



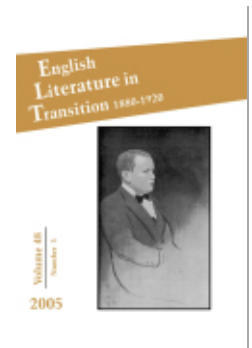
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RLS's *Jekyll & Hyde*

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Johnson, Juliet McLauchlan, J. Hillis Miller, Rosemarie Morgan, and Peter Widdowson.

And, beyond the strengths I see in Efron's *Experiencing 'Tess'* that involve its extraordinary range of reference and its engagement with so many different critical points of view, there is, also, the exceptional breadth of the many critical and cultural interconnections it makes. Where else might one find considerations of theories of the textual control of reader responses jostling with a discussion of the relationship of the novel's concern with the taboo of virginity to the current U.S. government's promotion of premarital abstinence? And there is, too, the humane clarity with which the book is written and the author's full engagement with his subject.

Arthur Efron's *Experiencing 'Tess'* is in important respects a flawed and eccentric book but one with much that is solid and sane in it. One can only regret that it will cost \$72 to have the varied "experiences" this paperback of 248 pages provides.

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### RLS's *Jekyll & Hyde*

Robert Louis Stevenson. *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Richard Dury, ed. *The Collected Works of Robert Louis Stevenson. The Centenary Edition*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. lxii + 199 pp. \$59.50

THE CENTENARY EDITION marches majestically and triumphantly on. This volume, beautifully printed in accordance with high standards set by the Edinburgh University Press, takes its place next to four of Stevenson's major works: *Weir of Hermiston*, edited by Catherine Kerrigan (1995); *The Ebb-Tide*, edited by Peter Hinchcliffe and Catherine Kerrigan (1995); *Treasure Island*, edited by Wendy R. Katz (1998); and *The Collected Poems of Robert Louis Stevenson*, edited by Roger Lewis (2003). Lovers of Stevenson's literary achievement, clouded for decades by patronizing biographers and critics, should rejoice at this most recent addition to the series of authoritative texts known as the Centenary Edition. Catherine Kerrigan is entirely justified in noting the problems created by the too-ready availability of corrupted versions of Stevenson's books (first editions, though prized in literary auctions, are notoriously unreliable guides to what Stevenson wrote or tried—unsuccessfully—to include). "In accuracy, authority and authenticity," she

writes in her preface, “the Centenary Edition improves on all previous editions of Stevenson’s works.”

The emphasis on a “clear text,” i.e., one “free from any editorial signals,” is welcome to this reviewer, if only because the text of Stevenson’s novel, running to some sixty-seven pages, is more than balanced by the scholarly apparatus, which, like some Maginot Line seeking to defy casual passers-by, occupies 163 pages. It is all the more helpful to reread this celebrated novelette as a self-contained fiction, as a story weaving a spell, before going on to study the cornucopia of aids to understanding the text supplied by Richard Dury. (He is a member of the faculty at Bergamo University in Italy, editor of the Stevenson website and the associated newsletters, author of *The Annotated Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* [1993], co-convenor of the Stevenson Conference at Gargnano in 2002 and co-editor of its proceedings, *Robert Louis Stevenson. Writer of Boundaries.*)

After a compressed chronology of Stevenson’s life we are treated to an elaborate introduction, reviewing the circumstances of composition. Perhaps not surprisingly, the story’s genesis does not begin with the famous moment when Fanny awoke her husband, who was “making cries in his sleep,” only to be rebuked with the question, “Why did you wake me? . . . I was dreaming a fine bogey tale.” Stevenson, alarmed by financial pressures and ill health, had earlier expressed his interest in writing for the Christmas “ghost story” market, and elements of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* are certainly present in stories he had already written: the script of a melodrama about Deacon Brodie, the result of a collaboration with W. E. Henley (“a Man who was Two men”), as well as “Markheim,” “The House of Eld” (described as a “fable”), and “The Body Snatcher.”

Stevenson’s quarrel with Fanny about his first draft (which she thought stressed sensationalism at the expense of allegory) led to the destruction of the manuscript and the laboring over an aborted second draft; but when the creative juices flowed, the story was completed in about six weeks. An analysis of how the different versions treated various aspects of characterization and “Victorian proprieties” (Dury’s phrase) leads into a review of the publication history. The editor of *Longman’s Magazine* decided not to serialize it but to publish it after Christmas. Within six months the British printing had sold 40,000 copies, and the various editions brought out in the U. S. had sold 78,000 copies. Reviewers confirmed Charles Longman’s encomium (“written in Mr Stevenson’s best manner”); its originality was highly praised; and its

power may have been best expressed by Andrew Lang, who confessed that, on reading the scene in which Utterson and Poole listen to noises within Jekyll's cabinet, he "threw the manuscript on a chair and scuttled apprehensively to the safety of bed."

Debates about whether *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* contains a moral, or what that moral might be, attracted participants ranging from Henry James, who enjoyed the narrative values quite independently of their allegorical meaning, to any number of critics who didn't explore the astonishing subtleties of the text beyond a feeble stab at something called "psychological speculation." The literature of exegesis, as Dury rightly implies, is astonishingly rich, and readers of this particular edition must be forewarned that the notes, despite their number, can only suggest the difficulties awaiting a reader who hopes for a definitive interpretation. Dury himself comes close to throwing up his hands in despair when it comes to showing the cards he has been dealt: "Rather than an allegory," *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* "could be seen as a puzzle text: a fantastical 'weird tale' with elements of detective, science fiction and sensational tale, containing many signifying elements of multiple and changing values." More than 100 words later, the paragraph amounts to the simple message that the reader (rather than the critic) bears the major responsibility for deciphering both Stevenson's intention and his achievement.

Little wonder, then, that so many imitations, adaptations, and derivative works appeared in the years immediately following its publication, or why so much has been made of bare hints—how RLS's choice of names, descriptions of physical appearances, echoes of literary antecedents (crime fiction, the Faust legend, anthropological research, Scottish literature, dramatizations of "substance addiction," etc.), homosexual undercurrents, and the ever-haunting presence of London as a setting (appropriately described at one point as a "symbolic 'city in a nightmare'") can justify almost endless speculations. For example, we can begin our detailed consideration of what takes place within Jekyll's house by acknowledging the extent to which Stevenson deliberately complicated our understanding of the house itself. Dury describes it as "a series of spaces around a mysterious centre," and supplies us with a diagram. This in turn (quite legitimately) suggests that the innermost part of Jekyll's house—"a raised space behind a 'blind forehead' and a red door"—should be seen as "the most primitive, instinctive or hidden part of his mind," i.e., it contains Hyde.

There follow explanatory notes (thirty-six pages), an appendix providing details of manuscript drafts (fifty-two pages), a second appendix with information about early editions and translations (four pages), and “textual notes” (thirty-three pages, with subdivisions given over to a description of manuscripts, a history of composition and publication distinguishing between first editions and the present edition, the last-named further subdivided into “choice and treatment of the copy-text” and a list of “variant readings”). Who would have dreamed *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* had so much blood in it?

Not that we would willingly surrender any of it. Confidence in Dury’s judgment is aided and abetted by a surprisingly tolerant acceptance of competing versions of a particular explication. He does not take sides even while noting that Stevenson’s promise to send his next book to Chatto and Windus was broken by his changing his mind and subsequently getting in touch with Charles Longman. Use of the phrase “winter’s tales” (to denote stories with supernatural elements) serves as a curtain-raiser to a review of the history of such stories, appearing in novels by Sir Walter Scott (*Redgauntlet*, 1824) and Charles Dickens (*The Pickwick Papers*, 1836), long before various magazines published Christmas numbers, the market for which Stevenson originally intended *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Fanny’s confusion about subconsciousness as a concept defined and discussed by several scientists in the crucial decade before the writing of Stevenson’s novelette, mixing articles that appeared in different periodicals in a way that has given headaches to various editors, is politely analyzed, and the more likely sources are identified for those interested in the way a creative mind works. The true value of payments made to Stevenson is assessed on the basis of a guideline cited by an economic historian: “To arrive at dollar figures, convert pounds into dollars by multiplying by five,” with the proviso that such a conversion holds only until World War I. And the distinction between changes made at the printing house, as distinct from those made by Stevenson while proofreading, is elegantly treated.

This is a splendid edition. Dury’s contribution is enormous, but all who helped him deserve recognition and high praise.

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