

“The last daisy stood all astunt”: Acceleration, Alienation, and Victorian Fairies

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Abstract

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This thesis explores Victorian fairy literature through the lens of Hartmut Rosa’s theories of social acceleration, resonance, and alienation. Following industrialization and rapid developments in the field of natural history—especially after Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*—the human was experiencing a disruption in scale, one that diminished them in relation to machines and to their place in a world that was much older and more complex than they had ever imagined. In navigating the interaction of social acceleration, alienation, and the desire for resonance, these Victorians found refuge in the underbelly of fairyland, a dark place to express their fears, desires, and disillusionment. Drawing on John Ruskin’s writings on fairyland and labour, I explore the connection between fairies and modernity. By turning to Christina Rossetti’s writings, “The Prince’s Progress” and “Goblin Market,” I present an allegory for social acceleration, and a reading of the fairy changeling in literature in relation to forbidden resonance, respectively. The changeling figure is also analyzed in the novel *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson as a representation of alienation. My analysis of these works is contextualized and supported by discussions of the interlacing cultures of folklore collection, art, factory work, Christianity, and social Darwinism. By engaging with fairy stories, Victorians were able to represent and locate in them their own struggles surrounding the pace, scale, and uncertainty of the modern world.

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Introduction: Disenchantment, Modernity, and Resonance

One of the most prolific and wide-ranging Victorian voices was that of writer and critic John Ruskin. In a lecture given at Oxford, Ruskin specifically invoked ‘fairyland’ as the utopian alternative to industrialization:

There are no railroads in it, to carry the children away with, are there ? no tunnel or pit mouths to swallow them up, no league-long viaducts — no blinkered iron bridges ? There are only winding brooks, wooden foot-bridges, and grassy hills without any holes cut into them ! Again, — there are no parks, no gentlemen's seats with attached stables and offices !— no rows of model lodging houses ! no charitable institutions ! ! ... and more wonderful still, — there are no gasworks ! no waterworks, no mowing machines, no sewing machines, no telegraph poles, no vestige, in fact, of science, civilization, economical arrangements, or commercial enterprise ! ! ! ... perhaps the world we truly live in may not be quite so changeable as you have thought it ; — that all the gold and silver you can dig out of the earth are not worth the kingcups and the daisies she gave you of her grace. (“Fairy Land” 103-104)

Ruskin does not hide his disdain for the present state of his country. He invokes a pastoral paradise of flowers, water, and untouched nature where all modern invention falls out of use. It is a place of simple, slow living without even economy or science. It is only this world, he claims, that can sustain fairies, sustain enchantment. The unhurried world that Ruskin paints is, in fact, an oasis from what Hartmut Rosa calls social acceleration. In his book *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity*, Rosa claims that “the experience of modernization is an experience of acceleration” (21). That experience, he explains, is the conviction that we are, and have been,

experiencing an increase in the speed of life through rapid technological advances, a tempo of daily living that outpaces us, and an increase in the social and cultural rate of change.

The continuation of industrialization, its new inventions and relentless progress—the emergence of which is generally agreed to have begun in the mid 1700s (More 2)—throughout the Victorian era caused a significant shift in the lives of many Victorians who found themselves confronting these same categories of change that Rosa identifies with modernity. For instance, since its beginnings, the Industrial Revolution had transformed and expanded the possibilities of labour, but, as Ruskin claims in *The Stones of Venice*, the “convenience, or beauty, or cheapness” that was welcomed by these new and developing forms of industry throughout the 1800s was “to be got only by the degradation of the workman” (“The Nature of Gothic” 87), destabilizing their sense of self in relation to their autonomy and purpose in the workforce. These workmen were also incentivised to participate in this degrading work rather than remain in employments that had flourished in the past. Robert C. Allen explains that during the Victorian era there was an enormous wage disparity between factory labourers, farm labourers, and handicraft workers, the latter of whom experienced “acute poverty” after 1830, despite a comparatively booming industry as recently as the early 1800s (“Condition of England” 71). Industry had marched forward and transformed at a staggering pace. At the same time, destabilization in identity materialized via other routes. Religious doubt, for example, followed “the gradual decline in superstition” throughout the decades, encouraging more disenchanting modes of progress as people looked for “practical solutions to life’s problems rather than trying to solve them by manipulating supernatural agents” (Allen, “The Industrial Revolution” 22). At the same time, skepticism about the nature of God also crept in from the field of natural history as Charles

Darwin made his mark with *On the Origin of Species*.¹ These examples serve as a snapshot of some of the conditions that accompanied the advancements of the 19th century, but there was another side of this emerging modernity. Within the experience of disenchantment and acceleration, an old, familiar, fairy-filled world also called for attention, and it was not only the nostalgic bliss of Arcadia that beckoned. Victorians began seeking refuge in the darker parts of fairy land, in the fairies that were transgressive, explicit, and unshackled by the confines of modern speed and suppression. In them, many Victorians found an avenue to express their sense of alienation from the unresponsive, disenchanted realm of modern man. Nicola Bown makes explicit the link between the sense of the destabilized and devalued human (and the alienation that devaluing creates), and the turn to a fairy underworld. She writes that Victorians contemplated “the degradation of the body and spirit both they and industrial workers possessed” by projecting “the distress elsewhere, to escape from it and at the same time to visualize it in another form” (84). That form, she claims, is that of fairies.

In *Resonance: A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World*, Rosa defines alienation as a “specific form of relationship to the world in which subject and world confront each other with indifference or hostility (repulsion) and thus without any inner connection” (184). It is “a relation of relationlessness” (184). Using this language, the developing world of mechanisation and relentless progress was hostile to many Victorians. The cold and relatively new reality of factories seemed ready to “smother their souls” (Ruskin, “The Nature of Gothic” 85); it threatened to turn man into automaton, as one with the machines that had become part of daily life. Ruskin considered the “degradation of the operative into a machine” to be an “evil of the times” which led “the mass of the nations everywhere into vain, incoherent, destructive

¹ See for example Stephen LeDrew “The Evolution of Atheism: Scientific and Humanist Approaches.”

struggling for a freedom of which they cannot explain the nature to themselves” (86). This struggling for a freedom, both within the context of mechanisation and modernity more broadly, for the something that is missing, I believe, is a struggle against alienation. Alienation is the “crisis of modernity” (425). It is a “crisis of humanity’s relationship to the world, of the ways in which modern society institutionally and culturally relates to the world” (425). Relating to the world, as opposed to feeling alien to it, is what Rosa calls “resonance” (166) and this is what I argue the Victorians were lacking, and what drove them to express and locate their griefs and angers in the shadowy realms of fairy. Resonance is not an emotion, not an affective state, but rather “a mode of relation” (168). Resonance occurs when two entities, person to person, person to work, person to nature, etc. “mutually affect each other in such a way that they can be understood as responding to each other, at the same time each speaking with its own voice” (167). Neither party overpowers the other, neither voice is louder, and a resonant experience can only occur when we are simultaneously touched on the level of our values—what we find meaningful—and on the level of desire—what we want. It is both expressing oneself, and receiving and engaging with the expression of the other. There are four criteria that must be met for resonance to occur: affection, self-efficacy, transformation, and uncontrollability. First, we must be “touched, moved, or called by something or someone ‘out there,’” that is, outside ourselves (Rosa, “Resonance as Medio-Passive”). Second, we must feel that our “expectations of self-efficacy” are met, that our efforts matter and our ability to self-govern is intact (Rosa, *Social Acceleration* 162). Third, we must be affected and the other must be affected, so as to come out of the moment of relation changed, or transformed (185). And fourth, something in the moment of resonance must remain that is inaccessible to us, that is beyond our control or understanding (174). Labour dissatisfaction, destruction of the natural world, lack of social mobility, repressive

gender roles, any one of these components of the Victorians' emerging modernity could deny them one or all of these necessities, rendering resonance impossible.

Within this context, my thesis posits that Victorians, facing social acceleration, the destabilization of identity, and rigid societal limitations, were failing to form resonant relationships to their modern world. I will argue that many Victorians turned to the transgressive realm of the fairies—one literary mode among many used during this period—to express their growing feelings of alienation, and to reaffirm their position of superiority over the non-human world that had been, until recently, largely unchallenged. The interaction of social acceleration, alienation, and the desire for resonance characterizes the Victorian experience of their reality. Accordingly, Section 1 will begin by elaborating on the meaning of social acceleration through the example of Christina Rossetti's poem *The Prince's Progress*. Section 2 establishes the problem of human scale in relation to the advent of powerful machines and outlines a pivot towards fairies as an attempt to re-establish the fragile hierarchy of man in the world. Section 3 turns to a different disruption of scale in the form of advances in natural history—Darwinism in particular—and introduces folklore collecting as a means to establish an evolutionary hierarchy that spills over into the realm of fairy changelings. Section 4 discusses Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* in the context of criminal atavism wherein Mr Hyde is linked to the changeling myth through a pervasive disdain for the vestigial other. Finally, Section 5 offers a reading of Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" as another example of the changeling myth, one in which the experience of resonance is punished and societal roles upheld. All sections strive to paint a picture of the alienating world that many Victorians were navigating, and by reading these works as fairy stories, I aim to demonstrate the breadth of

expression that was possible when they turned to fairyland to express their frustrations, fears, and desires—in short, to express their lack of resonant relationships to the world.

I. The Prince's Progress, and Social Acceleration

The most powerful and glaring force in the lives of the Victorians was the sweeping tide of industrialization, a tide that was frequently regarded with suspicion, hostility, and a desperate plea for the old days of enchantment to come put an end to the new mechanical reality. Working class Victorians were finding employment in factories rather than cottages, divorced from the natural world, and many of them, as well as the upper classes, found themselves struggling to cope with the rapid pace of change that blurred their place in an order of things that now included machines. Working-class poetry of the time highlights the strain between the human and the unfamiliar and alienating machine, within which we find an entire genre of “poems addressing the machine” in the wake of the replacement of the “cottage industry with work on the factory floor” (Blair 398). As mill poet Thomas Sanderson laments, addressing his handloom in the wake of a move towards powerlooms in the 1860s, “Auld frien’, your weaving days are done, / The age o’ steam is now begun” (qtd. in Blair 398). In this period of rapid change, fairies were associated with a golden era of humanity, which had come to a crushing end as a result of the progressive mechanisation of the world. As Nicola Bown explains in *Fairies in Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature*, “real fairies, the fairies who had left, were identified by the Victorians with an older, rural world which was being destroyed by industrial modernity” (41). Progress was associated with the destruction of a romanticized world of innocence and natural beauty. There was a sense that the world was off kilter, that it had transformed too much, too quickly. What does acceleration mean in this context? Another Victorian writer, Christina

Rossetti, offers one answer regarding the impositions of time in her fable “The Prince’s Progress.”

This poem, in which a prince struggles against the pressures of time to rescue his princess, perfectly encapsulates the experience of social acceleration in a Victorian context. The title itself is ironic in its allusion to John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678) since, as Simon Humphries points out, “this prince is an irresolute pilgrim who will fail in the quest for his destined bride” (684). As abundant as the religious readings of this title, and poem, might be,² the reading I offer is one that identifies ‘progress’ with earthly rather than spiritual time.

The poem begins with a juxtaposition in the experience of time: the bride is feeling the “long hours go and come and go” while she is “waiting for one whose coming is slow” (Rossetti, lines 3-5). On the other hand, the prince has “tarried” for the full moon, “taking his ease on cushion and mat” (14). The bride has no control over the prince’s time, but she relies on him to relieve her of tedium. The prince chooses to tarry for the right time to leave, remaining immobile by choice. But, as he will find out, it is an illusion of choice as, if he loiters too long, time will march on without him, and he—and his bride—will be left behind. This is a truth of modernity: though there is more time than ever for idleness (due to advancements in communication, transportation, and technology, for example), there is a pervasive sense that time itself is “out of joint,” that it is moving too quickly for us to keep up (Rosa, *Social Acceleration* 13). Indeed, Rosa points out that “reports of the perception of an immense acceleration of time and history, often expressing a state of bewilderment, appear in rapidly increasing number since roughly 1750” (13-14). It is no wonder then that Rossetti’s prince in 1866 is finding himself incapable of keeping up with the demands of his journey. From the beginning he is “strong of limb if of

² See for example Arsenau “Pilgrimage and Postponement: Christina Rossetti’s ‘The Princes Progress’” and Henwood, “Christian Allegory and Subversive Poetics: Christina Rossetti’s ‘The Prince’s Progress’ Re-examined.”

purpose weak” only “starting at length” on his journey (Rossetti 47-48). He appears to suffer a dysfunctional crisis of purpose, finding himself overwhelmed before he has even begun. Rosa explains that in the experience of modernity, this is to be expected:

One finds in the history of modernity periodic complaints about an increase in the pace of life and an ever more hectic lifestyle, which is said to have all manner of pathological characteristics, especially in the form of overstimulation and task overload (Überforderung). This grievance is interestingly accompanied by an opposing subtext in which the uneventful boredom of modern life is bemoaned. (15)

What the prince experiences is task overload brought about by the time-sensitive nature of his burden. His lethargy, which becomes ever clearer as the poem progresses, opposes the pace of life he is being subjected to. Later, he is “lazy of limb, but quick of nerve” (Rossetti 302) and he, instead of moving forward, speaks “of toil and an arduous way— / Toil to-morrow, while golden ran / The Sands of to-day” (358-360). He is never in sync with the times, speaking of tomorrow while wasting today, feeling lazy when progress demands him to be alert. The first person he meets on his journey—“a maid, or an evil dream?” (68)—knows that time is the most valuable resource of all, above even money or jewels. She takes what should be a fleeting moment, and stretches it as long as it will go, extending the present at the expense of the future. As Rosa explains, the “fleetingness of the modern moment thus actualizes in a new way the longing for the eternal and permanent” (37). The maid, who appears to be a witch or perhaps a fairy—with her eyes that began to “glitter and gleam” and her lack of use for his gold or finery (Rossetti 69; 74-78)—represents this idea on the small scale. She longs to make the present, where the prince lounges under the tree with her, eternal, but she can only demand as her “fee” the length of time of “one idle day” (72; 82). How quickly a day passes, so quickly in fact that the prince is woken

by the convenient watchman just before nightfall (109). The maid appears to stand in for what Rosa would call an inertia, which is a force that, despite the increasing pace of life, resists acceleration. There are several categories, one of which in particular relates to the Victorian longing, as Ruskin expresses, for the pastoral, enchanted world of the past. This category is inertia via islands of deceleration. These 'islands' are "territorial or social niches that have been left out of the accelerating processes of modernity" (Rosa 83). They represent a place where time stands still (Rosa gives the example of present-day Amish communities), and they gain ever more "nostalgic value" the rarer they become as acceleration continues to undo them (83). The world of fairyland is a version of one such island, where if one could enter the world of fairies, one would find that time was slowed and modernity had reversed into pastoral paradise. W. B. Yeats for example, in his *Irish Folk and Fairy Tales*, discusses "a country called Tír-Na-n-Óg, which means the Country of the Young, for age and death have not found it" and it is "the favourite dwelling of the fairies" (226). This is the kind of world that the milkmaid represents, where the prince will not worry about the progress he must make, or the time running out. Her role as milkmaid is a clearly pastoral emblem, and her allusion to otherness, as fairy or witch, sets her monopoly of his time in the light of escape, of going off the road and staying somewhere timeless. When he departs from her, he leaves the pastoral realm, and her island of deceleration, behind. In front of him, "The grass grew rare, / A blight lurked in the darkening air, / the very moss grew hueless and spare / The last daisy stood all astunt" (Rossetti 121-124). He carries on towards the barren future, the vivid past a fond memory. The next part of his journey takes him into land "where no man buildeth or fashioneth / Where none draws living or dying breath; / No man cometh or goeth there, / No man doeth, seeketh, saith, / In the stagnant air (140-144). This land, too, is devoid of the passage of time. It is not an oasis of slowness, rather it is stagnation

incarnate, where if the prince gave in to his tendency towards idleness, he would build nothing, do nothing, seek nothing and say nothing; he would simply disappear as the world outside continued without him. Rosa points out that “haste and hurry” are now “universal” experiences; there is no escaping them if one intends to live one’s life in the reality of modernity (Rosa 37). Rossetti's text anticipates that point when the prince meets an old man who has divorced himself from progress and modernity. The man demonstrates the high price that is paid by people who try to withdraw from the accelerated tempo of society (Rosa 86). Though he toils at his potion for a hundred years, he dies before his elixir of life is complete. When the prince walks out of the cave with the potion, that alchemist is forgotten, as though he never truly lived (Rossetti 259-260). Withdrawing from the forward motion of time leaves one outside society altogether. The prince should hurry to avoid the same fate, to save the princess before time makes them both irrelevant.

Rosa defines three kinds of social acceleration, all of which contribute to the overall sense of an increase in the speed of life. First, there is technical acceleration. This is the quintessential form of acceleration that most obviously defines modernity. Rosa describes it as “the intentional, technical, and above all technological (i.e., machine-based) acceleration of goal-directed processes” and gives the “paradigmatic examples” of “processes of transportation, communication, and production (of goods and services)” (Rosa 71). Ruskin’s distaste for “league-long viaducts,” “blinkerred iron bridges,” gasworks, waterworks, and sewing machines, is a distaste for the technological acceleration of his day. The story of the prince, however, falls more in line with the second and third kinds of acceleration. The second kind is the acceleration of social change. While technological acceleration is the speeding up of a phenomenon *within* society, the acceleration of social change is the speeding up *of* society itself (Rosa 77). More precisely, it is “an increase of the rate of decay of action-orienting experiences and expectations

and ... a contraction of the time periods that determine the present of respective functional, value, and action spheres” (76). Essentially, what is valid in the present becomes invalid within a shorter time period. Borrowing from Hermann Lübbe, Rosa identifies a “contraction of the present,” which he explains as an “increasing social and cultural rate of obsolescence or a growing sociocultural compression of innovation” (76). This “increasing rate of social change” (64) means that the present is shrunken, with the past—that which is “no longer valid,” (76) feeling like it was only just the present, and the future—that which is “not yet valid” (76) feeling like it is encroaching on the present and compressing it. The present itself feels shorter, because society’s inclinations (interests, fads, inventions, etc.) change so quickly. One can feel that they have only just caught up to the present when the future forces them to move forward.

The last type of social acceleration is the acceleration of the pace of life. This type is in “directly paradoxical relation to the category of technical acceleration” because it is the feeling of lacking time, despite technological advances making it so that tasks take much less time and should, by rights, increase free time. This category is defined as “the heightening of the tempo of life, understood as an increase in episodes of action or experience per unit of time” (78). This type of acceleration includes the *objective* experience of the “shortening or condensing of episodes of action” which might include for example, shorter meal times, amounts of sleep, or time spent communicating with one’s family (78), as well as attempts to reduce the “stretch of time between the ending of a previous activity and the beginning of the next one” (78). Rosa points out that increasing the speed of the action (ex. eating faster), decreasing the “empty times between activities,” and the simultaneous performance of activities—i.e. multitasking—all contribute to the increase in the “number of episodes of action or experience per unit of time” which is what can objectively define acceleration in the pace of life (78). But this category also

includes the *subjective* experiences of “the growing sense that one lacks time or is pressed for time,” “a stressful compulsion to accelerate” and “anxiety about ‘not keeping up’” (79). In this way, the condensing of action episodes we see above is a reaction to this feeling of time scarcity (79). When one feels like time is scarce, one may stack activities on top of each other to ‘save’ time—eating and watching a show, cleaning and listening to an audiobook, or take shorter breaks, or no breaks, between action episodes—scrolling as a break from writing a paper, for example. These are current examples, but according to Rosa, this is a phenomenon that has “accompanied modern society in continually repeated waves since at least the eighteenth century” (79). As he points out, it is not that the pace of life in modernity has always been elevated, but that it “constantly accelerates” and has been constantly accelerating since the dawn of modernity (79). In “The Prince’s Progress,” there is a metaphor for both the social change acceleration—that the present is compressed and rendered invalid more and more quickly—and the pace of life increases—the heightening of episodes of action/experience per unit of time—when the prince finds himself fighting for his life in the river. There is a feeling of urgency, of trying to catch up and not being able to get one’s footing back:

High above, and deep below,

Bursting, bubbling, swelling the flow,

Like hill torrents after the snow,—

..... //

Which way ?—which way ?—his eyes grew dim

With the dizzying whirl—which way to swim ?

The thunderous downshoot deafened him ;

Half he choked in the lashing spray : Life is sweet, and the grave is grim—

Which way ?—which way ? (Rossetti 307-313).

The slow prince, after “lagging” (301) and resting each chance he gets, suddenly enters the *rapids* where he must “swim for his life” (312). He is confused and lost and cannot keep up with the dizzying tide; he is bereft of sight, sound, and sense of direction, swept into an onward progression that he cannot escape from. The experience of modernity, of social acceleration, is much the same: the rate of change of what is valid and true of the present is too fast to understand, the world sweeps away from you the second you step back from engaging with it, and in order to keep up you must do more, swim faster, make quicker decisions—which way?—or you will find yourself irreparably out of sync with the times. Rosa calls this the constitutive experience of modernity; that of a “monstrous acceleration of the world, of life, and of each individual’s stream of experience” (35). “The Prince’s Progress” ending in failure is an apt metaphor for Rosa’s theory of social acceleration. The poem ends with a lament for the wasting of time:

“Too late for love, too late for joy,

Too late, too late!

You loitered on the road too long,

You trifled at the gate:

.....//

“Ten years ago, five years ago,

One year ago,

Even then you had arrived in time,

Tho’ somewhat slow;

Then you had known her living face

Which now you cannot know.” (Rossetti 481-496)

The prince is too late, the pressure to progress was not enough to force him onwards. He finds himself deprived of the ending that he expected. The princess has died, though she never really seemed to live. She never smiled, never felt bliss, never was comfortable, and grew old alone, waiting for the prince to save her from the monotony of a life where the only thing that changes is her age (511-520). Rosa points out that social acceleration has two sides. One, as discussed, is the feeling of a “heightening rate of change” (45), which is the prince’s experience; always rushing to get somewhere but always falling behind. The flipside of this can be characterized by the princess’ half-life of stillness and silence. Alongside acceleration, Rosa describes an “expanding experience of processes of rigidification” (45), or in other words, the feeling that though the world seems to constantly accelerate, nothing ever really changes. It sounds paradoxical at first, but it is simply another example of inertia that exists alongside acceleration. This inertia is an “inherent and complementary principle of acceleration” called “structural and cultural rigidity” (90). These concepts come together, in the words of Paul Virillo, as an “inertie polaire” or “frenetic standstill” (Rosa 56). Essentially, though there is evident and abundant acceleration on the ‘surface’ of society (that we experience in technology, rates of social change, and the pace of life), there is also a cultural and structural crystallization that prevents change. The core systems and processes of society—such as governmental organization, capitalism, or systemic racism, for example—are remarkably resistant to change. As Rosa puts it, “the rush of historical events only provides scant cover for (and ultimately, in effect, produces) a standstill in the development of ideas and deep social structures” (15). For the princess, though the world outside her tower went on, she remained essentially unchanged, as the bride-song proclaims to the prince, she ““slept, died, behind the grate; / Her heart starving all this while / You made it

wait” (Rossetti 488-490). The Princess in her tower may very well represent a fundamental structure of society, an institution or a political force, that resists the onslaught of the years. And though she has died, the tower will continue to stand, unchanged by the appearance of the prince who arrived too late to make a difference. More broadly, both social acceleration and frenetic standstill were evident in the lives of Victorians, who experienced both the rapid changes of modernity, and the crystallization of societal structures. An example brought up in the introduction, that is, the discrepancy in wages between factory workers and that of “their counterparts in the handicraft sectors” (Allen, “The Condition of England” 71), articulates this point, demonstrating changes on the surface of society—higher wages, expanding sectors of industry—and, at the same time, the reinforcement of class discrepancies that had been in place for centuries.

In sum, industrialization profoundly changed the experience of daily life, in ways that we will discuss in the next section, and created a sense in the Victorian consciousness that the world was no longer enchanted. By turning to the literature of the time, we find the roots of social acceleration. In the decades proceeding the turn of the 20th century, many Victorians were feeling the same time pressures we feel today: those related to technological advances, to social change, and to the pace of life. Rossetti’s poem “The Prince’s Progress” emblemizes the concerns surrounding the scarcity of time and the growing feeling of acceleration in Victorian life. Industrialization goes hand in hand with the technological side of social acceleration and represents some of the biggest changes that Victorians would face in their daily lives. What is most interesting in the present study is that many coped with these changes by turning, like Rossetti, to a darker kind of fairytale.

II. Industrialization and the Shrinkage of Man in the Face of Machines

As mentioned above, the most recognisable and obvious form of social acceleration is that of technical acceleration, and this kind of acceleration—of machines, factories, and industry—was sharply contrasted with an idealized pastoral world of old. Carolyn Merchant explains in *The Death of Nature* that “the pastoral has been an antidote to the ills of urbanization in ancient times, and it continued to play that role in the commercial revolution” (20). Nicola Bown agrees when she writes that “the idea that the factories had driven away the fairies was a powerful one which resonated widely in Victorian culture,” drawing a similar distinction between two worlds, one modern, one enchanted (41). But it was not just that the fairies represented an escape or a form of paradise untouched by industrialization. For many Victorians, the transgressive possibilities of the fairies allowed them to be put to use as metaphors for a bewildering sense of alienation from the mechanized world, to voice the uncertainties and fears that went along with the blistering pace of change. It is true that in Victorian fairy writing we often find expressions of yearning for the golden world³—for a Shakespearean Arcadia—but fairies were not only represented as perfect, nostalgic denizens of the old ways. Victorian fairies were also violent, destructive, tragic, sickly, and grotesque. They were pranksters, murderers, thieves, and abusers and this, the dark side of fairyland, is one place where Victorians could turn when they lost their footing in the order of things and needed some way to express the horrors of the modern world. Much of their horror came from the new reality of industrial factory work. In industry, the Victorians saw a slippery slope to the dislodging of the human from their previously uncontested place in the great chain of being, a place where humans are the “dearest of God’s creations, the ‘scale maker’ of the world” (Bown 68). Put beside machines, which could work harder and

³ John Ruskin’s own poem “The Emigration of the Sprites” (1850) is a clear example, but see also “The Last Fairy” by Rosamund Marriott Wilson (1891), and G.K. Chesterton’s “Modern Elfland” (1900).

faster, producing more goods in less time, the human seems to fall out of step with its previously established purpose and grandeur under the growing umbrella of capitalism. And there was no escaping this new order, no stepping out of modernity.

Giving the example of watermills and windmills which supplied earlier industries with energy, Merchant points out that though they were creating energy through natural sources like the sun and water, they were also clearly antagonistic to the natural world since they produced a new reality divorced from it. She explains that they were “large, geared machines that, as necessary parts of the new industries, were foci around which new forms of daily life became organized and institutionalized” (217). As the Industrial Revolution picked up speed, machines reinvented the daily lives of workers who had previously made their living with their own, vulnerably human, hands. Allen in “The Condition of England” lays out an autopsy of the cottage sector of handicraft in England, which gave way quickly and entirely to machine work. He places the spinners—women who made a living by operating spinning wheels—as the “first example of mass technological unemployment” (81-82). As machines replaced their hand-spinning, their role in society shrunk, and then disappeared, causing the collapse of their income alongside their diminishing importance next to the machines. This was true, according to Allen, of all the hand trades in England, which were all gradually replaced by machines which increased productivity beyond human capabilities (82). Not only did artisans lose their income, they also bloated the new machine industries when they all had to pivot into them to earn a living, driving up competition and pushing down wages (82). With these developments as the backdrop, Victorian workers were well aware of their diminishing importance when measured against technology.

At the same time, though, industrialization could be seen as a new high for human intelligence and innovation; the inventors of these new machines were making life easier for workers, saving time, and increasing production. But, as Bown explains, this is “a paradox of scale which is central to the industrial world” and very unsettling (64). The image of humans working alongside machines “celebrates the vastness of human achievements” and “simultaneously shows that human beings are dwarfed by them, and that the power upon which the modern world depends is achieved in despite of human weakness” (64). The creation outperforms the creator, a profoundly upsetting and fragmenting experience. To avoid these negative associations, the machine “must be thought of as a gigantic pair of human hands in order to magnify the human being” (Bown 64). The human and the machine would have to be seen as working together, a motif that indeed appears in some writings of the working class. In one case, Johnnie Ha, a mill worker, wrote in the 1860s a fond farewell to a carding machine: “My worthy friend adeiu [sic], / For by a new improvement / I’m stop’d from serving you” (qtd. in Blair 399). The word “serving” is especially meaningful. Bown, echoing Merchant’s understanding of a new daily organization, adds that “in the factory the role of the human operative is to be the machine’s servant, reversing the two roles; there the humans appear diminished to tiny, weak, miniature beings dwarfed by the machines they tend” (64). The human ensures the machine runs smoothly, enabling it to do the brunt of the work. Is this a role of caretaker or one of servitude? Indeed, later in the poem Ha calls himself the machine’s “erring servant” (qtd. in Blair 400), emphasizing the comparative weakness of the human next to the machine, and thus taking on a diminished role despite his seemingly positive relationship with the technology. As Blair points out, “the poem uses the obsolete machine as a means to reflect on the coming obsolescence of the worker” (400). Just as the machine is replaced by an

“improvement,” so too can factory workers be replaced as they grow old, sick, or otherwise outmoded. Any man, Ruskin reiterates, can be made into an “animated tool” through such labour (“The Nature of Gothic” 84); workmen are “fuel to feed the factory smoke” (85). In light of this diminishing, Victorian thinkers had to find a way to recalibrate the scales, to put the human back in his proper place where he emulates the relationship of God to His own creations, where he is not dwarfed by them (69). The only way to confront this miniaturization of the human was to put the human back into a scale that made sense. As Bown explains, Victorians replicated “in miniature the scale relation God:man and turn[ed] it into human:fairy” (69). If fairies are the miniature versions of ourselves, they are also ripe territory for replicating our feelings of alienation and confusion through a realm that is transgressive by nature, that allows the dark musings of humanity to find representation without consequences.

Alienation was everywhere for Victorians because scale was distorted on all sides. The feeling of smallness is at odds with a sense of self-efficacy, removing the possibility for a resonant experience with the world, and specifically with one’s work, in the case of factory workers. Rosa points out that resonant relationships are possible between humans and machines, but only if there is a sense that the material they are working with “seems to accommodate or respond to them, when a relationship is formed between material, implement, and hand” (Rosa, *Resonance* 234). The replacement of human labour by machines disrupts the relationship between the material and the hands that make it, replacing that relationship with unseen processes that dwarf the ability of humans. Under these conditions, it is no wonder that Victorians did not feel that the work they were doing was responding to them, or that they were making much of a difference at all. Alienation, a lack of resonance, appears nearly unavoidable in this context.

Furthermore, Bown explains that the concerns of scale between human and God and human and human creation were upset not only by machines outperforming man, but also by “the growing suspicion ... that God might in some way be a creation of man” (68). Indeed, Victorians were facing a “progressive unsettling of the biblical account of the world” which reached its zenith with Darwin’s theory of evolution through natural selection (68). As of the mid 1850s, many Victorians began searching even more fervently for smaller, ancient versions of themselves in some version of fairyland, a version that they could turn to in order to express their sense of alienation, and to reestablish their sense of authority in the world.

To want to bring the natural world into the scale of the miniature and the containable—the fairylike, perhaps—seems to be a direct reaction to both the longing for a natural world that was untouched by industrialization—that could, essentially, be frozen in a perfect, uncorrupted state forever—and for the need to see oneself as big and dominant in the scale of the world. This desire was reflected in the Victorians’ love for taxidermy, curiosities, and collecting. Rachel Poliquin in *The Breathless Zoo* identifies “a peculiar Victorian obsession with denaturalized nature” and highlights their “consumptive love of the natural world” (190). She points out that many wealthy Victorian households “would have at least one or two stuffed birds under glass, along with some small natural history collection: pressed ferns on the parlor wall, a collection of butterflies, or at least a few shells, feathers, or minerals” (68). With these displays, these Victorians could feel that some part of nature and its dizzying temporality was under their control. How unstable and upsetting could the long swathes of time that Victorians were discovering to make up natural history really be if they fit in one’s living room? Poliquin adds, “in aquariums or herbariums, bottled up in jars, and fossilized behind glass, coral, seaweed, birds, butterflies, beetles, ferns, and orchids were everywhere collected and transformed into

little vistas” (190). A tiny world to gaze at might provide the same kind of comfort that imagining fairies would. Indeed, Poliquin goes on, “Such containable, subordinated, imperishable miniature worlds were always open for contemplation and were always a source of both aesthetic pleasure and endless longing” (190). There is, then, a sense of power infused in the vistas which operates alongside the desire to live in these little worlds where the ascendancy of the human is restored. Victorians yearned to “confirm their own dominance in the world” (Bown 70); they sought to invoke their self-efficacy. One could conduct an almost inexhaustible study on the ways in which Victorian fairy paintings—see for example “The Fairy-Feller’s Master Stoke” by Richard Dadd, Sir Joseph Noel Paton’s “The Fairy Raid: Carrying off a Changeling,” or any of Richard Doyle’s pieces from *In Fairyland*—demonstrate these same kinds of vistas, where the smallness of the subjects solidify the grandiosity of humankind, or at least gave Victorians the opportunity to gaze down at these little creatures in their little homes and feel large, if for a moment. Victorian fairy painting also supports the notion that fairyland was not all buttercups and winged beauties from a pastoral realm, but that it indeed took on the transgressive role that Victorians needed it to take in order to freely express their alienation from the modern world. Susan P. Casteras speaks to this characteristic of the art:

Many Victorian fairy painters injected subliminal and not so subliminal elements, figures, and actions that would probably have been considered by most nineteenth-century viewers – if they consciously addressed the issue – as not merely frivolous but depraved, illicit, or abnormal conduct if openly practiced by mortals. But in the impassioned conduct or territory of non-human, fairy protagonists, these things may have gone unnoticed or been deemed simply amusing and thus easier to justify and accept. (127)

She adds that “[o]ne of the strongest impressions left by images of fairyland is not of bliss but of chaos” (127). This is evident for example in Paton’s “The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania” (see Appendix, fig. 1). In it, we see two of the lovers of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* asleep on the forest floor. Around them is pandemonium. Besides Oberon and Titania in the centre, there are dozens of fairies, many of which—feminine and masculine alike—are naked and embracing each other freely. In the bottom left corner, a fairy wraps his arms around the naked body of another fairy, seeming like he will pull her to the ground with him. In the middle, a shadowy fairy-man with pointed ears holds onto the hips and thighs of a naked fairy with butterfly wings. The sexual freedom of the fairies in this piece, painted in 1847, is especially striking because the humans, clearly much bigger than even the biggest of the fairies Oberon and Titania, are fully clothed and quite a distance from each other. The painting shows a tangle of both sexual pleasure and violence. In the foreground of the piece, a gang of fairies attacks a bird with spears while it claws at an unfortunate fellow on the ground. In other places, masculine fairies leer over embracing couples or solo fairy women, looking like voyeuristic devils. Violence appears almost as frequently as eroticism in this piece and the overall feeling is that of beauty, sex, and danger. It is an unstable landscape, as the fairies of many different sizes all encroach upon the sleeping humans, who are unaware they have stumbled into a world that they cannot understand nor participate in. If Victorians were failing to find resonance as they were dwarfed by the machinery that had taken over many sectors of industry, this painting seems to represent exactly that same feeling of failing to connect with their world. The fairies are the ones that are sure of themselves here, who are boisterous and free and animalistic. The humans are on the outskirts, both in their representation in the painting itself, but also as an audience looking in on this microcosm, this vista of fairyland, that is separate from them. The Victorians were having

to come to terms with this decentring on multiple fronts as their place in the order of things shifted before their very eyes.

III. Folklore Collection, Social Darwinism, and Changelings

As already hinted, it was not just progress in mechanization that disrupted the Victorian's perceptions of their size in the universe. Their status was also being challenged by the field of natural history. Like the mechanical scale disruptions, Darwinism knocked the wind out of the idea that humans are God's superior creations—after angels, but above animals, plants, and matter—in the Great Chain of Being by drawing an evolutionary line from the most inferior of life forms directly to humans. And it was a brutal line, one that disrupted not only humans' perceptions of the scale of themselves, but also the comfortable perceptions Victorians had of their Christian God. The powerful, benevolent father began to look increasingly powerless, or cruel, in the grand scheme of nature. John Holmes illustrates two issues that Darwin's *Origin of Species* raised for Victorians. The first problem is that “insofar as natural selection and God's design fulfil the same explanatory function, then either one makes the other superfluous” (77). God can therefore be seen as incompatible with evolutionary theory. He illustrates the second problem in a question: “How can a God who is at once omniscient, omnipotent and benevolent permit – or cause – so much suffering?” (78). The world revealed by evolutionary theory is hostile and alienating. Over a few decades the relationship between the world and the human was fundamentally changed, moving decidedly in a less resonant direction. Holmes describes natural selection as a “process that operates by means of premature death and the failure to breed. It is, bluntly, murderous” (79). If God is the creator and controller of everything, Victorians had to accept that their God had a taste for the violent and brutal processes of nature. Darwin himself, in

an 1860 correspondence with Asa Gray, expressed the alienating reality that was brought into focus with *Origin of Species*:

With respect to the theological view of the question; this is always painful to me.— I am bewildered.— I had no intention to write atheistically. But I own that I cannot see, as plainly as others do, & as I shd wish to do, evidence of design & beneficence on all sides of us.

There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent & omnipotent God would have designedly created the Ichneumonidæ with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice. Not believing this, I see no necessity in the belief that the eye was expressly designed. On the other hand I cannot anyhow be contented to view this wonderful universe & especially the nature of man, & to conclude that everything is the result of brute force. I am inclined to look at everything as resulting from designed laws, with the details, whether good or bad, left to the working out of what we may call chance. Not that this notion *at all* satisfies me. I feel most deeply that the whole subject is too profound for the human intellect. A dog might as well speculate on the mind of Newton.— Let each man hope & believe what he can.— (“Letter no. 2814”)

Darwin, wrestling with his own faith, cannot place himself fully in the camp of atheism and relies on the unsatisfying notion of chance rather than facing a reality that would affirm God to be cruel or, at the very least, callous with his creations. In the context of newly developed theories of how we came to be and what role God played in that development, finding a resonant way to relate to a world of chance would have been very difficult. In this letter, Darwin also expresses his own issues with scale. He compares the human contemplation of God to a dog trying to understand human science; we are simply out of our depth. The profundity of the

subject dwarfs the humans trying to understand it, rendering them small and impotent in the face of God's will, or within the potentially Godless confines of evolutionary theory. Not only was the scale of the human compressed by the enormous questions of natural laws and the shifting power of the deity, but Darwin's *Origin* advanced another emerging train of thought: the shifting of the entire scale of human time from a scope one could reasonably grasp—like that the world was created in 4004 BC, according to Archbishop Ussher of the seventeenth century (Prickett 75)—to a timeline that pushed the birth of the world back millions of years. Indeed, even before Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*, the scale of human time, which had aligned solidly with biblical time, was essentially shattered when fossils began to be discovered and, more importantly, dated. As Prickett explains, “What the discoveries of the prehistoric monsters had put at stake in the most dramatic way was a time change of dizzying magnitude” (75). To have discovered the remains of gigantic extinct species was one disruption of size that had to be reckoned with, but the real shocking discovery was the relative youth of all of humanity as we know it. To see ourselves as relatively brand new certainly disrupted notions of place and time in the hierarchy of all things in earth or in heaven. What importance could humans have when the scale of the world predates us by such unfathomable amounts of time?

In the same decades that natural science was developing, another kind of science was also burgeoning; that of folklore collection. It is not a coincidence that when the previous decades had begun to unearth the dinosaurs—beginning as early as 1812 when Baron Cuvier identified a set of enormous jaws as belonging to an extinct creature (Prickett 74)—Victorians found themselves increasingly drawn to the study of themselves and their ancestors, studies which sought to establish and ‘rescue’ a history of orality from obsolescence in the sweeping vastness of human time and to justify their own superiority in contrast to the backwards traditions of other cultures

(Naithani 19-20). If certain Victorians felt alienated from their own world, a world which they were discovering had existed so long without them as to render their existence essentially a blip in the timeline, it seems logical that they would turn to the world they know, that of humans and human culture, and attempt to reconfigure their place in the world. This was a task for the folklorists. The essential feeling of the crusade of folklore collection that erupted in the mid 1800s seemed to be to the effect of “if we are so small in time and scale as to be meaningless, there are certainly people who are smaller and more meaningless than us” and it became their duty to study them and perpetuate dominance over them. Perhaps this is a somewhat uncharitable description of the people belonging to the field of study Naithani has termed “colonial folkloristics” (4), but the self-proclaimed motives of folklore collectors living in the colonies of India and Africa paint a picture of perceived British superiority that cannot be ignored. But first, Naithani points out that “colonial collectors” (3) were often “administrators, missionaries, and amateurs” (8) living in British colonies and compiling the folklore of the native populations into collections that would be sold back home in England. Crucially, Naithani adds that “[t]he identity of the Empire lay in the knowledge about the Empire and in the articulation of this knowledge... ‘Knowledge about natives’ constituted a subject which was of general and scholarly interest” (5). Strengthening and solidifying the identity of the Empire served to strengthen and solidify the identity of the people that belonged to it, a comforting prospect in the face of the annihilation of humanity’s prime importance in the face of the deep time development of the earth. By collecting the folklore of those subjected to British rule, both the folklore collectors themselves, and the large audiences that read their collections, could mutually feel that their place in the world was safely established within an empire that was secure, vast, and powerful. Not only did folklore collection help to establish a dominant British identity, it also supported the notion of a

developing modernity that went hand-in-hand with notions of the superiority of written work over oral traditions. The colonial collectors in India and Africa saw themselves as defenders of modernity, tasked with saving as much native storytelling from oblivion as they could. As Bown explains, “Folklore is an attempt to preserve the past as it is embodied in legend and tradition before it is extinguished by forgetfulness” (165). There was widespread concern that much of human history would be forgotten if folklorists did not step in to safeguard it. The motives of some of these collectors are made abundantly clear in the forewords and introductions they wrote for their collections. For example, Mary Frere, author of the first published book of Indian folklore *Old Deccan Days* (1868), claims to represent these tales “in the hope that something might thus be done to rescue them from the danger of oral transmission” (xviii). Rev. J Hinton Knowles in *Folk Tales of Kashmir* (1888) writes that he has published his collection in order to “save them from the clutches of oblivion, to which they would otherwise have been consigned” (vi). Flora Anne Steel, in 1884, also expresses a desire to share the tales that “were told in the sunrise of the world, and will be told in its sunset” (qtd. in Naithani 14). Might this concern with the longevity of stories come from a place of fear? Fear that if the Victorians did not work harder to secure their place in the history of the world, to document where they came from and where they are now, the immense scopes of time beyond individual life would simply wipe them from memory? The key point is that these folklorists saw their own evolutionary history in the peoples they were cataloguing; they did not see the natives as equivalents to themselves, but rather as vestiges of the past still observable in the present. In other words, the colonial collectors saw themselves as far more advanced than the cultures whose stories they were telling. To Victorians, the natives of the British colonies were evolution-in-action; they saw them as inferior mentally and culturally and thus lower on the evolutionary rung than they were. Richard Carnac

Temple, in 1883, claimed that folklorists should “be able to provide reliable data towards a true explanation of the reasons why particular peoples are mentally what they are found to be” (qtd. in Naithani 16). In *British West Africa: Its Rise and Progress* (1900), folklorist A. F. Mockler-Ferryman writes that “in laying before the reader some of the folk-tales of the country, we hope to enable him to compare the mental condition of the native of these parts with that of other savages” (455). He goes on, in “[a] primitive country like West Africa,” a student of folklore “finds actually in existence customs and beliefs which, among more civilized people, are merely the survivals of derelict beliefs and ancient traditions” (455). In each of these accounts of the motive behind the collection, there is a clear evolutionary hierarchy being established whereby the native people being researched are entirely alienated from the books containing their stories, which have been processed by the colonial collector into essentially a comparative study of the developed “us” and the vestigial “them.” This is no more obvious than in Charlotte Sophia Burne’s introduction to her revision of *The Handbook of Folklore*, originally published in 1890, and then republished by Burne with the Folklore Society in 1914. According to Burne, folklore is “the generic term under which the traditional Beliefs, Customs, Stories, Songs, and Sayings current among backward peoples, or retained by the uncultured classes of more advanced peoples, are comprehended and included” (1). As we will see, the “uncultured classes of more advanced peoples” includes the Irish and Scottish peasantry, whose folklore was collected by figures such as W.B. Yeats in a similar framework of examining the beliefs of people who are perceived to be living in a non-modern state. Burne goes on to say that folklore “comprises early and barbaric beliefs” and that it is the scientific recording of the oral traditions of “the unlearned and backward portion of the community” (2). By using terms like “early” and “advanced” Burne speaks the language of human evolution. Indeed, her stated goal of compiling this book expressly

ties into the notion that these populations are evolutionarily inferior: “Eventually we may hope to adjust the balance between circumstances and character, and to arrive at the causes which retain some races in a state of arrested progress while others develop a highly-organized civilization” (3). The phrase “arrested progress” conjures up both a refusal to embrace modernity and a more sinister hint of social Darwinism. The folklorists were playing into their own fascination, and that of their counterparts back home in England, with what Prickett dubbed “the possibility of evolution in reverse” (97). Indeed, though *On the Origin of Species* itself did not theorize on human evolution (that would wait until Darwin publishes *The Descent of Man* in 1871), Diane B. Paul points out that his peers were “less reticent, and within a month debate focused on the implications of Darwin’s theory for human biological and social progress” (220). Social Darwinism, despite being a nebulous term that took on many meanings throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, can be defined broadly as “the application of the theory of natural selection to human society” wherein “human characteristics can also be seen as resulting from [a] struggle to survive” (Dickens 730). It goes hand-in-hand with Herbert Spencer’s phrase “the survival of the fittest” which was applied to human populations to suggest that there is a “struggle between *races* to survive, the demise of the weakest leaving the strongest to ‘keep up the average fitness to the conditions of life’” (730). As such, the theory implies that some kinds of people, defined by being of a certain race, having a mental illness, or even by socioeconomic status, represent the “weaker” parts of humanity, humans that are less capable of survival and thus less evolutionarily sound. The fears of folklore collectors that much of human history would disappear if they did not transform oral traditions into written ones appears to come from a belief that those societies are transient, precarious, apt to fail, while other, superior (i.e. British) societies would prosper.

Interestingly, the folklore figure of the changeling, a primarily Irish legend, embodies the notion that human evolution is something that can be seen with the naked eye, that the vestiges of the evolution of ‘developed’ nations could be seen in the ‘undeveloped’ ones. As Carole Silver explains, “[i]n both fantasy and reality, changelings were increasingly associated with the Darwinian notion of groups or races that had not ultimately triumphed” (85). Indeed, she recognizes the “infusion of social Darwinism into folklore study and theory, and thence into popular fiction and thought” (85). As folklorists were reporting the myths and legends they were hearing from the limits of the British Empire, they were integrating some of those stories into popular thought. The changeling was one such story, a figure which spoke directly to the new fascination with human evolution.

A changeling, W.B. Yeats reports in *Irish Folk and Fairy Tales*, comes about when “the fairies fancy mortals, and carry them away into their own country, leaving instead some sickly fairy child, or a log of wood so bewitched that it seems to be a mortal pining away, and dying, and being buried” (66). Silver seconds this when she claims that “[m]ost Victorians knew what an authentic changeling was: a substitute for an infant, child, or adult whom the fairies had abducted. Left in their stead, it was actually a starving imp, an aged, useless member of the elfin tribe, or even an animated log or stump of wood” (60). When a human child is abducted, they are replaced with a child possessing “an old, distorted face, a small or wizened body, and dark or sallow skin” and who was “often backward in learning to walk or speak” (60). That changelings are old, weak, and useless but also children in their own right entangles them in a web of metaphorical usage. In terms of social Darwinism, changelings reflect Victorian beliefs that children in general were “primitive or undeveloped adults” (Silver 82) and the belief that changelings—often children who were born sick or became sick, or who had mental delays—

revealed their “kindship with the lower vertebrates” through “their howls, snarls, inability to use language, and destructive actions” associated them firmly with that system of thought (83). Even further, if, while treating a changeling (usually with fire), that child died, they had simply “not been meant to live” (65) since they were unable to overcome the weakness that marks them as ‘unfit’ compared to others who would survive. By this point in time, the true belief in these kinds of fairy stories had faded almost entirely in the minds of educated Victorians. As such “changeling episodes usually occurred in rural areas and among poor or working-class Roman Catholic and Celtic rather than Saxon peoples,” a fact which validated feelings of Victorian superiority since “such groups were expected to believe in elves and exorcism” (Silver 67). This is a good example of the desynchronization of progress and acceleration in various parts of society that Rosa identifies as a tenet of modernity: a phenomenon called the “simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous” (Rosa, “Social Acceleration” 19). While Victorians may have seen themselves as the pioneers of modernity, they were more than happy to continue to indulge in the ‘primitive’ beliefs of their counterparts in Ireland or Scotland when it suited them. The pace of life continued to accelerate around them and technology continued to push them further and further away from their rural, pastoral roots, and thus the metaphorical capacity of fairies became increasingly important to Victorian storytellers. Yeats highlights this potentiality when he speaks of Irish fairy stories: “These folk-tales are full of simplicity and musical occurrences, for they are the literature of a class for whom every incident in the old rut of birth, love, pain, and death has cropped up unchanged for centuries : who have steeped everything in the heart: to whom everything is a symbol” (xii). There is a deliberate slowness to these stories, in which occurrences repeat themselves “unchanged” by the flow of time. As such, the desire of folklorists to preserve these kinds of tales reflected both their preoccupation with reasserting their

superiority in the changing world (through comparison to the unadvanced ‘other’) and with finding oases from acceleration and alienation. The “temporal scarcity of modernity” (Rosa 67) had Victorians yearning for the slow, clearly symbolic stories of the past, and through their own articulations of these stories they were able to represent their alienation with their own modern reality; their fears and discomforts about leaving the familiar past so far behind. But, as we have seen, not all reminders of the human past were welcome and folklore collectors, and the Victorians back home, were quick to apply evolutionary science to anyone they deemed ‘other.’

IV. Criminal Atavism and Mr Hyde as Changeling

Once you start looking, changelings are everywhere in Victorian literature; the ‘otherness’ that so concerned Victorians and kept them in fear about their own close ties to the animal kingdom was also the ideal metaphor for their own feelings of othering in the face of social acceleration, their own sense that their place in the world was compromised by machines, technology, and progress for progress’ sake. Social Darwinism lent itself easily to the development of more precise theories of who in society represented those vestiges of evolutionary history. In the 1870s, Cesare Lombroso developed the theory of “criminal atavism” in which he posited that “criminals were somehow a throwback to an earlier, prehistoric (atavistic) period, and in turn bear physical markers that even to the untrained eye denote these primitive origins” (Arntfield 126). In this view, criminals were seen as vestiges of “early protohumans who had never fully developed” (Arntfield “Glossary” 228). Relatedly, Silver identifies changelings as an example of “how phylogeny recapitulated ontogeny”—a phrase emerging from Ernst Haeckel’s recapitulation theory and one that clearly applies to criminal atavism as well (Silver 83). In keeping with that view that children themselves were examples of lower evolutionary attainment, both criminality and the changeling could be thought to arise

from a “combination of adult passion and childlike minds” (Silver 85) and many believed that “both criminals and children are properly understood as atavisms” (Nelson 60). These similarities lead me to the conclusion that the same forces that made the changeling myth so popular in the Victorian mind—forces like Darwinism, and the dual yearning/spurning for the slow, simple life of peasants and natives—also birthed the theory of criminal atavism.

To fully articulate the connections I am making between atavism and changelings, I turn to an example from Victorian literature, one that is more frequently discussed as an example of the gothic than of a fairy tale. Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is an exemplar of the concept of the gothic double, a well-loved trope of the Victorians and their predecessors in the Romantic period. The transformation of Dr. Jekyll into Mr. Hyde could be categorized as “doubles by metamorphosis” whereby a character “progressively, or suddenly, loses his original identity and is replaced by another one,” which “can be reversible or not” (Dieguez 82). Arguably, it could also be an example of “doubles by replacement,” in which the double “attempts to suppress the original, either by usurping its identity or by destroying it” (82). Notably, both definitions could also apply to changeling tales. The changeling inserts itself into a household by taking over the identity of a person who is in a “a liminal state physically, emotionally, or socially,” essentially, the vulnerable members of society (Vejvoda 45). The changeling is perceived as a changeling because the person is not themselves: they are physically wasting away or are mentally unwell. The changeling is wrongness and otherness incarnate, alienating a vulnerable person from themselves and from their world. By taking on these shared characteristics, the changeling can be seen as a kind of gothic double, and thus it follows that Hyde/Jekyll can be seen as a kind of changeling.

It is fair to say that this suggestion is complicated by the fact that Dr Jekyll *invites* the transformation; he is not taken over unwillingly, at least at first. Still, though Jekyll may have wished for this freedom, he is quickly overpowered and finds himself replaced (Stevenson 60). He wakes one morning and, against his will, is still Edward Hyde, potion or no potion (61). After this first instance, Jekyll can no longer control when Hyde replaces him and begins to shift spontaneously (68). His default form shifts from socially acceptable Jekyll, to murderous, evil, lowly Hyde. Whatever pleasures Jekyll gained from Hyde are replaced by the “horror” and disgust he feels for his “other self” (68) that he can no longer escape from. This lack of control in the end places Hyde in the realm of the changeling. The changeling begins to seep into Jekyll who becomes “a creature eaten up and emptied by fever, languidly weak in both body and mind” (68). Whatever drew Jekyll to Hyde in the first place is gone, replaced by the same horror and repulsion that everyone else feels around him. What is this repulsion based on? And how does it position Hyde as a changeling, one that is inflected with Victorian fears?

To begin, Hyde is repeatedly described in evolutionary terms. He is grotesque because he can clearly be seen as a vestige of the past: that disturbing reminder of human evolution is transposed in his DNA. Every man who describes Hyde uses the same kind of language, the language of social Darwinism and atavism: Mr Enfield claims that Hyde “gives a strong feeling of deformity” (Stevenson 10), while Utterson calls him “pale and dwarfish” as well as “hardly human” and “troglodytic” (16). Poole describes him as “a dwarf” (41) and Lanyon writes that “there was something abnormal and misbegotten in the very essence of the creature that now faced [him]” (52). Jekyll reinforces the notion that Hyde is lower on the evolutionary ladder than he is when he explains that the “evil side of [his] nature...was less robust and less developed than the good which [he] had just deposed” (58). This is clearly written into Hyde’s appearance

and mannerisms, as we learn that he is small (22) and hairy (61) and acts in “savage” (15) and “ape-like” ways (22). As Silver puts it, “Hyde is the dark amalgam of the aboriginal pygmy, the primitive anthropoid, and the little goblin man that lurks within” (143). In a similar vein, Nelson points out that Hyde’s lack of control “makes his ‘civilized’ counterparts horrific as well” because he displays “what they, by implication, only restrain with difficulty” (70). Hyde reminds more developed Victorians like Jekyll of the “limited extent to which humankind has evolved beyond the animal” (67). Changelings, too, are “closely linked” to the animal kingdom (Silver 83). Silver drives this point home further:

Overtly or covertly, [changelings] were increasingly perceived by folklorists, by educated readers, and by authors obsessed with them as diseased and animalistic, as evolutionary “throwbacks” or species hybrids and as creatures of savage and inferior ethnic or racial stock. In this way, these creatures crystallized the cultural angst about the fact that evolution could and often did suggest not only progress but also reversion; they revealed the widespread fear of “reeling back into the beast.” (86)

As a reminder of the evolutionary line between animal and human, changelings are deeply disturbing creatures. It is unsurprising then that they produce revulsion and fear in those that encounter them. Throughout *The Strange Case*, Hyde is repeatedly exposed to instantaneous hatred from all those who meet him. One of the most striking examples of this happens when we are first introduced to him through Enfield’s account of the trampling incident. Enfield takes pains to point out that Sawbones, the doctor who attends the scene, is a “cut and dry apothecary” who was “about as emotional as a bagpipe” and yet, this unemotional doctor takes one look at Hyde and “turn[s] sick and white with the desire to kill him” (Stevenson 7-8). Enfield admits that he felt the same way (8). If we return to the notion that Victorians strived to re-establish control

over their diminished self-image—in the wake of the discoveries of deep time and human evolution—by defining the “other,” or the “them” in contrast to “us” by levels of evolutionary inferiority, it is no wonder that Hyde, as a reminder of humanity’s animal past, would be hated and shunned as an unacceptable ‘other’ in modern Victorian society.

This stoic disdain for the other coupled with the desire to rid oneself of that other strikes me as similar to the motivations behind the cases of changeling “cures” that were making the rounds in Victorian newspapers throughout the 19th century. In both cases, reason and humanity appear to fall away in favour of an instinctual hatred. This is clear if we consider that in order to get a fairy to leave one’s home and give back the child or person they had stolen, it was not uncommon to threaten the ‘creature’—often a baby or child—with fire. In one famous case, Bridget Cleary, a young woman from County Tipperary in Ireland, is burned alive in her home to chase away the changeling that had taken her place. In the same emotionless, logical way that Sawbones and Enfield see evil in the countenance of Hyde and feel the desire to kill him, so too did Bridget’s family believe her to be a changeling, and her murder quickly followed. Her ‘otherness’ was too much to bear, and they wanted their ‘normal’ loved one back (Bourke 43).

To add another layer to the metaphorical identity of changelings, beyond the evolutionary one, fairies often represented transgressive behaviour or, in other words, any behaviour that societal standards deemed as abnormal or unacceptable, as we saw in the sexually free and violent world of Paton’s painting. But this othering need not occur due to such dramatic transgressions. Bridget Cleary was childless and had recently come into some money (62). She was also “unable to leave her bed” (58) and thus unable to care for the house or her husband for more than a week before her murder (58). The changeling myth, Silver reports, could “provide explanations for sudden death or disappearance, mysterious illness, and eccentric and bizarre

behavior” (60). Bridget was sick yes, but she was also unable to fulfill her prescribed role as a woman, leaving her open to accusations of untenable behaviour, and thus accusations of being a changeling. Cara Delay points out, for example, the belief in Irish folklore that women who “wandered in forbidden or profane places were particularly likely to be ‘taken away’” by the fairies, which reflects “communal anxieties about women venturing outside of the confines of the home or village” (76). Pointedly, fairy lore “consistently advocated that women remain at home, safely enclosed within the domestic sphere” (76) and thus “safely contained within patriarchy” (77). The domestic sphere is both the physical space of the home, as well as the behavioural boundaries which confined women and men to specific gender roles. To disrupt these domestic roles was to leave oneself open to fairy intervention. Confinement within societal expectations, both for women like Bridget and men like Jekyll/Hyde (whatever transgression it may be that Jekyll is “Hyding” from), is in direct conflict with having a resonant relationship with the world because opportunities for self-efficacy and self-governance are out of reach. Simply put, “to prevent people from using their agency is to prevent them from experiencing resonance” (Rosa “Resonance as Medio-Passive”). Agency is not possible under such strict conditions of control and repression.

Though fairy stories are commonly used as warnings against transgressive behaviour and thus serve to reinforce a status quo, we have also seen that fairy land offers unique opportunities for expressing dissatisfaction with the restrictions of society on gender, sexuality, and conduct in general, and the alienation that follows. Hyde as a fairy, as a changeling, represents the most extreme possibility of societal transgression because, as Jekyll puts it, though “all human beings ... are commingled out of good and evil ... Edward Hyde, alone in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil” (Stevenson 58). He is so beyond the pale of socially acceptable existence he can thus

only be depicted in a fairy tale, in a fantasy setting, because there is no place for him in reality or society. Stevenson can express disdain for the repressive qualities of his society by creating an exaggerated version of the consequences of such repression: might we all become murderous apes if we were confined to the “prisonhouse of [our] disposition” like Jekyll—who would “die to those appetites” if we must suppress them (63)? Perhaps, in such a case of severe alienation, the possibility hits too close to home. When Victorians felt the weight of social acceleration, non-resonance, and alienation within their social structures, the fairy world needed to be more than just a sanctuary for thinking about days gone by; it had to stand in for pain, fear, desire, and repression. As Bourke explains, “Fairies belong to the margins,” they “serve as reference points and metaphors for all that is marginal in human life” (32). As such, existing on the fringe “allows them to stand for the unconscious, for the secret, or the unspeakable” (32). They establish “the boundaries of normal, acceptable behavior” (34), and anyone who strays from these boundaries is at risk of being labelled a changeling or an example of atavism. There are countless ways to read into what is “unspeakable” in *The Strange Case*, to read what is “wrong” with Jekyll/Hyde. Is it indeed a case of repressed homosexuality⁴, insanity⁵, gender identity⁶ or something else entirely? Whatever it is, Stevenson chooses to play with this fantasy setting to express it, and changelings are especially ripe with potential when it comes to establishing and subverting the realities of a society that contribute to feelings of alienation and a lack of resonant connection with the world. It follows then, that Stevenson is far from being the only Victorian writer

⁴ See for example Davidson, “Sexuality and the Degenerate Body in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*”; Sanna, “Silent Homosexuality in Oscar Wilde's *Teleny* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.”

⁵ See for example Ganz, “Carrying On Like a Madman: Insanity and Responsibility in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.”

⁶ See for example Cohen, “Hyding the Subject?: The Antinomies of Masculinity in “*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.”

articulating the changeling myth.⁷ I am now arguing to add another literary name to this list: Christina Rossetti's Laura.

V. Forbidden Resonance and the Changeling Cure in "Goblin Market"

Laura's encounter with the goblin men in "Goblin Market" results in an unacceptable transformation that drives home the dual purpose of fairy tales that we have been discussing: that they offer an avenue for many Victorians to express their discontent with their accelerated and alienated world, and that they uphold patriarchal standards of gender roles and sexual expression, paradoxically reinforcing the same alienating forces that they combat. Christina Rossetti is a perfect example of an author grappling with this paradox: "Goblin Market" as a changeling tale appears to bolster the status quo of women's role in the domestic sphere while simultaneously wrestling with the same Victorian fears about evolution, desire, and self-efficacy that we see in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and in Victorian literary and folklore circles in general. If we read the goblins as fairies and Laura herself as a changeling, we gain another avenue to unravel the complicated social zeitgeist that Victorians found themselves in.

The poem contains a few rudimentary first indications that we are dealing with fairies. An obvious connection can be drawn between the entrapment of the goblins' fruits (that causes obsession and decay for Laura) and the fairy food of legend—food that causes mortals who indulge to "remain forever with the sidhe" or, once returned to "pin[e] away" (White 43). Another connection can be drawn between the goblins' enticing cry of "Come buy, come buy" (Rossetti, line 4) and irresistible fairy songs. Yeats claims that "many a poor girl has heard them,

⁷ Silver lays out a selection of characters to whose rank Mr Hyde might join: Emily Bronte's Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre, Elizabeth Gaskell's Robert in "The Doom of the Griffith's," Dickens' Quilp (*The Old Curiosity Shop*) and Bart (*Bleak House*) (60). Changelings were "very much part of the Victorian world" (59) through literature, folklore collections, and newspaper reports.

and pined away and died, for love of that singing” (24) while White adds that fairy songs “tear the heart with a longing few mortals can endure” and “each note excites desire” (32).

Still, several scholars refute the claim that Rossetti’s goblin men are fairies. Nicola Bown posits that the goblins are not fairies because they are not “insect-like” as was the vogue for fairy depictions at the time (13). She also points to another scholar, David Morrill, who sees the goblins as more vampiric than fairy-like (n4 199). I disagree. If we examine the goblins as influenced from a Celtic tradition, as I am arguing Laura emulates an Irish changeling transformation, the goblin men are very similar to the kind of fairy that had been circulating for decades in Victorian England before, during, and after Rossetti produced “Goblin Market” in 1862. For example, the fairies reported in Thomas Crofton Croker’s *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*—first printed in 1825 and so popular as to be expanded and reprinted throughout the rest of the century (Silver 28)—and Thomas Keightly’s *The Fairy Mythology*—first printed in 1828 and subsequently reprinted in 1850 and 1860 (29)—are just two examples of the widely popular contributions of Irish folklorists to the fairy fever of the Victorian era. Add to that the well-known contributions by Sir Walter Scott (“On the Fairies of Popular Superstition” in 1833) and the sensationalized reporting of changeling ‘cures,’ deaths, and abductions that made the rounds through British newspapers throughout the century (61-62), and it does not appear farfetched that Rossetti would have read or heard stories of Irish fairies and changelings, and thus been privy to a kind of fairy much different from the “insect-like” ones that Bown associates with the era surrounding Rossetti’s writing. As such, I maintain that Rossetti’s goblins are fairies, and furthermore, that “Goblin Market” depicts a changeling transformation.

Like Hyde, the goblin men are depicted as animalistic and primitive. Some do not walk upright, and all have distinctly animal features:

One had a cat's face.

One whisked a tail,

One tramped at a rat's pace,

One crawled like a snail,

One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,

One like a ratel tumbled hurry scurry. (Rossetti 71-76)

The goblins move by “flying, running, leaping,” they grimace, chatter, crow, cluck, and flutter (332; 334-339; 346). Silver points out that Rossetti's goblin men follow in the footsteps of the widely depicted sub-race of fairies that includes supernatural dwarves and goblins, which were “categorized as short, stumpy, and disproportioned; as wizened, hairy, and hideous...as simian; and as tainted with evil” (126). Just as Hyde's “dwarfish” (Stevenson 16) deformities mark him as “simian” or atavistic, so too does the size, hairiness, and animalistic qualities of Rossetti's goblins mark them as belonging to that same category of primitive survivals. The goblins' offered fruits are “evil gifts” (Rossetti 66) and combined with their “leering” (93) countenance and “hobbling” (237) bodies, they are clearly of the same race as Hyde, of the fairies. Silver adds that Rossetti's goblin men are “particularly threatening” because of their “grotesque materiality, their physical ludicrousness combined with their ‘primitive’ sexuality” (128). Indeed, the goblin men are disturbing because they represent the same evolutionary back peddling as Hyde—as uncomfortable reminder of our closeness to the animal kingdom through the loss of our prime position in the supposed great chain of being—but they also embody the same kind of warnings surrounding sexuality and gender roles that I have highlighted as central to many fairy stories.

Lizzie and Laura encounter the creatures in the evening (Rossetti 215), in twilight, which is “not good for maidens” who “should not loiter in the glen / In the haunts of goblin men” (144-146). Purkiss points out that fairies “are encountered on boundaries either in space—between town and wilderness—or in time” (86). The transition of day to night in the glen is exactly this kind of boundary that fairies thrive in. Purkiss adds that “throughout most of Europe, fairies are linked to features of the known landscape, especially to dangerous, marginal or conspicuous places” (92). Lizzie and Laura encounter the goblins as they are filling their pitchers in the “reedy brook” (Rossetti 216) and, if the weather were to change or if the “night grew dark,” Lizzie fears they would “lose [their] way,” indicating that they are vulnerably far from home (248-252). As Delay points out, “Fairy legends frequently place the female body in marginal landscapes and thus at the center of danger or drama” and as such “women proved especially susceptible to fairy-changing abduction” (76). It is this precarious positioning, of Laura being alone in the glen as night falls, that allows the goblins to assert their influence over her.

And yet, when Laura interacts with the goblin men, the prevailing emotion depicted is not fear, but desire. Though Laura should be like her sister—“No, no, no; / Their offers should not charm us” (Rossetti 65)—she is “curious” instead and chooses to “linger” (69) in this dangerous place. We are given two examples of female autonomy: Lizzie leaves, Laura stays. If we return to the categories that Rosa establishes as paramount for resonance—affection, self-efficacy, transformation, and uncontrollability—a reading of resonance, instead of alienation, begins to emerge. Laura does not, in this moment, experience the glen as hostile. As we have seen, resonance describes a “specific mode of relation between a subject and a certain segment of world” and this relationship can be understood as a “vibrating wire” (Rosa *Resonance* 172) formed by “‘af<-flection’ (something touches us from the outside) and ‘e->motion’ (we answer by

giving a response and thus by establishing a connection)” (Rosa “The Idea of Resonance as a Sociological Concept” 42), or in other words, “by the double movement of passively being affected by and actively relating to” (Rosa *Resonance* 172). Laura is affected by the goblin men. She is not fearful, instead she “longed” to engage with them and buy their fruit, though she has no money (Rossetti 106). The goblin men, affected by her presence and wanting her to partake, actively relate to her too, allowing her to pay for their fruits with her hair (125). She is entranced by the experience, having “never tasted such before” and loses track of time (132; 139). By choosing to linger, Laura is choosing to engage with the world beyond her domestic sphere. Rosa elaborates that “being touched or affected always means that one’s relationship to the world becomes more fluid, with the result that self and world both emerge from the encounter changed” (Rosa 185). Laura changes in an obvious way, but it is not for the better. For all the joy and pleasure she experiences by allowing herself to indulge in the fruit, she is subsequently punished. This moment of encounter, of the “vibrating wire” Laura feels between her and the goblin men (or the world of sweet indulgence that they offer through the fruits) seems to be a kind of *forbidden* resonance. A resonance that is not permitted to last or be repeated, that must not go unpunished. Rosa explains that resonance is “a flash of hope for adaptive transformation and response in a silent world” (187). When the world is alienating, it is silent, it does not actively ‘speak’ back. In the context of “Goblin Market,” the acceptable world is entirely silent, reinforced through caution, fear, and even death for maidens—like Jeanie (Rossetti 147)—who step outside the domestic roles enforced by a patriarchal society that ties the value of women to their purity, and their belonging to the home. As lovely as the domestic bliss of Lizzie and Laura seems when they lie “locked together in one nest” (198), it is not resonant because there is nothing uncontrollable or unknowable about the encounter, it is entirely prescribed without

leaving room either for agency or transformation. The resonance Laura feels while eating the fruit is forbidden because it takes her out of her expected roles as a maiden in society, and, because it is incompatible with a Victorian society that must maintain control over its women, her experience is turned sour, turned to alienation. This rigidity is another instance of Rosa's conception of a frenetic standstill of society: that though there is evident acceleration on the surface of society, gender role structures are remarkably persistent and powerful. It is an inertia that has taken centuries to significantly shift. Laura's alienated self replaces the self that had the agency to stay in the glen and eat the fruit, to follow her desires and indulge in what is forbidden. In the place of that emancipated girl, a changeling is left.

Laura as changeling is a diminished form of herself: "Her hair grew thin and grey; / She dwindled" (277-278). She has "sunk eyes" and a "faded mouth" (288). Her physical transformation echoes the aging and decay often associated with changelings, who are "sickly" (Yeats 50), "withered" (Bourke 32), "aged" and "useless" (Silver 60). As we have seen, changelings also have "strange, malicious, or ungovernable spirt[s]" (60) which emerged in Hyde as actions ranging from callous to murderous. In Laura we see something more akin to the 'abnormal' behaviour of Bridget Cleary. Laura, who has stepped out of the safe domestic sphere of the home and tasted the forbidden fruits, is now utterly divorced from her prescribed role as a woman:

She no more swept the house,
Tended the fowls or cows,
Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,
Brought water from the brook:
But sat down listless in the chimney-nook

And would not eat. (Rossetti 293-298)

Like Bridget, Laura is not herself because she is not engaging in her expected duties. And so, like Bridget, this unacceptable transformation must be reversed, even if the reversal kills the person it is trying to save. We have seen that the ultimate cure for a changeling is fire, and this too is a convention that finds its way into Rossetti's narrative. The imagery that surrounds Laura's return from the fairy realm is that of fire and exorcism. When Laura tastes the juice on Lizzie's mouth "Her lips began to scorch" (493) and then "Swift fire spread through her veins, knock'd at her heart, / Met the fire smouldering there, / And overbore its lesser flame" (507-509). Laura is burning from the inside out, expelling the influence of the fairies: She is "writhing as one possessed" (496) until she finally falls unconscious and Lizzie tends to her throughout the night. She survives her exorcism by fire, unlike Bridget, which allows Rossetti to re-establish the domestic status quo. Even so, Rossetti does not follow the standard doctrine of the fate of the fallen woman being death or destitution, she instead offers a lifeline to Laura in the form of her pure sister (Hillard 161). The return to domestic bliss is so pointed that it is jarring. Laura wakes up, back to her normal self, and we are immediately transported to "...years / [a]fterwards, when both were wives / With children of their own" (543-545). This moment serves as an example of the accelerated rate of social change, where we see a shrinkage of the present and privileging of the future, relegating the events of "Goblin Market" to a past left behind as quickly as possible to favour an idealized future. Though the enforced domestic life is safe and "tender" (15), we have seen that it is not resonant, indeed, that it cannot be as long as it is not a choice, but a requirement.

The tension in "Goblin Market" between the emancipated woman who can make her own choices and the swift punishment she will endure for those choices is extremely well-suited for a

fairy story. Reading the poem as an example of the influence of Irish folklore on Victorian writers positions it also as the epitome of what I have been claiming: that many Victorians expressed their alienation and dissatisfaction with their non-resonant relationships to the world by engaging with and producing fairies. The multi-dimensionality of fairy stories, that they can serve as warnings, as scale restorers, and be employed as metaphors for agency and freedom means that a writer like Rossetti, who plays with several of these dimensions, can express both a semi-veiled dissatisfaction with the systems of her society, while simultaneously upholding them. Stephen Prickett expresses this duality perfectly: “Like so many fantasies of the period, it is not difficult to find in *The Goblin Market* an image of a divided mind, and a divided society, terrified to come to terms with its own deepest needs and desires” (102-103). Locating resonance in this poem alongside alienation transforms it into a microcosm of the Victorian experience and supports the notion that fairy tales welcome the kind of inner battle with these concepts that authors like Rossetti and Stevenson are navigating.

Conclusions

Rosa describes resonance as a momentary “flash of a connection” (*Resonance* 185). Because they are so temporary, “moments of intense resonant experience...are always also filled with moments of intense longing” (185). To be in a resonant relationship with the world is to feel these flashes of connections often and to yearn for them, to sense that the world is alive and reaching out to you, just as you reach out to it. Rosa adds that resonance is “a basic human capacity and need” (171). To be denied these moments is to be missing out on life itself, on living itself. Resonance, for many Victorians, was in short supply. While more likely to feel alienated than connected to the accelerated and dominating world around them, we have seen how some Victorians forged literary reclamations of resonance, including forbidden resonance.

Using fairy stories to express their dissatisfaction with the pace, scale, and societal limitations of modernity was one way that they were able to begin the long journey back from the brink of alienated existence—to re-enchant the world, even if they were embracing a darker kind of enchantment than before. John Ruskin believed in the power of fairy stories to illuminate the darkneses of modernity, claiming that in “any tradition of old time” children will find something valuable, something that is capable of “animating for them the material world with inextinguishable life, fortifying them against the glacial cold of selfish science” (“Introduction” ix). The “glacial cold of selfish science” goes hand-in-hand with the dead mechanization of industry, and it is fairies in this case too that breath life and resonance-possibility back into nature, self, and world. The duality of fairies is that they offer both the pastoral haven of yore, *and* the crucial metaphors and language that the Victorians needed to put their repressed fears, griefs, desires, and anger into tangible form. To visit fairy land is to risk transformation, illness, or exclusion, but when the alternative is a world lacking resonance, a world that is too fast, too repressive, and too cold, that land—though treacherous—becomes the only option for the true articulation of the self. Since long before the Victorians and long after, the fairy realm has always had a power that holds firm against that of the “dynamic, unstable” (Crawford) and not wholly disenchanting tides of modernity.

Appendix



Fig. 1. Sir Joseph Noel Paton. *The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania*. 1847, Scottish National Gallery, Scotland. <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/5265>

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