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Source: *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, Vol. 37, No. 1/2 (Fall, 2003 - Spring, 2004), pp. 181-199
Published by: Duke University Press
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/30038535
Accessed: 06-02-2020 09:34 UTC

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Hyding the Subject?: The Antinomies of Masculinity in The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

ED COHEN

... our body is a only social structure composed of many souls.

Nietzsche

An Historical Pretext

The story of the story begins with a dream. As the narrative of its origins would have it, the idea for *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* first infected its author's feverish imagination as he wrestled with the tubercular illness that haunted him throughout his adult life. Waking amid the tangled accoutrements of his sick bed, Stevenson purportedly discerned the oneiric lineaments of the tale and in a fit of verbal passion birthed the first incarnation of the monstrous double being Jekyll/Hyde. However, on showing the manuscript to his wife, who seems to have been a rather judgmental woman, Stevenson found that she did not look favorably on his new literary progeny, and so he regrettably consigned his textual newborn to the fire. Yet, fortunately for us, the impecunious writer could not afford to let a good idea go unsold and so Jekyll/Hyde passed through the flames, reincarnated in 1886 in the famous form that we know today.[1] It is tempting to view the scene of Stevenson's authorial labor as one of male confinement, in which painful flows of paternal blood and mucous (Stevenson's lungs were hemorrhaging at the time) accompany the narrative's genesis, underscoring the somatic nexus from which this tale of hyper-embodiments grows. Such an interpretation might direct our attention to the novel's insistent focus on its male characters as a screen for fears about the failure of masculinity as a coherent subject position. It might also locate the novel's often remarked-upon repression of female characters in the author's own messy processes of literary parturition and divine in the novel's homosocial economy a phobic recapitulation of sexual opposition. While I think Stevenson's novel does incorporate some of these elements, rendering it a literary "case" which is itself a case study of and about male pathology, nevertheless, I'd rather not read it quite so fluidly. Instead, my concern with the novel will consider the narrative's doubling of the male body in the "dual person" Jekyll/Hyde as a symptom of the antinomies that destabilize male "character" itself. My reading underscores the ways that Stevenson's romance literalizes a struggle between normative and

[1] Veeder discusses the vicissitudes of Stevenson's text in much detail.

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transgressive embodiments of late nineteenth-century English masculinity, thereby making visible and intelligible some of the contradictions that permeate these opposing configurations of male gender identity. Structurally, the narrative turns around an unarticulated opposition between a political and economic assumption that (male) "character" unproblematically represents the embodied attributes of a (male) person and a gender ideology that qualifies masculinity as "proper" male character. The logical effect of this opposition gives rise to the conundrum that while all men "naturally" and consistently ought to be men by virtue of possessing male bodies, only some men are "real" (a.k.a. bourgeois English) men, insofar as they embody the appropriate class-defined, nationally inflected gender attributes. By invoking and elaborating this unacknowledged tension, Stevenson prizes apart the impacted logic that subtends Victorian ideas about bourgeois male subjectivity and allows the imaginary work that obscures its (ir)rationality to become palpable in the double being Jekyll/Hyde.

In the present essay, it is impossible for me adequately to elaborate the historical conditions that give rise to this tension within the representations of male "subjects," using this concept in its political, economic, sexual, narrative, and grammatical senses. Instead, let me briefly summarize some of the transformations in the relations among gender, class, sexuality, nationality, and generation that "gave body" to the middle-class "Englishman" throughout the nineteenth century.[2] By increasingly assigning qualitative attributes to somatic signifiers of difference, bourgeois Englishmen were able both to reproduce and naturalize the multiple effects of privilege and authority that accrued to them throughout the period. That is, by taking the "properties" of what they designated as "the body" to determine the "natural" ground of differences between individuals, middle-class Englishmen legitimated those practices through which they constituted and consolidated their positions as economic, political, and sexual agents, over and against all "others." Underwriting this discursive regime, the self-consistency of the "proper" individual appeared essential (i.e., the individual was defined as "essentially" self-consistent) at least in part because the economic and social security of contractual obligations depended on the reliability of the male "characters" who undertook them (Davidoff and Hall 234-35). Indeed, the development of middle-class interests depended on middle-class men's ability to embody successfully precisely those attributes that would assure their efficacy in this political economy of contract and commerce. Since these gender attributes would come both to differentiate them from and be less significant for men of the aristocratic or working classes, the definition and policing of male character was a critical part of the "ideological work" (to use Mary Poovey's term) that bourgeois men of the nineteenth century had to perform on themselves (Cohen 15-34).

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the representational practices that sought to establish the naturalness of the body as a metonym for the naturalness of the unified subject were becoming increasingly problematic. Various challenges to the celebrated superiority of English middle-class men appeared in the form of the vicissitudes of the economy (especially depression, bankruptcy,

[2] For an extended analysis of the transformations in and among English masculinities, see Cohen, Hall, and Davidoff and Hall.

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and unemployment), labor organizing among the working classes, agitation for independence among the Irish, tribulations among a number of other colonial outposts, and the emerging attempts by middle-class women to define themselves as political and economic subjects in their own right. In this increasingly conflict-ridden social and political context, the vexed relations between the middle-class Englishman and his many "others" began to reveal latent instabilities in masculine property and propriety that had remained obscured when unchallenged. Provoked to maintain the privilege they had consolidated throughout the middle of the century, bourgeois men sought to rectify these instabilities and to shore up their positions by reimagining the naturalness of their superiority in ever more complex ways. Indeed, it hardly comes as a surprise that from the 1880s on, fictional depictions of English masculinity often narrativize the difficulties of male embodiment as a splitting within the male subject precisely in order to assert new modes of self-representation. In literary historical terms, the effects of these troubled attempts to represent male experience can be found in the emergence of what is called the "modernist novel," a phrase used to periodize a number of formal and thematic transformations that reshaped the narratively impelled characterizations of mid-century "realism."[3] Thus, many of the canonical modernist and proto-modernist novels written by male authors during the period—for example, Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, James's *The Ambassadors*, Gissing's *The Whirlpool*, Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Conrad's *Lord Jim*, Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, Joyce's *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and Ford's *The Good Soldier*—depict the vicissitudes of divided male subjectivities (of course, often masquerading as "human" subjectivity per se). By positing and then narrating masculinity as an unstable subjectivity, these texts helped reproduce the conditions of possibility for imagining and embodying new forms of middle-class masculinity. In interpreting *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* as prefiguring the male modernist novel, then, I want to suggest that it is located at the cusp of narrative developments that have helped organize our contemporary forms of male embodiment and/as self-representation.

As evidence for this psycho-historical claim, I would like to begin by recognizing that Stevenson's book is undoubtedly among the few works written during the period that continues to have popular currency today.[4] As important as this text was/is as a text (and it is *as text* that I will consider it here), its endurance depends, at least in part, on the fact that it was also a significant "pre-text." That is, two years after its initial publication, it lent narrative shape to the highly

[3] Generically, Stevenson's novel is not usually classified as "modernist," but as developing out of his earlier "romances," a designation historically and aesthetically juxtaposed to "realism" as two distinct—if dialogically related—strains of the novel. Nevertheless, I think it is not entirely inappropriate to read the romance-realism distinction as it was articulated in the 1880s and 90s as opening the way for the emergence of modernism, since it concerned the ideological and epistemological function of prose fiction as it was developing in a shifting cultural context. For an excellent discussion of the realism-romance polemics and Stevenson's role in them, see Honaker.

[4] In "Writing Gone Wilde," I offer a complementary analysis of another still popular work of the 1890s, Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The themes of this essay are further elaborated in my essay "The Double Lives of Man."

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popular, widely disseminated newspaper accounts of one of the most prominent sex scandals of the late nineteenth century: the "Jack the Ripper" murders.[5] This familiar rubric names the brutal murders of five East London prostitutes, some of whom were sexually mutilated, during a ten-week period in the fall of 1888, by "fictioning"[6] an unknown assailant(s) who was presumed to have killed them. This historical "case" is obviously a highly overdetermined cultural event. Yet, for my purposes, it is sufficient to note that this textually produced and reproduced scandal provided the occasion for publicly renegotiating the value accorded to male sexuality precisely at the moment when it transgressed the boundaries of proper masculinity by manifesting blatant violence against women. Indeed, even the attempts *to represent* these transgressions themselves induced yet another important boundary violation, that of the distinction between "fact" and "fiction." For in drawing upon Stevenson's manifestly fabulous narrative in order to fiction a character who was then imagined as the author of the heinous crimes and thereby report murders that were being constituted and sold as "news," the journalistic stories necessarily embedded the novel's "fictional" determinations in the very fabric of their "factual" accounts. Thus, by underwriting the mass-market representations that sought to make sense out of events that had heretofore had no legitimate forms of public representability (in this case, the brutal violence enacted on female bodies), the antinomies that the novel inscribes within *and as* the narrative of the eponymous male character(s) were widely disseminated as a structure of historical intelligibility. In other words, the stories that identified "Jack the Ripper" as an upper-class man gone bad provide the paradigmatic example of what we now mean when we colloquially say that someone has a "Jekyll and Hyde personality." Conversely, the knowledge-effects reproduced by these contextual proliferations were subsequently read back into the novel itself, such that the literary work has come to embody the meanings of the very historical phenomena to which it helped give shape.

This recursive interpretive process becomes readily discernible in the many adaptations that Stevenson's novel has engendered over the last century, first in the theater, and subsequently in film and on television. The multiple versions of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* differ in significant ways, especially as they have moved across and between media in order to reanimate Stevenson's memorable protagonist(s) for succeeding historical moments.[7] Even without an extended

[5] There have been a number of critical works that link "Jack the Ripper" to Stevenson's novel, the best of which remains Walkowitz, *City* 191-228. See also Caputi, Curtis, and Frayling.

[6] The use of "fiction" as a verb in this sentence—and throughout this essay— derives from Michel Foucault's usage, in an interview with Lucette Finas, where he states: "It seems to me that the possibility exists for fiction to function in truth, for a fictional discourse to induce effects of truth, and for bringing it about that a true discourse engenders, or 'manufactures' something that does not as yet exist, that is, 'fictions' it. One 'fictions' history on the basis of a political reality that makes it true, one 'fictions' a politics not yet in existence on the basis of a historical truth" (*History* 193).

[7] Geduld provides a history of the stage and screen adaptations of the novel. For a recent reading of some of early film versions, see Waxman.

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consideration of these differences, however, we might generally concede that in the "spectacular" versions of the now infamous narrative, the somatic transformations of the eponymous male character(s) are routinely evoked as the (biological) index for a latent brutality that erupts across the gap, or "opposition," between the sexes. Indeed, having long since collapsed into the story of Jack the Ripper, the "horror" of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in this century has usually been evoked, on both the large and small screens, by dramatizing Hyde's late night attacks on women wandering through London's streets, attacks that are most notable for their absence in the book.[8] While this dramatic rendering might be thought to constitute a tacit acknowledgment of the very real gender contradictions that subtend the asymmetrical positionings of men and women within an urban political geography, it simultaneously veils this critique of sexual danger by representing it as the effect of an "unnatural" and violent splitting within the male subject. It is almost as if, by displacing male violence against women onto the "violence" of a male character against "himself," recent productions of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* narratively ascribe their "savage" representations of gender relations to differentiations across sex in order to "suture"[9] the painful splittings within (male) gender itself. However, when we turn to Stevenson's text, as written before its many historical and contextual reinscriptions, we find ourselves faced with a rather different story.

8 The one "attack" against a female character in the novel is Hyde's "trampling" of a little girl. This incident is retrospectively recounted by Enfield to Utterson in the first chapter and constitutes the "primal" evidence of Hyde's "loathsomeness":

All at once, I saw two figures: one a little man who was stumping along eastward at a good walk, and the other a girl of maybe eight or ten who was running as hard as she was able down a cross street. Well, sir, the two ran into one another naturally enough at the corner; and then came the horrible part of the thing; for the man trampled calmly over the child's body and left her screaming on the ground. It sounds nothing to hear, but it was hellish to see. (4)

My reading of this violence against women in Stevenson's novel differs from Steven Heath's treatment, which provides a ruminating, psychoanalytic reading of the novel. Heath sees this "hellish" violence against the unnamed (female) "child" as "a central Victorian male investment in and fixation of the female (female without the woman, a *ruly* body, without trouble for men)" (100). More importantly, Heath reads the general absence of women (and concomitantly the absence of violence against them) as their "negation," which perhaps is also a form of violence, leading him to conclude, much like Silverman might, that the psychoanalytic mechanism of male disavowal is very much at play in the novel. However, it is my contention that what he calls the "perfection" of the "overall system of sexuality" (98) through which "[d]ifference must be maintained and dealt with on her, not brought back onto him" (98), was not as complete as Heath would like to believe and that indeed, male sexuality and subjectivity were very much at issue "within" the representations of male embodiment and not merely evoked "by shifting the problem onto women" (98).

9 In the wake of the "Jack the Ripper" narratives, the use of this term from psychoanalytic film theory to talk about stage and screen adaptations of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* takes on added significance. In this case, not only does it designate the (re)production within the imaginary register of a fictive-yet-stable subject position constituted in and through the cinematic apparatus, but it also gestures towards what was critically at stake in the case itself: the surgical displacement of these imaginary formations of male subjectivity onto and against the bodies of women.

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Professional Misinterpretations

In the popular novel first published in 1886 as *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Stevenson's narrative is marked by transgressions that are as much formal as they are thematic. Indeed, one might argue that the "strangeness" of the "case," which is only made fully evident after the ostensible culmination of the plot, derives at least as much from the violations of storytelling conventions as it does from "horrors" of the tale itself. If *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is a notably short text that has minimal depictions of physical violence,[10] it is also a notably fragmented text that is riddled with embedded and appended "documents"—itself perhaps a form of textual violence against the conventions of the nineteenth-century realist novel. Comprised of eight rather traditionally narrated chapters, followed by two others that take the form of posthumous letters addressed to the character who provides the narrative focalization for the first two-thirds of the book (Mr. Utterson, a lawyer who is an old friend of Jekyll's), the text challenges the traditional "readerly" expectations it initially encourages—to use Roland Barthes's distinction—both with respect to narrative sequence and to levels of narration. When the eighth chapter, "The Last Night," concludes with the breaking down of the door to Henry Jekyll's laboratory, the finding of the gnarled body of Edward Hyde in Jekyll's clothing, and the sorting of Jekyll's papers to reveal a package of writing bequeathed to Utterson, the text signals these events as the termination of the novel's narrative development by making them the occasion for Utterson's unheralded retirement from the book, along with the narrator, "to read the two narratives in which this mystery was now to be explained" (66). In so doing, the novel leaves the epistolary "texts," which are also significantly coded as "autobiographical," to appear to the readers *in and of* the novel as its "unmediated" concluding statements.

Until this diagetic break, the novel's rather conventional, if somewhat elliptical, plot is primarily focalized around Utterson, who is alternately and repeatedly designated as "the lawyer." By taking Utterson's legal point of view as the guiding perspective, the first eight chapters evince an imaginary frame that seems/seeks to establish narrative "truth" on the side of verisimilitude, a gendered perspective that is textually and historically aligned with "classic realism."[11] As "the lawyer" employs the very skills that denominate him as a

[10] There are three deaths evoked in the course of the novel, Dr. Jekyll's, Dr. Lanyon's, and Sir Danvers Carew's—and only the latter is portrayed as being directly caused by Hyde's violence. The full account of it occurs in four sentences which read as follows:

And then all of a sudden [Hyde] broke out in a great flame of anger, stamping with his foot, brandishing the cane, and carrying on ... like a madman. The old gentleman took a step back, with the air of one very much surprised and a trifle hurt; and at that Mr. Hyde broke out of all bounds and clubbed him to the earth. And next moment, with ape-like fury, he was trampling his victim under foot, and hailing down a storm of blows, under which the bones were audibly shattered and the body jumped on the roadway. At the horror of these sights and sounds, the maid fainted. (27)

[11] As Catherine Belsey suggests, "realism" should not be understood as a merely formal qualification of texts, but rather as the historically articulated conjunction of "imaginary" and/or "ideological" subject positions through which representations of the world seem/seek to cohere as "real": "[Classic realism] performs ... the work of ideology, not only in

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consummate male professional (for the incidence of female legal officials in the 1880s was negligible) in order to interpret the diagetic events that confront him, he offers a privileged position within the narrative from which the articulation of a "true" story appears possible, a position however that will ultimately be revealed as one of radical *meconaissance*.[12] The undisguised elision between the focalizing character and his profession establishes such a characterological equivalence that his full name, "Gabriel John Utterson" (65), is given just once in the novel, when it is substituted for Hyde's name in Jekyll's will, in chapter eight just before Utterson disappears from print. Indeed, it almost seems as if this replacement of Utterson's proper name for Hyde's in a document that makes Utterson the legal heir to Jekyll's property formally (i.e., textually) negates the character's mediating function: it vanishes into blank space between chapters precisely because it can no longer "speak across" the gap between Jekyll and Hyde from which the narrative had emerged. Hence, the conclusion of the plot two-thirds of the way through the book, as marked by Utterson's "proper" naming and the consequent assumption of his inheritance (i.e., Jekyll's "property" as manifest in his "full statement"), coincides with the death of the title character(s) and the dissolution of both Utterson and the narrator, *but not with the end of story*.[13] This deferred closure, then, underscores the way the final chapters gesture beyond the representational limits embedded in conventional linear narratives, thereby complicating the formal identification of narrative as the "space" within which male character is textually embodied.

Given the distinctive mode within the novel of "the two narratives in which this mystery was now to be explained," it should come as no surprise that prior to these complicating, terminal chapters, the organization of the narrative from the lawyer's perspective situates the novel's epistemological inquiry among the male-defined circuits of bourgeois property and propriety. From the opening chapters in which Utterson first coincidentally learns of Hyde's "deformed" existence and then connects him to the "Edward Hyde" named in a disturbing holographic will drawn up against his advice by his friend and client, Henry Jekyll, Utterson's legal concerns circumscribe the novel's ostensible unfolding. Since the character deems Jekyll's last testament improper on several counts ("This document had long been the lawyer's eyesore. It offended him both as a lawyer and as a lover of the sane and customary sides of life, to whom the fanciful was the immodest" [11]), it is his (mistaken) interpretation of this doubly fictive document that organizes and impels the depiction of the diagetic situations. As Utterson attempts to ascertain why Jekyll would mysteriously bequeath his

representing a world of consistent subjects who are the origin of meaning, knowledge and action, but also in offering the reader, as the position from which the text is most readily intelligible, the position of subject as the origin both of understanding and of action in accordance with that understanding" (67).

12 The resonance here and throughout is obviously from Lacan's famous essay about that "imaginary" "splitting" that constitutes "subjectivity," "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the 'I'" (1-7).

13 On the narratological distinctions between "plot" and "story," see Chatman, Bal, and Rimmon-Kenan.

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property to Hyde upon his death and/or "disappearance or unexplained absence for any period exceeding three calendar months" (10), he assumes that Hyde must know something that he is using to blackmail Jekyll ("Ay, it must be that; the ghost of some old sin, the cancer of some concealed disgrace" [20]). Thus he orients his actions towards reversing the power derived from this occult knowledge by possessing Hyde's own "secrets": "'If he be Mr. Hyde,' he had thought, 'I shall be Mr. Seek.' ... 'This Master Hyde, if he were studied,' thought he, 'must have secrets of his own: black secrets by the look of him; secrets compared to which poor Jekyll's worst would be like sunshine'" (15, 21). However, since it is predicated on positing an anterior explanation that will properly account for the offending text, this orientation leads Utterson to be unable to read the "facts" of the case as they emerge within the narrative. Thus, as the novel ultimately indicates, Utterson's epistemological orientation is radically insufficient, since from his legalistic point of view, the case's "true" strangeness is not only not representable, *it is not even discernible*. That the novel supersedes this focalizing character, along with the narrator who confers fictional integrity upon "him," in order to achieve its closure demonstrates the story's underlying critique of the male subjectivity delineated by the professional epistemology with which he is identified. Stevenson's novel takes great pains to illustrate, even going so far as to get rid of the main character(s) to make the point, that within the legal purview, personhood is metonymically signified by a stable body that simultaneously serves to organize both a man's identity and his life story. Concomitantly and conversely, "the law" constitutes this temporal/narrative coincidence as the somatic site of a subjectivity around and within which it organizes its province. Hence, the will determining the proper disbursal of those properties legally subject to the "person" Henry Jekyll, the "document" that both initiates and terminates Utterson's inquiries, is a legal fiction that subtends the novel's plot but impedes the "full" representation of the "case."

In juxtaposition to the encoded limitations of Utterson's legal perspective, the revelatory effects that conclude the novel emerge from chapters that appear as appendices, structurally designated as the "final—and hence 'true'—words" of two physicians. The first, "Dr. Lanyon's Narrative," provides an account from a character identified as Jekyll's "colleague and old school companion" and who, along with Utterson, had been one of Jekyll's only friends. Within the diegesis, Lanyon is represented as having become estranged from Jekyll, who he believed "began to go wrong, wrong in the mind" as a consequence of having enmired himself in "unscientific balderdash" (12). Lanyon appears very briefly just twice in the course of the eight chapters preceding his "Narrative": the first time in the second chapter, "The Search for Mr. Hyde," when Utterson, unable to ascertain the reason for Jekyll's "eyesore" of a will, approaches Lanyon, whom he believes will "know" about Jekyll ("If anyone knows it will be Lanyon" [11]), only to find that the two doctors are no longer intimates. (Utterson's interpretation is mistakenly benign: "'They have only differed on some point of science,' he thought; ... 'It is nothing worse than that'"[12-13]). Lanyon's only other appearance, in the sixth chapter, "The Remarkable Incident of Dr. Lanyon," is again occasioned when Utterson, unable to understand Jekyll's refusal to admit the lawyer (or

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anyone) to his house, seeks out Lanyon, who he believes will know the cause of Jekyll's improper behavior. This time, Utterson finds Lanyon greatly changed, "his death warrant written legibly upon his face" (41), and when he asks the doctor about his fellow physician, Utterson is met with an absolute refusal of the topic: "...if you can sit and talk with me of other things, for God's sake stay and do so; but if you cannot keep clear of this accursed topic, then, in God's name, go, for I cannot bear it" (42-43). The only other mention of Lanyon occurs a few pages later when, after his death, the doctor bequeaths to Utterson an envelope containing another envelope inscribed, "not to be opened until the death or disappearance of Dr. Henry Jekyll." It is this "enclosure," then, that appears as the novel's penultimate chapter.

Considering how tangential Lanyon has been to the novel's plot, it is a bit surprising that he turns out to be so central to the story. For it is through Lanyon's "narrative" as it is written both in his letter to Utterson and "on his face" that the text introduces the transformation of Jekyll into Hyde as a narratable event. Consequently, it seems especially significant that this occurrence only appears in the novel as "written by the hand" of Jekyll's fellow physician after the retreat of the lawyer, since it is precisely this narrateme that incites the legally inflected plot but is nowhere articulable within it. Indeed, one could argue that the effect produced by Lanyon's eye-witness account of Hyde's-becoming-Jekyll depends upon Utterson's withdrawal to the position of reader, a positioning that almost necessarily locates the site of the text's epistemological contradictions within the reader both in and of the novel. Moreover, "Lanyon's Narrative" is not itself an unproblematic text, inasmuch as a third of it consists of another letter, written to Lanyon by Hyde posing as Jekyll when trapped in his embodiment as Hyde. Hence, it is through this highly mediated epistolary device that Stevenson at last reveals the critical transformation that links Jekyll to Hyde.

Chronologically, the incident related in Lanyon's account (chapter nine) would have occurred at the beginning of the sixth chapter, between the disappearance of Hyde after his killing of Sir Danvers Carew and the sequestering of Jekyll that leads Utterson to seek out Lanyon for the second time. The episode reveals how the fugitive Hyde, who unwittingly appears in a public park transformed from his protected guise as the prominent doctor, uses Lanyon as an intermediary to provide him with the chemicals that enable him to return to his alibi as Jekyll. Writing to Lanyon in Jekyll's hand, Hyde implores him to procure the contents of a drawer from Jekyll's laboratory, to have them transported to his home, and to transfer them to "a man who will present himself in my [Jekyll's] name" (68). Complying with the urgent request, Lanyon recounts that a "creature" with "something abnormal and misbegotten in [his] essence" (73) called at his home and demanded the materials from Jekyll's laboratory. The unnamed visitor thereupon prepares the draught that he so desperately needs and then taunts his host to decide if he will watch him consume it or not:

> *As you decide, you shall be left as you were before, and neither richer nor wiser, unless the sense of service rendered to a man in mortal distress may be counted as a kind of riches of the soul. Or, if you shall so prefer to choose, a new province of*

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> *knowledge and new avenues of fame and power shall be laid open to you, here, in this room, upon the instant; and your sight shall be blasted by a prodigy to stagger the unbelief of Satan.* (75-76)

The terms in which Stevenson couches Hyde's temptation of Lanyon converge along two axes: profitability and knowledge. Although primarily foregrounding the material benefits that might accrue to Lanyon by virtue of the "prodigy" that will be revealed to him, the concluding jibe introduces a supplemental benefit, whose effects can only be understood retrospectively, at which point such "knowledge" will be too late to save his life. Indeed, Lanyon's explicit positioning as a doctor indicates that he (like Jekyll) is ideally interpellated by Hyde's taunt, since it collapses the play between (un)belief and science that characterized the practice of medicine throughout the nineteenth century. Moreover, the underscoring of Lanyon's "sight" as the medium through which Hyde's transformation into Jekyll will be made known in the novel situates the medical gaze over and against the legal purview that failed to account for this critical metamorphosis for the first eight chapters.

When Lanyon accedes to Hyde's challenge and agrees to witness the infamous change, the "gaze" with which he is characterologically and professionally identified becomes the agency through which his epistemological/ontological boundaries are fatally violated:[14]

> *I saw what I saw. I heard what I heard, and my soul sickened at it; and yet now when that sight has faded from my eyes, I ask myself if I believe it, and I cannot answer. My life is shaken to its roots; sleep has left me; the deadliest terror sits by me at all hours of the day and night; I feel that my days are numbered, and that I must die; and yet I shall die incredulous.* (77)

In the novel's logic, witnessing the moment of Hyde's bodily metamorphosis is life threatening precisely because it disrupts what Jean-Joseph Goux calls the "biotic anchoring point of the subject" (193).[15] Caught between the "empirical fact" asserted "before [his] eyes" ("I saw what I saw") and his professed belief in its impossibility, Lanyon chooses "incredulity," even though this "unprofessional" disavowal is commensurate with his death. Yet the efficacy of his fatal disbelief is predicated upon another narrative equivalence—that between closure and death—such that the violation of this expected biographical/biological coincidence displaces death onto its witness, as what I like to call Lanyon's "final ejaculation" reveals: "'Oh God!' I screamed, and 'Oh God!' again and again; for there before my eyes—pale and shaken, and half fainting, and groping before him with his hands, like a man restored from death—there stood Henry Jekyll!" (76). Here, the exclamatory reiteration "Oh God ... Oh God" talismanically invokes and simultaneously proclaims the impotence of a theological (Christian)

[14] On the "medical gaze" as the structuring perspective of biomedical discourse in the nineteenth century, see Foucault, *Birth*.

[15] Goux uses this phrase to designate "some internal source of open-ended organization at the intersection of the cultural symbolic system and 'natural' potential" (193).

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narrative to make sense of this "scientific" transformation of man. When Jekyll appears before Lanyon "like a man [Lazarus?] restored from death," his presence confounds the expected narrative trajectory that identifies such profound somatic disturbances with death, thereby situating them on the outskirts of life and life stories. In this case, however, Jekyll's "restoration" marks the heretofore unseen origin of the story, though emphatically not its birth, even as it provokes Lanyon's death. Hence, by introducing the narrateme Hyde-becomes-Jekyll into the novel, "Dr. Lanyon's Narrative" exceeds both the representational limits established by Utterson's legal perspective and the epistemological assumptions that ground its own medical gaze. It is through the violation of the prevailing and privileged conditions for reproducing professional (male) knowledge, then, that the novel clears away the imaginary space within which the telling of Jekyll/Hyde's previously "unrepresentable" story can unfold.

The Telling Grammar of Men

The final chapter of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* establishes a tour de force first-person account from the perspective of a male character verging on more than one person, an account that diegetically and grammatically deconstructs the gendered integrity of the imputed narratological/sociological category. Not surprisingly, the first word of "Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case" is the pronoun "I": "I was born in the year 18— to a large fortune, endowed besides with excellent parts, inclined by nature to industry, fond of the respect of the wise and good among my fellow men, and thus, as might have been supposed, with every guarantee of an honorable and distinguished future" (78). With this introductory sentence, the text signals Henry Jekyll's interpellation into the proprieties of class and gender that "might have been supposed" to serve as the ideological "guarantee[s]" of an exemplary life/story. Indeed, both its rhetorical structure and its enumerated attributes might seem to provide a model opening to an ideal autobiography of a bourgeois Victorian man. Yet even as the text so explicitly evokes this class-determined, masculine ideal, it immediately swerves away from it:

> *And indeed the worst of my faults was a certain impatient gaiety of disposition, such as has made the happiness of many, but such as I found it hard to reconcile with my imperious desire to carry my head high, and wear a more than commonly grave countenance before the public. Hence it came about that I concealed my pleasures; and that when I reached years of reflection, and began to look round men and take stock of my progress and position in the world, I stood already committed to a profound duplicity of life.* (78)

Here Stevenson's novel reveals the "duplicity of life" that interrupts and then retrospectively shapes the story of a man who otherwise would/should serve as a paragon of bourgeois values. The turn in Jekyll's narrative, innocently introduced by the conjunction "and," which both appends it to and separates it from the idyll promised in the previous sentence, moves through a sequence of

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seemingly inconsequential deviations, only to arrive at "those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man's dual nature" (78-79). Yet this doubleness is explicitly *not* to be articulated as a moral failure, that is *not* as a failure of "character" understood as the apotheosis of proprietary standards, as Stevenson strives to make clear:

> *It was thus rather the exacting nature of my aspirations than any particular degradation in my faults, that made me what I was, and with even a deeper trench than in the majority of men, severed in me those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man's dual nature.... Though so profound a double-dealer,* I was in no sense a hypocrite*; both sides of me were in dead earnest....* (78-79, emphasis added)

Instead, the novel comes to affirm the "earnestness" of "both sides" by portraying a larger failure of "character," that is, a failure of the coherence attributed to this narratological/sociological representation of personhood itself. Hence, the novel constructs the unique alternative for which it is renowned: a "double" life, a life lived in and through two distinct forms of embodiment; however, in order to proffer this solution, the novel also must redefine the parameters of both narrative structure and agency.

In this last chapter, then, comprised of the book's second enclosed "enclosure," which brings it at last to closure, the novel departs from the epistemological and ontological assumptions that organized the narrative focus for the preceding chapters and finally reveals the simultaneously "scientific" and "mystic" device that engenders the eponymous "double" character(s):

> *And it chanced that the direction of my scientific studies, which led wholly towards the mystic and transcendental, reacted and shed a strong light on this consciousness of the perennial war among my members. With every day, and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual, I thus drew steadily nearer to that truth, by whose partial discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck: that man is not truly one, but truly two. I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. Others will follow, others will outstrip me on these same lines; and I hazard the guess that man will ultimately be known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens.* (79)

Jekyll's retrospective reflection on the trajectory which led to his "partial discovery" foregrounds the multiple determinants that must be made to cohere in order to reproduce that fictionally "unitary" being, the "male subject." Indeed, we may take his "discovery" to be "partial" not only in the sense of its being incomplete, but also in the sense of its disclosing the composite "nature" of this fiction ("the thorough and primitive duality of man ... the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness" [79-80]). As Stevenson's prose negotiates the epistemological terrain of nineteenth-century bourgeois ideology, invoking morality, knowledge, intellect, intelligence, science, truth, spirituality, mysticism, and

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chance in the span of a very few sentences, it weaves these elements into a self-divided vision of male subjectivity: "man will ultimately be known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens." This phrase has long struck me as wonderfully prescient, not simply because it so elegantly and persuasively evokes the multiply determined, heteronomous, divided subject of contemporary theoretical discourse, but also because it so clearly envisions the "space" of subjectivity as a political articulation, whose in-dwelling consists of a cohabitation within the locus demarcated as the body. For this reason, the novel's most (in)famous gesture, the naturalizing of Jekyll's "metaphysical" insight through the violation of his somatic integrity or individuation, constitutes not merely a brilliant literary artifice, but also an imaginary solution to the contradictions he "embodies."

At one level, we could perhaps read Stevenson's depiction of Jekyll/Hyde as an excessively literal-minded interpretation of the "sexual double standard," a concept widely publicized during the 1870s and 1880s by the campaigns to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts in order to call attention to the asymmetrical sex/gender ideologies inscribed across the supposedly symmetrical opposition man/woman. Indeed, the notion of a "double standard," with its corollary implication of a "double life," was a strategically formulated description that foregrounded the culture's tacit acceptance of male transgressions of those class-defined sexual standards that (s)ought to circumscribe sexual behavior within the confines of the procreative, monogamous, marital couple.[16] Throughout the last decades of the century, a number of highly visible sexual scandals brought this male behavioral "doubleness" into the public purview and made it the basis for the passage of new legislation designed to regulate male sexual conduct.[17] Undoubtedly, the engendering of Jekyll/Hyde out of Henry Jekyll's "concealed pleasures" alludes to this sexualized political context; indeed, it seems quite explicitly to "embody" it, manifesting the character's moral duality as a somatic one. However, in doing so, it simultaneously undermines the ground upon which such a moral/political distinction had been raised by locating the source/site of what Stevenson calls "profound [male] duplicity" in the underlying instabilities of what should otherwise (ideologically) provide "the very fortress of identity" (81), the male body:

> *I began to perceive more deeply than it has ever yet been stated, the trembling immateriality, the mistlike transience, of this seemingly so solid body in which we walk attired. Certain agents I found to have the power to shake and pluck back that fleshly vestment, even as the wind might toss the curtains of a pavilion.... I not*

16 The best source on the "double standard" and its role in the campaigns to repeal the C.D. Acts continues to be Judith Walkowitz's *Prostitution and Victorian Society*. For an elaboration of Walkowitz's argument that draws out its implications for the criminalization of male sexual behavior, especially with other men, see Cohen 69-97.

17 While almost no theoretical work has been done on these "scandals" or how they were elaborated within the culture, Walkowitz's *City of Dreadful Delights* insightfully interprets several of the most famous, especially the "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" and "Jack the Ripper." See also Weeks and Bristow.

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> *only recognized my natural body from the mere aura and effulgence of certain of the powers that made up my spirit, but managed to compound a drug by which these powers should be dethroned from their supremacy, and a second form and countenance substituted, none the less natural to me because they were the expression, and bore the stamp, of lower elements in my soul.* (80-81)

Positing "the trembling immateriality, the mistlike transience, of this seemingly so solid body," Stevenson's text explicitly inverts and hence subverts the natural (a.k.a. ontological) assumptions upon which the political and economic doctrine of "possessive individualism"—the philosophical and ideological underpinning both of the middle class and of middle-class forms of masculinity—had been established in England.[18] Indeed, I would argue that one of the reasons Stevenson's story has been and continues to be so popular is precisely because it foregrounds the fictioning of these underlying assumptions, even as it rearticulates them as necessary, natural, or even "true," by contrasting them with the extravagantly fabulous events of Jekyll/Hyde's tale.

The compelling quality of Jekyll's transformation, then, inheres in its capacity to crystallize and thereby give narrative shape to the subtending imaginary structures that reproduce male subjectivity within a locus denominated as "the male body," while simultaneously acknowledging the instability of this somatic site as the guarantee of either "character" or "identity." Indeed, the novel seems to anticipate Lacan's statement of this premise quite exactly when, recounting the first time Jekyll transforms himself into Hyde, it situates him in front of the mirror looking for his "self":

> *I lingered but a moment at the mirror: the second and conclusive experiment had yet to be attempted; it yet remained to be seen if I had lost my identity beyond redemption and must flee before daylight from a house that was no longer mine; and hurrying back to my cabinet, I once more prepared and drank the cup, once more suffered the pangs of dissolution, and came to myself once more with the character, the stature and the face of Henry Jekyll.* (84)

The ability of this scene of mirroring to confirm Jekyll's "identity" presupposes the "normal" coincidence between image and self or, in Lacan's version, the "misrecognition" of image as self. In this "case," however, the text additionally evokes the *image* of Hyde/Jekyll before "his" mirror image, as recounted retrospectively in the *narrative* mirror of his "full statement," redoubling the (self) reflective play through which "the character, the stature and the face of Henry Jekyll" achieve their fictive coherence. Moreover, it foregrounds the material as well as psychological stakes in this game with mirrors: the property, the privilege, and the (geo-political) location "that was mine." Recalling this scene before the mirror, then, Jekyll's statement posits an anterior moment of self-recognition that is, at the point of his writing, a recognized misrecognition, since this

[18] For the role of "the body" in the development of political and economic concepts of individual identity, see MacPherson. On the effects of "possessive individualism" for English masculinity, see Cohen 15-34.

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imaginary identification can no longer forfend his inevitable metamorphosis into Hyde. Indeed, by the point of the putative writing of "his" posthumously read "first-person" account, the status of Jekyll's character as the site for either "biographical" or identificatory coherence has become more than a little problematic (as even Jekyll notes, "this incoherencey of my life was daily growing more unwelcome" [85]). Thus, as Stevenson's text moves towards Jekyll's revelation of his decreasing ability to differentiate "himself" from that embodied aspect of himself who has become Hyde, his (whose?) prose runs athwart even the basic grammatical distinctions of "person" and "gender" as it attempts to depict the narrative constellation which is Jekyll/Hyde.

Not coincidentally, the most famous example of this grammatical "self" deconstruction (and deconstruction of self) occurs in the midst of Jekyll's narration of the episode that leads to Lanyon's death discussed above. As the text portrays Jekyll's attempts to account for the time Hyde spends before calling upon Lanyon, it increasingly heightens the tension between the nominal author (Jekyll) and his "subject" in order to convey their identificatory implosion. The passage begins with Jekyll recounting in the first person "his" experiences as Hyde, who is wanted for murder and is trying to conceal his presence until he can visit Lanyon, ingest the transformative potion, and return to his alibi as Jekyll. In the middle of the paragraph, the grammatical subject of the prose shifts so that rather than writing "as" Hyde, the first-person narrator (Jekyll) begins to reflect on Hyde as "other": "Hyde in danger of his life was a creature new to me..." (97).[19] The following several sentences then recount Hyde's actions from Jekyll's perspective, reiterating the third-person designations "he" and "his" so insistently that the narrating Jekyll seems to self-consciously break off "his" story in order to explain this obsessive tic, thereby interjecting what is undoubtedly the most extraordinary sentence in the book: "He, I say—I cannot say, I" (98). The brilliance of this formulation is at once narrative and theoretical. Within the context of Jekyll's statement, it serves as the elusive point of juncture between Jekyll and Hyde, linguistically effecting the slippage that the narrative repeatedly attempts to signify but cannot since it is constrained to maintain the distinction between the "two" characters as the impetus for its diagetic movement. In fact, we might consider that the dash in the middle of this verbal construction carries the most narrative value precisely because this diacritical mark iconically portrays the gap within the eponymous male subject(s) that is otherwise (re)produced in and through language, but is nowhere represented "within" it, him, them, or the text. Hence, Stevenson's graphic gesture here simultaneously links and displaces the conjuncture Jekyll/Hyde, locating the irreconcilable tension between their "characters" as the grammatically irresolvable problem to which the novel is the accreted solution. Moreover, the structure of the sentence

[19] Interestingly, this sentence follows the mention of Hyde's being left alone to write—in Jekyll's "hand"—the letter to Lanyon that appears as the enclosure in "Dr. Lanyon's Narrative," suggesting once again the novel's attention to the imbricated status of writing as the scene for the (re)production of subjectivity.

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visually effects an equivalence—though not a symmetry—between the first- and third-person pronouns such that their difference is prominently signified by the willful negation "cannot" weighing in on the side of the "I." It is only this negation that temporarily maintains the distinction (Jekyll/Hyde) that allows both Jekyll's "statement" and the novel to proceed to closure, a distinction that will be effaced with its and the book's last sentence: "Here then, as I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end" (103).

When, at the conclusion of chapter eight, Utterson, accompanied by Jekyll's butler, breaks down the door to Jekyll's laboratory and finds Hyde's shriveled body in Jekyll's clothes, he proceeds to search the rest of the premises in order to find the missing doctor. Only when that search proves unfruitful does he turn to Jekyll's papers where he finds the documents that he retires from the book to read. We might say, then, that there are two corpses in Jekyll's lab, Hyde's physical one and Jekyll's written one, yet only one has died. By displacing the scene of Jekyll's "somatic" closure onto his written enclosure, Stevenson effects a slippage between life and life story, a slippage that the novel's last sentence underscores by suggesting that it is the termination of his "confession" that constitutes the "end" of "the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll." That the novel takes as its final "statement" the end of its/Jekyll's written "embodiment" and not the end of "his" ("biological"? "biographical"? "fictional"?) "life" indicates that what has been at play in the narrative all along has been the representation of the discursive nexus from which the effects of characterological coherence ensue. Hence, it seems that *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* provides a late-Victorian narrative that prizes apart the contradictory determinants that bourgeois masculinity sought to portray as a "natural" coincidence of gender and person—in both the grammatical and descriptive senses—while simultaneously engendering the contexts that would continue to fiction its integrity.

Thus far, it has been my concern to demonstrate how Stevenson's popular novel created a story that placed the representation of male subjectivity in question by manifesting antinomies where an ideologically determined "identity" should have appeared. Not surprisingly, then, the book works within and against the two most pre-eminent modes of male professional knowledge in the period, law and medicine, in order to demonstrate their inability to account for the narrative complexity that inheres in the representations of Victorian male subjects, a complexity that the political articulation of the "sexual double standard" makes evident. Indeed, we might consider that *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* offers the notion of a split subject as a narrative solution to the problem of representing the fictive "coherence" of a male life and thereby reproduces the discursive conditions that displace social and historical contradictions "into" the male subject "himself." Stevenson's story is ubiquitous, both in its fictional forms and as it has helped to make sense of the representational problems engendered by "non-fictional" male subjects—Jack the Ripper's being the only most pronounced and publicized "case"—and by those everyday problems of representing male subjectivity that spur us to refer colloquially to someone as having a "Jekyll and Hyde personality." *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* emplots the antinomies of

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the male subject in a narrative that continues to offer one of the most popular ways for making sense of the discord that lies at the heart of the organism that is "man."

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