

JEKYLL AND HYDE, INC.: LIMITED LIABILITY, COMPANIFICATION, AND GOTHIC SUBJECTIVITY

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THE EMERGENCE OF LIMITED LIABILITY over the course of the nineteenth century was marked by intense and sustained feelings of anxiety. Victorians debated it in Parliament and in the periodical press, anatomized its evils in fiction and drama, and theorized its merits and pitfalls in the nascent discipline of economics. Formalized at mid-century through a series of acts that collectively instituted what Paul Johnson describes as “companification” – “the substitution of an impersonal corporate legal entity for the sole proprietorship or partnership” – limited liability was the means by which a corporation was constituted as a legal individual in order to restrict the responsibility of a company’s owners for its debts (106). Early response to the practice was tentative: though hailed by some as a means of promoting economic growth, limited liability also inspired fear among the public, for whom it seemed a threat both to moral character and to responsible social behaviour.¹ Wary that it would promote dishonesty in business and legitimize irresponsible speculation among investors, the mid-Victorians did not initially rush to invest. Despite the fact that by the final decades of the century many early fears had been realized and anxieties about investment continued unabated, however, there was a marked shift towards a culture of investment (Taylor 212–13). Summarizing the effects of the “‘Limited-Company’ Craze” in the *Nineteenth Century* in 1898, one commentator observed that “Personal ownership has ceased to be the controlling power in trade; and when it left it took along with it that personal care, personal supervision, and personal responsibility which made our business great.” The result, he suggested, is that “we now have, in thousands of instances, mere ‘corporations without bodies to be kicked or souls to be damned’” (Van Oss 734).

The idea of the corporation as a hollowed out fiction of selfhood – a legal entity for whom moral considerations were disaggregated from the pursuit of economic advantage – suggests the extent to which limited liability came to be connected with the language of the gothic for the Victorians. By the last decades of the century, contributors to periodicals such as the *Nineteenth Century* and *Blackwoods* were characterizing the limited liability corporation as a “Frankenstein” that wreaked havoc on society, producing successive waves of “mania” and “panic,” and leaving trembling, incapacitated victims in its wake.² If the late-Victorian periodical press was filled with cautionary stories about the threat that limited liability companies posed to vulnerable investors, however, the emergent culture of investment also

prompted other concerns about the ways that these new economic practices were reshaping lived experience. Discussing how corporations infiltrated the most private aspects of everyday life, for example, Van Oss pointed out:

No sooner do we rise from our bed (furnished by Somebody, Limited) than we use a limited soapmaker's soap. Very likely some of our garments bear a limited address. When we have donned them and gone down to breakfast we find on our table some prospectuses arrived by the first post; our bread and our jam bear the limited brand, and very likely our tea and butter would bear it if they could. (731)

Blurring the lines between various forms of consumption, from objects to comestibles to the prospectuses by which such activities are sustained, this passage suggests the influence that incorporated companies exert over consumers who depend (sometimes uncomfortably) on both their products and their profits. "Somebody, Limited" was, by the end of the Victorian era, theoretically anyone, and despite the legal protection afforded by limited liability, "anyone" was both morally implicated in and, in a sense, addicted to the products of corporate activity. The problem, therefore, was not only that people were vulnerable to the actions of corporations "without bodies to be kicked or souls to be damned," but also that they might themselves be hollowed out by economic activities that implicated them in the negative social effects of investment.

In what follows, I consider how the concept of limited liability drew attention to late-Victorian anxieties about the ways that economic practices worked to reshape human subjectivity from within. The significant body of scholarship that has investigated how Victorian fears about the effects of limited liability shaped moral concerns with identity – including work by John Reed, Norman Feltes, and Andrew H. Miller and, more recently, Susan E. Cook – has focused predominantly on mid-century novelists such as Dickens, Gaskell, and Trollope. Thus far, however, later nineteenth-century gothic novels remain relatively unexplored as loci for the expression of fears about the effects of limited liability. My argument here considers Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* as a text that represents the effects of limited liability in gothic terms by imagining the self as a corporate structure. Unlike the host of Victorian novels and plays that address economic matters directly in plots that focus on investment fraud,³ limited liability is a submerged theme in Stevenson's novella, which deals not with the externalized problem of economic villains and victims, but rather with the internal conflicts occasioned by emergent economic practices. By probing the relationship between moral and economic aspects of identity in ways that ask us to engage on a symbolic level with concerns about limited liability, I suggest, Stevenson exposes the ways in which the Victorians attempted to manage the uncomfortable moral implications of their activities as investors.

Central to Stevenson's rewriting of economic anxiety as the individualized struggle between moral dictates and the pleasures of consumption is the process of self-division by which Jekyll creates Hyde. Early in his confessional narrative, Jekyll describes the discovery

that man is not truly one, but truly two. I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. Others will follow, others will outstrip me on the same lines; and I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens. (48)

In its concern with the self as “polity,” I argue, *Jekyll and Hyde* registers contemporary anxieties about limited liability and incorporation, the development of which had implications not only for business, but also, as Andrew H. Miller argues, for contemporary notions of subjectivity. Indeed, the concept of the divided self that Jekyll articulates here echoes Miller’s description of the incorporated company as “‘a sort of legal monster’ . . . composed of many people, and yet legally considered ‘as one single person’” (139). As “legal monster[s],” limited companies resolved conflicts central to economic theory, particularly between the desire for unlimited individual freedom in the marketplace and the imperative to be morally responsible to society at large, in much the same way that Jekyll solves the problem of being “committed to a profound duplicity of life” (48): by partitioning ownership from the obligations of personal responsibility. If the limited company offered a fictional identity that allowed individual shareholders to escape the burden of personal responsibility, however, it also unsettled the idea of a unitary self. To manage conceptualizations of the corporate subject as “a fetishized emblem of subjective unity,” Miller suggests, the human subject was “doubled into distinct [public and private] capacities” (148). In *Jekyll and Hyde*, I contend, Stevenson challenges this bifurcation by casting the limited liability company as a divided human subject.

Recent work in what has come to be known as the new economic criticism has focused significant attention on the ways in which economic models create and reshape the discursive frameworks through which we formulate meaning and identity.⁴ In what follows here, I adopt the methods and build on the insights generated by this work, focusing on the ways that economic structures produce the monstrous subject that is the focus of Stevenson’s text. I am particularly indebted to Gail Turley Houston’s analysis of *Jekyll and Hyde* in *From Dickens to Dracula: Gothic, Economics, and Victorian Fiction*. Houston’s argument that the compartmentalization of the Bank of England via the Bank Act of 1844 approximates the act of self-division that produces Hyde as a desiring self suggests how the trope of self-division both contains and elides questions about responsibility in order to accommodate capitalism’s need for two distinct forms of selfhood: the “unified, monolithic individualist” and the “endlessly self-replicating, consumed/consuming multiply served incorporation” (97). Looking at the conflicts managed and produced by self-division from a slightly different angle, I trace the ways that Stevenson uncomfortably fleshes out abstract economic and legal constructs as human actors. The corporation is thus a model for, and abstract realization of, the human self as the “multifarious, incongruous and independent” polity Jekyll imagines: free from the “morbid sense of shame” that prompts his self-division and, in theory, prohibits individuals from engaging in self-interested violence against others (48). Jekyll’s “investment” in Hyde – on whom he secures his fortune – is a transaction from which he expects, quite explicitly, to “profit by the strange immunities of my position” (52). In splitting off Hyde, therefore, Jekyll employs a corporate model of identity to manage the problem of personal responsibility. By doing so, however, he makes visible the monstrous character of an economic field in which individuals are freed from moral considerations in order to maximize their desires. What appears in economic theory as the ascendance of a rational abstract subject thus takes shape in Stevenson’s gothic text as a horrific realization of Hyde as the figure theorized in economic discourse as *homo economicus*: “a being inherently malign and villainous; his every act and thought centered on self” (53). In loosing this force on society, the novel ultimately suggests, we may be able to disconnect ourselves from legal responsibility for a company’s activities, but we cannot free ourselves from moral implication in activities by which we profit.

I. Limited Liability and the Gothic Subject of Economics

MID-VICTORIAN DEBATE about limited liability raised concerns about how to balance the potentially positive economic effects of increased freedom in the marketplace against the human costs of limiting individual responsibility. As Donna Loftus notes, the creation of an economic sphere “free from moral values” was part of a larger impetus “to rethink the nature of society in the 1850s.” If some reformers saw limited liability as “a panacea for social ills, able to accommodate the conflicting interests of capital and labor in the free market” (94), however, others feared it would encourage dishonesty and erode the sense of trust associated with interpersonal knowledge. As Taylor explains, insofar as corporations were “autonomous entities, they were not ‘moralised’ by the people who held shares in them, unlike partnerships whose character was wholly determined by the partners” (27). With the “fading of individual knowledge about ‘personal character’ as a criterion for the evaluation of firms in an economy dependent on ‘trust,’” Miller suggests, investors were left “in a state of extreme vulnerability” (145). Subsequent economic history proved these fears correct: through the second half of the century, scandals involving investment fraud and financial speculation proliferated, prompting several parliamentary commissions and adjustments to existing laws (Taylor 212). By the final decades of the century, Johnson notes, limited liability encouraged the practice of compartmentalizing roles within companies in order to escape responsibility, since the owner as shareholder could “hide behind the veil of corporate personality . . . to distance himself from the legal obligations of partnership or sole proprietorship” (135–36).

The phenomenon of “hiding,” or distancing oneself from the legal obligations related to ownership, was identified not only as a potential social evil, but also with adverse effects on the self. Victorian detractors of limited liability highlighted the ways that the increasingly abstract, compartmentalized, and opaque economic operations enabled by companification worked to undermine the unitary, sacralised self as society’s most basic unit by prising apart economic agency and moral responsibility. As prominent economist John Ramsay McCulloch argued at mid-century:

In the scheme laid down by Providence for the government of the world, there is no shifting or narrowing of responsibilities, every man being personally answerable to the utmost extent for all his actions. But the advocates of limited liability proclaim in their superior wisdom that the scheme of Providence may be advantageously modified, and that debts and obligations may be contracted which the debtors, though they have the means, shall not be bound to discharge. (10–11)

McCulloch’s appeal to individual responsibility as a religious ethic is anchored both by a view of the unitary self as a God-given soul and of economics as a fundamentally social field, concerned primarily with relationships between people rather than with individuals in isolation. In this regard, his perspective looks back to an older model of economic thought, in which fixed moral authority functioned as a curb to individual aggression.⁵ By setting aside the divine in man in order to secure personal advantage, McCulloch’s comments suggest, economic activities such as limited liability supplant traditional notions of the self as immortal and *a priori* with a new concept of the self as *homo economicus*: an empty, merely economic unit governed by calculations of personal advantage rather than a fixed moral framework.

Writing at mid-century, McCulloch was responding negatively to the development in economic thought that culminated in the marginal revolution of the 1870s. Grounded in the work of academic theorists including Jevons, Walras, and Menger, the notion of marginal utility transferred the focus of economic theories of price from the cost of labour to the subjective calculation of individual consumers' desires (Poovey 276). One significant result of this change, Regenia Gagnier explains, is that the marginal revolution completed a conceptual shift away from concerns about moral responsibility that underpinned classical economic thought via "a turn from economic man as producer to economic man as consumer, from labor or pain to pleasure, and from the substantive to the formal." With this turn from a social to an individual focus, Gagnier argues, "economics deemphasized the relations of production that had effectively provided its social base and jettisoned one of its key motors for self-criticism" (41). One result of the marginal revolution was a fundamental modification in the ways economics as an emergent discipline conceived of human nature. Once understood as being motivated by a range of concerns, including sympathy and social welfare,⁶ human beings were now understood in terms of a single motivating instinct: the fulfillment of material desires. At stake in this shift, as McCulloch's comments above make clear, was the splitting off of moral responsibility that rendered the human monstrous.

Concerns about the relationship between economic activity and moral responsibility that were expressed in public discussion about limited liability in the last decades of the nineteenth century pinpoint the friction occasioned by this ascendance of *homo economicus* as a model of human nature in economic theory. The new economic theory began the process by which unbridled consumerism was legitimized, and greed and competitiveness naturalized as cornerstones of human character. It embraced a focus on self-gratification that was fundamentally at odds with the values of altruism and duty to others that anchored socially privileged gentlemanly and professional ideals from mid-century onwards.⁷ Setting itself in opposition to acquisitiveness, Lauren Goodlad argues, the identity of the professional man was understood as "constitutionally separate from and incommensurable with 'individual desire'" (160). If professional gentility was defined in opposition to the commercial and acquisitive impulses of entrepreneurs, however, it was also reliant on money to sustain its claims to social respectability (Morgan 137). The friction between economic licence and social duty was therefore realized as a painful contradiction.

Among middle- and upper-class Victorians who could not sustain the economic demands of their social position otherwise, investment seemed to solve this difficulty by offering access to wealth without the taint of trade. In pursuing this option, however, investors came to regard the exercise of economic self-interest as unrelated to their identities as citizens. Despite the public admonitions of critics such as Annie Besant – who insisted on revealing to the public "how the money is made with which these monstrous dividends are paid" (1604) – most Victorian investors were content to publicly denounce the excesses of capitalists and bemoan the immoral character of the marketplace when speculations failed, even as they profited from the financial rewards incorporated companies offered. Investment practices in the last decades of the century helped promote this sense of distance between investors and corporations, Taylor points out, insofar as a limited liability company was viewed as "made up of its capital, not those who owned this capital" (220). As a result, he suggests, "where shareholders were once owners of the assets of the company, they became merely owners of rights to the profits of the company, a subtle though important distinction which effectively 'externalised' shareholders from the companies in which they invested" (221).

Building on the social centrality of the perceived distinction between public and private spheres, economic discourse in effect undertook to manage the conflict between individual desire and social responsibility by partitioning economic and moral impulses as separate aspects of the self.

Such tactics draw on the distinction between public and private as a means of managing the conflict occasioned by the diverse pressures of economic desire and conformity to socialized moral norms, much as Jekyll engages in processes of self-division and compartmentalization in order to accommodate his conflicting interests. The Doctor's decision to divide himself from within is occasioned not by economic need but rather by the conflict between the social mandate to "wear a more than commonly grave countenance before the public" and the individual craving to indulge "a certain impatient gaiety of disposition" (47–48). Burdened by the social value placed on moral self-restraint, Jekyll attempts to resolve his difficulties by enacting the process of legal incorporation on an individual level. By dividing himself into two beings, one of whom is a construct intended to exonerate the other of responsibility, he approximates in human terms Johnson's definition of companification. As with limited liability owners, who "hide behind the veil of corporate identity" (Johnson 135–36), Hyde functions as "a thick cloak" that Jekyll can use to indulge his appetites without fear of discovery (Stevenson 52).

If Hyde masks Jekyll's appetites, however, he also exposes society to the aggressive, dangerous energies of unrestricted individual desire. "The pleasures which I made haste to seek in my disguise were, as I have said, undignified," Jekyll explains. "But in the hands of Edward Hyde, they soon began to turn towards the monstrous" (53). To the extent that the "monster" he creates is focused exclusively on the pursuit of pleasure without concern for others, Jekyll's attempt to uncouple his moral consciousness from his appetites realizes the shift towards the individual as consumer that Gagnier describes. If he initially sees the process of self-division as a way to maximize self-interest, however, Jekyll quickly discovers that with partitioning comes a loss of agency. Not only is he powerless to control Hyde when that personality is foremost, Jekyll is also increasingly unable to control when or where Hyde appears. The corporate character he creates thus overthrows the notion of the self as an inalienable possession directed by the individual will, revealing instead the economic residue of personhood: the monstrously material body of Hyde.

As a monstrous body, Hyde fleshes out the theoretical construct *homo economicus*. In the body of Hyde, Jekyll suggests, "I was conscious of a heady recklessness, a current of disordered sensual images running like a mill race in my fancy, a solution of the bonds of obligation, an unknown but not an innocent freedom of the soul" (50). This "solution" of bonds approximates the movement from the social situated-ness associated with moral constraint to the pure individualism and self-interest of the economic subject. In theory, economic man was conceived as an abstract, rational individual requiring complete freedom in the marketplace in order to negotiate with other like-minded individuals. In practice, however, the exercise of "freedom" in real markets resulted, as with Hyde's freedom from moral restraint, in various forms of violence against others. In contemporary critiques of economic systems this violence was often expressed using gothic metaphors, as when Marx characterizes capitalists as vampires. Describing Victorian industrial capitalists from a historical perspective, Peter Gay suggests, "They were bent on conquering wealth and power by any means, at any cost – to others. Hence they could hardly expect their claim to a monopoly on untrammelled aggressiveness to go unchallenged. Makers of wealth,

they were makers of victims no less” (66). Where capitalism functions by metaphorically trammelling others, Hyde realizes the impulse literally: trampling a little girl in the street, or bludgeoning Sir Danvers Carew to death in an ecstasy of violence. In doing so, moreover, he is characterized as having lost all humanity. “It wasn’t like a man,” Enfield suggests, describing the trampling scene: “it was like some damned Juggernaut” (9). Though undertaken from a rational, scientific point of view, then, Jekyll’s decision to divide himself produces a monster who makes visible and individual the violence and aggression associated with the pursuit of unfettered self-interest.

If Jekyll is “aghast” when he thinks of Hyde’s delight in “any degree of torture to another,” he takes comfort – as a rational investor would – in the protection offered by his alter ego: “the situation was apart from ordinary laws, and insidiously relaxed the grasp of conscience,” he reasons. “It was Hyde, after all, and Hyde alone, that was guilty. Jekyll was no worse; he woke again to his good qualities seemingly unimpaired; he would even make haste, where it was possible, to undo the evil done by Hyde” (53). Jekyll’s perspective here is informed by the logic of limited liability that distinguishes the corporate shareholder from the traditional partner. As Taylor explains, “Unlimited liability guaranteed that all partners had a direct interest in ensuring the responsible and honest behaviour of their colleagues” (25). Partners remain personally accountable for all of a company’s debts and thus are visible in all its activities. As the plots of many Victorian novels and plays remind us, “sleeping partners” who fail to uphold the obligation of diligence are still subject to personal ruin.⁸ Jekyll, however, deliberately abstracts himself from Hyde, allowing his alter ego to function as a distinct identity. He invests in a separate home for Hyde and rewrites his will “so that if anything befell me in the person of Dr. Jekyll, I could enter on that of Edward Hyde without pecuniary loss” (52). He does this, moreover, in order to “profit by the strange immunities of my position” (52), a turn of phrase that connects his decision to “incorporate” with the logic of investment. As a “shareholder” in his own identity, in effect, Jekyll attempts to profit from Hyde’s freedom even as he abstracts himself from responsibility for his actions. “Think of it – ” he thrills, “I did not even exist!” (52).

II. “Money’s Life to the Man”: Gothic Formlessness and the Corporate Subject

BEHIND THE EVASIVE TACTICS of distancing associated with limited liability, the gothic manifestation of a corporate self in *Jekyll and Hyde* reveals the extent to which the identity of the investor is comprised only of capital: endlessly circulated, decomposed, and reconstituted in order to secure profit. As Inspector Newcomen points out when he and Utterson discover the half-burned remains of Hyde’s cheque book, “money’s life to the man. We have nothing to do but wait for him at the bank, and get out the handbills” (24). Though Newcomen’s theory is subsequently disproven (Hyde never does reappear at the bank), his hypothesis merely fails to register the complex, opaque, and indirect relationship between capital and identity in a society of investors. Indeed, subjectivity, as Newcomen and Utterson conceive it, no longer exists as a fixed relationship between body and soul, but rather circulates, like capital itself, without regard for boundaries. As an expression of this new form of selfhood, Jekyll becomes uncertainly “formed” as a body, “evacuated,” as Kelly Hurley suggests of fin de siècle gothic more generally, “of a meaningful self-identity” (42). Hurley’s interest in the “Thing-ness” of the gothic subject is particularly germane here for, like matter, economic value “is intransigent and resists containment within a fixed and unitary form” (31).

Throughout Stevenson's text, Hyde is repeatedly described as a "thing," and after witnessing the physical process of transformation by which Hyde's features "melt and alter" into the form of Jekyll, Lanyon is so stricken that he ultimately dies of the shock (47). This horror reflects not only human disgust at the sight of material formlessness, as Hurley suggests (32), but also apprehension about the ways that economic subjectivity materializes as an uncanny identity that is literally "made of money." In this respect, Marx's discussion of the relationship between capital and money as a process of circulation, conversion, and exchange approximates the process of melting and altering by which Jekyll becomes Hyde. For Marx, money and commodities, like Jekyll and Hyde, are all one: "The capitalist knows that all commodities, however scurvy they may look, or however badly they may smell, are in faith and in truth money." As a result, he suggests, "Value therefore now becomes value in process, money in process, and, as such, capital. It comes out of circulation, enters into it again, preserves and multiplies itself within its circuit, comes back out of it with expanded bulk, and begins the same round ever afresh" (172–73). This circuit of exchange, evacuation, and reconstitution approximates the embodied experience of Jekyll and Hyde, even as it suggests how and why economic man comes to function as a multifarious "polity" in the form of the corporate self.

If such scenes connect late-Victorian gothic texts to scientific concerns with evolution, as Hurley argues, they also express on a metaphoric level the anxieties about identity and money associated with expanding capitalism. On the surface, the acquisition and possession of capital that constructs the gentleman's identity is screened by the conversion of money into status by means of what Paul Delany, building on Marx, describes as English cultural economics: the "feudal remnants" of the genteel classes, including the aristocracy, landowners, and Oxbridge-educated professionals (8–10). With the emergence of investment as a major source of income in the final decades of the nineteenth century, however, this formation came under pressure. Not only was "consciousness . . . more determined by mass consumption," as Delany suggests (13), but awareness of the ways that money produced and sustained status also became more pronounced. Throughout *Jekyll and Hyde*, Stevenson progressively reveals the ways that money and acts of consumption structure the self. In the final section of the text, for example, Jekyll introduces himself as "born in the year 18— to a large fortune, endowed besides with excellent parts" (47). The priority that Jekyll accords his fortune is shared by the text's other major narrator, Mr. Utterson, whose actions throughout are prompted by a desire to secure his client's fortune and his character, both attributes that are inseparable in the lawyer's mind. If money produces identity in the text, providing the home, furniture, food, and drink that signify social status, as well as access to the cultural capital that connects the professional men Jekyll counts as his friends, it is also a force whose existence is, where possible, repressed by the men in question. Indeed, without the anxiety-producing presence of Hyde as the embodiment of *homo economicus*, the capital that defines and anchors Jekyll's social identity would remain beneath the horizon of representation.

On this score, Stevenson's extension of the novel's concern with the circulation of capital to the objects that confer distinction (in the sense articulated by Bourdieu) bring the effects of economic subjectivity literally "home." Hyde's rooms are – unexpectedly, given their location in a seedy neighbourhood – "furnished with luxury and good taste. A closet was filled with wine; the plate was of silver, the napery elegant; a good picture hung upon the walls, a gift (as Utterson supposed) from Henry Jekyll, who was much of a connoisseur; and

the carpets were of many plies and agreeable in colour” (24). Utterson’s discomfort with this state of affairs suggests the extent to which the revelation of Hyde’s “private” self suggests his shared identity with Jekyll. As a material “portrait,” indeed, the room demonstrates far more accurately than the superficial sheathing of bodies the importance of the economic continuity between Jekyll and Hyde. Unlike the later description of hands that distinguishes “white” and “professional” from “dusky” and “swart” (54), Hyde’s house announces its connection with Jekyll via their shared taste. That such similarities are either repressed or rationalized by the circle of gentlemen Jekyll counts as friends suggests not only discomfort with “putting questions” (11), but also with the underlying knowledge that identity is not comprised of the innate merits or talents of the individual, but rather by the economic framework that sustains his existence. Indeed, insofar as possessions reflect and inscribe character, they suggest how, in a world inhabited by economic subjects, identity becomes a product of one’s material possessions rather than an index of the quality of one’s prior, interior selfhood.⁹

The idea that money might form the basis of identity was an uncomfortable one for *Jekyll and Hyde*’s earliest readership. In the correspondence between Stevenson and F. W. H. Myers that took place in the months following the publication of the novel, for example, questions about taste figured prominently. Myers, who was personally unacquainted with Stevenson, wrote several letters offering high praise for the text but also volunteering very detailed (unsolicited) suggestions for revision (Maixner 222). In his analysis of the exchange, Stephen Arata notes that many of Myers’s suggestions position Hyde “as a figure not of degenerate depravity but of bourgeois ‘virtue’” (236). Certainly, Myers’s comments emphasize similarities rather than differences between the doctor and his alter ego, and Arata notes particularly both Myers’s concern about the painting in Hyde’s Soho lodging and Stevenson’s response to Myers’s suggested edit. Of Hyde’s lodging, Myers asked “Would Jekyll have sent a picture there?” (Maixner 215). Stevenson replied to this query, though he let most of Myers’s other proposed changes pass without comment: “I rather meant that Hyde had bought it himself; and Utterson’s hypothesis of the gift an error” (219). Myers’s subsequent reply to Stevenson was lengthy, detailing and ruling out examples of why and how Hyde might have purchased the picture. Analysing these suggestions, Arata argues that for Myers, Hyde is “an image of the bourgeois male” and he therefore focuses on Myers’s concern “that Hyde’s reputation not be smeared by association with ‘jaded voluptuaries’ and aesthetes.” Perhaps most notably, Arata points out that Myers’s concern with the “voluptuary” character of aesthetes is counterbalanced by a relative approbation for Hyde’s engagements in “‘business, freedom from personal vanity, or reliance on the cash nexus” (238). Such distinctions work not only to protect Hyde as an expression of bourgeois masculinity, as Arata argues, but also to separate definitively the economic focus of middle-class businessmen from the cultural capital of genteel professionals. That Myers would have identified himself with the latter group seems likely given how his practical suggestion – that the painting might be “one or two small Jan Steens which [Jekyll] could have taken in a cab” – offers a demonstration of his own taste. Indeed, Myers’s concern with correcting details related to Hyde’s possessions are balanced by his insistence that Stevenson represent “the thoroughly sympathetic and gently apolaustic” Jekyll in properly civilized terms (215, 217).

If we read Myers’s response to these details as evidence of his discomfort not with the implication of Hyde in aestheticism, but rather with the implication of Jekyll in bourgeois

business practice, then Stevenson's suggestion that Utterson (and Myers) has made an error in assigning the choice of the painting to Jekyll suggests how economic factors were wilfully repressed as a basis of identity among affluent Victorians. Indeed, Myers's insistence that "friends of weight support my view" suggests the extent to which such connections struck a sore spot among affluent Victorians who regarded themselves as gentlemen (219). At the same time, Stevenson's exasperated insistence elsewhere in his correspondence that Hyde is not "a mere voluptuary" and his subsequent identification of business as a field associated with "cruelty and cowardice and selfishness" (231) suggest that this was precisely the spot he hoped to hit. The shared resistance of Utterson and Myers thus underlines the ways in which affluent Victorians managed the fear that economic activities might fundamentally shape identity by retreating into a compensatory focus on seemingly immaterial determinants of identity such as taste and cultural capital.

III. Conclusion: The Man in the Mirror

TO ACHIEVE THE END OF managing internal, ideological conflict in relation to questions of money, Christopher Herbert argues, the Victorians perfected strategies of "*not knowing what one knew*," an approach that became "almost the defining principle of consciousness, at least in the sphere of middle-class life" (186). In *Jekyll and Hyde*, such strategies of wilful not-knowing are persistently associated with questions of identity. Thus, for example, Jekyll's uncertain use of pronouns suggests the incomplete process of obfuscation, or wilful not-knowing, by which he distances himself from Hyde's activities.¹⁰ The practice of "not knowing what one knew" also structures the social relationships between gentlemen in *Jekyll and Hyde*. As Utterson and Enfield concur in the opening chapter, "the more it looks like Queer Street, the less I ask" (11). Perhaps at the broadest level, the practice of "not knowing" occurs when characters in the text attempt to characterize Hyde as other – using words that identify him with atavistic throwbacks, foreigners, and various forms of degeneracy¹¹ – all of which help to secure the perception of Jekyll as a positive, dominant, and privileged self. Such descriptors function defensively in the text, appearing at moments when the true relationship between Jekyll and Hyde threatens to reveal itself. "Not knowing" thus represents an attempt to forestall awareness of unpleasant truths about the privileged identity of the gentleman that persistently threaten to erupt.

Such fragile processes of collusion break down in *Jekyll and Hyde* in response to economic realities that suggest how the interrelationship of interest and disinterest in the self is managed with great difficulty in a capitalist society. The ugly truth, as Herbert explains, is that "the motive of economic self-enrichment, on which political economy seeks to confer moral legitimacy, is always and inescapably cruel and aggressive, and all theories of capitalistic free enterprise as continually expanding national wealth in which the whole population shares are obfuscations of this fact." The result, he points out, is a "chronic, culturally instinctive" pattern in Victorian writing, where "two categories form the two inseparable, interchangeable, 'necessarily' . . . mutually implicating aspects of a single thing" (193–94).

In Stevenson's text this convergence is represented in gothic terms when Jekyll wakes from one of his "adventures" disoriented. "It was in vain I looked about me," he explains; ". . . something still kept insisting that I was not where I was, that I had not wakened where I

seemed to be, but in the little room in Soho where I was accustomed to sleep in the body of Edward Hyde”:

I smiled to myself, and in my psychological way, began lazily to inquire into the elements of this illusion, occasionally, even as I did so, dropping back into a comfortable morning doze. I was still so engaged when, in one of my more wakeful moments, my eyes fell upon my hand. Now the hand of Henry Jekyll (as you have often remarked) was professional in shape and size: it was large, firm, white and comely. But the hand which I now saw, clearly enough, in the yellow light of a mid-London morning, lying half shut on the bed clothes, was lean, corded, knuckly, of a dusky pallor and thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair. It was the hand of Edward Hyde. (54)

Here, Jekyll wakes to find that self and other are indistinguishable. Despite his insistence on their outward difference in appearance, in fact, “the psychological way” in which Jekyll understands the world as a professional man is shared by Hyde, suggesting an intimate, inner correspondence that persists despite their separation into distinct characters. If investment allows one to limit legal responsibility by creating a new subject, the narrative ultimately suggests, its strategies of doubling and partitioning do not resolve the problem of moral implication in the actions of the corporate entity.

That gentlemen as a class are implicated in the expressions of economic subjectivity associated with Jekyll and Hyde seems to be the novel’s most anxious focus of wilful not-knowing, even as it is also its most prominent open secret. Steven Arata has noted that despite the strong negative feelings Hyde inspires in other gentlemen, this group nonetheless consistently accepts him as one of their own (235). In attempting to articulate his difference from themselves, moreover, most fail to find a concrete basis for the judgement. Enfield notes that Hyde “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” (11–12). Similarly, Utterson finds that Hyde “gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation” (17). Both men respond to Hyde as uncanny: eerily familiar, he makes visible what is repressed in the respectable, genteel identity of Jekyll and his circle: the “cruelty and cowardice and selfishness” that sustains a way of life (Maixner 231). Otherwise hidden aspects of gentlemanly society, particularly preoccupations with economic exchange, thus become visible when Hyde appears. Following Hyde’s collision with the little girl on the street, for instance, the murderous energies of the crowd are managed only with difficulty by the gentlemen present. As Enfield notes, “killing being out of the question, we did the next best” (9). By “next best” he means blackmail: “We told the man we could and would make such a scandal out of this, as should make his name stink from one end of London to the other” (9). This solution offers an intriguing example of the ways physical violence can be recast as economic violence in order to manage social tensions, as Hyde himself notes. “‘If you choose to make capital out of this accident,’ said he, ‘I am naturally helpless. No gentleman but wishes to avoid a scene’” (10). Significantly, Hyde’s membership in the group is confirmed by his grasp of this mechanism, which he designates in explicitly economic terms associated with investment. Later, Utterson engages in a less physical instance of economic reconceptualization. Having discovered the packet of documents lying by the dead body of Edward Hyde in Jekyll’s house, the lawyer pockets them and instructs the servant present, “I would say nothing of this paper. If your master has fled or is dead, we may at least save his credit” (41). This use of the term “credit,” Katherine Linehan

suggests, refers to Jekyll's reputation or good name (*Jekyll and Hyde* 41n.8). As a word with a financial double meaning, however, "credit" also suggests the extent to which questions of character and identity have become inseparable from economic matters in Victorian society.

For Utterson, whose perspective structures the first two-thirds of the narrative, such questions about identity erupt repeatedly, culminating in a final, significantly unresolved moment of identification when he reads Jekyll's will and discovers his own name has been substituted for that of Hyde. This is a particularly gothic moment where the return of what has been repressed knits together questions about subjectivity and the economic processes that constitute and sustain identity in capitalist society. Indeed, with this transfer of ownership, Utterson inherits not only Jekyll's capital but also confirmation of his implication in activities that Utterson has struggled not to see. Just as Jekyll discovers to his horror that inside he and Hyde are indistinguishable, then, Utterson is identified with the horrors he attempts to externalise. The discovery of the will is preceded by a search for Jekyll, during which the lawyer and Jekyll's servant come to "the cheval glass, into whose depths they looked with an involuntary horror. But it was so turned as to show them nothing but the rosy glow playing on the roof, the fire sparkling in a hundred repetitions along the glazed front of the presses, and their own pale and fearful countenances stooping to look in" (40). This mirror, which reflects back not the monstrous face of the other, but rather a domestic scene and the "pale and fearful" countenance of the gentlemanly self, suggests that horrors lie within rather than without. In this moment, where face and name are reflected in succession, Utterson fleshes out the identity of the faceless figure who has haunted his dreams, intruding on the "rich house" where his friend sleeps "dreaming and smiling at his dreams," gliding "stealthily through sleeping houses," and waiting "at every street corner [to] crush a child and leave her screaming" (15). The faceless man is, in fact, himself and all the other gentlemen with whom he associates. Indeed, Jekyll's economic bequest reveals Utterson's complicity in the economic processes that sustain his lifestyle as a gentleman.

This substitution of Utterson's name for Hyde's extends the paper trail that connects the invisible "investor" to the economic effects of his actions, suggesting, as it does so, the economic complicities that undergirded affluent Victorian society. What is horrifying in this scene of discovery, finally, is not the revelation of the other but rather the unmasking of the self in a context that is eerily ordinary – much like the breakfast room that has been penetrated by limited liability companies that usurp the private identity of the investor. Jekyll and Hyde's private space in the surgery is similarly normal and respectable: "quiet lamplight, a good fire glowing and chattering on the open hearth, the kettle singing its thin strain, a drawer or two open, papers neatly set forth on the business table, and nearer the fire, the things laid out for tea" (39). This private space, like the interior space of the self, is a product of investment – a laundering of profit into habitus and cultural capital. It is also, in this context, a representation laden with meaning that is left purposefully unresolved. Utterson dutifully unseals the two narratives that "explain" the mystery of Jekyll and Hyde, but his role in the chain of economic relationship associated with the will is not subsequently addressed. Instead, the end of Jekyll's narrative, which anticipates his own death as well as Hyde's, concludes the novel. Given my suggestion that the economic subjectivity I have associated with practices of limited liability articulates a view of identity as capital that is infinitely circulated, the unresolved ending of Stevenson's novel thus suggests not an end to the monster, but rather his reconstitution via the transfer of capital. Far from containing or

curtailing the gothic energies associated with the monster as other, in fact, the text directs us to the ways that this energy is central to the identities of the affluent professional men who occupy society's centre.

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NOTES

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1. My understanding of limited liability here and throughout is informed by extended discussions in Johnson, Taylor, and Alborn. For a discussion of investment as gambling see Itzkowitz.
2. See Van Oss (732) and "Speculative Investments" (299, 309).
3. Investment fraud was a popular theme in Victorian fiction and drama; in addition to analysis in Feltes, Reed, and Cook, see, for example, Poovey (268–73), Wagner (chapter 2), and Moody.
4. In addition to the work of Poovey, Gagnier, Delany, and Houston, with which I engage directly, I build on general concerns addressed by critics such as Brantlinger, Gallagher, Jaffe, and Klaver.
5. On this shift see Myers (3).
6. On the ways these aspects of human identity are overlooked in neoclassical formulations of human character see McQuaig (18) and Engler (26).
7. For influential discussions of the power of altruism in the Victorian era see Collini and Goodlad.
8. See, for example, Guest.
9. On the relationship between consumption and identity in Stevenson's writing see, for example, Danahay, Thomas L. Reed, and Denisoff.
10. See Garratt's discussion of the pronoun slippage (189–90).
11. See, for example, Arata, Greenslade, Youngs, Hendershot, and Dryden.

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