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Demonic Disturbances of Sexual Identity: The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr/s Hyde

JANICE DOANE and DEVON HODGES

In Victorian cultural myth, as Nina Auerbach has argued brilliantly in *Woman and the Demon*, woman is insistently imagined as a source of powerful and threatening metamorphic energies. Auerbach contrasts these heroic female demons with diminished male counterparts such as Robert Louis Stevenson's dwarfish Mr. Hyde: "Demonic man does not include divinity in his nature, and is thus a poor stunted counterpart to grandly demonic womanhood."¹ Yet if Victorian womanhood is indeed connected with transformation itself, then sexuality and identity are unlikely to remain the fixed categories that Auerbach's analysis insists upon—nor can Mr. Hyde be directly opposed to a specifically female demon of the Victorian imagination. Stevenson's story, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, is about a collaboration between the masculine and feminine that subverts the identity of each. Written at a time when gender roles were shifting, the story lacks coherent representations of sexuality despite its seeming emphasis on an emphatically male society. Both Stevenson's marriage to a "New Woman" and his collaborative writing provide dramatic examples of cultural ambivalence about sexual difference and its representation.

The instability of gender roles personified in the New Woman and exemplified in the marriage of Fanny and Robert Louis Stevenson has not often been explored as a challenge to hegemonic notions of discourse and identity, a challenge made particularly dramatic in collaborative writing. Feminist critics, astute about Victorian culture at large, have nevertheless assumed a radical difference between male and female texts. Elaine Showalter, for example, discusses how Olive Schreiner "played with the idea of the split personality—not the split between good and evil that fascinated Stevenson and Wilde, but the split between male purpose and female passivity that reflected feminist conflict."² This analysis implicitly assumes that men have more gender integrity than women. Criticism of Stevenson's story that denies women as a social force or source of authority reinforces this fiction of coherent male identity. Critics have long claimed that *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is a male story. Stephen Gwynn in his *Robert Louis Stevenson*, for example, describes the story's milieu as "a community of monks"³ and Irving Saposnik, who builds on Gwynn's remarks, asserts inaccurately that "for better or worse, Victoria's era, despite its

¹ Nina Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 103.

² Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 192.

³ Stephen Gwynn, *Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: MacMillan, 1939), p. 130.

monarch, was male-centered; and a story so directed at the essence of its moral behavior is best seen from a male perspective."⁴ *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* instead reveals an alliance between the masculine and feminine that resists strategies to keep these categories distinct.

In "Virginibus Puerisque," an essay written a number of years before *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Stevenson had already expressed his worries about the dangerous blurring of two people that takes place in marriage. In a particularly strange passage of the essay, he explains how the different moralities and aptitudes of men and women may be eroded in marriage so that both individual integrity and, his language implies, gender identity become subverted. This process of merging leads to incoherence within his text as well. He writes:

*the husband, in these unions, is usually a man, and the wife commonly enough a woman; and when this is the case, although it makes the firmer marriage, a thick additional veil of misconception hangs above the doubtful business. Women, I believe, are somewhat rarer than men; but then, if I were a woman myself, I daresay I should hold the reverse; and at least we all enter more or less wholly into one or other of these camps. A man who delights women by his feminine perceptions will often scatter his admirers by a chance explosion of the under side of man; and the most masculine and direct of women will some day, to your dire surprise, draw out like a telescope into successive lengths of personation.*⁵

Was the "man who delights women by his feminine perceptions" Stevenson? When he writes, "if I were a woman myself," he entertains the feminine point of view, though he assumes it to be opposite to the masculine one. And was the "most masculine and direct of women" Fanny Vandegrift, the woman he would soon marry? What does this passage finally say about sexual difference?

Stevenson first envisions marriage roles as decided by gender ("the husband ... is usually a man, and the wife commonly enough a woman"), but though this arrangement is relatively reassuring, marriage is still a "doubtful business." The hesitation of "usually" and "commonly enough" suggests that the categories male and female are not quite reliable because capable of being unsettled by hidden forces, darker revelations of sexual difference that have the power to shock. Man, for example, contains an "under side," a force that violently discharges. Stephen Heath, in "Psychopathia sexualis: Stevenson's *Strange Case*," connects Stevenson's notions of masculinity as hidden, perverse, and violent to Freud's remarks on the social effect of male perversion, "in many families the men are healthy, but from a social point of view immoral to an undesirable degree."⁶ Woman disrupts in a different way: she "draws out like a telescope into

⁴ Irving S. Saposnik, *Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1974), p. 90.

⁵ Robert Louis Stevenson, "Virginibus Puerisque," in *The Travels and Essays of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), XIII, 24.

⁶ Stephen Heath, "Psychopathia sexualis: Stevenson's *Strange Case*," *Critical Quarterly* 28 (1986), p. 99.

successive lengths of personation," into a series of masks, of transformations. Yet this still familiar opposition of male violence and female personation is again compromised by Stevenson's language. Man has "feminine perceptions" and woman is associated with a phallic metaphor—the lengthening telescope—that suggests a feminine, thrusting violence which threatens the male spectator. If, as Stevenson reminds us earlier, woman (the conventional wife) is "somewhat rarer than men," we may recall that Freud also remarked that femininity is almost impossible to achieve and maintain.⁷ Further, in late Victorian culture, it was hard to place the feminine because women were quite literally on the move, invading and appropriating male prerogatives and discourse.

In "Virginibus Puerisque," a system of oppositions that seems to keep the self firmly anchored in gender identity is undone by a process of doubling that turns stable oppositions into distorting funhouse mirrors. These mirrors no longer offer back untroubled reflections. Men are said to have feminine perceptions; women are masculine and direct. Men are violent—but women are too. Male violence and power finally become the "under side" of the feminine. In *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Hyde represents precisely this transformative power that is at once a brutal, violent force, yet feminine at the same time. It is no accident that for a long time film versions of the text depicted Hyde as the representation of manly lust, for this emphasis locates him more firmly within the masculine. Yet in a recent film version of Stevenson's story, *Dr. Jekyll and Sister Hyde* (1971), produced during the second wave of the feminist movement, hidden male violence merges with the *feminine* Sister Hyde. Though this film strives to maintain sexual difference—Jekyll is male and Sister Hyde is female—the effect of this doubling is uncanny because we see masculinity develop towards its apparent opposite.

The Stevenson marriage was itself marked by doubling and reversals that unsettled gender roles. Fanny, at times a self-proclaimed "clinging vine"⁸ in need of Louis's chivalric protection, was also ten years older than Louis and confessed herself to be somewhat embarrassed by *his* emotionalism:

When he begins to laugh, if he is not stopped in time, he goes into hysterics, and has to have his fingers bent back to bring him to himself again; and when his feelings are touched he throws himself headlong on the floor and bursts into tears; and you never know when either thing is going to happen. I like him very much but there are times when it is a little embarrassing to be in his company; and sometimes, I imagine, not altogether safe.⁹

Here Fanny stands as both analyst and judge of disruptive *male* hysteria.

⁷ Sigmund Freud, "Femininity," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1964), XXII, 117.

⁸ Margaret Mackay, *The Violent Friend: The Story of Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1968), p. 10.

⁹ Jenni Calder, *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Life Study* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 110-11.

Hyde, too, is an hysteric. He is the one who speaks the feminine from within the masculine, who wrestles “against the approaches of the hysteria” (78). The critic who almost says this is Stephen Heath, but because he wants to explore and *maintain* the categories “male” and “female” his analysis finally develops an incoherence much like Stevenson’s own. Heath writes this way about hysteria:

Hysteria had served in the nineteenth century as the representation of woman and of sexuality, the latter dealt with in the former. It is a male representation, men’s story, but it is also women’s narrative, at once because it names something from them and because it becomes a construction within which women speak and speak against. Juliet Mitchell talks of the ‘hysteric’s voice’ as ‘the woman’s masculine language’.... Now at the end of the century Stevenson provides a text—perhaps the text—for the representation of men and sexuality, excluding women and so the sexual and so hysteria and then finding the only language it can for what is, therefore, the emergence of the hidden male: the animal, the criminal, perversion. Perversion is men’s narrative and their story.¹⁰

Heath’s story finally cannot acknowledge what is in Stevenson’s story. Although it looks at first as if Heath’s discussion of hysteria will be used to analyze Hyde’s sexuality (because it is Hyde who speaks from “within” and who “speaks against”), instead the argument takes a turn toward what is defined as a “male” perversion. Heath knows that hysteria is itself both male and female, but he also wants to reinstate these gender categories as separate so that he can announce—and this is his thesis—that *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* provides a “men’s narrative.” Like Stevenson’s account of marriage, Heath’s text admits the possibility of a violent, feminine force located within the masculine, then represses this disruption so troubling to notions of fixed sexual difference.

Another male critic of the story, William Veeder, has recently provided an account of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* as a representation of the male anxiety derived from the weakening of patriarchy in late-Victorian Britain. Veeder is aware that the problem of maintaining boundaries is at the heart of Stevenson’s story and of patriarchy itself:

Exclusion and inclusion are the operative principles [of patriarchy]. Men must distinguish the patriarchal self from enemies, pretenders, competitors, corruptors; and they must affiliate through proper bonds at appropriate times. What Stevenson devastatingly demonstrates is that patriarchy behaves exactly counter to its obligations. Distinctions that should be maintained are elided, so that bonds occur where divisions should obtain; and affiliations that should be

¹⁰ Heath, p. 104.

*sustained are sundered, so that males war with one another and refuse to wed.*¹¹

Our point is much the same, that Stevenson's novella reflects a social moment when patriarchy is weakening and boundaries becoming blurred. Yet what Veeder does not do is provide a social explanation for this weakening of patriarchy. He does not, for example, mention the New Woman. His account of the story is primarily a description of the *consequences* of a weakening of the father: as fathers are diminished from aristocrats to bourgeois professionals, father-son quarrels over careers are restagings of childhood antagonisms (111-12). A rather slap-dash historicizing allows Veeder to talk about what he thinks really motivates the actions of the characters—oedipal rage. This oedipal account necessarily turns the novella's female characters into fantasies of the mother, fantasies that Veeder explains are pre-oedipal as well as oedipal. He insists that the men in the story create a close-knit society that "replicates ... mother-child mirroring" (147). In this society, men mirror each other—their bonds are homosocial and homoerotic—and so avoid a feared relationship with peer-aged women. As a result, Veeder explains, "Distinctions blur so thoroughly that even an admirable servant of the patriarchy like Poole is implicated in Hyde" (119-20). By focusing on Poole's alliance with Hyde, Veeder domesticates otherness. It is men who are threatening men. Veeder thus refuses the subversive possibilities of women as agents and mitigates the horror derived from the breakdown of *gender* distinctions.¹²

In the late nineteenth century, it was "New Women" who represented violent femininity, and Stevenson's wife was one of these disturbing and challenging women. When Stevenson met Fanny, she was not someone who fit conventional notions of the feminine. Separated from her first husband, she was in France to study art at a time when an artists' colony was an unconventional place for a woman to be. One biographer, Margaret Mackay, describes her as an "American tomboy from the Wild West," who had "mastered the masculine arts of rolling and smoking cigarettes—a lifelong habit—and of shooting a heavy revolver." Mackay also comments on "the surprising cast of masculinity in the tiny woman's character."¹³ While the Victorian stereotype of feminine beauty was a pretty blond angel, Fanny was described by one of Stevenson's friends as having "grizzling hair" and a "little determined brown face."¹⁴ In Stevenson she provoked extreme and paradoxical responses. Describing his wife

¹¹ William Veeder, "Children of the Night: Stevenson and Patriarchy" in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde after One Hundred Years*, eds. William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 109-10. Citations to this article hereafter in parentheses in the text.

¹² Curiously, the anthology edited by William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde after One Hundred Years*, creates a male critical community around the text that uncannily mirrors the conditions of the novella. (The one woman critic included writes about film versions of the story and their emphasis on the horrors of the body.) Have the challenges of contemporary feminism provoked responses similar to Stevenson's? The recent critical emphasis on the centrality of male homosocial relations in literature may reflect uneasy professional relations among academics. See our *Nostalgia and Sexual Difference: The Resistance to Contemporary Feminism* (New York and London: Methuen, 1987) for a discussion of forms of resistance to contemporary feminism.

¹³ Mackay, pp. 1, 12, 111.

¹⁴ Calder, p. 149.

in a letter to James Barrie, he writes that she is "infinitely little" and has "Hellish energy, relieved by fortnights of entire hibernation." He goes on to say of her: "a violent friend, a brimstone enemy.... Is always either loathed or slavishly adored; indifference is impossible."¹⁵ Stevenson's language recalls the attraction and repulsion, the reversals of mastery and submission, that characterize the relationship of Jekyll and Hyde.

For Fanny, marriage provided opportunities for realizing her artistic ambitions. With her husband she devised a series of tales, and wrote a story, "The Dynamiter." This story is attributed to her because "it has a coarse texture and synthetic manner that one does not find in those of her husband's works in which she was not a collaborator,"¹⁶ though Louis Stevenson published the story with the tag "written in collaboration with Mrs. Stevenson." "The Dynamiter" was published a year before *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and prefigures the later work by including a nefarious Dr. Grierson who experiments with an elixir of youth. Dr. Grierson and his elixir exist in a tale-within-a-tale (entitled "Story of the Destroying Angel") that is invented by a female anarchist, Clara Luxmore. Clara hopes her tale of a mad scientist and her own victimization will captivate a young man whom she wishes to dupe into helping a terrorist who has exploded a bomb in London. The woman story-teller is thus a demon posing as an angel. Her power lies in her ability to tell sentimental and sensational fictions that become a means of controlling men. The story also links independent womanhood to anarchist politics and the desire to radically transform the family—Clara's home is literally blown up—and to destroy the state. In the end, however, Clara is scolded by a patriarch ("I speak with some severity, and yet I pick my terms. I tell myself continually that you are a woman; and a voice continually reminds me of the children whose lives and limbs you have endangered. A woman," he repeated solemnly—"and children") and she retreats to the sanctuary of marriage ("I can say but one thing, ... I love my husband").¹⁷ "The Dynamiter" thus engages the radical possibilities of the New Woman while also opposing her linguistic and social daring. Since there is evidence that Robert Louis Stevenson generally finished what his writing partners began, it is not clear that Fanny was responsible for the conservative conclusion of the story.¹⁸ Yet it is likely that Fanny and Louis collaborated in some way to resolve that marriage provides the best outlet for a woman's talents and terrifying energy.

Fanny Stevenson's own ambitions were primarily enacted not as a writer but as a wife to a writer. Elaine Showalter has argued that women writers of the 1880s and 1890s—she labels them "Feminists"—were unlike the productive writers of sensationalist fiction that preceded them. They wanted to make in-

¹⁵ Mackay, p. 425.

¹⁶ Mackay, p. 193.

¹⁷ Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson and Robert Louis Stevenson, "The Dynamiter," in *The Novels and Tales of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), III, 263-64.

¹⁸ Saposnik, p. 147.

fluence, not writing, “a genuine source of power.”¹⁹ In defense of such a sense of her duty, Olive Schreiner invokes a special kind of marriage, “Just the mental union, ‘for the begetting of great works,’ to me constitutes marriage.”²⁰ Showalter and other analysts of the New Woman have linked such feminine idealism to neurosis. Stymied by the conflict between their desire for an idealized femininity and their desire to enjoy what were conceived of as masculine possibilities for achievement, New Women wrote only haltingly and developed “numerous and persisting ailments.”²¹ Fanny, for example, was plagued by physical problems and nervous breakdowns. Yet though New Women like Fanny experienced the debilitating effects of trying to negotiate their emancipation from traditional roles while trying not to attract too much criticism, they were nonetheless perceived as dangerous rebels who wanted to claim “supreme power over men.”²² In the label given them, “Wild Women,” one hears both aversion and fear.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde seems to share this response. Though the story contains no major female characters, it does include a number of minor female characters who are aligned with monstrosity and deviance: the little girl improbably at large in the night; the women “wild as harpies” who attack Hyde; the old woman with “an evil face, smoothed by hypocrisy.”²³ More importantly, many descriptions of Hyde’s physical characteristics are congruent with cultural descriptions of femininity. He is small in stature, has a quick light step with a swing, and weeps like a woman. The two most repeated descriptions of Hyde assert that he gives off a “haunting sense of unexpressed deformity” (50)—as Enfield puts it, “He must be deformed somewhere” (34)—and that he has a “debility of constitution” but great vitality. Further, Hyde is resentful of his subordinate station, “he loathed the despondency into which Jekyll was now fallen, and he resented the dislike with which he was himself regarded” (96). This resentment is most graphically demonstrated in his killing of a patriarch, the M.P. Sir Danvers Carew, and in his defacement of both Jekyll’s pious books and the portrait of his father.

Jekyll’s responses to Hyde also share in the general cultural fear of “Wild Women.” Jekyll describes his “terrors” as “unmanning” (58) and later remarks of Hyde that “that insurgent horror was knit to him closer than a wife” (95). Furthermore, the house, the wife’s place, provides one of the story’s central metaphors of doubleness. Jekyll is increasingly entrapped in the house—and Hyde, too, wants to get out. The rescue of Jekyll involves the dramatic breaking down of a locked door, a process that shakes the whole building. Yet when the besiegers burst into Jekyll’s library, they find a surprisingly domestic scene: “quiet lamplight, a good fire glowing and chattering on the hearth, the kettle

¹⁹ Showalter, p. 185.

²⁰ Lloyd Fernando, *“New Women” in the Late Victorian Novel* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977), p. 24.

²¹ Fernando, p. 22.

²² Gail Cunningham, *The New Woman and the Victorian Novel* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1978), p. 14.

²³ Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1979), p. 49. Citations appear hereafter in parentheses in the text.

singing its thin strain ... things laid out for tea" (70). As we all know, in the conventional arrangement women were the "angels of the house," who created for their husbands, as John Ruskin put it, a "place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division."²⁴ With the arrival of the New Woman, terror and division threatened from within the home—the angel was also the demon in the house.

Nina Auerbach argues that the conflation of the angelic and the demonic is central to the iconography of Victorian womanhood. This conflation allows woman special vitality and transformative power. Hyde, too, demonstrates transformative energies. Irving Saposnik describes Hyde's metaphorical power as "seemingly infinite." He writes, "the inevitability of his brute power, his unceasing energy, no doubt recalled to many the threatening forces which were beating upon the solid doors of their comfortable homes."²⁵ Yet the link between Hyde's powers and the powers of woman is not acknowledged by Auerbach, Saposnik, or by other critics.

What would seem to thwart the metaphoric association of Hyde with threatening femininity is Hyde's hairy hand. Auerbach argues, for instance, that "the cultivated hand of Jekyll and the hairy one of Hyde associate them with different species," but this simple division is complicated by descriptions in the story.²⁶ Jekyll's hand is described as "large, firm, white and comely" (88). The words evoke both stereotypically masculine (large, firm) and feminine (white, comely) characteristics. Hyde's hand is "lean, corded, knuckly, of a dusky pallor, and thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair" (88). Hyde's hairiness is usually, as in Auerbach's interpretation, linked with Hyde's ape-like nature. Yet elsewhere Auerbach points out the "totemistic aura parts of a woman's body acquire in disjunction from the woman herself."²⁷ According to Elisabeth Gitter, it was *women's* hair that was a particularly powerful emblem in the Victorian imagination. For Victorians, women's hair could be "a chilling evocation of buried female energy," and lurking behind this particular emblem, Gitter points out, is the head of Medusa, which Freud analyzed as representing both terror of the phallic mother and male castration. But, Gitter reminds us, hair is "also [woman's] art: the strands of hair she plaits, the threads she weaves are, as J. Hillis Miller and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have noticed, analogous to the narrative thread, the story line, the strands of the plot."²⁸ Given these various readings of women's hair, Hyde's hairy hand is filled with interpretive possibility, especially since his hand is both the sign that the transformation has taken place, and the emblem in the story for writing.

²⁴ John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (1907. rpt. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1960), p. 59.

²⁵ Saposnik, pp. 100-101.

²⁶ Auerbach relies here upon the traditional interpretation of Hyde's hairy hand as linked to Victorian fears about Darwin's evolutionary theory. While this interpretation is convincing, to insist upon it as the only interpretation would be to resist other disconcerting possibilities of meaning.

²⁷ Auerbach, p. 48.

²⁸ Elisabeth Gitter, "The Power of Woman's Hair in the Victorian Imagination," *PMLA* 99 (1984), p. 938.

In *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the hand is disassociated from the body and operates as an independent metaphor that is at first the sign of character, identity, and the possession of truth and certainty. When he is no longer in control of his transformations, Jekyll looks at his hand to discover whether he is Jekyll or Hyde; and the physical description of Jekyll's hand is a clue to his character—firm and professional—as is his handwriting. For Utterson, who tries to sort out the mystery, the doctor's handwriting is the clue and guarantor of Jekyll's identity: "This is unquestionably the doctor's hand," Utterson announces to Poole upon reading a strange note requesting drugs (66). Hyde's "hand" is also a clue to his character—ugly, bestial—and his handwriting is, as the handwriting analyst, Mr. Guest puts it, "odd" (54). Describing his counterpart, Jekyll remarks that acts "in the hands of Edward Hyde ... turn towards the monstrous" (86). Besides functioning as a sign of distinct character, the hand is also a metaphor for certainty—by taking things in hand one takes possession of the truth and order can be restored and maintained. The police officer has matters "in my hand" when he discovers Hyde's checkbook; all letters and important documents are placed in Utterson's trustworthy and respectable hands: "For the hands of J.G. Utterson ALONE" (58) is written on the envelope containing Lanyon's narrative of his horrifying discovery of Jekyll's transformation.

Yet the hand is not always so steady; in the course of the story, the hand becomes the sign of erupting emotion. Writing for help from Dr. Lanyon, Dr. Jekyll says his "hand trembles at the bare thought" of the possibility that Dr. Lanyon will not listen to his appeal (75); Hyde's hand flies to his throat to contain his hysteria (78); the worried Poole passes a "hand over his face" (66); Utterson takes a "rude" poker into his hand as he prepares for a perilous entry into Jekyll's study (67). The hand cannot be maintained as a stable sign of distinction, certainty, and identity. Increasingly, it becomes a sign of collaboration, a place where identities merge.

In an early instance of the unreliability of the hand as a guarantor of identity, Jekyll uses Hyde's hand to write a note in which Hyde vindicates Jekyll's character. It is this note, that when compared to Jekyll's hand, leads Mr. Guest to observe: "the two hands are in many points identical" (55) and Utterson becomes alarmed about Jekyll's character, "Henry Jekyll forge for a murderer!" Hyde later decides to use Jekyll's hand to write a note to Lanyon: "Then I remembered that of my original character, one part remained to me: I could write my own hand" (93). This quotation demonstrates how the notion of "hand" as a sign of identity has radically slipped. The "I" who remembers is the "I" of the first person narrative, supposedly Jekyll in the act of giving a "Full Statement" of his case. Yet it is also Hyde, who is here the "I" trying to find a way to save himself. He remembers that he has access to the "hand" of his original character, namely Jekyll. Yet the statement: "I could write my own hand" is an obvious statement of identity. There are other instances of such merging. Both Jekyll and Hyde are forgers; each writes as the other.

This difficulty in identifying a writer's hand reflects a problem of composition that is central to Stevenson's writing precisely because he so often collaborated. As Saposnik admits in a footnote to his book on Stevenson: "One of sev-

eral unresolved questions in Stevenson studies is exactly this question of collaboration."²⁹ We have already seen the ways in which Hyde's hand, with its "swart growth of hair," is connected to the feminine and we have discussed "The Dynamiter," a collaborative text, assigned to Fanny's hand because of its "coarse texture." "The Dynamiter" is also a possible source for the transformation idea in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and includes a female demon posing as an angel. These elusive signs of collaboration are given another form in the stories about the composition of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Though the nature and extent of Fanny's role in the writing of the story is debated, they are usually discussed as a matter of influence rather than participation. Fanny herself describes her function in what we have seen are conventional terms for the New Woman: she is a guardian of her husband's genius and his health who enables him to beget a great work. In her account of the story's composition, she writes:

*That an invalid in my husband's condition of health should have been able to perform the manual labour alone of putting 60,000 words on paper in six days seems incredible.... Two persons were not allowed in his room at the same time.... It was my ungracious task to stand guard outside the door..."*³⁰

Her sister insists Fanny's role was more active. According to this account, Louis told his wife that *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* was the best thing he had ever done, but Fanny "read it through and thought it the worst." Finally she told Louis that "he had treated it simply as a story, whereas it was in reality an allegory." Stevenson then proceeded to throw the manuscript in the fire and begin a revision. Malcolm Elwin does not believe this account; his view is that Fanny acted as a censor, a view recently endorsed by Veeder.³¹ The point is not which interpretation is correct—and indeed there is not enough evidence to support such an argument—but that all these versions of the story's composition emphasize Fanny's role as an editor not as a collaborator.

Stevenson himself admits to having collaborators in his story of the composition of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, but they are "unseen." In need of money, for two days he racked his brains for a plot, then

I dreamed the scene at the window, and a scene afterwards split in two, in which Hyde, pursued for some crime, took the powder and underwent the change in the presence of his pursuers. All the rest was made awake, and consciously, although I think I can trace in much of it the manner of my Brownies.... I do most of the morality, worse luck! and my Brownies have not a rudiment of what we call a conscience. Mine, too, is the setting, mine the characters. All that was given me was the matter of three scenes, and the central idea of a voluntary change becoming involuntary. Will it be thought ungener-

²⁹ Saposnik, p. 147.

³⁰ Malcolm Elwin, "The Strange Case of Robert Louis Stevenson," in *The Definitive Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Companion*, ed. Harry M. Geduld (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1983), p. 96.

³¹ William Veeder, "The Texts in Question," in Veeder and Hirsch, p. 10.

*ous, after I have been so liberally ladling out praise to my unseen collaborators, if I here toss them over, bound hand and foot, into the arena of the critics? For the business of the powders, which so many have censured, is, I am relieved to say, not mine at all but the Brownies.*³²

Patrick Brantlinger and Richard Boyle read Stevenson's "Brownies" as representations of his ambivalent feelings about popular fiction.³³ Stevenson will only allow "Brownies" to do the dirty work of appealing to popular tastes. This interesting reading of the passage does not, however, mention that the degraded sphere of popular writing was often connected to the feminine: Hawthorne's "scribbling women" were producing popular fiction on both sides of the Atlantic. With this fact in mind, it is easy to read Fanny—the "tiny" woman with the "little, determined brown face"—as reduced to the "Brownies," here internalized and praised, then expelled and chastised as responsible for the weakness of peripheral elements of the story. And, of course, Stevenson *had* collaborated with Fanny on "The Dynamiter," the source for "the business of the powders." Throughout the passage, Stevenson is trying to define and establish the extent to which the story is properly "his." But in order to do this, he must suppress the otherness intrinsic to language: his story is one that includes proliferating points of view and interrogates the radical divisions within the self. This disruption of a unified identity, we have argued, is imagined in gendered terms because of the conditions of Stevenson's writing—he collaborated—and because of shifts in the sex/gender system taking place at the end of the nineteenth century.

In the 1880s and 1890s, James, Meredith, Gissing, Hardy and other male writers, were, like Stevenson (and like the women writers Showalter describes), inspired to write about what they feared and desired: a transgression of the boundaries of masculine and feminine identity. Julia Kristeva notes that in those societies in which the boundaries that constitute the speaking subject are threatened, one finds an accompanying concern for separating the sexes. Her remarks, significantly in a book entitled *The Powers of Horror*, are as follows:

It is as if, lacking a central authoritarian power that would settle the definitive supremacy of one sex—or lacking a legal establishment that would balance the prerogatives of both sexes—two powers attempted to share out society. One of them, the masculine, apparently victorious, confesses through its very relentlessness against the other, the feminine, that it is threatened by an asymmetri-

³² Elwin, p. 96.

³³ Patrick Brantlinger and Richard Boyle, "The Education of Edward Hyde: Stevenson's 'Gothic Gnome' and the Mass Readership of Late-Victorian England," in Veeder and Hirsch, pp. 265-78. In Veeder's view, the Brownies are the more exclusive property of Stevenson's unconscious. They have their origin in "a childhood nightmare about the color brown" and are "eventually shaped ... into the Brownies who personified for him the unconscious processes themselves" ("Children" 114). We are suggesting, as do Brantlinger and Boyle, that the Brownies are a figuration of specific social relations.

*cal, irrational, wily, uncontrollable power.... That other sex, the feminine, becomes synonymous with a radical evil that is to be suppressed.*³⁴

In *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* we have seen how ineffective is that suppression of the "other." The story, like the merged characters of Jekyll and Hyde, has a disturbingly undecidable body with an unsteady hand.

³⁴ Julia Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror: An Essay in Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 70.