man?”<sup>62</sup> Part of Čapek’s answer comes in his introduction of the word “robot,” which was first coined by his brother Josef as *robota*, meaning “servitude, forced

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<sup>62</sup> I acknowledge Darko Suvin’s excellent historical analysis in *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, which, in the second part of the book (and through some eight chapters), demonstrates the connective tissue between Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726), Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), Wells’s *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896), and Čapek’s satirical masterpiece *War with the Newts* (1936). I add to this list *R. U. R.* (published some fifteen years before the latter novel) in order to suggest that the play was an early attempt to address Swift’s question, and to contemplate the role that Yahoos, monsters, and Beast-Men of all kinds have had to play in the great philosophical questions of modern Western society.

labour,” and *rab*, meaning “slave.”<sup>63</sup> From one perspective, robots are what humans had become by the end of WWI—a massively mobilized work force and war machine subject to the big “powers” that now ruled the world. From another perspective, the robot is a conceptual persona, the necessary “agent” in the movement of an author’s thought (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 64-65), exploring in particular the operations of the labouring classes (the mechanism of modern labour and of the automated human) and the possibilities of optimal social relations (the use of speed and the creation of intensities for the purpose of finding “lines of flight” [Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 65] in the machinic assemblage or modern mechanized society). Čapek’s exploration of these conflicting perspectives adds an important dimension to our previous discussion of the changeling persona, which, like the Robot, is an imitation human, or organism consisting of both human and nonhuman attributes, promising (for better or worse) an improvement on *Homo sapiens*. Before discussing Čapek’s play in detail, it seems appropriate for the moment to consider the twentieth-century exploration of Swift’s question, especially as it related specifically to contemporary concerns with the burgeoning field of eugenics and biological engineering.

In the previous century, Wells had restated Swift’s question in evolutionary terms. As Robert Philmus and David Hughes argue in their discussion of Wells’s developing scientific thought, after his cycle of scientific romances in the 1890s “he ceased to speculate in biological terms of how man became man or will become any other entity, and turned instead to cultural evolution, which he labelled ‘The Acquired Factor’” (Philmus and Hughes 184-85). For Wells, as for Stevenson before him, humans possessed

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<sup>63</sup> See the entry for “robot” in the online *OED*.

a “dual nature,” but the two sides—the “polar twins,” as Jekyll calls them (Stevenson, *Jekyll and Hyde* 56)—were not “good” and “evil” but rather the “inherited” and “acquired” (Wells, “Human Evolution, An Artificial Process” 217).<sup>64</sup> The tension was therefore between natural selection and “reasoned thought,” as Wells would argue in “Human Evolution, An Artificial Process,” an essay published in the same year as *Moreau*. The personae that enunciate this tension are the “natural” man and the “artificial” man, and Wells was quickly losing faith in the future of the former when “reversion” could mean the sully of man’s “shining soul” (*Moreau* 104). Moreover, if the “speculative” approach to human history (as employed in the scientific romances) valued the open-ended scenario in which humans could work out their evolutionary future in unrestricted fashion, then Wells, especially by the early 1900s, felt that it should be replaced by the “extrapolative” approach of the programmatic utopia in which biological *change* is induced rather than simply nurtured. “[M]an-making,” Wells now felt, “was a human enterprise rather than a natural process” (Philmus and Hughes 186). So it is, then, that Čapek’s play about “artificial” humans *speculates* on the consequences of instituting the Wellsian programmatic utopia in twentieth-century European society: “man-making” turns out to be frighteningly simple.

If Čapek was evoking Wells in his portrayal of automated humans, he was also evoking Shelley in his focus on the sublime aspect of the body and its relation to the unknown forces of nature. In particular, Čapek’s pseudo-humans are presented as the by-products of a “mad” science invested in engineering a replacement for the primitive

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<sup>64</sup> Deanna Kreisel draws attention to this particular focus in Wells’s thought in her illuminating article, “Wolf Children and Automata: Bestiality and Boredom at Home and Abroad” (27).

human animal. But as Elana Gomel has shown, the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century interest in constructing supermen had a “logical” and “consistent” investment in the science of “self-transformation” (401-02). Eugenics, or the “science of human breeding” (401), may be understood as the most efficient method for *coding a population* since, at least in theory, the splitting and branching of single organisms is not only controlled by the eugenicist but also *contained*. In such a scenario, which we must differentiate from that described in *Frankenstein*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, and even *Moreau*, the deforming, doubling, and multiplying processes (Chapter 2, Conclusion) are absolutely intentional, planned, and a necessary part of the experiment. The botched superman is, therefore, no Frankensteinian mistake but rather a sublime horror, a species of the “biological sublime” that is the main ingredient for the “factories of pain” (Gomel 404) constructed in Auschwitz and the Russian Gulags during and after WWII. To be sure, evolutionary theory announced the scientific subversion of religion; but, as Gomel demonstrates, in the case of some eugenics programs, the god of religion was simply replaced by a deity of pure science. As she states: “The biological sublime [was] an attempt to harness the sweeping changes inaugurated by evolutionary biology to a particular *modality* of subjectivity” (398; my emphasis). As both a monstrous divergence of the human genetic structure and a programmed “substitute” for a human infant, the changeling enunciates such a “modality”: the consistency of folk legends suggests that, while the changeling figure may be *unforeseen* by the human family, it is likely engineered by the Good People themselves.

But the similarities between the “fairy economy” and eugenics are limited when we clarify the meaning of this word “engineer,” for it relates specifically to controlled

experiments and planned, protracted results rather than *contingent* operations that are usually impossible to control. If the subterranean species featured in folk legends institute a “program of genetic mutation,” as suggested in Chapter 1, they do so for the purpose of increasing species intermixture and the possibility of future relations between the upper and lower worlds, which turn out to be analogical to both geological and social strata, as suggested in Chapter 3. There is no sense that such a program intends to create a new dominant species, and where there is pain, there is also the beauty of unexpected alliances; if the family is shocked by the intrusion of a changeling, the changeling’s parents might be equally shocked when it is, on occasion, nurtured and cared for rather than burned, starved, or butchered. We cannot say the same for “negative eugenics,” which, as instituted by the Nazis in the 1930s, was organized on the principle of eliminating the “unfit” (Gomel 401). To be sure, the true accounts of changeling “cases” demonstrate the human capacity for sadism, but then so do the true accounts of colonial occupations in which the “savages” who believe in fairies and other “superstitions” are eliminated for being deemed “unfit.” The changeling enables an impasse in which the pre-planned scenario is shattered by the intrusion of a monstrosity; but the “New Man,” which enunciated the “idealized image of self” in the wake of WWI (394), intrudes only to *engineer* monsters—and then to shatter them as part of the fascist “revolution of the body.”

Gomel’s portrait of the “biological sublime,” which was the offspring of “fin-de-siècle discourses of biology” (395), suggests a terribly bleak future for the “artificial” human, already encountered in Shelley, Stevenson, and Wells. As she argues, where the eugenicists’ intention was to create supermen, the result was the production of “pitiful

monsters whose only function [was] to suffer” (401). However, I would argue here that, particularly in twentieth-century SF, the changeling becomes the antidote for the “New Man,” the “scientific *Übermensch*” (394). The disfigured changeling, a composite persona of child, monster, and animal, rejects the ideology of uniformity inherent in fascism. But, then, we should not be surprised by this reemergence of folkloric personae, for the folk legend is a virtual breeding ground for “bifurcations” of all kinds and a residual expression of subaltern discontent. The human’s “dual nature” turns out to be the central focus of changeling legends, which have always urged its readers or listeners to wonder to what degree our actions are *inherited* or *acquired* and therefore to what degree we are “natural” or “artificial.”

The question of what constitutes the “human” and the “nonhuman” in the Robot is, of course, part of the drama of *R. U. R.* The play opens with the arrival of the President’s daughter, Helena Glory, who visits the factory of Rossum’s Universal Robots with the hidden motive of inciting the Robots to rebellion. The factory’s general manager, Harry Domin, offers a guided tour of the plant, explains the history of the two Rossums, including Rossum Sr.’s “chemical synthesis to imitate the living matter known as protoplasm” (*R. U. R.* 4), introduces her to the other managers of the plant (Dr. Gall, Mr. Fabry, Dr. Hallemeier, Mr. Alquist, and Consul Busman), and pontificates on the utopian possibilities of universal Robot labour. When she reveals her intentions (she is a member of the “Human League”), the men laugh at the idea that the Robots would ever revolt since, as Hallemeier, the Head of the Institute for Psychological Training, says: “They’ve no will of their own” (*R. U. R.* 14). Act II is set ten years later after Helena has married Domin and settled into her life on the island. Reflecting something of Čapek’s experience

and fascination with the journalism of his day, the dialogue that ensues between Helena, her maid Nana, and the managers of the plant includes fragmented references and recitations from newspapers about the Robots and their role as law enforcement officers during labour disputes and strikes, and ultimately about their rumored national organization. Disgusted by the unending production of Robot labour, which she identifies as the cause of the world's new era of strife, Helena burns old Rossum's manuscript containing the formula for the creation of new Robots. Confirming Helena's fears, it is discovered that the Robots have armed themselves: proclaiming "man" as the enemy and declaring a pogrom on all of humankind, the Robots commandeer the *Ultima*, the ship that was originally intended to protect Helena, and surround the factory. Act III brings the play to its climax. First, Dr. Gall, Head of the Physiological and Experimental Department, reveals that he had, under the request of Helena, "changed" the Robots in some way, and that this change (which allowed them to experience "irritability" [41]) must be the reason for their revolt and for their hatred of humankind. Following this, the managers discover that they cannot use Rossum's Robot formula as a bargaining ploy since Helena has burned the manuscript, and hereafter follows a series of tragic scenes to "man." Lastly, the Robots storm the factory and kill all but Alquist who, as an architect, "works with his hands like the Robots" (49). The Epilogue details the events of one year later when Alquist—for all intents and purposes, the "last man"—has settled into his role as a human advisor and technician for the new Robot race. The Robots have discovered that, without the crucial details of the Rossum manuscript, they cannot reproduce themselves. After all, as Domin had first explained to Helena, the Robots were only built to last for twenty years, after which time they could easily be replaced by new ones. Now

without the manuscript, after humankind has been all but extinguished, Alquist must resort to dissecting the Robots to discover the source of their existence—a task that he has no stomach for.

Unlike either *Frankenstein* or *Moreau*, which begin with the travel narrative that has been a staple of SF since Poe and Swift, Čapek’s play is notable for its “semi-domestic” atmosphere, especially in the first two acts, and the overall “macabre farce” (Naughton 75) in which the traditional elements of melodrama blend unevenly with the paraliterary elements of utopian SF. This narrative strategy, which we might identify as a characteristically modernist one, provides an effective way of satirizing the naively romantic perceptions of the inventor and of the capitalist enterprise of mass production and automation. The first sequence of the first act is filled with general manager Harry Domin’s bombastic declamations to Helena about the Rossum legacy and his reverent descriptions of the “secret process” of Robot manufacture (*R. U. R.* 2)—a comic interlude that is heightened by the fact that Domin has no “aptitude for dates” (Bengels, “‘Read History’: Dehumanization in Karel Čapek’s *R.U.R.*” 14), no accurate historical knowledge, and therefore no real sense of the upheaval that such an industry will create. Indeed, even ten years later (Acts II and III), when the Robots are politicized, armed, and when they have surrounded the factory, Domin and most of the other managers seem surprised by the rebellion of these mimic humans and their ability to organize so effectively. (While it is true that the men *know* about the Robot rebellion, since the newspapers give reports on the events every day [Act II], they fall back on their original belief that the Robots could either be controlled or eradicated if the need arose.) It is ironic, then, that, early on, Domin disparages “Old Rossum” as a “fearful materialist” (5)



when his engineer son has not the ability to see in his successes the possible creation of a menace. To be sure, Old Rossum, whose attempt at an “artificial dog” turns into a “sort of stunted calf” (4), is a parodic nod to Shelley whose Frankenstein was himself something of a materialist and the creator of a botched superman. However, as part of the satire (or “macabre farce”), Domin just assumes that *newer is better* and that the “physiological horrors” (5) of the father would not be visited upon the son. John D. Naughton has argued that “Čapek portrays the danger that man’s inventiveness linked to materialist economic imperatives presents to his very survival as a species” (73). I would add that Čapek also satirizes the ways in which creativity is reduced to utility or what Wells had called the “acquired factor,” and, in an anticipation of SF’s ghettoization in the pulp magazine industry of the later 1920s and 1930s, the ways in which utopian critique is appropriated for profit.<sup>65</sup>

Like the Robots themselves—these “machinic assemblages” (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 88) of the late machine age—the history of *R. U. R.* and of the two Rossums in particular has been “sewn or mixed together” (*R. U. R.* 4). Domin suggests as much when he states: “What the school books say about the united efforts of

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<sup>65</sup> Hugo Gernsback’s *Amazing Stories*, launched in 1926, offered a type of fiction that was consciously “scientific,” hence Gernsback’s cumbersome neologism “scientifiction,” which had brief popularity before giving way to “science fiction” in the late 1920s. The magazine placed great emphasis on tales that featured scientific inventions of the future and that helped to popularize science. This editorial preference helped foster the “gadget story” and, often as a consequence, science-fictional “technolatry” (Anderson, “The Science” 218) and SF of very limited aesthetic and cognitive merit. In *The Poetics of Science Fiction* (2000), Peter Stockwell explores the (often narrow and confining) dimensions of “pulpstyle” (76-106), noting how the penny-a-word payment in the 1930s forced pulp writers to turn out as many stories a month as they could and, to maintain their popularity with editors and sometimes fickle fans, very few stories that deviated from the norm. As a result, many later SF writers and critics claim, the genre was not allowed to flourish on its own, cut off as it was from the literary mainstream. SF was, in effect, ghettoized (Ashley 58) in its limited role as propaganda for technology. For a lucid and entertaining discussion of the Gernsback era, see Mike Ashley’s informative book, *The Time Machines: The Story of the Science-Fiction Pulp Magazines from the Beginning to 1950* (2000).

the two great Rossums is all a fairy tale” (5). In his typically regurgitated style, Domin never stops to clarify whether what he is about to relate is itself the school book “fairy tale” or the truth, at least as he has been told. And, of course, here lies the (ironic and thus satirical) point: the history of the Robots’ origin, of the Rossum family, and even of humanity is carelessly and inaccurately represented, often without even the contrived planning of the typical (literary) fairy tale. As part of Čapek’s skilled scripting, it seems as though the characters/actors are unaware of their part in either the ridiculous melodrama or the dystopian fiction. Domin continues in this fashion:

They [the Rossums] used to have dreadful rows. The old atheist hadn’t the slightest conception of industrial matters, and the end of it was that young Rossum shut him up in some laboratory or other and let him fritter the time away with his monstrosities, while he himself started on the business from an engineer’s point of view. Old Rossum cursed him and before he died he managed to botch up two physiological horrors. Then one day they found him dead in the laboratory. And that’s his whole story. (5)

If this is not a fairy tale, it is certainly the stuff of gothic fiction, with its prominent motif of parental/offspring discord, curses on future generations, and family secrets being shut away (in a laboratory rather than the attic). We can only assume that both Rossums have since passed on, even while this is never confirmed; the “future” here is as fuzzy as the past. In Domin’s narrative we also discover the legacy of SF and the three literary descendents of the Rossums: Frankenstein, as the materialist and creator of monstrosities; Jekyll, as the chemist shut away, eventually found dead (in altered form) in his laboratory; and Moreau, as the more skilled engineer and indeed the successor of these older bunglers. Unlike Moreau, young Rossum has made the profession of creating pseudo-humans respectable, expanding the small island operation into a world-wide enterprise; but like Moreau, young Rossum fails to see what dangers he is creating for his

own world. Like the robots, the humans in Čapek's drama are "rootless, 'without history'; unlike the robots, who have never had a past, however, man simply can't be bothered to remember his traditions" (Bengels, "'Read History'" 13).

From the business perspective, Rossum's Robots are perfected humans, "simplified" in their anatomy (*R. U. R.* 5) and superior in intellect (6); from the spiritual side of things, the Robots are either "fallen" creatures, as Nana (Helena's maid) claims (20), or pre-Edenic, that is, without souls, as Domin claims (6). As changelings, however, the Robots appear to be both supernatural and unnatural, and they possess the uncanny ability (as speculative monsters, *engineered* or not) to behave in unpredictable ways. The first sign of this is an occasional malfunction, known as "Robot's cramp," in which a Robot throws down his work, stands stock still, and gnashes his teeth. To Domin and the others, this seems innocuous enough, like a slight case of epilepsy (14). For Helena, however, the "cramp" is the first indication of "revolt" and promises a rebellion in both body and mind ("a struggle within," as Helena suggests and accurately predicts). On the one hand, the Rossum enterprise discovers a successful way to code a massive population, creating a factory that produces perfectly obedient workers and effective law enforcement officers (as Act II reveals). On the other hand, the rootless nature of Rossum's Robots allows them to detach themselves from their creators, to reject their artificial relations with a "father" that *is* so only in name (Rossum): both history and genealogy are therefore undermined. While they may be sexless and asexual, and while they may not, as Nana remarks, have "any young [i.e., offspring]" (20), the Robots nevertheless possess a hybrid vigour (Stross 256-57), which depends on contingent alliances rather than conjugation. The individual Robot itself, as we see in the case of

Marius and Sulla, has the capacity to proliferate into other forms. Domin admits that he and his colleagues thought “Marius” and “Sulla” were the names of “lovers,” but Helena corrects him on yet another of his historical inaccuracies, even while her own knowledge has its gaps: “Marius and Sulla were generals and fought against each other in the year—I’ve forgotten now” (*R. U. R.* 9). We can supply the date of ca. 112-107 B. C., but the essential point to note here is that the “coding” of these robots (which I consider in more detail below) is limited insofar as no real *affiliation* is maintained. As a collective, these changelings “form a multiplicity, a becoming, a population, a tale” (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 241), and ultimately a fusion of past and future personae.

In her illuminating essay, “The Folktale, Wells, and Modern Science Fiction,” Tatyana Chernysheva reiterates the point that the science-fictional adaptation of older forms like the folktale creates a new fusion, which can alter our perception of both traditional and modern knowledge:

The point is not [...] merely playing with folktale motifs [...] The point is primarily that in modern science fiction, as in Wells, the folktale is an indispensable constructive element for creating new science-fictional imagery [...] The ideas and figures of science fiction are created by a complex fusion of newest scientific and technical knowledge, fabulous wonders, and sometimes even medieval mysticism. (41)

Čapek’s Robots—pseudo-humans born as test-tube babies but conjured up in the laboratory of a “mad” scientist (*R. U. R.* 5)—may evoke for us the figure of Frankenstein’s monster (with the exception of his seamed and scarred visage), but they also recall an older mythological figure: the Jewish *golem* (upon which many believe *Frankenstein* itself was based). According to the legend, Rabbi Loew (c. 1520-1609) formed a golem of clay and water and brought it to life “by means of Kabbalistic

incantation and ritual” (Comrada 245). In her article, “Golem and Robot: A Search for Connections,” Norma Comrada lists the points of correspondence between the golem and the robot: “both were created by humans, their creation encompassed both material and mystical elements, and both were created to serve humankind” (244). Comrada concludes by noting that, while the Rabbi intended his creation only for good, the Young Rossum has only profit and the doctrine of endless production in mind. Her brief comparative study leaves two points to ponder: that, as in the golem legend, Rossum perverts a potentially benevolent and utopian dream into a malevolent nightmare, which I would classify as a *technotopia*; and that the construction of the Robots evokes the Judeo/Christian mythology of Eden. Moreover, in its magical conjuration from clay, the golem is linked with the biblical story of creation (246) and therefore gives a religious dimension to the production of Robots, hinted at throughout the play and reinforced in the Edenic denouement (*R. U. R.* 58). But we should also remember that the changeling (of which, I am arguing, the Robot and the golem are two additional enunciations) was, on the one hand, thought to have been the result of a divine intervention, and, on the other (especially in the days of Luther), a mutation and *imitation* inspired by Satan.

Additionally, we should recall that Frankenstein, Jekyll, and Moreau all assume god-like roles, but, in their willingness to dispense with accepted morality, exemplify satanic pride. At the same time, these creators, at least for a time (and in the case of Moreau, completely and fatally), lose control of their creations whose rebellion and perversity evoke, for the nineteenth-century reader (as for the twentieth), the characteristics of a *fallen* nature. Once again, we can attribute the success of this rebellion to the fact that Domin and Co. (excepting Alquist, perhaps, whom I discuss below) seem largely

unaware that they are following a pattern (in history, in religion, in literature) that was established long before them. Helena's devout maid, Nana, is convinced that the Rossum enterprise is "against God's will," calling the Robots "heathen," complaining that "Radius" is not a "Christian name" (20), and claiming that the low human birth rate is a "punishment" from God (24) and a sign of the "end of the world" (25). Perhaps, in a certain sense, Nana is right: the "world," as Domin and the others know it, is coming to an end. And perhaps, if we follow Chernysheva's argument, the original fantasy of "playing with [...] motifs" has led to a "fusion" of old and new and the emergence of entirely unforeseen social relations.

Čapek, then, does not indulge in apocalyptic nihilism, opting for an open-ended and, perhaps we might even say, *Wellsian* conclusion to his play (if we recall how Prendick's world still reverberates with the memory of Moreau's island and how Wells's changeling personae deterritorialize in the very moment of their reversion). There are the moments of pathos, when Hallemeier, for example, eulogizes, "It was a great thing to be a man. There was something immense about it" (*R. U. R.* 47), and, after this, when the Robots enter the factory and kill all but the architect Alquist (49). Amid the pathetic melodrama, we also have a genuine paean to the human spirit, which, despite all attempts to "simplify" it, ultimately infects the Robots with a will to survive and promises, just before the fall of the curtain, a new riot of creativity. Moreover, the apocalyptic gloom that hangs over the second and third acts derives from the realization that humans have substituted their humanity for automated living, and that the Robots have, quite *naturally*, assumed the vital role of "Lord[s] of Creation" (16). What causes the most difficulty with this development, however, is how the Robots regress by reterritorializing on the very

ideology that had made them slaves in the first place: the doctrinal faith in endless production: “Work must not be stopped” (34). My subsequent analyses of *R. U. R.*, then, focus on the ways in which Čapek’s conceptual personae (Robots, but also Newts, as the next section reveals) explore the possibilities of/differences between *natural* spontaneous mutations of the “changeling” type (congenital, etc.) and *unnatural* or engineered mutations of the “Frankenstein” type. What remains for us to consider is how, in finally rejecting the Rossum ideology, these SF changelings evolve “into sentient beings capable of compassion, wonder, love—and reproduction” (Comrada 248).

As part of the play’s rising action, it is revealed that Robot soldiers have been mobilized (Act II). Now the Robots have assumed the roles of labourers, law enforcement, and therefore State authority: the coding of a population has been perfected since the Robots cannot *technically* contradict orders. This molecular aggregate operates now (as the newspapers nervously report) in the form of a controlled contagion. They “spare no-body in the occ-up-ied terr-it-ory” (*R. U. R.* 24), Nana reads in halting fashion. Are the organized Robots who commit these slaughters obeying orders? They are following through with their orders with brutal efficiency. If the intention of *R. U. R.* was to replace all human workers, an exploitative system is already in place to give *whatever* entity may be employed the extra push towards rebellion. The wars may make no “sense,” as Nana claims (24), but they have a perfect logic: *code* a population, institute exploitative labour, and condition the population into efficient “workers,” whose very exploitation is the beginning and end of the Roboticized (human-run) regime of labour. Helena continues to read the reports: “During the past week there has again not been a single birth recorded.” Nana insists that this low birth rate is a “punishment,” but, again, it

is the logical outcome of coding a non-reproductive population that has been built in order to relieve humans of all *labour*—including, as it happens, that involving the creation of offspring. Sterility, then, is what comes of replacing humans with Robots—that and the nurturing of a fascist mind: “I don’t want a master,” says Radius, the eventual leader of this proletariat dictatorship. “I want to be a master. I want to be master over others” (27). The Robots truly become a “contagion” (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 247) in the sense that, while they are produced in droves (and operate, in some ways, as ant-like drones), they (like Frankenstein’s monster and Jekyll’s Hyde) reproduce nothing but their own divergent art, which involves the destruction of “statues and pictures” (*R. U. R.* 20), but also the wrecking of the machinic assemblage that first mixed them up in “vats for the preparation of liver, brains, and so on” (10). As in the changeling tales discussed in Chapter 1, the *substitution* of Robot for human, and the hybridized man-machine born as the result, does not lead to the further propagation of either human or Robot, but an unforeseen divergence of both species: the “Robot” (as first designed by Rossum, and perhaps as first coined by Joseph Čapek) is not what it was intended to be.

To elaborate, from a purely technical point of view, the Robots triumph over the Rossum managers (and therefore humanity) not because events do not occur as expected but because they happen with a *velocity* that is unpredictable: the Robots arrive more quickly than expected and from a direction that could not have been foreseen (in the form of a mobilized mass, which commandeers equipment and weapons, and which converges through apertures and open windows [cf. stage directions, *R. U. R.* 49]). Hallemeier at one point praises “punctuality”: “The time-table is more significant than the gospel; more than Homer, more than the whole of Kant. The time-table is the most perfect product of the



human mind” (32). And, we could add, the time-table is further perfected by Robot labour. But of course Hallemeier has not figured in the passage of time, of time’s endurance, of its physical growth and coverage of *space*: he has not counted on the fact that *nature* is “the antagonist of order” (Eagle 39). While Domin tries to assure Helena that everything has been timed (*R. U. R.* 32), the revolution—by its very definition—undermines this punctuality through the force of its *speed*: time is sped up by the intensive coverage of space, and the escape route is closed off by the wrong-headed reliance on time as an *immobile* calculation (Bergson 1-2).

At this point (and, not for the first time) we need to consider how much ideological mystification muddles the Robot revolution (see Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 272) and how “rebellion” so easily becomes reterritorialized as war mongering, or as a celebration of the “New Man” who would eliminate the Old one. The Robots’ operation as an organized war machine hinders the possibility of an enduring hybrid vigour as it drives towards the extermination of the species that has exploited it. This is, of course, part of Čapek’s satirical scope: that the utopian creation of artificial life would be accomplished only at the expense of natural life. On the one hand, Čapek satirizes the capitalist ideology of controlled labour which would remove the physical (human) possibility of a proletarian revolution. On the other hand, once the revolution erupts, the celebration of the Robot’s superiority is exposed as a fascist (both Left and Right wing) fetishism for purity (and this is, once again, an anticipation of *War with the Newts*). In other words, Rossum’s experiment *requires* mechanical flaws in order for it to maintain adaptability, flexibility, and a rejuvenating and empowering (rather than an atrophying and annihilating) force. The obsession with production, then, restricts creativity and thus

divergence. Radius exemplifies the hubris of knowledge/power over wisdom/flexibility, that is, the mere accumulation of information over the adaptability of information for the good of all. But we must remember (as we recall Čapek's satirical bent) that the Robots begin their career (as other changelings have in the past) by serving the needs of the privileged group in society who enjoys the novelty (Roboticized or automated labour) insofar as it can be made useful. Rossum's *end product* truncates the "cognitive horizon" (Suvin, *Positions* 87) of the experiment to modify the human species. Struggling to find answers for the disastrous turn of events, Dr. Gall speculates: "You might think that nature was offended at the manufacture of the Robots" (*R. U. R.* 28-29). He may be right if we understand "nature" to be the force that causes organisms to evolve and diverge constantly rather than remain stuck in rigid schemas. Following Gall's sentiment, Nana reflects that all "these new-fangled things are an offense to the Lord" (29). While she says this in response to Helena's act of burning of the Rossum manuscript, Helena's intention is not to prevent *invention* (in the creative sense of *mutation*) but rather to encourage it since the papers, which contain the blueprints for Robot manufacture, serve only to reproduce a faceless servile mass and not individualized entities.

Coming back to the issue of natural/unnatural invention, we find that the difference in the first instance is between the *mechanism* of evolution and the *manipulation* of that mechanism: the manipulator (Rossum) is then understood also as an inventor. However, "invention" also relates to the uncontrolled process by which organisms evolve in sometimes sudden bursts, or mutations. It is apparent, then, that *invention* can be both a spontaneous and willed event, and that the *inventor* is still at the mercy of nature's indiscernible will. For, as Deleuze and Guattari write, "Creations are

like mutant abstract lines that have detached themselves from the task of representing the world, because they assemble a new type of reality that history can only recontain or relocate in punctual systems” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 296). Recalling the final section of Chapter 3, we find that Wells focuses his speculations on a *collective* population’s “undirected” human evolution, which, in one instance, leads to a gruesome overturning of the Spencerian, progressionist faith in the survival of the “fittest” where the deformed outcasts of society prey on the beautiful elite (*The Time Machine*), and, in another instance, leads to a liberating release from the “shackles of humanity” where beast and human alike are allowed to embrace their animal instincts (*Moreau*). As one of Wells’s literary descendents, Čapek reiterates the tendency for collectivity to rigidify into ideological domination when it uses the rule of Law (in the case of *R. U. R.*, the engineered biology of young Rossum) to turn the divergence from the norm into an ideology of purity, strength, and racial perfection.

*R. U. R.* speculates on the nightmarish possibilities of an automation that would produce a “hundred thousand faces all alike, all facing this way. A hundred thousand expressionless bubbles” (37). While the denouement is certainly dystopian in tone, both the near extermination of the human race and the failure of the Robots’ supremacy over their former masters lead to a new understanding between Alquist, the “last man,” and the Robot lovers, Primus and Helena (the Robot masters’ homage to one of the few “flesh and blood” humans). Radius, the powerful leader of the Robot revolution, which learns to dominate and overcome through its collectivity, discovers that he is perhaps more vulnerable than his new human ally. So while it is true that humans could not be successful without Robot labour, Robot longevity is dependent upon human ingenuity.

After all, Robots were built with only a twenty-year life-span, and they cannot thrive as a species without the creation of new Robots. However, in probably the most touching scene of the play, two Robots engage in what, to most audiences, resembles human courtship. Hearing laughter, Alquist awakes out his present stupor and insists that he experiment on one of them. Surprisingly, each Robot refuses to let the other come to harm. Alquist, the last man and perhaps the only truly “good” man among the Rossum managers, discovers that, in the situation where *production* is limited (since the Robots cannot *reproduce*), creativity begins to blossom, and that, in the situation where the Robot organism is threatened (57), love and compassion begin to thrive. All along, then, or at least ever since Dr. Gall had “changed” the Robots by giving them more acute pain centers and the ability to become “irritable” (41), a transformation was in the works. But, as Bakhtin has argued, “Metamorphosis or transformation is a mythological sheath for the idea of development—but one that unfolds not so much in a straight line as spasmodically, a line with ‘knots’ in it, one that therefore constitutes a distinctive type of *temporal sequence*” (113; original emphases). The Robot cramp functions as one of these “knots,” or as a spasmodic divergence from the otherwise straight line of development. For while the original Czech phrase for “Robot cramp,” “*křeč robot*” (from the original play text), “has multiple associations,” it “may be translated as ‘cramp,’ ‘spasm,’ or ‘convulsion.’ *Křeč* may be associated with pain and with orgasmic pleasure” (Kinyon 384). Indeed, the Robots’ original “irritability” signals a rebellion against automation, which has the goal of reducing creativity and therefore *sexual drive*. The “cramp” indeed becomes a “spasm” in the final sequence of the play when Alquist discovers, to his surprise, that his Robot lovers may after all have the capacity to *reproduce*.

In a parodic nod to the creation myth (and perhaps an anticipation of Shaw's *Back to Methuselah* [1921]), Čapek ends his play in a re-imagined garden of Eden. Assuming the role of the Edenic Creator, Alquist offers the Robot lovers Primus and Helena his blessing: "Go, Adam, go, Eve. The world is yours" (*R. U. R.* 58). There is, of course, a certain wonderful irony in this command, which comes from this would-be god-in-the-garden. For this reason, I completely disagree with Kamila Kinyon's argument that Alquist's evocation of the Genesis "be fruitful and multiply" sentiment re-constitutes an ideological investment in a *dominion over the earth*, which had led to the Robot massacre in the first place. As she argues in her article, "The Phenomenology of Robots: Confrontations with Death in Karel Čapek's *R. U. R.*": "Having admired the humble and altruistic nature of Primus' behavior, Alquist ironically reverts to an obsession with dominion. He claims victoriously that man will once again become lord of the universe" (381). Kinyon reinforces this argument in her conclusion: "in line with the progression of the Hegelian dialectic, a universal duty is accepted, the submission to the higher master, God" (395). Alquist's final statement is indeed "ironic" since it is uttered by an individual who is very reluctant to assume a god-like role and who is, for that matter, very uncertain as to his own "dissecting" skills. Unlike Moreau, Alquist is actually squeamish about causing these creatures pain; such an attitude already raises the Robot's status from automaton to human. Also, while the Robots are highly dependent upon human ingenuity, it is difficult to determine who or what has been responsible for the Robots' subsequent development: the "Robot cramp" turns out to be the equivalent of an evolutionary mutation, which has happened spontaneously rather than through an engineered effort. Moreover, far from being obsessed with dominion, Alquist is in awe of the new

organisms that will reclaim the earth; but they are hardly “humans”: they are very much hybrid creatures, for while they are composed of synthetic human-like materials, they are of an entirely different order. So what *victory* does Alquist claim in this final scene? As the stage directions indicate, Alquist says these words “almost in tears” (*R. U. R.* 58), which reinforces that he has *relinquished* dominion and that “man” has finally served his time as the dominant species. “Dominion” of one species over the other has been undermined by the very fact that the new inheritors of the earth are a product of a human-Robot intermixture. It is in this hybridization of the two species that the Hegelian dialectic is subverted, and this subversion is announced specifically in Alquist’s evocation of Genesis. For parody is used throughout the play to satirize faith in history, journalistic accuracy, and the Hegelian dialectic itself, not to mention the melodramatic mode, which tends to include an idealized and unrealistic denouement. Far from reclaiming the Hegelian dialectic, Alquist parodically repeats both the biblical and Hegelian notions of human dominion over “others,” placing nonhuman entities in the position of the human “Adam” and “Eve.” Following William Harkins’s comments on Alquist’s “philosophy of creative work” (93), we could conclude that Alquist and not Old Rossum has discovered something divine in the Robots, something miraculous in their will to survive, in their will to assert their individuality, and in their will to *create* in this raw, new world. The hybrid vigour of these changed Robots constitutes the “becoming” of Čapek’s science-fictional changeling, that is, the evolution of a new conceptual persona, which has become—from C. L. Moore (“No Woman Born” [1944]) to Jack Williamson (*The Humanoids* [1948]) to Isaac Asimov (*I, Robot* [1950] and his “Robot” series [1953-86]) to Philip K. Dick (*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* [1968]) to Brian Aldiss

(“Supertoys Last All Summer Long” [1969])—one of the most recognizable SF personae in the genre.

## II. *War with the Newts*: the Changeling as Evolved Salamander

If, as Harkins has argued, Čapek’s writings of the 1910s and early 1920s exemplify an “ethical relativism,” or the “discovery of the freedom, richness, and variety of a relativist world” (72), hinted at in the conclusion of *R. U. R.*, then his writings of the 1930s reveal the potential destructiveness that this very freedom unleashes from time to time. But Čapek’s wholesale faith in a relativist “freedom” was already changing in the years following the composition of *R. U. R.*. In *The Life of the Insects* (1921), for example, the idea of a relativist world is exposed as a sham, especially when militant territorialism, exhibited by the ants of the third act, leads to the exploitation of the “freedom” touted in such a philosophy. In other words, in the relativist world, one may be “right” at the expense of another. To be sure, Čapek’s “entomological review” presents a rich catalogue of nature from the perspective of the minute insect world, employing light humor and lyric tonalities in his homage to the mysteries of evolution. On the other hand, his satirical use of insect personae as enunciations of philosophical problems exposes the dark, primeval currents in the “struggle for life” found in nature. Right from the Prologue, Čapek satirizes the *human* belief that “nature” is something that can be observed from a distanced position, as if we could, like the Lepidopterist, discover truths simply by pinning butterflies to a corkboard (*The Life of the Insects* 6). Elaborating on this perspective, Čapek then targets both the poet “butterflies” who “grow tired of life” without having lived it and the flighty “butterflies” who never grow tired of living in the

moment and have no thought for the future (Act I); these Aesopian figures are, despite their differing views on “love” and “experience,” the “bright young things” of Evelyn Waugh’s best work (*Vile Bodies* [1930] comes to mind) and offer a satiric portrait of the complacent (“roaring”) post-WWI era. After this, Čapek turns to the bourgeois beetles’ concerns with capital accumulation, the aristocratic flies’ concern with luxury (Act II), and the militant-fascist ants’ obsession with racial superiority, deathful inventions, and territory (Act III). There is complexity in this “review,” however; not simply the complexity of nature’s quiet and mysterious stirrings (as in the case of the “chrysalis” of the play), but also the complexity of the human relationship with nature, our contiguity with the instinctual struggle to survive and thrive, and our willingness to exploit and kill in the name of survival; and not simply this, but the ways in which the beetles are both *real* beetles and also analogies to humans, the ways in which the ants are *real* ants and also analogies to a certain type of human-inspired ideology. Moreover, the presence of the Tramp in the drama, as Čapek tried to remind his readers/audiences in the preface to his later play, *The Macropulos Secret* (1927), indicated that “man” was being represented alongside the rest of nature (“Preface” 3): this “not only”/“but also” hermeneutic (Suvin, *Positions* 46) means that man is not only man but also man becoming-insect, and that the beetle is not only beetle but also beetle becoming-man. *The Life of the Insects*, then, is one of Čapek’s most provocative attempts at “doing philosophy,” as Deleuze and Guattari would have it, through the conceptual personae of insects.

His most successful and masterful use of animal personae is the great satirical work, *War with the Newts* (1936), produced almost on the eve of Nazi Germany’s invasion of Czechoslovakia: for the Munich agreement of 1938 promised that both



France's Daladier and Britain's Chamberlain would not interfere with Hitler's militant expansionism. In this work, Čapek is more suspicious of "human ingenuity" since, even more so than *R. U. R.*, "invention" is what ultimately leads to the destruction of the human world. While *R. U. R.* seems to engage more readily with the *Übermensch* ideology of eugenics, given its focus on the superhumans that would eventually become associated with the impermeable "men of steel" (Gomel 402), *War with the Newts* offers the dire warning that the "New Man" has actually begun to take shape in the form of National Socialism. And even more so than the 1920 play, Čapek's 1936 novel depicts the present political climate in which the exploitation, pain, and psychological torture of the "little men" contribute to the "phantasmagoric wholeness," or racial purity, of the New Man (Gomel 406). Indeed, the Newts, too, are "robots" of a kind since they are co-opted as a slave-labour contingent; but it is their sublime suffering that contributes to the wholeness of the nation-states who recruit them. Unlike *R. U. R.*, a brief summary of the novel will not suffice, especially given the density of events in the book, including the Newts' strange but frighteningly plausible (because *scientifically possible*) evolution. What follows then is a fairly detailed plot summary which takes into account the novel's three-book structure and the Newts' progress from exotic animal to scientific anomaly to sensational side-show entertainment to assimilated citizenry to labour force and finally to "Collective Male" horde (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 278).

Book One, "Andrias Scheuchzeri," tells of Captain J. van Toch's discovery of the Newts in Devil Bay, off the island of Tanah Masa, west of Sumatra, Indonesia while hunting for pearls (ch. 1). To his great delight, van Toch discovers that these strange Salamanders have the ability to grasp objects such as pearls, walk upright, and understand

human forms of communication. The Czech van Toch approaches his fellow countryman, business tycoon G. H. Bondy (chs. 3-4), to obtain some financial backing for his burgeoning pearl enterprise. Van Toch boasts, with a kind paternal pride, that he will “tame” these “lizards” to hunt pearls on other unexplored islands and as a favour will supply them with knives so that they can protect themselves against sharks, their natural predator. As a result of their new survival skills, the Newts begin to multiply at an incredible rate, a biological fact that is never fully considered until the Newts become a “problem.” The two homonymous chapters in book one, “Andrias Scheuchzeri” (ch. 8) and “Andrew Scheuchzer” (ch. 9), focus on the scientific community’s analysis of the Newt phenomenon and the eventual discovery by the world that Newts can acquire language. The first name refers to the scientist Johannes Jakub Scheuchzer who (according to actual historical documents, cf. Test 5) discovered fossil remains of a rare Salamander in 1726, and whose findings seem to confirm that van Toch’s “tapa boys” are indeed of the *Andrias Scheuchzeri* genus. The second name refers to the individual Newt who, from inside his zoo cage, begins to imitate human speech and ideas. “Andrew” then undergoes a series of speech tests, the results of which prove that Newts are of average intelligence. Sadly, Andy succumbs to “catarrh of the stomach and intestines” after being fed too much chocolate by visiting children; as the wry narrator concludes, the Newt “perished of the consequences of his popularity” (*War with the Newts* 79). After a brief chapter detailing the old Captain’s side-show of “trained lizards” (ch. 10), and another speculating on the sped-up evolution of these “men-lizards” (ch. 11), we have the crucial chapter, “The Salamander Syndicate” (ch. 12), in which Bondy, the Chairman of the Pacific Export Association, proposes to transform van Toch’s romantic but finally “short-

sighted” enterprise by exploiting the “latent” labour force of this now gargantuan Newt population (at six million and expanding ever outward). The first book ends with a provocative “Appendix” on the “sexual life” of the Newts. Book two, titled “Along the Steps of Civilization,” is partly based on a large mass of newspaper documents and articles collected by the only recurring character, Mr. Povondra (ch. 1), the porter who first allowed van Toch to enter Bondy’s offices. The larger “annals” of the Newts (the very long ch. 2) is a multi-authored compendium detailing (not always in the correct order) momentous events, such as the colonization of new islands (in the wake of the Syndicate of book one) and the setting up of Newt incubators (117); the persistence of a lucrative Salamander trade, beginning in the days of Captain van Toch (124); the gradual development of the “Newt problem” (138) related to the ambiguity surrounding their origin and their current political and religious affiliations; and the development of Newt labour and Newt-built machines for the construction of dams. Book three, “War with the Newts,” constitutes the culmination of the “Newt problem” and the inevitable conflicts that occur between Newt populations of different nations. The first three chapters are brief reports on the outbreak of skirmishes, and are followed by a chapter on the Baltic Newt, which is proclaimed by German nationalists to be “superior to all the other Salamanders”—indeed, a “German Super-Newt” (193). While tensions rise between nations, and political theorists speculate on the future of both *Andrias Scheuchzeri* and *Homo sapiens* (chs. 5-6), a series of earthquakes erupt in Louisiana, China, and other places across the world (chs. 7-8), bringing the superpowers of the world to their knees. Then the “Chief Salamander” makes his demands (ch. 8) and when they are not met, the Newts (with their own manufactured underwater drills) proceed to make new continents,

effectively submerging the better part of the globe in water. In the final chapter of the book the author talks to his “inner voice” about how he should end the tale, and ultimately leaves the narrative open-ended.

Like *The Absolute at Large*, *War with the Newts* is a variation on the *roman feuilleton*, which is a “brilliant pastiche of the most diverse kinds of writing: newspaper articles, memoirs, scholarly works, manifestoes, etc.” (Harkins 95). Chapter eight of the first book and the entire second book contain excerpts of scientific reports, including a close facsimile of a Newt skeleton (*War with the Newts* 69); an eighteenth-century manuscript with the original typeface (87); footnotes that contain news dispatches with their own typeface or font (115-119, 131-33, 144-49); a report printed in an “unknown tongue” but which teasingly contains the words “Salaam Ander” (119-20); fragments from the censored Newt manifesto (158); tiny extracts from the imitation manifestoes, printed in various languages from the perspective of varying ideologies (159); and other sundry minutes and extracts of meetings and conferences. Additionally, Čapek masterfully incorporates the heteroglossic utterances of the peoples who inhabit the book—everything from the brawling sea-slang of van Toch with its Czech inflections (which he tries to hide), to the lilting and proverbial brogue of the Irishman Dingle, who is one of van Toch’s crew members in the early days of the Newt enterprise (ch. 5), to the academic-speak of the scientists and the news-speak of the journalists, and finally, to the strange “ts, ts” sounds that emit from the Newts before they acquire human language (52-53, 56-57). All of this—the catalogue of typeface and tongues—contributes to the babbling confusion of the book’s middle section and its catastrophic close, and forms the texture of what most critics have dubbed a “dystopian” work. However, as George Test

noted in one of the earliest English-language articles on the book, while there are some now obvious connections between *War with the Newts* and the two other major dystopian satires of the era, *Brave New World* (1932) and *1984* (1949),

Čapek's concerns are much more mundane, fictionally speaking. His Newts fit into the scheme of things as they are. Life goes on as it always has, only more so. Business prospers, governments govern, education, religion and science flourish. But one day life ends terrifyingly in a watery grave. No one seizes power, no one applies behaviouristic psychology. The forces and institutions of society merely destroy themselves. No hedonistic new society, no pathological coercion of man's mind. Only God's voice over the silent deep. Who is responsible? No one. Everyone. We have met the enemy and he is us. (9)

I would add to this that, like *R. U. R.*, Čapek's later novel introduces into the "mundane" world an estranging "novum" (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 64)—the Newt—which functions for a good deal of time simply as sensational entertainment. Only when the world returns to its mundane concerns, when the Newts have been absorbed into daily life like so many immigrant labourers, does the novelty come into focus again, this time as a threat to the most deeply held values, and therefore to the *cognition*, of a complacent society (Mr. Bondy's and Mr. Povondra's Czechoslovakia) and world. While the novel itself brims with knowledge (facts, speculations, neat articulations of theories), the personae that populate it grasp only small portions of the text—and now the Newt-infested world—in which they live.

While it is true, as Suvin argues, that the Newts enter "the life of mankind [...]" under a cloud of delusions and misperceptions" (*Metamorphoses* 276), there is no shortage of scientific studies and learned scholarly articles on Newt biology and their evolutionary past. Two chapters in book one (chs. 8 and 11) as well as the Appendix include a handful of analyses dealing with fossil remains and theories on salamander

genera, the Newts' evolution, and the social and sexual life of the Newts. While one intellectual claims that the Newts are "unscientific humbug and sheer fantasy" (*War with the Newts* 67), two others speculate that the *Andrias Scheuchzeri* may be "antediluvian man" (70) or "Miocene man" (89). In these opposing views lie two kinds of warnings: on the one hand, an academic scolds his peers for engaging in sensational mythologizing; on the other hand, two academics strive earnestly to write about the facts as they appear, to enlighten, and to engage in a "learned discussion" (90) that may prevent future "delusions and misperceptions." However, one of the issues that plagues the Newt "problem" of the second book (indeed, the issue that contributes to it) is the dispute over the *identity* of this unusual salamander species. As we learn in the first scientific chapter of the first book ("Andrias Scheuchzeri"), scientists from all across the world "discover" their own genus of Newts and begin to wage "a most ferocious war with the giant salamanders of other countries" (72). The word choice here is meant to indicate not only the "war of words" that erupts in the scientific community but also the ways in which the Babylonian confusion of tongues can undermine the goal of sharing knowledge. But Čapek is not so prejudiced as to suggest a universal translation: indeed the proliferation of Newt genera deriving from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century explorations of the South and Central Pacific—the *Megatrion moluccanus* from the Dutch Sunda islands Dgillo, Morotai, and Ceram; the *Cryptobranchus salamandriodes* from the French islands Takaroa, Rangiroa and Raroire; and the *Pelagotrion Spencei* from the English Gilbert islands (*War with the Newts* 71)—indicates how such a translation has already been at work in the desire to name everything for the glory of king and empire and in the language of science. In this initial instance at least, the Newt is important insofar as it has distinct and verifiable

affiliations; the subject of the Salamander genera is important insofar as it is a *legitimate* field of study, and this status is reached when scientists become the “fathers” of their discoveries—Johannes Jakob Scheuchzer gives birth to *Andrias Scheuchzeri*, H. W. Spencer (perhaps a parodic nod to the noted Social Darwinist, Herbert Spencer) gives birth to *Pelagotriton Spencei*, and so forth. The “war” that is waged, then, is one between potential patriarchs, and it indicates the ways in which chauvinistic politics instigate cultural wars between nations. As a result of these disputes, our narrator concludes, “right up to the last, on the scientific side there was not enough light shed upon the whole big question of the salamanders” (72).

The great irony of the second book, “Along the Steps of Civilization,” is that while the “progress” first initiated by Bondy’s Syndicate has moved forward, much of the more significant research on Newt biology has been forgotten if not completely ignored. “Along the Steps of Civilization” really means *along the steps to war* (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 278), and this war is the consequence of the failure to consider fully the possible “future” of the Newt. This crucial middle section, which, as the narrator indicates in its first chapter, consists largely of the “annals of the newts” (*War with the Newts* 114-15), is a refraction of countless view points and is characterized by an almost haphazard fragmentation of logic and sense. The narrator (whom we cannot so easily identify since, as a footnote suggests [115], the sources for the “annals” are many) apparently gives no thought to the matter that this history is incomplete, but confidently asserts that “the making of history [...] takes place wholesale” (115-16). In support of old Bondy’s strong belief that “Utopia” is possible through economic enterprise, the narrator adds that “we cannot simply wait some hundreds of years for something either good or bad to happen in

the world” (116). The control mechanism required to contain this mass of documents known as “history” is turned towards the Newts themselves who remain scattered about the globe: through the machinery of incubators, the Salamander Trade (124), and universal Newt education (138-50), the Newts are organized into a “story” about *human* progress. Additionally, the Salamander Syndicate formulates its own division of labour among the Newts, resulting in an almost universal “commercial slang” designating Newts as a “leadings” (the more intelligent Newts trained as group leaders); a “heavy” (the strong active Newts, usually sold in sixes, trained for the heaviest work); a “team” (the ordinary working Newts sold in groups of twenty, trained for lighter work such as dredging dams); “odd jobs” (“half wild” Newts that resemble a “lower proletariat” and can also be trained for other roles such as “trash,” “heavy,” or “leading”); “trash” (inferior or defective Newts whose role remains uncertain); and “spawn” (which means simply “Newt fry” or the young Newt tadpoles) (121-22). To be sure, the Newts appear to be the property of *everyone*, and indeed the construction of Newt “incubators” for the purpose of increasing the salamander population and colonizing new islands and new worlds contributes to the global enterprise of a Newt-dominated world. The rational and optimistic narrator of the “Annals” boasts that “Nature is not and never has been as enterprising and systematic as human industry and commerce” (117). However, as with previous changelings, the Newt pops up in rhizomatic fashion, giving the skewed impression that he has *just begun* his career—as pearl hunter, film monster, dam builder, or circus performer—when he has been employed by *Nature* for centuries in any number of operations. After the war of words in the first book, *Andrias Scheuchzeri* still exists in a shroud of mystery, child of everyone and of no one.



If the “annals” are basically non-linear in structure, as the omniscient narrator describes in a lengthy disclaimer (*War with the Newts* 114), the voice of this work would have us believe that, as Bondy had proclaimed in the famed Salamander Syndicate, “the future of the Newts is beyond all doubt” (99). However, because history contains alternate avenues, unforeseen tangents, and dangerous quagmires; because history consists of co-existing planes in which time moves forward while events erupt in unpredictable directions; because, therefore, agents fall back on or deterritorialize in opposition to the course of history, a doctrinal faith in official History is not only limited but dangerous. Unlike the writers of the “annals,” then, we must return to the moments in which the Newts’ history already shows signs of diverging from the norm, and the moments in which this divergence begins to graft itself onto the history (and evolution) of *Homo sapiens*. The first moment, which occurs in Chapter 11 of book one, may be a parodic reminder of Čapek’s earlier “vitalist” works, sparkling as it does with the Bergsonian intonations about “a striking mutation in actual progress” (85) or the endlessness of Nature’s “creative work” (86). It is perhaps too hasty to conclude that vitalism was a mere stage in Čapek’s writing, especially since much of the satire in this work points to the inability to *foresee* the workings of “creative evolution” or the “life force” that operates despite our belief in the eternal laws of science. “[T]here is no universal biological law,” Bergson writes, “which applies precisely and automatically to every living thing. There are only *directions* in which life throws out species in general” (16). Professor Vladimír Uher, whose findings are summarized in this scholarly chapter provocatively titled “Men-Lizards,” writes in a similar spirit when he speculates on the possibility that some “powerful vital élan [...] suddenly [...] revived the archaic existence

of a primitive creature”—indeed “one almost already extinct” (*War with the Newts* 85). His theory begins to blossom: If the Newt had evolved in what appears to be an almost spontaneous mutation, perhaps as a way of making up for “those hundreds of thousands and millions of years of evolution that it had missed” (89), what was it still capable of? Was it indeed still capable of catching up to man or, given its unpredictable “vital élan,” even surpassing him? These are *speculations*, of course, exuberant ruminations resulting from an undated (but likely early eighteenth-century) newspaper report Professor Uher was given describing a crew’s discovery of strange salamanders fitting the description of *Andrias Scheuchzeri*. Provocatively, the report tells of how, after the men hunt down most of the salamanders and slay them, two live ones are brought aboard but, as the ship is crossing near Sumatra, ultimately escape from the casks in which they have been imprisoned, climb out the windows of the “steerage,” and throw themselves into the water (87). This fragment, while certainly *apocryphal*, exists alongside other similarly speculative theories about the Newts’ history, and offers both a confirmation that *some* Newts may indeed have derived from the South Pacific as well as a counter to the belief that Captain van Toch was indeed their “liberator” (Test 3). In this alternate “history,” the Newts display early signs that, like Rossum’s Robots, they can “revolt” when provoked by either nature or man. But, Uher discovers, “man” is not interested in a *story* that has ceased to be fashionable, a sentiment that displays the first signs of his own dwindling “life force.” Convinced that his readers have become “*tired to death* of those newts” and opting instead for something “*fresh*” (*War with the Newts* 89-90; my emphases), the editor of the *Lidové Noviny* rejects Professor Uher’s “learned discussion” and, as a result, “the article on the evolution and future of the newts was never published at all” (90).

The irony of the editor's fickleness, not to mention the scientist's intellectual subservience for not disputing the editorial decision, is enhanced by the fact that *Andrias Scheuchzeri*'s history has become intertwined with that of human society, and, in particular, its social organization has become *analogical to* the development of new social relations among humans. There is certainly no lack of comparisons between the Newts and *homo sapiens*—from the Sinhalese diver's assertion that their "hands" resemble those of "human beings" (*War with the Newts* 12), to the scientific report that Andrew Scheuchzer's intelligence does not exceed that "of an average [British] man of the present time" (79), to the miscellaneous items in the "annals" concerning Newt labour, language, and education which recall issues of discrimination/assimilation among immigrant groups, Jews, and perhaps even African Americans in the United States. Harkins insists that the Newts are symbols and that they "stand in" for this or that human foible, the same argument that is usually made about *The Life of Insects* and most SF books that employ "beast fables" or "Aesopian language" to disguise political satire (Maslen 88-91). However, Čapek's own statement in the first edition of the novel, quoted by Harkins, suggests no speculation on the future but rather a "mirroring of that which exists and the surroundings in which we live. [The novel] was no matter of fantasy [...] but reality" (qtd. in Harkins 96). Yet, Harkins still persists in his line of argument: "Thus he makes it abundantly clear that the world of the Newts is an *allegory* of the contemporary world" (97; my emphasis). As with Čapek's insects, his Newts are no mere symbols, *representing* humanity, but are both the nonhuman inferiors to man and his ultimate rival in the struggle for life. For, as Bergson says, the individual is "solidary with all that descends from the ancestor in divergent directions" (43). This has already been my

argument in Chapters 1 through 3: that the animal and hominid comprise at least two divergences of an original organism, and that folklore and now SF hints at the prospects of a relationship between the separate kingdoms. The “Bergsonian” moments in the novel suggest that Čapek has not rejected his youthful vitalist theories but has modified them: not everything that diverges is wonderful, and “invention” can be more terrifying and devastating when nurtured by the wrong hands. It is more accurate, then, to speak of how the Newts “operate” in the novel, but also to note that, in the interests of dominant society, they also “function” in various ways. In particular, the Newt-as-changing functions as a scapegoat for society’s ills and reveals the ways in which particular groups are segregated from society almost as if they were a separate species. In this scenario, which recalls that of *R. U. R.*, the lower classes become “the masses” and, as such, a dangerous and menacing—because undefined and shapeless—alien entity.

Unlike other SF works of the period, the menace in *War with the Newts* does not simply invade the everyday world from “outside” but *grows up out of it*, from its very islands and underwater caves, and is *nurtured by it*, in its zoos, schools, work sites, and entertainment industries. While it is true, as John Clark and Anna Lydia Motto argue, that the Newts are initially “perceived from afar,” understood by the Bataks to be “the work of the Devil” (10), I would defer to Test’s remark that the Newts still fit into the scheme of human life, on both the biological and psychic levels. At the same time, Clark and Motto are correct in their assertion that “the reader is never allowed to settle for consistency and complacency” when it comes to the “oscillating” significance of the Newts: indeed, as I have suggested, the reader can track the accumulation of errors, misinformation, and plain negligence which contribute to the Newts’ “ubiquity and multifariousness” (11). The

Newt *menace*, then, may seem to be a fantasy creation, and it is both ironic and appropriate that Bondy feels “as if he were in a fairy-tale” (*War with the Newts* 37). As in Wells’s *Moreau*, the folkloric *idea* of the animal-human hybrid undergoes its own transformation in the SF form of narration or “narrative logic” (Suvin, *Positions* 70): both Wells’s and Čapek’s talking animals are the creations of *science* rather than *fantasy*. Their fantastical creatures function initially as sensational pleasures for the bourgeois audience but ultimately overturn the expectations of the reading/viewing public. Čapek turns his satirical weaponry against the entertainment industries themselves, including the pulp SF industry (see note 65) which restricted its estrangements to gadgetry, BEMs (Bug-Eyed Monsters), and indulgent end-of-the-world scenarios. Čapek also satirizes the sensationalized adventure tales of the nineteenth century, later adapted in the Right-wing militaristic “hard” SF of the forthcoming era in the 1940s and 1950s. The aiding and abetting of Newt encroachment and domination in the final section of Čapek’s novel mirrors the ways in which writers and movie directors of the 1940s and 1950s employed monsters in order to expand book and film industries’ hold on the marketplace. But for Čapek, it is more than simply bad art or bald money-making schemes; this he satirizes with light melodramatic touches in *R. U. R.* fifteen years before. What Čapek targets are the ways in which humanity *betrays its own kind* in order to make a profit, and the ways in which, as Suvin suggests, capitalists finance “the menace to humanity (Nazis as well as Newts)” (*Metamorphoses* 277).

As it is clearly demonstrated in the minutes of the Salamander Syndicate (*War with the Newts* 92-100), the eventual partnership between adventurer and financier is a binding one in which the Salamanders, the exploitable bait or “Newt-fry,” can finally be

“treated decently now that they will have some value” (101). This is a partnership, moreover, that requires the “tapa-boys” to eventually adopt big business as their new parents. While it is true that they exemplify notable deviations from human civilization, the ambiguous history and origin of *Andrias Scheuchzeri*, coupled with their “linguistic capacity” without which they “would be impervious to exploitation” (Maslen 83), makes them also susceptible to ideological recuperation and a binding affiliation. Lured out of their islands by the promise of friendship and camaraderie, the Newts suddenly find themselves working for a new “boss”; this may constitute exploitation, but the Newts may very well have developed their own sense of kinship with a species that first protected them against shark attacks and then encouraged their natural skills as technicians (*War with the Newts* 106). For the businessman, Bondy, the Newt is “the body without an image” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 8) onto which a new signature of authority can be inscribed, and into which new codes and functions can be inputted; as the author of the “annals” comments at one point, people “simply regarded the Newts as something commonplace, like counting machines or other gadgets” (*War with the Newts* 134). The mystery of why the Newts respond so vigorously to the cry, “Work must not be stopped” (*R. U. R.* 34), is answered scientifically in the “Appendix: Of the Sexual Life of the Newts” (*War with the Newts* 101-107). The omniscient narrator cites several laboratory studies with male and female Newts, noting the prominence of a *male* collectivity, indicated in the peculiar mating ritual. Referring to the work of Miss Blanche Kistemaekers, the narrator describes the “sexual milieu” in which males emit a discharge into the vicinity of the female after which she emits her own already fertilized eggs. While the courting of females is characterized by a rather ritualized and frenzied dance,

the studies prove that, beyond his acidic spermatozoa which stimulate the particular female “milieu,” the male is rather superfluous in the mating process (103-04). At the same time, the Newt “community” is almost exclusively *male*—a fraternal collective who court the female “in unison” but then move on to the important business of technical undertakings (106). Perhaps, then, we might interpret the Newts’ attraction to van Toch as one of male camaraderie: in this bond, van Toch is more successful than any mad scientist we have encountered thus far, including Dr. Moreau. Of course, this microcosmic view of stimulating a sexual milieu is analogous to the capitalist enterprise of stimulating an entire globe, with these little Newts now in the diminutive role of the spermatozoa, seeking to penetrate new continents.

As in *R. U. R.*, while the Newts’ divergent characteristics are first articulated as exotic, then as a scientifically anomalous, and then as a sign of that species’ unique evolutionary path, they are finally recapitulated as an inferiority complex. The whole second half of the “annals” of book two is taken up with report after report detailing the inferior and maligned status of the Newt, and yet, right to the end (to the last days of the so-called “Golden Newt Age” [*War with the Newts* 171]), the Newts are congratulated for their willingness to work endlessly and for their slave-like work ethic. In one particular sequence, a Czech couple comes across a Newt that speaks their language and begins a conversation about Czech history. To their surprise, the Czech Newt appears to be hundreds of years behind in history but knows the old woeful and wretched details of the country’s past. He speaks excitedly of the Thirty Year’s War when “the Czech land was then turned into a desert, soaked with blood and tears,” and speaks proudly of the “Three Hundred Years suppression” that followed (147). In this situation where hardship is

glorified, Čapek “not only mocks his fellow-countrymen for wallowing in past sufferings but shrewdly shows how this kind of pride in humiliation can be fostered in others” (Maslen 84). In his willingness to make a myth of misery, the Newt becomes a figure of *ressentiment*, as Nietzsche described it: the resentment characteristic of a “slave morality,” which takes the form of a stunted, dwarfish persona who wants revenge on the beautifully-shaped humans that rule the upper world (cf. Wells’s Morlocks and Eloi).<sup>66</sup> On the one hand, the Newts are indeed an inferior race, exploited by business and science for ambivalent purposes—greed, the enlightenment of society, the creation of a nonhuman labour force to *replace* the already massive human one. On the other hand, the Newts *become* a vengeful *fraternity* bent on the total exploitation of the entire globe. The Salamanders multiply faster than the Robots, aided and abetted as they are by both the artificial invention of incubators and the natural invention of an evolutionary “vital élan.” In this work, Suvin rightly notes, “a limit was found beyond which the pseudo-human became clearly evil,” particularly when the Newts “grow into an analogy to the Nazi aggressors” (*Metamorphoses* 276).

While this analogy is confirmed in the third book when German nationalists begin praising the superiority of the “Baltic Newt” (*War with the Newts* 193-97), it finds its earliest expression in the scenes describing Captain van Toch’s encounters with the indigenous people around Tanah Masa and Sumatra. Much of this section (3-15) appears to function as the convenient background for the captain’s fateful discovery of the Newts and the creation of the first known “partnership” between human and salamander. In the

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<sup>66</sup> Nietzsche makes use of the dwarf persona in many of his texts but especially in *Beyond Good and Evil* (sections 58, 62, 203, 225, and 267) and *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (pp 177-79, 212, 215, 271, and 293) in which the dwarf functions as the “little man” who craves authority but also a slave morality.



first instance, van Toch forms what appears to be a meaningful symbiotic relationship in which the clever little “lizards” fetch pearls for the old man and he, in turn, provides them with tools of self-defense. Struck by their odd movements and sounds, he begins to imitate them, “making ts, ts, ts, and wriggling like a lizard,” he later tells Bondy, so that “they took me, perhaps, for some kind of a big salamander” (31). Van Toch even speaks of them as if they are his pets or indeed his foster children: “They are very good and sensible, these tapa-boys; when you tell them something they sit up and take notice like a dog does when it listens to its master. And particularly their childish paws—you know, my boy. I’m an old chap, and I’ve got no family.... Yah, an old man is lonely” (32). Bondy is ultimately won over by such sentimentality, and privately forms a bond with the blue-eyed captain whose romantic narrative about his dear tapa-boys resonates with his own paternal role as a business “captain.” All the same, it is clear from his comparison of them to dogs that with this sentimental attachment also comes a patriarchal sense of ownership: they are *his* tapa-boys, and they are “good” and “sensible” when they “take notice” and “listen” to their “master.” The humor of this meeting between van Toch and Bondy derives from these ironic expressions of sentiment towards a species that is not human and which, at first, only partially understands what the partnership involves (if it is, to the Newts, anything other than a game of “go fetch,” “sit,” or “roll over”). However, the captain’s tale, which is the “best story” Bondy has “ever heard” (32), is driven by an original conviction that “the prestige of the white race was at stake” (9): the Newts present for van Toch an opportunity to vindicate “civilized” Europe by finding something “left [that is] worth a brass farthing” (4). In other words, the captain “exemplifies a paternalistic racism [towards the Newts], despite his generally humane attitude” (Test 3):

if we consider the fact that the “Chief Salamander” is really a human, “Andreas Schultze” (*War with the Newts* 240), and therefore a con artist, we might accept with a bitter laugh that van Toch truly is, as the Newts believe, a “big salamander.”

While he never speaks badly of his Newts, his virulent prejudice towards the “lousy” and “dirty” Bataks (*War with the Newts* 3, 5) gives the oblique message that his sympathies lie only with the species that can be *tamed*. The taming of the Newts is analogous to the taming of the uncivilized, non-white world, but these salamanders correspond to both the indigenous population and the very *mechanism* of that population’s oppression. The Newts are praised for their uncanny response time and work ethic, but not for their weird, lizard-like appearance. Because they do listen so well, perhaps van Toch can forget that they are not “nice looking,” are without scales, “absolutely naked” like “frogs, or salamanders” (*War with the Newts* 28). On the other hand, the indigenous Bataks, the Sinhalese, and his “own commercial agent” absorb most of his overt racist comments, which reflect his disgust for non-white races and “half-breeds.” For example, he speaks disdainfully of his agent as a “cross between a Cuban and a Portuguese”—“a bigger thief, heathen, and swine than a pure Cuban and pure White man put together” (3). In this same rant he complains about the lack of pearls in these parts (before he has discovered the Newts, of course), putting the blame on the “rats in Europe” who hire captains like him to exploit islands like Tanah Masa: “It’s a wonder they don’t ask us to look into these Bataks’ snouts to see if they’re not sniveling pearls” (4). The irony here is that his tapa-boys are themselves half-breeds, hybrid “men-lizards” (as ch. 11 reveals) with mutant characteristics and changeling-like adaptability. There is a certain, perhaps typically *colonial*, partial blindness in the captain’s failure to see in the

Newt's mimicry of the human the possibility of a menace. For, the "*menace* of mimicry is its *double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" (Bhabha 88; original emphases). If the Newts are animals, they behave like men; and if the Sinhalese are human, they behave like animals: Van Toch fails to see the points of correspondence between these two groups of mimic-men. Later on he describes the indigenes to Bondy: "Those Sinhalese in the water look something like a lizard, but lizards have more brains than a Sinhalese, or a Batak, because they want to learn" (*War with the Newts* 30-31). The great irony here is that the *nonhuman* functions for the captain as the very yardstick of *human* ingenuity, even while his preference for the apparently docile, dog-like ally, reveals his own autocratic intentions. But his comparison between the natives and the Newts indicates also his wish to absorb colonial difference and to co-opt biological divergence for the glory of the mission, hence his eventual decision to exploit the "lizards" at the circus (79-84). What he ultimately fails to see is that the "civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double" (Bhabha 86)—in this case, the *Newts-as-fascist horde*.

It is reasonable to find the answer to the Newts' aggression in their biology: the studies show that, in everything—in sexual courting, in community organization, and in industry—their society is organized by a male collective, "We, the Male Principle" (*War with the Newts* 106). But it is also fair to suggest that their evolution (at least as it is fictionally presented in Čapek's work) has been driven by "secondary impulses," which correspond to the ideological abstraction of male "honour" and dominance; these impulses do not, in other words, derive from any biological necessity (Reich vii-ix, xii, 130, 140, 253, 295). The Newt behaviour is, of course, comparable to that of *Homo*

*sapiens*, who also tries to marginalize the female population, form into male collectives, and court aggressively as it consumes and builds. No Newt is ever really a slave to his courtly aggression, just as no man is; but each organism finds that the result (the fertilization of eggs) will raise his own status in his particular community and contribute to his own feeling of self-worth. Van Toch sees something of this male pride in his “tapa-boys,” even if he is unfamiliar with their sexual life or social organization; he flatters their male ego (just as the “Chief” does, we might imagine) and the result is that they bind themselves to him and to the more successful “Male Principle” of the capitalist world. More so than even his Robots, Čapek’s Newts’ “evolve” according to the demands of capitalism, which can proclaim with all confidence “the amazing extension and progress” (*War with the Newts* 116) and the “strong and constant ascent” of the Newts (166). Here we have vulgarities of all kinds—of Marxism, of Darwinism—leading to the greatest perversion of all, *fascism*. After the Newts allow themselves to be employed in the new hyper-industrialist milieu, when the exploitation reaches its peak, they then turn on their masters and carry out the destruction of the human world. So we can say with accuracy, “no, the masses were not innocent dupes; at a certain point, under a certain set of conditions, they *wanted* fascism, and it is this perversion of the desire of the masses that needs to be accounted for” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 29). This “perversion” can be distinguished from its previous form—mutation, deviation, divergence—since, in the form it takes here, *fascist desire*, these characteristics are co-opted for the purposes of irrational hatred. For example, if we call Hyde “perverse” we understand that he is *not only* an opponent of Victorian morality *but also* a fetishized creation of Victorian morality. But a further distinction is necessary: Hyde is more successfully *controlled*, he

is more allegorical “ape” than truly one of the *masses*, whereas the Newts willingly participate in the experiment and exhibit the “*emotional attitude of man in authoritarian society, with its machine civilization and its mechanistic-mystical view of life*” (Reich viii; original emphases). However, Čapek does not fail to underscore the irony of the (now amalgamated) male collective’s “vainglorious” characteristics (*War with the Newts* 106): unlike the Newt’s sexual milieu, the Salamander Syndicate’s ritualized technological “dance” ends in the production of a sterile world, which now has at least the appearance of a technotopia—a society in which “perfection” is sustained through a centralized and mechanized form of state-run capitalism. This is not to say that a *fruitful* capitalist enterprise would have been a better alternative, especially since the constant stimulation of islands and continents throughout the globe allows a dominant corporation to ultimately run the world. Indeed, the sterility derives from the overabundance of production and the oppressive machinery of affiliation, which denies the possibility of contingent alliances—*brief partnerships with real symbiotic principles of give-and-take, sharing, and the creation of a better world*. Sterility, then, may be understood here as the result of a mechanized automatism which appropriates the vital energy of a working mass (the Newts) and redeploys it in its own systematic way.

We do not, then, have in *War with the Newts* a “conciliatory happy ending” (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 276); the Newts do not, as we can say of the Robots, ultimately prefer “vitalism” over “mechanism” or creativity over mere production. There are no heroic characters like Helena who get “to the root of things” by wrecking the machinery. Given time, we might speculate, perhaps the Newt master race would return to the original creative industry of their island-dam civilization, where collectivity could be

restricted to the building of communities rather than the exploitation of worlds. There is, moreover, a subtle Darwinian lesson implied in Čapek's novel: that the beautiful complexity of a single (call it *microcosmic*) society becomes savage, destructive, and ultimately sterile when it attempts to impose its creativity and inventiveness on other societies; where it, in other words, prefers automatism over individuality. Brilliantly, Čapek's novel illustrates how the rise of empires and of totalitarian regimes derives *in part* from the very biological impulses that drive the individual organism along its evolutionary path: the sexual milieu is not simply the *analogy to* another society (that of *Homo sapiens*) but is an earlier stage of *evolution* in general. The exception here, "in part," indicates that for Čapek—as for Wells, and as for Darwin—it is not "natural" for a man to want to dominate and exploit his neighbors because it is not part of the human's "biological core" (Reich vii-viii), even though he may employ his strength and cunning towards this very goal when certain conditions spur him on. As Gomel elaborates for us, "When violent power is misread as a law of nature, it elevates itself beyond ethical judgment" (406). The violators—Van Toch, Bondy, and especially the ubiquitous Salamander "Chief"—see themselves and especially their subservient Newts as "agent[s] of natural order": more so than in Wells's day, Darwinism has become fully entrenched in political ideology as the justification for war-mongering and genocide. What produces a creative tension, however, is the fact that the Newts are both the oppressed and the oppressor, the contradictory Hegelian dialectic embodied as an evolutionary imperative. This tension is perfectly illustrated when we consider that the Newts' journey "along the steps of civilization" is deliberately *misread* as a justification of nature's cruel progress towards perfection. As a result of this misreading, the "post-Darwinian inversion of

benevolent natural theology into a gospel of cruelty paves the way for the sacred science of massacre” (411).

The “open-ended” nature of the novel reflects Čapek’s Wellsian faith in an “undirected” evolution, leaving us with more than one possible future for *Homo sapiens*, and therefore more than one set of operations for the changeling. Indeed, the final conversation between the author and his “inner voice” invites us to *invent* our own ending. On the one hand, the Newt *mass* becomes a State apparatus comparable to a military dictatorship, destroying whole fleets of ships in order to construct as many continents as possible (in other words, breaking each of the major continents into multiplicities). On the other hand, the Newts operate as a molecular aggregate linked already to the multiple continents of the world, and to the scattering and diffusion of State authority. This is why the mechanism of “co-option” is so important: the typically large quantity of the oppressed group supplies the State with multiple organs of power which are fuelled by a *ressentiment* reappropriated from the “enemy” (*you are an inferior bastard tribe!*) and redeployed in paternal affection (*you are superior legitimate sons!*). From the State’s point of view, the pathway from inferiority to superiority is a linear one, “striated” or punctuated in a series of steps like the most rigid model of evolutionary descent or ascent: such a model encourages the “little man” to see in his new affiliation the “natural” progression towards higher and enlightened things. From the point of view of the molecular aggregate, or the diffused and divergent “masses” that are “constantly flowing or leaking from classes” (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 213), the pathway is “smooth” and “the points are subordinated to the trajectory” (478): such a model encourages the changeling (the Newt, perhaps, but most definitely the *nomad*)

persona to see legitimacy as one more stoppage, as one more damned affiliation, not to mention one more way to be “fucked over” (*Anti-Oedipus* 23). He may very well hesitate at the moment of the insult—*you are a bastard!.... now kill and reclaim your kinship with the State!*—and move right on to a new territory, not ruled by fascists or “little men.” In other words, in a certain sense, the Newt understands that he is not really a man, that he need not *be* a man, but that he can deterritorialize this fascist horde, this State-driven production frenzy (akin to the Robots’ cry of “Work must not be stopped!”), perhaps even this variation on Wells’s “House of Pain,” and be a *Newt becoming-man*. This type of becoming occurs when the Newts first learn to grasp shells to find nourishment or knives to defend themselves or drills to build dams. It occurs most dramatically when the Newts begin to acquire human languages. The “annals” narrator reports: “they were oblivious to grammatical endings, never learned to differentiate between ‘I’ and ‘we,’ and it was the same to them whether a word was masculine or feminine [...] In their mouths every language underwent a characteristic change” (*War with the Newts* 143). As an analogy to Nazi Germany, this indifference to grammar and linguistic inflection and gender may reflect the imperialist and racist policy of purifying the Newt language of its foreign elements; but as an analogy to radical teratology, this failure to differentiate between individuality and collectivity may reflect the natural diffusion of centralizing (or centripetal) languages through the habitual utterances of the people, of the masses. The repetition of the various world languages leads to a mongrelization of the unitary language, however much the Newts appear to be gobbling them up one after the other.

Thus, despite the dark and possibly dystopian conclusion to the novel, it is clear that radical invention persists nonetheless (and is dramatically played out when the author



begins to invent an ending): unable—or unwilling—to predict an easy outcome, the “author” ends his conversation with his “inner voice” and ends the novel by saying, “...Then I don’t know what comes next” (241). Čapek’s satire still reveals a remarkably resilient and adaptable changeling, and despite the devastating failure to achieve an optimal “partnership,” Čapek’s *roman feuilleton* contains enough “vitalist” fragments to suggest that the opportunity may still exist. *War with the Newts* dramatizes not only Čapek’s shaken faith in human ingenuity but also his solid faith in Nature’s creativity.

## Conclusion

Despite its departure from recognizable plateaus, its tangential abandonment of the beaten path, and its perversion of family resemblance, the changeling appears to be still *with us*. This folkloric persona is discovered lurking in the fantastical or science-fictional works and worlds of the twentieth century, during a period in which fascism was seeking to “mobilize the middle strata” (Hobsbawm 143), including the “little men,” of society. Despite the many instances where this persona has served an ideological function (as a “diagnosis” for mental illness, as Chapter 1 describes, as sign of racial inferiority, as each of the first four chapters have shown), the changeling has also (regardless of its author’s “intentions”) turned situations to its own ends, deterritorializing *almost in the instant of its reterritorialization*. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of the “Robot’s cramp” or the “Salamander dance.” In the first instance, the cramp is identified simply as a minor flaw, a fit of epilepsy, rather than a sign of inner revolt; and yet, the very fact that the Rossum design would have *any* flaw at all is significant and an early indication of humanity’s failure to master its artificial creations. In the other instance, the

dance is interpreted as a celebration of the “cult of the moon” (*War with the Newts* 105) rather than an indication of collective coordination. In each case, the changeling performs divergent operations that are misunderstood or misinterpreted. The resilient nature of this organism, threatening anarchy to its own family structure, as folk narrative shows, suggests a remarkable and admirable tenacity, an attribute that allows it to turn any defeat into a victory. We discover these movements through a geophilosophical—rather than a purely historical—analysis. In a spirit reminiscent of Deleuze and Guattari, Suvin writes: “An ideal history—especially a history of culture—would have to be a geology, interested perhaps as much in the hollows produced by absence of data as in the fullnesses produced by their presence, or a geography of the ocean depths as much as of the visible islands” (*Metamorphoses* 88). The changeling dwells within these hollows—the caves, dens, laboratories, or “submerged nations” featured in both folk narrative and modern SF.

To reiterate a point from Chapter 3, the “empirical environment” of the folktale, which Suvin disavows in *Metamorphoses* (8), contains within it subversive undercurrents at once associated with a rural underclass and a “little people” driven underground by colonization as much as industrialization. However, as I have suggested in Chapter 1, this little folk, known primarily as the “Good People” in the Irish tradition, are not comparable to the tinker-bell creations popularized by the Cottingley fairies, Walt Disney, and the whole tradition of fairy tales from the Victorian era onward: in most cases (in Irish, Welsh, Scottish, and even some Scandinavian and German variations), fairies operate as a—sometimes large, sometimes small—collective, aristocratic in appearance and taste, plebeian in work ethic and personality. Significant SF of the

twentieth century has attempted to reassert the complexity of this otherworldly—but also this *changeling*—personality. And so we have Čapek’s Robots and Newts. In the beginning, the Robots carry forward the program of mechanized labour presumably by outbidding the conventional system of organized labour, fulfilling Moreau’s vision of coding a population of mindless automata. All the same, they form a terrifying “host” of mercenaries that dictate terms in autocratic fashion. The very spirit of their potential revolution, which seems a “rational rebellion against intolerable social conditions,” does not ultimately go “to the root of things,” as Marx would say (Reich x). Another group of “little people” are the Newts who also bear no close resemblance to the fairies, it is true. In the case of *War with the Newts*, Fairyland has been ransacked and redesigned by the capitalists, while its inhabitants have been armed and deployed as a host to frighten even the most “modern” of families. In this overturning of the folk legend or folktale scenario, Čapek nevertheless returns us to the “plebeian” concerns of the “little people” by exposing the sham of “free enterprise” as well as the limitations of “hospitality.”

As the corpus of changeling tales suggests, fairies are interested most in forming (although not always maintaining) alliances, even while their manner of initiating such relations does not always lie within the acceptable boundaries of human ethics. To be sure, changeling tales are characterized by a concern with hospitality—this is one of my general theses of Chapter 1; and yet, fairies themselves never hide the fact that they violate the laws of hospitality, as established in previous dealings with humans. Again, *enter* the Robots and the Newts: they destroy the very homes and machinery of their hosts who, at the same time, demand constricting ties and affiliations. For this very reason—that true hospitality is virtually impossible—I have found Derrida’s philosophical probing

of the concept important and crucial to a discussion of the changeling persona, but substitute the term from time to time for the more accurate (and perhaps more *honest*) “alliance.” To adhere to fixed notions of moral behaviour, or indeed to demand a rigid moral code at all, is to fall prey to the belief that violence and conflict can—or should necessarily—be transcended. The Good People consistently show a—sometimes virulent—dislike for human morality, but in the numerous instances where a compromise is made, the consequences are frequently devastating: in the case where a fairy woman consigns herself to a domestic role and then must suffer the xenophobia of the man’s relations (“The Fairy Wife”); or where the Newts agree to “work” for “the man” and find themselves marketed like so much “Newt fry” (*War with the Newts* 122) or clinically dissected for science (104-05). At the same time, the Good People are an incredibly versatile and generous organization whose methods of infiltrating, appropriating, and sometimes sabotaging human institutions (the family, the church, the state) are designed to benefit and teach the families they come into contact with. But more than this—and here I come to my essential point—the changeling in particular eschews both the human and fairy communities, claiming as it does only partial affiliation with both; in a sense the changeling follows through with the Good People’s program of divergence by abandoning his original birthplace, his original home, in order to launch (perhaps only for the instant) his mobile territory. (And isn’t the changeling constantly moving—his restless eyes over the strange but exciting domestic realm of these humans, his diminutive but vigorous legs over the surface of the kitchen?) For the reason that we do not find in Čapek “the ideal environment, tribe, state, intelligence, or other aspect of the Supreme

Good” (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 5), it is beneficial to return to the folk legends from time to time since they, and their benevolent personae, still have much to teach us.

But if the twentieth-century SF changeling, as featured in Čapek’s work, bears little physical resemblance to the “fractious” fairy encountered in British folk legend, it nevertheless carries on the subversive activity of the little folk and, in its celebration of hybrid identity, presents a fictional narrative that explores human evolution through the interaction and exchange with a nonhuman species (Chapter 1, section IV).

To begin, Rossum’s factory, with its witches’ brew of great vats and “kneading troughs” containing the “ingredients for a thousand Robots at one operation” (*R. U. R.* 10), is Čapek’s science-fictional variation on an old folkloric motif: the production of changelings in the form of pseudo-humans without affiliation.<sup>67</sup> Of course, the two “programs of genetic mutation,” as I suggested in the opening of the chapter, have quite different motivations. For the Good People, the abduction of human infants is less a “program” than a tactical method of survival—for the purpose of improving the fairy bloodline. The mad scientists of SF (Frankenstein, Jekyll, Moreau, and Old Rossum) have assumed the archaic role of the Good People, selecting, refining, and building a race of “people” with superior minds and bodies; this “program” clearly differs since it seeks to *perfect* humanity rather than simply help it to thrive. Nevertheless—and perhaps this is part of both the play’s flaw and the ultimate reason for its open-ended and optimistic denouement—the theory and the applied scientific formulas are nearly as vague as

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<sup>67</sup> Despite its obvious melodramatic form, *R. U. R.* continuously employs characters as story-tellers who narrate events of the past in lieu of historical accounts, which, as the careless Domin reveals, often leave out the whole “truth.” For this reason, we may agree with Lubomír Doležel that “Čapek found the model of oral storytelling in the folktale” (17)

Frankenstein's natural science; they are brilliant, Domin assures Helena, but very speculative in nature. Young Rossum has certainly surpassed Frankenstein in skill and application, and he has Moreau's organizational skills plus the manpower to expand. However, despite the impressive efforts of Dr. Hallemeier (responsible for implanting in the Robot brain the desire to function like clockwork) and Dr. Gall (responsible for enhancing the pain centers of the Robot brain for safety purposes [14]), none of the factory's senior employees are able to predict how the Robots might diverge from the original plan. This unpredictability is precisely the *changeling* factor, which counters the development of the fascist "New Man" every step of the way.

The van Toch venture and its expanded global enterprise, the Salamander Syndicate, suggest to us that "artificial" humans need not be "robots" but rather "natural" mutants guided by the paternal hands of both unfettered capitalism and fanatical fascism. So it is, then, that the "New Man" resurfaces again in the form of the Newts whose evolutionary divergence provides cheap labour, cheap entertainment, and cheap soldiery. The architects of the Newt-changeling contingent possess their own technology for the purpose of reproducing this collective "horde"; the Newt incubators established in the Bay of Mexico (*War with the Newts* 117) ensure the "tremendous spread" of these industrious organisms and the utopian possibility of a new "Atlantis" (130). Čapek's satirical evocation of Baconian divine science suggests that the twentieth century embraced a new scientific idealism obsessed with fashioning a new Eden, a new Fairyland; the chief science in this epoch is, of course, biological engineering. As Sherryl Vint has argued, Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627) discussed in some detail the possibility of manipulating a god-like science and, through the tools of vivisection, engineering a new

species of humanity—that is, *hybrids*—for the glory of the nation (Vint 86-87). As the host describes to the narrator of Bacon’s utopian work, “We have also parks and enclosures of all sorts of beasts and birds; which we use not only for view or rareness, but likewise for dissections and trials, that thereby we may take light what may be wrought upon the body of man” (Bacon 291-92). Rossum’s Universal Robots and the van Toch/Bondy Newts—not to mention Moreau’s Beast Folk—are the results of this unchecked scientific vision in which, as Erica Fudge has argued, man’s position as the “sovereign and commander of creation” is restored (qtd. in Vint 86). The prominence of Baconian experimental science throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries helped to foster a technotopian philosophy that would produce “New Scientists” (87) as well as “New Men.”

But if the Newts serve a satirical and possibly dystopian purpose, warning against the scientific exploitation of humans and animals alike, they also present a rough model for optimal alliances between disparate groups. While we cannot claim for Čapek’s novel the status of “critical utopia,” which, according to Tom Moylan, would not only “negate” the “nonutopian” society but would offer detailed “alternatives” (237), the work is, unlike *Brave New World*, *1984*, and other dystopian SF works of the period, “anti-utopian.” As John Huntington writes, the “anti-utopian form discovers problems, raises questions, and doubts”; it is “not simply satiric” but “is a mode of relentless inquisition, of restless skeptical exploration of the very articles of faith on which utopias themselves are built”; and finally, it explores “conflicts in human desire and expectation,” and is able to “acknowledge virtues in oppressive situations even while denouncing them” (“Utopian and Anti-Utopian Logic” 124). While *War with the Newts* is much darker than any of

Čapek's previous work, it goes a long way towards exposing the naiveté of a straight utopian vision (like that in More's *Utopia*, Bacon's *New Atlantis*, or Bellamy's *Looking Backward*) in which "articles of faith" are accepted as doctrine and human relations restricted by an autocratic vision of *perfection*. The Newts' anomalous adaptation to human society and their ability to operate for a time as equal partners to their human counterparts suggests the sort of symbiotic relation that *might* have developed had the salamanders not been exploited for profit. Their unpredictable changeability, their capacity to infiltrate human society, suggests that Čapek's pseudo-humans still function in a socially critical way. We might put the matter thus: In both *R. U. R.* and *War with the Newts* the novelty (the Robot, the Newt) grafts itself onto certain aspects of the mundane or empirical world, slowly and gradually transforming it, almost imperceptibly, in the same way that a virus can alter the structure of any organism over a period of time. This *literary teratology* provides a way of gauging how deviations enter into society and affect (or infect) that society, and how "monsters" become a part of how *Homo sapiens* understands its own evolution as a species. Further, a literary teratology, grafted onto my original concept of "changelingism" (Chapter 1, Conclusion), takes into account the process of culture, its structures of feeling, the emergence of new genres, such as SF, or new personae, such as the Robot, the Pseudo-Human, or simply the "SF changeling," and the emergence of new social relations.

Certainly, we cannot avoid discussing the question, *what does it mean* when discussing the changeling, for it is true that the changeling *means* many things to many people, and not only the Victorians but also pre- and post-WWI Europe (the range of Chapters 3, 4, and 5). However, we must not forget that the changeling is a *persona*



whose meaning is largely determined—but also contradicted or critiqued—by what s/he says, or *enunciates*; that is to say, the changeling has certain operations just as any human does, and herein lies the important discovery: that the changeling is fundamentally an enunciation of Swift’s question, “What is Man?” For the changeling *embodies* humankind’s potential to evolve into open communities, to diverge from the normal set of relations, to embrace what conservative ideologies call the “perverse” and the “monstrous,” to reject the doctrine of *ressentiment* and part company with the “little man,” and to diverge from (or *detrterritorialize*) the laws that would seek to restrict mobility and change.

## Chapter 5—Olaf Stapledon's Divine Mutant: A Changeling for All Seasons

The truth is that adaptation explains the sinuosities of the movement of evolution, but not its general directions, still less the movement itself. The road that leads to the town is obliged to follow the ups and downs of the hills; it *adapts itself* to the accidents of the ground; but the accidents of the ground are not the cause of the road, nor have they given it its direction. At every moment they furnish it with what is indispensable, namely, the soil on which it lies; but if we consider the whole of the road, instead of each of its parts, the accidents of the ground appear only as impediments or causes of decay, for the road aims simply at the town and would fain be a straight line. Just so as regards the evolution of life and the circumstances through which it passes—with this difference, that evolution does not mark out a solitary route, that it takes directions without aiming at ends, and that it remains inventive even in its adaptations.

—Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution* 102

### Introduction

SF, which frequently bears no formal resemblance to folk narrative, nevertheless explores some of the same philosophical problems, which derive from the tensions that exist between the collective (the Good People) and the individual (the changeling) and therefore between ancestry and evolution, reproduction and mutation. SF, however, adds a scientific dimension: due to the impact of evolutionary theory in the mid-nineteenth century and the rapid progress of genetics, especially since the 1930s,<sup>68</sup> twentieth-century (SF) changelings have begun to fulfill the utopian dream of a program of genetic mutation. However, if SF adds plausibility to the changeling tale by providing scientific rationale for biological engineering, the folk legend returns us to the primitive but by no means irrational reverence for the body and its biological and political freedoms. This is to say that the legend and the changeling motif in particular contribute to the second element in the well-wrought SF tale—*estrangement*. We cannot ignore the pervasive

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<sup>68</sup> While the most significant developments in genetics have occurred since Watson and Crick theorized DNA in the 1950s, I leave out this context since my own concerns are with the pre-1950 era of science and SF.

influence of the pulp magazine era, which, of course, was uncannily obsessed not only with space travel, space technology and weapons, but also with the concept of genetically mutated humans or *supermen*. As Brian Stableford notes in his insightful study, *The Sociology of Science Fiction*, the “implications of Darwinism were very important in generating early attitudes to literary supermen, encouraging writers to think of the mutant superman as a threat to *Homo sapiens*, a competitor and nemesis” (133). For the most part, the pulp writers (who may or not have thought through the Darwinian ideas they were co-opting) had no time for social criticism (134), focusing instead on the “gosh-wow!” exploits of their mainly “WASPy” protagonists (Stockwell 81-83) as they battled for supremacy with big-brained opponents. Eventually, it became just as common to find stories celebrating the triumph of superhuman figures who would replace the decadent and inferior human species. In either case, the superman provided plot material for some of the most indulgent militarist power-fantasies.<sup>69</sup> At any rate, the 1930s and 1940s SF superman was an updated version of the mutant creatures, and therefore the changelings, of previous SF, such as Wells’s *Beast-Men*, Stevenson’s *Hyde*, and Shelley’s monster. In contrast to the pulp writers of his era, Olaf Stapledon presents the most sophisticated attempt to “vary [the] surface” of Wells’s original paradigm, as established in both *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 242),

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<sup>69</sup> A. E. van Vogt, for example, was perhaps one of the most popular writers of the 1940s (along with Robert A. Heinlein who was among the most skilled SF authors), but his provocatively titled novel, *The Changeling* (1942), features the disappointing cover blurb, “FACED WITH INVADERS WHO COULDN’T BE KILLED MAN MUST MAKE A TERRIFYING CHOICE: SLAVERY OR DEATH”—which, while it is clearly an editorial intrusion, aptly characterizes the clumsily crafted tale of a “totipotent” and his paranoiac struggle against the normals of his society. The greatest disappointment is that the novel never really explores the operations of the changeling in human society, nor does it add anything new to a relatively ancient conceptual persona. *Slan* (1940) is a slightly better—and certainly better-known—superman tale, which, however, follows the same, rather predictable plot.

conceptualizing new changelings in the form of a mutant superman and a hybrid man-dog.

What we see in most of Stapledon's SF works is a continual process of adaptation-modification in which the author *tears SF away from itself* by using it for the purpose of philosophical speculation on social relationships rather than mere tinkering with scientific inventions and fantastical neologisms.<sup>70</sup> Accordingly, the first section of the chapter, which considers Stapledon's cosmological fictions, *Last and First Men* (1930) and *Star Maker* (1937), focuses first on two human species of the future (the Second Men and the Fourth Men) who are, by all appearances, supermen or BEMs (Bug-Eyed Monsters) of

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<sup>70</sup> Critics and biographers love to repeat the old anecdote that *Olaf Stapledon did not read any science-fiction magazines until 1936*, a fact that seems to suggest a certain originality in the field of SF or at least that his first few major works (*Last and First Men* [1930], *Last Men in London* [1932], and *Odd John* [1935]) were not directly influenced by the "Gernsback era" of pulp SF (1926 through to the late 1930s). As the anecdote goes, when Stapledon finally had the chance to read American SF stories in 1936, he was "appalled that they were generally so badly written" (McCarthy 28). In some ways, perhaps, he was *unconsciously* writing out of an established "science fiction" tradition, which had "no actual existence except as a publisher's category" (Priest 187). Hugo Gernsback himself had introduced the category "scientifiction" in 1926 and then chose the less clumsy "science fiction" in the early 1930s, thereby inventing the genre—at least as it existed in the ghettoized landscape of the pulp industry. See also note 66 in Chapter 4. In any event, the case seems to be that Stapledon employed fantasy and fantastical motifs to shape his philosophical ideas rather than knowingly imitate a popular form. As Robert Philmus has suggested, "Chancing to write science fiction, he discovers for himself the genre's connection with ideas, and in that sense invents science fiction as their vehicle. More precisely, he invents science fiction as a vehicle for propagating what he himself might have called *cognitive (self)estrangement*" (*Visions and Revisions* 115).

On the other hand, Stapledon repeatedly acknowledged his debt to the British tradition of speculative fiction in the form of H. G. Wells (Crossley 35) whose vision of the far future in *The Time Machine* and whose invading Martians in *The War of the Worlds* receive a respectful homage in *Last and First Men*. In his essay, "British Science Fiction" (1979), Christopher Priest offers a fairly accurate reason for the differences between British and American SF, particularly around the 1930s: unlike its American counterpart, the British SF "community" was not driven and dominated by an established institution that fed directly into fan-based markets—magazines run by "doctrinaire" editors, including especially Gernsback (*Amazing Stories*), but also John W. Campbell (*Astounding Science Fiction*) (188). Gernsback made no bones about the fact that the "scientifiction" plots should be mere "'sugar coating' to make the science and the technological speculation in his story more palatable" (Stableford 48), while Campbell's preference for WASPy heroes led to the dominant trend of "biological chauvinism" (112) or, as Robert Silverberg had complained, "an outrageous Homo sapiens-chauvinist" attitude (qtd. in Stableford 114). Additionally, because "relatively few books were produced in America (as compared with Britain), the pulp magazines won a virtual monopoly over the Market for popular literature, and held that dominance for forty years" (47).

the pulp magazine era. However, only in isolation do we find correspondences between Stapledon's metamorphosed men, who undergo a vast number of minute physiological and psychological changes over countless millennia, and those of John W. Campbell, A. E. van Vogt, or Edmond Hamilton, whose telepathic mutants function more often as sensational monsters rather than as cognitively estranging visions of humanity in the post-WWI era. So, while twentieth-century humanity in *Last and First Men* discovers that it is inferior to the "Last Men" of a far future era, some two thousand million years away, Stapledon underscores the ways in which "progress" in the future millennia is continually undercut by the failure to achieve optimal social relations. Venturing through his next cosmological excursion, *Star Maker*, we discover that, whereas the previous book explores the triumph of a superhuman race in the form of the Eighteenth Men, this sequel of sorts considers the scenario in which a nonhuman race (comprising "Arachnoids" and "Ichthyoids") achieve a truly symbiotic community. The "spiritual factor" (Swanson) is part of the larger "composite fiction" (Rabkin) of Stapledon's philosophical vision, but, as I argue in the second section of the chapter, it operates most dramatically in his two more conventional novels, *Odd John* (1935) and *Sirius* (1944). The malicious cripple from the Hebrides in *Odd John* is a satirical reterritorialization of the folkloric changeling (such as that discovered in "The Caerlaverock Changeling"), while the titular protagonist himself deterritorializes the poisonous *ressentiment* of the "little man" (akin in many ways to Čapek's exploited Newts) in order to teach the superman (Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 41) and to proclaim the SF changeling. While the folktale changeling is certainly recognizable, given its prominence since the Victorian era, the SF changeling is not a well-known entity but rather one that I have been attempting to conjure since

Chapter 2. *Stapledon is perhaps the first author to reach back to the folk narrative tradition, to reassert a folk sensibility in terms of a utopian speculation on “spirit,” and to resituate the folkloric changeling in a technologically advanced setting. Sirius, the thematic sequel to Odd John, reiterates Stapledon’s earlier position in Star Maker that the truly “awakened” individual possesses a balance of human intelligence and animal instinct. Sirius, one of the first notable canine protagonists in modern SF or fantastic literature,<sup>71</sup> is also Stapledon’s first prominent animal-human hybrid protagonist; for he is, unlike Odd John, a mongrel consisting of human and animal parentage whose spiritual awakening results not from his escape from but rather his alliance with *Homo sapiens*. With the appearance of the superhuman comes also the counter-vision of the *nonhuman*: this is the shifting set of coordinates (Swanson 288), and ultimately the geophilosophical scope (deterritorialization/reterritorialization), for *Last and First Men* and *Star Maker*, *Odd John* and *Sirius*.*

Since Chapter 1 I have argued that changeling tales and SF variations on them provide articulations of “new social relations” through the personae of congenitally afflicted children, spontaneously mutated and/or genetically altered humans, and hybridized animal-humans. On the one hand, the changeling—as a particular conceptual enunciation of human evolution and social change (to put it in abbreviated form)—has often been a figure of both crippled body and crippled mind, a dwarfish figure of *ressentiment*, as Nietzsche would say, but also a fetishized creation of an even more deformed human species, the “vast army of our sick civilization,” as Wilhelm Reich

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<sup>71</sup> Others include the dog investigator of Franz Kafka’s “Investigations of a Dog” (1922) and the proletariat mongrel Sharik of Mikhail Bulgakov’s *Heart of a Dog* (1925).

announced in 1946 (ix). On the other hand, it would be no contradiction to say that the changeling has shown remarkable adaptability and that it frequently possesses a refined, almost alien, sense of *ethics* that enables humans to reevaluate their own limited systems of morality. All the same, none of the alliances we find in folk legends attain more than a truncated articulation, and if they are advanced, they fizzle out through the general *human* inability to suppress hierarchical behavior: the changeling, and therefore the new social relation, is exorcized. But if we consider the legends and their corresponding folk culture to be “primitive” (which, *temporally*, they certainly are), it is only a falsehood to believe that “modern” culture is more advanced (with the exception of the handful of folkloric and SF simulations, models, or analogies down through the ages which have exceeded the limits of their generic boundaries or linguistic registers). If it follows that the opening assertion of Chapter 1 holds true for Chapter 5—that is, that “folk narratives conceptualize inter-group relations, which concern the material circumstances of raising families, dealing with poverty, disease, and war, and learning to adapt to changes in both the environment and in the economy”—then *Homo sapiens* has not truly made any notable *advance*. These “relations” are hostile, irrational, hierarchical, and totally internecine, governed as they are by the abstractions, or “secondary impulses,” that have always ruled the human species—“justice,” “freedom,” and all the rest.

Stapledon’s cosmological vision of humanity in *Last and First Men* confirms that *what passes for* human intelligence nearly cripples the race beyond repair; and worse than this, his initial self-inflicted blow (biological or nuclear warfare) causes his own race to limp along painfully and pathetically for thousands of millennia until he remakes himself out of the desecrated environment of past wars. But far from advancing some new

salvational ideology that would heal the “fractured political field” of his own “war-torn Europe and the fragmented psyches of its inhabitants” (Gomel 394-95), Stapledon, like his contemporary Čapek, finds in the mongrel changeling the ultimate antidote for the transcendent superman. In the midst of the bitter portrait that culminates in the final destruction of humankind, Stapledon offers one of the first significant *science-fictional* attempts to articulate what it means to form “new social relations” through the symbiotic exchange of dissimilar organisms. And the changeling is a key persona here: for Stapledon’s changelings are *thinkers*, and they are themselves inventors and creators of other changelings (the Third Men engineer the Fourth, the Fourth engineer the Fifth, and so on); they also populate the territories of new societies and new civilizations and “*show thought’s territories, its absolute deterritorializations and reterritorializations*” (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 69; original emphasis). For the record, this deterritorializing movement is also discovered in Shelley’s use of Enlightenment philosophy, in Wells’s use of Darwinian theory, and in Čapek’s use of European folk tradition: the whole apparatus of an established tradition in a particular epoch is adopted in its entirety but is then rerouted and steered in an entirely different direction. It is in SF, and through the SF changeling, that Stapledon so eloquently reminds us that life “proceeds by insinuation” (Bergson 71). While we find the most detailed description of the SF changeling and his operations in Stapledon’s later works, the future Chronicler’s anthropological field notes on the culture of post-twenty-first humankind reveals Stapledon’s broader interest in a metamorphosed humanity, a state which can only occur if a *spiritual* and not just a *biological* change can be engineered.



## I. *Last and First Men* and *Star Maker*: Cosmological Reterritorializations and Anthropological Deterritorializations

As another writer who claims direct descent from Wells, Stapledon writes what we may call “social science fiction” since he *links the artistic creation of new worlds and new social relations to the optimal transformation of his own empirical environment*. But, if he can be described as a “utopian” thinker, he is not a naïve one: the new worlds of Stapledon’s SF are meant to correspond to, if not stimulate, a radical change in the minds of individuals rather than a radical reconstruction of society itself. For example, while he was throughout his life consistently sympathetic towards Communist thought and the notion of a “more advanced type of government” (Moskowitz 60), he also understood the importance of minute but singular changes; he valued, in other words, evolution as much as revolution, well aware that the spontaneous changes occurring in nature on a regular basis could be as radical as any governmental overthrow or military coup. He is, then, interested in what the “controlled imagination” can accomplish (*Last and First Men* 9), aided by both the initial free range of art as well as the delimiting forces of the intellect.

### i. *Last and First Men*

*Last and First Men* outlines the rise and fall of some eighteen species of humanity through some two thousand million years, amidst the incalculable duration of the vast struggle for life in the “slaughter-bench of history” (Geoghegan 347). As the work is too immense to discuss in full, I will consider just a few sequences involving a culture that is the first species to cultivate a new understanding of “the social relation” not hindered by ideological abstractions like the “State” but who succumb to a devastating Martian invasion (the Second Men); the genetically engineered projects of the Third Men who,

with their massive turret-mounted brains, manufacture the most formidable autocracy and totalitarian state (the Fourth Men); and the last race of humans, who attempt to regain the refinement of previous species (especially the Second and the Fifth Men), and who set about eliminating the five great evils—"disease, suffocating toil, senility, misunderstanding, ill-will" (the Eighteenth Men). The last Neptunian races in Stapledon's series (Tenth to Eighteenth) achieve the optimal height of human consciousness and what he would come to call "personality-in-community," the state of being fully "awakened." But what exactly does Stapledon mean by "awakened"? The answer lies not in the transcendental realm of metaphysical philosophy—in, say, Plato's "Ideal" or in Hegel's "Absolute Spirit"—but rather in the material realities of living and working. By "awakened" perhaps Stapledon means: to awake from the drowsy inertia hastened by the "phantasms" of his society, the wholesale ideologies of particular groups that demand complete affiliation, whether they be Christians, Scientists, Mystics, or Revolutionaries.<sup>72</sup> But Stapledon's cosmic scope is not ultimately concerned with producing a totalizing theory of the "awakened spirit," choosing instead to fill his Cosmos—a living organism, stratified beyond comprehension—with a vast swarming horde of conceptual personae whose individual operations cannot be reduced to the dominant trends of their particular epochs. For this reason I tend to disagree with Stanislaw Lem who asserts that it is in the complete multi-millennial scale of humanity, rather than the smaller slices or individual epochs, that we find our greatest enjoyment ("On Stapledon's *Last and First Men*" 274). On the contrary, Stapledon encourages us to lament or rejoice over the individual failures

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<sup>72</sup> These comprise the four sections of *Four Encounters* (1976), which is a philosophical meditation on each personality through the narrator's encounter with a representative from each group.

and achievements of each species of humanity. It is within these smaller segments that we find the various becomings of humankind, the states that lie *in between* one species and another. In its hybrid or in-between state, humanity limps along in “crippled” fashion (*Last and First Men* 23, 41, 47, 55, 63, 78, 95, 98, 103, 108, 131, 132, 138, 192, 200, 201), collectively enunciating a new conceptual persona: the SF changeling.

One of the most tragic defeats for the race of humanity is the Second Men’s conflict with the Martians who, at the height of this human civilization’s evolutionary progress, invade the planet in search of “terrestrial water and terrestrial vegetation” (*Last and First Men* 121). The colonization of earth takes place over some fifty thousand years, with the amoeba-like Martians first descending upon the Earth in the form of greenish “cloudlets” (114). Gradually, the narrator tells us, the Martians are overcome by a “crusade” fervor for “liberating” diamonds, which have the special ability to embody “ethereal radiation or light” (125). This mania allows the Second Men to defeat the Martian crusaders in every subsequent invasion, but gradually the infiltration of this alien race begins to take its toll on the terrestrial inhabitants. The result is that a bacteriologist designs a deadly virus which wipes out all of the Martians but leaves the Second Men in disarray and apathy. So, like the First Men who destroy themselves through the use of biological weapons (73), the Second Men are driven into a new gloomy “wilderness” of existence in the aftermath of a devastating world war; in each case, a previously enlightened culture wrests itself from the earth only to turn the environment against itself. Moreover, it appears as though the Second Men have reverted to the tendencies of their immediate ancestors—the First Men as well as the species of Stapledon’s own society.

In his depiction of a series of bacterial invasions (echoing previous epochs where individual races annihilate one another with microbial weapons), Stapledon produces a crucial variation on Wells's *The War of the Worlds*: whereas in *The War of the Worlds*, the Martians eventually succumb to an unforeseen Terran bacterium, in *Last and First Men* "the Martians are the fatal microbes" (Shelton, "The Mars-Begotten Men of Olaf Stapledon and H. G. Wells" 1). More than this, Stapledon takes the time to explore the mutual incompatibility of the Martians and the Terrans, and the fundamental failure for each group to acknowledge the other as a sentient culture. If the exchange of microbes is, on first appearance, simply a deadly technique of future warfare, it ultimately foreshadows Stapledon's divergence from Wells's text: the creation of a symbiotic organism deriving from the contact between Martian and Earthling (2). But this symbiosis is never willed by the two cultures, and it only occurs after the Martians are completely annihilated by the bacteria and after their "subvital units," which enable telepathic communication, are imbibed and absorbed into bodies of the mammals who survive the war. Over time, the alien microbe wipes out the remainder of the Second Men, wreaks havoc on the environment, and torments animals with "pulmonary diseases" (*Last and First Men* 140). Gradually, however, something remarkable occurs in the physiology of the carnivorous animals, the most favoured species in the nearly desecrated Terran environment:

As ages passed, certain species of mammals so readjusted themselves that the Martian virus became not only harmless but necessary to their well-being. A relationship which was originally that of a parasite and host became in time a true symbiosis, a co-operative partnership, in which the terrestrial animals gained something of the unique attributes of the vanished Martian organisms. (140, 142)

Here we have the most remarkable deterritorialization of all: the animal's adjustment to a previously hostile environment, which may recall our own adjustment to the chaotic planet after ice ages, volcanic eruptions, and the disastrous spread of deadly germs by hostile invaders, as well as our subsequent cultivation of the earth and our stubborn adaptability. But we must not forget that deterritorialization involves *insinuation* and, in this case, *ingestion*: for, "living matter seems to have no other means of turning circumstances to good account than by adapting itself to them passively at the outset" (Bergson 70). All the same, the "turning" of circumstances to good ends—like the mammals in the Martian sequence of *Last and First Men*—occurs when the organism seeks out another territory, segment, or stratum of its environment. And this deterritorialization occurs when the organism refuses to accord itself the status of "organism," and instead opens the body to "connections that presuppose an entire assemblage, circuits, conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensity, and territories and deterritorializations measured with the craft of a surveyor" (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 160). In such a scenario, cosmology (the vast force of astrological movements and planetary changes and the laws that supposedly govern our own planet's environment) may be modified by its counter-position, anthropology (the biological and cultural development of humankind and the minute but by no means insignificant effects of particular operations on our environment). Divergence occurs, then, when Stapledon's personae (his animal-men) turn their environment towards different ends.

It may be worth our while to dwell on these cosmological-anthropological issues a little further. The Martian sequence, of course, introduces once again the concepts of

*divergence* and *symbiosis*, but it is not easy to distinguish where the one begins and the other ends: the moment of “contact” (between the animal-hominid and the earth, between the earth and the alien being, between the animal-hominid and the alien being) already presents an in-between stage in which we cannot tell whether it is the animal that has achieved human consciousness or the human who has learned to embrace his animal instincts; whether it is the earth that has been Martianized, or Mars that has been terraformed by the human bacteria carried back to the home planet by the fleeing Martians (*Last and First Men* 138). Both events occur, precipitating the separate divergence and hybridization of Terran and Martian. The physical joining together of the two disparate cultures is analogous to the narrator’s belief that each possesses something that the other is lacking: for the Second Men, it is the ability to cultivate an individual consciousness free of the repressive public mind; for the Martians, it is the ability to view itself collectively, as a group consciousness that can transcend the narrow-minded single self. Combined, the now hybridized Martian-animals, who, we are led to believe, get an extra evolutionary boost from the subvital microbes, constitute the first of Stapledon’s changeling personae and reside in the almost imperceptible space between *animal* and *human*, *human* and *alien*.

Stapledon’s most “awakened” humans possess a vigorous combination of these biological-spiritual coordinates, and it is the symbiosis of Terran and Martian that leads to further variations on humankind, which now possesses the special telepathic technique enabled by the Martian subvital units. These units had allowed the Martians to communicate as a mass organism, even while the ideological preference for the group or “public” mind ultimately assimilates individual consciousness. For the Third Men, “at the

back of every mind was the conception of society itself as an organism of *specialized* members” (*Last and First Men* 155; my emphasis): at this moment in the history of humanity (some thirty million years after the eclipse of the Second Men), a new race has the opportunity to recapture that now ancient art of “personality-in-community,” or the diversity of personalities within the larger community. Having set about to change “nature” generally—through their “vital art,” which proceeds through Moreau-like operations on various animal types—they now set about changing or “remaking” *human* nature. The result is the creation of the first of the “Great Brains,” and perhaps the most notable of Stapledon’s changeling personae. Consider the following description of this bizarre experiment, which owes something to the large-brained Grand Lunar of Wells’s *The First Men in the Moon* (Shelton, “Mars-Begotten Men” 7), the similarly equipped Martians in his *The War of the Worlds*, and the speculative vision of a highly-evolved humanity in his earlier science article “The Man of the Year Million” (1893):<sup>73</sup>

[T]he dauntless experimenters succeeded at last in creating an organism which consisted of a brain twelve feet across, and a body most of which was reduced to a mere vestige upon the under-surface of the brain. The only parts of the body which were allowed to attain the natural size were the arms and hands. These sinewy organs of manipulation were induced to key themselves at the shoulders into the solid masonry which formed the creature’s house. Thus they were able to

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<sup>73</sup> For example, compare the passage from Stapledon’s work to the following one from *The War of the Worlds* “It is worthy of remark that a certain speculative writer of quasi-scientific repute, writing long before the Martian invasion, did forecast for man a final structure not unlike the actual Martian condition. His prophecy, I remember, appeared in November or December, 1893, in a long-defunct publication, the *Pall Mall Budget*, and I recall a caricature of it in a pre-Martian periodical called *Punch*. He pointed out—writing in a foolish, facetious tone—that the perfection of mechanical appliances must ultimately supersede limbs, the perfection of chemical devices, digestion, that such organs as hair, external nose, teeth, ears, and chin were no longer essential parts of the human being, and that the tendency of natural selection would lie in the direction of their steady diminution through the coming ages. The brain alone remained a cardinal necessity. Only one other part of the body had a strong case for survival, and that was the hand, ‘teacher and agent of the brain.’ While the rest of the body dwindled, the hands would grow larger” (350). The “prophecy” to which the narrator alludes is Wells’s own article, “The Man of the Year Million,” which was, in fact, published in the *Pall Mall Budget* in November of 1893 and describes this same large-brained organism.

get a purchase for their work. The hands were the normal six-fingered hands of the Third Men, very greatly enlarged and improved. The fantastic organism was generated and matured in a building designed to house both it and the complicated machinery which was necessary to keep it alive. A self-regulating pump, electrically driven, served it as a heart. A chemical factory poured the necessary materials into its blood and removed waste products, thus taking the place of digestive organs and the normal battery of glands. Its lungs consisted of a great room full of oxidizing tubes, through which a constant wind was driven by an electric fan. The same fan forced air through the artificial organs of speech. (*Last and First Men* 157-58)

We may recall from Chapter 1 that medical changelings often possessed large craniums but often damaged brains and pituitary glands. While the narrator of Stapledon's work tells us that the limbs of this creature are normal, compared to the massive brain, they are deformed; the brain certainly outweighs the diminutive body. We can imagine the whole rigging of the Brain's "home" as comparable to the hospital set-up in which tubes are hooked up to artificial organs to enable respiration and blood circulation in a congenitally afflicted child. Moreover, despite the great excitement generated by this project and its promise to usher in an entirely new human nature, for most readers this scene must produce the acute sensation of *pain*, recalling the ghastly photographs of children with Graves disease and marasmus (Munro 68, 72), or children suffering from progeria (Silver 76).<sup>74</sup> Compared to the folkloric (rather than *medical*) changeling, who has complete control of its environment (and escapes such tortures through its uncanny mobility), this "preposterous factory of mind" (*Last and First Men* 159) is terribly vulnerable. On the one hand, the science-fictional leap here proceeds by *enlarging* the possibilities of the engineered organism, first anticipated in British folk narrative, and by conceiving of an abnormality that is also *an advance on the previous prototype*. On the other hand, the

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<sup>74</sup> For a review of other congenital disorders, see Chapter 1, section III.



narrator's tone ("this *preposterous* factory of mind" [emphasis added]) suggests that this new man is an utter regression; and while this new species of humanity is soon directed towards more successful projects (in which the first clutch of Brains build superior prototypes forty feet in diameter [159]), ultimately it becomes an instrument of autocracy and a socially engineered State. The "Great Brains" that constitute the Fourth Man in this dense cosmological fantasy anticipate the grotesque BEMs and the bulbous-headed scientists, not to mention the legions of supermen, of pulp magazines and cinema of the later 1930s, '40s, and '50s; but they also present a remarkably potent satirical sketch of extreme scientific materialism (McCarthy 38).

*Last and First Men*, with its vast two thousand million-year cosmological cycle, may be seen as an expansive enunciation of Stapledon's philosophy of "personality-in-community" (Shelton, "The Moral Philosophy of Olaf Stapledon" 19-20), or *symbiosis*, which is finally accomplished in the era of the last nine species of *Homo sapiens*. Of course, the narrator, who is one of the Last Men, remarks that if "one of the First Men could enter the world of the Last Men, he would find many things familiar and much that would seem strangely distorted and perverse" (*Last and First Men* 214). Further, Wells's *Moreau* becomes an even more crucial text now when we consider that Stapledon's "Last Men" resemble "beast-like" organisms, and would, to the "primitive explorer" (perhaps to Prendick?), appear as "a degraded type," "faun-like, and in particular cases, ape-like, bear-like, ox-like, marsupial, or elephantine" (215). Unlike the "Beast-Folk," however, the Last Men "are both more human and more animal," and their particular operations (locomotion, manual dexterity, intellectual speculation, and spiritual reflection) make them a superbly harmonious organism in the great symphony that is humanity. Looking

ahead to *Odd John*, we might conjecture that the Eighteenth Men may very well be *superhuman* compared to the First Men since they are in such control of both their biological and spiritual evolution. While it does lack the “novel” appeal of the later work, the element of anticipation and speculation in *Last and First Men* is significant all the same, and it stands as one of the most skilled examples of philosophical SF. Consider, for example, the resolution of the confrontation between the Martians and the Second Men: this variation on Wells’s *The War of the Worlds* exemplifies Stapledon’s “modernization of the Hegelian dialectical process whereby ‘antithesis’ becomes ‘complement’ (a term favoured by Wells) so that ‘synthesis’ can become ‘symbiosis’ (a term borrowed from biology by Stapledon himself)” (Shelton, “Moral Philosophy” 16). We also discover that humanity’s “evolution” is never a linear process but consists of terrible reterritorializations and wondrous deterritorializations; always, the Chronicler tells us, the new human species is on the “right track” when it begins to demonstrate some of the characteristics of the very first human species, the First Men. It may not surprise us, then, that Stapledon begins his second great cosmological fantasy with plain old *Homo sapiens*.

ii. *Star Maker*

Continuing on with the “controlled imagination” of the previous work, *Star Maker* employs the format of a loosely structured anthropological survey of alien worlds which serves to explore anew the possibility of achieving “personality-in-community.” As I am focusing my attention on Stapledon’s symbiotic communities, I will pass over much of the content of this work, which is largely concerned with the establishment of a “community of worlds” and the attempt to penetrate the identity of the Creator, the Star Maker himself. Instead, I will isolate just a handful of chapters—and in those chapters,

very particular scenarios—detailing the narrator’s formation of a whole collective of “cosmical explorers,” instigated by the narrator and his original ally, Bvalltu, a philosopher (Ch. 5.1); and this collective’s encounter with the early strivings of a symbiotic “sub”-race (Ch. 7.1). The book opens with the narrator expressing his existential malaise: “One night when I had tasted bitterness I went out on to the hill” (*Star Maker* 11). While Leslie Fiedler has made the claim that this “bitterness” possibly suggests a “conjugal quarrel” and perhaps even “casts some light on Stapledon’s complex relationship with his own wife” (*Olaf Stapledon* 11), I would assert that it places the narrator—the *conceptual persona* rather than simply the *author’s* “real” voice—in his “cosmic setting” and amidst the flux of other social relations, which he cannot at first perceive in the “obscurity” (*Star Maker* 11) of the Cosmos itself. His eventual “odyssey among the stars” (Lem, “On Stapledon’s *Star Maker*” 1) pulls him out of his familiar and habitual environment; for he has, by virtue of his prolonged meditation on the stars above, begun to soar away from “his native planet at incredible speed” (*Star Maker* 17) and ultimately to *see* through the perspective of a whole new series of extraterrestrial personae. I begin with one brief example.

The cosmic travels in strange new worlds and the alliance with a pack of diverse organisms transform the narrator’s previous understanding of home and *Homo sapiens*. Remarking on his ability to see through the philosopher Bvalltu’s eyes, he describes a woman from the “Other Earth”:

When he looked up, I saw standing opposite us a caricature of a human being, with a frog-like face that was scarcely a face at all, and with the thorax of a pouter-pigeon, naked save for greenish down. [...] This creature, which, to the terrestrial eye, was simply a monster, passed on the Other Earth as a young and beautiful woman. And I myself, observing her through Bvalltu’s benevolent eyes,

recognized her as indeed beautiful. To a mind *habituated* to the Other Earth her features and her every gesture spoke of intelligence and wit. Clearly, if I could admire such a woman, I myself must have changed. (*Star Maker* 66; my emphasis)

Despite the anthropomorphic analogy to the Terran animal kingdom, the narrator reveals how his newly acquired habits have altered his conception of beauty, of womanhood (surely he is now estranged in some way from his wife at home), and of the home. As Prendick discovers in *Moreau*, habituation leads to sympathy, and sympathy to a new social relation, which, in turn, deterritorializes our established conception of the “home” and leaves us open to the contaminating effects of symbiosis.

While the star-seeker frequently uses the analogy of contagion to describe the numerous “swarms” of insane organisms that destroy their own worlds and those of other sentient beings (see, for example, *Star Maker* 43, 93, 129), he also applies this analogy to himself, suggesting that the symbiotic experience—the savoring of the “richness and subtlety” of alien sense organs (64), the “contrapuntal harmony” of living and moving with each other and through each other (70)—implies the mutual contamination of identity. Certainly, if we recall what Derrida has said about true or “radical” hospitality, the hosting of another involves a parasitical relationship, a “*receiving without invitation, beyond or before the invitation*” (“Hostipitality” [2002] 360; original emphasis). Two particular instances in *Star Maker* indicate that the narrator has gradually assumed the role of a parasite or symbiont, further suggesting his own status as a changeling of a sort. In the first case, he describes the reaction of the “hosts” he visits on the Other Earth: “The more sophisticated [inhabitants] assumed that I was a mere disease, a symptom of insanity in themselves. They therefore promptly applied to the local ‘Mental Sanitation

Officer”” (*Star Maker* 35). In the second case, he describes his part as another kind of “host,” perhaps akin to Derrida’s conceptualization (“Hostipitality” [2000] 4): “Like a swarm of locusts we would descend upon a new-found world, each of us singling out a suitable host” (*Star Maker* 133). This return to the concept of hospitality reminds us how significant SF has itself deterritorialized—and *contaminated*—its own domain as well as that of folklore: the symbiont, for example, has become a well-established “alien actant” in the realm of alien-encounter SF (Malmgren 16), modifying the persona of the parasite, as featured in other SF works like Robert A. Heinlein’s *The Puppet Masters* (1951) or Jack Finney’s *The Body Snatchers* (1956) and in folktales about changelings. In Stapledon’s hands, the SF changeling sheds its regressive characteristics and resentment, even while it reaffirms its animal and alien divergences. We can also perceive that Stapledon (like Čapek) forces us to rethink the concept of hospitality, which is modified when we graft onto it the additional component of “alliance.” But, after all, the home and the family of the changeling has always been a “mobile territory” (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 67). And if *Star Maker* does not conceptualize a changeling we have seen before, it soars through the outer reaches of our own galaxy and beyond in order to make humanity itself unrecognizable, hybridized, and therefore a candidate for a changeling that is *new under the sun*. The strength of a comparison lies in the ability to find not only points of correspondence but also points of convergence: two very distinct personae may be said to *converge* when they bear a *conceptual* resemblance. Therefore, while Stapledon employs changeling personae, such as the Great Brain or Odd John, who resemble previous ones, he also employs *prototypes* whose operations, rather than appearances or characteristics, mark them as relevant for the current discussion.

One such prototype in *Star Maker* is the race consisting of Ichthyoids and Arachnoids who play a crucial part in Stapledon's search for "personality-in-community" because they constitute the most striking *biological* model for symbiosis in his entire cosmological series. This sequence is fascinating for its dazzling anthropological style, mixed as it is with an impressive knowledge of amphibian biology as well as a characteristic science-fictional flight of fancy. And while we find no recognizable changelings here (not that Stapledon ever explicitly acknowledges them as such in his work), we do discover the metamorphoses at work in the crossing over of kingdoms within the alien biospheres—operations that characterize all changeling tales, whether they be found in European folklore or SF. The two species, one resembling a "fish-like stock" and the other a "crustacean," initially engage in a fierce cultural war. As the narrator explains, both "were sufficiently *human* to be aware of one another as rival aristocrats in a subhuman world, but neither was *human* enough to realize that for each race the way of life lay in cooperation with the other" (*Star Maker* 104-05; my emphasis). This may strike us as *humanist* in the worst way.<sup>75</sup> However, the narrator's subsequent description of what "cooperation" between species entails completely estranges us from any human conception of that word:

As the epochs passed, the two species moulded one another to form a well-integrated union. The little arachnoid, *no bigger than a chimpanzee*, rode in a snug hollow behind the great '*fish's*' skull, his back being stream-lined with the contours of the larger creature. The tentacles of the ichthyoid were specialized for large-scale manipulation, those of the arachnoid for minute work. A biochemical interdependence also evolved. Through a membrane in the ichthyoid's pouch an

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<sup>75</sup> We may recall, from the movie *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (1990), the Klingon woman's mocking reply when Chekov makes a toast to "inalienable human rights": "In-*alien*-able? If you could hear yourselves—*human* rights. The very name is racist. The Federation is nothing more than a *Homo sapiens*-only club."

exchange of endocrine products took place. This mechanism enabled the arachnoid to become fully aquatic. So long as it had frequent contact with its host, it could stay under water for any length of time and descend to any depth. A striking mental adaptation also occurred in the two species. The ichthyoids became on the whole more introvert, the arachnoids more extravert. (105; emphasis added)

It is notable that the narrator continues to anthropomorphize alien species in this passage:<sup>76</sup> we have comparisons to a chimpanzee and a fish, and each species is explicitly identified through a classification from the animal kingdom (ichthyoid and arachnoid). We might also speculate that the internal secretions of these creatures are likely not *endocrinic*, or even akin to what we usually identify as *hormonal*. Lastly, the narrator is intent on using human psychology to determine the temperaments of each species: one is extravert, the other introvert. The difference between this scenario and the earlier one involving the woman of the Other World is that the narrator does not specify the ways in which he experiences the new environment *through the alien perspective*. More so than in earlier episodes, the narrator maintains the perspective of a highly trained—if highly sympathetic—anthropologist. Following Gregory Benford’s lead, Carl Malmgren characterizes this type of alien encounter as “extrapolative” since it involves an anthropomorphic categorization and therefore allows for a “readerly recuperation” (17). Despite these obvious faults, however, we might argue that Stapledon’s concern in this passage (and in the book as a whole) is to place the human organism within the biosphere as a whole, including all of the wondrous creatures that crowd around Darwin’s “tangled

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<sup>76</sup> As Stanislaw Lem argues in *Microworlds*, most American SF simplifies the human/alien dichotomy, leading authors to project “their fears and self-generated delusions on the universe” (247). For related discussions of alien-encounter SF the anthropomorphized aliens, see Patrick Parrinder’s “The Alien Encounter. Or, Ms Brown and Mrs Le Guin”; Gregory Benford’s “Aliens and Knowability: A Scientist’s Perspective” and “Effing the Ineffable”, and Carl D. Malmgren’s “Self and Other in SF: Alien Encounters ”

bank,” and to show, by analogy, the human capacity to think beyond its own species; but before we can contemplate the alien, we must contemplate the animal. For this reason, the changeling may actually be easier for us to contemplate since it has always been associated with either our own species (lesser-evolved “savages,” throw-backs, missing-links, or hybrid unions) or with the animal (the “monster” that exhibits uncouth behaviour associated with a feral organism). The alien, on the other hand, presents for us an “impasse” in which both the human and the animal registers fail us; we may very well be forced to “leave behind the notion of characterization” altogether (Parrinder, “The Alien Encounter: Or, Ms Brown and Mrs Le Guin” 55). But we should not forget the powerful effects of cognitive estrangement, as Suvin suggests, nor should we discount in particular the subversive and satirical (not to mention *defamiliarizing*) technique of the animal bestiary, as exemplified by Swift, Orwell, and Čapek. It does the human race no credit to discover that simple Arachnoids and Ichthyoids (“alien” or not) can achieve a truly symbiotic community and a “partnership” that is “at once more intimate than human marriage and far more enlarging to the individual than any friendship between members of distinct human races” (*Star Maker* 106). Further, while we (as humans) may find the grotesque description of the first Great Brain to be an almost familiar sight, we may find the image of aristocratic insectoid amphibians engaging in “contrapuntal sexuality” (105) estranging and a threat to our own human sensibilities.

We have already seen how Wells conjures up folktale entities in his island of Beast-Men, and how Čapek returns to Wells in his dystopian world of talking Newts. Stapledon plumbs the depths of these scientific parables in order to move off in an entirely new direction by conceptualizing the first of a series of symbiotic communities



based on both the traditional, *folkloric* notion of communal hospitality as well as the tactical alliance. The fairy realm is the height of human potential because human participation in the fairy economy constitutes a hybridization of two societies, cultures, and perhaps even *kingdoms*. For, if “evolution includes any veritable becomings, it is in the domain of *symbioses* that bring into play beings of totally different scales and kingdoms, with no possible filiation” (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 238; original emphasis). If we do not reach the level of *alienation* produced in the best “alien-encounter SF,” we can also recognize that the alien converges at various points with the changeling persona, as seen in this and previous chapters. The hybrid theoretical approach of philosophical Darwinism (“creative evolution” in Bergson, “nomadic philosophy” in Deleuze and Guattari) helps us to gauge these intersections: the alien persona perhaps corresponds to what Stapledon calls the Cosmos, while the changeling corresponds to the terrestrial realm, to the solid earth. These points of convergence lead us to new insights in the next section.

## II. *Odd John* and *Sirius*: A Changeling for All Seasons

It was suggested in the Introduction that *Odd John* and *Sirius* constitute Stapledon’s *proper* “novels” because they abandon the essay format but also because they correspond to the more recognizable prose narrative containing a tightly-woven plot and individual protagonists distinguishable from the mass of their society. These works also extend the warning of *Star Maker* that the “lofty communal mind” can lead to a gregarious lifestyle and an oppressive herd mentality (*Star Maker* 171). While it is true that Stapledon was generally interested in the “enhanced lucidity of the cosmical spirit

itself" (254-55), Odd John and Sirius focalize for us, perhaps better than the Last Men, *symbiosis* in the modern milieu—an environment that is directly analogous to an external “truth”: Stapledon’s empirical world (Angenot 18). The eponymous protagonists situate us in the empirical world of bio-genetics in 1930s and 1940s Britain and enunciate the problem of how “variations, beneficial or deleterious, come about in the first place” (Isaacs 37). It may be said that each of the five chapters of this project also correspond in varying ways to the motif of animal-hominid deterritorializations and reterritorializations—wresting the paw from the earth, reterritorializing it onto all manner of tools, turning away from territories and returning to them, as the situation demands (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 67-68). It would be premature, then, to suggest that the Last Men or the Symbiotics constitute a finished product: if we can say that the changeling (folkloric or science-fictional) is the model for a higher evolved human, Stapledon’s Eighteenth Man and his Ichthyoid-Arachnoids are theoretical models for Odd John and Sirius. As I have suggested, the symbiotic relation occurs on both the cosmological and anthropological planes, and the focus on a folkloric entity has allowed us to keep both in perspective. For Ó Giolláin, Jenkins, Briggs and other folklorists have continually stressed that any account of the changeling must take into consideration the “syncretism” of “popular” and “official” beliefs, and of religious and economic concerns. If the changeling functions for both the Church and its largely pagan congregation as a demonic force, it also operates as a parasitical threat to the material stability of the household. Appropriately, *Odd John* returns us to the realm of the “domestic” fiction, but with a twist: it parodies both traditional folklore and contemporary SF, and in doing so, displays more of Stapledon’s skills of insinuation.

i. *Odd John*

*Odd John* depicts the life of a superman, and, through appropriately titled chapters (“The First Phase,” “Thought and Action,” “Many Inventions,” “Methods of a Young Anthropologist,” and so forth), details the stages of John Wainwright’s maturity from deformed revolutionary to god-like philosopher. Bakhtin has shown us that the “basic plot of a novel [...] is presented as the course of a life sheathed in a metamorphosis” (111) and is “drawn from pre-class world folklore” (112). *Odd John* imitates the old form in its early catalogue of the hero’s growth and maturity, including his remarkable ability to learn mathematics and theorize physics from his pram (*Odd John* 14): this is also an odd twist on the modernist “portrait” of an artist. The first eleven chapters (roughly the first half of the novel) describe John’s rapid acquisition of human knowledge (mathematics, chemistry, biology, psychology, philosophy, and religion) and the tactics and operations that will allow him to survive in a world of “normals.” Like other *Bildungsromans*, the plot turns on the protagonist’s search for a vocation, which, for John, means the search for the fully “awakened” state of the human spirit. Chapter 12, entitled “John in the Wilderness,” finds the protagonist at an impasse in his life, after which, in the next ten chapters (roughly the second half of the novel), John begins to turn his back on the human world and make an earnest search for other “supernormals” like him. It should be noted here that *Sirius* repeats this structure but with a crucial difference. The discussion that follows is largely concerned with how Stapledon’s superhuman persona carries on the project to achieve “personality-in-community”; but it also concludes by considering why *Sirius* is more successful in this same objective. The distinction between each persona has much to do with their individual responses to the deformed changelings that surround

them. And so, as a fulfillment of my promise in Chapter 1, I first consider how Stapledon's SF reinvents the old world changeling in a modern milieu.

But if we say that Stapledon returns the changeling to its old world scenario, by reminding us that these folkloric entities resembled "failure-to-thrive" children, his novel goes one step further than the folktale: it parodies the attempts to diagnose deformity, revealing its knowledge of congenital disorders and its powers of imperceptible insinuation. Fittingly, the newborn infant, little John, is described as an "inert pulpy bit of flesh," "more vegetable than animal, save for an occasional incongruous spasm of activity" (*Odd John* 11); and, when he matures, the infant prodigy appears "spiderish," long and lithe, with grey-green skin, a "Mongolian" head with close white, almost "Negroid" wool hair, and large, green cat-like eyes, which are the "most obviously 'queer' part of him" (9). These descriptors are certainly indicative of an anomalous child, even while none of these features distinguish him from the changeling children we encounter in European folktales. According to Eberly, who cites the authority of fairly current medical texts (1990s), the child here may suffer from Marfan's syndrome, which was "characterized by very long, slender, 'arachnoid' digits and limbs" (236), or perhaps homocystinuria, which often had the symptom of "arachnodactyly," manifesting itself in "spider-like" limbs (242). More so than the first Great Brain, *Odd John* seems to come right out of a medical text on physical anomalies, and he may recall for us the "living skeletons" discussed in a work like Leslie Fiedler's *Freaks* (133-36). Even John's later pram riot, which the narrator compares to "a rich and subtle shindy, full of quaint modulations and variations" (*Odd John* 12), recalls the legendary changeling's cradle antics. But John is no passive spider-boy, nor is he mentally crippled by his deformity; if

he “fails to thrive” it is not because his parents fear or reject him (Munro 277); far from it, they protect him fiercely. Further, his pram riot is directed towards a complex and intelligent purpose, whereas, for the most part, the folkloric changeling’s anarchy is short-lived, even while we may feel that it has certain potential. But, at this point, we would be wrong to say that John transcends the folk changeling: rather, he explores the potential of this entity and, by embracing these characteristics, defies the set parameters of changeling *behaviour*, which would limit his “quaint modulations and variations.” Moreover, Stapledon neatly displaces the authority of both medical science and the unnamed narrator: if John fits the traditional description of a changeling, he also effectively undermines the narrator’s journalistic attempt to “complete the description” (*Odd John* 9), since each descriptor (“spiderish,” “Mongolian,” “Negroid”) carries the register in several directions and reveals the divergent nature of our conceptual persona. These descriptors, in other words, present us with a series of personae—animal, man, man-becoming-animal, and so forth—as well as alternate regions and territories (Mongolia), biological deterritorializations, and finally a hybrid identity (Negroid and therefore what used to be called *Mulatto*). We could go further with this and say that John is an entity swarming with previous conceptual personae—all the crippled and deformed children and the prodigies of twentieth-century pediatrics and pathology, the imps and interlopers of folklore, even Martin Luther’s devil-in-the-cradle. The first indication of this occurs when John first opens his eyes, some eighteen months into his career: “it was as though a sleeping city had suddenly leapt into life” (11). Perhaps, like his literary descendent Paul-Muad’Dib, the superhuman protagonist of Frank Herbert’s *Dune* (1965), John is a “theater of processes,” even while he does not fall “prey to the imperfect vision, to the

*race consciousness and its terrible purpose*” (Herbert 390; original emphases). Like the Last Man of *Last and First Men*, John is able to harness particular processes and coordinate them into tactical patterns, and to keep others at bay.

In particular, John orchestrates the processes he harnesses (the “theory of relativity” [*Odd John* 14], “passionate manual constructiveness” and drawing [16], “locomotion” [17], physical agility [23], and inventiveness [47-49]) towards the cultivation of his own particular “style” (44), which is related to his search for a vocation. Throughout these first several chapters he performs a series of experiments as a way to discover what fields of knowledge and what kinds of social relations are worth pursuing. True to his changeling nature, he deftly infiltrates the world of finance and politics; discovers that most modern philosophers are mere “howlers” (35), that psychiatry is pure quackery (71) and religion “Ninety-nine *per cent.* slush” (73). His particular style is a sort of *bricolage* of human philosophy, religion, and science, shaped and redirected for a new purpose. Even as a child, John does not merely “play” with numbers (an already precocious activity) but discovers, in essence, that it makes more sense for humans to count in twelves (13); and shortly after this, his conversation with a mathematician proves that he has the “imaginative power” to perceive principles without knowing the “jargon” (15). As he accumulates his catch-all of human pastimes, John discovers that science, philosophy, and all the rest of it have the potential to serve the human race well but that the human race makes a muddle of it all—which means that they are unable to see beyond their doctrines, ideologies, and quackery. The coordination of his experiment, then, requires him to develop his powers as imperceptibly as possible to avoid the damaging effects of human irrationality and to extricate himself from any prolonged contact with

those who are his inferiors. He first accomplishes this task by constructing for himself a subterranean workshop in which he creates a series of ingenious “household and personal labour-saving devices” (47). The description of this burrow of sorts, located deep in the woods under a sheet of corrugated metal, is a variation on the folktale landscape featured in Chapter 1:

The sheet was now easily lifted, and opened like a trap door in the hillside. It revealed a black hole between three big stones. John crawled inside, and bade me follow; but before I could wedge my way through he had to move one of the stones. I found myself in a low cave, illuminated by John’s flashlight. So *this* was the workshop! It had evidently been cut out of the clay slope and lined with cement. (45-46)

We may recall the scene in “The Fairy Wife” where the little boy comes through the door in the hillside in order to buy the foal from the man (Chapter 1, section I). Following his fairy ancestors, John invites the human into his cavernous dwelling and proceeds to initiate an economic transaction: introducing his series of inventions, John discloses his financial venture, which can only function if the narrator assumes the role of business agent (48-49). The inventions themselves—a trouser pocket for boys (46), a parsley cutter, a potato peeler (47)—are variations on domestic devices and therefore further insinuations into the human world directed for the purpose of “‘putting one over’ on the established order on its home ground” (de Certeau 26). Like the Good People, John resides in the *earth* only to tear himself away from it, to break through it and ascend above it; accordingly, he will reside in the company of humans (the narrator and his own mother, Pax) in order to reaffirm his need to escape humanity. Moreover, this method of detachment creates a dilemma for the superhuman protagonist: as he begins to distance

himself from *Homo sapiens*, he also loses touch with his changeling heritage which, as we know, derives in part from that very same species.

There is, then, a certain amount of cynicism involved in John's search for a style or mode of expression. But always this cynicism appears to have a purpose, for we must remember that John also enunciates some of the criticisms of his creator, the author, Stapledon. As the superman, the *Übermensch*, John also enunciates Nietzsche's frustration with the "man" who sees himself as a finished product, or who, on the contrary, delights in his "crippled" misery (*Zarathustra* 159-60). Accordingly, he enters the realm of human social relations in order to initiate a radical convalescence among the "hunchbacks" of his society (159). However, once John discovers his great powers of seduction early on (*Odd John* 58), it appears as though he is simply engaging in lab experiments with *Homo sapiens*. His first affair or attempt at conquest is with his closest friend, Stephen (59); this is a sure sign of John's "queer" behaviour and yet another gesture of his defiance of accepted human morals. He engages in other love-affairs with older boys and young men (61) but focuses most of his attention on the pursuit of an attractive girl named Europa. Later on he tells the faithful narrator, whom he benevolently calls "Fido," that he needed the conquest of Europa in order to gain independence from *Homo Sapiens* but that, by engaging in the affair, he was fraternizing with an inferior specimen (64-65). There is, of course, an allegorical reading available to us, since Europa is seen by John as a representative of at least one segment of the race—*Europe*—but there is more to unpack here. His whole career of seduction and his otherwise misogynist remarks on one of the female sex, whom he compares to a "dog [...] smelling around me" (64), indicates that he is loath to be tied in any way to another, and that he sees the



dangers in becoming *affiliated*. Additionally, his homosexual relationship with Stephen does not require him to consummate a relationship through marriage, or at least to become subject to the heterosexual marriage convention. This is not the first “queer” changeling we have encountered, if we recall the homoerotic undertones of the Jekyll-Hyde relationship.<sup>77</sup> Lastly, his final transgression of committing incest with his mother Pax underscores his larger intention to “assert his moral independence of *Homo sapiens*, to free himself of all deep unconscious acquiescence in the conventions of the species that had nurtured him” (65). The great irony, however, is that the rejection of human affiliations seems to truncate “new social relations” all the more. Most of these brief friendships, and even his life-long one with “Fido,” are comparable to that between a man and his faithful dog. As both Barbara Bengels and Arthur Roy Swanson argue, Stapledon’s “Story Between Jest and Earnest” (the subtitle of the novel) may be inviting us to see the flaws in the superhuman mentality, just as we are encouraged to see flaws in the engineered society of the Great Brains in *Last and First Men*. Part of John’s tragedy is that he is unable to find fully awakened humans and must search instead for superhumans. For failing to see that humanity is the source of the symphony he seeks (*Last and First Men*), and for failing to acknowledge his own human heritage, John truly is “a dullard in his own way” (Bengels, “Olaf Stapledon’s ‘Odd John’ and ‘Sirius’: Ascent into Bestiality” 59). But another part of the tragedy—which is also the comedy, the jest, and the satire—is that a large portion of human society cannot see the potential to

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<sup>77</sup> Andrew M. Butler and Chris West have recently sketched out what should be a pioneering exploration of the “queer” or “perverse” elements of SF, which can be traced back to *Jekyll and Hyde* and which recur most prominently in the texts of the magazine heyday and of the Cold War era, although frequently through the perspective of a hyper-homophobic protagonist.

embrace the spiritual transcendence that John at least emulates, even if he is too divine to appreciate the experience (Swanson 284). Moreover, “Stapledon is philosophically sad that humans cannot be what they must remain, once they have developed full spirituality” (285), and John enunciates this flaw when he ultimately transcends humanity.

Transcendence has never been the objective of the changeling and even in the crudest versions of the legend, there is a tragic sense of the loss of community: as Johnnie laments, “I wish I had been longer with my mother. I’d a kent her better” (Briggs, “Johnnie in the Cradle” 290). At the same time, right from the start the changeling has been a “*theater of processes*” intended to carry out the objectives of his own—sometimes *terrible*—race, the Good People. Nevertheless, while John has crawled out of the cradle, propelled by his inventive operations, he has refused to fall back on the home when he is vulnerable. He chooses instead to exile himself permanently from the human world. This break happens when he strikes off to the wild hills of Scotland in order to relive primitive man’s struggle for existence (*Odd John* 94-104): this we may see as his “down-going” (Nietzsche, *Zarathustra* 39) and his very last reterritorialization. John discovers that he has become “spiritually contaminated by contact with the civilization of *Homo sapiens*,” and while he is momentarily thrust back to the blood-riot of *Homo sapiens*’ savage hunter-gatherer beginnings, he makes a clean break in order to “strip away every vestige of [the race] from his own person [...] without depending in any way whatever on the primitive and debased creatures who dominated the planet” (*Odd John* 94). Thus, in the middle of his search for “personality-in-community,” John has reached an impasse, for he has surpassed the previous mutants, Beast-Men, monsters, and changelings of all kinds and degrees. Like Zarathustra, he underscores man’s animal ancestry but is much too

impatient with the slow process of evolution; while he had originally been amused by man's animal, earthy, and earth-bound thinking, his final down-going leads to a torrid denunciation of man's stultified position *as man*. Man is *too much* the animal, he asserts frequently; man is much too proud of his primitive instincts, and even the greatest man, as Zarathustra exclaims, is "all-too-human!" (*Zarathustra* 117). This impasse is worth considering in further detail since John's *absolute* deterritorialization nevertheless contributes to one coordinate of Stapledon's radical reinvention of the changeling persona. For "man," or rather the *human*, is a crucial part of the equation: as Zarathustra says poignantly in the opening prologue of Nietzsche's philosophical fantasy, "What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal; what can be loved in man is that he is a *going-across* and a *down-going*" (44).

However we are meant to interpret John's superhuman arrogance, it is apparent that he operates effectively as a component of Stapledon's critique of contemporary human society. Unlike the Last Men, John has great difficulty adjusting to his environment, especially since he cannot transform society with society's willing assistance. Being a superhuman, he experiences the acute pain of living in the *wrong era*, instead of in one of the future eras described in *Last and First Men*, where he truly seems to belong. Accordingly, John searches for beings of this sort, and his acquired telepathic abilities allow him to succeed at least in this pursuit. As a testimony to his belief that the world of *Homo sapiens* has "contaminated" the supernormals who must live in the same space, the first "wide-awake" person he finds, James Jones, is a five-fingered flute player currently living in a lunatic asylum (*Odd John* 109). The ailing old man discovers a way to produce sweet music from his pipe in the midst of his isolation and despite the fact that

the orderlies regard his “oddly twisted variants” of classical pieces as the “caterwauling of a lunatic” (110). John tells his faithful Fido that the pipe music straightens out the “tangles” of his mind (111), suggesting once again the ways in which the behavior of these supernormal changelings defies the expectations and diagnoses of modern society and, ultimately, John’s own doubts about the race. If we have gradually become more detached and less sympathetic towards John, who has subjected every one of our sacred beliefs to merciless ridicule, we may experience a kind of pathos for “J. J.,” this deformed, pipe-playing child living in an old man’s body—evidently, a descendent of Johnnie-in-the-cradle. When he finally leaves the old man, J. J. sinks back into his madness, reinforcing for John the need to strip away the vestiges of the human world, which seems to have done more to harm than to help the changeling.

John’s next encounter with a supernormal goes some way towards convincing us of his need to extricate himself from human society, but the meeting also reinforces Stapledon’s search for a human community that might learn something from the changeling’s variant music. The second “wide-awake” individual is discovered to be living in South Uist, Outer Hebrides, and John gives his faithful biographer a detailed description:

He’s a ghastly cripple; no legs, and arms like a newt’s arms. And there’s something wrong with his mouth, so that he can’t talk. And he’s always sick, because his digestion doesn’t work properly. In fact he’s the sort any decent society would drown at birth. But the mother loves him like a tigress; though she’s scared stiff of him too, and loathes him. Neither parent has any idea he’s—what he is. They think he’s just an ordinary little cripple. And because he’s a cripple, and because they treat him all wrong, he’s brewing the most murderous hate imaginable. (*Odd John* 112)

In this scenario we discover the, by now, *recognizable* changeling persona, with his deformed limbs and internal organs: he is like the “fractious” baby of “The Caerlaverock Changeling,” contrary because he is constantly ill, and a good candidate for infanticide. The difference here, which John is sure to point out, is that this changeling possesses a glittering malice. Unlike the beautiful lunatic, J. J., this creature has become completely warped by his deformity: he does not say, “friend” when he sees another supernatural (110) but instead shuts his mind like an oyster (113). For John, as for Stapledon the author, the old world changelings will not do; for too long (not just since the Victorian period but as far back as the Renaissance, and perhaps as far back the Middle Ages), changelings have functioned as scapegoats in society, like Luther’s “devils in the cradles, which thrive not, only they feed and suck” (qtd. in Hartland 109), like Stevenson’s Hyde who represents the atavistic behaviour of the lower (criminal) classes, or like Čapek’s Newts who, as “little people,” thrive on the honour of deformity and the reactionary politics of mass military bravado.

Odd John is a radically deterritorialized changeling; “radical” because he is *born* as a changeling but quickly sheds most of the characteristics associated with changelings and changeling behaviour. Most significantly, this changeling *grows up*. When the crippled child finally “opens” himself to him, John is nearly swallowed by the mirror-image of himself: “I felt myself dropping plumb into the most appalling darkness [...] a sort of dank atmosphere of poison” (*Odd John* 113). This “baby Satan” (114) is the changeling that John used to be, but also the changeling that was fetishized in the folklore of the Victorian period: the changeling that we have been trying to shake off since Chapter 1. We may then shiver in relief as John escapes with his life—and especially his

mind—intact, but also feel a certain haunting sadness for both the afflicted child, with his poor digestion (his inability to savor life while in this crippled state), and his elderly parents who protect him fiercely, fear him all the more, and ultimately help to deform his sociability. The very domestic scene haunts us as well since it seems to fit the setting of the old changeling tale: the “minute room with a flagged floor, the peat fire” (113), which, we might add, is never used to drive the wretched creature out of the home. I have lingered on this passage and on this figure because he, more than any persona encountered since Chapter 1, allows us to see the changeling in its old world setting; allows us to see the old world changeling with new eyes, and to remind ourselves that this persona has always oscillated between ideological recuperation and radical reinvention (Chapter 4, Introduction): the Hebridean child comprises one of these, and Odd John comprises the other. In the midst of this black hell-hole of hate, we discover within the extremes of these two changelings, the possibility of “personality-in-community.” More than any other SF writer of the period, Stapledon employs a changeling persona in order to discover the “appropriate attitude of the adult human spirit” (111).

While John later founds a colony of supernormals, after having recruited throughout the British Isles and then the rest of the globe, we eventually discover that he cannot succeed in his enterprise without opening his familial circle. Indeed, his own insinuation into the domestic realm early on—his changeling birth—precipitates his lifelong search for contingent allies who will not demand *membership*. His is a “family” without the usual blood ties, for they are bastard and nomadic, hybridized and, to a certain degree, deformed. Moreover, there is a certain amount of irony in the Hebridean episode, for this “baby Satan” fits the bill for loose membership in John’s band of freaks, and is

likely a more powerful supernormal than even John (*Odd John* 114). The child is, moreover, John's folkloric *doppelganger*, not only because he resembles John in infancy (the "inert pulpy bit of flesh") but also because he foreshadows the stunted growth of the supernormal colony, which John establishes in the final stage of his life. It may not surprise us in the end that the old world changeling ultimately contributes to the destruction of John and his colony of supernormals. When an international fleet of ships finally discovers the secret colony, and proceed to inquire about the curious project, John and his clan manage to use the power of telepathic suggestion to manipulate their guests into benevolence. This tactic works initially, but one representative from Japan begins to resist the telepathic control and ultimately convinces his cohorts to dismiss the supernormals as "devils" that will someday destroy the human world (186). John believes that the Hebridean child had "contrived to be telepathically present at this scene" in the mind of the Japanese representative. Shortly after this, John and his colony members commit mass suicide to avoid their inevitable destruction but also to avoid the possibility of being experimented on. This summary "complete[s] the description," as it were, supplying us with the first of two tragic endings to a beautiful life. But we should be far from convinced that Stapledon saw only tragedy in this "failed superman."<sup>78</sup> The whole project of the colony, with its intention to explore the fully awakened state, deserves further consideration.

Some critics have taken Stapledon's tale of a superman to be an "earnest" account of the extraordinary possibilities of genetic mutations, believing, as Stapledon may have

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<sup>78</sup> Leslie Fiedler's chapter on *Odd John* in *Olaf Stapledon: A Man Divided* is titled "A Failed Superman and His Faithful Hound."

in his early years (see, for example, “The Splendid Race”), that “the great hope for mankind is the coming into being, either artificially or through mutation, of an advanced species which will possess more of godliness and less of the animal” (Moskowitz 273). These assertions seem to be confirmed when, after he has founded his colony, John initiates a series of experiments in an attempt to genetically alter human embryos (*Odd John* 168-69): not content with living amongst *Homo sapiens*, he seeks to alter them in his own way after all. Characteristically, Fido passes over this episode rather quickly, perhaps aware of the delicate nature of his biography and of the fact that his narrative can only *describe* John’s actions rather than fully *explain* them. Once again, Stapledon seems to be inviting us to add our own interpretation, but we cannot assume that the author supports his protagonist’s actions, whether they involve biological engineering or the casual murder of a crew that intercepts John and his collective on their way to the island (146). While John may be right that *Homo sapiens* would likely destroy a colony of apes if it threatened to inhibit the founding of a human society (148), we may not forget his earlier claim that the inability to sympathize with a lesser or misfortunate species (crippled, deformed) indicates a spiritual corruption. More than this, John refuses to see in his own maturity from changeling to superman, the sped-up version of humanity’s very slow and painful evolution. So it is with irony that we return to John’s own words: “My looks are a rough test for people,” he tells Fido. “If they don’t begin to see me beautiful when they have had a chance to learn, I know they’re dead inside, and dangerous” (9). But John still believes that the colony of wide-awakes can find no success in the world of the normals. Langatse, the supernormal Tibetan monk who becomes advisor for the project but not full participant, invites John to delay what he views as a hasty enterprise in



order to share with him “more exalted spiritual adventures” (149). John ultimately rejects the offer. Perhaps we might view Langatse, this supernormal changeling, as one of two possible routes for John in the aftermath of his wilderness exile: for the monk possesses the spiritual sensitivity that John is lacking and which would turn John’s enterprise into a less isolated venture by delaying the complete departure from human affairs. John’s rejection of the spiritual “adventure” “may be seen as [his] rejection of his humanity and indeed of humanity itself in favor of a demigodhood that cannot retain its human experience of spirituality” (Swanson 291).

Despite the sense of community that is present in the colony, as described by the ever faithful Fido (who, we may say, is rather too quick to adopt John’s views), we could say that the supernormals have either 1) reterritorialized on their obsession with forming a community of like minds and have therefore fallen back on the affiliation after all, or 2) they have brought about an absolute deterritorialization in which “community” is completely drained of its “social” significance. We have already seen in *Last and First Men* how the Great Brains choose the former option, and how the Martians choose the latter one. Perhaps we might venture to say that the supernormals oscillate between the two options and, at certain moments, achieve an optimal level of sociality—indeed, a “personality-in-community”—despite their isolation from *Homo sap*. This intersection of the individual and the community occurs when, upon finally rejecting the old world changeling, the nasty Hebridean child, John invites other changelings into his circle. There is Ng-Gunko who, by all appearances, is a “Negroid” variation of the changeling, or a “grotesque and filthy little blackamoor,” as the narrator uncharitably describes, appearing “about eight years old,” but being in fact “over twelve.” He is a “freak” with

impossibly red wool hair, two different sized eyes, a face that had “a sinister comicality which was borne out by his expression” (*Odd John* 136), and a personality which suggested that he was “at heart a little savage” (137). Ng-Gunko himself becomes a recruiter and abducts an African baby that, even before birth, demonstrates “supernormal” ability (145). Throughout the lengthy journey back to the other supernormals, the child does not “thrive,” even though he ultimately survives the ordeal and remains mentally in peak form: we can assume that he, too, bears the likeness to the deformed changelings of British folk legend, but with the difference that he (like his abductor, Ng-Gunko) is free of the crippling hate that affects the Hebridean child. Moreover, despite his best efforts, John fulfills the promise and the threat of all folklore changelings: that the more interpretations and diagnoses we introduce, the more conceptual personae appear. And despite his attempt to deterritorialize the old world changeling, it keeps returning, always with a new variation on the old theme.

To be sure, in Stapledon’s hands, the changeling motif undergoes a significant alteration. However, the old changeling narratives frequently display ambiguous attitudes towards the interlopers, indicating both the parental fear of the outside world as well as the desire to experience some of its pleasures and utopian possibilities: the gifts of the Good People could be invaluable and life-altering. Recalling Chapter 1, the “fairy economy” involves an ongoing transaction between the domestic and public/market spheres, resulting in a crossover scenario in which the home becomes the very site for material exchange and therefore serious domestic disturbances (thefts and abductions). The changelings in these tales and legends are hybrid figures because they not only occupy but effectively *instigate* the in-between state of the transaction itself—the

*exchange of human child for fairy child.* In other words, it is a measure of Stapledon's skill that he incorporates these same ambiguities in his depiction of the super-changeling, Odd John, and of the "baby Satan," the Hebridean child who is his arch-nemesis. Further, the older generation, represented by his mother Pax, may be unusually accepting of the mutant child, but the rest of John's world is still tainted by the old world fear of both the changeling and the supernormal intelligence, which is why, John claims, religious folk so desperately want "their God to be human" (*Odd John* 73). Post-WWII SF authors have picked up on this almost mystical fear of human evolution or, to be more precise, the fear of the real possibility of a post-human evolution. In his study of Stapledon, *Olaf Stapledon: A Man Divided*, Fiedler suggests that only in Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End* (1953), which incorporates the changeling motif in its depiction of extra-terrestrials as midwives who nurture a new species to replace *Homo sapiens*, did a whole generation take "the myth of the Changeling Child as their very own" (103). While most academic SF critics and a few enthusiasts would likely agree that Stapledon was a "major molder" of later SF (Moskowitz 14), the philosopher-poet was virtually unknown to most fans throughout his writing career and remains something of an obscurity today. But I am not ultimately concerned here with Stapledon's popularity, how he succeeded or failed to spawn his own "freak" following (as Clarke did and as Heinlein certainly did). Rather, I am interested in how he molded his conceptual persona, and in this respect (philosophically, conceptually), Stapledon bridges an important gap between the Victorian folkloric changeling and the post-WWII changeling that would inhabit the

worlds of Clarke, Heinlein, Bradbury, Sturgeon, Wyndham, Blish, Brunner, Dick, Anderson, and Butler.<sup>79</sup>

ii. *Sirius*

If Odd John is one of the most fascinating supermen of the first half of the twentieth century, Sirius is likely the most fascinating supercanine. After his engineered insinuation into the life of humankind, Sirius proceeds along a path that in some ways runs parallel to that of John Wainwright, for the chapter titles detail the stages of Sirius's maturity from deformed sheep-dog to enlightened *man*-dog. The canine initially appears to be an unpromising anomaly, more prodigal than prodigy, even slow to acquire the usual canine locomotion, but he also shows remarkable intelligence that is latent in the early years of growth ("The Making of Sirius," "Infancy"). He then spends a certain length of time getting used to his supernormal abilities and the painful realization that he is not like the other members of his species, assuming the role of a "super sheep-dog" in the country, then a lab researcher at the university, and then a religious confidante of a minister in the city ("Sheep-dog Apprentice," "Sirius at Cambridge," "Sirius and Religion"). The search for a "vocation" that follows is difficult since he is forced to

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<sup>79</sup> Fiedler is perhaps one of the few critics to note Stapledon's use of folklore material in his SF and the possible ways of gauging the author's variation on a theme. Both "Humpty and Paul" (a story sequence and fictional pairing from *Last Men in London*) and Odd John, he argues, "reembody, in inverted form" the ancient myth "preserved in the folktale of the Changeling Child" (*Olaf Stapledon* 103). By "inverted" Fiedler means that, whereas the "original version is sympathetic to the older generation," that is, the parents of the changeling, "in Stapledon, the balance is tilted in favor of the later born, the 'freaks,' whose monstrosity he emphasizes so strongly that it seems as if he believed that to be truly admirable a new species must challenge not just ethical but esthetic norms." Previously, in his widely acclaimed book *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self*, Fiedler had explored the science-fictional penchant for mutants and the 1960s youth movement's co-option of works like van Vogt's *Slan*, Clarke's *Childhood's End*, Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* (1954-55), and Robert A. Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961) as "guides to freaking out" (*Freaks* 322). Fiedler remarks that while in retrospect, *Odd John* must seem an equally influential "mutant" text, Stapledon did not—and could not—reach his youngest contemporaries in the same way that Clarke and others could in their era (323-34).

choose between a life of the mind and a life of the body (“Experiences in London,” “Man as Tyrant,” “Farmer Sirius”). Despite the pressures on all sides to conform to one pursuit or another, he chooses to design his own career by seeking out other awakened minds like his own (“Tan-y-Voel,” “Strange Triangle”). He finally dies after his perverse “community” with his foster sister Plaxy becomes intolerable to the other normals of his society (“Plaxy Conscripted,” “Outlaw”). Like *Odd John*, *Sirius* incorporates both folk narrative and the *Bildungsroman* mode, combining the motif of the animal-human transformation and the general theme of a protagonist’s social metamorphosis. However, there is a greater tension here between the two generic modes; on the one hand, our animal “protagonist” struggles to break free of the folktale structure that would reduce his role to spiritual guide or magical agent; on the other hand, if we consider the general description of the *Bildungsroman*, the hero also refuses to allow the “social order” of the human world to become “manifest” in him (Hader). This refusal means that Sirius is ultimately not “accommodated into society” (Hader) but that, when his spirit fades from the world of human affairs, he has in a certain sense reinforced the residual significance of folk narrative in contemporary culture. We can see here, and especially in the specific details of each stage (which are addressed below), that Sirius’s career differs from John’s in significant ways—but always in the form of a repetition with a difference. Together, among the conceptual personae discussed in this chapter, John and Sirius are the most significant components of “a composite fiction of staggering scope” (Rabkin 238), and they constitute the two coordinates in “Stapledon’s attempt to isolate the true human, a being that is spiritually somewhere between an intelligent handless animal and an emotionless, wingless demi-god” (Swanson 288). Moreover, Sirius completes the

composite changeling persona by reintroducing the animal-human component, which would return to the earth where the superman would wish to transcend. Quite literally, Sirius tears humanity away from itself in order to reaffirm its significant role in the community, as a sort of gestalt persona.

Certainly, Sirius does not possess the wings of his mutant counterpart, but he also seems to find a certain flawed beauty in the “pack,” as the voice inside his head tells him over and over: “For you, humanity is the pack. You are not one of them, but they made you and you are *for* them. And because you are different you can give them a vision which they can never win for themselves” (*Sirius* 107). This is the voice of the folk changeling who possesses a keen understanding of the domestic realm and who, folklorists continually remind us, offer a new and sometimes estranging “vision,” which intrudes upon the household like a divine intervention. Indeed, as a “monster,” Sirius signifies something “marvelous” (Eberly 228), even while his origin is also scientifically explained. The point here is that Sirius is “*for*” humans, even while this preposition remains ambiguous for nearly everyone except the creator himself. Unlike the other creator-changeling relationships we have seen in previous chapters (Frankenstein and his monster, Jekyll and Hyde, Moreau and his Beast-Men, Rossum and his Robots), Thomas Trelone and Sirius share both an emotional and intellectual bond, for, when the great scientist “builds” the supercanine, he also adopts him as one of his foster-children: the little “man-dog” is indeed, from the start, part of the pack. The animal-human relationship, as it develops between Sirius and Thomas, Sirius and Plaxy the foster sister, Sirius and Robert the narrator, and Sirius and the “sheep,” is a highly complex one, involving different sets of coordinates, including what has generally been identified as the

anthropological-cosmological planes. Within this axis Sirius struggles between his “wolf nature” and his “compassionate civilized mentality” (27), which is the spiritual or divine component already articulated by the superhuman John. But as we discover, Sirius does not embrace one at the expense of the other, and he invests much more in the project of studying the human species and the possibility of comprehending the “awakened spirit,” even to the point of risking contamination. In this way, *Sirius* employs the folktale “law of sympathy” between humans and animals as a further means to explore the “personality-in-community,” which, if allowed to blossom, can be extended to the wider socio-political realm.

To be sure, Sirius does not work “out according to plan,” for the success of the experiment changes *all* pre-conceived plans, as dictated by the so-called “laws” of nature, and as a result, transforms the mundane world into something marvelous. Indeed, as I have suggested since Chapter 1, the residual presence of folk narrative in modern literature highlights the often “submerged” voices of marginalized or disenfranchised groups: such a dynamic engagement with primitive tradition reproduces versions of utopia—Fairylands, Earthly paradises, and, as in the denouement of *R. U. R.*, new “Edens.” Sirius’s complaint that his creator made him “without making a world for [him] to live in” also acknowledges that he can nevertheless *act upon* that environment and reshape it. As he continues, “It’s as though God had made Adam and not bothered to make Eden, nor Eve. I think it’s going to be frightfully difficult being me” (*Sirius* 78). If *War with the Newts* promises the creation of a “new Atlantis” in which the upperworld is reduced to the submerged nation, *Sirius* promises the creation of a new *Eden* in which the divine “creator” is neither the scientist Thomas Trelone nor the titular character but rather

a powerful alliance between the two. In this “fairy” economy, the social milieu has indeed become hybridized by the crossing of multiple genres and biological types.

Sirius, who possesses very few of the usual changeling characteristics, converges *conceptually* with the changeling in his particular operations—in his willingness to seek a “down-going,” to *fall back* as the circumstances demand, and to teach the music that is animal-man as well as animal-woman. Like all changelings, Sirius’s birth comes about as an insinuation, for Thomas Trelone creates Sirius by “introducing a certain hormone into the bloodstream of the mother,” which thereby affects “the growth of the brain in the unborn young” (*Sirius* 13). Trelone’s theories lead us to believe that this sane scientist among the mad understands in a rudimentary way the implications of this mutant birth: as a “missing-link mind” (15), Sirius can possibly adapt more easily than a superhuman individual who would already outstrip the dominant species, *Homo sapiens*, and thereby suffer the fate of an Odd John. As numerous critics have observed, *Sirius* is itself part of the evolutionary stage of Stapledon’s writing, a repetition of, but also a variation on, *Odd John*. It is a mark of the novel’s evocative power, then, that it comes across to us as Stapledon’s most “human” piece of SF (Aldiss, *Billion Year Spree* 236; Fiedler, *Olaf Stapledon* 184): it is more human because it celebrates the animal nature of humanity.

Despite these distinct differences, the description of Sirius as a puppy very much resembles that of John Wainwright as an infant, suggesting the convergence of a changeling birth. As the narrator tells us, the supercanine “remained a helpless infant long after the other litter were active adolescents. For months it could not even stand. It merely lay on its stomach with its bulgy head on the ground, squeaking for sheer joy of life; for its tail was constantly wagging” (*Sirius* 17). Like John, Sirius shores up intellectual



powers while he languishes in his clumsy, inert body, “squeaking” all the more for the possibilities awaiting his active brain. Perhaps we might say that Sirius’s tail is originally a crude compensation for his lack of “wings,” even while the former appendage is far superior because it remains in “flight” without transcending the earth: this movement in the midst of apparent *immobility*, and its indication of remarkable patience in the face of physical deformity, confirms the canine’s *nomadic* operations, for “the nomad moves, but while seated” (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 381)—or in this case, while prone. More significantly, Sirius lacks both the cold indifference of the super-changeling John and the glittering malice of the deformed changeling the Hebridean child, for his own shortcomings present the opportunity for interesting challenges, such as the task of forming words without the benefit of vocal cords (*Sirius* 24), or the creation of music without the benefit of *hands* (36). Sirius’s proximity to the ground allows him to cultivate throughout the course of his life the art of excavation, which John pursues only in his early years and which succeeds in operation only as exile, as absolute deterritorialization. Sirius’s insinuation takes him far down into the earth, literally, and his mud-stained coat (58) marks him as a terrestrial soul who is nevertheless alien to his own canine species, in the way that animals in folktales are usually associated with the supernatural because they talk and move like their human counterparts. Indeed, part of the conflict in Sirius’s life lies in the fact that he is without hands and therefore lacks manual dexterity; despite these limitations, Sirius wrests himself from the earth all the same, using the biological advantage of his hybrid human-animal heritage.

As we discover, Sirius’s best defense is simply to *act like a dog*, or at least a “supersheepdog,” which Thomas has already succeeded in introducing to some of the

farmers and shepherders of the Welsh countryside (*Sirius* 18). This act is not difficult to follow since, unlike John, Sirius is inclined to be congenial towards his “master,” *man*, and since, unlike other creators, Thomas ultimately sheds the role of master when his prized experiment begins to mature. As the narrator discloses to us, “Unfortunate experiences in [Thomas’s] own childhood had led him to regard the family as a hopelessly bad institution, and one which ought to be abolished” (19). The human-canine relation is certainly complex and painful, not to mention tragic; but the ability for each partner to *give ground* on occasion leads to some surprisingly joyful moments of communal sharing. Sirius initiates this first gesture towards symbiosis when he accepts the role of sheepdog and when he, as part of the business transaction, assumes a more prosaic and practical identity. In this capacity, Sirius performs all sorts of manual tasks, herding sheep, corralling them for the purpose of shearing, protecting them from intruding beasts, and even rescuing them on occasion. “Bran,”<sup>80</sup> as Sirius is temporarily renamed by the benevolent farmer Pugh, possesses a docility that is not, however, “due to a servile disposition. When he had learnt his lesson he often introduced novelties which greatly improved the method” (59). Here we see again how *passivity*, as Bergson remarks,

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<sup>80</sup> The name “Bran” is associated with a number of Celtic myths deriving from both Welsh and Irish traditions. There is Bran the Blessed, the Irish king whose decapitated head speaks, his story is recounted in the tale “Branwen Daughter of Llŷr,” which is included in the thirteenth-century Welsh mythological cycle *The Mabinogion* (Gantz 66-82). There is also the Bran from the old Irish saga “The Voyage of Bran,” which dates from around the eighth century. Both of these Brans are human, even while they possess supernatural or god-like powers. There is, however, another “Bran” that may have been one of the inspirations for Stapledon’s canine protagonist, and who is certainly evoked in the particular section of Stapledon’s novel where Sirius assumes the name Bran. The particular source is the Irish mythological cycle relating to Fionn Mac Cumhail and his followers, the Fianna. One particular sequence recounts “The Birth of Bran” (Gregory 173-75). A fairy woman named Uchtdealb discovers that her lover, Iollan, is engaged to a female mortal named Tuiren; in retaliation, Uchtdealb turns Tuiren into a hound, “the most beautiful that was ever seen” (174). As a hound, Tuiren gives birth to two “whelps,” Bran and Sceolan. When Iollan finally agrees to keep Uchtdealb as his lover, Tuiren is returned to her human shape and the two hounds become Fionn Mac Cumhail’s companions. Bran is featured in several subsequent tales about the Fianna, and like Sirius, he is notable as a dog that possesses “human wits” (176).

is the first requirement for *insinuation*: this conceptual *performance* is the first of a series of gradual—painfully gradual—reterritorializations and deterritorializations of both the human and canine spheres; but it also signals the ways in which each sphere intersects with the other and anticipates the complex sympathy/intimacy between Sirius and his human beloved, Plaxy. For while Sirius competes with other canines for supremacy in the animal world, and even demonstrates his evolutionary advantage over normally superior mammals, such as the bull (62-63), his ultimate goal is to compete on a level with humans. This conflict leads to the most devastating defeats—the failure to see colour or to make music in the conventional way, the inability to grasp objects or to articulate freely—but also reinforces the dangers of living in a society in which animals are domesticated to the point of becoming “‘pathetically human’ dolls” (53), and in which the animal passion for physical intimacy is perversely repressed and even sadistically punished (104). To remain fully in the world of *Homo sapiens* is to suffer the oppressive stench of the “super-simian tyrant” (88) who can, nevertheless, provide the crucial ingredient for a new social relation.

If John suffers from his contact with *Homo sapiens* and the influence of the species’ primal urges, he does not *feel* such urges himself; in the face of obvious opponents, he is able to transcend the blood-riot of the brain which would command him to defend his slighted honour. Can an exception be made for his pre-teen battles with neighborhood boys (*Odd John* 17-23)? Or perhaps his almost religious slaying of the deer (98-99)? Perhaps not, for consider the narrator’s remarks after John has defeated the big neighborhood boy, Stephen: “John’s own rage, I suspect, was artificial. He could fight better in a sort of cold fury, so he produced one” (23). While we risk giving deference to a

“gormless” narrator (Fiedler, *Olaf Stapledon* 106), we are without another option, and most of John’s subsequent enterprises are accomplished with an almost sadly stoic attitude towards the normals of his society. Sirius, on the other hand, fails to keep himself in check at the first insult he receives: when the neighborhood dog, Diawl Du (the Welsh for “Black Dog”), harasses Sirius and even chases him away, Sirius feels cowardly and therefore humiliated; after Plaxy suggests to her mother that he just does not have any “spunk,” he rushes off in a rage, tricks the dog through an inventive strategy of circling and weaving, tackles it, and nearly crushes its windpipe before the village people can tear apart his jaws (*Sirius* 39-41). Indeed Sirius does not *ascend* in the manner that John does; he takes “flight,” as it were, on contingent events, such as his ability to produce music, his cultivation of his olfactory faculties, and his discovery of a kindred spirit in Plaxy; but he also returns to the earth-bound activities of sexual play, hunting and killing, and the basic enjoyment of being canine. But as a “man-dog,” an animal-becoming-man, Sirius complicates the easy dichotomy of the two modes, demonstrating that the earth-bound activities are not mere regressions but creative and therefore tactical operations. His olfactory art, for example, is both doggish and spiritual, penetrating as it does the physical armory of deceptive facial expressions and body language: the typical array of human defenses are useless since they can be sniffed out by the dog. Of course, Sirius follows each trail as a human might follow a line of thought, even while, as he laments to Thomas later in life, he sometimes loses the scent in order seek out a more frivolous activity (76). Nevertheless, he discovers in these unforeseen “scatter-brained” moments the opportunity for invention. Certainly it does him no good to strive for a philosophical stoicism when his life is threatened by another, usually lesser-evolved, beast: his early unacknowledged

motto might be, *when danger strikes, always be creative; but to be creative is also to be "human."*

But the point here is that nature produces the most remarkable violations of seemingly strict laws, and then remakes them again only to find new ways to violate them. The case of Sirius is especially instructive here, for, as a "man-dog," he violates natural law at every turn, and ultimately brings his relationship with his creator to a crisis point when he discovers that his *role* is continually determined by Thomas who insists that he be a full-time employee at Cambridge University. Sirius asserts that he must be allowed some freedom, and that he must not be constrained to the role of a lab experiment or "tenth-rate research worker" (*Sirius* 91). As Bengels argues, Stapledon's decision of choosing a dog for a protagonist in *Sirius* comically reverses roles in which "man's best friend" is no longer the faithful lap dog but the best possible source for exposing his foibles and shortcomings ("Olaf Stapledon's 'Odd John' and 'Sirius'" 57).

But if Sirius operates as a foil for his human masters, he cannot alter human society without first becoming a part of it; and so his project to "study" *Homo sapiens* (*Sirius* 119) requires experiments in which he himself is a key element. A large part of the drama of *Odd John* involves the protagonist's discovery of other supernormals; for while they help to form a community of like minds, they also introduce a series of divergences that reinforce both their superhuman differences (longevity [123], telepathic communication across centuries [129-34], telepathic manipulation of the mind [172-86]) as well as their animal resemblances (J. J., the Hebridean child, Ng-Gunko, and Sambo all appear to be evolutionary throwbacks in certain respects). As we have suggested above, despite his attempts to exorcize the human-animal element, John's recruitment program

offers an open invitation to the changeling whose primary characteristics marks him/her as primordially human and therefore “at heart a little savage” (137). In *Sirius*, Stapledon returns to the scenario of the symbiotic community but with a greater emphasis on the human-animal alliance. The difference in this case is that Sirius fully embraces his kinship with animal-man, cringing all the while at the cruel grasp of the “super-ape” (*Sirius* 87). Further, while John demonstrates his supernormal (telepathic) skill of locating others of his kind, Sirius demonstrates his supercanine ability of inducing a change in others. The Rev. Geoffrey Adams (116f.), for example, experiences a truly religious epiphany as a result of Sirius’s crooning canine anthems during his church services (123-24, 126): the first song in particular contains the truth that the Rev. had striven for all his life despite the fact that it contains no words (123). Early in his study of human religion, Sirius refuses to be bound by his canine half, asserting in his memoirs that he is determined to be a “hound of the spirit” (111). We may not be surprised, then, that he is intrigued and touched in his spirit by the hymn “Washed in the blood of the lamb” (113). For this is a communal blood-riot of spiritual ecstasy, in which Sirius can unify both his tenderness and his feral nature, and witness the same spiritual symbiosis within the human members of the congregation. For the congregation, the dog-song reaffirms the primordial nature of a religion since its chief symbols are blood and the savage struggle for existence. Far from reinstituting a dominant Christian interpretation of “the spirit,” this divine animal ditty suggests something of the pagan belief in “contagious magic” (Frazer, Röhrich) in which a particular element—like hair or, in this case, *blood*—reinforces a primordial connection between species. Later, when he has joined the Rev., Sirius continues to adapt human religious rituals, at one point urinating on a gatepost

before entering the church grounds. When the Rev. complains, Sirius explains the rite to him: "It was a religious act. I have poured my libation in honour of your God. And I have relieved my spirit of impurity. I am lightened for the chase, the pursuit of the divine quarry by song" (123). Moreover, Sirius embraces all of the savage rites that John hopes to escape, proving that the most powerful composition descends into the subterranean realm of the animal-hominid alliance and may very well resemble "the howling of an alien species in the jungle" (113).

If John operates as the leader of his changeling colony, Sirius effectively becomes a key component of a hybrid entity, *Sirius-Plaxy*, which constitutes the penultimate sequence of the human-animal symphony. This is the most vivid attempt by an SF author before the 1950s to imagine a human-alien sexual relationship, although, as in *Star Maker*, the "alien" is first conceived within the terrestrial biosphere as a hybridized cross-section of kingdoms (ichthyoid and arachnoid, in the one case, and human and canine, in the other). If we recall the description of the pairing in *Star Maker*, the cross-over or interpenetration amounts to a "contrapuntal sexuality" (105) in which both fluids and thoughts are exchanged, leading to a gradual physiological and philosophical alteration in both species. In the case of *Sirius*, there are early signs in the novel before the narrator has really begun his dog-tale that a similar contrapuntal experiment has been at work with Plaxy and her canine companion. Plaxy teases Robert when he first arrives, telling him that he has "nosed" her out (*Sirius* 9); her remark may suggest to us, if not to the narrator, the first sign of Plaxy's *woman-becoming-dog*. At the same time, Robert discovers that his own "brilliant race" had contributed to the development of Sirius's "huge cranium," suggesting the latter's *dog-becoming-man*. In the continuing sequence, Plaxy reveals

more of her animal transformation: “‘Nice human Robert’ [she says] putting her head on [his] shoulder.” Immediately she pulls away from him and says with emphasis, “No, *I* didn’t say that. It was just the female human animal that said it” (10). In many ways Plaxy is in the position of John, at times seeing herself superior to the brute animal, not fully comprehending the attraction she feels for her canine foster brother. But even against the strictest British cultural mores, Plaxy cannot deny her own animal desires, which, in her early years, are expressed in her imitation of Sirius’s “etiquette for leaving tokens” (37) and, in her mature years, are manifested in marked physiological alterations and the “intensification of animal sex feeling” (134). This development, from mimicry to embodiment, indicates the maturity of the changeling persona as she oscillates between operations—mimicry and insinuation, social deviance, anarchical behaviour—and as she grasps for more intimate alliances. If *Sirius* is Stapledon’s frankest and most perverse novel, this is because he has come to understand that symbiosis requires biological hybridity and therefore the sexual union between two rather different species. For this reason, *Sirius* returns us to the concerns of previous chapters, for we have (re)discovered that the changeling is a multiplicity: it is not only decidedly male (Stevenson and Wells), not only a “collective male horde” (Čapek), but also a female persona. We cannot therefore speak only of Sirius-the-man-dog but of Sirius-Plaxy the man-woman-supercanine, a composite changeling persona that recalls for us the hybrid wonders of the remarkable folktale “The Speckled Bull.”

Indeed, *Sirius* may be the closest thing in Stapledon’s oeuvre to a folktale, especially given its inclusion of extraordinary animal-human metamorphoses, the heroic deeds of a nonhuman protagonist, and the unusual romance between an animal and a



human, which constitutes the “contagious” or “sympathetic” connection between the two kingdoms. According to James Frazer, sympathetic magic contains two components, as part of the so-called “law of sympathy”: first, that “like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause; and second, that things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed” (12). We might find in these two components—respectively, the law of similarity and the law of contagion—a complex ritual analogous to the conflicts and alliances formed between species over time. In a certain sense, sympathy—like magic—produces startling results when two like-minded entities come into contact. The physical connection between Plaxy and Sirius is based not on any specific biological relation but rather on the primal blood-riot that links animal and human, including especially the need to form powerful bonds; the dog-woman bond is not based on a strict affiliation but rather a willed symbiosis. As Sirius describes it, “the more different, the more lovely the loving” (*Sirius* 53). We might then call Sirius’s conceptualization the “law of symbiosis.” We may sympathize with Plaxy who, like the first wife in “The Speckled Bull,” is ostracized by her community for her association with puppies; the difference here is that Plaxy fancies one pup in particular over the human males in her village. One way of understanding this preference for the animal is to consider the second sequence of the folktale: the princess of the Eastern World discovers that the bull is also the “finest man that a young girl, or an old woman either, ever laid eyes on” (“The Speckled Bull” 124). Like the princess, Plaxy struggles to maintain the relationship despite the physical difficulties; in a sense, she too can live with Sirius only part of the time, when she is able to adapt to his turbulent lifestyle, and when he is able to sniff out her own shifting moods.

Once Plaxy's neighbors have discovered this human-canine community, they begin to engage in sadistic games, perhaps comparable to the prince's second wife in the folktale: when Plaxy is conscripted during the war, her hired replacement, Mary Griffith, invents all kinds of salacious tales, involving Sirius's perverse attempts on her virtue (*Sirius* 176-77); Plaxy is, of course, charged with similarly perverse acts, even while she is, like the princess of the Eastern World, the sexual confidante of an animal. While it is never made entirely clear, and while this constitutes much of the beauty and richness of the folktale, we may surmise that both the prince's first wife (who is accused of giving birth to kittens and puppies) and the princess of the Eastern World are themselves not entirely human, and that this may be attributed in some way to both the animal and fairy realms. If she has not indeed given birth to animals, the prince's first wife has certainly begotten a changeling child (as the wicked second wife strategically claims ["The Speckled Bull" 120]). Similarly, the princess in the eastern realm possesses the ability to *see* the human in the animal, the animal in the human. Early on in *Sirius*, it is remarked that Plaxy is "not quite human," and Robert himself claims that she does, indeed, have a certain "feline" quality about her. But he also believes that her "elegant 'handedness'"—an acknowledgement of Sirius's own doggish obsession with manual dexterity—"was something far stronger than felinity [...] It was at once human and 'parahuman,' so that she seemed to [him] not so much cat as fay. She was indeed at once cat, fawn, dryad, elf, witch" (*Sirius* 49). Here we find that, as in *Odd John*, the narrator tries to impose his formal perspective on the proceedings, but that he also succeeds in demonstrating to us the ways in which Plaxy's relationship with Sirius leads to a proliferation of multiple personae—mythical or mundane animals, condemned female personages: each

corresponds to the divergent operations we have encountered in previous SF narratives and in folk narrative.

As her relationship with Sirius begins to change, Plaxy feels that she is losing something of her humanity. This discovery occurs in the wake of her first sexual encounter with Sirius, which is, perhaps not surprisingly, never described in detail. As the narrator says, the pressure of the general outrage in the village leads Sirius and Plaxy to become more intimate than ever:

Isolation, combined with contempt for the critics, drew girl and dog into closer intimacy, in fact into a manner of life which some readers may more easily condemn than understand. Plaxy herself, in spite of her fundamental joy in her love for Sirius, was increasingly troubled by a fear that she might irrevocably be losing touch with her own species, even that in this strange symbiosis with an alien creature she might be losing her very humanity itself. (*Sirius* 167)

In his dark dreams, Robert envisions the “beast” mauling “the sweet human form” that he himself “so fittingly embrace[s]” (172); but he does not indulge in the sadistic pleasures of the Welsh village and ultimately feels a certain “warmth” for Sirius (173) as the worthy rival of another animal-hominid—himself. On the other hand, Robert’s brief vision does invite us to glimpse the awkward pairing of this brute beast and the well-made female form, reminding us that two taboos have been broken here: incest as well as bestiality. Unlike “The Speckled Bull,” *Sirius* does not include the expected “disenchantment” in which the animal protagonist is transformed into acceptable human form before the relationship between beast and woman is consummated (Röhrich 91). The beautiful, if perverse, philosophy of symbiosis is finally summed up in Plaxy’s own configuration: Sirius is “the part of Sirius-Plaxy” that she loves (*Sirius* 91); she herself is the “human part of Sirius-Plaxy” (136, 146); and, in her own words, “I am not just a girl.

I am different from all other girls. I am Plaxy. And Plaxy is half of Sirius-Plaxy, needing the other half. And the other half needs me” (171). The very use of the hyphen here shows us that symbiosis has been initiated at the level of the sentence, and the joyful conjugation of two disparate parts: again, as Sirius says, “the more different, the more lovely the loving” (53).

If Sirius tears the human away from itself by enunciating philosophical problems through a doggish invention of speech, he also tears the canine away from itself by using its doggish tricks and operations for the purpose of philosophical speculation. The intersection of the human and animal, the philosophical and the biological, result in an interpenetration of each zone, so that philosophy may end up being the likely occupation of the dog, and the urinary marking of territory the common office of the woman. As Deleuze and Guattari say, if “thought searches, it is less in the manner of someone who possesses a method than that of a dog that seems to be making uncoordinated leaps” (*What Is Philosophy?* 55). In order to investigate the dog, Kafka, in his “Investigations of a Dog” (1922), necessarily had to initiate a becoming-dog in the form of the canine narrator, a conceptual persona who would not merely study dog behaviour but who would be, in effect, an intersection between philosopher and canine, man and animal.<sup>81</sup> In a similar way, Stapledon initiates a becoming-animal, but this process is far more radical than his previous forays—his completely silent human narrator in *Last and First Men*, his subservient and “gormless” reporter in *Odd John*, and even the apparently transformed

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<sup>81</sup> Sirius also, in a certain sense, learns to “leap” like the canines in Kafka’s story. While the dog narrator of this eccentric text acknowledges the leaping canines “by force of habit simply as dogs” he happens to meet on the road (Kafka 207), their dancing and leaping “evolutions” leads them to walk about on their hind legs and therefore to violate the sacred canine law (210).

star-seeker in *Star Maker*. In particular, Stapledon dispenses with the catalogic pedantry of *Odd John* in which an overawed mere mortal naively celebrates the demise of his own species. While Robert, the narrator of *Sirius*, may remain a *human* narrator, his willingness to narrate the *life of a dog* leads to a sort of understanding in the midst of the human-animal difference, which, while it at first appears to be a simple animal rivalry, develops gradually into a human social relation. As Robert puts it,

[L]ittle by little the identical spirit in each of us, as Sirius himself said, triumphed over the diversity of our natures and our private interests. Had I not actually experienced this close-knit triple relationship I should not have believed it possible. Nor should I, perhaps, have been able to sustain my part in it, had not my love for Plaxy been from the onset unpossessive; *owing to the fact that I myself, like Sirius in his canine style, had sometimes loved elsewhere*. (*Sirius* 173-74; emphasis added)

Perhaps we could modify this by asserting that the developed interrelation also *sustains* the “diversity” between Robert, Plaxy, and Sirius, and succeeds in crossing over the boundaries between human and animal, and perhaps also male and female (since Plaxy’s own becoming-dog crosses over both species *and* genders). Whatever Robert may intend, to *love elsewhere* is not simply to have many “bitches” (101-04), or even to have frequent promiscuous sexual relations; it is, rather, to love outside of one’s own conventional sphere. Certainly, the comparison of human and canine styles indicates the ways in which each organism embraces or dispenses with the operations of the other as the situation demands: both Robert and Plaxy provide the hands that Sirius lacks, even as Sirius offers them a symphony that no mere appendage could create. Following this program, we discover here the first truly intimate relationship between the narrator and his intended “subjects”: an event in which the narrator is thrust into the action—the chaos he had merely studied from a scientific point of view—and becomes an agent (unlike the

voiceless or passive narrators in the other works). Sirius may be seen as the author/narrator in its “true”—and therefore *hybridized*—form: he is an animal that requires a human to narrate, and a human narrator that requires an animal to enunciate the action or the *philosophical problem*. “In making me,” Sirius tells Thomas, “you made something that sees man from clean outside man, and can tell him what he looks like” (91). After Sirius is killed by one of the Home Guards and Plaxy repeats back to us one of Sirius’s joyful songs (187), we discover that Sirius has, in a certain sense, *made something that sees animal from clean outside animal*—Plaxy, who is one of the first significant female changelings of modern SF.

## Conclusion

This exploration of a particular conceptual persona (the changeling) seems to have led us down a strange and unpredictable road, even while a glance backward would reassure us that if we are not on the trail of the SF changeling, s/he is already on *ours*. The changeling persona, since it is still with us (because it has always been with us, not only in folktales like “The Speckled Bull” but in the medical literature of a very recent era), allows *Homo sapiens* to understand its own evolution as a species. Unlike the accepted view of human evolution, Stapledon’s version shows that the race as a whole does not proceed by straight lines, in a progressive and linear fashion, but by erratic and unpredictable pathways, sometimes in furious leaps, other times in shameful plummets or reversals. The nearly immeasurable chronotope of *Last and First Men* nevertheless discovers time and time again the multiple reterritorializations and deterritorializations that comprise the evolution of the species. In the second work, *Star Maker*, Stapledon the

writer/artist/philosopher/scientist evolves in his own way, seeking ever more divergent pathways of sentient life, looking beyond the progress of a single species (from the “First Men” to “Eighteenth Men”) in order to gaze wonderstruck at the societies of “other men” of his own galaxy as well as the “Echinoderms,” “Nautiloids,” “Plant Men,” and “Symbiotics.” In this first series, then, his philosophical vision is not a rigid system but rather an incubation of previous thought, which, like the portrait of Stapledon’s ideal, “awakened” spirit, sheds those characteristics detrimental to its development, and ingests and modifies those characteristics vital to its increased complexity. The link between philosophy and biology is found in the dual concern with the physical coming together of bodies and the intellectual joining together of thought. Perhaps in the spirit of George Bernard Shaw, Stapledon attempts in these first two “far-out” and far-flung “possible worlds” a “Metabiological Pentateuch,”<sup>82</sup> grafting entirely invented but entirely plausible cosmologies onto the received story of the creation myth.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> This is the subtitle of Shaw’s science-fictional play, *Back to Methuselah*, performed first in 1921. In this work Shaw employs the concept of “creative evolution” to speculate on human evolutionary metamorphosis and transformation, and, in particular, to develop a theory to extend human life to three hundred years as a solution to the moral immaturity of those whose life extends only to a mere “three score and ten.” While Shaw himself rejected mechanical Darwinism for “creative evolution,” Stapledon speculates on the possibilities of an evolution that is fraught by both accident and the excesses of imagination; in other words, however pessimistic and depressing it might sound, a whole civilization could conceivably be annihilated by the mad inventions of a community of scientists (as it occurs in Ch. IX/2) just as easily as an entire planet could be destroyed by the unforeseen collision with the moon (as it happens in Ch. XII).

<sup>83</sup> By the time we reach the demise of the First Men, it becomes clear that Stapledon’s book is more interested in studying the ways in which myth operates in human societies than in actually constructing a *myth* proper; that is to say, Stapledon’s two-billion-year cosmology of *Homo sapiens* is both analogous to and estranged from the then current comprehension of our evolutionary character, tracing as it does early twentieth-century history up to and beyond Stapledon’s own spatio-temporal co-ordinates. If certain “men” (be they the “first,” the “second,” or some other species) become mythic in later epochs, Stapledon (or at least his faithful future Chronicler) describes the ways in which this myth-creation comes about as the result of a previous human society’s failures. for the misuse of knowledge leads to mystification and helps to foster a dangerous mythification of human authority figures. The most vivid critique of this human flaw (which, Stapledon is quick to point out, is yet an important impetus for the documenting of history) comes in the Patagonian section where the prophet, known as the “Boy Who Refused to Grow Up” (80), smashes the sacred idol of the Divine Boy which has led the people to make a cult of youth, to strive only for

But as I have argued especially throughout this chapter, the most significant SF is situated somewhere between cosmology and anthropology: Stapledon illuminates this tension between the unknown forces of the universe and the biological drives of the human organism through his invention of a whole series of mutant or changeling personae. As Aldiss has remarked, the “strength of [SF] is that it is not a pure stream” (“A Monster For All Seasons” 16). Moreover, SF constantly reveals its operation as a feedback loop wherein the folk novum and its associated conceptual personae are appropriated and redeployed in an altered form: through SF, the *changeling has been Darwinized*.<sup>84</sup> But still we can say that folk narrative continues to inform SF through its estranging themes of biological deformity and species hybridization. More than any writer in his day, Stapledon carries forward this project of redeployment by grafting onto the mythological and folkloric landscapes of his literary antecedents (the Victorians and Wells in particular) plausibly constructed worlds filled with personae who enunciate the philosophical problems of the current day (1930s and 1940s Britain). Like Wells and Čapek, Stapledon wished to explore through metamorphosed men of the future, star-seekers of distant galaxies, and two changeling contemporaries, Odd John and Sirius, the friction between the old and the new, the animal and the human, the human and the superhuman. He is, then, concerned with the ways in which the Victorian world of Wells’s scientific romances had to change and how these alterations demanded new men and new women who would learn how to combine animal passion with intellectual insight.

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victories, to forget the struggle and beauty of the “game of life” itself, and to squander its vitality in “violent living” (83). If Stapledon is a “myth-maker” he is also a myth-breaker.

<sup>84</sup> I owe this point to Dr. Nicholas Ruddick.



The Victorians feared the insurgent, monstrous, and hybrid changelings of their society: the children who defied their parents' authority, the women who refused to adhere to patriarchal authority, the dark-skinned immigrants or the Irish who refused to be enslaved or oppressed by Her Majesty's Empire. Similarly, the Moderns feared their own changelings: the immigrant labourers who formed a molecular population, undifferentiated like so many Robots, industrious and cunning like so many Newts. The Great Brains of *Last and First Men* suffer the tragedy of fulfilling a State-sanctioned plan for a new engineered humanity: a massive and bloated changeling whose very organs are manipulated for the purpose of autocracy and absolute tyranny (*Last and First Men* 160). For the "men" of this society, there is no escape from the organism (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 163): they have become the *organ(s) of the State*. The Eighteenth Men of *Last and First Men* are all too aware of their perverse, changeling appearance, but they are "more human and more animal" than all of the other prototypes who, we can say, are analogous to the various political and social systems of Stapledon's own empirical world (democracy, cosmopolitanism, totalitarianism, Communism, and so forth). In *Star Maker* Stapledon returns to contemporary *Homo sapiens* in order to reinvestigate the engineered changelings of his society, who, now several years later (1937), have begun to menace the world in the form of fascism and Nazism. Stapledon narrows his cosmological scope in his other SF works in order to rethink the "relation," the "family," the "nation," and the Cosmos itself, which can operate as a "milieu of experimentation," a "milieu of pure intensity" (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 164), and a site for the creation of symbiotic communities.

Because symbiosis is both a biological and philosophical phenomenon, Stapledon is careful to sketch out in his denser works the possible pitfalls of placing too much emphasis on one plane or the other. The key mechanism for such a dialectic is *divergence*, and *Odd John* and *Sirius* deal explicitly with the mutant's internal struggle between a sort of primitive *ressentiment* of "normal" society and an almost divine rejection of "primitive" society. The cosmological-anthropological model leads us to consider the possibility that both Odd John and Sirius comprise the dual coordinates for a highly successful symbiotic relationship as well as the perfect components for a changeling that can adapt to the most diverse environmental changes: this is to say that, in going to the root of things, in embracing its divergent characteristics, it both rejects the "little man's" ideology of *ressentiment* and the superman's wish to expel or exorcize the "little man," the deformed changeling. However, since I have not been strictly bound to any model in this investigation, I would argue that *Sirius does not simply complete the construction of the true human but allows us to imagine its conceptual shape (Sirius-Plaxy) through his willingness to fall back, where John would want to transcend*. As I have suggested, Plaxy may very well assume John's superhuman role because, unlike John, she helps "to elevate the lower orders of species" rather than "refine [herself] out of spirituality and human existence" (Swanson 291). After Sirius's death, Plaxy sings a song that Sirius had taught her: "The wordless phrases symbolized for her the canine and the human that vied in him all his life long. The hounds' baying blended with human voices" (*Sirius* 187). Here the woman-becoming-animal captures what is, for the man-becoming-god, too uncouth for civilized ears but is, as Nietzsche would argue, the "rebirth of the art of hearing" (Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* 295). If Stapledon's critique is more subtle in *Odd*

*John*, his turn towards a supercanine and his search for the awakened individual *within the animal itself* is a more direct critique of the human who would sacrifice his brothers and sisters for an abstract godhead. In *Sirius* Stapledon critiques the position of the *Übermensch* as presented in *Odd John* and specifically the Nietzschean impatience with the herd-like “virtues” of humanity. Certainly, Stapledon is as tricky as Nietzsche at times, inviting us to celebrate the superman at the expense of *man*, thereby exposing our lack of joy and our spiritual decay (John’s central concerns). But we must remember that throughout the first part of *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche praises man as the “rope” or the “bridge” between “animal” and “superman” (43-44, 104) and celebrates the fact that he is a “going-across and a down-going” (44), a nomad and a burrower, as Deleuze and Guattari might say, rather than an angel that transcends the body and its crude processes. Our discussion of four works by Stapledon indicates four different approaches to the metamorphosis of the human organism and the evolution of what I have identified as the changeling persona. Therefore, we cannot, without violence, absolutely isolate each work, each movement, and even if we achieve such a separation, we discover the cross-section of themes that exist within each work, like the veins in a severed limb. In especially the last two works considered, we come to realize that the conceptual persona cannot function without the two components of superhuman flight and animal excavation—but that Stapledon’s most fascinating female character (Plaxy) may very well be the new substitute in this SF changeling narrative. For this reason, Stapledon’s divine mutant—his composite superhuman-canine—is a changeling for all seasons.

## Conclusion—A Typology for New “Alien” Encounters, Components for a New Ethos

The history of revolutions [...] which politically spells out the innermost story of the modern age, could be told in parable form as the tale of an age-old treasure which, under the most varied circumstances, appears abruptly, unexpectedly, and disappears again, under different mysterious conditions, as though it were a *fata morgana*. There exist, indeed, many good reasons to believe that the treasure was never a reality but a mirage, that we deal here not with anything substantial but with an apparition, and the best of these reasons is that the treasure thus far has remained unnamed. Does something exist, not in outer space but in the world and the affairs of men on earth, which has not even a name? Unicorns and fairy queens seem to possess more reality than the lost treasure of the revolutions.

—Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* 5

The devil can also steal children away (as sometimes children within the space of six weeks after their birth are lost,) and other children, called *Supposititii*, or Changelings, laid in their places. [For] the devil hath this power, that he changeth children, and instead thereof layeth devils in the cradles, which thrive not, only they feed and suck.

—Martin Luther, “Luther’s Colloquia Mensalia” 314-16

In what way is the changeling—and especially Stapledon’s changeling—“for all seasons”? I’ve borrowed the notion from Aldiss’s essay “A Monster For All Seasons,” which likely gets its title from Robert Bolt’s play about Thomas More, *A Man for All Seasons* (1960), which takes its title from grammarian Robert Whittinton, who, in 1520, had described More as a “man for all seasons.” Aldiss’s essay makes the basic argument that SF characters continually reappear down through the history of the genre. In this instance, the changeling is “for all seasons” because it continues to *return*, sometimes as a changeling we’ve seen before (from a “fairytale” found in the Grimms or from British, or Irish, or Norweigan folk legend), sometimes as a changeling in an entirely new form (an artificial human with no relations, a brute animal with no manual dexterity). While my use of the phrase owes nothing to Bolt’s play (as fine a play as it is), it could be seen as a general acknowledgement of More’s “utopian” influence on the genre of SF and on the

various personae who seek to effect a *change* in society. If the communities featured in folk legends or folktales seem a far cry from utopian societies, the changeling motif continues to inspire SF authors attempting to articulate both biological and political metamorphoses; it is not the “utopia” or perfect society that one finds in these tales and texts so much as the utopian *spirit*, which More exhibited in his writings. Whittinton’s description of More, on the other hand, has less to do with his utopian vision than with his general character: “More is a man of an angel’s wit and singular learning. I know not his fellow. For where is the man of that gentleness, lowliness and affability? And, as time requireth, a man of marvelous mirth and pastimes, and sometime of as sad gravity. A man for all seasons” (xxviii). Perhaps this does not exactly match our general impression of the changeling, although we might say that Odd John possesses something like “an angel’s wit”; that there is something “gentle” in the monster’s dealings with the De Laceys, and in the Morlocks’ tentative approach to the Time Traveller; and that there is something of “sad gravity” in Sirius’s final days in claustrophobic human society. These changelings, of course, are also *men* and *women* for all seasons, or at least changelings-becoming-men and women-becoming-changelings; the sad gravity of their situation is that they all seem to be living in the wrong era, even if they continually turn up again and again, season after season. It is as though these personae were *all* fairy creatures, living outside or underneath the human world, dreaming of a way to make contact.

## I. New Fairyworlds for Old

“In the Underground Realm, where there are no lies and no pain, there lived a princess who dreamt of the human world.” So begins Guillermo del Toro’s 2006 film *El*

*laberinto del fauno* (*Pan's Labyrinth*), which uses a legend to frame a narrative about Spanish guerrillas attempting to resist Franco's fascist regime in the 1940s. Before the main thread of the story begins, the voiceover narrator describes how the princess escapes the magical realm only to lose her memory when she emerges into the upper world; shortly after, she weakens and dies. Just as the fantasy sequence ends, the camera pans up from the underworld and when it emerges we are suddenly amongst the ruins of a bell tower in modern Spain; as Paul Julian Smith notes, this is probably Belchite, the setting for an important battle during the Spanish Civil War of the late 1930s (4). As del Toro seems to suggest here, by leaving the place where there are "no lies and no pain," the princess is now vulnerable to the cruelty and misery of the upper, human world. What follows the initial voiceover is a double narrative strand in which the protagonist, Ofelia, imagines her life through the same tale about the princess from the Underground Realm and also tries to deal with living in a fascist military outpost; as it happens, her pregnant mother, Carmen, has married Captain Vidal, who is leading the campaign against the contingent of guerrilla rebels. As a way of coping with her marginal position in the outpost, Ofelia escapes to the fairy world where she is given a number of difficult tasks; these tasks resemble the sort encountered in European folk narrative and, at least through Ofelia's perspective, seem to affect the outcome of events happening around her. When she places a magical mandrake root under her mother's bed, her mother seems to recover from her pregnancy-related illness; other tasks like retrieving the golden key from the venomous frog that inhabits the fig tree are subtle parallels to the guerrillas' tactics of stealing food and medical supplies from Capt. Vidal's outpost. Moreover, del Toro's Underground is not simply a realm of escapism but, as the film gradually reveals, offers a

utopian vision of a better world. More than this, del Toro is drawing a subtle parallel between the guerrilla resistance, which must always remain submerged, and the entities like Pan (Ofelia's underworld guide) that fictively live beneath the earth. Del Toro reinforces the link between worlds during a split scene in which Ofelia walks through the woods reading her fairytale book while Capt. Vidal leads his men through another part of the woods to search for a possible guerrilla hideout. The voiceover meanwhile describes a forest that was "home to creatures who were full of magic and wonder" and who protected and looked after one another. Clearly, we are meant to see that the oppressed guerrillas have something in common with the underworld creatures. It is crucial that Ofelia enables us to *see* the fairy world, for it helps to enhance the subaltern position of the Spanish guerrillas and their search for the "age-old treasure" that continually eludes a people struggling against a totalitarian regime. Given the futility of the guerrillas' struggle against Franco's regime, we might well agree with Hannah Arendt that "Unicorns and fairy queens seem to possess more reality than the lost treasure of revolutions" (5). But the important point here is that, as Jack Zipes notes in his review of the film, Ofelia has the ability to "see two worlds at the same time" ("Pan's Labyrinth (El laberinto del fauno)" 237)—not the "real" and the "unreal" but rather the visible and the submerged worlds.

It cannot be stressed enough here that Fairyland is not simply a reflection of the real world; the fairy creatures in del Toro's film are *not* the guerrillas, even if we are meant to see some commonality between the submerged positions of each group. The Spanish rebels are clearly a subaltern group, struggling to fight against a powerful fascist regime that has, as Capt. Vidal smirkingly quips in the opening of the film, already

“won.” However, the elder race that lives beneath war-torn Spain is of a different order altogether; as I argued in both Chapters 1 and 3, despite their lowly position and homely appearance, the fairy folk of British legend tend to operate as a harmonious collective; del Toro’s underworld creatures seem to be organized in a similar fashion. Despite Ofelia’s battles with the darker elements of the underworld—the venomous frog and the eyeless ghoul who eats children—there is a strong sense that the rulers of the Underground Realm are peace-loving and not oppressive. Not so in the upper world, where the rulers feign kindness by hoarding all the food in one place (the outpost is located at a mill) and then distributing food in bread lines, announcing smugly, “This is our daily bread in Franco’s Spain, kept safe in this mill!” This scenario smacks of totalitarianism, and the garrison-style organization, along with Capt. Vidal’s ruthless treatment of suspected “Red” sympathizers, indicates that this world is dominated by something worse than venomous frogs and ghoulish child-eaters; this point is reinforced in the final act of the film when Ofelia is shot and killed by Capt. Vidal as she tries to escape into the magical labyrinth. Nevertheless, the conclusion of the film, in which the rebels manage to storm the outpost, rout the army, and kill Capt. Vidal, indicates that this “submerged nation” has achieved a victory against great odds; this victory is reinforced in the closing scene where we see Ofelia resurrected in the Underground Realm as the long lost princess. This denouement demonstrates the ways in which folk narrative can be used (by directors and writers, by people involved in a political struggle) to alter the perception of a world. If Mercedes, the benevolent scullery maid who secretly delivers food and medical supplies to the guerrillas, tells Ofelia that she no longer believes in “fairies,” Ofelia’s ardent belief in the



Underground Realm is powerful enough to give the otherwise bleak world a tinge of hope and beauty.

While it would be difficult to argue that del Toro's film is a species of SF, its interest in the "feedback oscillation between two realities" and the way in which it "actualizes a different—though historical and not transcendental—world corresponding to different human relationships and cultural norms" (Suvin, *Positions* 37) means that it shares an important *goal* with SF. It was my initial, tentative suggestion in my Introduction that 1) there are certain thematic links between folk narrative and SF and that 2) the most fundamental commonality between the two genres lies in their mutual use of "cognitive estrangement," which is not possible without the tension or collision between real and imagined worlds. I specifically argued that folk narrative's engagement with both "poetry" and history—as part of its composite make-up of folktale and legend—enabled it to straddle the imaginary and real worlds and therefore to correspond to the concerns of an empirical environment. My subsequent analysis in Chapter 1 established the precedence in the Victorian period for folk narratives to function as articulations of social anxieties; the central persona of my discussion, the linchpin for my main argument, was the changeling who became in this era an embodiment of the ways in which the outside world could so inexplicably intrude upon a comfortable and orderly bourgeois society. The examples I used to reinforce my argument were a series of legends for the most part, although two folktales, "The Fairy Wife" and "The Speckled Bull," supplied at least two instances where the folk genres overlapped. It would be pointless to prove that either genre is pure since the oral and written traditions continually intertwine through historical transmission; but it is apparent that the particular legends that comprised my main

discussion—"The Caerlaverock Changeling," "Johnnie in the Cradle," and so forth—were intended to be parables about the human relationship with the earth's unknown elements. These offerings seemed to exemplify Röhrich's observation that the legend presented a "real otherworld" or a tension between "two worlds" (23-24). But *where was* this "otherworld"—indeed, where *is* it? Fairyland has a tendency to disappear just as someone is about to glimpse it; as a submerged locale, it is always just out of sight. And yet people claim to have seen it—people like Mr. Noy, in the Cornish legend, "The Fairy Dwelling on Selena Moor." Making a shortcut through a moor one evening, Mr. William Noy loses his way and travels for what seems like numerous miles until he sees "lights in the distance" and hears "music" (Briggs, "The Fairy Dwelling on Selena Moor" 225). When he finally reaches what he believes is a familiar farmhouse, William enters the orchard and sees "hundreds of people either dancing or sitting drinking at tables," all of them "richly dressed" and looking, "to him," "very small." Eventually, he is warned away by another mortal named Grace Hutchens, who was also lured to the farmhouse and who claims that life here is "unnatural and a sham" (226). When he attempts to rescue Grace, everything disappears before his eyes, and the narrator concludes by stating: "Like many other visitors to Fairyland, Mr Noy pined and lost all interest in life after this adventure" (227).

If the message here is largely negative—that the fairies live a "sham" lifestyle and get a charge out of stealing women or children—the final line strikes a different note: if Fairyland is so bad, why would someone "pine" and lose "interest" in the affairs of the human world upon his return to it? Del Toro asks this question in a different manner: why would someone want to *leave* "Fairyland" if such a place existed, if such a place were

*possible?* When the princess of the Underground Realm leaves her home and emerges into the upper world, she quickly loses all thought and subsequently dies. Again, legends like the one del Toro adapts and the one I have briefly discussed here are not simply escapist. Ofelia does *not* escape from reality and, in fact, dies because of it. Similarly, we are left with the feeling that Mr. Noy languishes because he cannot return to the place that he so hastily left. The *failure* in both cases is quite significant: escapism is not permitted because the protagonist fails to escape. But these are only two examples, and, as I suggested in that first chapter, it is in the changeling legends that we really see this tension between worlds—embodied frighteningly in the body of (what looks like) a human infant. Despite the equally negative outcome of these tales (especially where the changeling is frequently abused or driven out of the house), they also enable the oscillation between realities. “The Fairy Changeling: II,” for example, re-poses the question, *Why would you leave Fairyland?* when the long-lost brother tells his family that the “fairies had kept him in a beautiful palace under the rocks, and fed him on the best of everything!” and that he only returned because of his family obligation (Briggs, “The Fairy Changeling: II” 221-22). We only *hear* about Fairyland in this instance, but once again, the *failure*—in the young man’s reluctant return, in our inability to actually see the “other” place—is important.

Further, I would argue that the failure here is important for the same reason that it is crucial to modern SF: if this pining for a magical realm that can neither be fully glimpsed nor properly articulated was the impetus behind folk legends, it is also the impetus for a large number of utopian and/or SF narratives. Consider, for example, William Morris’s *News from Nowhere* (1891). The protagonist, William Guest, awakes

one morning to discover that he has been somehow transported in time to a communistic utopian version of his merry England; this is a place in which all the drudgery of the industrial revolution has been replaced by a rural arcadia. However, despite the beauty and peacefulness of the society he witnesses, Guest begins to feel that he does not belong here somehow, that he does not fit in; finally, during a banquet, he sees the faces of his beautiful hosts blur before his eyes, and then the whole scene fades to black. Guest then awakens to discover that the utopia has been a dream. Despite this failure, the first person narrator—this “guest” to the otherworld—concludes on an optimistic note: “if others can see it as I have seen it, then it may be called a vision rather than a dream” (Morris, *News from Nowhere* 228). Given that he wrote this proto-SF work as a response to Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward: 2001-1887* (1888), in which the protagonist Simon West also awakes in a futuristic, utopian world but never returns to his own tumultuous, nineteenth-century world, Morris seems to be suggesting that the failure is not only important but *necessary*. Indeed, as the legends themselves continually suggest, the jolt of leaving the strange, new world is as important as the initial shock of first encountering it; the charge that we might level at Bellamy’s work and others like it is that it uses the folkloric dream sequence for the purpose of *escape* (finding security in Edenic pastures) rather than *critique* (knowing full well that one *deserves* Eden, but looking in from the outside all the same).

Following up my study of folk narrative in Chapter 1 with individual author studies in Chapters 2 through 5, I attempted to place my originally “tentative” argument for a thematic link between folk narrative and SF on a more solid footing. These chapters served to reinforce 1) the two genres’ mutual interests in a wished-for “otherplace” 2); the

function of cognitive estrangement in both folk narrative and SF, as exemplified in the human-nonhuman encounter and the resulting shock; and, as my central claim, 3) the numerous ways in which the changeling persona conceptualizes symbiosis and the creation of “new social relations” in modern SF. According to Suvin’s theory, which I have adapted throughout this study, “cognitive estrangement” occurs when the science-fictional world causes the reader to both *identify* and *shudder*; the shock itself, that is, the subsequent reformulation of the SF conceptual worlds offered, constitutes the *third* option, the reader’s own world, which is now transformed in a significant way (Chapter 3, section II). For example, in *The Time Machine*, the reader’s own world is inverted, so that they (and “we,” over 100 years after the book was published) are able to *see* London as an immeasurable mass of swarming Morlocks, inhabiting an underworld and operating the machinery that makes it function. As the sort of linchpin of the dissertation, Chapter 3 (beginning with the preamble in section I) established the major groundwork for a theoretical discussion of folk narrative as the “absent paradigm” in SF. On the one hand, I argued, the legend is simply an abbreviated expression of cognitive dissonance that the SF tale then expands and develops; on the other hand, I suggested, the legend is the *seed of a larger idea*, the monad or core problem that provides an SF narrative with its mechanism or thrust, even if the actual apparatus (plot structure, technical/technological details) derives from other sources (the detective novel, popular scientific journals). This is to say that the legend provides something like an explanatory inscription or code (like the *legend* on a map) that the SF story then attempts to decipher. In the case of the legends I have discussed, the particular inscription tells the brief story about an encounter between a human mortal and a nonhuman entity and the failure to achieve optimal

relations. Wells “reads” this legend through the Traveller’s futuristic encounter with the Morlocks and the Eloi and Prendick’s encounter with the Beast Folk; Čapek brilliantly sees another “future” for these automated “little people,” recasting them as Robots and Newts; and Stapledon goes right back to the source and offers a changeling and hybrid human-animal protagonist that would be at home in either “The Caerlaverock Changeling” or “The Speckled Bull.” But reading and reimagining the legend does not mean that the essential problem is solved (or decoded); indeed, the changeling maintains the strict tension between the real and imagined worlds, embodying as it does the consequences of crossing boundaries. The fractious, deformed, hairy, ugly and anarchical creatures usually identified as changelings embody the situation of straddling two worlds—the fairy world that they are forced to leave behind and the cruel human world into which they are thrust. Indeed, we could argue that these specific changelings, identified through their recognizable traits, conceptualize the fundamental experience of exposure, shock, and transformation that occurs in most legends that treat human-fairy encounters. It has been my argument from the beginning that the changeling enunciates the rupturing experience of a self-other encounter and the metamorphosis that occurs as a result, and that this experience is characteristic of both folk narrative and SF.

## II. Anatomy of a Changeling

While Deleuze and Guattari have been the general inspiration for a project that studies particular “conceptual personae,” such a study would not be possible without the folkloric and science-fictional agents of enunciation. For this reason, folk narrative—and not a specific philosophical text—constitutes the main source for my *theoretical*

*framework*; it is specifically in changeling legends that we find a consistent exploration of hybridity and symbiosis, and that we find an almost archaic articulation of “new social relations.” Indeed, while other chapters include explicitly identified theoretical sections (Chapter 2, section I and Chapter 3, section I), Chapter 1 is the primary theoretical chapter, from which *all* my subsequent arguments derive. In a certain sense, the *anatomy of the changeling* proceeds from those detailed sections describing “The Changeling as Naughty or Precocious Child” (II), “The Changeling as Monster” (III), and “The Changeling as Hybrid” (IV).

i. The Child.

The changeling, of course, typically shows up in legends as a *child*, albeit a nasty-looking and bad-tempered one. Such a creature poses a threat to the domestic order and the authority of the family. As we recall from Chapter 1, section II, the changeling motif elicited two basic and conflicting interpretations: on the one hand, stories about changelings offered warnings to individuals who had overstepped boundaries; and on the other hand, these tales seemed to comment on the human capacity for violence and intolerance, and, especially in a tale like “The Fairy Changeling: II,” the possibility of reconciling the conflict through a new and perhaps “radical” understanding of hospitality. This fundamental conflict—and even the failure to find a resolution to it—finds new expression in the gothic and urban gothic environments of Shelley and Stevenson; we could say that the monster and Hyde are changelings “born” in the cradle of science—the laboratory. The changeling-as-child motif recurs in both works, for the monster is an infant in an old man’s body who is abandoned by his father, while Hyde is repeatedly described as a “young man” who parasitizes his upper-class father. As most critics have

noted, the pseudo-human figures in each work seem to caution us about the consequences of “mad science,” of altering humanity and unleashing monstrous changelings on a society. But both stories also elicit sympathy for the changeling: in the first instance, the monster is a vulnerable solitary fairy, with no “relations” (*Frankenstein* 81) and subject to all manner of abuse; Hyde, meanwhile, actually engenders in his creator a “more generous tide of blood” (*Jekyll and Hyde* 62). Both “fathers” ultimately reject their offspring when they can no longer tolerate the insurgent behaviour.

Wells was clearly inspired by this gothic link between deformity and insurgency, and re-imagined the scenario as a future class war in *The Time Machine*. As texts that deal in a general way with the conflict between insurgents and autocratic authority figures, both *The Time Machine* and *Moreau* take their cue from the legends where upstart changelings attempt to supplant the ruler of the home and defy house rules. Of course, the Eloi are described as both elfin and child-like, while the Beast Folk are treated like subhuman infants and are, at least initially, forced to bow to their progenitor, Dr. (“daddy”) Moreau. We may at first sympathize with the Traveller’s revulsion at the Morlocks and enjoy the pummeling strokes of his crowbar, but a closer reading of the story reveals a changeling society that deserves more sympathy, and perhaps *empathy*, given the real-worlders (East-Enders) to whom the Morlocks may very well be analogous. Certainly, in the case of the Beast Folk, the language itself (for example, the creature who looks like a “flayed *child*” and who guides Prendick into the submerged world) invites us to sympathize with the subaltern plight and to contemplate “truly *other* relationships” (Suvin, *Positions* 55).



The basic plot of the changeling legend, then, could be summarized as a family dispute between parents and child, although in the hands of Shelley, Stevenson, and Wells, the legend begins to present a warning about not simply rejecting the changeling but possibly *exploiting* it for profit. This theme of exploitation is especially evident in *Moreau*, which seems to have had a conceptual influence on *War with the Newts*, just as *Frankenstein* is clearly a source for *R. U. R.* Čapek's Robots are "born" in vats, thrust into an adult world; they ultimately reach maturity but not before annihilating most of the parents who begot them. But if ever there were a "daddy" it would be van Toch; he is, of course, the first and most influential *exploiter* of the Newts, long before Bondy co-opts them as a global work force. Again, the changeling legend is instructive here as a commentary on and critique of hospitality, and it also offers a model for forming fruitful alliances.

It could be argued that Stapledon warns his society to not forget the lessons of these previous folk and SF changeling tales. Throughout both his cosmological fantasies and his more mundane SF novels he emphasizes the beauty in cultivating a "personality-in-community," and the devastating affects of exorcizing or at least misunderstanding the new changelings that appear from time to time, as nature sometimes dictates. *Odd John* and *Sirius* truly return us to the environment of the folk narrative and, in particular, the drama that begins where all human dramas begin: the *cradle*. We could say that *Odd John* reenacts the changeling legend where the parents peek into the crib and find a deformed infant—mute, ugly, sallow, and frighteningly inhuman. The difference here, however, is that is that his parents accept him and protect him fiercely. *Sirius* repeats the same formula but with significant changes; nevertheless, the changeling-child motif is in effect

just the same, with the additional folktale exploration of a “sympathetic” connection between “children” of different species. John and Sirius have no strict affiliations but they do, however, develop alliances and new social relations, even if the latter is more successful in achieving a symbiotic relation.

## ii. Monster

The child is just one of the constituent parts of the changeling persona, for, as the legends reveal, the *changeling-child* it is not bound to its parents or relations, even if it laments the loss of such family ties; moreover, it generally tries to find new relations, but this only reinforces how much of a “monster” it is. While the folk legends discussed in Chapter 1 present the theoretical framework for our conceptualization of changeling monstrosity, it is especially in the realm of SF that the monster finds its fullest articulation. *Frankenstein* is the originating monster-text of the nineteenth century, a veritable organism of seething passions, sensations, and speculations, gathered from the most conservative socio-political philosophies (Malthus, Hobbes) and the most adventurous philosophical and scientific treatises (Burke, E. Darwin, Saint-Hilaire). Shelley’s “monster” has contributed—and continues to contribute—to the conceptualization of all the aliens, robots, and changelings of later SF (Chapter 3, Introduction), but is itself clearly indebted to eighteenth-century theories of the sublime and the monstrous sublime. Both *Frankenstein* and *Jekyll and Hyde* reiterate the manner in which the newly revised gothic mode, which was interested in the science of terror, could contribute to a cognitive estrangement, or the shocking collision between a known, empirical reality and an unknown but *possible* reality; if the supernatural turned out to be a terrifying mutation of the natural, it was deemed possible and therefore all the more

shocking. Clearly finding inspiration from the folk notion of a bodily substitution, Shelley and Stevenson each introduce a gothic monster as the “novum” (agent) of their work in order to posit the doppelganger as a biological possibility (Chapter 2, Conclusion).

If Wells’s monsters are generally identified as *science-fictional* entities, dominated by a consistently developed “novum” (*Metamorphoses* 63) that is, for the most part, validated by late nineteenth-century physics and biology, they are also heirs to the gothic fear of the “black things” (*The Time Machine* 50) that go bump in the night. His Beast Folk constitute (at least initially) a more successful attempt at creating automated or artificial humans. Wells knew as well as any of his contemporaries that, despite the apparent yawning abyss between the two genres, a little “jiggery pokery” was all that was required to make the gothic into SF. But if Wells’s scientific romances validate the cognitive importance of the gothic monster, they also validate the parabolic importance of folk narrative.

Subsequent SF works by Čapek and Stapledon follow Wells’s lead by including “monsters,” or “mythical creature[s] which [are] part animal and part human, or [combine] elements of two or more animal forms.”<sup>85</sup> As works that explore the fascist obsession with the “biological sublime” (Gomel), *R. U. R.* and *War with the Newts* posit the monster as the counterpoint to the racially pure “New Man.” If it is true in each case that the “masses” really did desire “fascism” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 29) and effectively perpetrate world destruction, Čapek is all the more successful in proving how much the changeling has oscillated between ideological recuperation and radical

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<sup>85</sup> See definition of “monster” in the online *OED*

reinvention, and how the fear of the changeling still reflects class and racial anxieties (Chapter 4, Introduction).

Moreover, if we lose sight of the folkloric changeling through the course of our investigation, it continually emerges—sometimes through its constituent parts, sometimes as a bifurcation of the folkloric figure (child, monster, demon, animal-human, and so forth). Both Odd John and his Hebridean nemesis recall the legend's function as a lexicon of congenital malformation; these two figures also remind us of the supernatural or perhaps religious dimension of changeling legends, hitherto developed in Shelley's engagement with the monstrous sublime and in Čapek's parodic evocation of the garden of Eden myth in *R. U. R.* We discover in Stapledon's oeuvre the development of a changeling that has been centuries, if not millennia, in the making: the divine mutant.

### iii. Hybrid

So, then, even before we reach the third component of our “anatomy,” the changeling begins to alter before our eyes, converging as it does with a gothic or religious understanding of the “monstrous” and a biological understanding of the anomalous. But the gothic notion of monstrosity still reinforces how much the anomalous creature exceeds the limited scope of scientific investigation; for this reason, the folkloric perspective continues to contribute to our understanding of both “old world” and “new world” changelings. As presented in Chapter 1, the hybrid might be understood as a way of conceptualizing the combined supernatural and biological notions of monstrosity. As I argued in the final section of the chapter, the changeling legend conceptualized the divine mystery of conception as well as the unforeseen proliferation of deviations in the human organism. If Darwinian theory amplifies such a description, the changeling nevertheless

*enunciates* such a profound process; in other words, if we can distinguish between folkloric and biological and cultural “hybridity,” the legends invite us to see the changeling as an agent of hybridity in its *widest possible sense*—that is, as not just the product of a supernatural intervention but *also* as the product of both physical and social inter-species alliances. Bhabha further develops the theory of hybrid or partial identity, while Williams provides an additional way of understanding the changeling’s “residual” importance in nineteenth-century fiction and science fiction. This final component of the changeling’s anatomy suggests that this folkloric persona may very well constitute a hitherto unacknowledged typological feature of SF, especially if we now consider the possible source for the cross-sections and intermixtures in *Frankenstein* and the “polar twins” in *Jekyll and Hyde*; the parasitical symbiosis in *The Time Machine* and the physical metamorphoses in *Moreau*; the engineered automata in *R. U. R.*; and the deformed superman in *Odd John*. If the changeling only rarely appears in SF as a folkloric entity, he is nevertheless there, incognito, miming the ways of humanity until humanity acknowledges his request for whiskey and music as a basic and primordial request for hospitality.

### III. The Changeling Factor: New Actants for New Alien Encounters

SF, and, I would argue, twentieth-century SF in particular, provides a new “conceptual plane” (Deleuze and Guattari) for folktales, and particularly those concerned with fairies and fairy changelings. It is in the realm of SF criticism, and in Suvin’s location of SF within optimal horizons (*Positions* 61-73), that folk narrative assumes a new cognitive significance; it is especially within the conceptual worlds of SF that the

changeling persona discovers new opportunities for optimal social relations. This should really be no surprise: folk narrative can be viewed as a speculative discourse, intertwined as it is with notions of otherworldly visitations and a program of genetic mutation instigated through the abduction of human children (Rojcewicz 493). *Where exactly does “science” come into folk narrative?* one might rightfully ask. As I argued in Chapter 1, folktales involve a kind of speculation that may very well be pre-SF and even pre-scientific, at least in the post-Enlightenment sense of the term. However, speculation, at least in the tales I discussed, rests on the disturbance or rupture of cognition, where otherwise natural phenomena (child birth, for example) exceed the limits of human comprehension. *What if*, a folk legend might ask, *a child is born with greenish skin, aged features, and spider-like limbs?* As it turns out, these characteristics (green skin, wizened appearance, spidery legs) are mentioned in documented cases of birth deformities, the changeling rearing its ugly head in the modern hospital (Chapter 1, section III). This set of changeling traits also accurately describes the protagonist of Stapledon’s *Odd John*. As this text seems to suggest, “Fairyland” turns out more than just fractious, deformed infants; it sometimes produces “supernormals.” Somewhere in between the so-called “medical changeling” and Stapledon’s SF changeling are those failed experiments of Shelley, Stevenson, Wells, and Čapek; failures or not, these creations are inspired by that folk paradigm of the human-nonhuman encounter and by the possibility of fashioning a symbiotic community. Moreover, both folktales about changelings and SF texts that reconfigure the changeling persona in a new environment are linked to—or can be *impelled* to relate to (Geertz 23)—cognitive horizons corresponding to relevant epochs or empirical worlds (Victorian England, the interwar years in England and in Eastern

Europe). So if a “plane” functions as the habitation for otherwise homeless and scattered concepts, the concepts themselves (hospitality, monstrosity, hybridity, metamorphosis, symbiosis, and so forth) also populate and nourish the landscape of the plane, and the folkloric personae (the fairy, the changeling) function as the necessary agents of this concept creation (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 36-37). This is to say that, if SF enables a new interpretation of folk narrative, specific folk legends, in turn, can offer a new perspective on SF by filling in the absent paradigm and thereby providing a mechanism for social metamorphosis; science itself can provide answers, but something beyond the realm of the scientific asks the question, *What if?*: this is precisely the *changeling factor*.

The scientific method of interpreting changeling narratives as representations of children with congenital disease has been echoed in twentieth-century SF tales where supernormal abilities (telepathy, telekinesis, and so forth) are initially attributed to birth defects. In John D. MacDonald’s “A Child Is Crying” (1948), for example, scientists speculate on the possibility that the “child” was a mutation either a) “brought about by atomic radiation,” or b) produced as a defensive mechanism in the case of nuclear war (he is an anomaly with the ability to predict the near future). As the boy reveals when he is stuck with a needle containing a truth serum, neither of these theories are accurate; he is, rather, a “direct evolutionary product,” he is “necessary to humanity because otherwise humanity would not have survived,” and he is, therefore, the “factor missing from man’s intellect” (204). Like Odd John, this child is no mere deformity, nor is he spiteful like the Hebridean child; MacDonald’s child prodigy exemplifies the notion that the fairy realm—that *missing factor*—is possibly the height of human potential (Chapter 1, section IV). In

the film *Stalker* (1979), Andrei Tarkovsky's loose adaptation of Arkadi and Boris Strugatsky's SF novel *Roadside Picnic* (1972), the area called the "Zone" is considered by the surrounding population to be the site of a mysterious "visitation"; it is also thought to contain gifts and to produce miracles. Functioning as a sort of expert and freelance guide, the Stalker sneaks individuals into the Zone past the barbed wire and the troops assembled to keep all intruders out. The Stalker's wife is upset that he continues to enter the Zone, despite the dangers involved. She believes that the Zone is responsible for their child who exhibits something like mental retardation; apparently, the child, affectionately called "Monkey," was conceived *after* the Stalker first entered the Zone. As the mother puts it, "God himself has cursed you by giving you this child!" As we discover in the final scene of the film, Monkey has telekinetic abilities: sitting placidly at the kitchen table, she moves three glasses along the smooth surface without the aid of her hands. We could argue that the Zone functions here as the SF equivalent of a Fairyland—clearly dangerous in some way but also capable of producing marvelous anomalies. The mother's reaction to the child is symptomatic of the typical human response to the miraculous: *some divinity must be responsible for this*. As Susan Eberly remarks, birth defects and congenital afflictions "have produced feelings of fear and awe since earliest times" (228). Perhaps it is this alternative religious component that has made the changeling figure so fascinating for SF writers interested in exploring the fearful symmetry of the human organism—or, for that matter, the nonhuman organism. The tales and texts I have discussed in Chapters 1 through 5 lead us to contemplate the cultural predominance of a figure whose characteristics suggest something of a divine mutation, which is the result of a radical



hospitality that has enabled these blasphemous unions between disparate kingdoms to occur in the first place.

The speculative search for a new faith and for new social relations in the irreligious and hyper-technological era of the twentieth century has its roots in the seventeenth century when both Francis Bacon and René Descartes attempted to separate philosophy from theology by proposing a “new method” that would rely upon the principles of scientific inquiry and dispense with the old metaphysics (Lewes 1-2). As true Renaissance men and harbingers of the “scientific revolution,” Bacon and Descartes rejected any philosophical system which did not search for “visible or tangible results” (117). In particular, Bacon’s *New Organon* (1620) was “driven by a strong commitment to new technical scientific instruments and the increasing variety of experiments on nature they made possible” (Jardine xii). As I suggested in Chapter 4, however, this supplanting of theology had the long-term goal of restoring humanity’s dominion over the earth, a notion that had already been prescribed by Christian doctrine centuries before. Despite his ultimate failure, Victor Frankenstein is the first modern fictional scientist to achieve the utopian dream of engineering a superior human species, as described in Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (291-92). Both Dr. Jekyll and Dr. Moreau attempt to perfect the Baconian project by extracting the animal instinct; in each case, the radical experiment is guided by a conservative devotion to Man’s Edenic dominance over the lower orders. As *Moreau* reveals, the separation of the Church and unfettered philosophical inquiry (that is, *science*) did not liberate society in the way that the Renaissance philosophers imagined but actually passed all “Authority” into the hands of an elite minority of intellectuals: such a venture effectively eliminated the religious side of speculation or the continual

faith in nature's unknown principles. As Gary K. Wolfe argues in his seminal SF study *The Known and the Unknown*, "If technology is the systematic appropriation and ordering of natural forces, the monster is the spontaneous bursting forth of those forces in strange and terrible guises" (Wolfe 187). While they begin their career as simply an ingenious and industrious species, prone to exponential growth, the Newts evolve into something horrifying: the "Newt Menace." Čapek's Newts are no mere fantastical creations but salamanders bred for labour, intellectual speculation, and ultimately war; the horror derives from their mutation, which humanity has not been able to predict. Čapek's anti-utopian work depicts the frightening results of Moreau's "monsters *manufactured*" (Moreau 53; emphasis added) and the proto-fascist obsession with transcendent, pseudo-religious violence and a directed evolution. There is, as Wolfe suggests, something menacing about nature's "spontaneous" changes. On the one hand, the scientists and engineers in Čapek's works seem to usher the change into society almost in a calculated or extrapolated fashion. On the other hand, these authorities are unable to estimate the *degree* of exponential change and the *variety* of changes that occur in the Newt population: some salamanders are able to talk and perform in sideshows, while others possess the frightening ability to mobilize in military fashion and break apart the continents of the world. In other words, whereas *extrapolation* isolates determinable variables in the world, *speculation* requires us to entertain the possibility of an irreducible otherness that exists beyond the purview of our human-made science. If Bacon is considered to be the father of modern experimental science, Darwin is not, as it has been assumed, the strict disciple of the Baconian method (Rees 386) since his *Origin* at least celebrates the speculative or conceptual possibilities of the scientific paradigm.

Evolutionary theory, moreover, emphasizes the special uniqueness of individual creatures both great and small, and in particular, those “deviations of structure so strongly pronounced as to deserve to be called monstrosities” (*Origin* 26).

The changeling has evolved, moreover, as both a stigmatized representative of fallen humanity (the progeny of demon incubi, fallen angels, fairies without souls) and a scientific anomaly (a congenitally afflicted infant, a mutant, a hybrid human-animal), and this makes the changeling a possible prototype for the “alien actants” of SF. This discovery was first hinted at in my argument in Chapter 1 that the changeling tale could be interpreted as an *evolutionary* narrative (Chapter 1, section IV). Given that folk narrative continually reveals the relationship between human and nonhuman species, it seems reasonable to argue that genres like folktales and legends present rituals that are analogous to the interrelations between species described in biology. Throughout my five chapters I have identified the unforeseen effects of species evolution as *changelingism*, which has to do with the changeability of elements in nature. Shelley’s monster may be pre-Darwinian, but his monstrous form foreshadows the later discovery that the world evolved through “indefinite variability” and not a definitive act of creation (*Origin* 26); at most, the “species” is “the unknown element of a distant act of creation” (65), and this applies to the changeling who seems to arrive from out of nowhere. Wells was one of the first SF artists (although his novels of the 1890s were usually identified as “scientific romances”) to combine the discoveries of Darwin with speculations on the future evolution of humankind; and it is significant that his far future species resemble the denizens of Fairyland encountered in British folk narrative. Under Wells’s influence, folk personae, including the changeling, become agents of evolutionary change. Čapek was

clearly influenced by Wells's Darwinian speculations, although there is much to suggest—given the conclusion of *R. U. R.* and the scientific bits on “*élan vital*” in *War with the Newts*—that he did not discount the possibilities of a “creative evolution,” in which species could grow, survive, and thrive despite the destructive forces of humanity. For, as we know, Darwin continually stressed that natural selection would determine the “preservation of favorable” traits (*Origin* 108) and the “extinction” of unfavourable ones (213); while Darwin was often vague in this early work on exactly what sort of traits would be favoured, he gradually came to believe that certain “types” of humanity possessed a higher moral rule (*Descent of Man* 137) and were therefore more likely to survive. So perhaps we can say that the “Darwinian lesson” of *War with the Newts* (Chapter 4, section II) either reflects Darwin's early thought or is more accurately a Bergsonian lesson, which is that “there is no universal biological law, which applies precisely and automatically to every living thing” and that “[t]here are only *directions* in which life throws out species in general” (Bergson 16). This is to say that, if the changeling is an agent of evolutionary change, it has less to do with so-called “favorable” traits than with “divergent” ones, being a product of a force of nature and not the *tool* of a Social Darwinist “survival of the fittest.”

Stapledon's SF constitutes the pinnacle of this evolutionary-cum-folkloric exploration, particularly in *Odd John* where the legendary changeling makes an appearance again; only this time, the creature turns out to be an *evolutionary advance* on humanity—more divergent and also more adaptable. The subsequent fusion of folk themes and biology especially in the work of Stapledon enables the “changeling” and perhaps even the “fairy” (not to mention “Fairyland”) to become part of the typology of

SF, and in particular, “alien encounter SF.” As Carl Malmgren defines it in his article “Self and Other in SF: Alien Encounters,”

Alien-encounter SF involves the introduction of sentient alien beings into the actantial system of the fictional universe; one or more of the actants are nonhuman or subhuman or superhuman. [...] *The encounter with the alien necessarily broaches the question of the Self and the Other.* In general, the reader recuperates this type of fiction by comparing human and alien entities, trying to understand what it means to be human. (15; emphasis added)

While Chapter 1 demonstrates folk narrative’s engagement with a self-other relationship, it further specifies the “encounter” as a convergence of *multiple* personae or “alien racial groups” (Silver 57). Indeed, these philosophical categories of Self and Other are often too strictly defined, whereas the changeling legend undermines such attempts at definition right from the outset, confusing the boundaries of human and nonhuman or human and animal, suggesting that alternate forms of “sentient” life come from the “world” that we live in rather than the one that has yet to be discovered. The folkloric changeling’s appearance and behaviour may be echoed by Malmgren’s typological categories of “nonhuman,” “subhuman,” and “superhuman,” but they are also already specified enough in the legends to suggest an additional sort of entity that critics either have neglected to mention or have quickly subsumed under the general category of “alien.” In his article, Malmgren suggests a plethora of more specific alien actants to which the changeling roughly corresponds; for example, there is the “technologically transformed self,” the “mutant,” the “monstrous alter ego,” as well as a variety of “aliens” that take the form of parasites and symbionts (15-16). Again, the folkloric changeling is one of the prototypes for such entities, and Briggs’s enormous collection *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales in the English Language* offers a wide-ranging portrait of such “symbionts” and “parasites”

and, therefore, a hitherto unacknowledged contribution to the typology of SF.

Specifically, the changeling emerges as the primary prototype for the alien “mutant” so prominent in American SF of the 1930s onward.

SF writers in the post-WWII era seem well aware of this folkloric influence.

Consider the following passage from James Blish’s *The Seedling Stars* (1957):

The notion of modifying the human stock genetically to live on the planets as they were found, rather than changing the planets to accommodate the people, had been old with Olaf Stapledon[;] it went back, in essence, as far as Proteus, and as deep into the human mind as the werewolf, the vampire, the fairy changeling, the transmigrated soul. (Blish 43)

As this passage indicates, the changeling is among several notable fictional or mythological personae associated with the notion of physical metamorphosis, an imaginative scenario familiar especially to readers of folk narrative, SF, and horror and fantasy stories. But, coming as it does within the pages of a classic SF novel of the 1950s, the passage situates the genre of “science fiction” as a transformative plane in which both *fiction* and *science* are seen to be interactive agents: the changeling is not simply part of a primitive belief system but is rather an *anticipation* of, and a conceptual model for, the biological possibility of genetic mutation. Indeed, as the protagonist Donald Sweeney discovers while listening to a seminar on “pantropy,” or the process by which humans can be biologically adapted to inhabit new planets, the “notion” of the “fairy changeling” fits well into the conceptual history of biological engineering since it speculates on the pros and cons of altering the human organism. Significantly, pantropy is offered as an alternative to terraforming (Blish 42-46), or altering the new planet to suit the Terran colonists, a practice closely associated with imperialist encroachment in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Wells’s *The War of the Worlds* (1898) is, at least in part, a

satirical jab at British imperial expansion, and the Martians could be seen as either the invading Empire itself or the foreign “others” who succumb to “contact” in the end. Other texts like Čapek’s *War with the Newts* and Stapledon’s *Star Maker* explore similar themes but, in particular, contemplate the consequences of engineering or adapting pseudo-humans to different environments. In every case, the message seems to be that humans should learn to adapt to the new landscape or environment rather than attempt to convert it and its inhabitants to suit their needs. If the Newts adapt to various changes in their own environment (the rocky shelves or coral beds under the sea), they are also forced to adapt to other environments (shallow pools in laboratories and zoos) and to serve the State’s program of militant capitalism. In this instance, the Newt environment is exploited and reformed to suit humanity’s needs. In the “Symbiotics” episode of *Star Maker*, the Ichthyoids and Arachnoids initially exist in an exploitative relationship in which the hostile environments—the sea for the one, the land for the other—constitute the very basis for a genocidal war. However, certain “flexible” individuals from each group see the advantage of “fraternization with the enemy” (*Star Maker* 105) and agree to the biochemical exchange that allows each to adapt to the new environment. In SF, then, terraforming is analogical to more specific strategies of colonizing planets, exploiting resources, and planting new and more suitable citizens. Pantropy, on the other hand, is analogous to the specific tactics of adapting to new environments through survival skills, sharing resources, and engaging in symbiotic relationships with otherwise “alien” communities. The changeling is, accordingly, an agent of pantropy since it initiates a symbiotic community, however often this project fails.

Poul Anderson's novelette "The Queen of Air and Darkness" (1971) contains perhaps one of the most direct admissions of SF's debt to the folkloric tradition. The tale focuses on a widowed ecologist, Barbro Cullen, whose three-year-old child Jimmy is kidnapped during a field expedition in the interior of a planet called Roland and the Holmesian detective, Eric Sherrinford, who is hired to investigate the case. According to traditional belief in Roland, the mysterious kidnappers are none other than the "Old Folk," an enigmatic and fey-like species who are believed to inhabit the margins of Roland's wilderness world, a wild region known as Arctica. According to anthropologists, these creatures of legend may actually be the "Outlings," an indigenous species driven to the margins of their wilderness world by a century of colonization. The puzzling nature of little Jimmy's abduction—that the child was taken from the scientists' campsite without tripping the alarms and carried away with so little effort—leads to further questions: Who are these creatures? What is the purpose of these child-thefts? And can a peace, if not an alliance, be established between the colonists and the natives? Sherrinford insists that the key to this case is coming to terms with an additional, academic question:

[W]hy—across that gap of centuries, across a barrier of machine civilization and its utterly antagonistic world view—no continuity of tradition whatsoever—why have hard-headed, technologically organized, reasonably well-educated colonists here brought back from its grave a belief in the Old Folk? (49-50)

While the specific details of the story do not concern me here, Sherrinford's initial question does; and it seems both whimsical and significant that Sherrinford's boss, Chief Constable Dawson, suggests that "eventually somebody will get a thesis out of [his] question" (50). Why, we might ask, do seemingly out-of-date genres survive in



technologically-driven societies where folk beliefs appear to have been superseded by rational truths or disproved by scientific discovery? As Sherrinford discovers, the belief in “nonhuman beings with supernatural powers” (48-49) is linked in some way with actual “tactics employed in a chillingly subtle strategy” (54). In a scenario reminiscent of seventeenth-century captivity narratives, or, as I would suggest, nineteenth-century changeling legends, these Outlings have begun stealing children as a tactical method in a nearly invisible war against the exploitation and settlement of a final frontier. The link to folk narrative is firmly established when Barbro sees one of the captives in the woods and specifically identifies it as a “changeling, stolen in babyhood and raised by the Old Folk” (66). But, again, why the recourse to legendry? Given this science-fictional example, we might surmise that an increasingly industrialized—and now technologically advanced—environment naturally provokes its inhabitants to search for a new “structure of feeling,” which comes in “the form of modification or disturbance in older forms” (Williams 134), such as the folk legend or the folktale. This is to say that, as dominant forms of knowledge and communication narrow the possibilities of speculation, the mass population holds onto and/or re-articulates beliefs and practices that, by default, have been marginalized but which, for this same reason, have also retained a certain significance.

If the folk belief associated with fairies indicates “the struggle between the subordinated cultures of local communities and the hegemonic culture of the state” (Ó Giolláin, “The Fairy Belief and Official Religion” 199), the science-fictional text that adapts folkloric themes may be said to redeploy such a struggle, but in a new context. Anderson’s novelette is instructive in this regard: what remains beyond the purview of the

dominant or “technologically organized” culture has the ability to survive and influence new generations whose voices still remain submerged. We may identify the adaptation of folk motifs in Anderson’s tale—written in the late twentieth, but likely set in at least the twenty-first, century—as an indication of the residual effects of certain colonial anxieties, of the guilt over colonization and the subsequent displacement of cultures, and, more significantly, of the fear that further “contact” will ultimately threaten the stability of a hyper-industrialized society. Indeed, invasion or abduction narratives can be seen as expressions of the fear that a formerly subordinate group might turn the tables and invade a territory, terrorize an unsuspecting and even undeserving country or nation: this seems to be one of the socio-political thrusts of Wells’s *The War of the Worlds*, which draws comparisons between the Martians’ invasion of earth and the British Empire’s “extermination” of the Tasmanians (266). The point here is that, as Geertz has suggested, folk belief can be directed towards other purposes. Far from indulging in superstitions, a particular segment of society in Anderson’s tale *impels* traditional folk belief to tackle the practical problems of a modern society. Similarly, British (and, generally, European) folk narrative often supplies practical solutions to crises that the authorities of law and medicine are unable to comprehend. The legend about a fairy woman who curses a man’s cattle may seem a quaint fireside story, but it may also offer an *analogy* to an insubordinate woman who is fed up with patriarchal authority. Similarly, the legend about a deformed fairy child exchanged for a human one may be analogous to more than superstitious belief about the “Good People” (or the “Old Folk,” for that matter); it may actually express a fear regarding birth defects, infant paralysis or death, class or racial position; it may also reflect a personal—perhaps *wished for*—association with the

subversive undercurrents of the fairy world. In any event, legend has the capacity to cross the “barrier” of civilizations and societies but always through the vehicle of agents—fairies, “little people,” and, of course, the changeling.

#### IV. A New Changeling Ethos

The resilience of the changeling persona in modern SF is the result of a number of factors. To begin with, the legend from which the changeling figure derives encodes a spiritual yearning for a utopian society and is especially attractive to those discontented with modern political systems and the Christian notion of a “Heaven” that can only be realized in the “afterlife.” Specifically, the changeling has helped to conceptualize new social relations and, in particular, *the development of a community of unlike peoples, animals, and organisms in which symbiosis between disparate groups rather than dominance of one over the other becomes the organizing principle*. These relations are specifically imagined with varying degrees of success in the novels I have discussed in Chapters 2 through 5. The failed or achieved social relations presented in each text correspond to actual socio-political contexts, and throughout each of the chapters I have followed Suvin’s basic argument that an SF work should bear some analogical resemblance to an “empirical environment.” As he argues, “When we read a text we should understand *not only* its internal narrative articulation *but also* its relation to wider paradigms. The result is that the text inescapably amounts to a given *interpretation* or model of the extra-textual universe” (*Metamorphoses* 46; original emphases). So, for example, the new social relations in several of the works are analogical to the residual effects of cultural encounters in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries; colonization

sometimes produces “hybrid” subjects, a phenomenon embodied by the changeling who straddles two “kingdoms” and explored in *The Time Machine*, *Moreau*, and *Star Maker*. These relations are also meant to be analogous to experimental societies and “submerged nations” in contemporary society; such societies are explored in Wells and also especially in Čapek’s *War with the Newts* and Stapledon’s *Odd John* and *Sirius*. In some circumstances, of course, the second case might be understood as simply the aftermath of the original cultural encounter, where the colonized society remains unassimilated or produces its own community as a variant on the dominant political system; either way, we should now recognize in these scenarios the typological “alien encounter” motif and the crucial part that the changeling has had to play in the conceptualization of “first contact.” Finally, the preceding sections have indicated that the changeling persona conceptualizes a new *ethos* that emphasizes the interplay of a whole species rather than only specific individuals or groups.

The components for this new *ethos* are to be found especially in Stapledon’s works, which, on the other hand, appear to be a variation on almost all the previous SF works discussed in Chapters 2 through 4. Moreover, throughout Stapledon’s four major books, there is a re-evaluation of the monster-creator relationships in *Frankenstein* and *Jekyll and Hyde*; the parasitical symbiosis in *The Time Machine* and the animal-human hybrids in *Moreau*; the engineered humans in *R. U. R.* and the adapted, co-opted sea-creatures in *War with the Newts*. As I have claimed, *Odd John* and *Sirius* constitute Stapledon’s most important achievements. His reinvestigation of the SF canon leads him to present his first mutant—the congenitally deformed child—as the model for a higher evolved human, or “an advancement in human evolution rather than a ‘throwback’ or

reversion” (Chapter 1, section IV). The deformed body itself, as John describes, presents a “test” for people: “If they don’t begin to see me beautiful when they have had a chance to learn, I know they’re dead inside, and dangerous” (*Odd John* 9). Accordingly, the experimental community in *Odd John* operates collectively as part of a larger Nietzschean critique of the spiritual “hunchbacks” of modern society (*Zarathustra* 159), or those who fail to see the beauty of a symbiotic community like the one John has organized. John’s test, of course, is a variation on the monster’s trial in the De Lacey household; only the old blind man passes the test, but his keen-eyed nephew is very quick to pass judgement and banish the one-time “*good spirit*” from human fellowship forever. Despite this failure, the monster is nevertheless freed from the filial confinement of the family structure. There is no space in this novel for a full articulation of an alternate social relation, but the *break* itself provides the gap for subsequent authors to fill. Enter the SF changeling. As one of these hybrid personae, John wishes to change his society by tearing humanity away from itself, by altering it beyond recognition; moreover, his experimental community is to be a model for a completely new society in which “every vestige” of humanity has been stripped from the planet (94). This first component, then, specifies the changeling as an *evolutionary leap*.

The second component of this new ethos reinforces the original sentiment: that the symbiotic community does not exclude but rather encourages intermixture and the celebration of all species that inhabit the particular biosphere. As I suggested in Chapter 5, John’s alternate community is composed of an endless variety of “freaks” who possess paranormal abilities, each of which seems to supplement the “factor missing from man’s intellect” (MacDonald 204). Ultimately, however, the need to make the leap from human

to superhuman blinds the community to the original, symbiotic spirit of the campaign. Indeed, John's community fails because it is missing a crucial element: the *human* or at least respect for the human ancestor. It is in *Sirius* that we find the flowering of this second component, which occurs because Stapledon's canine protagonist values the human part of his identity and also because he understands that an evolutionary leap goes backward as well as forward, and that *divergence* means wresting the paw from the earth, reterritorializing it onto all manner of tools, turning away from territories and returning to them, as the situation demands (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 67-68).

Stapledon's novels present the *animal-human* relation as a fluctuating scale that alters our perception of the *human*: for John, the human is what needs to be transcended since it is the lower species; for Sirius, the human is what he needs to *ascend* towards, but he does not believe that it is the *higher* species. Again, Sirius wishes to compromise where John refuses to make himself vulnerable to the contaminating effects of human society. Sirius values humanity because it partakes of both the animal world and the divine realm—the descent into the earth and the ascent into spiritual ecstasy and communion. This ethos is reinforced through the symbiotic relationship in which a canine benefits from the “elegant ‘handedness’” (*Sirius* 49) of his female human lover and she, in turn, benefits from the animal energy of his “canine style” (174); it is almost as if *Plaxy-Sirius* were a musical composition in which case the beautiful song could not be heard unless both entities were in sync. This entity enables that interplay between species that has been hinted at in all previous SF (or proto-SF) works—Frankenstein-monster, Jekyll-Hyde, and Morlocks-Eloi—and which originates in the deformed changeling's plea to be loved and tolerated.

I have suggested that the fairy economy, as presented in the various legends, suggests the workings of a “fairy ethics,” which can be distinguished from human morality (Chapter 1, section I). In a certain sense, the new ethos I have described is the sort that might be prescribed to a superhuman since it both praises the “new” organism and honours its progenitor. Indeed, the procedure of my analysis has been to identify and present a loose genealogy for the changeling, *and* to explore the numerous ways in which SF authors incorporate and *detrterritorialize* the changeling persona: the changeling is, like the human, an important “bridge” to *something else*. One work that elaborates on this notion and, in fact, demonstrates the further development of this ethos is Theodore Sturgeon’s classic SF work *More Than Human* (1953). The novel has its share of changelings, including the “idiot” and telepath Lone who lives almost by instinct until he meets other unusual humans such as Janie, who has telekinetic powers, Beanie and Bonnie, who can teleport, and “Baby,” the “Mongoloid” infant who never grows but has the brain capacity of an “adding machine.” Together, this group functions as a “Gestalt” organism, with Lone as the “head,” Janie as the “body,” the two twins as the “arms” and “legs,” and Baby as the “brain” (*More Than Human* 60). When Lone is accidentally killed, the Gestalt requires another “head”; this role is eventually filled by Gerry, another very powerful telepath, but we discover that he intends to use the other members to achieve power and to usher out the inferior elements of society. As he explains to a psychologist, “self-preservation for the *gestalt*” takes precedence over morality (113-16). This brief plot description suggests that Sturgeon is developing a theme in Stapledon’s *Odd John*, but whereas John cannot reconcile humanity, Gerry learns to; in fact, he is *taught* how to accept humanity by another human, Hip Barrows, who is recruited for this

purpose by Janie when it is apparent that Gerry has become tyrannical. Unlike so many other SF works of the period, the final showdown between human and superhuman does not end in the typical way: Hip does threaten Gerry but he also offers the superhuman what we might consider to be an elaborated version of the ethos I have described above:

The ethos will give you a code for survival too. But it is a greater survival than your own, or my species, or yours. What it is really is a reverence for your sources and your posterity. It is a study of the main current which created you, and in which you will create still a greater thing when the time comes. (181).

In a certain sense, Hip's ethos is an antidote for the fascist ideology, which, from the perspective of 1950s SF and culture, had recently tried to exterminate *mere* humanity in the name of the *Übermensch*. Gerry is made to realize that, while he does constitute an evolutionary leap and therefore something "more than human," he is also *part* of humanity or the "main current" that first breathed life into his limbs. In this sense, then, Sturgeon has also adapted from *Sirius*, which presents a sort of gestalt entity comprising animal and human parts. The power of *Sirius* is that the changeling is neither a completely isolated individual, as in *Frankenstein*, nor a completely absorbed unit of a collective, as in *War with the Newts*; *Sirius* is also the only text throughout the five chapters where we find a successful pairing, and in that a pairing, a physical and spiritual symbiosis. As an elaboration of Stapledon's concept of "personality in community" as well as an adaptation of key folkloric themes, Sturgeon's novel teaches *us* to reverence "those who bore [us] and the ones who bore them, back and back to the first wild creature who was different because his heart leapt when he saw a star." This is the ethos of the fairy folk who were frequently identified as "star-worshippers" (Briggs, "The Fairy Dwelling on Selena Moor" 226) and of *Sirius* whose name translates as "Dog-Star." And



yet who is this “wild creature” if not humanity in its changeling infancy? For this ethos describes the evolution of *Homo sapiens*, which, having now experienced a sort of cognitive estrangement, is maybe the strangest progeny of all.

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