



# Violent disruptions: Victorian Warnings & Fascination for a Dystopian and Inorganic Society which Became the Anthropocene

Interrupciones violentas: las advertencias victorianas y la  
fascinación por una sociedad distópica e inorgánica que  
se convirtió en el antropoceno

*José Fabián Elizondo-González*

Escuela de Lenguas Modernas  
Universidad de Costa Rica

[josefabian.elizondo@ucr.ac.cr](mailto:josefabian.elizondo@ucr.ac.cr)

*Leonardo Chinchilla-Mora*

University of Helsinki  
Finlandia

[Leo.chinchilla.mora@gmail.com](mailto:Leo.chinchilla.mora@gmail.com)

## Abstract

While the Victorian Era has been analyzed as a period of slavery, colonialism, and race based on self-adjudicated supremacy, little thought has been given to the ecological implications of such imperialism and the warnings literary works presented such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. This essay aligns itself with a body of literature that looks retrospectively at Victorian literature through the lenses of the geological time known as Anthropocene since, as proposed by Taylor, "Victorian studies in the Anthropocene [...] align with the historical period during which the Anthropocene emerged" (574). By analyzing Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, one may assert that it identifies warnings to the shift towards industrialization that impend in the Victorian era, and it offers possible implications for such a shift. Additionally, it makes acute emphasis on the novella's

imagery as redolent of a fascination for dystopianism, which is articulated, we argue, through the (self)-monster making of Dr. Jekyll. Hence, this paper is divided in three main sections. The first one is an introduction to the historical context that took place before Victorian times, making an emphasis on the transition from the Romantic, pastoral England when Romantics “recognized no radical separation between self and nature” (Reed 364) to the industrial, utilitarian England (Dimmock). The second section deals with illustrations and arguments of ecologically-monstruous behaviors of Victorian times materialized in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Lastly, the third section addresses (a) moral issues during said Victorian times, which might, in turn, become unheeded warnings for generations to come.

**Keywords:** Anthropocene, Victorian Literature, ecology, amorality, progress and violence

### Resumen

A pesar de que la Era Victoriana ha sido analizada como un periodo de esclavización, colonialismo y raza basado en una supremacía autoadjudicada, poca atención se les ha prestado a las implicaciones ecológicas de dicho imperialismo y a las advertencias que trabajos literarios como *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* de Robert Louis Stevenson. El presente ensayo se suma a la creciente literatura que analiza literatura victoriana retrospectivamente a través de la edad geológica conocida como Antropoceno, ya que, como propone Taylor, “los estudios victorianos en el Antropoceno [...] se alinean con el período histórico durante el cual surgió esta era” (574). A partir del análisis de *The Strange Case* de Stevenson, este ensayo identifica advertencias acerca del cambio hacia la industrialización que amenazaba el periodo victoriano, y ofrece también posibles implicaciones de dicho cambio. Asimismo, se enfatiza en la imaginaria de la novela como evocadora de una fascinación por el distopianismo, la cual es articulada a través del proceso de autocreación monstruosa de Dr. Jekyll. Por lo tanto, este artículo se divide en tres secciones principales. La primera es una introducción al contexto histórico que tuvo lugar antes de la época victoriana, haciendo énfasis en la transición de la Inglaterra romántica y pastoral cuando los románticos “no reconocían una separación radical entre el yo y la naturaleza” (Reed 364) a la industrial y utilitaria (Dimmock). La segunda sección trata de ilustraciones y argumentos de comportamientos ecológicamente monstruosos de la época victoriana materializados en *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Por último, la tercera sección aborda cuestiones (a) morales durante dicha época victoriana, las cuales, a su vez, podrían convertirse en advertencias no escuchadas por futuras generaciones.

**Palabras claves:** Antropoceno, literatura victoriana, ecología, amoralidad, progreso y violencia

### Industrial shift and its implications

By having the Romantic England in a near past, Englishmen are reminiscent of a more nurturing motherland and a closer relationship among nature, people, and their feelings, since at the time, as described by Reed, people “recognized no radical separation between self and nature” (364). In this way, the literary portrait of romantic texts was committed to an idyllic conceptualization of nature and a fascination for the gothic. As an illustration, Hume describes that at the time “there were three varieties of novel widely current in the late eighteenth century, sentimental-domestic (the novel of manners), ‘Gothic,’ and didactic” (282), while the works by Wordsworth and Coleridge were predominantly popular; [these two authors] “were instrumental in helping to establish the Romantic Movement as a major force in nineteenth century British literature” (Routledge Library Editions).<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, this English society evolved into a radical shift towards Victorian times, which entailed drastic, industrial changes to a mostly agricultural, peasant country (Robinson). This is observed over an abrupt timeframe where, as Patriquin explains, “what is at the heart of the transformation is a modification of class relations here from the old “landlord versus peasant” to a [...] class structure of landlords, capitalist-farmers, and wage-laborers” (201). He goes on to explain that life for Englishmen has changed since now

“owners (and renters) of means of production have no choice but to compete against each other, where the actions of all producers, in lowering their costs, have a direct bearing on the economic well-being of everyone else” (201). Naturally, not only does this shift transform innumerable conditions for being a functional, adapted individual in society, but also it is a catalyst of change for social standards and Victorian’s ecological relationships with nature. Put in another way, it is a change that comes to reconfigure the grounds of Victorian’s futurity.

Victorians, thenceforth, were confronted with anomalous distortions in numerous aspects of their lives. For example, the pervasive nature of pollution, contaminating all rivers, cities, and specially the air, all of which grew to be significant symbols for what happens in the English mind and, subsequently, in their literary expressions; in fact, as Scott comments, “Victorians were conscious that their pollution was unprecedented, and they perceived in it not just ecological impacts, but moral culpability too” (589). This ‘culpability’ is embedded in literature in as much as *doubt* becomes one the most significant words for these times. Namely, the environmental and physical imagery of the fog of England, besides referring to and denouncing contamination, comingled with the uncertainty of their inhabitants, an uncertainty whose foundation is the industrial revolution, the scientific developments, and rise of utilitarianism. As writer Hoare explicitly avers, “without the fog, we’d lack half of 19th-century literature. [...] Doyle’s Hound of the Baskervilles howled out of the gothic Dartmoor

---

<sup>1</sup> For more descriptions on the kinds of Gothic novels and literary texts that were popular back in England and in the United States of America in the 18th century, refer to Hume, Robert D. “Gothic versus Romantic: A Reevaluation of the Gothic Novel.”

mist; [and] Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde relied on the curtain of fog to obscure his transformations." To further this argument, for the synopsis of her book *London Fog*, Corton adds by elaborating on the impact of Londoners' fog: "by the time London's fogs lifted in the second half of the twentieth century, they had changed urban life. Fogs had created worlds of anonymity that shaped social relations, providing a cover for crime, and blurring moral and social boundaries.

Given such an advent of societal and environmental distortions, Victorians express curiosity in terms of the decadent, the ugly, and the macabre, for they may deem those elements as direct, human projections that result from that crucial shift towards industrialization. As Carroll comments "[both Romantics and Victorians] explored literature's emphasis on 'atopias': spaces on the verge of empire that highlight [...], and often seem [...] to materialize resistance against, the spatial transformation that are characteristic of modernization (qtd. in Griffiths & Kreisel 7). Therefore, one may claim that Victorian's literary work may embody those attributes as actual representations of that amoral, detrimental shift of their time, as warnings or acts of resistance against those unforeseeable, yet quite ineluctable, turns towards progress.

### **Ecological monstrosity**

In view of Merchant's *The Death of Nature, Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution*, one can conceptualize the Victorian Era as one which had long severed its organic links, or "restraining

ethic" as she terms it, from nature and had incurred in the process of its exploitation by means of rendering it passive "divested of life and action" (111). To elaborate on Merchant's argument, she states that back in the Renaissance era, "an I-thou relationship in which nature was considered to be a person-writ-large was sufficiently prevalent that the ancient tendency to treat it as another human still existed" (27). This conceptualization of nature, with its 'vitalistic imagery' in literary expressions, served as a 'restraining ethic' (27). However, with the advent of the scientific revolution, a new metaphor for organizing society superseded those restraints; the implantation of a machine metaphor that organizes society through "rational control over nature, society, and the self" (192) displaced that 'restraining ethic.' Such "justified" exploitation of nature, we argue, had already yielded results in shaping the collective whole of England by the time of Victorians. Another important angle to view this age from is through the fact that even when William's conception of 'organic community' is perceived to be a retrospective term, as Griffiths & Kreisel remark, "it yet remains very much alive in the way we imagine the systems—economic, ideological, and institutional—that hold societies together" (4). Thus, the fact that such organic links that *restrained* violations to the land have been deracinated does not seem to have considerable effects on England's achieved grandeur. However, the organicism ideology, or community as Griffiths and Kreisel refer to it, which understands that one part affects the whole entity would later come to show that there *were* consequences in incurring in ecological

violations by forgetting those restraining parameters. Such shift, one can say, encompass the beginning of their derailment towards our contemporary Anthropocene.

In the search of unrelated power, in fact, that detachment from the land must not be coincidental with the expansion of the British Empire and the self-adjudicated supremacy that was endorsed by technological advancements. Notwithstanding this nationalist empowerment, it may also be significant to remember that writing in the nineteenth century was not all “jingoist” but oftentimes “ambivalent,” as Brantlinger points out (2). Therefore, there may be certain precautions that Victorian literature accentuates as warnings for such imperial expansion. For example, a warning which has not been extensively addressed is the (further) colonization of nature itself which we will expand on henceforth. In that light, Taylor argues, “the Victorian era offers a glimpse of the Anthropocene *in medias res*, from the midst of still-unfolding, slow-motion catastrophe” (575).<sup>2</sup> Likewise, Scott claims that “Victorian fiction experimented with the material results of living within particular eco-ideologies. Its play between scientific measurement and fictional speculation presents avenues for better understanding our own late-industrial moment” (592). Accordingly, this paper argues that Stevenson’s Victorian novella, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is a cautionary text about the catastrophic, dystopian for Victorians even, effects of

the industrial turn, which are based on the dual reality of violence and progress, and on the fears for monstrosity at ecological and societal levels, both of which take root in amoral behaviors.

Regarding ecological monstrosity, there are two illustrative moments of violations of ‘restraining ethic’ in the novel, which are the first aspects to analyze. Mr. Hyde’s first mention in the novel is one where he tramples “calmly over a child’s body” (8), in which the insouciance is perhaps one of the aspects that most strikes the readers as he leaves the girl there without minding her or even apologizing. Yet, while it may be seen as an instance of outrage for the gap in rectitudinous behavior, Enfield proceeds to threat the trampler with social ostracization (with Hyde’s casting out), but suddenly the whole mishap is monetized off the accident: “a hundred pounds for the child’s family” (9).<sup>3</sup> Hence, on closer examination, it seems that the outrage is not stirred up by stepping an innocent girl, but rather by walking away off such a situation without presenting the adequate etiquette of an Englishman. We would further propose that if such stepping could be the embodiment of something, it would be of a more pastoral England. Thus, it could be argued that the novel’s start signifies not only stepping onto innocence, as the girl’s innocence, but also stepping on someone who represents the value of old England (perhaps one that used to be more pastoral on its own). Given this, society’s move towards more industrialized ways

---

2 As dictated by the National Geographic encyclopedia, “the Anthropocene Epoch is an unofficial unit of geologic time, used to describe the most recent period in Earth’s history when human activity started to have a significant impact on the planet’s climate and ecosystems.”

3 This is appallingly similar to what is witnessed in Charles Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities* (see chapter 7) when the Marquis throws a coin at a grieving father whose son has just been run over to death by the very Marquis.

is, on the one hand, a certain aberration stepping on, (hiding—“Hyding”) or burying such roots. On the other hand, however, such shift calls for transvaluation, as Nietzsche would call it, which has already occurred and proved to be able to be monetized provided that it exalts the country in technological and nationalistic ways. In fewer words, England is still integral without its innocence insofar as the new mechanical order subserves its expansion and prestige and continues to facilitate its way into more modern and mechanized directions. In this way, the legacy of the Scientific Revolution proves that the “Baconian enslavement of nature” (Bacon qtd. in Fleming 26) was a way to attain “growth and progress [which] could be achieved from the study of the mechanical arts” (Merchant 179). Viewed in this way, the novel’s introduction evinces a key contradiction of Victorian times where there is violence and progress as concurrent truths of their society; thus, it can also be argued that *The Strange Case* sets off with a reminder that “violence is not anathema to liberalism but, rather, necessary to its founding and maintenance” (Hensley qtd. in Aslami 680). Hence, there is unjust—yet monetized—violence towards innocent, idyllic England, paving the way to its industrial landscape while reinforcing a liberal paradigm full of contraries.

The second violation of ecological integrity is alluded to with the unprecedented fogs of industrialization that impend in the novel. The fog is more prominently alluded in the chapter “The Carew Murder Case,” yet it inhabits all spaces and is pernicious. For instance, in said chapter the fog remains constant until a point of

clearance where Mr. Utterson can eye a corrupted section of England that is ‘dingy’ with ‘ragged children’ with international women losing consciousness (37). This imagery seems to suggest that wherever developed England is, there is fog; otherwise, there is poverty, which strictly links industrialization to progress on an assumed natural exploitation. Later passages comingle the lure of science with the fog as in the case of Dr. Jekyll’s neighborhood, “even in the houses the fog began to lie thickly” (42) and other surrounding areas, “light failing dimly through the foggy cupola (41). Essentially, not only is there a subtle recognition that whenever there is science, there is fog but also progress makes immiseration follow in those sidelined areas which lack such development. Evidently, as pointed out before, the fogs of England play a paramount role when establishing the setting of this novella, which in turn serve a myriad of purposes in the characters’ (un)doings.

A further aspect to analyze concerning monstrosity is the conceptualizations of normality and abnormality. When the trampling of the girl is contrasted with the other trampling, that of Sir Danvers Carew, this old man is more broadly characterized as educated and polite who “seemed to breathe such an innocent and old-world kindness of disposition” (34). Nonetheless, Mr. Hyde, bursts out in anger “with ape-like fury” and crushes the old man’s bones for no apparent reason. It seems, again, that the “old-world kindness” is viciously attacked by the impulses of a character that is vigorously decried by the collective whole as the embodiment of England’s anathema. However, since this

transgression is murderously perpetrated against the embodiment of English politeness, Mr. Hyde must be persecuted. The underlying message is that the national order of educated England cannot be abrogated as such, nor can an Englishman whose savage actions are noxious to the whole be out in the loose. In like manner, Mr. Hyde is not only a device to embody the antithesis of England's foregrounded qualities but also a way to deny aspects of Englishmen physical attributes. To be more precise, Mr. Hyde derives a definition of abnormality, which is to be backgrounded. Being 'deformed' (13), 'pale and dwarfish' and 'displeasing' (24), a contrast is made with Dr. Jekyll, which underlines the theme of ideal English character. Yet, it must not be overlooked that the fact that they are the same person implies that presenting one face or another is a matter of back and foregrounding; being both contained in the same person, normality is further presented as a construction that insinuates a chance in self-monster making. In this way, what is socially considered as "(ab) normality" reinforces such ideal standards through scientific framing words such as "mutations" or "deviations" from the norm; they are abnormalities that must be persecuted, hidden, or simply abnegated in order to preserve *the* English character.

Beyond contributing to the social construction of adequate etiquette, science also surpasses moral standings by becoming somewhat nonpartisan; this begs the question of agency in utilizing science benevolently or malevolently. When one considers Dr. Jekyll's transformations throughout the novel, the contrast is axiomatic. Dr. Jekyll's dual character exalts

him as amicable and, during the longest absence of Mr. Hyde, he is said to be "at peace" (51). On the other hand, however, his evil side, Mr. Hyde, does commit aggressive transgressions such as the ones detailed above. In addition, Dr. Jekyll confesses epistolarily that, "I have brought on myself a punishment and a danger that I cannot name" (53). It is this last confession and the dualism of the protagonist's social and performative characterization that allow the argument that the novel presents a warning towards scientific possibilities and experiments. Namely, the fact that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are the same individual suggests that the danger to become either lies in the hands of humans and how far they are willing to go in the search of mastery and power. Dr. Jekyll indeed states, "I saw that, of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because *I was radically both*" (97 emphasis added). Hence, the chance to become unrestrained monsters or progressive, benevolent scientists is human. The latter, indeed, strongly echoes Scott's work when discussing 'The Good Anthropocene' predictions of Victorian literature. In her article, Scott explains that 'The Good Anthropocene' concerns technological fixes which are "cornucopian, competitive, and [it] promises timely solutions using human capitalist ingenuity" (592). It is in this way that technology becomes an object to human ambition, which holds the potential to become perilous, as the novel illustrates. Perhaps, then, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* lies at the edge of awakening a sense of 'abnatural [ness],' to use Jesse Oak Taylor's coinage, to its

readers; that is, an unsettling realization “that the world does not comply with our ideas of nature” (qtd. in Scott 596). Finally, even though there is an interest in foregrounding the benevolent Dr. Jekyll and suppressing evil Mr. Hyde through dissociation, the specific procedures and scientific branches of endeavor are omitted to preclude experiment replications (Stevenson 96), which may be a further critique for science and its potential to repeat studies, or cases, even when they have proved to go wrong. That may be why it is *The Strange* case and not *A Strange* case. This, along with the resolution to kill himself in the face of failure, substantiates scientific culpability and fear of human ambition on suppressing the complex nature of human beings, on exalting a nation’s ideal character. Such model of simplification that Dr. Jekyll aimed at is what he considers a danger for the future: the ability to experiment to the point of becoming monsters, a simplified, yet dystopian version of humanity of an era that would later come to be known as the Anthropocene when, retrospectively, ambition has had a considerable effect in blueprinting humanity’s impact in geological time since ‘restraining ethics’ were not present nor capable of precluding such disruption.

### **(A) Moral and Social Monstrosity**

Drawing from a metaphor of organicism where the whole is intricately interdependent and –drawing from Beer’s claim that organicism has helped humanity explain a manifold of interrelations within society (qtd. in Griffiths & Kreisel 4)– we speculate that ecological disruptions affect complementary aspects of Victorians.

Therefore, not only is there disruption at the ecological level brought about by a scientific model of development that seems unstoppable, but also Stevenson’s novella further engages in the portrait of moral and spiritual ruptures, which may be deemed as social displacements that come along with the imperialist discourse. The first one is illustrated through the degradation process of Dr. Jekyll throughout the novel. Accordingly, the protagonist’s degradation process through his transformation suggests that amorality is, in the same way, socially undesirable and objectionable. This comes to shape ‘amorality’ as another backgrounded quality in the Englishmen character. Initially, Dr. Jekyll is presented as a “smoothed-faced man of fifty [...] —with—every mark of capacity and kindness” (29). It is a positive representation that sets the precedents of a well-prepared, educated, respectable doctor who is admired by his fellowmen and who in turn also seem honorable and morally responsible. Nonetheless, as expressed quite early in the text by Lanyon, Dr. Jekyll begins “to go wrong, wrong in the mind” (18). With such an assertion, the doctor’s friends, acquaintances, and even readers start questioning his rationale for his grim, secret endeavors in his laboratory as he has been experimenting with uncustomary subjects. At the same time, Dr. Jekyll’s own awareness of the collective disregard towards him is evident. For example, when visited by his life-long friend Mr. Utterson, Dr. Jekyll accepts the accusation of his unnatural state, for he acknowledges the abomination of his deeds. Similarly, even though Poole, Dr. Jekyll’s butler, can perfectly identify his master, for he has lived with him for



twenty years, this same character testifies in the process of the Doctor's enigmatic self-isolation and immersion that whatever scientific endeavor Dr. Jekyll has been conducting, the person in the laboratory is not the same he has been serving for decades anymore. The transformation is axiomatic. These instances not only demonstrate that Dr. Jekyll becomes an evident stretch of the moral fiber of England but also subserve to trigger a societal grit that would defensively reinforce its presentation by singling out instances of abnormal, "non-English" behavior. In the words of Punter when referring to the "imperial Gothic trend," he is "going native [...] [hence,] it is precisely Jekyll's 'high views' which produce morbidity in his alter ego" (qtd. in Brantlinger 48).<sup>4</sup> As a result, there is duality embodied in Dr. Jekyll, which he himself seems to be interested in both experimenting and eventually deracinating the presence of Mr. Hyde. Moreover, this "nativity" Punter indicates is differently addressed by Stephen Arata who claims that the existence of Mr. Hyde concretizes "the infancy of human species," (i.e., reflects the initial and primitive state of humanity); thus, Mr. Hyde is a "threat" to "middle class values and social order" (qtd. in Manning 183) due to the atavism he presents. On those grounds, we claim that Dr. Jekyll's ambitions suggest an attempt to England's desire to progress and collectively gain distance from that primitiveness or nativity. As a matter of fact, this feeling of atavism gives our reading of the *Strange Case* a feeling succinctly summarized by

---

4 "Nativity" in this sense is used as a derogatory term that refers to aboriginal populations and their associated stereotypes.

Manning when discussing the common post-Darwinian conversation: "[a] discourse about the endurance of 'primitive' agencies in modern 'civilized' culture that perceive the ongoing existence of the ancestral type as an erosive force, (also read 'regressive')" (Stevenson qtd. 184). Seeing Mr. Hyde as a societal disruption in amoral terms sustains the claim that he is akin to a social sickness that, by rubbing on an educated society, halts their swift and smooth progress.

In the novella, reaching the downward pinnacle of Dr. Jekyll's horrific moral and physical transmutation, he is found in a building's window by Mr. Utterson and his cousin, being a complete monster himself: "before the smile was struck out of his face and succeeded by an expression of such abject terror and despair, as froze the very blood of the two gentlemen below" (59). Such a macabre shift of this originally well-respected man brings down all hope of restoring him to his previous life conditions where he was respected and not vilipended as a crazy, soulless individual. It is worth noting that both of those impressions of the same character come straight from society contoured by a collective standard to which morality is measured. Consequently, even when seen as an imperial push back from what England is not, the neatly puppeteered embodiment of a moral fiber significantly turns in against itself within the larger picture as the reality of progress is dual by implying exaltation of rectitudinous behavior on one end and distance from savagery that is being othered and feared on the other. Two aspects further complicate *The Case* at this point. First, this dually embodied reality is

an instance in which the strategic othering to justify violence so common of Victorians in imperial discourse (see Brantlinger) is no longer applicable as both opposites live within the same person. Second, there is a chance that, as Manning proposes, Mr. Hyde may “represent both the individual organism subject to the pervasive modifying forces of speciation and the embodiment, in a single yet fluctuating corporeal entity, of those very forces” (181); thus, Mr. Hyde is simultaneously a subject that has evolved throughout evolutionary struggle towards the creation of modern and civilized English embodiment, and the object of those societally forced changes. Mr. Hyde, in this way, is the avenue to a “conversational capacity” of the novella (188), an interactional lynchpin to view these changes. For these reasons, murdering Mr. Hyde seems pivotal to sever from that native, uncivilized, amoral, and even pastoral, idyllic England, even at the expense of an originally well-regarded man as Dr. Jekyll.

A second rupture exemplifies an insatiable inquisitiveness for the ugly and dark, which is expressed through the concern for the loss of humanity and God. In the novel, Poole also dejectedly affirms that he has found his master “weeping like a woman or a lost soul” (73), which potentially suggests the loss of his spiritual stability, whence of his God. Thus, the second factor that leads Dr. Jekyll to become the social abomination he morally represents for his people is the collective fear towards evolution theories freshly brewed, mixed with the industrialization and the maximization of human prowess through machinery, which result in the questioning

of God’s artistry. By publishing multiple studies, Darwin determines that humans do not descend from God’s hand, “develop[ing] his argument rhetorically with the claims of its explanatory superiority over the doctrine of ‘special creation’” (qtd. in Sloan). These propositions pose the threat against the long-held conviction that humans possess a soul, for, as Darwin explains in his work *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, men come from a lower scale of organization and a descent with modification. With the notions of the environment as the determiner of the future—eliminating God of the equation—Victorians fear the implications to their coming generations, since the industrialization menaces with detrimental changes for ecological, physical and spiritual Englishmen constituency. Seen from a larger point of view, *Frankenstein* proved that the Galvanistic notions and the fear of the infinite spectrum of scientific development are truly feared, and these show again in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, as the scientist ends up just like Dr. Frankenstein, creating an evil, uncontrollable eyesore that stands for the most inner fears of a developing society that delights in playing God, as evidenced in the writer’s words when introducing her book: “Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavor to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world” (Shelley 9). Indeed, having seen Mary Shelley’s perceptions in science during the early nineteenth century, the collective feeling of the extent of the unknown power of science and the industrial revolution triggers the worrying consideration of what people can engender for their own experimenting

purposes like in the case of Dr. Jekyll. This Victorian literary curiosity of creating multiple monstrous figures may come from the fright of actually having the products of neglectful scientists in the streets, that is, products that are violations of an integral human fiber that has long assured society's "balance," or as argued by Manning, meeting with "the Hyde we live in." Under this light, the description of Mr. Hyde himself, who has become the materialization of England's anathemas, seems frightful enough to understand the communal horror and their actions: "[he] was pale and dwarfish, he gave an impression of deformity without any namable malformation; [...] he seems to have Satan's signature upon himself" (24). This description illustrates the concern with the effects of science on people's lives and anticipates the likelihood of genetic modification of future generations. The impact of such disruptions that Victorian society could be rendered to aimed to warn their contemporaries and our contemporaries. Thence and henceforth, monster-making could be affirmed to be not only at the interest of the ugly, macabre, and dark in Victorian times within the text, but also with the upcoming dire effects of those changes we were warned of but could not collectively hear.

### Concluding Remarks

As an era driven by displays of imperial superiority, narratives of colonization spring out, as it has been argued in here, even to an ecological level. Simply encapsulating the term scientific revolution under "early modern science," as Merchant argues:

obscures the power of the dominant narratives of colonialism and imperialism that have helped to shape Western culture since the seventeenth century at the expense of nature, women, minorities, and indigenous peoples. This move hides the political power of scientific narratives in remaking the earth and its natural resources as objects for human use. (*Reinventing* qtd. in Merchant "The Scientific" 517)

Given the conceptualization of such a displacement through the optimistically phrased "rise of a new modern time," the reconsideration of texts that could have foreseen distortions at social levels is mandatory.

This paper has argued that the monster-making potential lies in the destructive capacities of mechanized views that were to be accelerated through the industrial turn back in Victorian times swiftly galvanizing agency to individuals in their creation of monsters given the ruptures in social, ecological, and moral spheres. Therefore, in essence, the Victorian era prominently allows us to tackle our ongoing monstrosity since, as Scott comments, "whereas climate change is observational and attuned to outward conditions, the Anthropocene is potentially introspective and moral: it strikes at the core of our culpability" (590). This culpability has been reified by the ongoing model of disruptions and by analysis such as the one this paper presents. Hence, further studies on Victorian literature may be oriented towards the tracing of that resonance of Victorian concerns from our contemporary stand, for we may be linked to their concerns in our Neo-Victorian literary expressions since,

as Hillard states, “literature produces its own diaspora” (781).<sup>5</sup>

Finally, from this very contemporary stance, where the development of at least 300 years of science can be evaluated, there is an unequivocal mantic nature in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* as a text that not only “hails the dawning of the Anthropocene,” as Manning mentions (181), but is also cautionary of arriving at our twentieth-first reality; our time is one in which it is possible to experiment with genomes, biologically alter products, and exploit nature without much regard to *laissez-faire* capitalism.<sup>6</sup> These, in turn, have shaped the morality and spirituality of the ongoing and foregoing generations while gravely decimating ecosystems and species. With this in mind, we can agree with Taylor as she states that “glimpsed from a distant future [where we now lie], in which all that remains of human society is a compressed stratigraphic trace and radically different climate, the Victorians become our contemporaries” (575). They were contemporaries, however, who embedded the meaning of that industrial turn and warned us of the implications of our self-monster making back then, yet our reality evinces the deafened ears of past generations.

### Works Cited

Aslami, Zarena. "Living in a Biopolitical World." *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 47, no. 3, 2019, pp. 679-689, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1060150319000123>.

5 For more on Neo-Victorian conceptualization, see Clark Hillard, Molly's "Neo-Victorian."

6 That is, three hundred years since the scientific revolution; not since the industrial shift of Victorian literature.

Brantlinger, Patrick. *Victorian Literature and Postcolonial Studies*. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2009, pp. 1-54.

Corton, Christine L. *London Fog: The Biography*. Harvard University Press. 2015, [www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674979819](http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674979819).

Darwin, Charles. *On The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. London: John Murray, 1859.

Dickens, Charles. *A Tale of Two Cities*. Canterbury Classics, 2020.

Dimmock, Mark, and Fisher, Andrew. "Chapter 1. Utilitarianism." *Ethics for A-Level: For AQA Philosophy and OCR Religious Studies*. Open Edition Books, Open Book Publishers, 2017, pp. 11-28, <https://books.openedition.org/obp/4419>

Fleming, Jim. "Excuse Us, While We Fix the Sky: WEIRD Supermen and Climate Engineering. In: 'Men and Nature: Hegemonic Masculinities and Environmental Change,'" edited by Sheryl MacGregor and Nicole Seymour. *RCC Perspectives: Transformation in Environment and Society*, no. 4, 2017, pp. 23-28, <https://doi.org/10.5282/rcc/7979>.

Griffiths, Devin, and Deanna K. Kreisel. "Introduction: Open Ecologies." *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 48, no. 1, 2020, pp. 1-28, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1060150319000470>.

Hillard, Molly C. "Neo-Victorian." *Victorian Literature and Culture*;

- Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 46, no. 3-4, 2018, pp. 780-783, *ProQuest*, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1060150318000827>.
- Hoare, Phillip. "Fog Is Transcendent. It Muffles Our World, and Inspires Our Artists." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 2 Nov. 2015, [www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/nov/02/fog-artists-autumnal-dickens-constable-turner](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/nov/02/fog-artists-autumnal-dickens-constable-turner), accessed 29 Feb. 2021.
- Hume, Robert D. "Gothic versus Romantic: A Revaluation of the Gothic Novel." *PMLA*, vol. 84, no. 2, 1969, pp. 282-290. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1261285>. Accessed 11 Mar. 2021.
- Manning, Pascale M. "The Hyde we Live in: Stevenson, Evolution, and the Anthropogenic Fog." *Victorian Literature and Culture; Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2018, pp. 181-199, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1060150317000389>.
- Merchant, Carolyn. *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution*. HarperCollins/ HarperOne, 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ed., Kindle ed., New York, N.Y, 1980.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Scientific Revolution and The Death of Nature." *Isis*, vol. 97, no. 3, 2006, pp. 513-533, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1086/508090>.
- National Geographic Society. "Anthropocene." *Resource Library Encyclopedic Entry*, [www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/anthropocene/](http://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/anthropocene/). Accessed 10 Mar. 2021.
- Patriquin, Larry. "The Agrarian Origins of the Industrial Revolution in England." *Review of Radical Political Economics*, vol. 36, no. 2, June 2004, pp. 196-216, *Sage Journals*, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0486613404264190>.
- Reed, John R. "Inherited Characteristics: Romantic to Victorian Will." *Studies in Romanticism*, vol. 17, no. 3, 1978, pp. 335-366. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25600141>. Accessed 11 Mar. 2021.
- "Routledge Library Editions: Wordsworth and Coleridge." *RLE: Wordsworth and Coleridge – Book Series - Routledge & CRC Press*, [www.routledge.com/RLE-Wordsworth-and-Coleridge/book-series/RLEWAC](http://www.routledge.com/RLE-Wordsworth-and-Coleridge/book-series/RLEWAC).
- Robinson, Bruce. "History - British History in Depth: All Change in the Victorian Age." *BBC*, BBC, 17 Feb. 2011, [https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/speed\\_01.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/speed_01.shtml)
- Scott, Heidi C. M. "Industrial Souls: Climate Change, Immorality, and Victorian Anticipations of the Good Anthropocene." *Victorian Studies*, vol. 60, no. 4, 2018, pp. 588-610, doi: <https://doi.org/10.2979/victorianstudies.60.4.04>.
- Shelley, M. *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*. Penguin Books, 2003.
- Sloan, Phillip, "Darwin: From *Origin of Species* to *Descent of Man*," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Summer 2019 Ed., edited by Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2019/entries/origin-descent/>.

Stevenson, Robert L. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. E-book, Floating Press, 2008.

Taylor, Jesse O. "Anthropocene." *Victorian Literature and Culture*; *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 46, no. 3-4, 2018, pp. 573-577, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S106015031800027X>.

T.E. Jordan. *Studies in the Quality of Life in Victorian Britain and Ireland*. Springer Briefs in Well-Being and Quality of Life Research, 2013 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-6122-3>.