
Review

Reviewed Work(s): Dr Tekyll and Mr Hyde after One Hundred Years by William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch

Review by: Beth Kalikoff

Source: *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Spring, 1989), pp. 452-453

Published by: Indiana University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3828527>

Accessed: 06-02-2020 09:36 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Indiana University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Victorian Studies*

the reputation of Stevenson, he begins with Borges (who has all the correct twentieth-century credentials), who is linked to G. K. Chesterton in his admiration for Stevenson, who is linked to Graham Greene on Stevenson, and so forth. Some of these connections at first seem to be only entertaining trivia: Greene, we learn, is a first cousin, twice removed, of Stevenson. But this leads to Rankin's discovery of a biography of Stevenson begun and laid aside by Greene, and then to information that *The Wrong Box* (1893) as published did not include Stevenson's final corrections. Bodley Head, Greene's publisher, was last expected to publish the true version of *The Wrong Box*, to be edited by "E. J. Mehew, the Mycroft Holmes of Stevensonians" (p. 77). *Dead Man's Chest* is full of these interesting twists and turns, and it often reads like a good detective story.

In the final analysis, Rankin's sidetracks on the trail of Stevenson affirm the breadth of the Victorian author. Each Stevensonian is committed to revealing some uncovered facet of the author, and each implies that Stevenson is broader and deeper than we have known so far. His works demand constant reevaluation because of their timelessness. "Museums become mausoleums," writes Rankin. "But the spirit of Stevenson was in his writing, not in his possessions — the books were the real dead man's chest" (p. 184). Rankin's engaging account of his journey of discovery assures us that RLS and his works are alive and well, and very much in good hands.

RICHARD A. BOYLE

Tempe, Arizona

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde after One Hundred Years, edited by William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch; pp. xviii + 312. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, \$47.50, \$16.95 paper.

THOMAS HARDY CALLED HIS FRIENDS HENRY James and Robert Louis Stevenson "the Polonius and the Osric of novelists" — no doubt seeing himself as their belle-lettristic Hamlet — and later wrote that "Stevenson's essays far surpass his stories in my opinion." Despite these words from the great Tessimist, Stevenson attained nearly "iconic status in the later 1890s" (p. x). His fictional works were enormously popular with adults as well as with children. The twentieth century, however, saw his critical reputation take a Tennysonian swan dive. It was not until the 1970s that, with Jenni Calder's biography and Ian Campbell's *Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction*, a critical reappraisal of his work began in earnest.

The hundredth anniversary of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) provides the occasion for nine notable scholars to continue resurrecting Stevenson. Their contributions explore the strange case of this provocative novella in order to account for its "combination of artistic and popular features" (p. xii) and to understand it as a potent cultural force. The essays "employ such divergent methodologies as deconstruction, feminism, psychoanalysis, intellectual and cultural history, and genre study, as well as close textual analysis," evoking theorists Bakhtin, Derrida, Foucault, Marx, Lukács, and Kristeva, among others (p. xiv). These diverse approaches and voices illuminate Stevenson's novella, bringing us far beyond the reading of the text as parable that Vladimir Nabokov found so "tasteless." The collection also provides readers with a fine example of the way contemporary literary theory may be brought to bear on Victorian Studies.

In their excellent introduction, William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch focus the issues of the collection. They have organized the essays usefully into five groups: questions of text, voice, repression, genre, and context. The first section begins with "The Texts in Question," in which Veeder does an impressive job of clarifying the novella's compositional history, difficult as that is amidst the clouds of smoke from the original draft Stevenson burned. Veeder also posits an original interpretation of "the creative process that Stevenson underwent between his seminal dream and his novella's publication" (p. xiii). The "Collated Fractions of the Manuscript Drafts" provide readers with the opportunity to draw additional conclusions about the development of Stevenson's artistic choices.

"Questions of Voice" features two essays that use poststructuralist strategies and close textual study to explore some of the novella's formal issues. In "Cries and Voices: Reading *Jekyll and Hyde*," Peter Garrett argues that "the tale's greatest power and interest derive . . . from its fictional irresponsibility, its refusal or failure to offer any secure position for its reader or to establish any fixed relation between its voices" (p. 70). With this reading, the motives of the tale are contaminated and come to implicate the reader with their "cruel logic" (p. 71). Ronald Thomas hears in the novella's conclusion "the fragmenting of the self into distinct pieces with distinct voices," one that "brings Stevenson's work closer to that of Beckett than that of Dickens" (p. 73). In this context, it is a premodernist narrative of self-discovery, of escape into an "other" (p. 90).

VICTORIAN STUDIES

The essays by Veeder and Jerrold Hogle pursue "the latent and occluded forces that drive Stevenson's characters" (p. xiv). Veeder grapples with two questions: "Why are there, for all practical purposes, no women in Stevenson's novella? And why are the major characters . . . all professional men as well as celibates?" (p. 107). His answers emerge in a careful psychoanalytic reading that defines patriarchy in terms of the rise of professionalism in late-nineteenth-century England (p. xiv). In a related essay, Hogle argues that Jekyll and his interpreters repress the frightening possibility that the "self" may have multiple personalities (p. xv). Hogle's prose is sometimes heavy going — "It is literature's special function, surely, to be the space where every cacophonous forelanguage seeks coherent verbalization and where sanctioned verbal orders are drawn back toward that figural mobility, even in concerted attempts to resist it" (p. 201). But quoting out of context is unfair, if tempting, and in any case I was rewarded for the time I spent reading Hogle's essay.

In fact, each essay in this volume rewards the reader, and deserves far more space than I can give in a short review. The essays by Hirsch and Donald Lawler discuss *Jekyll and Hyde* in the context of gothic fiction, detective fiction, and, most usefully, gothic science fiction. Patrick Brantlinger and Richard Boyle contribute "The Education of Edward Hyde: Stevenson's 'Gothic Gnome' and the Mass Readership of Late-Victorian England." Their essay is an original, persuasive reading of the novel in terms of the politics of literacy from 1850 to 1900. Lastly, Virginia Wright Wexman investigates cinematic interpretations of the novella, focusing on Rouben Mamoulian's 1932 version.

The collection includes evocative and various illustrations from the different editions of *Jekyll and Hyde*, as well as a number of photographs from stage and screen productions. The bibliography is useful. All told, this volume illuminates Stevenson's novella by addressing the challenge Martha Vicinus recently offered scholars in the pages of *Victorian Studies*: that of incorporating "some of the insights of the new theorists into our thinking and writing about the social context of Victoria's age."

BETH KALIKOFF

University of Puget Sound

The New Cambridge History of India, II.1: Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire, by C. A. Bayly; pp. xi + 230. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988, \$29.95.

AN IMMENSE DISTANCE SEPARATES THE OLD *Cambridge History of India* from the new one. The old consisted of a small number of volumes, massive

as Stonehenge monoliths, each the work of a batch of writers who were often retired British officials. The new is to be made up of four sequences of much smaller, handier books, each by a single historian. For a good many years now, research into Indian history has been widening and deepening, in Britain as well as in India, and the time is ripe for a great mass of accumulated evidence and opinion to be collated and sifted. C. A. Bayly's contribution to this task is of high quality and fulfils its purpose admirably. He provides brief narrative outlines of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, down to 1857, but concentrates on analysis of the main discernible forces and tendencies. Study, as Bayly says, has been focused largely on regions, and he tries to draw these threads together to illuminate India as a whole. There may be some disagreement with his assumption that terms like "capitalist," "class," and "gentry," can be legitimately used, because there were Indian concepts that "very closely approximated" to these features of European life (p. x). Often this procedure looks convincing enough; sometimes it seems too loosely handled, as when "petty kings . . . great bankers and the warrior peasant lords of the villages" (the last category itself not quite clear) are lumped together as "forms of indigenous capitalism" (p. 47). At this rate one might come to suppose that most of the world has always been more or less "capitalist."

Behind such formulations is the fact of commercialization, making itself felt in later Mughal times and after in many fields of Indian life; the post-Mughal "decline and anarchy" pictured by the old C.H.I. was really "a much more complex and ambiguous process" (p. 3). There was some economic growth, here and there at least, but no accompanying development of political ideas and administrative systems which failed to rise above the Mughal level. Hence Bayly is able to find a good part of the explanation of the British take-over in the existence of wealthy trading and financial groups which found no satisfactory protectors in native governments, and were consequently ready to join hands with the East India Company. Numerous ties were formed; Indian money flowed increasingly into loans floated by the Company, and by helping to pay for the expanding sepoy army encouraged annexationist policies. For commercial Indians, here was a rewarding and safe investment. At the same time they were being squeezed by British competition, as Bayly shows, out of large-scale trade and export business. The two things must have gone together; Indian money, instead of growing into active capital, was degenerating into a rentier condition.