



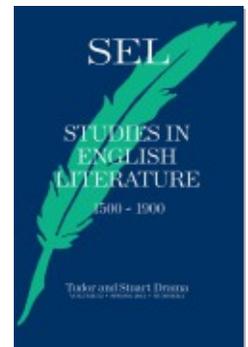
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Hyding Nietzsche in Robert Louis Stevenson's Gothic of Philosophy

HARRIET HUSTIS

To confront the fictional world of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) is to enter a realm in which the impact of a variety of moral, psychological, and aesthetic bifurcations seems both immensely relevant and strangely unresolved. Although the title of Stevenson's famous shilling shocker suggests interrelation and combination (it purports to describe, after all, the "Strange Case" of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde), the narrative logic and impetus of the text seem to promote separation, delineation, and, ultimately, distinction—an either/or dynamic that has been duplicated in much of the criticism of the novel. Thus, as early as 1888, Henry James began his analysis of Stevenson's text by wondering whether it was "a work of high philosophic intention, or simply the most ingenious and irresponsible of fictions," only to conclude that questions of form take precedence: "it is . . . not the profundity of the idea which strikes me so much as the art of the presentation—the extremely successful form."¹ Although this "extremely successful form" nevertheless reveals "a genuine feeling for the perpetual moral question, a fresh sense of the difficulty of being good and the brutishness of being bad," according to James, "the most edifying thing" "above all is a singular ability in holding the interest."²

What if, however, what is "most edifying" about Stevenson's "gothic gnome" is precisely its intermingling of the fictive and the philosophical?³ Contrary to James's neat assessment, in an essay published in *Scribner's Magazine* two years after *Jekyll and Hyde's*

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first appearance, Stevenson's extended account of the origin of his novel describes a far less clear-cut distinction between fiction and philosophy, the intentional and the unintentional, or even the conscious and the unconscious. In "A Chapter on Dreams," Stevenson first describes, in the third person, the psychological development of "an ardent and uncomfortable dreamer" whose childhood dreams "were at times commonplace enough, at times very strange."⁴ This dreamer begins "to read in his dreams" and eventually experiences serialized "dream adventure[s]": thus, "he beg[ins] . . . to dream in sequence and thus to lead a double-life—one of the day, one of the night—one that he had every reason to believe was the true one, another that he had no means of proving to be false."⁵ The progression from dreamer to dream reader to leader of a double life is marked by an apparent conflation of truth and falsehood and the replacement of the notion of specific origins with a strange sequentiality. In short, belief in the truth of a daytime reality can no longer supplant the putative falsity of a nighttime dream sequence when conclusive proof of their difference is always already unavailable.

At this point, Stevenson switches to the first person and admits what is by now patently obvious, namely, that this sequential dreamer is none other than himself. He then further problematizes the very notion of selfhood and authorship by positing the existence of chimerical "Little People."⁶ These "Brownies" or "near connections of the dreamer," he claims, "do one-half my work for me while I am fast asleep, and in all human likelihood, do the rest for me as well, when I am wide awake and fondly suppose I do it for myself. That part which is done while I am sleeping is the Brownies' part beyond contention; but *that which is done when I am up and about is by no means necessarily mine*, since all goes to show the Brownies have a hand in it even then."⁷ If serialized dreams provide the source and Brownies the agency, then what role does intentionality play in the act of writing? If being "up and about" is no guarantee that "that which is done" is "necessarily" one's own, then what guarantees *do* exist, and how can seemingly requisite origins ever be definitively traced? Interestingly, by shifting between third-person and first-person perspectives, Stevenson further complicates the notion of stable narrative origins and definitive intentions.⁸

Ultimately, Stevenson's specific account of the genesis of *Jekyll and Hyde*, quoted here at length, testifies not to one particular origin but to multiple possible trajectories and influences:

I had long been trying to write a story on this subject, to find a body, a vehicle for that strong sense of man's double being which must at times come in upon and overwhelm the mind of every thinking creature. I had even written one . . . which I burned the other day on the ground that it was not a work of genius, and that *Jekyll* had supplanted it. Then came one of those financial fluctuations to which (with an elegant modesty) I have hitherto referred in the third person. For two days I went about racking my brains for a plot of any sort; and on the second night I dreamed the scene at the window, and a scene afterward 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. The meaning of the tale is therefore mine . . . 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.⁹

Premised on moments of duplication, proliferation, and inadvertent compulsion, Stevenson's account problematizes any putative control of meaning by deconstructing intentionality even as he warily asserts it. In Stevenson's conception, writing fosters a conflation of the intentional with the unintentional that destabilizes the (presumably fundamental) boundaries between self and other at even the most basic level—"what I call I."¹⁰

What is particularly striking about Stevenson's account of his "gothic gnome"'s origin in "A Chapter on Dreams" is the extent to which he subtly duplicates the actions, apparent intentions, and ostensible concerns of his bifurcated protagonist/antagonist, Henry Jekyll/Edward Hyde. Like Jekyll, Stevenson resorts to writing in third person when it suits the self-image he is committed to upholding. Thus, he experiences "financial fluctuations," but prefers to retrospectively cast them in the third person, in order to preserve a semblance of "elegant modesty." Like Hyde, Stevenson also burns documents or otherwise defaces originals, but only after his later version has clearly "supplanted" their presumably originary status.¹¹ Finally, in an ironic reversal, after repeatedly identifying what is definitively "his," Stevenson *undermines* it all by suggesting that what was "given" to him was the very principle that "the voluntary" might very well be "involuntary" after all. Like Jekyll, Stevenson repeatedly asserts his own authorial

self-possession, and, much like his Gothic protagonist, he premises this alleged control of meaning on a fundamental creative duplicity, the possible production of “some unseen collaborator” who is “locked in a back garret” while his co-producer “get[s] all the praise.”¹² Ultimately, as Patrick Brantlinger has argued, “the various accounts of the genesis of the ‘fine bogey tale,’ including Stevenson’s, are all marked by an ambivalence or doubleness,” and, as a result, “Stevenson’s sense of ownership, or of authorial control, of the story is itself ambivalent.”¹³

Stevenson’s duplication of the intentions and incentives of his dynamic Gothic duo is marked by a significant difference, however. Unlike Jekyll, Stevenson does not resort to the subterfuge of hypocrisy. In February of 1886, in a letter written to his friend Edward Purcell, Stevenson admits:

What you say about the confusion of my ethics, I own to be all too true. It is, as you say, where I fall, and fall almost consciously. I have the old Scotch Presbyterian preoccupation about these problems; itself morbid; I have alongside of that a second, perhaps more—possibly less—morbid element—the dazzled incapacity to choose, of an age of transition. The categorical imperative is ever with me, but utters dark oracles. This is a ground almost of pity. The Scotch side came out plain in *Dr Jekyll*; the XIXth century side probably baffled me even there, and in most other places baffles me entirely. Ethics are my veiled mistress; I love them, but I know not what they are. Is this my fault? Partly, of course, it is; because I love my sins like other people. Partly my merit, because I do not take, and rest contented in, the first subterfuge.¹⁴

Stevenson’s ethical “confusion,” his bewildered love for his “veiled mistress,” is triggered by the combination of a “morbid” moral “preoccupation” and the “dazzled incapacity to choose” brought on by “an age of transition.” As such, it differs from the attempted erasure of hypocrisy practiced by Jekyll; Stevenson overtly locates the Gothic danger of his novel in the self-deceptive and predeterminedly unified intentionality of Jekyll.¹⁵ Jekyll’s insistence that he meant no harm, that his intentions were “good” (whatever the consequences of his actions might have been), depends upon an original motivation that is definitively dissociated from the “evil” that nevertheless results.

This dissociation is philosophically challenged several months later with the publication of Friedrich Nietzsche's landmark *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (1886). Nietzsche begins with the suggestion that "it might even be possible that what constitutes the value of . . . good and revered things is precisely that they are insidiously related, tied to, and involved with . . . wicked, seemingly opposite things—maybe even one with them in essence."¹⁶ In the concluding narrative that traces Jekyll's ill-fated progress toward "that truth, by whose partial discovery" he is ultimately "doomed" (namely, "that man is not truly one, but truly two"), Jekyll testifies to the fundamental instability of origins and to the incorporation of a principle of synthesis within a framework of apparent antithesis in terms that clearly echo Nietzsche's own investigation of the implications of a philosophic move beyond good and evil (p. 48). When juxtaposed with Nietzsche's confrontation of the "will to truth," Stevenson's shilling shocker seems not only to examine this resistance to accepted values but also to detail its potentially disastrous consequences (p. 199).¹⁷

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche argues that "we stand at the threshold of a period which should be designated negatively, to begin with, as *extra-moral*," a period in which "the decisive value of an action lies precisely in what is *unintentional* in it, while everything about it that is intentional, everything about it that can be seen, known, 'conscious,' still belongs to its surface and skin—which, like every skin, betrays something but *conceals* even more" (p. 234). This Nietzschean "threshold" is provocatively figured in *Jekyll and Hyde*'s inaugural "Story of the Door," where the reader is first introduced to Hyde via Richard Enfield's elliptical narrative of a threshold moment—a "story" of a paradoxically deliberate yet seemingly unintentional trampling of innocence: "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 wasn't like a man; it was like some damned Juggernaut" (p. 9). The reaction of Enfield, the "Sawbones," and the surrounding onlookers—their sudden impulse of murderous loathing toward Hyde—vividly dramatizes Nietzsche's suggestion that, in this "threshold" phase of the "extra-moral," "decisive value" resides in the unintentional. In Enfield's narrative, Hyde is culpable as a "damned Juggernaut," but he himself is implicitly

to be commended for resorting to blackmail instead of murder (his hidden impulse): the “known” and the “seen,” that which is “conscious,” is merely part of the “surface” or “skin”—what matters most is what is unseen and unintended.

The moral “strangeness” of the “case” represented in Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde* thus appears to stem from its establishment of a standard of moral evaluation that may ultimately subvert the stability of Western metaphysics itself. Intentionality no longer serves as the stable “origin” required by the “will to truth” but instead marks a self-righteous hypocrisy that inadvertently “betrays” the instability of an allegedly necessary and “originary” ethical either/or. More importantly, however, in this “age of transition,” the “dark oracles” of the categorical imperative demand embodiment and utterance: once identified and acknowledged—as Hyde is by Jekyll—the “insurgent horror” cannot be returned to the “inorganic” (pp. 61, 60). When the efficacy of intentionality is exposed as a philosophical fiction, “voluntary” and “involuntary” are no longer distinct and pure sources of origination, but instead composite, commingled, and, thus, impure. Having admitted the “truth” of the “truly two,” Jekyll is forced to recognize the fact that he cannot simply and seamlessly reestablish the more appealing truth of an either/or that would relegate the mute “slime of the pit” and “amorphous dust” to the realm of “what was dead, and had no shape” (p. 60).

This realization might be characterized as a kind of Gothic of philosophy, that is, as a representation of the conflation of the intentional and the unintentional that not only destabilizes the (presumed) boundaries between self and other, but also problematizes the Western metaphysical binaries of good and evil. Although hotly contested definitions of the Gothic abound, one point of relative critical consensus is that the Gothic constitutes a site of narrative and interpretive instability, frequently evidenced by the use of fragmented and “unreliable” perspectives.¹⁸ The Gothic thus problematizes textual and moral bodies, boundaries and origins, and, in so doing, it undermines the possibility of interpretive control or stability—the very elements that the binaries of the “will to truth” are designed to separate, delineate, organize, and uphold. As Peter K. Garrett argues, “Gothic fiction depends at least as much on producing . . . disturbance as on containing it; its characteristic complication of narrative form and multiplication of voices, whether in conflict or complementarity, always express the effort required to establish control of meaning and often suggest its uncertain success.”¹⁹

Similarly, Nietzsche notes in *Beyond Good and Evil* that “a doctrine of the reciprocal dependence of the ‘good’ and the ‘wicked’ drives, causes (as refined immorality) distress and aversion in a still hale and hearty conscience—still more so, a doctrine of the derivation of all good impulses from wicked ones” (p. 221). The “distress and aversion” of a gothic of philosophy could well stem from the fact that if “good” is “insidiously related, tied to, and involved with . . . wicked, seemingly opposite things,” then just as a virtuous surface may conceal an essential evil with which it is fundamentally and necessarily united, so too an evil surface might hide (or Hyde) elements of goodness. Ultimately, Nietzsche argues, the very “value” of “goodness” as such may depend upon its paradoxical union with this “concealed,” “unintentional” evil, and not upon its separation or essential differentiation from it. This is particularly the case if “purity” is really only a comforting fiction or an empowering form of metaphysical subterfuge constructed by and through language itself—in essence, an effect of style. As Nietzsche argues, one of the “awkwardnesses” of language is its tendency toward polarization, the fact that it “will continue to talk of opposites where there are only degrees and many subtleties of gradation” (p. 225).

In his “Full Statement of the Case,” Jekyll insists that although his own “strange case” appears to be marked by precisely the kind of essential “insidious” unity of good and evil and the “subtleties of gradation” that Nietzsche identifies, the “polar twins” of his identity must be definitively separated and then separately “housed” if “life [is to] be relieved of all that [is] unbearable” (p. 49). Thus, Jekyll both acknowledges and ultimately rejects as untenable the interrelationship of good and evil; asserting a morality of separate-but-equal influences, he insists that the coexistence of good and evil necessitates physical differentiation, whatever the apparent existential realities: “It was the curse of mankind that these incongruous faggots were thus bound together—that in the agonised womb of consciousness, these polar twins should be continuously struggling. How, then, were they dissociated?” (p. 49). Katherine Linehan has suggested that Jekyll actually means to ask, “How, then, were they *to be* dissociated?” (p. 49n8, emphasis added): her editorial footnote assumes that because Jekyll has not yet physically embodied this fundamental dissociation, a future passive construction of his intentionality is more grammatically accurate.

The fact that Jekyll employs the past tense passive is significant, however: the grammatical construction of his question

effectively erases the idea of an essential conflation of good and evil in order to insist on their predetermined status as “polar” opposites. Grammatically speaking, the physical dissociation he will eventually attempt is treated here as a *fait accompli*, as little more than the logical materialization of a predetermined moral and psychological binary. The awkwardness of his language evokes Nietzsche’s assertion: Jekyll will “continue to talk of opposites where there are only degrees and many subtleties of gradation.”

Therefore, in “Henry Jekyll’s Full Statement of the Case,” the ethical ambiguity suggested by Nietzsche’s *Beyond Good and Evil* is reconfigured; when Jekyll concludes that “of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both,” an existential both/and is invoked in order to erase the implications of a philosophical either/or (p. 49). Jekyll’s logic of the only-rightly-either-because-radically-both clearly invokes the “insidious” relationship between “good and revered things” and “wicked, seemingly opposite things” suggested at the outset of *Beyond Good and Evil*. However, to the extent that he “learned to dwell with pleasure, as a beloved daydream, on the thought of the separation of these elements,” Jekyll testifies to his erasure of his own metaphysical conclusions (p. 49). Thus, throughout his confession, he seeks to return to an existential possibility whose validity is challenged by his own narrative testimony.

In effect, Jekyll’s failure dramatizes Nietzsche’s claim that “we are accustomed to disregard [the] duality [of will and action], and to deceive ourselves about it by means of the synthetic concept ‘I’”, and as a result, “a whole series of erroneous conclusions and consequently of false evaluations of the will itself, has become attached to the act of willing—to such a degree that he who wills believes sincerely that willing *suffices* for action” (p. 216). In the mistaken self-evaluation that gives rise to his disastrous experiment and its seemingly uncontrollable aftermath, Jekyll exposes the Nietzschean fictionality of cause and effect. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche argues that “one should use ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ only as pure concepts . . . as conventional fictions for the purpose of designation and communication—*not* for explanation” (p. 219). To the extent that Jekyll’s “Full Statement” attempts to rely upon the explanatory power of cause and effect (thus, the transformation—and its reversal—is first explained as the result of drinking the potion, then as the result of drinking it with a particular mindset, and, finally, as a result of an unforeseen and essentially undetected impurity in its chemical contents), Jekyll’s

final document reveals his false evaluation of the (in)sufficiency of both his will and his actions. Deprived of its explanatory power, the philosophical becomes fictive.

As a result, “Henry Jekyll’s Full Statement,” with its convoluted narrative of disastrous experimentation and seemingly unintentional transformation, can be read as an attempt to overwrite the possible “*jenseits*” (“beyondness” or, literally, “other-sidedness”) of good and evil that Nietzsche posits and explores. Interestingly, Nietzsche acknowledges that the “philosophers of the future may have a right—it might also be a wrong—to be called *attempters*” (p. 242). These “*Versucher*” are attempters, experimenters, and tempters: they cavort with metaphysical “dangers” as “free spirits” who “do not want to betray in every particular *from what* a spirit can liberate himself and *to what* he may be driven” (p. 245). Conversely, it is precisely this directionality that Jekyll wants to identify and define: thus, he asserts that although “others will follow, others will outstrip me on the same lines . . . I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens. I for my part, from the nature of my life, advanced infallibly in one direction and in one direction only” (p. 48).

To the extent that he seeks to reify and reembody the psychological and ontological dissociation that he upholds as essential, Jekyll is compelled to redefine hypocrisy. “Driven to reflect deeply and inveterately on that hard law of life, which lies at the root of religion and is one of the most plentiful springs of distress,” he concludes that, “though so profound a double-dealer, I was in no sense a hypocrite; both sides of me were in dead earnest; I was no more myself when I laid aside restraint and plunged in shame, than when I laboured, in the eye of day, at the furtherance of knowledge or the relief of sorrow and suffering” (p. 48). In effect, Jekyll is exposing as a “foreground estimate” what Nietzsche will identify in *Beyond Good and Evil* as the “*faith in opposite values*” characteristic of the “will to truth” (pp. 199–200). His own assertion to the contrary, Jekyll’s assessment of the simultaneous “earnest[ness]” of each “side” of his putative duality does not negate the possibility of “hypocrisy,” but instead articulates a two-pronged Nietzschean “doubt”—“whether there are any opposites at all” and whether the kind of “popular valuations and opposite values” that would, ironically, brand Jekyll a “hypocrite,” are, in fact, merely “provisional perspectives” (p. 200). As Jerrold E. Hogle has argued, “Hyde . . . is fashioned . . . not simply to conceal the division in man (which he only succeeds in revealing) but to ensure

that the notion of 'two sides' keeps conscious Western thought (Jekyll's included) from sensing a deeper play of differences, a nonbinary polymorphism, at the 'base' of human nature."²⁰ Or, as Nietzsche puts it, "every profound spirit needs a mask . . . around every profound spirit a mask is growing continually, owing to the constantly false, namely *shallow*, interpretation of every word, every step, every sign of life he gives" (p. 241).

Ultimately, the "notion of 'two sides'" is metaphysically seductive: the control of meaning and its (illusory) guarantees of success can be traced to the "peculiar" origin for "the things of highest value" that is demanded by the "faith in opposite values" (p. 200). According to Nietzsche, such a belief system only ever *rhetorically* wonders, "how *could* anything originate out of its opposite? for example, truth out of error? or the will to truth out of the will to deception? or selfless deeds out of selfishness?" (pp. 199–200). The faith in opposite values insists that "such origins are impossible; whoever dreams of them is a fool, indeed worse; the things of the highest value must have another, *peculiar* origin—they cannot be derived from this transitory, seductive, deceptive, paltry world, from this turmoil of delusion and lust" (p. 200).

To uphold this control of meaning throughout his "Full Statement," however, Jekyll is compelled to resort to what Nietzsche will identify as "an odd narrowness of interpretation" (p. 234). This standard, Nietzsche claims, marks the "*moral period*" of human history, a time when, he asserts, "the intention as the whole origin and prehistory of an action . . . dominated moral praise, blame, judgment, and philosophy on earth" (p. 234). According to Nietzsche, in the "moral period," "the origin of an action was interpreted in the most definite sense as origin in an *intention*; one came to agree that the value of an action lay in the value of the intention" (p. 234). As his letter to Purcell suggests, Stevenson recognizes the extent to which this moral period is prone to a kind of "subterfuge" that it is all too easy to "take and rest contented in."²¹ As Nietzsche provocatively suggests, "man . . . has invented the good conscience to enjoy his soul for once as *simple*; and the whole of morality is a long undismayed forgery which alone makes it at all possible to enjoy the sight of the soul" (p. 420).

The metaphysical anxiety over the "peculiar" (or "pure") origin of "the things of the highest value" is particularly apparent in Jekyll's (dramatically inconclusive) "Full Statement." Having identified his (implicitly "good") aspirations as the source of his duality, Jekyll interprets his physical transformation as a "pure" externalization of what he will then identify as "the evil side of

[his] nature” (p. 51). Jekyll thus argues that the drug that he has concocted has “no discriminating action; it was neither diabolical nor divine; it but shook the doors of the prisonhouse of my disposition; and like the captives of Philippi, that which stood within ran forth” (pp. 51–2). The fact that “that which stood within” allegedly becomes embodied in Hyde, a figure of “pure evil,” can be attributed, Jekyll argues, to the fact that while his “virtue slumbered,” his “evil, kept awake by ambition, was alert and swift to seize the occasion” (p. 52). As a result, he argues, “although I had now two characters as well as two appearances, one was wholly evil, and the other was still the old Henry Jekyll, that incongruous compound of whose reformation and improvement I had already learned to despair. The movement was thus wholly toward the worse” (p. 52). It seems significant that, at this moment of physical and psychological splitting, Jekyll reiterates the word “wholly”: if Jekyll is *still* an “incongruous compound” after the release of Hyde, then it would seem that his experiment has “wholly” failed. The holistic Hyde to which Jekyll attests clearly fails to embody the moral dissociation—the separate housing—that he seeks.

More importantly, if Jekyll’s own psychological and moral identity is marked by a profound existential duplicity, then it would seem that “that which . . . ran forth” when Hyde was projected could never be “pure” in any sense. To the extent that Hyde represents a projection of Jekyll’s bifurcated identity, Hyde’s “evil” would necessarily be commingled with Jekyll’s “good”—a possibility that his “Full Statement” is determined to erase or overwrite. In short, Hyde might be Jekyll’s “veiled mistress”—a possibility to which Jekyll himself attests when he laments that Hyde is “knit to him closer than a wife, closer than an eye” (p. 61).

The fact that Hyde seems to emerge as an ironic, composite figure who is seemingly invoked by the very claims of moral supremacy that are supposed to assert (and perhaps even ensure) his suppression, not only begs the question of whether Stevenson’s text can be read as “hyding” Nietzsche’s formulation of the “beyond,” but also raises the issue of whether the parallels between the two texts represent a startling serendipity or a more significant cultural intersection. Interestingly, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche argues that the ongoing democratization of Europe has resulted in “a tremendous *physiological* process” that is “gaining momentum” (p. 366). According to Nietzsche, “the very same new conditions that will on the average lead to the leveling and mediocritization of man—to a useful, industrious, handy, multi-

purpose herd animal—are likely in the highest degree to give birth to exceptional human beings of the most dangerous and attractive quality” (p. 366). Nietzsche then suggests that when this instinct reaches its “ultimate excesses,” those individuals who possess independence and “the art of commanding” will either disappear entirely or “secretly suffer from a bad conscience and . . . find it necessary to deceive themselves before they could command—as if they, too, merely obeyed” (pp. 300–1). Nietzsche identifies this deception as “the moral hypocrisy of those commanding. They know no other way to protect themselves against their bad conscience than to pose as the executors of more ancient or higher commands (of ancestors, the constitution, of right, the laws, or even of God)” (p. 301). Ultimately, these hypocritical commanders accommodate themselves to “the herd man in Europe” who “gives himself the appearance of being the only permissible kind of man, and glorifies his attributes, which make him tame, easy to get along with, and useful to the herd, as if they were the truly human virtues” (p. 301).

Perhaps not surprisingly, Nietzsche’s description seems to apply to all of the (presumably) upstanding male citizens of Stevenson’s Gothic text, including Enfield, Utterson, Lanyon, Sir Danvers Carew, and, of course, Jekyll himself. In fact, Nietzsche identifies the “leveling and mediocritization of man” as an inherently English phenomenon: “Ultimately they all want *English* morality to be proved right . . . With all their powers they want to prove to themselves that the striving for *English* happiness—I mean for comfort and fashion (and at best a seat in Parliament)—is at the same time also the right way to virtue; indeed that whatever virtue has existed in the world so far must have consisted in such striving” (p. 347). As a result, he argues, “the spirit of respectable but mediocre Englishmen . . . is beginning to predominate in the middle regions of European taste” (p. 381).

Ultimately, what the respective texts of Stevenson and Nietzsche seem to share is a concern for the extent to which moral hypocrisy may be embedded in a class structure that is increasingly figured as a merger of degeneration and democracy, egoism and atavism. Given Britain’s cultural imperialism in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, it is perhaps no surprise that the Victorian Englishman becomes the embodiment of this merger and the protagonist (and antagonist) of its narrative of separation or dissociation. Thus, Stephen D. Arata’s claim that “degeneration becomes a function not of lower-class depravity or aristocratic dissipation but of middle-class ‘virtue,’” could apply equally well to either Stevenson’s text or to Nietzsche’s.²² As Nietzsche boldly

asserts, “philosophizing is . . . a kind of atavism of the highest order” (p. 217).

In the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche argues that “all great things first have to bestride the earth in monstrous and frightening masks in order to inscribe themselves in the hearts of humanity with eternal demands” (pp. 192–3). In the end, however, the “eternal demands” of a Gothic of philosophy represented by the “monstrous and frightening mask” of an Edward Hyde and the boldness of a philosophical *Versucher* may have terrified their creators. Suffering a sudden and ultimately fatal stroke in 1894, Robert Louis Stevenson reportedly asked, before he collapsed, whether his face had changed.²³ Similarly, at the outset of his semi-autobiographical *Ecce Homo* (written late in 1888, not long before his descent into insanity in January of 1889), Friedrich Nietzsche indulges in a surprising lament, worthy of Henry Jekyll himself: “Hear me! For I am such and such a person. Above all, do not mistake me for someone else.”²⁴

NOTES

¹ Henry James, “The Art of the Presentation,” in Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Contexts, Performance Adaptations, Criticism*, ed. Katherine Linehan (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), pp. 101–2. Subsequent references to Stevenson’s novella, hereafter *Jekyll and Hyde*, are from this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text and notes by page number. Similarly, in “Cries and Voices: Reading *Jekyll and Hyde*,” Peter K. Garrett notes that “the oppositions from which James’s tentative appreciation is constructed . . . may still seem pertinent as we try to decide how seriously to take *Jekyll and Hyde*” (in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde after One Hundred Years*, ed. William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch [Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1988], p. 59). Likewise, in “The Strange Voices in the Strange Case: Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde, and the Voices of Modern Fiction,” Ronald R. Thomas has argued that “*Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* contains encased within it two opposing texts with two opposing plots” (in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde after One Hundred Years*, p. 73). Patrick Brantlinger and Richard Boyle also note that “the Jekyll/Hyde split . . . is similar to the other, more familiar dichotomies of Stevenson’s life and work” (in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde after One Hundred Years*, p. 268).

² James, in *Jekyll and Hyde*, p. 102.

³ Stevenson to Will H. Low, Skerryvore, 2 January 1886, in *Jekyll and Hyde*, p. 82.

⁴ Stevenson, “The Dream Origin of the Tale,” from “A Chapter on Dreams,” *Scribner’s Magazine* (January 1888): 122–8, in *Jekyll and Hyde*, pp. 87–91, 87.

⁵ Stevenson, “The Dream Origin of the Tale,” in *Jekyll and Hyde*, p. 88, emphasis added.

⁶ Stevenson, "The Dream Origin of the Tale," in *Jekyll and Hyde*, p. 90.

⁷ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

⁸ In "A Chapter on Dreams," Stevenson also problematizes his own self-consciousness and his ability to write coherently about himself. He argues that the influence of the Brownies upon his writing creates "a doubt that much concerns [his] conscience": "For myself—what I call I, my conscious ego . . . the man with the conscience and the variable bank-account, the man with the hat and the boots, and the privilege of voting and not carrying his candidate at the general elections—I am sometimes tempted to suppose he is no story-teller at all, but a creature as matter of fact as any cheesemonger or any cheese, and a realist bemired up to the ears in actuality; so that, by that account, the whole of my published fiction should be the single-handed product of some Brownie, some Familiar, some unseen collaborator, whom I keep locked in a back garret, while I get all the praise" (*Ibid.*).

⁹ Stevenson, "The Dream Origin of the Tale," in *Jekyll and Hyde*, pp. 90–91.

¹⁰ Stevenson, "The Dream Origin of the Tale," in *Jekyll and Hyde*, p. 90.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Brantlinger, *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1998), p. 167.

¹⁴ Stevenson to Edward Purcell, Skerryvore, 27 February 1886, in *Jekyll and Hyde*, pp. 83–4.

¹⁵ It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that in a letter written to John Paul Bocock, Stevenson excoriates critics who are unable to identify the true source of harm in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. "There is no harm in a voluptuary; and none, with my hand on my heart and in the sight of God, none—no harm whatever—in what prurient fools call 'immorality.' The harm was in Jekyll, because he was a hypocrite—not because he was fond of women . . . The Hypocrite let out the beast Hyde" (Stevenson to Bocock, Saranac Lake, November 1887, in *Jekyll and Hyde*, pp. 86–7, 86).

¹⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Modern Library, 2000), pp. 179–435, 200. Subsequent references to *Beyond Good and Evil* are from this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text and notes by page number.

¹⁷ Although Garrett and Alex Clunas have invoked the specter of Nietzsche in their respective readings of Stevenson's novella, they have eschewed a more thorough juxtaposition of the two texts. In "Cries and Voices," Garrett reaffirms this interpretive dichotomy when he suggests at the very outset of his essay that the "oppositions from which James's tentative appreciation is constructed . . . still seem pertinent as we try to decide how seriously to take *Jekyll and Hyde*." As a result, although he argues that both *Beyond Good and Evil* and *Jekyll and Hyde* articulate a metaphysical concern with the binaries of "good and evil, higher and lower, spirit and matter, soul and body," Garrett nevertheless limits his juxtaposition of Nietzsche's text with Stevenson's to the conclusion that "to confront Jekyll's voice with Nietzsche's

helps to bring out the strong conservative strain in Jekyll's 'Statement,' his efforts to make sense of his terrible experience in conventional moral terms and as the reenactment of a traditional story" (in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde after One Hundred Years*, pp. 59–72, 59–60). Similarly, according to Clunas, the system of moral binaries examined by Stevenson's text is crucial to Utterson's essential "misreading" of the "strange case" that presents itself for his (and our) perusal. According to Clunas, the fact "that good and evil are nested unstably inside each other is the dialectical insight [that Utterson] is not vouchsafed"; as a result, Utterson's (mis)understanding of the events of *Jekyll and Hyde* is limited to a "crude moral dualism" that will ultimately "collapse" in "Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case" ("Comely External Utterance: Reading Space in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*," *JNT* 24, 3 [Fall 1994]: 173–89, 181–2).

¹⁸ See, for example, Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 2, 3–4, 9, 11, 12, 14, 20, 22–3, 53; Garrett, *Gothic Reflections: Narrative Force in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 2003), pp. 2, 6–7, 10, 17, 23–4, 27, 106, 109; and George E. Haggerty, *Gothic Fiction/Gothic Form* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1989), pp. 2–3, 8, 21.

¹⁹ Garrett, "Cries and Voices," p. 71.

²⁰ Jerrold E. Hogle, "The Struggle for a Dichotomy: Abjection in Jekyll and His Interpreters," in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde after One Hundred Years*, pp. 161–207, 161.

²¹ Stevenson to Purcell, in *Jekyll and Hyde*, p. 84.

²² Stephen D. Arata, "The Sedulous Ape: Atavism, Professionalism, and Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*," *Criticism* 37, 2 (Spring 1995): 233–59, 240.

²³ According to Graham Balfour, Stevenson "was helping his wife on the verandah, and gaily talking, when suddenly he put both hands to his head, and cried out, 'What's that?' Then he asked quickly, 'Do I look strange?'" (*The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* [London: Methuen, 1906], p. 264).

²⁴ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp. 673–791, 673.