

21L.017 presentation

- Probability and the Nautical Setting
- Darwin's Natural Selection
- Degeneration
- Moreau as God
- probability and its relation to the sea/sea faring vessels
 - The boat and preface
 - Don't know whether or not the entire story occurred
 - hinged on this chance'
 - similar to the ancient mariner
 - both started on a vessel
 - journey through time seems correct, but the physical reports seem almost impossible
 - Property of many sea-faring stories?
 - odyssey
 - Moby Dick

"Then I am a religious man, Prendick, as every sane man must be. It may be, I fancy, that I have seen more of the ways of this world's Maker than you,—for I have sought his laws, in my way, all my life, while you, I understand, have been collecting butterflies. And I tell you, pleasure and pain have nothing [to do](#) with heaven or hell. Pleasure and pain—bah! What is your theologian's ecstasy but Mahomet's houri in the dark? This store which men and women set on pleasure and pain, Prendick, is the mark of the beast upon them,—the mark of the beast from which they came! Pain, pain and pleasure, they are for us only so long as we wriggle in the dust.

- Degeneration
 - 1850's-1950's movement that took a pessimistic viewpoint on the human race's future
 - Natural Selection had the ability to evolve or degenerate any species based on the surrounding conditions
 - The changes that evolution invoked could clash with the idea of progress in humanity
- Devolution
 - Evolution has a direction (with reference to a societal standpoint)
 - flawed due to the lack of teleological evolution

"To this day I have never troubled about the ethics of the matter," he continued. "The study of Nature makes a man at last as remorseless as Nature. I have gone on, not heeding anything but the question I was pursuing; and the material has—dripped into the huts yonder. It is nearly eleven years since we came here, I and Montgomery and six Kanakas. I remember the green stillness of the island and the empty ocean about us, as though it was yesterday. The place seemed waiting for me.

First one animal trait, then another, creeps to the surface and stares out at me. But I will conquer yet! Each time I dip a living creature into the bath of burning pain, I say, 'This time I will burn out all the animal; this time I will make a rational creature of my own!' After all, what is ten years? Men have been a hundred thousand in the making." He thought darkly. "But I am drawing near the fastness. This puma of mine—" After a silence, "And they revert. As soon as my hand is taken from them the beast begins to creep back, begins to assert itself again." Another long silence.

- the slithering thing and degeneration
 - brought about by Darwin's natural selection and evolution
 - the idea that evolution could steer human development in a way that society deemed unwanted.
 - Prendick's suspicion that Moreau is degenerating man
 - Or is he bringing the other species up to speed?
 - natural degeneration of those species after Moreau, and subsequently the Law's presence dissolves
 - Moreau's distaste for his failures is interesting
 - natural selection?
 - failed creations?
 - etc.

"It killed the Kanaka—yes. It killed several other things that it caught. We chased it for a couple of days. It only got loose by accident—I never meant it to get away. It wasn't finished. It was purely an experiment. It was a

limbless thing, with a horrible face, that writhed along the ground in a serpentine fashion. It was immensely strong, and in infuriating pain. It lurked in the woods for some days, until we hunted it; and then it wriggled into the northern part of the island, and we divided the party to close in upon it. Montgomery insisted upon coming with me. The man had a rifle; and when his body was found, one of the barrels was curved into the shape of an S and very nearly bitten through. Montgomery shot the thing. After that I stuck to the ideal of humanity—except for little things.”