

CHAPTER III

SYMPTOM, CAUSE, AND IMPACT OF FEAR OF ROBERT MARTIN OLMSTEAD IN H.P. LOVECRAFT'S "*SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH*"

3.1. Analysis of Intrinsic Elements of H.P. Lovecraft's "Shadow Over Innsmouth"

3.1.1. Robert Martin Olmstead

Robert Martin Olmstead or is also known as Robert, is the main character and narrator of the story. Robert is described as having an "Innsmouth look". This refers to a combination of physical characteristics shared by the Innsmouth people, who are descended from both humans and the aquatic, monstrous Deep Ones. They are a species of ocean-dwelling creatures with human and amphibian-like traits. These characteristics include protruding eyes, a thin head, and other fish-like traits. The realization of these characteristics in himself is a significant event for Robert, since it provides tangible confirmation of his horrible ancestry, as quoted in the story: "This was the dream in which saw a shoggoth fot the frist time, and the sight set me awake in a frenzy screaming. That morning the mirror definitely told me I had acquired the Innsmouth look (Lovecraft, 1936:1).

The transformation is detailed in his terrible dream of meeting with a shoggoth or a Deep One; the sight of it forces Robert to awaken in a condition of overwhelming horror, screaming in a frenzy. The following morning, as he looks in the mirror, he can no longer deny the changes in his appearance. The physical manifestation of the "Innsmouth look" in himself is undeniable, with features such

as bulging eyes, a thin head, and other fish-like characteristics emerging, resembling those of the Innsmouth people.

3.1.1.1. A Curious Person

Robert is depicted as a curious character from the start of the novel. He is instantly intrigued, driven by a deep desire to uncover the truth behind the strange and unsettling rumors. His curiosity drives him to investigate the city, despite the warnings and the aura of secrecy and taboo that surrounds it, as quoted:

But at last I am going to defy the ban on speech about this thing. Results, I am certain, are so thorough that no public harm save a shock of repulsion could ever accrue from a hinting of what was found by those horrified men at Innsmouth (Lovecraft, 1936:1).

Robert's curious nature is indirectly characterized through his actions. His decision to defy the ban on speech regarding Innsmouth and divulge the horrors discovered in it displays a willingness to defy society's norms to fulfill his curiosity. His notion that the Innsmouth discoveries could cause harm to the public other than disgust reinforces his confidence that knowledge, no matter how unsettling, is preferable to ignorance and it would eventually serve the greater good. He is determined to disclose his findings, despite potential danger to himself and social reaction. Through this action, Robert is portrayed as a deeply curious individual, motivated by a desire for knowledge and a moral need to reveal the truth, regardless of the ramifications it could bring.

3.1.1.2. A Perceptive Person

The story subtly depicts Robert as a highly perceptive individual, consistently showcasing his keen observational skills and meticulous attention to detail. Robert's perceptive nature is indirectly expressed through his detailed observations and descriptions of people and their environment. One illustrative

moment of his perceptive nature occurs when the driver emerges from the store as quoted:

When I finally reached the Square I saw that almost all the loiterers were congregated around the door of the Gilman House. It seemed as if many bulging, watery, unwinking eyes looked oddly at me as I claimed my valise in the lobby, and I hoped that none of these unpleasant creatures would be my fellow passengers on the coach (Lovecraft, 1936:28).

This showcases Robert's perceptive nature, as he is acutely aware of his surroundings and highly sensitive to abnormal details. Upon arriving at the Gilman House, he observes that nearly all of the loiterers have gathered around the door, their numerous bulging, watery, unwinking eyes fixating on him oddly. Rather than dismissing this as coincidence, Robert quickly links the townspeople's presence and appearance to an escalating sense of discomfort. His keen attention to their physical traits, especially the unusual quality of their eyes, highlights his propensity to notice uncomfortable details that others might overlook.

3.1.2. Conflict

The story of *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* revolves around both internal and external conflicts that contribute significantly to the psychological depth of Robert's.

3.1.2.1. Internal Conflict

The internal conflicts in *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* center on the psychological struggle experienced by Robert Olmstead throughout the story.

3.1.2.1.1. Curiosity vs Fear

The internal conflict in Robert appears when he learns about the existence of Innsmouth during the winter of 1927-28, and discovers that federal investigators conducted an unusual and secret study into specific situations in the old

Massachusetts harbor of Innsmouth. Due to the discovery made, the government has decided to prohibit statements relating to Innsmouth. Due to his curiosity and the unusual events surrounding Innsmouth, Robert displays a great urge to disobey the prohibition on speech and investigate the mysterious town. He believes that the findings of his inquiry are so important that he feels forced to reveal them, as quoted:

But at last I am going to defy the ban on speech about this thing. Results, I am certain, are so thorough that no public harm save a shock of repulsion could ever accrue from a hinting of what was found by those horrified men at Innsmouth. Besides, what was found might possibly have more than one explanation (Lovecraft, 1936:1).

Simultaneously, the quotation also reveals his internal struggle with the feeling of fear. His fear is evident in his belief that the information could cause profound disturbance. He fears that his discoveries in Innsmouth are so disturbing that merely hinting at them could horrify the public. Despite his fears, Robert's curiosity prevails. His determination to investigate the town of Innsmouth displays his prioritization of discovering and publicizing the truth over his personal safety and probable social consequences. This duality of thought—his desire to satisfy his curiosity and his struggle to cope with his fear of the unknown—causes intense internal conflict.

3.1.2.1.2. Existential Crisis

The second internal conflict experienced by Robert emerges when he discovers his true ancestry. As the story progresses, Robert experiences a wide range of emotions. Despite his trauma in Innsmouth, he is unable to break free. The emotional journey reaches its zenith when he is confronted with the shocking discovery of his ancestry. The truth about his lineage is linked to the grim past of

Innsmouth. Robert's existential crisis is encapsulated by his internal conflict, which is motivated by his fear of losing his identity and becoming someone he fears. He is confronted with the idea that his fate is inevitably related to a family history he considers revolting. This understanding compels him to confront both his physical alteration and the possibility of losing his humanity. Robert's internal struggle grows as he begins to question his lineage, prompted by the frightening changes he perceives in his physical appearance, as quoted:

It was then that I began to study the mirror with mounting alarm. The slow ravages of disease are not pleasant to watch, but in my case there was something subtler and more puzzling in the background. My father seemed to notice it, too, for he began looking at me curiously and almost affrightedly. What was taking place in me? Could it be that I was coming to resemble my grandmother and uncle Douglas? (Lovecraft, 1936:45).

Referring to the quotation, Robert is going through a serious existential crisis as he confronts the uncomfortable changes he notices in himself. As he examines his reflection in the glass with a growing concern, he realizes that he is experiencing something far more insidious and complex than the physical effects of sickness. He finds out that, like his forefathers, he is descendant from the Innsmouth people. He is one of them, and he belongs to them. This revelation causes him to be deeply confused and to question his identity, as he struggles with the dreadful ambiguity of whether he is truly human.

3.1.2.2. External Conflict

The external conflicts in *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* revolve around the tension between Robert Olmstead and the residents of Innsmouth.

3.1.2.2.1. The Conflict Between Robert and Innsmouth People

The external conflict between Robert and the Innsmouth people stems from Robert's investigating and uncovering dark and disturbing secrets about the town, such as strange religious practices, rumors of interbreeding with sea creatures, and the hidden existence of the Deep Ones. This information makes him a target, as the residents prefer to keep these secrets private. His encounters with the townspeople are marked by suspicion, antagonism, and a desperate struggle for survival. From the minute Robert arrives in Innsmouth, he feels uneasy and suspicious. His first interactions with the residents reveal a community that is very different from what he is used to, both in looks and behavior as depicted in the quotation:

It must have been then that I began to notice the loiterers staring more significantly at me. The fishermen on the distant breakwater, looking as if they were on the point of going into the water; the loungers on the outside of the long, uncovered bridge; the furtive figures that might have slunk down the alley and disappeared, the upstairs windows of decrepit, poorly-painted houses (Lovecraft, 1936:18).

From the minute he arrives in Innsmouth, Robert is watched and evaluated as an outsider and intruder. The loiterer's intense looks indicate that his presence is unwanted and that his actions are being monitored. It is not until he meets Zadok Allen and hears his story that he becomes an actual target. Zadok, an elderly alcoholic, tells Robert of Innsmouth's dark and horrifying secrets, such as the town's relationship with the Deep Ones, odd religious rites, and legends of interbreeding with these ancient sea creatures. The townspeople's intense stares, as well as the shadowy people peering through darkened windows, give the impression that he is constantly being watched. However, after learning the entire situation of Innsmouth's dark secrets from Zadok Allen, his dealings with the inhabitants change drastically. The residents transition from merely observing him to actively

hunting him down. They now regard him as a threat that must be dealt with to preserve their way of life and secret link to the Deep Ones.

3.1.3. Setting

The story takes place primarily in the town of Innsmouth, which serves as the main setting where the events unfold.

3.1.3.1. The Town of Innsmouth

The town of Innsmouth serves as the primary setting of the story. It is located in the ancient Massachusetts seaport, and during the winter of 1927-28, the officials of the federal government had put a ban on the town of Innsmouth. Driven by curiosity, Robert sets forth toward Innsmouth. Upon arriving, he is finally able to closely observe the town, one that had nearly half of its population deserted for over a century.

It was a town of wide extent and dense construction, yet one with a portentous dearth of visible life. From the tangle of chimney-pots scarcely a wisp of smoke came, and the three tall steeples loomed stark and unpainted against the seaward horizon. One of them was crumbling down at the top, and in that and another there were only black gaping holes where clock-dials should have been (Lovecraft, 1936:10).

It is portrayed as a dead and decaying town, with architectural neglect and a sense of desolation. The lack of smoke, destroyed steeples, and hollow silence all combine to a pervasive sense of unease. These settings establish the grim and oppressive atmosphere that has surrounded the town of Innsmouth from the very beginning. The decaying structures and lack of human presence foreshadow the hidden horrors Robert will later uncover.

3.2. Analysis of Extrinsic Elements of H.P. Lovecraft's "Shadow Over Innsmouth"

3.2.1. The Symptoms of Fear

The symptoms of fear experienced by Robert Olmstead emerge gradually throughout the novel, particularly when he begins to realize the terrible truth about the town of Innsmouth. These symptoms can be classified as physiological or psychological responses.

3.2.1.1. Physiological Symptom

The physiological symptoms of fear experienced by Robert emerge through noticeable bodily changes, reflecting his instinctive response to the growing threat around him.

3.2.1.1.1. Dyspnea or Shortness of Breath

Robert experiences dyspnea, or shortness of breath as his investigation in Innsmouth reaches the climax, leaving him in a desperate struggle for survival. The previously curious and determined investigator is a hunted man, fleeing the town's terrifying people. The intensity of the hunt and the absolute panic he feels lead to a physical and psychological breakdown, which manifests as dyspnea, or shortness of breath. During his desperate escape, Robert endures extreme respiratory discomfort, which is powerfully conveyed in the following quotation.

The horde was very close now—air foul with their hoarse snarlings, and the ground almost shaking with their alien-rhythmed footfalls. My breath nearly ceased to come, and I put every ounce of will-power into the task of holding my eyelids down (Lovecraft, 1936:39).

Referring to the passage, Robert describes the mental and physical repercussions of his desperate flight. The closeness of the horde, the foul air, and the shaking ground create a situation that makes to breath practically impossible. It shows

Robert's extreme terror and physical exertion. The combination of these sensory nuances adds to his trouble breathing and heightens his feelings of dyspnea and terror. This reflects his body's response to the acute stress and fear caused by the relentless pursuit.

3.2.1.1.2. Shivering

Robert experiences significant physical stress during his exploration of Innsmouth, one of which is shivering. Throughout his research, Robert is exposed to terrible conditions and constant scrutiny by the townspeople. This growing paranoia is not unwarranted, as the resident's acts become more sinister and the surveillances worst. This reaction is vividly illustrated in the quotation:

The figures moved uncertainly, and I realized to my relief that they did not know where I had gone; but for all that they sent a shiver of horror through my frame. Their features were indistinguishable, but their crouching, shambling gait was abominably repellent (Lovecraft, 1936:28).

Referring to the quotation, Robert describes a moment of intense fear as he hides from the hordes of people chasing after him. Although he is relieved that they do not know his exact location, their presence sends a shiver of horror through his body. For the first time, Robert sees the figures who are chasing after him—indistinguishable, but repellent figures whose crouching and shambling gait embody a deep sense of otherworldly decay. This sight involuntarily triggers a shivering reaction. The sight of the abominable figures, even in their uncertainty, elicits a profound physical reaction from Robert. The shivering is a manifestation of his deep-seated dread and the immediate threat he perceives.

3.2.1.2. Psychological Symptoms

The psychological symptoms of fear are reflected in Robert's thoughts, emotions, and mental state.

3.2.1.2.1. Feeling of Dread at Innsmouth

Robert's experience in Innsmouth is marked by an overwhelming sense of dread. From the time he arrives in Innsmouth, the atmosphere in the town is disturbing, with an eerie silence and a suffocating aura of ruin. The town's decaying structures, weird odors, and peculiar conduct of its residents all contribute to an increasing sense of dread. As Robert delves deeper into Innsmouth's mysteries, his behavior becomes increasingly fearful. The sense of dread that Robert experiences is shown by his observations of the town's inhabitants and their unsettling behavior.

The statement is vividly capture in the quotation:

Once or twice, I glimpsed listless-looking individuals toiling in desolate gardens or harvesting clams on the foul-smelling beach below. Groups of grimy, simian-visaged children played around the weed-choked doorsteps. These people somehow instilled a deeper dread than the dismal buildings, as almost every one exhibited peculiarities of appearance and movement that I instinctively found disturbing, without being able to define or comprehend them (Lovecraft, 1936:11).

In this passage, Robert first encounters the citizens of Innsmouth, who are as unnerving as the town itself. He occasionally sees people working in neglected gardens or collecting clams on the foul-smelling beach. These brief glances reveal people who appear listless and desolate, reflecting the deteriorated surroundings around them. What genuinely bothers Robert are the strange appearances and movements of the people he observes. Almost every person has some type of abnormality that he finds highly disturbing, even if he cannot fully identify or understand it. These abnormalities could include unique facial features, weird

proportions, or unnatural gaits. Robert's instinctual reaction to these irregularities heightens his fear, since it implies a concealed, underlying terror in the town.

3.2.1.2.2. Fainting

The intense psychological and physical stress Robert endures during his investigation of Innsmouth culminates in moments of extreme reaction, such as fainting. Robert's investigation of Innsmouth leads him to several disturbing discoveries. The revelation of the town's dark secrets, such as interbreeding with the Deep Ones and the town's malicious worship practices, heightens his fear. The height of this fear occurs when Robert finds himself in immediate danger, hunted by the townspeople. The continuous chase, the foreign footsteps of his pursuers, and the filthy air filled with their snarling create an environment of pure terror. In this state of fear and physical exertion, his body is unable to cope, resulting in the fainting episode. This symptom is vividly illustrated in the quotation:

It seemed to me that there were limitless swarms of them and certainly my momentary glimpse could have shown only the least fraction. In another instant everything was blotted out by a merciful fit of fainting; the first I had ever had (Lovecraft, 1936:41).

This occurs during a moment of intense fear and horror when Robert is confronted with the terrifying sight of the Deep Ones. His fainting is described as "merciful," suggesting a temporary escape from the overwhelming horror. This is the first time Robert has ever fainted, highlighting the unprecedented nature of the terror he's faced. This involuntary reaction serves as a brief respite, a momentary blackout that protects him from the mental and emotional stress of his ordeal. The overwhelming stress and the grotesque reality of what he witnesses push him to the point of fainting. By temporarily shutting down, Robert's psyche protects him from the full weight of the horror allowing him to survive.

3.2.2. The Causes of Fear

The causes of fear in Robert Olmstead are triggered when he begins to learn the truth about the town of Innsmouth and its eerie residents.

3.2.2.1. Scared Behaviors of Zadok

One of the significant causes of fear in Robert is his observation of the fear experienced by others in the town, particularly Zadok Allen. Zadok, a long-time resident of Innsmouth, reveals the town's dark secrets. Zadok's fear originates from his understanding of the town's horrible secrets, which he shares with Robert. In a pivotal moment, Robert witnesses Zadok's fearful behavior. As Zadok is about to continue his tale, he suddenly shrieks in such a terrible and inhumane way that Robert is shocked and nearly faints. Zadok then begins shaking Robert, his expression is changing from being fearful to twitching and moaning. His voice returns as a shaky whisper, frantically encouraging Robert to flee from Innsmouth as soon as possible as quoted:

But now Zadok was shaking me, and I turned back to watch the melting of that fear- frozen face into a chaos of twitching eyelids and mumbling gums. Presently his voice came back—albeit as a trembling whisper. "Git aout o' here! Get aout o' here! They seen us—git aout fer your life! Dun't wait fer nothin'—they know naow—Run fer it —quick—aout o' this taown — (Lovecraft, 1936:26-27).

Zadok's urgent warning and fearful behavior lead to a tremendous impression on Robert. This experience does not only heighten Robert's fear, but also serves as a catalyst for his subsequent actions. After screaming and encouraging Robert to flee from Innsmouth, Zadok loses his grip and flees frantically inland, vanishing behind a collapsed factory wall. Robert, feeling disturbed, returns his gaze to the sea, where Zadok has previously focused, but Robert sees nothing. The information and

emotions of Zadok eventually solidify Robert's desire to flee the town as soon as possible.

3.2.2.2. Direct Confrontation with the Innsmouth People

When Robert is stranded in Innsmouth due to an unexpected bus malfunction, he has no choice but to spend the night at the Gilman House hotel, which immediately reveals to be dangerous. Late at night, Robert hears inhuman voices and strange movements and realizes that someone is attempting to break into his room, followed by clattering and splintering of wood, confirming that his chamber is being attacked. The situation becomes one of direct bodily peril, as his anxieties are no longer abstract or emotional, but dangerously real, as quoted:

The clatter at the northerly connecting door was now terrific, and I saw that the weak paneling was beginning to splinter. Obviously, the besiegers had brought some ponderous object into play as a battering-ram. The bedstead however, still held firm; so that I had at least a faint chance of making good my escape (Lovecraft, 1936:33).

The townspeople, whose deformities and strange behavior had once seemed merely suspicious, are now revealed to be something far more sinister: monstrous hybrids, part human and part Deep One, who are actively trying to capture him. This forces Robert to escape the room using a makeshift rope and flee through the streets of Innsmouth. What follows is a tense and desperate escape sequence in which Robert navigates the alleyways and train tracks, attempting to outwit his pursuers and escape the nightmarish town alive.

3.2.2.3. Escaping the Town of Innsmouth

After Robert's saw Zadok scared behavior, it leaves Robert perplexed and extremely disturbed. The previous experiences are described as insane, miserable, disgusting, and horrifying, emphasizing the intense and disturbing nature of the

events portrayed. Zadok's utter terror in recounting the narrative convey a sense of rising dread for Robert, adding to his current feelings of dislike towards the town of Innsmouth. Robert wants to leave the town right away, but because the bus he is on does not make it to Arkham due to engine trouble, and there is no other way out of Innsmouth, he decides to stay the night at the Gilman house hotel.

Upon arriving at the Gilman House hotel, the protagonist checks into his room, Room 428, which is on the next-to-top floor and lacks running water. He immediately feels a sense of unease due to the gloomy surroundings and the strange, fishy odor permeating the air. The room overlooks a dreary courtyard, and the overall atmosphere of the hotel is unsettling. As night falls, the protagonist becomes increasingly suspicious and fearful. He hears muffled creaking sounds and indistinct voices from the floor below, which he initially thinks might be human, but later realizes bear little resemblance to any recognized speech. These noises heighten his sense of dread as he recalls his whole confrontation with Zadok. Listening intently, he realizes that a group of people is trying to force the door. In a panic, he blocks the door more securely and braces himself for potential confrontation as quoted:

From the first I felt that the unseen fumbler meant a danger not to be met or dealt with, but only to be fled from as precipitately as possible. The one thing to do was to get out of that hotel alive as quickly as I could, and through some channel other than the front stairs and lobby (Lovecraft, 1936:30).

After perceiving a threatening situation from the Innsmouth residents, he instinctively evaluates the situation as one he cannot confront, only escape. Robert's fear response motivates him to flee in order to reduce the perceived danger. Rather than confronting the unknown assailants directly, he decides to escape through an

alternate route—avoiding the lobby and front stairs of the hotel. He quickly seeks an escape through a window. He finds large velour curtains hanging on a pole with brass rings. He swiftly yanks on the hangings, pulling them down along with the pole. Robert then ties two rings into the shutter catch and flings the drapery outside, forming an improvised rope ladder for climbing down the Gilman House's steep roof.

After escaping from the hotel, he dashes through Innsmouth's empty streets, mimicking the residents' distinctive movements to avoid attracting attention. Eventually, he comes across a set of train tracks and decides to follow them. As he hides along the tracks, he hears a large number of creatures go by. Robert closes his eyes, recognizing the horrible reality of Zadok's story. He can not keep his eyes closed, so he opens them and sees the fish-frog creatures in full light for the first time. The sight overwhelms him, and he collapses in his hiding place, overtaken by the overwhelming fear of the situation. Throughout the chase scene, Robert's sense of urgency and terror is obvious as he navigates the dark and dangerous alleys of Innsmouth, evading his pursuers and looking for a way out of the nightmarish town of Innsmouth.

3.2.3. The Impacts of Fear

The impacts of fear on Robert Olmstead function as both a defense mechanism and a form of emotional regulation, helping him respond to danger and cope with the psychological stress he experiences throughout the story.

3.2.3.1. Isolation

Robert's mental and psychological health deteriorates even after he escapes from Innsmouth, and one of the most obvious signs is his withdrawal into isolation.

This isolation reflects a mechanism in which withdrawal replaces confrontation, and silence substitutes emotional expression. Following his tragic encounter and the realization of his true ancestry, Robert becomes increasingly isolated from the outside world.

After Robert managed to escape from Innsmouth, he finds himself waking up in a brush-grown railway cut after the traumatic events of the previous night. Despite his physical and emotional exhaustion, he manages to walk to the nearby village of Rowley, where he gets a meal and changes into presentable clothes before catching a night train to head back home. Robert spends a week with his late mother's family in Cleveland. During this visit, he verifies his new genealogical data against the various notes, traditions, and heirloom materials available in the family. This task is unsettling for him because of the morbid atmosphere of the Williamson home. Robert's memories of his grandmother, who had always disturbed him, take on a new, more sinister significance.

Robert finds himself increasingly disturbed by the connections he uncovers in his genealogical research. His fear is heightened by the discovery that his great-grandmother was a Marsh of unknown origin, maybe related to the Captain Obed Marsh of Innsmouth. This discovery adds to his fear because he no longer feels connected to the world around him. Because of this, He's no longer engages with his former life and instead adopts a lifestyle characterized by seclusion and stasis, as quoted:

I felt, was seeking gradually to drag me out of the sane world of wholesome life into unnamable abysses of blackness and alienage; and the process told heavily on me. My health and appearance grew steadily worse, till finally I was forced to give up my position and adopt the static, secluded life of an invalid (Lovecraft, 1936, pp. 44–45).

This passage reveals how the emotional burden of fear and identity crisis manifests in Robert's withdrawal from reality. His choice to live as an "invalid" is not driven solely by physical necessity, but by a deep psychological need to distance himself from society and the identity he once held. In this context, isolation serves as a survival mechanism, helping Robert cope with the trauma he experienced in Innsmouth. By retreating into a secluded life, he is able to detach from the emotional weight of the events, shielding himself from further psychological harm.

This form of emotional regulation allows Robert to suppress the intense feelings of fear, offering temporary relief from overwhelming emotions. Though not a permanent solution, this isolation provides a buffer between his conscious mind and the traumatic truth he is still struggling to fully accept.

3.2.3.2. Acceptance

By the end of the story, Robert's emotional state undergoes a huge transformation. After enduring fear, denial, and psychological withdrawal, he finally reaches a state of acceptance. Following his traumatic escape from Innsmouth and the disturbing revelations about his lineage, Robert does not immediately come to terms with his identity. Instead, he retreats into a life of isolation, both socially and mentally. However, over time, this self-imposed isolation gives way to emotional integration, as Robert gradually stops resisting his fate. Eventually, he reaches a state of acceptance, no longer viewing his transformation as something to fear or deny, as quoted:

We shall go to marvel-shadowed Innsmouth. We shall swim out to that brooding reef in the sea and dive down through black abysses to Cyclopean and many-columned Y'ha-nthlei, and in that lair of the Deep Ones we shall dwell amidst wonder and glory for ever (Lovecraft, 1936:45).

In contrast to his earlier fear and resistance, Robert now speaks with calm conviction and even reverence for the world he once found terrifying. As the novel concludes, Robert's fear turns into acceptance. His language is filled with awe, not dread—phrases like "marvel-shadowed," "wonder and glory," and "forever" imply a renewed sense of belonging and purpose.

This change symbolizes the end of his emotional struggle; he is no longer escaping from fear, but instead accepts his fate. Rather from perceiving his change as a misfortune, Robert now sees it as a source of freedom. He sees a future of calm and permanence rather than terror, content to live eternally in the city of Y'ha-nthlei, deep beneath the sea.