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Monsters in Mirrors: Duality, Triangulation, and Multiplicity in Two Adaptations of *Jekyll and Hyde*

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Abstract: Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction provides an ideal means of appreciating and interrogating the duality central to both Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and its adaptations. Moreover, because deconstruction exposes binary oppositions as artificial and constrictive, it enables us to advance beyond them toward multiplicity, a term used by Gilles Deleuze for a complex, ever-changing, multipart structure that transcends unity. Roy Ward Baker's *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* (1971) and episodes of Showtime's *Penny Dreadful* (2014–2016) offer fresh ways to think about—and beyond—the duality of culture's most famously divided pair. The binary oppositions that organize each text are innovative, as are the ways in which these oppositions are reversed and conflated. Ultimately, these adaptations employ triangulation to deconstruct themselves, thereby demonstrating the limitations and instability of duality, as well as the possibilities of multiplicity.

Keywords: adaptation; deconstruction; *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde*; duality; multiplicity; *Penny Dreadful*; *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*; triangulation

1. Deconstructing *Jekyll and Hyde*

In “Henry Jekyll’s Full Statement of the Case”, the notoriously bisected doctor avers that “man is not truly one, but truly two” (Stevenson [1886] 2015, p. 76). Following Jekyll’s lead, adaptations of Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, such as F. W. Murnau’s *Der Januskopf* (Murnau 1920) and Terence Fisher’s *The Two Faces of Dr. Jekyll* (Fisher 1960), have depicted Jekyll/Hyde as two-faced; but he is, in fact, a monster of many faces. Jekyll himself contends that duality is merely a starting point: “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” (Stevenson [1886] 2015, p. 76). Jekyll’s speculation indicates how exploring duality is the first step in appreciating multiplicity, a concept developed by Gilles Deleuze. “‘Multiplicity’, which replaces the one no less than the multiple, is the true substantive, substance itself”, Deleuze claims, contending that “everything is a multiplicity in so far as it incarnates an Idea”, and that “instead of the enormous opposition between the one and the many, there is only the variety of multiplicity—in other words, difference” (Deleuze 1994, p. 182). Considering multiplicity as a substantive rather than a predicate enables us to distinguish not between single/multiple but among types of multiplicities, which are always changing. As Deleuze and Félix Guattari emphasize, “becoming and multiplicity are the same thing” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 275). Signifying not simply range or variety but “a complex structure that does not reference a prior unity” (Roffe 2010, p. 181), a multiplicity has never been and never will be unified. In terms of the psyche, multiplicity defines an interwoven subjectivity continually in flux. With respect to *Jekyll and Hyde*, it describes not only the “multifarious” mind theorized by Jekyll but also an ever-changing network of texts by critics, filmmakers, playwrights, artists, novelists, and others. Stevenson’s psychomachia has been adapted across media in works ranging from B-horror movies to prestige pieces, and from TV shows to musicals. It has been interpreted as an allegory of alcoholism, drug addiction,



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(homo)sexuality, thermodynamics, and much more.¹ Thus, the cheval-glass before which Jekyll transforms into a monster has multiplied into a house of mirrors within which we see a profusion of monsters—all of whom, uncannily, we recognize as reflections of ourselves.

An invaluable means of navigating this *mise en abyme* and understanding how adaptations of *Jekyll and Hyde* move past duality and toward multiplicity is deconstruction, the theory introduced by Jacques Derrida in his 1966 lecture “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences” (Derrida [1970] 2007) and articulated in *Of Grammatology* (Derrida [1967] 1997). Derrida contends that central to Western thought is the binary opposition, in which two contrasting terms both generate and restrict meaning. The privileged term appears to the left of a slash: good/evil. Terms situated between extremes—for instance, twilight, which falls between day and night—are excluded by binary oppositions but explored by critics, who not only identify the oppositions in a text but also consider how they are inverted (evil/good) and collapsed (good, evil). Ultimately, deconstruction exposes binary oppositions as artificial and constrictive, and it enables us to advance beyond them.

Because deconstruction highlights and problematizes bifurcation, it is an ideal way to interpret adaptations of *Jekyll and Hyde*, whose source is synonymous with division and whose endlessly creative variations on a theme involve yet another provocative tension: original/adaptation. This opposition remains central to debates involving fidelity criticism, an approach concerned with an adaptation’s faithfulness (or lack thereof) to its source.² Whether one believes that “[a] stubborn insistence on fidelity certainly has kept adaptation theory from maturing” (Albrecht-Crane and Cutchins 2010, p. 12), or contends that “fidelity discourse” persists despite the fact that “no one in academe is actually advocating the antiquated notion of fidelity” (Murray 2012, pp. 8, 9), deconstruction enables those who study the relationship between literature and film to challenge fidelity/infidelity and original/adaptation. It does so via Derrida’s notion of supplementation, which both inverts and subverts the hierarchies of Western binary oppositions by revealing their fundamental instability. In speech/writing, for instance, the written word supplements and replaces the spoken one. Derrida reifies his strategy of supplementation by coining an ingenious neologism, *différance*. Derived from the bifurcated verb *différer*, which means both “to differ” and “to defer”, *différance* is a homophone for *différence* whose difference from its near double is perceptible only in writing, and whose meaning is likewise twofold. Building on the structuralist insight that the meaning of a word depends on its difference from the meanings of other words, rather than on a mimetic relationship with reality, *différance* demonstrates how signifiers are linked in an endless chain of signification, and meaning in language is always contingent, always deferred. The gap that *différance* opens between the signifier and the signified is closed, if only in imagination, by the “transcendental signified”, an ultimate but elusive referent whose meaning is “absolute and irreducible” (Derrida [1967] 1997, p. 20). Describing both the semiotic and the psychological appeal of this fallacy, Derrida explains that a transcendental signified (God, for instance), “would exceed the chain of signs, and would no longer itself function as a signifier” (Derrida [1972] 1981, p. 19).

The transcendental signified of deconstruction is akin to the source text of adaptation theory, which is just as illusory. As Robert Stam points out, adaptations are “caught up in the ongoing whirl of intertextual reference and transformation, of texts generating other texts in an endless process of recycling, transformation, and transmutation, *with no clear point of origin*” (Stam 2000, p. 66, my emphasis). Stam’s observation aligns with Derrida’s insight that “the concept of origin has merely a relative function within a system situating a multitude of origins in itself, each origin capable of being the effect or the offshoot of another origin” (Derrida [1967] 1997, p. 217). Accordingly, though adaptations of *Jekyll and Hyde* appear to stem from Stevenson’s novella, this ostensible ur-text is preceded by and adapts a multitude of intertexts. These include not only the author’s much-discussed incinerated first draft but also his melodrama, *Deacon Brodie, or the Double Life* (Stevenson 1879), part of whose subtitle, *Founded on Facts*, underscores how the play that prefigures *Jekyll and*

Hyde is itself anticipated by accounts of the life of the duplicitous Edinburgher William Brodie (1741–88), by day the Deacon of Wrights and Masons and by night a housebreaker (Stevenson [1886] 2015, pp. 120–22 and Gibson 1977).

The potentially limitless intertextuality of *Jekyll and Hyde*, which elides the duality of original/adaptation, exemplifies the multiplicity evident not only in the corpus as a whole but also in individual adaptations. I have chosen to study two thought-provoking works that have received either very little or no scholarly attention: Roy Ward Baker's *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* (1971) and episodes of Showtime's *Penny Dreadful* (2014–16).³ Featuring, respectively, a male Jekyll/female Hyde and an ostracized Anglo-Indian Jekyll who becomes the privileged Lord Hyde, these underappreciated yet rich and stimulating texts offer fresh ways to think about—and beyond—the duality of culture's most famous pair. The binary oppositions that organize each text are innovative, as are the ways in which these oppositions are reversed and conflated. Ultimately, these adaptations employ triangulation to deconstruct themselves, thereby demonstrating the limitations and instability of duality, as well as the possibilities of multiplicity.

2. Triangulating Gender: *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde*

As the title of *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* indicates, the film's primary opposition is male/female. Also at issue are life/death and, of course, good/evil. Dr. Henry Jekyll (Ralph Bates) seeks to develop an "elixir of life" (Baker 1971, 9.17–9.19), whose key ingredient is the hormones of women (who live longer than men), so that he may extend his own life and gain the time to develop "a universal panacea" (Baker 1971, 7.26–7.27) for cholera and other scourges. His potion transforms him into a woman (Martine Beswick), whom he describes as his sister, the widow Mrs. Hyde, to his friend Prof. Robertson (Gerald Sim) and his upstairs neighbors, the siblings Howard and Susan Spencer (Lewis Fiander and Susan Brodrick), who live with their mother, Mrs. Spencer (Dorothy Alison). At first, the ovaries and hormones that Jekyll needs from women's cadavers are supplied by the infamous Burke (Ivor Dean) and Hare (Tony Calvin). Once Burke is hanged and Hare blinded, however, Dr. Jekyll/Mrs. Hyde resorts to murdering prostitutes himself/herself, in Jack-the-Ripper style. After Hare exposes Jekyll to the police, the scientist attempts to flee but transforms into Hyde, plunges from the side of a building, and perishes. The film's final image is of an androgynous Jekyll/Hyde lying in the street.

Opposing *Dr* to *Sister* instead of *Mr* is not simply a clever innovation but also a means of emphasizing how the film's men are defined by their careers; its women, by their relationships with men. Susan is Howard's sister and Jekyll's potential wife. Mrs. Spencer is Howard's mother, and his late father's wife. Mrs. Hyde, according to Jekyll, is his sister and the widow of Mr. Hyde. By contrast, Dr. Jekyll and Prof. Robertson are, as their titles indicate, educated professionals who conduct research and practice medicine. The policeman who consults Prof. Robertson, Sgt. Danvers (Paul Whitsun-Jones), is likewise called and characterized by his professional title. Even those men who are not so distinguished, including the murderers Burke and Hare, and the morgue attendant Byker (Philip Madoc), are shown working. The exception is Howard, whose job is undisclosed. That he has or is seeking employment seems likely, however, since a young, unmarried Victorian gentleman would hardly choose to share rooms with his mother and sister unless he were compelled to do so. The film's contrasting masculine professionalism with feminine domesticity, both in its title and in its characters, reproduces the opposition in Stevenson's novella, whose focus is on male professionals and whose few female characters are usually depicted at home.⁴ Neither the novella nor the film celebrates professional men, however. In fact, as Stephen Arata notes, in *Jekyll and Hyde*, Stevenson "[links] gentlemanliness and bourgeois virtue to various forms of depravity" (Arata 1995, p. 244). *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* likewise exposes the erotic desire motivating men's scientific research, thereby inverting and collapsing the binary oppositions of professional/personal, altruistic/selfish, repressed/expressed, heterosexual/homosexual, and male/female.

The film repeatedly conflates medical inquiry with the gratification of (illicit) male lust. Prof. Robertson chastises his friend Dr. Jekyll for working too hard, observing, “Why only last night I passed here, well after midnight, and your light was still burning”. When Jekyll wonders what Robinson was “doing at that hour”, his friend responds, “Oh, I was on the job too. Research, you know. A delicious blonde fragment from the chorus at the Alhambra” (Baker 1971, 6.46–7.03). Later, when Robertson comes to see “just how much progress [Jekyll has] been making” on his experiment, he spots a red dress that Mrs. Hyde has ordered. “Seems rather more [progress] than I’d anticipated”, he notes, grinning (Baker 1971, 1.03.21–1.03.23). Whereas Robertson is a garden-variety lecher, Jekyll’s more exotic sexual proclivities, barely sublimated into his research, include necrophilia. A scene at the morgue, where Jekyll chooses from among several female corpses, is telling. As Jekyll inspects one woman’s body, the leering Byker tells him, “I’ve grown fond of her” (Baker 1971, 11.12–11.13). When he selects another body, pulls out his dissecting knife, and stares significantly at Byker, the man exits the room so that Jekyll can be alone with the corpse. Jekyll also asks Burke and Hare to step outside while he works on a woman’s body in his home laboratory. “What do you think he does with them?” (Baker 1971, 19.10–19.11) Hare asks Burke, who in a later scene appears to draw his own conclusions. Shifting his gaze between Jekyll and the corpse of a young woman that the doctor is anxious to cut open, the observant Burke slyly remarks, “All in the cause of science, eh, doctor?” (Baker 1971, 22.36–22.38). After Jekyll decides to procure his own corpses by murdering prostitutes, he sits fondling his knife while a woman undresses, her back turned to him. “Undo me”, she punningly directs him (Baker 1971, 40.51). He obliges by cutting away her corset before driving his blade into her body. That Jekyll’s knife is now larger—and decidedly not a medical tool—signifies his transition from an effete scientist who receives dead women’s bodies from other men into a more potent Jack-the-Ripper figure who kills them himself—and herself, as Mrs. Hyde.

Dr. Jekyll’s transformations into Mrs. Hyde debunk the altruistic motivations for his research—not only because he uses her as a disguise while committing heinous murders but also because these sex changes, ostensibly an unfortunate by-product of his experiment though arguably its true goal, reveal his repressed, forbidden desires: to become a seductive, powerful woman; to revel in narcissism and autoeroticism; to pursue his attraction to other men. Jekyll claims to be developing his potion to extend his own life and, through his research, the lives of others. That female hormones are essential to this elixir may appear incidental; however, in reality, the “side” effects of the formula realize Jekyll’s unconscious wishes. Like his predecessor in Stevenson’s novella, he opens a psychic cage and “that which [stands] within [runs] forth” (Stevenson [1886] 2015, p. 79). Once released, Mrs. Hyde, who drolly tells Prof. Robertson, “To date I’ve lived a very sheltered life” (Baker 1971, 1.08.40–1.08.42), seeks “adventure” (Baker 1971, 1.08.36) through sex, murder, and what the Victorian sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing categorizes as “Lust-Murder” (von Krafft-Ebing 1894, p. 62). Immediately after Mrs. Hyde first appears, she gazes into Jekyll’s cheval-glass, touches her face, frees her hair, exposes her breasts, and begins fondling one of them. She looks down and away from the mirror to discover Jekyll’s hand touching her body, and she closes her robe. His hand then caresses her face. This facial stroking is repeated when Jekyll, leaving a shop with a dress and hat for Mrs. Hyde, encounters Howard, who inquires after her health. “I am in excellent health”, Jekyll responds to the confused Howard, before tenderly whispering, “Howard”, and reaching out to touch the other man’s face (Baker 1971, 1.02.08–1.02.24). In keeping with Freudian theory, these recurring gestures link autoerotic narcissism with homosexuality,⁵ which link is strengthened by the film’s references to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.⁶ While viewers are meant to understand that Mrs. Hyde controls Jekyll’s mind when he touches Howard, the moment nonetheless exposes the queer desire that animates her/his relationships with both Howard and Robertson—lovers prohibited to Dr. Jekyll but permissible to Mrs. Hyde.

Jekyll’s queer desire energizes the triangulation by which *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* deconstructs itself. Jekyll’s repressed feminine side seduces both Howard and Robertson,

in scenes that evoke René Girard's and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's theories of triangular relationships within which a woman functions to connect two men. As Sedgwick notes, "Girard seems to see the bond between rivals in an erotic triangle as being even stronger, more heavily determinant of actions and choices, than anything in the bond between either of the lovers and the beloved" (Sedgwick [1985] 2016, p. 21 and Girard 1976, p. 47). Triangulation of this sort, which inverts and elides beloved/lover and heterosexual/homosexual, configures the love scene between Howard and Mrs. Hyde, and that between her and Robertson—though not in the manner viewers might expect. Although the two men and the woman do form an erotic triangle, neither man is aware of the other's interest in the woman. (In fact, the men are strangers to each other.) Triangulation and deconstruction occur not among the three characters, but between each man and Mrs. Hyde/Dr. Jekyll. As they are entwined on Jekyll's couch, Howard tells Mrs. Hyde, "Oh, if you could imagine what a man feels [when kissing you]", and she responds, "But I can imagine it" (Baker 1971, 1.14.53–1.15.10). Later, Robertson, believing that he has caught Jekyll at home with a female lover, takes his cue to exit and jokes, "Two's company. Three—positive deviation" (Baker 1971, 1.03.56–1.04.00). His remark underscores both the deviant nature of Dr. Jekyll/Mrs. Hyde's triangular encounters with men, and the means by which they are accomplished. A "positive deviation" refers to a non-ideal, binary, liquid solution in which "the attractive forces between solute and solvent are lower than those between the molecules of the pure components" (Atkins and Jones 2008, p. 341). Thus, Robertson's complex pun at once evokes duality, triangulation, chemical attraction (both literal and figurative), and, most obviously, Jekyll's potion. Ironically, not long after making this remark, Robertson finds himself in a de facto bisexual threeway with Mrs. Hyde/Dr. Jekyll. She consummates their encounter by killing him, thereby proving the point he makes to Sgt. Danvers after she commits her first murder: "It's a queer business, Sergeant. Very queer" (Baker 1971, 1.01.41–1.01.45).⁷

In *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde*, as in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, murder is indeed a very queer business.⁸ The transsexual Mrs. Hyde kills other women for their ovaries and female hormones, and she stabs Robertson to death while repeatedly changing sex. After he shares with her his suspicion that Dr. Jekyll is the murderer for whom he and the police have been searching, she seduces and murders him. While they are kissing, she reaches for a knife and stabs him repeatedly in the back and torso. During this attack, dressed only in her underclothes, Mrs. Hyde transforms into Dr. Jekyll and back again, while crosscuts show (1) objective shots of Jekyll, his eyes closed, writhing on the floor of his sitting room; (2) subjective shots from Jekyll's point of view of his bloody hand over a prostitute's mouth; (3) subjective shots from Dr. Jekyll/Mrs. Hyde's point(s) of view of Robertson's bloody face; and (4) an objective shot of a prostitute with the tip of a knife sticking out of her throat. The subjective shots of both the prostitute and Robertson are from a high angle, indicating that Jekyll looms over them and highlighting their vulnerability to him. A cut to Jekyll in his sitting room indicates that he has been dreaming—but his bloody hands and knife reveal that his dream is partly, if not wholly, a flashback.⁹ Interpreted as a flashback, this scene demonstrates how Mrs. Hyde, who stalks London armed with a long knife hidden under her petticoats that she uses to penetrate bodies, acts as the androgynous "phallic woman" described by Sigmund Freud and Barbara Creed (Freud [1933] 1989, pp. 30, 108, 122–23, 157, 161 and Creed 1993, pp. 156–58). Interpreted as a dream, this scene discloses Jekyll's repressed desire for his friend Robertson, who is conflated with the prostitutes whom Jekyll murders in sexually suggestive ways. However we view the murder, it is illogical for Mrs. Hyde to kill Robertson because he poses a threat to Dr. Jekyll, given that she later declares, "It is I who exist, Dr. Jekyll, not you! It is I who will be rid of you!" (Baker 1971, 1.13.27–1.13.34). If her alter-ego were wanted by the police, then he would be imprisoned within her—just as, in Stevenson's novella, the fugitive Hyde is (temporarily) trapped within Jekyll. It makes much more sense that Dr. Jekyll would unconsciously wish first to kiss and then to kill the man who has "[b]een preaching" (Baker 1971, 1.03.36–1.03.37) that he "[f]orsake] research" (Baker 1971, 56.28–56.29) for a woman and who, upon learning that

his formula effects a sex change, tells him, “Keep away from me, my boy. I’m having far too much fun the way I am” (Baker 1971, 33.25–33.30). The older, more established man’s aggressive joke emphasizes his superiority to Jekyll, as both a patriarch and a womanizer, while tacitly recognizing Jekyll’s queer desire and warning him against indulging it. Jekyll responds by transforming into an androgyne who feminizes Robertson while ferociously, repeatedly, and fatally penetrating him.

This threeway encounter spectacularly demonstrates how *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* employs triangulation to transcend duality and achieve multiplicity: Dr. Jekyll/Mrs. Hyde is at once male, female, and androgynous. Once established, this tripartite entity serves as a catalyst to triangulate bifurcated relationships. The film’s brother/sister pairs—Howard/Susan, Dr. Jekyll/Mrs. Hyde—become trios: Mrs. Hyde/Dr. Jekyll, Howard; Dr. Jekyll/Mrs. Hyde, Susan; Dr. Jekyll/Mrs. Hyde, Robertson. Indeed, Mrs. Hyde is herself tripled—recognized first as Dr. Jekyll’s lover, then as his sister and as Mr. Hyde’s widow. These thematic triangulations are visually translated when Jekyll throws a knife into the cheval-glass and cracks it into three pieces. In one of the film’s most complex shots, Dr. Jekyll and Mrs. Hyde contend for dominance while standing before the broken mirror. Viewers do not recognize that the camera is positioned in front of the mirror until Mrs. Hyde steps toward the glass and the cracks appear, dividing her likeness into two and then three parts. The realization that we are looking into a mirror and experiencing a subjective rather than an objective shot is startling, and an ominous musical cue amplifies our unease. “We’ll see who wins”, Mrs. Hyde tells her reflection—which, in an intensely uncanny moment, we recognize as (not) our own. “We’ll see”, Dr. Jekyll’s voice echoes from her mouth, as the reflection changes first into an androgynous countenance and then into his own face (Baker 1971, 1.18.03–1.18.15). The transitional image foreshadows the film’s final shot of Jekyll/Hyde’s body lying in the street—an uncanny, tripartite amalgam that is at once both and neither of them.

3. Taming a Beast from the East: *Penny Dreadful*

Dr. Henry Jekyll (Shazad Latif) appears in eight episodes of the third and final season of *Penny Dreadful*, a Showtime television series that explores the demimonde behind and beneath nineteenth-century London and features several major figures from Romantic and Victorian Gothic fiction.¹⁰ These include Victor Frankenstein, the Monster, and the Bride; Dorian Gray, his painted doppelgänger, and his paramours; Dracula, Mina Harker, Dr. Seward, Renfield, and, finally, Quincey Morris, who is reimagined as a werewolf and renamed Ethan Lawrence Talbot in a nod to Lawrence Talbot, the protagonist of George Waggner’s *The Wolf Man* (Waggner 1941). Also involved in this monster mash-up are witches, demons, vampires, and Satan himself. Although Jekyll has less screen time than other major characters, his status as an Anglo-Indian, the son of an English colonial military officer and an Indian mother, renders him a significant variation on the Jekyll/Hyde character. Responding to a request for help from his friend and former schoolmate Victor Frankenstein (Harry Treadaway), Jekyll helps Frankenstein combat his drug addiction and reconcile with one of his creations, Lily (Billie Piper).

The adapted tales of *Penny Dreadful*’s outré characters, stitched together in Frankensteinian fashion as a Gothic pastiche, are presented to viewers of the twenty-first century as an updated, intertextual version of a fictional genre popular among readers of the nineteenth century, the penny dreadful, which itself drew on eighteenth-century Gothic novels (Dittmer and Raine 2023, p. 12). In its return to Victorian Gothic form, *Penny Dreadful* deconstructs itself, blurring the lines not only between original and adaptation but also between texts and times. For instance, Frankenstein, a Romantic figure, conducts research alongside Jekyll, a late-Victorian one. More broadly, as Sinan Akılı and Seda Öz demonstrate, the series creates a “world which is characterized by the merging of dualities” in three areas: “first, the confluence of London/Demimonde; second, the confluence of the double (and sometimes multiple) selves of the characters; and third, the confluence of Romantic poetry and nineteenth-century Gothic fiction” (Akılı and Öz 2016, p. 16). In a semiotic approach

that aligns with its composite nature, *Penny Dreadful* establishes binary oppositions only to complicate and conflate them, before it employs triangulation to transcend them entirely.

Foremost among these oppositions is West/East. When Jekyll first appears, in “The Day Tennyson Died” (Logan 2016a), while seeking Frankenstein in London’s East End he is derided by its xenophobic inhabitants—perhaps not despite but because of the fact that, during the Victorian period, the East End’s Oriental Quarter was the unheimlich home to many Indians (Fisher 2004, p. 383). “Not from around here, is he?” (Logan 2016a, 24.21), asks one man. “Go home, you dirty wog!” (Logan 2016a, 24.22),¹¹ shouts another, while a woman shrieks, “Don’t need no bloody niggers here! Back to fucking Calcutta with every one of you, say I!” (Logan 2016a, 24.39–24.45). Her verbal assault, and a man’s calling Jekyll a “black bastard” (Logan 2016a, 24.20), link West/East with white/black. This latter contrast is emphasized by close-ups that show Jekyll, first in silhouette and then in half-shadow, standing at Frankenstein’s door. These shots anticipate his observation in “Predators Far and Near” that “[w]e are all two things, are we not? [...] Light and dark” (Logan 2016b, 13.36–13.47). West/East and white/black are problematized, however, by the fact that Jekyll is actually an Anglo-Indian, a “half-breed” (Logan 2016b, 14.47), whose deconstructive understanding of his own racial and ethnic bifurcation inverts and elides traditional hierarchies. Sympathizing with his Indian mother, who perished in disease and dishonor after being deserted by his English father, Jekyll sees the latter as “wholly evil” (Logan 2016b, 13.33). In his mind, good/evil is aligned with mother/father, East/West, and black/white. *Penny Dreadful* itself affirms Jekyll’s transposition of conventional oppositions: his wicked father is not simply a Hyde-like figure but actually Lord Hyde. Thus, the series sharpens Stevenson’s critique of a morally compromised upper class, as exemplified by the slumming Sir Danvers Carew—who is murdered by Mr. Hyde after the two men meet while wandering the late-night London streets in search of illicit pleasure (Veeder 1988, p. 119). *Penny Dreadful* also echoes Stevenson’s condemnation of patriarchy (Veeder 1988), and his deconstruction of father/son, by killing Lord Hyde in “Perpetual Night” (Wilson-Cairns 2016), thereby transforming his son and heir from Jekyll into Hyde.

The series not only inverts but also (imperfectly) collapses the West/East opposition. In “The Day Tennyson Died”, the tea that Frankenstein and Jekyll share signifies the tie between India and Britain that the two men likewise represent. Stressing their bond, Jekyll calls Frankenstein “brother” (Logan 2016a, 39.35), and—imitating upper-class English parlance, the better to assimilate into the world of his father—“old man” (Wilson-Cairns 2016, 7.04), “old sport” (Hinderaker 2016, 5.26), and “old boy” (Hinderaker and Wilson-Cairns 2016, 6.59). Yet, just as tea also evokes the British East India Company’s domination and exploitation of the subcontinent, so too is the relationship between Frankenstein and Jekyll an unequal one. After studying the serum that Jekyll has developed to erase traumatic memories, Frankenstein boasts, “I have developed a superior method” (Hinderaker 2016, 4.29–4.32). While the two men prepare to inject Lily with the formula, Jekyll acts as Frankenstein’s subordinate. Lily recognizes as much, telling her creator, “What a fine little assistant you’ve found yourself, Victor”—to which observation Jekyll angrily responds, “I am not his assistant!” (Wilson-Cairns 2016, 14.17–14.22). Shortly thereafter, Frankenstein undercuts this assertion by curtly dismissing Jekyll from his own laboratory. Although Jekyll rejects Frankenstein’s assumed preeminence, he acknowledges that his friend and colleague, who is shunned by the scientific establishment but also white, is less traumatized than himself. “You think we’re the same. Fellow outcasts”, Jekyll tells him. “But if you could undergo this treatment, if you could have every horrific moment struck from your memory, every time your work was denigrated and you were treated like filth [...], would you do it? No. And that, my true friend, is the difference between you and me” (Hinderaker 2016, 20.07–20.39). The “essence of [Jekyll’s] work” has become finding a means to repress his rage at being ostracized, which project he describes as “[t]aming the beast within” (Logan 2016a, 38.05–38.07, 38.13–38.15). Jekyll’s phrase reveals how he has internalized—both psychologically and figuratively—the Western animalization of the outcast Eastern Other. It also aligns the East with animality and femininity,¹² and Jekyll

with Lily—whom he proposes to “tame” and “[d]omesticate” (Logan 2016a, 39.09–39.14) for Frankenstein.

These alignments, illustrated by the shoulder-length black hair that marks Jekyll as at once Eastern, animalistic, and feminine, elucidate Jekyll’s nurturing, intimate, and quite possibly homoerotic relationship with Frankenstein.¹³ This relationship, like those in *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde*, involves triangulation among two men and a woman. Taking Jekyll on a tour of the lab in which he resurrected Lily, Frankenstein describes it as “[t]he House of Pain” (Logan 2016a, 35.48). He thereby evokes a late-Victorian fictional mad scientist notably absent from *Penny Dreadful*, one who would have made a fitting colleague for Frankenstein and Jekyll: Dr. Moreau, whose vivisections transform animals into human beings in “the House of Pain” (Wells [1896] 2009, pp. 38, 52, 142, 144, 162, 163, 164, 190). Jekyll’s confession that Frankenstein’s years of silence have “caused [him] no small amount of pain” (Logan 2016a, 36.47–36.49) reinforces the links among himself, Lily, and animality—as does the “horsebit” (Hinderaker 2016, 21.31–21.25) that both Jekyll and Lily would bite down on if injected with the serum. Furthermore, Frankenstein’s relationship with Lily echoes Moreau’s with his own ultimate creation, a puma-nearly-turned-woman. The puma is fettered in Moreau’s lab; Lily is chained in Jekyll’s. While Moreau seeks to turn a cat into a woman, Frankenstein hopes to accomplish the reverse. In a seduction scene whose homoerotic undercurrent is unmistakable, Jekyll, standing close to Frankenstein and speaking softly, asks his friend whether he would like Jekyll to “leave [Lily] purring like a kitten in [Frankenstein’s] lap” (Logan 2016a, 39.13–39.15). “Yes”, Frankenstein responds, as Jekyll touches his friend’s neck and face. “Then shall we attempt it, brother?” Jekyll asks. “Yes”, Frankenstein whispers (Logan 2016a, 39.28–39.36). The two men thus form a triangular relationship with Lily, in which their own bond is at least as strong as that between Frankenstein and his creation. If they cannot “make [her] into a proper woman” (Logan 2016c, 44.38–44.43), then they will “destroy her” (Logan 2016a, 40.38)—leaving them alone to work together.

Trying to determine the nature of his friend’s troubles, Jekyll asks, “Is it love, or work?” “Both”, Frankenstein tells him (Logan 2016a, 26.36–26.40). Love and work are conflated for these men, and their love for each other is sublimated into their shared work. Indeed, all three adaptations of the Jekyll/Hyde story considered here disclose the libido driving their protagonists’ scientific enterprises—an energy that, though apparently focused outward, is actually directed within, thereby deconstructing the interior/exterior opposition central to *Jekyll and Hyde* and its adaptations. In *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* and *Penny Dreadful*, scientists hide their motives, even and especially from themselves, as they seek enlightenment. They discover not the cures for which they ostensibly search, but the self-awareness that, while seeming to be a by-product of their work, is in fact its true object. Tragically and belatedly, to varying degrees, each recognizes himself in his mirror image. Both/and substitutes for either/or, as in Frankenstein’s response to Jekyll, before these narratives move past duality altogether.

Deconstruction, triangulation, and multiplicity are at work not only within but also among the many versions of *Jekyll and Hyde*. Considered together, Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde*, and *Penny Dreadful* are notable for three interrelated binary oppositions: original/adaptation, Victorian/neo-Victorian, and canonical/non-canonical. These oppositions are unstable, however, and may easily be deconstructed by means of the Freudian uncanny, an experience of the (un)familiar whose manifestations include doppelgängers and ghosts (Freud [1919] 2003, pp. 141, 148), and whose operations in certain respects resemble those of Derrida’s supplement. As Rosario Arias and Patricia Pulham observe, a neo-Victorian narrative is essentially uncanny, insofar as it “represents a ‘double’ of the Victorian text”, which often “defamiliarizes our preconceptions of Victorian society” and acts as “a ghostly visitor from the past that infiltrates our present” (Arias and Pulham 2010, p. xv). *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* and *Penny Dreadful*—and, indeed, all versions of *Jekyll and Hyde*—are simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar doubles of Stevenson’s novella, which itself uncannily doubles its precursors. As such, they both include and

transcend the binary oppositions according to which they appear to be structured. They therefore constitute a third, fundamentally uncanny textual category. Moreover, they form a multiplicity which engages with other multiplicities. Deleuze and Guattari stress that the key distinction is not between binary oppositions, “which are always relative, changing, and reversible, but between different types of multiplicities that co-exist, interpenetrate, and change places” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 36). To explain these dynamics, they consider *Le Meneur de Loups* (Dumas 1857), in which a man encounters a supernatural wolf who offers him wishes in exchange for the hairs on his head. Each time he makes a wish, a hair turns red, like that of a wolf, until he eventually becomes a wolf himself. This novel is part of both “the hair-multiplicity, [in which] hair is the borderline”, and “the wolf-multiplicity”, in which the wolf is the borderline (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 276). In other words, it shares borders with other multiplicities involving hair or wolves. The many multiplicities of *Jekyll and Hyde* include drinking, mirrors, and transformation, to name just a few. Individually and in combination, they—like Jekyll/Hyde—are always changing, always becoming. These multiplicities are fittingly symbolized by the “transforming draught” (Stevenson [1886] 2015, p. 86) that at once transforms Jekyll/Hyde and is transformed. It contains materials of different colors and, as these combine, itself repeatedly changes color. “The mixture, which [is] at first of a reddish hue”, begins “to brighten in colour” before “the compound [changes] to a dark purple” and ultimately to “a watery green” (Stevenson [1886] 2015, p. 76). These shifting colors evoke the never-ending variations on *Jekyll and Hyde*, each and all of which demonstrate the limitless multiplicity distinguishing Stevenson’s classic tale of duality.

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Notes

- ¹ For studies of addiction and alcoholism in *Jekyll and Hyde*, see Colman (2015), Comitini (2012), Reed (2006), and Wright (1994). Heath (1986) and Showalter (1990) consider (homo)sexuality, while MacDuffie (2006) investigates the relationship between Stevenson’s novella and contemporary thermodynamics. For an overview of adaptations, see Rose (1996).
- ² Johnson (2017), Kranz (2007), and Stam (2000) discuss fidelity criticism and its limitations.
- ³ For comments on *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde*, see Benschhoff (1997, pp. 189–91), and Grunzke (2015, pp. 74–78). To the best of my knowledge, no scholarship focuses on the depiction of Henry Jekyll in *Penny Dreadful*, though Monterrubio Ibáñez (2020) and Poore (2016) do consider how the series adapts Gothic fictions.
- ⁴ The maid who witnesses Hyde’s attack on Carew, Hyde’s landlady, and Jekyll’s housemaid and cook are confined to domestic interiors. The two female characters who appear outside the home are assaulted by Mr. Hyde, as if being punished for entering the masculine public sphere. He tramples “a girl” who is running “down a cross street”, and after encountering “a woman” in one of the “less frequented thoroughfares”, he “[smites] her in the face” (Stevenson [1886] 2015, pp. 37, 89).
- ⁵ As Tim Dean (2001) notes, “Explaining male homosexuality as a form of narcissism, Freud conceives it in terms of the sameness not of gender but of the self: Homosexuality appears to Freud as self-love rather than love of another” (p. 122). See also Freud ([1914] 1989).
- ⁶ Dorian infamously wishes “to be always young” (Wilde [1891] 1998, p. 65). Jekyll hopes to discover the “secret of eternal youth” (9.21). Dorian kills his best friend, Basil Hallward, by stabbing him from behind, “[digging] the knife into the great vein that is behind the ear [...] and stabbing again and again (Wilde [1891] 1998, p. 189). Mrs. Hyde literally stabs Jekyll’s best friend Robertson in the back, and knifes him repeatedly. Filled with remorse for this murder and seeking to destroy his alter-ego, his “monstrous soul-life”, Dorian takes “the knife that [has] stabbed Basil Hallward” and “[stabs] the picture with it” (Wilde [1891] 1998, p. 250). After (vainly) vowing to Mrs. Hyde, “I’ll be rid of you!” (1.12.35–1.12.36), Jekyll throws a knife wet with Robertson’s blood into the cheval-glass.
- ⁷ His observation recalls Enfield’s telling Utterson, “the more it looks like Queer Street, the less I ask”, and Poole’s noting that “there [is] something queer about that gentleman [Mr. Hyde]” (Stevenson [1886] 2015, pp. 37, 64). These remarks invited Stevenson’s

readers to see his novella as an allegory for gay men's double lives. As Showalter (1990, p. 112) and Veeder (1988, p. 144) explain, the term *queer* was linked with *homosexual* by the time *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was published in 1886.

⁸ In *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Sir Danvers Carew, a slumming Member of Parliament, is murdered by Hyde after seeming to mistake him for a male prostitute. See Showalter (1990, p. 111). By naming Sgt. Danvers after Sir Danvers, Baker's film deconstructs Stevenson's novella, inverting and eliding aristocrat/commoner and policeman/criminal.

⁹ The scene is an obvious homage to *Psycho* (Hitchcock 1960). Crosscuts in quick succession replicate frenzied stabbing, and the knife-wielding Jekyll in petticoats evokes the knife-wielding Norman Bates dressed as his mother. The links are thematic as well as visual, for both films feature androgynous, crossdressing killers who invert and collapse the binary oppositions of gender and family.

¹⁰ For analyses of how *Penny Dreadful* adapts Gothic fictions, see Monterrubio Ibáñez (2020) and Poore (2016). Farizova (2020) discusses the influence of Romantic poetry on the series.

¹¹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *wog* as British slang for a "non-white person", perhaps "a South Asian, an Arab, or a sub-Saharan African".

¹² Aligning the animal and feminine with the Other is typical of colonialist, Orientalist discourse. Fanon ([1961] 2004) notes that the colonized subject is "reduced to the state of an animal" (p. 7), and Césaire (2000) describes how "the colonizer" becomes habituated to "seeing the other man as *an animal*" (p. 41, emphasis in original). As Yeğenoğlu (1998) observes, "The Orient [...] is always understood in feminine terms and accordingly its place in Western imagery has been constructed through the simultaneous gesture of racialization and feminization" (p. 73).

¹³ Some *Penny Dreadful* viewers hoped for, and Latif was asked about, a romantic relationship between Jekyll and Frankenstein. See Connolly (2016) and Mancuso (2016).

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