

PART FOUR
ANALYZING *JEKYLL AND HYDE*

We come now to a consideration of *Jekyll and Hyde* as a Darwinian-Christian-Platonic text, in the light of the preceding chapters. It is worth recalling here that at the time of the book's publication various readers identified all three influences operating in it. An anonymous reviewer for a Christian magazine found that it was

an allegory based on the two-fold nature of man, a truth taught us by the Apostle PAUL in Romans vii., 'I find then a law that, when I would do good, evil is present with me'.¹

John Addington Symonds focused on the atavistic figure of Hyde and the spectre of biological determinism arising from Darwin's theory:

Physical and biological Science on a hundred lines is reducing individual freedom to zero, and weakening the sense of responsibility. I doubt whether the artist should lend his genius to this grim argument. It is like the Cave of Despair in the Faery Queen.²

James Ashcroft Noble, also invoking Spenser, saw Hyde as a Platonic manifestation of Jekyll's evil soul:

The fateful drug acts with its strange transforming power upon the body as well as the mind; for when the first dose has been taken the unhappy victim finds that 'soul is form and doth the body make,' and that his new nature, of evil all compact, has found for itself a corresponding environment (204).³

Each of these readers makes a valid observation, yet at the same time each is providing only a partial explanation for the presence of Hyde within Henry Jekyll. We must not forget that while Stevenson was reading Spencer, Darwin, and Huxley, he was also reading Spenser, Milton, and the Bible. Kingsley accepted Darwinism on one level, and then used it to suit his own higher purpose, which was theological. Nor was he coy about the process. Stevenson, when he became a man, put away childhood belief, but retained all of the language, all of the myth, and many of the values that went with it. His writing reveals the same blending and interweaving of Biblical, Platonic, and scientific language that one can find in Kingsley. In *Jekyll and Hyde*

¹ See Maixner, p.224.

² *Letters*, III, 121. See also Maixner, pp.210-11.

³ *Academy*, 29 (23 January 1886), 55. See also Maixner, p.204.

Darwinism provides an adequate frame of reference on the physical level, but it then gives way to Platonism and the Bible as Stevenson engages with his more profound concerns. It is only when we view Hyde through all three lenses, and focus them together on the underlying theme of heredity, that a clear picture begins to emerge.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HYDE THE WILD MAN

Probably the simplest way of approaching Hyde is to start at the outside and work inwards. His outside presents the reader immediately with a Wild man.⁴ Not only was Stevenson aware of the Wild Man tradition, but at one time he planned to make his own contribution to it with a short story entitled – after, one suspects, not a lot of thought – ‘The Wild Man of the Woods’.⁵ According to Arthur Dickson’s description of the Wild Man, quoted above in Chapter Four, he

has a hairy body, [...] is frequently of great physical strength; [...] carries [...] a club; is sometimes reputed to attack the unwary passer, particularly the women and children.⁶

And Bernheimer writes:

The creature itself may appear without its fur, its club, or its loin ornament. Any one of its characteristics may be said to designate the species.⁷

Hyde’s most obvious characteristic is his hairiness; although it is mentioned only by Jekyll; and then only twice (88, 92); and then only in reference to Hyde’s hands, which are “lean, corded, knuckly, of a dusky pallor, and thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair” (88). One might argue that this hardly constitutes a case of hirsutism, but the fact remains that only Hyde’s face and hands are open to view, and that most of what is open to view is covered in hair.

Hyde’s next Wild Man characteristic is the stick with which he murders Carew, which the maid who witnesses the crime describes as “a heavy cane” (46), and the narrator describes as “of some rare and very tough and heavy wood” (47) — thereby investing it with an exotic origin, making it a suitable weapon for a Wild Man. The maid reports, not that Hyde struck Carew with the cane, but that he “clubbed him to the earth” (47), thereby reinforcing the image of Wildness.

The attack itself is also in keeping with Wild Man behaviour. This is Hyde’s second recorded attack on the unwary passer—the first being the trampling of the young girl,

⁴ Edwin Eigner refers to Hyde as “a wild man who turns particularly evil”. *Robert Louis Stevenson and Romantic Tradition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), p.178. “Wild” is here synonymous with “savage” or “uncivilized”; and, since he also applies “wild” to describe Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, one could safely assume that appearance does not come into it.

⁵ *RLS Letters*, letter 669 to Sidney Colvin, December 1879, III, 33-35, (p.35).

⁶ Dickson, p.9.

⁷ *Wild Men in the Middle Ages*, p.2.

who embodies both the feminine and the child in one. Hyde's final attack on an unwary passer occurs on his way to his midnight rendezvous with Lanyon, when a woman offers him a box of lights, and he hits her in the face (94). Attacks on women by Wild Men usually involved rape. At least one reader of *Jekyll and Hyde* found a flavour of this in the trampling scene. Gerard Manley Hopkins writes: "The trampling scene is perhaps a convention: he [Stevenson] was thinking of something unsuitable for fiction."⁸

The attack on Carew involves another dominant aspect of the Wild Man character—irascibility. The maid reports that, as Carew was speaking politely to Hyde,

He answered never a word, and seemed to listen with an ill-contained impatience. And then all of a sudden he broke out in a great flame of anger, stamping with his foot, *brandishing the cane*, [my emphasis] and carrying on [...] like a madman. [...] 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 upon the roadway (46-47).

As an indication of this Wild Man's "great physical strength", we learn that the cane

with which the deed had been done, although it was of some rare and very tough and heavy wood, had broken in the middle under the stress of this insensate cruelty (47).

Hyde's strength is also noted by Lanyon, who is "struck" with his "great muscular activity" (77).

But more than strength and irascibility are required for the performance of such a crime. Jekyll's Statement provides the clue to persuade the reader that Hyde is a true Wild Man. Jekyll writes:

With a transport of glee, I mauled the unresisting body, tasting delight from every blow (90).

Had he taken a bite out of his victim the picture would have been complete.

Again one might argue that all of these comparisons are simply circumstantial—that Stevenson is thinking of Hyde solely as a hairy ape; that Enfield also carries a cane (30); that the trampling is an example of Hyde's callousness, and the murder an

⁸ *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed., notes and intro. by Claude Abbott (London: Oxford University Press, 1935; 2nd edn rev. 1955), letter 138, 28 October 1886, p.238. See also Maixner, pp.228-30 (p.229). See also Dury for the contemporary association of Hyde with a paedophile known as "the London Minotaur" (*Jekyll*, p.xxxiii-xxxiv).

example of his growing viciousness. How, then, explain the fact that Jekyll – and, increasingly, the “troglodytic” (40) Hyde – lives, ultimately takes shelter in, and finally dies in, the former house of one Dr Denman? The word “former” is used advisedly here, because in some minds the house seems to have remained the property of its late owner. Lanyon, for example, in his letter to Utterson, refers not to entering Jekyll’s laboratory, but to entering “old Dr Denman’s surgical theatre” (76). Among Jekyll’s household the building is “indifferently known as the laboratory or the dissecting-room” (51). Utterson refers to the door at the back of Jekyll’s house as “the old dissecting-room door” (41). The narrator explains that Jekyll “had bought the house from the heirs of a celebrated surgeon; and his own tastes being rather chemical than anatomical, had changed the destination of the block at the bottom of the garden” (51) from that of a dissecting-room, to a laboratory.

Martin Tropp asks:

Why this seemingly unnecessary detail? Stevenson’s equation of Jekyll’s chemical experiments with dissection and surgery, and especially placing the dissecting rooms in a separate place with a disguised entrance on a back street, would no doubt bring to mind the “resurrectionist” scandals earlier in the century.⁹

True enough; but the “seemingly unnecessary detail” of real importance is not the admittedly highly significant association of Jekyll’s experiments with his predecessor’s dissections, but the mention of his predecessor’s name. Stevenson drops this pearl into his narrative with the same sly ease – and with the same intention – as Peacock does in *Melincourt* when Lord Anophel Achthar mentions that Forester and Sir Oran Haut-ton are staying at Wildman’s Hotel in London. After all, where else would a couple of Wild Men stay? Likewise Jekyll – the aspiring Wild Man – and Hyde – the actual Wild Man – have secured a dwelling whose former inhabitant was a Denman; and, as we saw in the chapter on the Wild Man, Wild Men are as often as not Cave men.

Stevenson specifically has Utterson reflect that Jekyll in his younger days had been “wild” (41). The youthful exuberant wildness of Jekyll finds its full evil expression in the Wild form of Hyde. Jekyll, “the professional son of Denman,” as Veeder calls him,¹⁰ being a composite character, moves freely between the respectable front of the

⁹ Martin Tropp, ‘Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Schopenhauer, and the Power of the Will’, *Midwest Quarterly*, 32 (1991), 141-55 (p.149).

¹⁰ *100 Years*, p.122.

house and the disreputable back, as did his predecessor. Hyde, being elementally Wild, inhabits only the part which has maintained its association with Denman—the dissecting-rooms, and, at their furthest extremity, Jekyll’s private cabinet. Not only does he inhabit this part, but he is metaphorically born there. Jekyll describes what happened during his first transformation into Hyde. He drinks the potion.

The most racking pangs succeeded: a grinding in the bones,¹¹ deadly nausea, and a horror of the spirit that cannot be exceeded at the hour of birth or death. Then these agonies began swiftly to subside, and I came to myself (83).

And what of “old Dr Denman’s surgical theatre”? In its day it must, on occasions, have resembled the den of a Wild Man, with the Doctor and his “eager students” (51) engaged in cutting up and dismembering bodies lying naked on the tables, and even then beginning to exhibit signs of decay. Even worse, some of the bodies had very likely been dug up from their graves or murdered by the traffickers. Thus the door, which in Denman’s day opened to admit the victims of an evil and ghoulish trade, now opens for the sole purpose of admitting Hyde to his lair after one of his escapades (33), one of which is the murder of Carew.

One can find the original of Denman’s theatre in Stevenson’s earlier short story *The Body-Snatcher* (written in 1881, published in 1884).¹² A comparison of *Jekyll and Hyde* and *The Body-Snatcher* may provide an insight into Stevenson’s vision of the wild creature lurking in Jekyll’s soul. *The Body-Snatcher* revolves around the premises of “a certain *extra mural* [my emphasis] teacher of anatomy”,¹³ Mr K—, based on the real Dr Robert Knox who notoriously employed Burke and Hare to provide him with bodies for dissection. Denman, having his theatre at the back of his house, is obviously without the walls of the medical schools as well. K—’s pupils are “eager” (480); Denman’s are also “eager” (51). K—’s sub-assistant Fettes, who has

¹¹ Stevenson here may be recalling a phrase from his childhood: “Fee, fi, fo, fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive or be he dead, I’ll grind his bones to make my bread.” He writes to his cousin Bob Stevenson, “There are two English epics: *Paradise Lost* and *Jack the Giant Killer*.” *RLS Letters*, letter 63, September 1868, I, 151.

¹² Commentators have noted correspondences between *Jekyll and Hyde* and *The Body-Snatcher*, but make no reference to Wild Men. See Douglas S. Mack, ‘Dr Jekyll, Mr Hyde, and Count Dracula’, in *Beauty and the Beast: Christina Rossetti, Walter Pater, R.L. Stevenson and their Contemporaries*, ed. by Peter Liebrechts and Wim Tigges (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), pp.149-56. See also Mighall, *Jekyll*, pp.xiv-xvii.

¹³ *The Body-Snatcher*, *Works*, VII, 457-88 (p.465). Further references are given after quotations in the text.

the charge of the theatre and lecture-room (465-66), is the moral prototype of Henry Jekyll. The “slave of his own desires and low ambitions” (466), he leads a double life:

Cold, light, and selfish in the last resort, he had that modicum of prudence, miscalled morality, which keeps a man from inconvenient drunkenness or punishable theft. He coveted, besides, a measure of consideration from his masters and his fellow-pupils, and he had no desire to fail conspicuously in the external parts of life. Thus he made it his pleasure to gain some distinction in his studies, and day after day rendered unimpeachable eye-service to his employer, Mr. K—. For his day of work he indemnified himself by nights of roaring, blackguardly enjoyment; and when that balance had been struck, the organ that he called his conscience declared itself content (466-67).

K— lodges Fettes “in the same wynd, and at last in the same building, with the dissecting rooms” (466). The *OED* defines “wynd” as “A narrow street or passage turning off from a main thoroughfare; a narrow cross-street.” K—’s theatre shares a geographical similarity with Denman’s. Fettes, like Jekyll and Hyde, lives on the premises, where at night:

He would be called out of bed in the black hours before the winter dawn by the unclean and desperate interlopers who supplied the table. He would open the door to these men (466).

For his part, K— attempts to remain apart from any moral taint; but the narrator makes it plain that he is thoroughly implicated:

“Ask no questions,” he would tell his assistants, “for conscience sake.” There was no understanding that the subjects were provided by the crime of murder. Had that idea been broached to him in words, he would have recoiled in horror; but the lightness of his speech upon so grave a matter was, in itself, an offence against good manners, and a temptation to the men with whom he dealt (467-68).

K—’s first assistant is another young doctor, by the name of Wolfe Macfarlane, with whose introduction we see the full complexity of the strange life which these respected professional men are leading. Whereas Fettes appears cravenly debauched, Macfarlane is more of the upper-class man about town, who on the one hand is clubable, and on the other has a taste for the seamy side of life. He is

a high favourite among all the reckless students, clever, dissipated, and unscrupulous to the last degree. He had travelled and studied abroad. His manners were agreeable and a little forward. He was an authority on the stage, skilful on the ice or the links with skate or golf-club; he dressed with nice audacity, and, to put the finishing touch upon his glory, he kept a gig and a strong trotting-horse (470).

Stevenson then immediately undercuts Macfarlane's glory by mentioning the use to which the horse and gig are put during the night, when no one can see this respectable pair:

[W]hen subjects were scarce the pair would drive far into the country in Macfarlane's gig, visit and desecrate some lonely graveyard, and return before dawn with their booty to the door of the dissecting room (470).

These are not nice people. They are, in Stevenson's eye, beasts. Macfarlane's christian name – Wolfe, by which the narrator refers to him five times (459; 459; 470; 475; 477) – requires no explanation; and it is he who provides the other animal imagery, which also implicates K—. Macfarlane murders a crony and brings the body late one night to the dissecting room. By force of character he makes the unwilling Fettes an accomplice. He tells Fettes:

There are two squads of us—the lions and the lambs. If you're a lamb, you'll come to lie upon these tables [...]; if you're a lion, you'll live and drive a horse like me, like K—, like all the world with any wit or courage. You're staggered at the first. But look at K—! (478).

Fettes passes an awful week waiting to be caught; but when it is clear that they have got away with it, he tells Macfarlane that he has “cast in his lot with the lions and foresworn the lambs” (479).

However, Macfarlane's assessment of themselves as lions is challenged by the narrator. Word comes of a burial in a country graveyard. Our two heroes set off to rob the grave:

Somewhat as two vultures may swoop upon a dying lamb, Fettes and Macfarlane were to be let loose upon a grave in that green and quiet resting-place (481).

A comparison of *Jekyll and Hyde* and *The Body-Snatcher* reveals that Stevenson did not choose Denman's name at random. *The Body-Snatcher* shows that the association of beasts with dissecting rooms was already in Stevenson's head before he began *Jekyll and Hyde*. Furthermore the beasts are cruel animals of prey – wolves, lions – or unclean despicable carrion feeders – vultures. The comparison, then, is not between Denman and Jekyll and their respective experiments, but between Denman and K—. Similarly, by extension, one may be justified in viewing Jekyll and Lanyon as standing in the same relationship to Denman as Fettes and Macfarlane stand in relationship to K—. Indeed, Jekyll's purchasing the property, and Lanyon's

familiarity with “old Dr Denman’s surgical theatre” (76) (a pleasant euphemism), would suggest as much.

Uttersson recalls that Jekyll was “wild” in his youth (41). If his youth was anything like that of Fettes and Macfarlane, then he was wild indeed. He lives in a house, some of whose apartments still bear their grisly association with Dr Denman. He metaphorically gives birth to Hyde in the most remote den of the complex. Hyde lives part of his life in the den, and finally dies there. He is a hairy, irascible, violent, stick-wielding night stalker; in other words, a typical Wild Man.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE DARWINIAN HYDE

[A] comical story of an ape touches us quite differently after the proposition of Mr Darwin's theory.

So wrote Stevenson in his review 'On Lord Lytton's *Fables in Song*.'¹⁴

There are not many laughs to be had in *Jekyll and Hyde*; but the principle remains. One is therefore bound to ask oneself the question: Is this a Darwinian text? Hyde's apishness suggests to many that it is. Hyde snarls (40); he is "troglodytic" (40); his fury is "ape-like" (47); he is "like a monkey" (68); he gives out a "screech, as of mere animal terror" (69); he drinks "pleasure with bestial avidity" (86); he begins "to growl for licence" (92); he is "the animal within [Jekyll] licking the chops of memory" (92); he walks about "chattering to himself" after the manner of an ape or monkey (94); he is a "brute" (94); his tricks are "ape-like" (96); as is his spite (97).

Here we find, within the broad category of animal imagery, two independent streams running side by side. Hyde looks and behaves like an ape in his hairiness, his swiftness, his chattering, his rage, his tricks, and his spite. The self which has been trying to get free of Jekyll is the primitive, proto-human brute which Darwinism proclaims as our common ancestor. But that is not all that has been trying to get out. In his Statement Jekyll writes that "man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens" (82). Ironically, the ape-like creature that we see is not the worst of Hyde. The other stream of imagery involves, not early man, but something more dreadful—predators. Wolves, lions, and tigers all snarl, growl, and lick their chops. Here may be a continuation of *The Body-Snatcher's* presence; or it may be that Stevenson is contemplating an even more primitive and bestial state of the human condition, one which has continued as an ever-present shadow on the soul of modern man. Indeed, in one of the more celebrated passages in Jekyll's Statement Stevenson appears to cast his mind back to the very origins of life itself, and to imply that sin is a fundamental property of existence. Jekyll writes that he

thought of Hyde, for all his energy of life, as of something not only hellish but inorganic. This was the shocking thing; that the slime of the pit seemed to utter cries and voices; that the amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned; that what was

¹⁴ *The Fortnightly Review*, June 1874. Reprinted in *Works*, XXIV, 49-62 (p.50).

dead, and had no shape, should usurp the offices of life (95).

Here Stevenson is presenting a straightforward evolutionary concept—life springing from inorganic matter. But, although Huxley gave it the name of Abiogenesis in 1870, it is not necessarily based on modern scientific theory; it began with the ancient Greeks. The Roman poet Lucretius also held that all life grew out of the earth. As for the *primaeval* slime from which all creatures (including, thanks to Darwin, mankind) have evolved, the Egyptians thought they saw life spontaneously generating in the slime on the banks of the Nile. One of the theories which the Houyhnhnms held to explain the existence of the Yahoos was that they were produced by the Sun's heat on slime.

The two concepts, of life developing from inorganic matter, and living creatures generating from slime, came together in the writings of (among others) the German nature-philosopher Lorenz Oken (1776-1857):

Every organic thing has arisen out of slime [*Ur-Schleim*], and is nothing but slime in different forms. This primitive slime originated in the sea, from inorganic matter, in the course of planetary evolution. The origin of life (*generatio originaria*) occurred upon the shores, where water, air, and earth were joined.¹⁵

Likewise, Huxley:

In nature, nothing is at rest, nothing is amorphous; the simplest particle of that which men in their blindness are pleased to call "brute matter" is a vast aggregate of molecular mechanisms performing complicated movements of immense rapidity, and sensitively adjusting themselves to every change in the surrounding world. Living matter differs from other matter in degree and not in kind; the microcosm repeats the macrocosm; and one chain of causation connects the nebulous original of suns and planetary systems with the protoplasmic foundation of life and organisation.¹⁶

Thus, although Jekyll appears to be echoing contemporary scientific theory, he could have derived it from anywhere; in fact, as will be argued later, Stevenson may have been looking far beyond Darwin when he was writing the passage.

What, then, of the ape, to which Hyde is likened? Stevenson obviously recognized the Darwinian implications of such an association; and, equally obviously, he need not have made it. In his recounting of the tale's genesis, he makes no mention of

¹⁵ *Elements of Physiophilosophy* [1805], trans. by Alfred Tulk (London: Ray Society, 1847). Quoted in Osborn, pp.125-26. Osborn glosses "*Ur-Schleim*" as "(?protoplasm)".

¹⁶ 'The Connection of the Biological Sciences with Medicine', *Science and Education, Collected Essays*, III, 347-73 (p.371).

Hyde's appearance—he is simply another person.

Furthermore, Stevenson seems to have taken some pains to make Hyde as authentically ape-like as possible, drawing a figure who exhibits many of the characteristics of apes – in particular, chimpanzees – described in Huxley's *Man's Place in Nature*.

This little book, a thorough and detailed attempt to demonstrate to the lay reader that mankind is related to the lower animals, began life in 1861, when Huxley “was invited to give two addresses on ‘The Relation of Man to the Lower Animals’ at the Philosophical Institute of Edinburgh.”¹⁷ These lectures, which Cyril Bibby describes as “scandalous”,¹⁸ were delivered in 1862 “in the belief that ‘After all, it is as respectable to be modified monkey as to be modified dirt’”.¹⁹ Huxley later “gathered together the substance of his writings and lectures on this topic, and worked them into *Evidences as to Man's Place in Nature*”.²⁰ Naturally, given its authorship, it was a great success. Ashley Montagu writes:

[It] was T.H. Huxley's first book, and his most important. It was published in January 1863 in an edition of one thousand copies, an edition which was soon exhausted and immediately reprinted. In July of the same year the American edition appeared. Both in England and America the book was steadily reprinted for the next forty years.²¹

There is no biographical evidence to suggest that Stevenson read *Man's Place in Nature*; indeed, his only mention of reading anything by Huxley comes after the publication of *Jekyll and Hyde*,²² but a comparison of the two works reveals many curious parallels. Huxley writes: “It is quite certain that the ape which most nearly approaches man, in the totality of its organization, is either the Chimpanzee or the Gorilla” (86). As turning into a gorilla may have been a bit obtrusive in late-Victorian London, Stevenson would have had no decision to make. Moreover, the chimpanzee appears to have suited his purpose. He begins by employing a fairly general term to describe Hyde.

When, after lying in wait for some time, Utterson finally meets Hyde, he is left “the

¹⁷ Cyril Bibby, *Scientist Extraordinary: The Life and Scientific Work of Thomas Henry Huxley* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1972), p.48.

¹⁸ Bibby, p.55.

¹⁹ Bibby, p.55. Bibby is quoting from a letter by Huxley to Frederic Dyster, catalogued by Warren Dawson (1946), held in the archives of Imperial College of Science and Technology, folio 18, 97.

²⁰ Bibby, p.49.

²¹ T.H. Huxley, *Man's Place in Nature*, intro. by Ashley Montagu (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1971), p.1. Further references are given after quotations in the text.

picture of disquietude. [...] ‘God bless me, the man seems hardly human! Something troglodytic, shall we say?’” (40). From the earliest reports of man-like apes, the term *troglodyte* was used indiscriminately. But by the mid-nineteenth century, Huxley is able to write:

For the purpose which I have at present in view, it is unnecessary that I should enter into any further minutiae respecting the distinctive characters of the genera and species into which these man-like Apes are divided by naturalists. Suffice it to say, that the Orangs and the Gibbons constitute the distinct genera, *Simia* and *Hylobates*; while the Chimpanzees and Gorillas are by some regarded simply as distinct species of one genus, *Troglodytes*; by others as distinct genera—*Troglodytes* being reserved for the Chimpanzees, and *Gorilla* for the Engé-ena or Pongo (35-36).

Hyde’s face is “pale” (40), and “ugly” (84). His hand is “lean, corded, knuckly, of a dusky pallor, and thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair” (88). Huxley says of chimpanzees that “their hair is black, while the skin of the face is pale” (35). He also quotes one William Smith, describing a mandrill: “The face, which is covered by a white skin, is monstrously ugly” (21).²³ Huxley goes on to say that the animal “was, without doubt, a Chimpanzee” (22).

Hyde is described as speaking “a little hoarsely” (39). Utterson recalls after the meeting that Hyde “spoke with a husky, whispering and somewhat broken voice” (40). Huxley, drawing on an article by Dr Thomas Savage, remarks: “The ordinary voice of the chimpanzee, however, is affirmed to be hoarse, guttural, and not very loud” (59).²⁴

Utterson finds Hyde “dwarfish” (40). Huxley writes that “the adult Chimpanzees [...] never exceeded, though the males may almost attain, five feet in height” (56). Huxley refers to Tyson’s treatise, and his description of a “Pygmie”:

This “Pygmie,” Tyson tells us, “was brought from Angola, in Africa; [...] Its hair “was of a coal-black colour, and strait [*sic*][...]. From the top of the head to the heel of the foot, in a straight line, it measured twenty-six inches.” [Here Huxley includes two figures (Tyson’s figures 3 and 4) of a hairy biped carrying a walking stick.]

These characters, even without Tyson’s good figures (figs. 3 & 4), would have been sufficient to prove his “Pygmie” to be a young Chimpanzee. But the

²² *RLS Letters*, V, 353-54.

²³ Huxley is quoting from William Smith, *A New Voyage to Guinea* ([n.p.: n.pub.], 1744), p.51.

²⁴ Thomas Savage, ‘Observations on the External Characters and Habits of the *Troglodytes Niger*’, *Boston Journal of Natural History*, vol.4 (1843-44), 362-86 (p.365). Savage refers to “a hoarse guttural sound” (365). Huxley infers that it is “not very loud”.

opportunity of examining the skeleton of the very animal Tyson anatomised having most unexpectedly presented itself to me, I am able to bear independent testimony to its being a veritable *Troglodytes Niger*, though still very young (17-19).

Huxley's figure 6, "The Anthropomorpha of Linnæus", consists of four strange-looking creatures, one of whom is seated on a bench holding a staff of almost Mosaic proportions. This anthropomorph, named *Pygmæus Edwardi*, is copied, Huxley tells us, "from the figure of a young 'Man of the Woods,' or true Orang-Utan, given in Edwards's *Gleanings of Natural History* (1758)" (14).²⁵ This figure presents us with an all too common problem—is it a source for Stevenson? It and Hyde share five common factors. They are both hairy. They both own a solid stick. Hyde is "dwarfish"; the Satier is a "pygmie." They are both named Edward. They both sit on a bench, Hyde's being in Regent's Park (92).

In his Statement Jekyll remembers "that tempest of impatience with which I listened to [Carew]" (90). The maid who witnesses the murder tells how Hyde "broke out in a great flame of anger, stamping with his foot, [...] and carrying on [...] like a madman. [...] He] broke out of all bounds, and clubbed [Carew] to the earth. And next moment, with ape-like fury, he was trampling his victim underfoot" (46-47). Huxley reports that the Asiatic man-like Ape "may be capable of great viciousness and violence when irritated: and this is especially true of adult males" (55).

Hyde has a peculiar walk; the narrator notes that his footsteps "fell lightly and oddly, with a certain swing" (69). The Gibbon, notes Huxley, "walks rather quick in the erect posture [...]. When he walks [...] he turns the leg and foot outwards, which occasions him to have a waddling gait and to seem bow-legged" (39-40).²⁶ Huxley's figures 3 and 4 also show a bow-legged, waddling gait in the chimpanzee.

On the last night, when Utterson and Poole stand listening to the footsteps pacing up and down inside Jekyll's cabinet, Utterson asks, "'Is there never anything else?'" The reply comes, "'Once I heard it weeping. [...] Weeping like a woman or a lost soul'" (69). Huxley, quoting William Smith, says that they (i.e., mandrills, i.e., chimps) "cry

²⁵ George Edwards (1694-1773) was an English natural historian, ornithologist, artist and etcher. His original figure is titled "The Satier".

²⁶ Huxley is quoting from *Wanderings in New South Wales, Batavia, Pedir Coast, Singapore, and China: being the journal of a naturalist in those countries, during 1832, 1833, and 1834/ by George Bennett*, 2 vols (London: Bentley, 1834), vol.2, chap.8.

when vexed or teased, just like children” (21).²⁷

Utterson, by now convinced that Jekyll is dead and that his murderer Hyde is lurking within the cabinet, orders Poole to break down the door. “Poole swung the axe over his shoulder; the blow shook the building, and the red baize door leaped against the lock and hinges. A dismal screech as of mere animal terror rang from the cabinet” (69). Stevenson here could almost have inverted Huxley’s observation: “When shot [chimps] give a sudden screech, not unlike that of a human being in sudden and acute distress” (59).²⁸

The “haunting sense of unexpressed deformity with which [Hyde] impressed his beholders” (50) can also be explained by his likeness to a chimpanzee. When he is forced to visit Lanyon in the middle of the night, Lanyon is “struck [...] with his remarkable combination of great muscular activity and great apparent debility of constitution” (77). The “apparent debility of constitution” refers to Hyde’s smallness and the pallor of his skin, which are characteristics of chimpanzees. As for the “great muscular activity”, Huxley remarks on “the ape-like arrangement of certain muscles which is occasionally met with in the white races of mankind” (166-67).

Hyde has access to Jekyll’s money and, presumably, to his tailor. Although he is “very plainly dressed” (39), his clothes would still be carefully cut to cover some of his deficiencies. However, when he enters Lanyon’s house he is wearing Jekyll’s clothes. Lanyon writes:

His clothes, that is to say, although they were of rich and sober fabric, were enormously too large for him in every measurement – the trousers hanging on his legs and rolled up to keep them from the ground, the waist of the coat below his haunches, and the collar sprawling wide upon his shoulders (77-78).

Lanyon does not mention, in all this detail, whether Hyde’s *sleeves* were rolled up. Hyde’s hands are unimpeded: he “laid his hand upon my arm and sought to shake me” (78); “he paused and put his hand to his throat” (78); he “laid his hand upon his heart” (79); he “plucked away the sheet” from the drawer on the floor (79); holding a graduated glass he “measured out a few minims of the red tincture and added one of the powders” (79). Jekyll in his Statement describes the transformation in Regent’s Park: “I looked down; my clothes hung formlessly on my shrunken limbs; the hand that lay on my knee was corded and hairy” (92).²⁹ If he can still see his hand, then his

²⁷ William Smith, p.51.

²⁸ Huxley is quoting from Thomas Savage, p.386.

²⁹ Note that the Satier’s hand is resting on his knee.

arms have not shrunk to the same extent as the rest of him, therefore he is proportioned more like a chimpanzee, which, according to Huxley, “has arms which reach below the knees” (35).³⁰

If Hyde is not only hairy like an ape, pale like an ape, hoarse like an ape, and gaited like an ape, but proportioned to a degree like an ape, then his deformity would be both noticeable and obscure at the same time, arising as it would from a violation of normal expectations in his beholders.

In a Darwinian landscape, why make a character hairy and ape-like unless you were making a Darwinian point? The answer lies simply in the fact that Stevenson *was* inhabiting a Darwinian world, whose philosophical mood was determined by the new awareness of man’s place in nature. This mood was reflected – and influenced – by writers such as Huxley, of whom James Paradis writes:

The concept of an organic dualism had begun to take shape in Huxley’s final essays. [...] Huxley began to think in psychic dimensions, to conceive of man as a divided entity, one foot in a primordial past and the other in his civilized present, unable to possess completely either his primitive or his civilized self. [...] The primitive self remained intact, although it shared the body with a rational entity Huxley associated with the conscious mind. Neither aspect of this divided self could eliminate the other half; rather, both existed in a kind of painful equilibrium, a never-ending war.³¹

Parts of this passage could almost be a paraphrase of the opening pages of Jekyll’s Statement.

This organic dualism no longer invoked the Platonic system of souls selecting appropriate vehicles in which to express their impulses, as we saw in the story of Er; it no longer invoked the images of Spenser’s Bower of Bliss, or More’s Dizoia, or Milton’s *Comus*, in which particular bestial tendencies lurking within individuals betray themselves in the outer countenance. Organic dualism – planted firmly in the Adonisian garden of Darwinian natural selection – spoke loudly, not of beast *in* man, but of beast *as* man. But Darwinism defined the beast, and insisted that there was no other. In his bestial actions man did not reflect lions, tigers, wolves, goats, foxes, or any other beast of the field: he reflected the ape.

Stevenson’s decision to make Hyde ape-like suggests that his intention was to give

³⁰ Huxley notes (34-35) that of all the apes, the chimpanzee has the shortest arms in proportion to its legs, thereby making it the ape closest to a human in its proportions.

³¹ *T.H. Huxley: Man’s Place in Nature* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), pp.151-52.

the story a surface of reality, if, to paraphrase Henry James, one may speak of reality in such a case. James objected to Jekyll's powders. In a review of *Jekyll and Hyde* he writes:

The powders constitute the machinery of the transformation, and it will probably have struck many readers that this uncanny process would be more conceivable (so far as one may speak of the conceivable in such a case), if the author had not made it so definite.³²

Stevenson made much about the story definite. Locations are definite; houses are definite; individuals are definite. *The Body-Snatcher*, although it begins realistically, is a simple horror story with a simple horror ending which relies on an unspecified supernatural agency. *Jekyll and Hyde*, however, determinedly aims for realism throughout, even to the last tragic detail of the unknown impurity in the salt. The powders are definite (if somewhat vaguely described); and the beast which lurks in Jekyll is the beast which contemporary science gave Stevenson's readers to expect. The story thus rises above the level of fable, to the level of a true scientific description of the inner nature of man.

Is *Jekyll and Hyde* then a Darwinian text? Yes. And no. Or, rather, partly. It is a Darwinian text insofar as Stevenson deliberately draws on contemporary scientific thought in order to drive home the point that within each of us there is a dark ungovernable self whose origins reach back to the very birth of life on this planet—in other words, that we have not fallen from a state of grace, but risen from a state of sordid brutality to arrive at a condition far from accomplished perfection. One might say that Jekyll and Hyde are organic dualism personified.

Or are they? They are certainly dualism personified, but is it entirely organic? Is Hyde a truly Darwinian figure? He is troglodytic, and ape-like, which would seem to place him firmly in the Darwinian basket, along with Stevenson's comic Lucretian men from 'The Manse' and 'Pastoral'³³. However, one cannot overlook the fact that at one point Stevenson appears to state unequivocally that Hyde is *not* a reversion to an earlier primitive form. Jekyll describes the accursed night in which he compounds his elements, watches them boil and smoke together in the glass, then, with a strong glow

³² *Century Magazine*, xxxv (April 1888), 869-79. Reprinted in 'Robert Louis Stevenson', in James's *Partial Portraits* (London: Macmillan, 1888; repr. 1919), pp.137-74 (p.171). Quoted in Maixner, p.309.

³³ Stevenson knew his Lucretius; in a letter of 8 October 1887 to Edmund Gosse he quotes, in Latin,

of courage, drinks off the potion. After the transformation, curious to see his new self, he steals from his cabinet towards his house to view his reflection in his bedroom mirror:

I crossed the yard, wherein the constellations looked down upon me, I could have thought, with wonder, *the first creature of that sort that their unsleeping vigilance had yet disclosed to them* (84). [my emphasis]

If Hyde were a reversion to a more primitive form from a Darwinian perspective, then surely the constellations would recognize him from the time when his fellows roamed the earth. Moreover Stevenson tells the reader unequivocally what sort of creature Hyde is. Jekyll writes:

[A]ll human beings [...] are commingled out of good and evil: and Edward Hyde, alone, in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil (85).

This is not a biological assessment; it is a moral assessment. We may therefore safely conclude that Hyde is not simply a Darwinian reversion. Stevenson also contradicts Darwin's optimistic forecast for humanity's future. Darwin writes:

Hence we may look with some confidence to a secure future of great length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection.³⁴

Jekyll, however, writes:

I have been made to learn that the doom and burthen of our life is bound for ever on man's shoulders; and when the attempt is made to cast it off, it but returns upon us with more unfamiliar and more awful pressure (83).

With his allusions to troglodytes and apes, Stevenson has knowingly pointed his readers in the Darwinian direction (or allowed them to infer it), but then appears to contradict himself. But if Hyde is not a Darwinian throwback, what is he? For an answer to that question, we must look to see what Henry Jekyll has to say about him.

from *De Rerum Natura*. See *RLS Letters*, letter 1899, VI, 24-25.

³⁴ *Origin of Species*, p.373.

CHAPTER NINE

HYDE, MILTON AND THE BIBLE

Thus far we have seen that Hyde exhibits the characteristics of a Wild Man; and it has been argued that some of his characteristics may be actually derived from real apes. But where does Hyde stand in relation to Jekyll? And what does he “stand for”? Jekyll begins his Statement by observing that his “profound duplicity of life” arises from “man’s dual nature” (81); moreover that this duality is “thorough and primitive” (82), which suggests that it stems from our bestial troglodytic origins. However, as we saw in Chapter One, the reviewer in *The Rock* referred to primitive man as “man ‘made in the image of God’ before the fall of our ancestors.”³⁵ Hyde’s origins are therefore ambiguous, but lent a biblical flavour by Jekyll’s allusion to St Paul when he writes of “the perennial war among my members” (82). St Paul writes, in his letter to the Romans:

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members (7.23).³⁶

On a physical level Stevenson presents Jekyll and Hyde as warring brothers. On the very first page he introduces the theme of Cain and Abel:– “‘I incline to Cain’s heresy,’ [Uttererson] used to say quaintly: ‘I let my brother go to the devil in his own way’” (29). The thought of Cain seems to be still on Stevenson’s mind later when Jekyll writes that, following the murder of Carew, his career as Hyde is over. He writes:– “Jekyll was now my city of refuge; let but Hyde peep out an instant, and the hands of all men would be raised to take and slay him” (91-92). Dury (*Jekyll*, p.107) cites Numbers 35.11 as the origin of “city of refuge”:– “Then ye shall appoint you cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares.” For “the hands of all men would be raised to take and slay him”, he cites Genesis 16.12:– “And he [Ishmael] will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him.” However (despite the tempting mention of the wild man), a more likely source – given Stevenson’s theme, the context of the Carew murder, and the murder in Numbers – is Cain’s complaint after the murder of Abel:

³⁵ See Maixner, p.225.

And Cain said unto the LORD, my punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face I shall be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me (Genesis. 5.13-14).

Cain and Abel are not the only warring brothers in the Bible. Stevenson's language evokes an even more closely joined pair of siblings. Jekyll, having fondly dreamt of separating his unjust self from the just, laments:

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 (82).

In Genesis we learn that Isaac's wife Rebekah is with child:

And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the LORD.

And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob (25.22-26).

We now have two sets of warring siblings: Cain slays Abel (4.8); Jacob extorts Esau's birthright (25.29-34); Jacob steals Esau's paternal blessing (27.1-40); Esau vows to kill Jacob (27.41).³⁷

These siblings – physical embodiments of the war in the members – could hold the clue to Stevenson's thought processes in constructing the figure of Hyde. The theme of man's dual nature had been exercising him in the period leading up to *Jekyll and Hyde*. In his dream he saw a man in peril swallow a drug and turn into someone else. The dream also gave him the idea of the change becoming involuntary. Here, then, are the three central ingredients of the story, which, when fused, provide one figure who is divisible into two; who is at war with himself; and who loses the battle for domination of his body. The rivalry of the two competing selves suggests both the fratricidal struggle between Cain and Abel – in which Cain slays Abel and is cursed

³⁶ See also the Epistle of St James: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (4.1).

for it – and that of Jacob and Esau, whose struggle for inheritance (a constant motif in *Jekyll and Hyde*) commences even in the womb. The smoothness of Jacob and the hairiness of Esau are reflected in the smoothness of Jekyll (43) and the hairiness of Hyde. If Hyde is a true representation of Esau, then he is “hairy all over, like an hairy garment”, which lends strength to the argument about him being a Wild Man, and would also be appropriate to him being apelike. From this the Darwinian association would inevitably follow, as well as the need for an accurate description of a suitable ape, namely, a chimpanzee.

Jekyll, of course, is keen to distinguish between himself and Hyde from the start, and lapses into more biblical language as he does so, referring to Hyde as “the unjust”, and himself (rather optimistically) as “the just [who] could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path” (82)—an allusion to Proverbs 20.7: “The just man walketh in his integrity.”

The warring sibling theme is obvious enough, but what is Stevenson saying about Jekyll and Hyde at a deeper level? Jekyll writes that Hyde’s form and countenance are “the expression [...] of lower elements in [his] soul” (83); and refers to his body as a “tabernacle” (83), echoing the words of St Paul: “our earthly house of this tabernacle” (II Corinthians 5.1), and St Peter: “as long as I am in this tabernacle” (II Peter 1.13). Jekyll’s complaint therefore is that part of his indwelling soul is sinful, and it is that part which tends to lead his members astray. Thus the problem is one not so much of bestial tendencies, as of sinful tendencies. Whence, then, comes this sin? G.K. Chesterton, assessing Stevenson as an author, writes:

[I]f he could bear no witness to the Resurrection, he was continually bearing witness to the Fall (224).

This witness began at an early age. Stevenson writes of his childhood:

I would lie awake [in bed at night] declaiming aloud to myself my views of the universe in something that I called singing although I have no ear and in a measure of my own although at that time I can have known nothing of verse. One of these *Songstries*, for so I named my evening exercises, was taken down by my father from behind the door, and I have seen it within the last few years. It dealt summarily with the Fall of Man, taking a view most inimical to Satan.³⁸

³⁷ In defiance of all expectations, Jacob and Esau reconcile (Gen. 33.1-4).

³⁸ ‘Memoirs of Himself’, *Works*, XXVI, 203-37 (p.215). Stevenson wrote these memoirs “alone in San Francisco” (205) in January 1880.

He continues, with an observation, and a question whose relevance will become apparent in our final chapter:

[B]ut what is truly odd, it fell into a loose, irregular measure with a tendency toward the ten-syllable heroic line. This, as I am sure I can then have heard little or nothing but hymn metres, seems to show a leaning in the very constitution of the language to that form of verse; or was it but a trick of the ear, inherited from 18th century ancestors?³⁹

Jekyll and Hyde not only bears witness to the Fall, it re-enacts it.⁴⁰ And, it would seem, it does so while employing language derived from both the Bible and *Paradise Lost*. I am not suggesting that Stevenson based his story on *Paradise Lost*, but rather that the original conception suggested the Biblical and Miltonic parallels to one who, by this time, had restored his belief in God. Katherine Linehan outlines Stevenson's method:

Intertextual allusions typically operate as a ghostlike presence in the fiction of Robert Louis Stevenson. [...] He habitually left echoes of predecessor texts to be recognized – or not – through such trace effects as an association-laden proper name, a foreign phrase, a teasingly familiar-sounding turn of phrase, or a déjà vu sensation recalling an important scene in a well-known work.

I doubt that any work of Stevenson's, however, can match his most famous spook story, [*Jekyll and Hyde*], for suitability and subtlety of function involved in just such shadowiness of allusion.⁴¹

Linehan's argument is that,

While Stevenson worked at top speed to produce a piece of sensation fiction geared to popular accessibility, he laid up an additional store of mind-teasing, shock-inducing reading pleasure through knowing his intertextual sources so intimately that he could draw on them with ease to create what amounts to a coded layer of signification for readers who share a knowledge of those sources.⁴²

The biblical allusions in *Jekyll and Hyde* therefore arise naturally from the language and symbolism which Stevenson imbibed while he was growing up; and, I would argue, the Miltonic parallels both grow out of, and in their turn serve to inform, Stevenson's dramatic arc. It has been mentioned that Stevenson burned his first draft,

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Paul Fayter, while regarding *Jekyll and Hyde* as a work of "evolutionist science fiction", nevertheless interprets it as "an explicitly biological metaphor for the Fall." See 'Strange New Worlds of Space and Time: Late Victorian Science and Science Fiction', in *Victorian Science in Context*, ed. by Bernard Lightman (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp.256-80 (pp.262-63). Aaron Perkus writes, "The 'Fall of man' motif is ingeniously repeated in the text of *Jekyll and Hyde*" (40).

⁴¹ 'The Devil can cite Scripture', p.5.

apparently because, according to his wife, he had not seen the allegory. I would suggest that the Miltonic layer may be Stevenson's remedy, because, once it is seen, it provides an obvious – and consistent – allegorical subtext. Milton was one of Stevenson's favourite authors. His mother gave him an edition of Milton's works for his eighteenth birthday.⁴³ He discussed Milton with J.A. Symonds during his stays in Davos.⁴⁴ When Edmund Gosse was selecting material for his anthology *English Odes* (1881), Symonds and Stevenson suggested Milton's 'Time' and 'Solemn Music'.⁴⁵ In his letters Stevenson quotes from Milton's 'Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity';⁴⁶ 'Areopagitica';⁴⁷ 'On Time' and 'L'Allegro';⁴⁸ 'Lycidas';⁴⁹ and, of course, *Paradise Lost*.⁵⁰ The obvious biblical language and references, and (if my argument is correct) the less obvious but thematically consistent Miltonic allusions, therefore lift *Jekyll and Hyde* beyond a mere story about humanity's lingering animal self, and turn it into an examination of a creature at war with itself in a moral universe. Optimistic Darwinism suggests that mankind will in the fullness of time rise above its primitive origins and shake off its bestial limitations. Henry Jekyll's statement that "the doom and burthen of our life is bound for ever on man's shoulders" (83) suggests that mankind's problem is one of more than mere biology.

Hyde is associated throughout with Satan. Enfield tells Utterson that the trampling of the girl was "hellish to see" (31), and that afterwards Hyde behaves "like Satan" (32). Utterson reads "Satan's signature" (40) in Hyde's face. Jekyll calls him his "devil", who contains "the spirit of hell" (90); "that child of Hell" (94); and a "fiend" (36; 85) – a term used by Milton for Satan in *Paradise Lost* (II.677; III.430; IV.1013; XI.101). In order to drive home the association of Hyde with Satan, Stevenson invokes the Book of Job:

And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it (1.7).

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.6. Linehan makes no mention of *Paradise Lost*.

⁴³ *RLS Letters*, I, 168, n4.

⁴⁴ *RLS Letters*, letter 743 to Sidney Colvin, November 1880, III, 120.

⁴⁵ *RLS Letters*, letter 762 to Edmund Gosse, December 1880, III, 144. Their first choice was Tennyson's 'Duke of Wellington' (143).

⁴⁶ *RLS Letters*, letter 72, I, 168.

⁴⁷ *RLS Letters*, letter 146, I, 326.

⁴⁸ *RLS Letters*, letter 1126, IV, 146.

⁴⁹ *RLS Letters*, letter 1257, IV, 276.

⁵⁰ *RLS Letters*, letter 2176, VI, 311.

Stevenson cleverly uses Satan's words, but spaces them apart, and presents them in the same order. On the final night, as Utterson and Poole wait outside Jekyll's cabinet door, listening to the sounds of Hyde within, they hear "the sound of a footfall moving to and fro along the cabinet floor" (68). Ten minutes later the "patient foot" is "still going up and down, up and down" (69). In Jekyll's Statement he relates how, waiting for the hours to pass until Hyde can rendezvous with Lanyon, he hails a cab and is "driven to and fro about the streets" (94). As he finishes his Statement Jekyll pictures himself once more and irretrievably Hyde, a prisoner in his cabinet, pacing "up and down this room" (97).

The first description of Jekyll's house is from the back—the area from which Hyde comes and goes. The narrator's perspective places it "on the left hand" (30). In St Matthew's gospel Hell is on the left hand:

Then shall he [the King] say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (25.41).

Milton also places Hell on the left hand. After the Fall Sin and Death construct a bridge from Earth to Hell:

With Pinns of Adamant
And Chains they made all fast, too fast they made
And durable; and now in little space
The Confines met of Empyrean Heav'n
And of this World, and on the left hand Hell
With long reach interpos'd. (X.318-23)

Milton relates the fall of Satan and the birth of Sin and Death. He then parallels and re-enacts the same process in the Fall of Adam and Eve. Satan, escaping Hell in order to pervert mankind, happens upon two deformed and monstrously ugly creatures, whom he does not recognize. Sin addresses him:

Hast thou forgot me then, and do I seem
Now in thine eye so foul, once deem'd so fair
In Heav'n, when at th' Assembly, and in sight
Of all the Seraphim with thee combin'd
In bold conspiracy against Heav'n's King,
All on a sudden miserable pain
Surpris'd thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzie swumm
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth, till on the left side op'ning wide,
Likest to thee in shape and count'nance bright,

Then shining heav'nly fair, a Goddess arm'd
Out of thy head I sprung. (II.747-58)

Note that Sin has sprung from the left side of Satan's head.

Compare the painful and disorienting experience of Satan with that of Jekyll after he drinks his potion:

The most racking pains succeeded: a grinding in the bones, deadly nausea, and a horror of the spirit that cannot be exceeded at the hour of birth or death (83).

Sin relates what happened when she made her first appearance:

amazement seis'd
All th'host of Heav'n; back they recoild affraid
At first, and called me *Sin*, and for a Sign
Portentous held me; but familiar grown,
I pleas'd, and with attractive graces won
The most averse, thee chiefly, who full oft
Thy self in me thy perfet image viewing
Becam'st enamour'd, and such joy thou took'st
With me in secret, that my womb conceiv'd
A growing burden. (II.758-67)

Here Milton expands the archetypal pattern which he will repeat in Adam and Eve. Satan finds the perfect image of himself in Sin; likewise, so does Adam with Eve. God causes a deep sleep to fall on Adam, who yet remains conscious and observes as the Divine form,

stooping op'nd my left side, and took
From thence a Rib, with cordial spirits warme,
And Life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound,
But suddenly with flesh filld up and heald:
The Rib he formd and fashond with his hands:
Under his forming hands a Creature grew,
Manlike, but different sex, so lovely faire,
That what seemd fair in all the World, seemd now
Mean, or in her summd up, in her containd,
And in her looks, which from that time infus'd
Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,
And into all things from her Aire inspir'd
The spirit of love and amorous delight. (VIII.465-77)

Note that the extraction of the rib from the left side of Adam is a Miltonic device not found in the Bible.⁵¹ Milton has introduced it for thematic symmetry:– Eve springs

⁵¹ This fact has also been noted recently in *Paradise Lost*, ed. and intro. by David Scott Kasdan (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 2005), p.253.

from the left of Adam just as Sin springs from the left of Satan. After the Fall, as we shall see, Milton darkens this conceit by replacing “left” with its more formal and archaic equivalent, “sinister”, and all of its negative connotations.

Stevenson, on the other hand, introduces Jekyll’s house by using “left” and “sinister” in the same sentence (30), thereby associating them both at the beginning, and thereby loading the neutral “left” with a darker overtone. Hyde may not have sprung, like Sin, from the left side of Jekyll’s head; nor, like Eve, from the left side of Jekyll’s body; but he is associated with the left-hand side. The court leading to the back of Jekyll’s house – from which Hyde comes and goes – is on the left (30). After Jekyll involuntarily turns into Hyde in Regent’s Park he writes to Lanyon for help, writing that he would sacrifice his “left hand” (74) to help Lanyon if he were in trouble. Commentators point out that the phrase is usually, to sacrifice one’s *right* hand.⁵² Hyde writes to Lanyon that the transforming chemicals are to be found in a press “on the left hand” (74) in Jekyll’s cabinet.⁵³ Hyde is also associated with “sinister.” The back of Jekyll’s house – the Hyde part – is “sinister” (30); and Utterson regards the inexplicable terms of Jekyll’s will as arising “from the sinister suggestion of the man Hyde” (59).

Stevenson, of course, was not reliant on Milton (or any one particular author) for the commonplace association of “left” and “sinister”. But Stevenson’s text suggests that (just as Spenserian language and imagery permeated Kingsley’s imagination when he was writing *The Water-Babies*), so Stevenson naturally reflected biblical mythology in one of its highest literary expressions – the poetry of Milton – when dealing with such a fundamental issue as the presence of evil in mankind.

Adam, having parted with his rib, wakes infatuated and obsessed with finding the lovely vision from his dream. He sees her coming towards him. He speaks:

I now see
 Bone of my Bone, Flesh of my Flesh, my Self
 Before me; Woman is her Name, of Man
 Extracted; for this cause he shall forgoe
 Father and Mother, and to his Wife adhere;
 And they shall be one Flesh, one Heart, one Soule. (VIII.494-99)

⁵² See, e.g., Veeder, *100 Years*, p.138.

⁵³ Noted in Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Annotated Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, ed., intro. and notes by Richard Dury, 2nd edn, rev. (Genoa: Edizioni Culturali Internazionali Genova, 2005), p.152. (Hereafter Dury, *Annotated*.)

Sin is the “perfect image” (II.764) of Satan. Likewise, Adam’s “my Self/ Before me” proclaims that Eve is the “image” of Adam. Yet when she sees him she retreats in apprehension. Adam calls after her, and reassures her in words that call to mind Jekyll’s description of Hyde as

a second form and countenance [...], none the less natural to me because they were the expression, and bore the stamp, of [...] *elements in my soul* (83). [my emphasis]

Acknowledging Eve as both himself and from himself, yet apart, Adam says:

Return fair *Eve*,
Whom fli’st thou? whom thou fli’st, of him thou art,
His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart
Substantial Life, to have thee by my side
Henceforth an individual solace dear;
Part of my Soul [my emphasis] I seek thee, and thee claim
My other half. (IV.481-88)

Satan sees himself in Sin. This is the self projected by his pride and ambition. Adam sees himself in Eve. She is the self provided for him by the Lord in order to complement and fulfill Adam’s existence. The Lord tells the lonely and incomplete Adam:

What next I bring shall please thee, be assur’d,
Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,
Thy wish, exactly to thy hearts desire. (VIII.449-51)

All of this could with equal justification be said about Hyde. Eve is the likeness of Adam, yet a dissimilar one; Hyde is Jekyll, yet unrecognizably so. Hyde is created to be Jekyll’s fit help in his secret depravities; he is his other self, his wish, and, when Jekyll finally sees him, exactly to his heart’s desire.

Eve continues the established pattern of self-observation. Adam wakes after his creation, as if from sleep (VIII.253); and again sleeps (though conscious) during the creation of Eve. Eve wakes after her creation, as if from sleep (IV.450). She tells Adam that she followed the sound of water,

and laid me downe
On the green bank, to look into the clear
Smooth Lake, that to me seemd another Skie.

As I bent down to look, just opposite,
 A Shape within the watry gleam appeerd
 Bending to look on me, I started back,
 It started back, but pleasd I soon returnd,
 Pleasd it returnd as soon with answering looks
 Of sympathie and love; there I had fixt
 Mine eyes till now, and pin'd with vain desire,
 Had not a voice thus warnd me, What thou seest,
 What there thou seest fair Creature is thy self,
 With thee it came and goes. (IV.457-69)

Adam (formed from the dust of the ground by the Lord), and Eve (formed from Adam's rib by the Lord), both awake as if from a gentle sleep; and each awakes as if from a gentle sleep, to see an other which they come to realize as their self.

Jekyll, however, like Satan, experiences racking pains, deadly nausea, and a horror of the spirit which he associates with both birth and death—a prophetic choice of words, because the birth of Hyde signals the death of Jekyll. During this period of confusion and disorientation he changes, unaware, into Hyde. Still referring to himself as the “I” who drank the potion, he writes:

Then these agonies began swiftly to subside, and I came to myself as if out of a great sickness. There was something strange in my sensations, something indescribably new and, from its very novelty, incredibly sweet. I felt younger, lighter, happier in body (83).

Jekyll experiences for the first time what it is to be Hyde. He writes:

I knew myself, at the first breath of this new life, to be more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to my original evil; and the thought, in that moment, braced and delighted me like wine (84).

Stevenson's language suggests that Jekyll's sensations correspond to those of Adam and Eve after eating the apple: Satan, in the body of the serpent, tempts Eve to eat the fruit, whereby she too is delighted as if with wine. Eve,

Intent now wholly on her taste, naught else
 Regarded, such delight till then, as seemd,
 In Fruit she never tasted, whether true
 Or fansied so, through expectation high
 Of knowledg, nor was God-head from her thought.
 Greedily she ingorg'd without restraint,
 And knew not eating Death: Sate at length,
 And highthn'd as with Wine. (IX.786-93)

Likewise, Adam is also sold a slave to original evil, and is delighted as if with wine:

Nature gave a second groan,
 Skie lowr'd, and muttering Thunder, som sad drops
 Wept at compleating of the mortal Sin
 Original; while *Adam* took no thought,
 Eating his fill, nor *Eve* to iterate
 Her former trespass feard, the more to soothe
 Him with her lov'd societie, that now
 As with new Wine intoxicated both
 They swim in mirth, and fansie that they feel
 Divinitie within them breeding wings
 Wherewith to scorn the Earth. (IX.1001-11)

But Jekyll has in fact changed into Hyde. In other words, he has changed from the Satan who conceived Sin, into Sin herself. And as Satan saw himself in Sin, and Adam saw himself in Eve, and Eve saw herself in her reflection in the water, so it is with Hyde and his reflection. Curious to see his new form, he steals from Jekyll's cabinet to stand before the mirror in Jekyll's bedroom. Jekyll writes, in that curiously fluid blending of personalities that characterizes his Statement:

Even as good shone upon the countenance of the one,⁵⁴ evil was written broadly and plainly on the face of the other. Evil besides (which I must still believe to be the lethal side of man) had left on that body an imprint of deformity and decay. And yet when I looked upon that ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance, rather of a leap of welcome. This, too, was myself (84).⁵⁵

Viewed in a Miltonic context, this becomes a very complex moment. Jekyll, recalling the incident much later, considers the image of Hyde in the mirror, and writes, "This, too, was myself", as if he were Satan observing Sin, or Adam observing Eve. The scene at the time, however, involves not Jekyll observing Hyde, but Hyde observing his own image; and being (if one may use the word here), charmed by it, in

⁵⁴ Jekyll views himself in a better light than the narrator, who describes him as, "a large, well-made, smooth-faced man [...], with something of a slyish cast perhaps (43).

⁵⁵ Alan Sandison also makes the connection between Eve first seeing herself and Hyde first seeing himself. See *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Appearance of Modernism* (London: Macmillan; New York: St Martins, 1996), p.260. Although he speculates on one other, less certain, reference to *Paradise Lost* (268, n48), he finds no more parallels between the two texts. However, he finds that in *The Master of Ballantrae* "references to *Paradise Lost* are widespread" (314). Barbara Hannah in her Jungian analysis of *Jekyll and Hyde* writes: "[T]his is perhaps one of the finest descriptions in literature of a man meeting his shadow and recognizing him fully as his own" (46). Hannah explains that the shadow "comes from our dark, completely unknown side, and is related to the serpent who first confronted Eve with the problem of evil and thus led to the expulsion from Eden" (17). I do not quote this observation in order to claim Stevenson as a proto-Jungian, but simply to provide another example of the universality of Stevenson's text.

the same way that Eve is charmed by her image.⁵⁶ But, since it is the Adamic Jekyll's narrative, it is his moment of recognition – expressed in the use of “I” – that concerns us here.

Whereas Satan after his fall happily continues to acknowledge his relationship with Sin, Adam after his fall rejects the one whom he had formerly found so dear. When Eve presents him with her offence, Adam, not realizing the implications of what he is about to do, elects to follow her example, and reiterates their indissoluble bond:

However I with thee have fixt my Lot,
 Certain to undergoe like doom; if Death
 Consort with thee, Death is to mee as Life;
 So forcible within my heart I feel
 The Bond of Nature drawe me to my owne,
 My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;
 Our State cannot be severd, we are one,
 One Flesh; to loose thee were to loose my self. (IX.952-59)

But after the Fall he turns on her in shame, frustration, accusation, and despair, and tries to dissociate himself from her:

But for thee
 I had persisted happie, had not thy pride
 And wandring vanitie, when lest was safe,
 Rejected my forewarning, and disdaind
 Not to be trusted, longing to be seen
 Though by the Devil himself, him overweening
 To over-reach, but with the Serpent meeting
 Fool'd and beguil'd, by him thou, I by thee,
 To trust thee from my side, imagind wise,
 Constant, mature, proof against all assaults,
 And understood not all was but a shew
 Rather then solid vertu. (X.873-84)

Jekyll also, finding himself unable to control his sinful nature, now turns on the self which he created in order to indulge it. In a final attempt to justify himself and place all the blame on Hyde, he writes:

He had now seen the full deformity of that creature that shared with him some of the phenomena of consciousness, and was co-heir with him to death: and beyond these links of community, which in themselves made the most poignant part of his distress, he thought of Hyde, for all his energy of life, as of something not only hellish but inorganic. This was the shocking thing; that the slime of the pit seemed

⁵⁶ Eve's origin must have appealed to Stevenson. In a letter to W.E. Henley he writes: "I am reading hard for my work on *The Transformation of the Scottish Highlands*, which has grown, like Eve, out of one rib in *Scotland and the Union*." *RLS Letters*, letter 764, 21 December 1880, III, 146-48 (p.148).

to utter cries and voices; that the amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned; that what was dead, and had no shape, should usurp the offices of life. And this again, that that insurgent horror was knit to him closer than a wife, closer than an eye; lay caged in his flesh, where he heard it mutter and felt it struggle to be born (95).

We have already examined this passage from the Darwinian viewpoint of most modern commentators, in which the dust and the slime are interpreted as a pre-biological and a biological state. However, Stevenson's biblical imagery elsewhere in the text allows one to regard the dust as that which went to form Adam and all his children.⁵⁷ This reading takes us back to the origins of life; but it suggests that, although sin and evil may be a fundamental property of existence, it is not a biological problem, it is a spiritual problem. The pairing of "hellish" and "inorganic", however, raises an interesting point about Hyde's origins, as Jekyll immediately equates him with "the slime of the pit"; which could be either Ur-Schleim in some primaevial Darwinian swamp, or Milton's "asphaltic slime" (X.298) in the "Pit", a Miltonic synonym for Hell (I.91) deriving from the Bible.⁵⁸ At a level beyond the Darwinian, Stevenson could be taking the scientific process of inorganic matter evolving into organic life, and transferring it back into an archetypal beginning in Hell, a place of

Fens, Bogs, Dens, and shades of death,
A universe of death, which God by curse,
Created evil, for evil onely good,
Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Then Fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceiv'd,
Gorgons and Hydra's, and Chimera's dire. (II.621-28)⁵⁹

If this be the case, then when Jekyll calls Hyde a "child of Hell" he is being exact: Satan may have been exiled to Hell because of his crime, but Hyde has sprung deformed from Hell's natal mud.

The "amorphous dust" that "was dead, and had no shape" could be the dust of the earth which was formed into the first man and, by extension, the first woman. After the Fall Adam tells Eve:

⁵⁷ Dury (*Annotated*, p.184) quotes Genesis 3.19: "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

⁵⁸ Numbers 16.30, 33. Job 17.16.

⁵⁹ Stevenson was well aware of this passage. In a letter to Sidney Colvin (admittedly, of 1889), he refers to "gorgons and chimaeras dire." *RLS Letters*, letter 2176, VI, 310-13 (p.311).

we are dust,
And thither must return and be no more. (XI.199-200)⁶⁰

Why is Hyde “knit to [Jekyll] closer than a wife?” This is both an appropriate and a curious image for Stevenson to use. The use of “knit” is a highly appropriate adoption of a term familiar from the Bible, in which hearts, souls, individual bodies, and groups of bodies are joined together as one.⁶¹ The use of “wife”, however, is curious. There is only one example of “closer than” in the Bible; and it would seem to suit Stevenson’s purpose exactly:

A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother (Proverbs 18.24).

Given that Stevenson has introduced the themes of Cain and Abel and Jacob and Esau; and Jekyll has written “in the agonised womb of consciousness these polar twins should be continuously struggling” (82); and that he goes on to reprise the image by writing that he can feel Hyde “struggle to be born” (95); and given all of the other biblical references; why does Stevenson not maintain the sibling imagery at this crucial point? Why does he instead elect to shift the focus to “wife”? Perhaps Stevenson is wanting to remind the reader that, despite Jekyll’s attempt to distance himself from Hyde (He, I say – I cannot say, I’ (94)), they are, in fact, like man and wife, one flesh.

It could be that the sudden association of Hyde with “wife” at this point indicates a deliberate Miltonic association on Stevenson’s part. We have seen that the forbidden fruit intoxicates Adam and Eve like wine (IX.793; 1008); and that Jekyll’s first draught of his potion delights him like wine (84). We have seen that Eve (VIII.465) and Hyde (30; 74) are both associated with the left. Adam is initially pleased with Eve; Jekyll is initially pleased with Hyde. Adam and Eve both sin together; Jekyll, despite his protestations, sins along with Hyde. After the Fall Adam turns on Eve and wants to reject her; eventually Jekyll turns on Hyde and wants to reject him. It is at this point that Hyde becomes “closer than a wife”—symbolically, the wife being Eve.

⁶⁰ In Stevenson’s philosophy, Adam’s fear of being no more is unfounded. As we shall see in the final chapter, part of each generation continues to live on in its descendants.

⁶¹ “So all the men of Israel were gathered together against the city, knit together as one man” (Judges 20.11). “[T]he soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul” (I Samuel 18.1). “If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you” (I Chronicles 12.17). “That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love” (Colossians 2.2). “[T]he body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you [...], not holding the Head, from which all the

This is not to say that Hyde should be consistently identified with Eve, but in this passage Jekyll's language betrays him as the guilty fallen Adam (now "co-heir [...] to death" with Eve), turning in hypocritical righteous indignation and blaming his fellow sinner for the mess. Jekyll's changing relationship with Hyde appears to follow Adam's changing relationship with Eve. Before the Fall, Adam tells her how the Lord, "stooping op'nd my left side and took/ From thence a Rib" (VIII.465-66). More lovingly he tells her. "[T]o give thee being I lent/ Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart/ Substantial Life" (IV.483-85). When he first sees her he says, "I now see/ Bone of my Bone, Flesh of my Flesh/ Before me" (VIII.494-96). Likewise, Jekyll, recalling his first sight of Hyde, writes, "This too, was myself" (84).

However, when Adam turns on Eve, he regrets that she was ever created, and laying a darker connotation on her association with the left, denigrates and belittles her as

all but a Rib
Crooked by nature, bent, as now appears,
More to the part sinister from me drawn,
Well if thrown out, as supernumerarie
To my just number found. (X.884-88)

Hyde also, with his nameless deformity, is crooked by nature. He too is physically bent in his deformity, as well as bent both towards and on that which is sinister. He is drawn from the sinister "lower elements" (83) of Jekyll's soul; and physically emerges first from the sinister aspect of Jekyll's house. In the "slime of the pit" passage presently under discussion, Jekyll first regards Hyde as dust, which is generally accepted as (among others) an Adamic reference. Jekyll then writes that Hyde is knit to him closer than a wife; and nothing could be closer, since man and wife are one flesh—another biblical allusion centred around Adam and Eve. Next he writes that Hyde "lay caged in his flesh" (95), as if they were separate. Hyde is associated with beasts, therefore being caged is a natural image to use. But there may be some other word association going on here: "caged" could well carry the double associations of both "caged beast" and "rib-caged"—the rib again reinforcing the association at this point of Hyde with Eve. This would not be an isolated instance in Stevenson's writings. Sir Walter Raleigh (1861-1922), commenting on Stevenson's use of wordplay, writes:

body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Colossians 2.17-19).

Sometimes [...] this subtle sense of double meanings almost leads to punning. In *Across the Plains* Stevenson narrates how a bet was transacted at a railway-station, and subsequently, he supposes, ‘liquidated at the bar.’ This is perhaps an instance of the excess of a virtue, but it is an excess to be found plentifully in the works of Milton.⁶²

There remains but one more Miltonic character to examine. We recall that Satan became enamoured of Sin, and coupled incestuously with her, whereupon her womb conceived a growing burden. Sin tells Satan:

Pensive here I sat
Alone, but long I sat not, till my womb
Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown
Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.
At last this odious offspring whom thou seest
Thine own begott’n, breaking violent way
Tore through my entrails, that with fear and pain
Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
Transformd: but hee my inbredemie
Forth issu’d, brandishing his fatal Dart
Made to destroy: I fled, and cry’d out *Death*. (II.777-87)

St James writes:

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (1.15).

Jekyll’s sin, like Satan’s, is pride. He has an “imperious desire to carry [his] head high” (81). Even after all he has done as Hyde – including the murder of Carew – he still feels superior to his fellow men. Sitting on the bench in Regent’s Park he has one last “vainglorious thought”, which produces symptoms resembling those which afflicted the rebellious Satan at the birth of Sin. Jekyll writes:

[A] qualm came over me, a horrid nausea and the most deadly shuddering. These passed away, and left me faint (92).

He changes into Hyde, and from then on can no longer maintain the identity of Jekyll for more than a short period of time. Sin has gained the ascendant, and Death is on the wing.

Milton’s *Death* offers a possible solution to one of the great verbal mysteries in Stevenson’s story. On the night of Hyde’s death Poole persuades Utterson to come to

⁶² *Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: Arnold, 1927), p.36. Raleigh is not suggesting that Stevenson

Jekyll's house. Jekyll is apparently missing, and someone is prowling about inside his cabinet. Poole explains that Jekyll had been writing desperately to his chemist for new ingredients. The chemist's name is Maw (65; 66). Why? What does it mean?⁶³

After the Fall Satan hurries back to Hell, to spread the good news. On the way he meets Sin and Death. He sends them on towards the Earth, where he tells them to

Dominion exercise [...],
Chiefly on Man, sole Lord of all declar'd,
Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill.⁶⁴ (X.400-02)

They speed on, and survey the Earth. Sin asks Death how he likes their new empire. He replies:

To mee, who with eternal Famin pine,
Alike is Hell, or Paradise, or Heaven,
There best, where most with ravin I may meet;
Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems
To stuff this Maw. (X.597-601)

Meanwhile the fallen Adam and Eve ponder their lot, and the misery which they have brought on all the generations yet unborn. Adam, despairing, says to Eve:

Childless thou art, Childless remaine: So Death
Shall be deceav'd his glut, and with us two
Be forc't to satisfie his Rav'nous Maw. (X.989-91)

The chemist's strange name could be a signal – in Stevenson's mind, at least – that Death's maw is waiting; and the end is near for Jekyll and Hyde.⁶⁵

One can find Miltonic parallels even in the final moments of Jekyll/Hyde. Jekyll, trapped in his cabinet, writes of the mutual hatred between himself and Hyde:

and indeed, had it not been for his fear of death, he would long ago have ruined himself in order to involve me in the ruin (96).

Likewise, at her first meeting with Satan as he is escaping Hell, Sin reflects on her relationship between herself and Death:

picked up this habit from Milton, merely that Stevenson is in good company.

⁶³ "Maw" is not a word that occurs often in Stevenson's writing. In a letter to Henry James he writes: "It is terrible how little everybody writes, and how much of that little disappears in the capacious maw of the Post Office." *RLS Letters*, letter 2288, 29 December 1890, VII, 64-66 (p.64). In *Catrina* David Balfour recalls a satirical ditty which contains the words "satisfiate my maw". *Works*, X, 240.

⁶⁴ This of course is what they do with Jekyll.

⁶⁵ Veeder provides a Freudian interpretation of "Maw" (*100 Years*, pp.128-29).

Before mine eyes in opposition sits
 Grim *Death* my Son and foe, [...],
 And mee his Parent would full soon devour
 For want of other prey, but that he knows
 His end with mine involvd; and knows that I
 Should prove a bitter Morsel, and his bane,
 When ever that shall be. (II.803-09)

Milton expands on the association between a bitter taste and death, to show how they are the direct consequence of transgressing the law of God. The Lord shows Adam all of the fruits of Paradise, which he may freely eat, but warns him:

But of the Tree whose operation brings
 Knowledg of good and ill. Which I have set
 The Pledge of thy Obedience and thy Faith,
 Amid the Garden by the Tree of Life,
 Remember what I warne thee, shun to taste,
 And shun the bitter consequence: for know,
 The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command
 Transgrest, inevitably thou shalt dye. (VIII.323-30)

As Poole and Utterson break down the door to Jekyll's cabinet, Hyde swallows poison. They find him lying dead on the floor:

and by the crushed phial in the hand and the strong smell of kernels that hung upon the air, Utterson knew that he was looking on the body of a self-destroyer (70).

The smell of kernels tells us that Hyde has taken cyanide, which has an unmistakable smell of bitter almonds. His last morsel – the final consequence of his transgression – has been bitter indeed.

Jekyll's death is inevitable, and determined by the relationship between Sin and Death. Immediately after the Fall, Sin, who has been awaiting within the gates of Hell the outcome of Satan's adventure, grows impatient to follow her father. She addresses her son:

Methinks I feel new strength within me rise,
 Wings growing,⁶⁶ and Dominion giv'n me large
 Beyond this Deep; whatever draws me on,
 Or sympathie, or som connatural force
 Powerful at greatest distance to unite

⁶⁶ Cf. Adam and Eve's feeling of wings after eating the apple (*PL*, IX.786).

With secret amity things of like kinde
 By secretest conveyance. Thou my Shade
 Inseparable must with mee along:
 For Death from Sin no power can separate. (X.243-51)

Jekyll's disobedience, like that of Milton's Adam and Eve, brings death into the world with the first mortal taste of his potion. He likens his first transformation to dying (83). When Hyde takes the draught in front of Lanyon, Lanyon reports that Jekyll was "like a man restored from death" (80). Death, as commentators have observed, is an inherent part of the process of transformation. Hogle, for example, writes of "Jekyll/Hyde's primordial 'change' moving *into* death's blackness while also recalling a death from which it seems to emerge."⁶⁷ But as well as discerning the state or condition of death in Jekyll/Hyde's "change", one might also discern Milton's Death in Lanyon's description of the dark and shadowy figure who stares out fleetingly from the metamorphosing visitor. Lanyon writes:

There came, I thought, a change – he seemed to swell – his face became suddenly black, and the features seemed to melt and alter (80).

Milton describes Death:

The other shape,
 If shape it might be calld that shape had none
 Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
 Or substance might be calld that shadow seemd,
 For each seemd either; black it stood as Night. (II.666-70)

Like the Fall of Adam and Eve, Jekyll's transgression brings death not only on himself, but on others as well. Lanyon's death continues the archetypal pattern employed by Milton:– Satan, Sin, Death; Adam, Eve, Death. The prideful Satanic Jekyll "gives birth" to Hyde, and their ongoing union brings about their death. The Fall pattern is re-enacted in the temptation of Lanyon, in which the "serpentine"⁶⁸ Hyde – motivated by the serpentine Jekyll – plays on the curiosity of Lanyon and lures him to his doom. Hyde/Jekyll offers Lanyon "a new province of knowledge and new avenues to fame and power" (79); but the fruit of this knowledge is too bitter for Lanyon, and as he begins his descent into the grave he tells Utterson, "I sometimes think if we knew all, we should be more glad to get away" (57). The Fall, then, is not

⁶⁷ *100 Years*, p.190.

⁶⁸ Irving S. Saposnik, *Robert Louis Stevenson* (Boston: Twayne, 1974), p.92.

a single event; it is an ongoing process, and each of us, whether we will or no, continues to re-enact it, and to die.

CHAPTER TEN
THE PLATONIC HYDE

Stevenson begins his story with a paradox. The narrator describes Gabriel Utterson as “a man of rugged countenance, that was never lighted by a smile; cold, scanty and embarrassed in discourse; backward in sentiment; lean, long, dusty, dreary, and yet somehow lovable” (29). What makes such a character lovable? He is “austere with himself” (29), which is commendable; he has “an approved tolerance for others” (29), which could imply either Christian charity or a lack of discrimination; he is “modest,” and “of good-nature” (29). But the fact remains that he is still cold and dreary. What makes him lovable is the fact that at “friendly meetings, and when the wine [is] to his taste, something eminently human beacon[s] from his eye” (29). This eminently human beacon is the light of his soul which, being essentially good, is also beautiful. But if his soul is beautiful, and “soule is forme and doth the body make,” why is Utterson himself not better looking? After all, as Spenser puts it in his ‘Hymne in Honour of Beautie’:

Therefore where ever that thou doest behold
A comely corpse, with beautie faire endewed,
Know this for certaine, that the same doth hold
A beauteous soule, with faire conditions thewed,
Fit to receive the seede of vertue strewed.
For all that faire is, is by nature good;
That is a signe to know the gentle blood. (134-40)

Spenser of course is not unaware of this Uttersonian paradox among the ladies of his day, some of whom are exemplars of all the virtues, and yet far from beautiful. The explanation is that their souls, on their journey from the realms of spirit to the material world, found only inferior matter with which to clothe themselves. Spenser continues:

Yet oft it falles, that many a gentle mynd
Dwels in deformed tabernacle drownd,
Either by chaunce, against the course of kynd,
Or through unaptnesse in the substance fownd,
Which it assumed of some stubborne grownd,
That will not yield unto her formes direction,
But is perform'd with some foule imperfection. (141-47)

Utterson is in good company, his most notable predecessor for our purposes being none other than Plato's hero Socrates himself. In the *Symposium* the drunken Alcibiades sets out to praise Socrates before the other party-goers:

And now, my boys, I shall praise Socrates in a figure which will appear to him to be a caricature, and yet I speak, not to make fun of him, but only for the truth's sake. I say, that he is exactly like the busts of Silenus,⁶⁹ which are set up in the statuaries' shops, holding pipes or flutes in their mouths; and they are made to open in the middle, and have images of gods inside them. I say also that he is like Marsyas the satyr. You yourself will not deny, Socrates, that your face is like that of a satyr. Aye, and there is a resemblance in other points too.

[...] And then again he knows nothing and is ignorant of all things—such is the appearance which he puts on. Is he not like a Silenus in this? To be sure he is: his outer mask is the carved head of the Silenus; but, O my companions in drink, when he is opened, what temperance there is residing within! [...] I saw in him divine and golden images of such fascinating beauty that I was ready to do in a moment whatever Socrates commanded: they may have escaped the observation of others, but I saw them (215a-217a).

The introduction of Utterson in this manner raises an important point. Obviously Utterson is not foul and deformed in the way that Hyde is; yet the lawyer is not at first sight a figure whom one would approach socially with many hopes of an agreeable outcome. But having done so, one is illumined in the glow of his soul beaming from his eyes. The narrator refers to it as “something eminently human” (29); and these words are well chosen, because by contrast Hyde, according to Jekyll, “had nothing human; nothing lived in him but fear and hatred” (94). Fear and hatred—the two dominant emotions felt by people in Hyde's presence.

When Hyde tramples on the child, Enfield apprehends him, but tells Utterson that Hyde “gave [him] one look, so ugly that it brought out the sweat on [him] like running” (31). The doctor who arrives turns “sick and white with the desire to kill” Hyde (31). The womenfolk of the girl's family become “as wild as harpies” (32). “I never saw a circle of such hateful faces,” says Enfield (32).

The trampling of the girl, who is “not much the worse” (31) for the experience, has not, in itself, been enough to provoke such extreme reactions. Nor, as Enfield makes clear, is Hyde's physical appearance:

There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why.

⁶⁹ A son of Pan, and father of the satyrs. With his ivy-twined staff and rough appearance he was a typical Wild Man. This classical figure continued to exercise the Victorian imagination. See, e.g., Thomas Woolner's poem *Silenus* (1884).

He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He's an extraordinary-looking man, *and yet I really can name nothing out of the way* (34). [my emphasis]

Utterson experiences the same reaction upon meeting Hyde for the first time, and, as he walks home, ventures a theory to account for it:

Mr Hyde was pale and dwarfish; he gave an impression of deformity without any namable malformation, he had a displeasing smile, he had borne himself to the lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness, and he spoke with a husky, whispering and somewhat broken voice, – all these were points against him; but not all of these together could explain the hitherto unknown disgust, loathing and fear with which Mr Utterson regarded him. ‘There must be something else,’ said the perplexed gentleman. ‘There *is* something more, if I could find a name for it. God bless me, the man seems hardly human! Something troglodytic, shall we say? or can it be the old story of Dr Fell? or is it the mere radiance of a foul soul that thus transpires through, and transfigures, its clay continent? The last, I think; for, O my poor old Harry Jekyll, if ever I read Satan's signature upon a face, it is on that of your new friend!’ (40).

Utterson feels fear and loathing; he notes the impression of deformity. But then he advances our awareness of Hyde's inner condition: the “eminently human” Utterson is shocked to find that Hyde seems hardly human. This is the strongest point against him so far, and it is reinforced by the word “troglodytic”, Stevenson's first reference to the Hyde who occupies the twilight area between man and beast. *Troglodyte* can apply equally to a cave-man, or any of the primitive “sub-human” races encountered by earlier travellers (as we saw in the chapter on *Gulliver's Travels*), or a chimpanzee. Hyde is thus at once human, sub-human, and not human—like a Yahoo. Also like a Yahoo he is deformed. Gulliver's first observation about the Yahoos is that their shape is “very singular and deformed” (193). One might imagine that Hyde's deformity remains “unexpressed” (50) because he has clothes on, whereas the Yahoos are naked. However, when Gulliver is able to observe a Yahoo at close range, he is shocked to find “a perfect human Figure; [... We were] the same in every Part of our Bodies, except as to Hairiness and Colour” (199). The deformity of the Yahoos, like that of Hyde, therefore arises from, as Utterson surmises about his new acquaintance, the “radiance of a foul soul that [...] transpires through, and transfigures, its clay continent” (40).

Reactions to Hyde, as we have seen, are also the same as Gulliver's reaction to the Yahoos. Gulliver writes:

Upon the whole, I never beheld in all my Travels so disagreeable an Animal, or one against which I naturally conceived so strong an Antipathy (193).

He regards them as “abominable”, and concludes:

I never saw any sensitive Being so detestable on all Accounts; and the more I came near them, the more hateful they grew, while I stayed in that Country (199).

Hyde and the Yahoos both inspire disgust and loathing; but Hyde alone excites fear as well. Why is this? Henry Jekyll writes in his Statement:

I have observed that when I wore the semblance of Edward Hyde, none could come near to me at first without a visible misgiving of the flesh. This, as I take it, was because all human beings, as we meet them, are commingled out of good and evil: and Edward Hyde, alone, in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil (85).

The Yahoos are embodiments of sin; Hyde is the embodiment of evil.

Jekyll’s inference, however, like most of his discoveries, turns out to be incomplete. He is correct; but that is not the full story. Lanyon considers the matter more deeply; and in his letter to Utterson writes of his meeting with Hyde, and of his reaction to this embodiment of evil:

I was struck [...] with the odd, subjective disturbance caused by his neighbourhood. This bore some resemblance to incipient rigor, and was accompanied by a marked sinking of the pulse. At the time, I set it down to some idiosyncratic, personal distaste, and merely wondered at the acuteness of the symptoms; but I have since had reason to believe the cause to lie much deeper in the nature of man, and to turn on some nobler hinge than the principle of hatred (77).

In order to illuminate this rather obscure passage, we must turn again to Spenser—in particular, Una in Book I of the *Faerie Queene*. J.S. Harrison writes:

Spenser presents in Una the personification of truth or wisdom.

But he does more than this; he presents her not only as wisdom, but as true beauty. Spenser is so thoroughly convinced of the truth of that fundamental idea of Platonic ethics, that truth and beauty are identical, that he shows their union in the character of Una, in whom, as her name signifies, they are one.⁷⁰

Harrison continues, showing the power of beauty on the beholder:

⁷⁰ John Smith Harrison, *Platonism in English Poetry of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Macmillan, 1903; repr. New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), pp.3-4.

Plato had taught that the highest beauty which the soul can know is wisdom, which, though invisible to sight, would inflame the hearts of men in an unwonted degree could there be a visible image of her. In his “Phædrus” he had stated that “sight is the most piercing of our bodily senses; though not by that is wisdom seen; her loveliness would have been transporting if there had been a visible image of her.”⁷¹

Spenser constantly insists on the remarkable power and influence of Una’s beauty. The mere sight of her is enough to tame a hungry savage lion (I.3.5-9). She enchants a wild horde of satyrs and nymphs (I.6.9-19). When she finally removes the veil which has hidden her face from the Red Cross Knight, he does “wonder much at her celestiall sight” (I.12.23).⁷²

Harrison continues:

Spenser has taken the greatest care to show that the source of Una’s influence over those that come into her presence lies in the power exerted by her beauty; but this is the beauty of her whole nature, a penetrating radiance of light revealing the soul that is truly wise.⁷³

Harrison’s language is very close to Utterson’s “radiance of a foul soul that thus transpires through, and transfigures, its clay continent” (40). Just as the beauty of Una is the beauty of her whole nature, so the ugliness of Hyde is the ugliness of his whole – or, rather, single – nature. Hyde is, in effect, an anti-Una. Therefore, whereas Una excites love, Hyde excites fear and hatred.

Una is the personification of truth and wisdom, but what is truth? or, more to the point, who is Wisdom? Spenser conveys some of her greatness in ‘An Hymne of Heavenly Beautie’:

There in his [God’s] bosom *Sapience* [Wisdom] doth sit,
The souveraine dearling of the *Deity*,
Clad like a Queene in royall robes, most fit
For so great powre and peerelesse majesty.(183-86)

Wisdom is distinct from God, but hardly separable. Enid Welsford writes:

Spenser’s Wisdom has been identified with the Second Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary, the Schekina of the Cabala, the Angelic Mind of the

⁷¹ Harrison, p.4. *Phædrus*, 250, Jowett’s translation.

⁷² The only one unmoved by Una’s heavenly beauty is Sansloy—a paynim (I.6.2-6).

⁷³ Harrison, p.5.

Neo-Platonists, and even with the most obvious prototype, the personified Wisdom of the Old Testament and Apocrypha.⁷⁴

Spenser tells how Wisdom's beauty – both innate and reflected from God's presence – is beyond description (lines 204-10). He then goes on to describe the effect of her beauty on the beholder.⁷⁵

But who so may, thrise happie man him hold,
 Of all on earth, whom God so much doth grace,
 And lets his owne Beloved to behold:
 For in the view of her celestiall face,
 All joy, all blisse, all happinesse have place,
 Ne ought on earth can want unto the wight,
 Who of her selfe can win the wishfull sight.
 [...]
 None thereof worthy be, but those whom shee
 Vouchsafeth to her presence to receive,
 And letteth them her lovely face to see,
 Whereof such wondrous pleasures they conceive,
 And sweete contentment, that it doth bereave
 Their soule of sense, through infinite delight,
 And them transport from flesh into the spright.(239-59)

Hyde, on the other hand, as the embodiment of the infernal presence, elicits an equally strong but opposite response. Beholders, reading Satan's signature on Hyde's face, instinctively recoil from him. His deformed body and nasty character invoke fear; and his devilish soul invokes a powerful reaction from normal people, whose natural inclination is towards God.

Those who behold Sapience enjoy wondrous pleasures, sweet contentment, and infinite delight. Those who behold Hyde experience quite the opposite:– Enfield comes out in a sweat (31); Poole feels something in his marrow, “kind of cold and thin” (68); Jekyll notes that people feel “a visible misgiving of the flesh” (85); Lanyon remarks on “the odd, subjective disturbance caused by [Hyde's] neighbourhood [which] bore some resemblance to incipient rigor, and was accompanied by a marked sinking of the pulse” (77); and Utterson suffers a profound spiritual unease – a “hitherto unknown disgust, loathing and fear” (40), a “shudder in his blood, [...] a nausea and distaste of life; and [...] the gloom of his spirits” (41).

Here is the key to Lanyon's obscure musings, quoted above, in which he concludes the cause of all these reactions to lie “in the nature of man, and to turn on some nobler

⁷⁴ *Fowre Hymnes Epithalamion: A Study of Edmund Spenser's Doctrine of Love*, ed. by Enid Welsford (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967), p.170.

hinge than the principle of hatred” (77). Hyde stands alone in the world as the visible image of Satanic will; as such he inflames the hearts of men (and women) in an unwonted degree with fear, hatred, disgust, loathing, and – Satan’s greatest weapon – despair. These are the negative qualities which radiate out from Hyde’s foul soul; and the beholders’ consequent negative emotions arise because these negative qualities overwhelm the fragile balance of the normal human souls in Hyde’s path, depriving them of all joy, happiness, and contentment. But coupled with this negative response is the positive impulse in the nature of man – as Lanyon suggests – to resist the Devil.

Meanwhile, what does Henry Jekyll think he has done? Some readers, focusing on the powders instead of the transformation, conclude that he has been scientific, and that the powders involve – in Eigner’s phrase – “what we would now call the science fiction aspect of the story” (35). At least one contemporary reviewer shared this assessment:

In our impatience we are hurried towards the dénouement, which accounts for everything upon strictly scientific grounds, though the science be the science of problematical futurity. [...] For we are still groping by doubtful lights on the dim limits of boundless investigation; and it is always possible that we may be on the brink of a new revelation as to the unforeseen resources of the medical art.⁷⁶

This view has survived into more recent times. According to Donald Lawler:

Even though in *Jekyll and Hyde* Stevenson does not try to explain or even theorize about how Jekyll is metamorphosed into Hyde, he makes it clear that the trick is done with chemicals. It may seem more like alchemy than pharmacology or chemistry [...]. Nevertheless, Stevenson’s choice of chemicals rather than spells was critical because the substances remove the logic of the story from the realm of the fantastic into the scientific. The probabilities change.⁷⁷

How do they change? Stevenson’s use of chemicals would seem to give the story an appearance of reality; but ultimately they fail in their purpose. Jekyll’s chemicals are no more scientific than those of the eponymous hero of Godwin’s *St Leon* (1799). St Leon (not unlike Jekyll) has discovered an elixir which will restore him to youth. On the run from the Spanish Inquisition, he hides in the house of an old Jew named Mordecai, who agrees to help him, and to procure clothes and “certain medical

⁷⁵ In this instance the witness is beholding Wisdom with the eyes of his soul, not his body.

⁷⁶ Unsigned review, *The Times*, 25 January 1886, 13. Quoted in Maixner, pp.205-06. Here we see an example of Stevenson’s success in creating a sense of reality.

ingredients [...], together with his chafing-dish of coals to prepare them.”⁷⁸ St Leon continues, with an intriguing mixture of precision and vagueness:

I unfolded the papers [Mordecai] had brought me; they consisted of various medical ingredients I had directed him to procure; there were also two or three vials, containing syrups and essences. I had near me a pair of scales with which to weigh my ingredients; a vessel of water; the chafing-dish of my host, in which the fire was nearly extinguished; and a small taper, with some charcoal to relight the fire, in case of necessity (282).

These are the necessities for an alchemist; yet when Lanyon looks at Jekyll’s chemicals he finds much the same thing. He writes:

I found what seemed to me to be a simple crystalline salt of a white colour. The phial, to which I next turned my attention, might have been about half-full of a blood-red liquor, which was highly pungent to the sense of smell, and seemed to me to contain phosphorus and some volatile ether. At the other ingredients I could make no guess (76).

This gives us no scientific information. Nor does Lanyon’s description of the chemicals’ reaction, even though it sounds very scientific:

[Hyde] measured out a few minims of the red tincture and added one of the powders. The mixture, which was at first of a reddish hue, began, in proportion as the crystals melted, to brighten in colour, to effervesce audibly, and to throw off small fumes of vapour. Suddenly, and at the same moment, the ebullition ceased, and the compound changed to a dark purple, which faded again more slowly to a watery green (79).

We know that the reaction has worked; but we do not know how or why. This is in direct contrast to a work such as Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), whose premise is based firmly on the writings and experiments of Erasmus Darwin, and the Bolognese physiologist Luigi Galvani.⁷⁹ Shelley *begins* her tale with the science, and the rest of the story grows out of it; and the science in the novel is extrapolated from current scientific knowledge and theory.

⁷⁷ ‘Reframing *Jekyll and Hyde*: Robert Louis Stevenson and the Strange Case of Gothic Science Fiction’, in *100 Years*, pp.247-61 (p.250).

⁷⁸ William Godwin, *St Leon: A Tale of the Sixteenth Century. Collected Novels and Memoirs of William Godwin*, ed. by Mark Philp and others, 8 vols (London: Pickering, and Chatto, 1992), IV, 280. Cf. Jekyll’s “certain agents” (82), “a particular salt” (83), and “the medicine” (95).

⁷⁹ For details of the scientific background to *Frankenstein*, see: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, ed., intro. and notes by Marilyn Butler (London: Pickering, 1993); Anne K. Mellor, *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988). For a description of Galvani’s ghastly experiments – in one of which a dead body sat up – see Mellor, pp.104-06.

Where, then, is the science in *Jekyll and Hyde*? Jekyll writes that his scientific studies led “steadily nearer to that truth by whose partial discovery [he has] been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck: that man is not truly one, but truly two” (82). Is this a Huxleyan sense of organic dualism? Not really; because he goes even further:

I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. [...] I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens (82).

This is hardly a novel insight; it could have come to Jekyll from reading Matthew Arnold – “[T]he divine Plato tells us that we have within us a many-headed beast and man”⁸⁰ – or the divine Plato himself, who, in the *Republic*, is recalling Socrates describing an image of the soul of an unjust man:

An image like the composite creations of ancient mythology, such as the Chimera or Scylla or Cerberus, and there are many others in which two or more different natures are said to grow into one.

[...]

Then do you now model the form of a multitudinous, many-headed monster, having a ring of heads of all manner of beasts, tame and wild, which he is able to put forth and metamorphose at will.

[...]

Suppose now that you make a second form as of a lion, and a third of a man; but let the first be far the largest, and the second next in size.

[...]

And now join them into one, and let the three somehow grow together.

[...]

Next fashion the outside of them into a single image, as of a man, so that he who is not able to look within, and sees only the outer case, may believe the beast to be a single human creature (IX, 588c-e).

Jekyll’s science, then, does not involve a discovery of the dual nature of mankind, but is simply directed towards “the separation of these elements.” But how? He writes:

I was so far in my reflections when, as I have said, a side light began to shine upon the subject from the laboratory table. I began to perceive more deeply than it has ever yet been stated, the trembling immateriality, the mist-like transience, of this seemingly so solid body in which we walk attired (82).

This, we feel, *is* science, and it apparently derives from the same scientific discoveries still plaguing Stevenson when he writes in ‘Pulvis et Umbra’:

Of the Kosmos, in the last resort, science reports many doubtful things and all of them appalling. There seems no substance to this solid globe on which we stamp: nothing but symbols and ratios. Symbols and ratios carry us and bring us forth and beat us down; gravity that swings the incommensurable suns and worlds through space, is but a figment varying inversely as the square of distances; and the suns and worlds themselves, imponderable figures of abstraction, NH_3 and H_2O . Consideration dares not dwell upon this view; that way madness lies; science carries us into zones of speculation, where there is no habitable city for the mind of man.⁸¹

Here we see the logical end of contemporary reductionist science: where the physical basis of life is protoplasm; where protoplasm is a compound of chemicals; where chemicals are aggregates of atoms; and where atoms are finally resolved into mathematics.

Or do we? Jekyll's science is not that of his fellow scientists. Lanyon calls it "unscientific balderdash" (36). Jekyll refers to it as "mystic and transcendental" (81); and derides Lanyon for being "bound to the most narrow and material views" (80). The material and the transcendental are at war not only in the persons of Lanyon and Jekyll; Ralph Waldo Emerson – a transcendentalist – declares:

What is popularly called Transcendentalism among us, is Idealism; Idealism as it appears in 1842. As thinkers, mankind have ever divided into two sects, Materialists and Idealists; the first class founding on experience, the second on consciousness; the first class beginning to think from the data of the senses, the second class perceive that the senses are not final, and say, The senses give us representations of things, but what are the things themselves, they cannot tell.⁸²

And he continues, in language very like that of Jekyll and his "mist-like transience":

The materialist, secure in the certainty of sensation, mocks at fine-spun theories, at star-gazers and dreamers, and believes that his life is solid, that he at least takes nothing for granted, but knows where he stands, and what he does. Yet how easy is it to show him that he also is a phantom walking and working amid phantoms, and that he need only ask a question or two beyond his daily questions to find his solid universe growing dim and impalpable before his sense.⁸³

⁸⁰ 'Numbers', a lecture delivered in America in October 1883, and published in the *Nineteenth Century* (April 1884). *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, ed. by R.H. Super, 11 vols (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960-77), X [1974], 160.

⁸¹ *Works*, XII, 284.

⁸² 'The Transcendentalist: A Lecture read at the Masonic Temple, Boston, January 1842', *The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 12 vols, The Riverside Edition, vol.1, *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures* (London: Routledge, 1903), pp.311-39, (p.311).

⁸³ Emerson, p.313. It is interesting to compare this with Kingsley's letter to Revd Maurice in which he promotes his doctrine that "souls secrete their bodies, as snails do shells". He ends this overtly Platonic

Lanyon suddenly finds his solid universe growing dim and impalpable, and it kills him.

The Transcendentalists, being Idealists, were by definition Platonists; and one can find the origins of Jekyll's claims for the insubstantial body, in the works of Plotinus, who writes:

I prefer to use the word phantasm as hinting the indefiniteness into which the Soul spills itself when it seeks to communicate with Matter.⁸⁴

[A]ll that is allowed to it [i.e., Matter] is to be a Potentiality, a weak and blurred phantasm, a thing incapable of a Shape of its own.⁸⁵

“There are”, writes Plotinus, “no atoms; all body is divisible endlessly”.⁸⁶ Matter itself has no size, or shape, or colour, or smell, or touch; it is not hot, or cold, or moist, or dry.⁸⁷ It only acquires these properties by virtue of the soul “bestowing Form” on it.⁸⁸ In other words, soul is form and doth the body make.

Jekyll is quite specific on this point. He writes:

Enough, then, that I not only recognised my natural body for 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 (83).

But Jekyll's drug – the powders which are the outcome of years of scientific research – is never explained, nor is the theory behind its action. In fact, as Jekyll admits, in the end even he does not know the identity of the active ingredient (83; 96). There is a good reason for Jekyll's ignorance: the powders came to Stevenson in his dream, and are unconnected with any branch of science. They are simply, as Douglas Thorpe aptly puts it, “an improbable bit of Gothic machinery” (17), literally dreamt up as a mechanism for the transformation. To inquire into them is both futile and unnecessary. Unlike Mary Shelley, Stevenson can offer nothing from contemporary science to explain his mechanism. He may have been wise not to do so. Maixner

letter with, “Whereby you may perceive that I am not going astray into materialism as yet.” *CKL*, II, 171-72.

⁸⁴ *The Six Enneads*, trans. by Stephen MacKenna, 3rd edn, rev. by B.S. Page (New York: Pantheon, [n.d.]), II.4.11.

⁸⁵ *Enneads*, II.5.5.

⁸⁶ *Enneads*, II.4.7.

⁸⁷ *Enneads*, II.4.12.

writes: “Countless readers – Henry James included – objected to the transformation by chemical means, which they felt was too material an agency” (24).⁸⁹ This suggests that readers were regarding the story not as a speculation on the possibilities of scientific inquiry, but as a meditation on the influence of evil on the soul. Andrew Lang seems most in sympathy with Stevenson’s intentions, when he refers to Jekyll’s draught as “the mystic potion”.⁹⁰ The only aspect of Jekyll’s theory available to the reader lies in the Platonism behind his transcendental medicine. And it is Platonism which confirms Utterson’s conjecture about Hyde’s “foul soul”; Hyde conforms precisely to the type described by Plotinus:

Let us then suppose an ugly Soul, dissolute, unrighteous: teeming with all the lusts; torn by internal discord; beset by the fears of its cowardice and the envies of its pettiness; thinking, in the little thought it has, only of the perishable and the base; perverse in all its impulses; the friend of unclean pleasures; living the life of abandonment to bodily sensations and delighting in its deformity.⁹¹

Hyde’s appearance and eventual ascendancy fulfill all Platonic expectations. Not only does his ugliness reflect his evil soul, but he is “much smaller, slighter, and younger than Henry Jekyll” (84), which Jekyll puts down to the fact that he has had little opportunity in the past to express his baser side. However, as Hyde’s career progresses Jekyll notices an ominous change:

That part of me which I had the power of projecting had lately been much exercised and nourished; it had seemed to me of late as though the body of Edward Hyde had grown in stature, as though (when I wore that form) I were conscious of a more generous tide of blood (88-89).

This is an important point. If Hyde were a pure Darwinian figure, and if the story were one of Darwinian degeneration, then Hyde should become progressively more ape-like. But he does not. He remains the same, but grows larger as he becomes more dominant. This is Platonic: the more that Jekyll partakes vicariously in the adventures of Hyde, the more tainted becomes the upright part of his soul. Hyde is not growing because of his own activities; he is growing because Jekyll’s entire soul is becoming more foul. Therefore when Hyde manifests, he progressively represents a larger portion of foul soul, hence he grows larger. Not only does he bear the stamp of lower elements in Jekyll’s soul, but he also embodies their steadily increasing amount.

⁸⁸ *Enneads*, II.4.10.

⁸⁹ For responses by F.W.H. Myers and Henry James, see Maixner, pp.216; 309.

⁹⁰ Letter to *The Athenaeum* (12 January 1895), p.49.

Following the murder of Carew, Jekyll puts away the powders and throws himself into doing good works; but, still “cursed” with his “duality of purpose” (92), he gives way to temptation as himself. In arguably the most chilling sentence in the story he writes:

There comes an end to all things; the most capacious measure is filled at last; and this brief condescension to my evil finally destroyed the balance of my soul (92).

We should take this as a literal statement of fact. Jekyll’s soul now becomes predominantly evil, and therefore he looks evil. Just as Tom the water-baby’s body became all prickly because his soul became all prickly, so Jekyll’s body becomes Hyde-ish because his soul has become Hyde-ish. Whenever he sleeps his powers of self-control relax and he wakes up as Hyde. As he writes:

In short [...] it seemed only by a great effort as of gymnastics, and only under the immediate stimulation of the drug, that I was able to wear the countenance of Jekyll (95).

It is only by an act of will that he can now force his body into a counterfeit representation of his soul—one which, significantly, he refers to as if it belonged to someone else.

Jekyll’s drug – which he now refers to as “the medicine” (95) – no longer provides more than temporary relief. Why? Jekyll writes that it

had no discriminating action; it was neither diabolical nor divine; it but shook the doors of the prison house of my disposition (85).

The drug originally worked both ways: it allowed Jekyll to turn into Hyde, and it allowed Hyde to turn back into Jekyll. However, when Jekyll’s sins (vicariously accumulated in the body of Hyde) have destroyed the balance of his soul, and he is just as depraved, corrupt, and sinful as Hyde, what can the drug do? Jekyll barely exists anymore; he has given most of his soul over to Hyde. He declares that, whereas Hyde is “express and single,” he himself is “imperfect and divided” (84), and “commingled out of good and evil” (85). Hyde therefore always remains Hyde; but the divided Jekyll is a mixture of Jekyll and Hyde; and when the Hyde aspect comes to dominate his soul, then his body must come to reflect his inner condition. Lasting

⁹¹ Plotinus, I.6.5.

return to the Jekyll body is no longer possible; the Hyde body takes over. Soul is form and doth the body make; in Jekyll's case the principle operates too well.