

**“Nothing more than a certain hue of brown”:
Brownness as Metaphor for Robert Louis Stevenson’s Remnants of Fearful Femininity**

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<1> The 1870s and ‘80s were dominated by women writers, and “therefore being an artist might not sit well with male identity” (Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy* 77). In a culture saturated by the Woman Question, with the very tenets of masculinity under severe stress, male authors created “homosocial”(1) worlds in their literature and thereby avoided the minutiae of everyday domesticity in favor of sweeping masculine adventure. Victorian poet, author and critic Edmund Gosse believed that before Kipling “the fiction of the Anglo-Saxon world...had become curiously feminised” while Sir Arthur Conan Doyle declared that Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* (1883) had marked the emergence of “the modern masculine novel” (qtd. in Tosh 174). According to John Tosh, “A new group of writers headed by Robert Louis Stevenson...believed that the reading public had been starved of flesh-and-blood adventure...[and] aimed to provide adults with something heroic, exotic and bracingly masculine” (174). Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar observe that for Victorian men “women seemed to be agents of an alien world that evoked anger and anguish, while to women in those years men appeared as aggrieved defenders of an indefensible order” (*No Man’s Land* 4). And as Elaine Showalter notes, “Opportunities to succeed at home and in the Empire were not always abundant; the stresses of maintaining an external mask of confidence and strength led to nervous disorders...[later giving] rise to renewed antifeminism, expressed as a masculinity crisis... The crisis of masculinity marked an awakening consciousness of what it meant to be a man” (*Sexual Anarchy* 9).(2)

<2> Yet for an artist fascinated with the idea of the dark, unconscious double, RLS’s writings don’t fall in accord with the surrounding ideology that is both fearful of and intrigued by blackness of the soul, skin, sex and mind—or any other presumable heart of darkness.(3) Instead, RLS is more interested in a kind of lingering middle ground, which he represents in his work as an ephemeral brownness. With this metaphoric brownness, he creates an enigma that comes closer in pigment to the dried spittle of blood his wife feared was draining his arteries. This sense of brownness is intimately connected with his own articulation of the artistic forces that emerge from his psyche, and in turn penetrate his fiction and essays at ostensibly random moments; it is as if his brownish dreamscape consciousness accidentally invades the text, leaving remnant stains quite like the fleeting presence of an animated, spirited “chocolate” fog that creeps into the evening streets of London in *Jekyll and Hyde*. Revealing the effect of his relationship with the “Brownies” that he writes of in his “Chapter on Dreams” (1888), those nighttime sprites who invade his imaginary consciousness, RLS inadvertently bids readers to inhabit, although just for

brief moments, this brownish realm of artistic energy and expression. For RLS, brownness is subconscious inspiration, yet it is simultaneously a frightening projection of a kind of diseased femininity that he would rather repress and edit out of his art. In what follows I will trace Stevenson's irrevocable conflict with feminized brownness—a seemingly transient presence that he views as damaging to his art—in order to elucidate for those reading his work now that this tension actually enlivens and enriches much of his art in a manner that endures beyond both his own and late Victorian culture's idiosyncrasies with regard to gender and artistry.

<3> For the duration of his stay in Bournemouth from July 1884 to August 1887, RLS “lived the life of a chronic invalid, spending much of his time in bed plagued by colds and hemorrhages: a life that he was later to sum up in a famous phrase as that of ‘a pallid brute that lived in Skerryvore like a weevil in a biscuit’” (Mehew 267).(4) This reference to a weevil, an insect often found to eat away at an otherwise healthy organism, is an initially telling instance of the impact of Stevenson's illness on his self-perception. His wife Fanny suspected that he was spitting up arterial blood, although his doctors denied this assumption (267n). It was also of course a time of great literary proliferation for Stevenson, resulting in his most famous work, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). Incidentally, weevils are also great proliferators—they devour grain and reproduce quickly, so the “pride of life” is also suggested by this image.

<4> Moreover, RLS was adamantly interested in the fundamental double nature of humanity, and therefore the artist.(5) For him, the artist is both a prostitute and a creator associated with the earthiness of bohemian life that lays just a cut above the life of Victorian London's working class. He writes to Gosse in 1886, “We were full of the pride of life, and chose, like the prostitutes, to live by pleasure. We should be paid if we give the pleasure we pretend to give; but why should we be honoured?” (*Selected Letters* 299). RLS finds the public and the press to be “the mouth of the sewer...everything prurient and ignoble, and essentially dull” and admits, “I do not like mankind...and fewer women” (298). Clearly for Stevenson, the artist should behave somewhat misanthropically, certainly not to muddle in the mire of the grid-like African jungle of contemporary London.

<5> As I will outline here, Robert Louis Stevenson's artistic drive is closely tied with his own perception of illness, weakness and secrecy that manifests itself in his writing through expressions of often feminized earthy, continuous, brown-riddled remnants. In this essay, I explore how Stevenson's letters to friends and associates, his “A Chapter on Dreams,” family members' accounts of his maladies (in conjunction with the contemporary ideology of illness and attitudes about masculinity and femininity), and finally his most well-known work, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, create a remarkable patchwork that speaks to the way in which his obsession with the image of brownness informs his artistic process and, ultimately, his creations. Again, my larger aim is that current readers might look at his work with renewed interest in its gendered implications—ironically through the muddled lens of brownness that permeates much of Stevenson's oeuvre. Ultimately, our focus on the metaphor of brownness in RLS's life/work might begin to answer the question of how to productively reconcile the psychosomatic quarrel with perceived femininity that this writer was unable to resolve through his art.

Stevenson's Correspondence on Art (and Life)

<6> Scottish dramatic critic, journalist, translator and editor of Ibsen, William Archer, wrote the following to Stevenson in a letter dated 29 October 1885:

I know that I am mis-representing you personally in making you out to be one of the robust nuisances whose 'aggressive optimism' springs from ignorance of suffering...But it is precisely the absence of any hint of this [personal experience of illness and suffering] in your writings which leads me to adopt what I fear you will think the unsympathetic tone of the last part of my article. It seems to me that if a man sees anything about his life he should say all he knows. (Mehew 294n)

Stevenson answers Archer's claims politely, arguing for the fact that "literature should give joy" but that

I see the universe...[as a] very joyous and noble universe; where suffering is not at least wantonly inflicted...but where it may be and generally is nobly borne; where, above all, any brave man may make out a life which shall be happy for himself and, by so being, beneficent to those about him...And if he fails, why should I hear him weeping?...Then to me morals, the conscience, the affections, and the passions are, I will own frankly and sweepingly, so infinitely more important than the other parts of life, that I conceive men rather triflers who become immersed in the latter. (*Selected Letters* 295)

For Stevenson, literature is better served without admissions of any biographical suffering or otherwise messy, morose information connected to the writer's life. RLS is more concerned with the "morals, the conscience, the affections, and the passions" of greater humanity's "noble universe" than his own singular and evidently insignificant life. He emphasizes the traditionally masculine behavior of the stalwart, stoic man who boldly bears illness and scorns the weak, effeminate man who weeps over his pain. Herbert Sussman delineates the contemporary notion of manhood as "an unstable equilibrium of barely controlled energy that may collapse back into the inchoate flood or fire that limns the innate energy of maleness, into the gender-specific mental pathology that the Victorians saw as male hysteria" (13). RLS clearly likens illness with femininity. As Stephen Heath relevantly notes,

Hysteria had served in the nineteenth century as the representation of women and of sexuality, the latter dealt with the former. It is male representation, men's story, but it also women's narrative, at once because it names something *from* them and because it becomes a construction within which women speak and speak against...Now at the end of the century Stevenson provides a text—perhaps *the* text—for the representation of men and sexuality, excluding women and so the sexual and so hysteria and then finding the only language it can for what it is, therefore, the emergence of the hidden male: the animal, the criminal, *perversion*. (104)

It would seem, then, that Stevenson, not only in his most famous novel, but also in his private life, was battling against this “hidden male,” which was in his case analogous with the supposed perversion of the female.

<7> Stevenson’s curious postscript in his correspondence with Archer, which reads as follows, reverberates with this unnerved attitude toward gender and illness:

P.S. Here I go again. To me, the medicine bottles on my chimney and the blood on my handkerchief are accidents; they do not colour my view of life, as you would know, I think, if you had experience of sickness; they do not exist in my prospect; I would as soon drag them under the eyes of my readers as I would mention a pimple I might chance to have (saving your presence) on my bottom. What does it prove? What does it change? It has not hurt, it has not changed me in any essential part; and I should think myself a trifler and in bad taste if I introduced the world to these unimportant privacies. (*Selected Letters* 296)

Like a true formalist critic, RLS strives to avoid contaminating his art with “unimportant privacies” for fear of appearing in “bad taste” by working within the same genre as nineteenth-century women writers; his admission of illness or weakness might feminize him, or rob him of his phallic “essential part.”(6) It is telling that in Stevenson’s essays on fiction (i.e. *Books Which Have Influenced Me*, *A Gossip on a Novel of Dumas’s*, *Some Gentlemen in Fiction*, *Popular Authors* and *Letter to a Young Gentleman Who Proposes to Embrace the Career of Art*), none even mention a female writer (beyond a cursory glance to Charlotte Yonge). It is as if women writers “do not exist in [his] prospect.” His sickness, too, does “not exist in [his] prospect,” and he refuses to subject his readers to the embarrassment of bodily peccadilloes he equates with a “pimple...on [his] bottom.” Yet the “blood on [his] handkerchief,” his “hemorrhagic leaking” (*Selected Letters* 275) inevitably seeps through onto his texts, albeit involuntarily and by “accident.” This letter illustrates just one example of the mellifluous brownness that paradoxically reveals and enshrouds Stevenson from his art.

<8> RLS attempts to provide nothing from his personal life in his art, but he acknowledges his own failure in this endeavor. In the course of a letter to Gosse in 1886, he states that “I think the public should know nothing from behind the scenes, until the man himself is out of reach of hurt,” yet he also admits that “I earnestly wish my books to sell” (*Selected Letters* 313n). He speaks of this conflicted position in an earlier letter to Gosse, lamenting that “There must be something wrong with me, or I would not be popular” but concedes, “I’m a pretty sick whore anyway” (300). Not only does Stevenson associate himself with prostitution as a writer who must sell his wares, but he also clearly has a psychological desire for cleanliness: “We were put here to do what service we can, for honour and not for hire; the sods cover us, and the worm that never dies, the conscience, sleeps well at last; these are the wages...and they are enough for a man who knows his own frailty and sees all things in the proportion of reality” (300). When he comments upon finishing “The Travelling Companion,” a precursor to *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, he writes to close friend and literary mentor Sidney Colvin that, “I will now be clean or see myself damned; and by clean I don’t mean any folly about purity, but such things as a healthy man with his bowels open shall find fit to see and speak about without a pang of nausea” (*Selected Letters* 317). Again, his drive to create is somehow dirty, secretive and frail,

and is most importantly something that must be suppressed to the point of illness.(7) One could even maintain that Stevenson was referring to the physical state of pregnancy, with his attention to “frailty,” “bowels open” and “a pang of nausea” when he discusses the physical effects of concealing his life from his art.

“A Certain Hue of Brown”

<9> Undoubtedly Stevenson’s sense of his art and its relation to brownness is connected to “Brownies”; he explains his artistic process in terms of the Brownies, who appear in “A Chapter on Dreams.”(8) Stevenson admits coyly in this article, published in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1888, that he relies on these benevolent goblins to create ideas for his stories. It is, however, first the “night-hag” who infiltrates his dreams, haunting him with “nothing more definite than *a certain hue of brown*, which he did not mind in the least while he was awake, but feared and loathed while he was dreaming” (94; italics mine). This female figure might inhabit a similar menacing sphere with his demanding wife, or the other woman about whom he moans, “She has not denounced me yet...when will she denounce me?” in the subsequent dream he writes of (100).(9) Stevenson also makes notes of an “old, *brown*, curly dog...something about this was no proper dog at all, but something hellish...that devilish brown dog” (98; italics mine) that appears to be another expression of suppressed nightmare in this rather odd article.

<10> We finally come upon “the little people who manage man’s internal theatre” (97) and compel Stevenson to sell his stories to the public. These Brownies (“God Bless them!”) create the tales that Stevenson must then, as a “realist bemired up to the ears in actuality...pull back and cut down...dress the whole in the best words and sentences that I can find and make...I have some claim to share...in the profits of our common enterprise” (102). RLS must take over the editorship of the art created by the Brownies because they “have not a rudiment of what we call conscience” (103), and in doing so wrote his most famous story, “find[ing] a body, a vehicle, for that strong sense of man's double being which must at times come in upon and overwhelm the mind of every thinking creature” (102-3). It is intriguing that “the other one, the stupid one...who doesn't love my friends as I love them, who doesn't appreciate things of art as I appreciate them” (*Selected Letters* 324) is the subconscious self that often takes control over his writing. (10) In his essay “The Lantern-Bearers” (1888), Stevenson explores how that part of him that experienced such vivid nightmares as a child can recall the “unplumbed childishness of man's imagination [because] his life from without may seem but a rude mound of mud; there will be some golden chamber at the heart of it, in which he dwells delighted” (qtd. in *RLS on Fiction* 145). Here, the concept of brownness appears to have somewhat positive connotations, or at least can emanate the treasure from the otherwise nightmarish realm of the imagination.(11) Yet again this associative earthiness is inadvertently commingled with the “beggardly women of the street, great, weary, muddy labourers, poor scarecrows of men, pale parodies of women” in “A Chapter on Dreams” (96). As Elaine Showalter reminds us, “The major source of infection, men were told, was the body of the prostitute. The prostitute was the agent of corruption and contamination, whose putrid body bred stench and disease [especially syphilis]...This hostility towards the prostitute could be generalized to all women” (*Sexual Anarchy* 193; 195). RLS again disparages effeminate men, but here once again he connects the artist with the dreadful image of the prostitute.

Illness as Femininity

<11> Stevenson was continually troubled by his feminized affliction—to the extent that his confidence in his abilities as a writer is compromised. In another Bournemouth letter to John Addington Symonds, dated February 1885, RLS complains about his continuous maladies:

I had horrid luck; catching (from kind friends) two thundering influenzas in August and November; I recovered from the last with difficulty; also had great annoyance with hemorrhagic leaking...which has upset my liver and driven me to the friendly Calomel; on which I now mainly live; it is the only thing that stops the bleeding...I feel a little old and fagged, and chary of speech, and not sure very of spirit in my work. (*Selected Letters* 275)

Stevenson's own (perhaps) tubercular battles connect with the "leaking" of menstrual blood, as well as the symptoms of syphilis. Susan Sontag writes:

TB is understood as a disease of extreme contrasts: white pallor and red flush, hyperactivity alternating with languidness. The spasmodic course of the disease is illustrated by what is thought of as a prototypical TB symptom, coughing. The sufferer is wracked by coughs, then sinks back, recovers breath, breathes normally; then coughs again...TB is disintegration, febrilization, dematerialization; it is a disease of liquids—the body turning to phlegm and mucus and sputum and, finally, blood. (11; 13)

The feminine, viscid quality of TB and menstruation resonate with Showalter's explanation of syphilis:

The hideous ravages of syphilis, from an enormous and Miltonic list of skin disorders—macules, papules, tubercles, pustules, blebs, tumors, lesions, scales, crusts, ulcers, chancres, gummas, fissures, and scars—to cardiovascular disturbances, locomotor ataxia, tabes, blindness, and dementia, made the disease a powerful deterrent in theological campaigns to control male sexuality. (192-3)

Syphilis is thus an obliteration of the healthy, thriving male sex drive, resulting in weepy "pustules," "lesions" and "chancres" all over the depleted male body. If Stevenson refers to the violent action of coughing up blood from his consumptive lungs as a matter of "leaking," he censors the severity of his illness.⁽¹²⁾ Interestingly, James Pope Hennessey notes that Stevenson wrote to poet W.E. Henley, regarding his voyage to New York, that he had "got the itch...or at least an unparalleled skin irritation" and that he added (but later deleted) "very similar to syphilis" (144). It is ironic that in order to downplay his symptoms and perhaps then appear more masculine, RLS unconsciously associates himself with the trickling distinction of menstrual blood and even the weeping lesions of the syphilitic.

<12> In his biography of Stevenson, Frank McFlynn provides an extended discussion of the Victorian notion of the divided self in literature, and, bolstering my suggestion here, specifically points to Stevenson's infirmity as a representation of a kind of division in himself: "...between the man he was—an invalid with pulmonary impairment, possibly tuberculosis, possibly some

erosion of the lungs—and the man of action he wanted to be. Whenever he looked in a mirror—and Henley assures us that this was often—he saw ‘the other’: a bronchitic/consumptive specimen, not the hero he imagined himself to be” (262). Foucault explains how sexuality was linked with the conception of disease at this time, which could only further Stevenson’s anxiety concerning himself as an invalid, a man, and an artist: “[S]exuality was a medical and medicalizable object, one had to try to detect it—as a lesion, a dysfunction, or a symptom—in the depths of the organism, on the surface of the skin, or among all signs of behavior” (*The History of Sexuality* 44).(13) All of Stevenson’s guilt-ridden and disgusted admissions of himself as damaged goods—a prostituted writer—are most patently detectable in this particular letter.

Bohemian Brownness, Domesticity, and Fanny

<13> Perhaps not as easily apparent is the relationship between Stevenson’s bohemian lifestyle and his brown-esque self-perception. In his biography of Stevenson, Bryan Bevan reports that when Henry James first met Stevenson in the summer of 1879, James called him “a pleasant feller, but a shirt-collarless bohemian” (110). The idea of the bohemian lifestyle was introduced into England by Thackeray in *Vanity Fair* (1848) and was mused upon in an 1862 edition of the *Westminster Review*: “The term ‘Bohemian’ has come to be very commonly accepted in our day as the description of a certain kind of literary gipsy, no matter in what language he speaks or what city he inhabits...A Bohemian is simply an artist or littérateur who, consciously or unconsciously, secedes from conventionality in life and in art” (*OED* 361). Stevenson is both set apart from society by his position as an artist and by virtue of frequent sickness, yet at the same time strives to eradicate personality and biography of himself as the artist creating his work.

<14> Even in his derision for the bourgeois, middle-class, domestic life, RLS remained a sort of stay-at-home dad, nursing his art while limited to the separate (traditionally female) sphere of the home. Stephen D. Arata concurs, arguing that, “Stevenson’s critique of professional discourse in *J&H* turns out also to be a displaced critique of his own profession [since]...the 1880s and ‘90s...constitute a key moment in the professionalization of authorship over the course of the nineteenth century” (244). He notes that “until he took possession of Skerryvore, Stevenson had never had a permanent address. In his letters he repeatedly refers to his occupancy of the house as a capitulation to bourgeois convention, a ‘revolt into respectability’.” Arata concludes that writing *J&H* “was in part an expression of self-loathing for what Stevenson perceived as his betrayal of former [bohemian] ideals” (245).

<15> Yet even in his feminized state of weakness and conventionality, RLS *could* grasp a small degree of masculine pride in himself as a “professional” writer. As Herbert Sussman suggests,

For the doctor or lawyer, as for the novelist and painter, the social formation of professional man resolved specific contradictions of nineteenth-century manhood by reconciling the demand to follow a morally valued calling...setting the achievement of artistic manhood within the formation of the professional man enabled the artist to maintain the sense that he is not [writing] solely for money but following the demands of a calling while also allowing him to maintain the bourgeois manliness marked by wealth and social position, specifically the class position as a gentleman. (153)

It seems that Stevenson would have failed utterly at upholding these standards by virtue of the fact that he, even jokingly, referred to himself as a decidedly non-respectable “sick whore,” and one who is certainly content with receiving money from the masses who read his work. But he wrote in late 1887 that, “I am a bourgeois now...I am likely to be a millionaire if this goes on...well, I would prefer that to dying in my bed” (qtd. in *Dreams of Exile* 191). Audrey Jaffe notes in her study of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle that it was also the possibility of movement between identities that the new professional, city life of London offered bourgeois men: “On the one hand, a choice of profession may be regarded as a choice of identity. But on the other, the: Thevery idea of choice introduces a possibility of multiple identities—an instability that the idea of an identity divided between work and home...attempts to resolve” (410). Furthermore, Showalter observes that for artist John Singer Sargent, who painted RLS a number of times, Stevenson was “trapped by domesticity and femininity” (“Dr Jekyll’s Closet” 69) in the most famous likeness he created of RLS and Fanny. RLS thought it was “too eccentric to be exhibited” (qtd. in Showalter 69). Thus RLS’s identity as a writer and as a man was doubly suspect and unstable because in order to be a productive writer, he was confined to the home when he should have been more visibly proactive out in the literary marketplace; his masculine self is blurred between the rigidly defined spheres of home and work.

<16> Stevenson’s wife Fanny deemed his first draft of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* as having “missed the allegory...[and instead created] a magnificent bit of sensationalism when it should have been a masterpiece” (qtd. in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Appendix E 134) and subsequently made him throw it in the fire and then rewrite it.(14) Apparently, Fanny’s obsessive, often overbearing protectiveness of her husband resulted in jealousy that bordered on madness. Biographer Ian Bell states that:

All her efforts were...directed at making Louis as safe from affliction as possible. The battle never ceased, and made a ruthless obsessive of Mrs. Stevenson...She infuriated and humiliated unsuspecting visitors by preventing them from seeing Louis and making no apology for it. She was prepared to try anything...Fanny...did not cope well with emotional pressure, and the sufferings of her husband, not to mention the sheer horror of the hemorrhages soaking clothes and sheets, took their toll...Louis belonged to her alone, and it gave her a kind of proprietorial satisfaction to eject competitors. (156-7)

Fanny eventually became a biographer of her husband, after his death, “fighting her endless battles to present Louis to the world as she thought he should be presented. So many letters, prefaces, introductions, rows, and dreams. Neither his work nor his memory stood in her way” (267). Both Bell and Bevan provide extensive discussions of Fanny’s over-protectiveness of her husband’s health, as well as her own hypochondria and morbid depression. Their relationship began as an affair that offered Stevenson virile sexual advancement with a more mature woman—Fanny was twelve years older than Stevenson: “As different as was possible to be from the prostitutes who had provided him with his only sexual experiences, Fanny Sitwell was nevertheless yet another of those older women to whom Louis seemed to be drawn...They had the confidence and experience the gangling young man so conspicuously lacked” (73-4). Stevenson himself spoke of her in “masculine” terms, stating that she had “Hellish energy,” that she was “a violent friend, a brimstone enemy...always either loathed or slavishly adored,

indifference is impossible” (MacKay 425). Although he may have (in some subconscious way) welcomed the domination of women in his personal life, RLS would have had every reason to fear that the same sort of female force that eradicated his first draft of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* might similarly infiltrate and/or sabotage his work.

“The glow of a rich, lurid brown” and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

<17> A pseudo-menstrual, hemorrhagic leaking and an insurgent “blood [that appears] on [his] handkerchief” (*Selected Letters* 176) finds its way into *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* as well: “A great chocolate-coloured pall lowered over heaven, but the wind was continually charging and routing these embattled vapours...and there would be a glow of rich, lurid brown, like the light of some strange conflagration” (47-8). Stevenson’s suppression of his disease manifests itself here in leakings of brownness associated with the septic squalor of Victorian London. Showalter reads *Jekyll and Hyde* as a novel of homosexual panic and equates the “glow of rich, lurid brown” with “the male homosexual body...suggestive of anality and anal intercourse” (*Sexual Anarchy* 113). I interpret brownness within the scope of my argument as more closely a representation of the deeper connection between RLS’s disquieting, non-masculine sense of his illness and his artistic process; the outcome of this struggle is a shadow of brownness that stretches throughout his letters, essays and fiction.

<18> In my reading of *Jekyll and Hyde*, through the lens of RLS’s feminized brownish affliction, Hyde represents Stevenson’s own alter ego, the physically unfettered artist who pursues unbridled desire with bouts of vigorous energy, yet becomes degenerated in the process.(15) However, like Dr. Jekyll, RLS would both loathe and fear himself in this state of unhampered existence. Without the confinement dictated by his ill health, “the spirit of hell [might] aw[a]ke in [Stevenson]” and the image of himself “in the top fit of [his] delirium...would str[ike] though [his] heart...a cold thrill of terror” (*J&H* 85). As tuberculosis feminizes Stevenson, his physical state mirrors that of Dr. Jekyll:

A qualm came over me, a horrid nausea and the most deadly shuddering. These passed away, and left me faint...I began to be aware of a change in the temper of my thoughts, a greater obligation. I looked down; my clothes hung formlessly on my shrunken limbs...I was once more Edward Hyde. A moment before I had been safe of all men's respect, wealthy, beloved; and now I was the common quarry of mankind.(87)

Jekyll, like Stevenson in his bedridden state, has transformed from a respectable, professional in his homosocial world to something less of a man.(16) His ensuing description of the “vital instinct” that is the Hyde inside his mind and body conjures images of a grim pregnancy: “that insurgent horror was knit to him closer than a wife, closer than an eye; lay caged in his flesh, where he heard it mutter and felt it struggle to be born; and every hour of weakness, and in the confidence of slumber, prevailed against him, and deposed him out of life” (89). Here illness is an inextricable part of the flesh, and one that tortures its host.

<19> Stevenson’s reliance on the metaphor of pregnancy in the novel as a surrogate for Jekyll’s internal state links with the contemporary fear of male hysteria, and the shadow of hysteria hangs

over the text.(17) Dr. Jekyll is visibly weakened when the insipid lawyer Utterson first inquires of “young Hyde”: “The large handsome face of Dr. Jekyll grew pale to the very lips and there came a blackness about his eyes” (44). Women were, according to the prevailing Victorian patriarch, and as Jekyll reflects, “the evil side of...nature, to which I had now transformed the stamping efficacy...less robust and less developed than the good which I had just deposed” (79). As Jerrold E. Hogle aptly states, the trampling scene “shows how Hyde serves the general need of Victorian men to beat down the child and the woman in themselves” (179).(18) Not only is the feminized version of Jekyll “smaller, slighter and younger,” he is “less robust and less developed,” or stunted and deformed like the body of a woman. Yet women were also virtual walking wombs that might erupt at any menstrual moment; contemporary physicians agreed that “the whole vasomotor system of the female was far more excitable than that of the male, marking her with a tendency to greater tension, irritability, and emotionalism. Laughing, crying, blushing and quickened heart beat were all marks of her peculiar mental state” (Haller and Haller 73-4). Stevenson also pointedly writes that it is in “the agonised womb of consciousness” (*J&H* 77) that the unfettered nature of man gestates and presumably ripens. The repression of disease ultimately damages the victim. Dr. Lanyon observes later in his narrative of his interactions with Dr. Jekyll that the man “was wrestling against the approaches of hysteria” so that “I grew alarmed both for his life and reason” (73). The only alternative to stoic reason and composed manliness is mad, womanish hysteria, as Utterson’s appraisal of Dr. Jekyll proves: “Your master...is plainly seized with one of those maladies that both torture and deform the sufferer” (63) and cause him to, like one of Stevenson's “triflers,” to “weep...like a woman or a lost soul” (65).(19)

<20> The fact that Victorian doctors and scientists were unable to grapple with women’s sexuality other than to label women as deficient, hysterical, fragile creatures was, for those doctors, evidence of women’s covert criminality. As Elaine Showalter relevantly states, “If the rebellious New Woman—the ‘shrieking sister’—or the prostitute could be turned into a silent body to be observed, measured, and studied, her resistance to convention could be treated as a scientific anomaly or a problem to be solved by medicine” (*Sexual Anarchy* 127-8).(20) French doctor Récamier set a precedent with the invention of the speculum in 1845, and American gynecologist Marion Sims “experienced himself as a ‘colonizing and conquering hero’ [when using the speculum for the first time, rejoicing,] ‘I saw everything as no man had ever seen before’” (129). Judith Walkowitz states in her study *Prostitution and Victorian Society* that even the vaginal discharge of “virtuous women” was considered impure, and could therefore spawn “disease” in men: “This virtuous source of infection...challenged the sexual-moral code that rigidly segregated ‘pure’ women from the ‘impure.’ By designating all women as pollutants of men and reservoirs of infection, it evoked instead a more general hostility and dread of females and female ‘nature’” (56). Amanda Anderson ruminates further on Victorian ideology surrounding female influence and the construction of masculinity:

The virtuous domestic woman was certainly expected to be...self-regulating. Crucially, however, she was not often accorded the same level of rational control and deliberate consciousness that is so prominent in the construction of masculine virtue...Accounts that claim extraordinary responsibilities and duties for ‘the women of England’ recurrently struggle against portraying feminine influence as a form of power that women wield too deliberately. (42-3)

Thus female control *was* carefully delineated, yet it was also feared as a true threat to masculinity.(21) It is evident that RLS, in like fashion, had apprehensions that the unfathomable recesses of female sexuality would somehow project a horrific kind of nonproductive “menstruation” onto his art, or moreover that his own feminized, physical weakness might result in the same sort of obliteration or corruption of his artistic production. Perhaps RLS saw himself as a “reservoir of infection” like those prostitutes he frequented in his youth.(22)

<21> Stevenson’s stepson Lloyd Osbourne’s *An Intimate Portrait of R.L.S.* echoes his stepfather’s anxiety and its ensuing regenerative power. The passage is worth quoting at length:

His health throughout was at its lowest ebb; never was he so spectral, so emaciated, so unkempt and tragic a figure. His long hair, his eyes, so abnormally brilliant in his wasted face, his sick-room garb...in general he was a prisoner in his own house and saw nothing of Bournemouth save his own little garden. There could be no pretense he was not an invalid and a very sick man...How thus handicapped he wrote his books is one of the marvels of literature—books so robustly and aboundingly alive that it is incredible they came out of a sick-room...I would see him sitting up in bed, filling page after page, and apparently never pausing for a moment...[I caught] awed glimpses of him...writing, writing, writing...It was a stupendous achievement; and the strange thing was that, instead of showing lassitude afterward, he seemed positively refreshed and revitalized; went about with a happy air; was as uplifted as though he had come into a fortune; looked better than he had in months. (qtd. in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Appendix E 132-135)

Not only is Stevenson’s malady the means of feverish energy that propels his creativity, it is also a process by which he metaphorically expectorates, and thereby purges, all his afflicted intensity onto the page.(23) In his confession, Dr. Jekyll notes that “The powers of Hyde seemed to have grown with the sickliness of Jekyll” (89), a sentiment that parallels RLS’s own sense of the relationship between his art and his sickness. The illness seems to allow RLS to work at a state of maggotish feeding—not just purging, but also reproduction. Strangely, he becomes fruitful in his writing by virtue of his confining sickness and in the process transforms into the classic Pre-Raphaelite picture of the female hysteric—a “spectral,” “emaciated” and “tragic” figure. Sontag notes that “what is hinted at by the yearning but almost somnolent belles of Pre-Raphaelite art is made explicit in the emaciated, hollow-eyed, tubercular girls depicted by Edvard Munch” (25). She also speaks to the mythology of TB, noting that victims were thought to be “beautiful and soulful” (16).(24) RLS is similarly feminine and sensitive as a supposed victim of tuberculosis, and those qualities ironically energize his art. RLS believes that books should “torture and purify” the reader, as is his experience in connecting with the “protoplasmic humanity of Raskolnikoff” (qtd. in Appendix D: Letter to Symonds 128). We know from the *OED* that in 1854 Emerson wrote of the term protoplasmic as “indicating the way upward from the invisible protoplasm to the highest organisms” (700), and that Bentley considered it the place where “all cells originate” in his 1861 book on botany. Stevenson clearly associates the artistic process between writer and reader with the generative power of earthy, primordial ooze here, and thus once again, brownness.

<22> In *J&H*, Hyde's drive to create havoc, this primitive energy must be "remedied" (82) by the detainment poor health necessitates. "The Incident of Dr. Lanyon" best illustrates how Stevenson employs this attitude of self-restraint. Utterson comes to visit the doctor and is told that he is "confined to the house" (54), but after several attempts, he is allowed to see Dr. Lanyon, who "declared himself a doomed man" (55). Utterson is "shocked at the change which had taken place in the doctor's appearance." He discovers that "the rosy man had grown pale; his flesh had fallen away...and yet it was not so much these tokens of a swift physical decay that arrested the lawyer's notice, as the look in the eye and quality of manner that seemed to testify to some deep-seated terror of the mind." Dr. Lanyon explains that in his hysterical state, plagued by "terrors so *unmanning*" (56; italics mine), he means to "henceforth lead a life of extreme seclusion," and thereby stifling his dis-ease. Yet Lanyon's involvement with the case of Mr. Hyde not only transforms him into a male hysteric, but also kills him within "something less than a fortnight." As Athena Vrettos argues in her study of the centrality of illness in Victorian culture, "Contagion signified not only the passage of disease between bodies but also the transmission of ideas, impressions, feelings, and influences between the minds" (178). Lanyon has been contaminated in body and mind by Hyde's ferocious energy. Perhaps it was Stevenson's final comment, then, is that "release from [the self-]torment" of disease only comes in death. The "chocolate fog" that looms over London's homosocial society is less a depiction of the contemporary dilemmas of sewage and crime and more a reflection of RLS's own sense of his feminized self. Just as Lanyon is emasculated by the contagion of Hyde's diseased energy, RLS is also weakened by his own ailing creativity. Brownness, then, offers an alternate narrative of Stevenson's artistic life.

"The horror of the thing..."

<23> Robert Louis Stevenson's struggles with illness beleaguered him until the end, yet he always continued his fight to appear vital (read: masculine). Biographer Bryan Bevan notes that Stevenson suffered his first hemorrhage when he stayed in San Francisco in 1879, just after he endured an attack of malaria. RLS wrote the following letter to George Meredith the year before his death, in 1894, at the age of forty-four:

For fourteen years I have had not a day's real health; I have awakened sick and gone to bed weary; and I have done my work unflinchingly. I have written in bed, and written out of it, written in hemorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam for weakness; and for so long, it seems to me I have won my wager and recovered my glove. I am better now, have been, rightly speaking, since first I came to the Pacific; and still, few are the days when I am not in some physical distress. And the battle goes on—ill or well, is a trifle; so as it goes. I was made for a contest. (qtd. in Bell, *Dreams of Exile* xiv)

Even at time of his impending death, Stevenson is determined to view his experience of constant ill health as a "contest" to be "unflinchingly" endured by the ardent, properly masculine artist. To do otherwise would mean he was not entirely manly, that the threat of femininity had crept into his body *and* mind, penetrating him completely.

<24> RLS spent the last years of his life in his estate of Vailima, situated in the hills about three miles inland from Apia, the chief town and port of Upolu, one of the three principle islands comprising Samoa. There he and Fanny lived the ultimate bohemian existence, under “primitive” conditions, while they built a large house for the healthful benefit of a warmer climate. Incidentally, Henry Adams noted Stevenson’s disheveled appearance, writing that “He was costumed in very dirty striped cotton pyjamas, the baggy legs tucked into coarse knit woolen stockings, one of which was bright brown in color, the other a purplish dark tone” (*Selected Letters* 429). Stevenson’s mention of gardening to Sidney Colvin, in a letter dated March 1891, brings the feminine nightmare/art connection full circle. Here is a man both captivated and horrified by the actualization of a truly bohemian life:

I groped in slime after viscous roots...I wonder if anyone has ever had the same attitude to nature as I hold...? This business fascinates me like a tune or a passion; yet all the while I thrill with a strong distaste. The horror of the thing...is always present in my mind; the horror of creeping things, a superstitious horror of the void and the powers about me, the horror of my own devastation and continual murders. The life of the plants comes through my fingertips, their struggles go to my heart like supplications. I feel myself blood boltered; then I look back on the cleared grass, and count myself an ally in a fair quarrel, and make stout my heart. (*Selected Letters* 453)

Although RLS seemingly resolves his fear by “mak[ing] stout [his] heart,” he is clearly intrigued and driven by his artistic passions. Yet Stevenson still feels a conflicted “distaste” for them, indeed a “horror of creeping things” such as the stuff his nightmares are made of. Nature here and his coterminous artistic process are procreative yet are also inevitably tied with disease; the earthy subconscious stimulus threatens to destroy and “devastate” him as his bouts of sickness have continued to do. Yet he can’t help but “grope...in [the] slime after [those] viscous roots” and “feel[s] [him]self blood boltered” in the process.(25) The *OED* defines “blood-boltered” as “clotted or clogged with blood”; Stevenson expresses here not only his literally overwhelming, blood-bedraggled illness, but also a sense of entrapment by being “boltered” (read: bolted) and a simultaneous amazement in the malevolent natural (read: female) cycle. In one fell swoop, his metaphorical “expedition into the primordial female body” (Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy* 129) represents all the awe, pain, terror, and anguish associated with Robert Louis Stevenson and his diseased, brown-infested artistic process.

<25> Although Robert Louis Stevenson was considered a literary luminary during his lifetime, he was relatively ignored in the wake of the modernist movement and subsequently left out of the Oxford and Norton anthologies through much of the twentieth-century. More recently, scholars have regarded his range as writer who crossed boundaries of genre and culture. Unfortunately, RLS was unable to escape both his own failing body and the influence of prevailing ideologies of gender in his own time. According to Ian Bell, “Sickness shaped Stevenson, formed his emotions, scented his art” (xvii). At the time of his absolute demise, he was described as “impossibly thin...The doctor who came to his deathbed was astonished anyone could write with arms so thin...His hair was brown and lank, his face famously boyish, high coloured when not tanned. He spoke with an Edinburgh accent. The trademark wisps of facial hair were all he could ever manage in the way of a beard” (xiv). His friend Henry James noted

that “His feelings are always his reasons” (xv).(26) Even in this final portrait of Stevenson the bohemian Victorian artist, he is described in conventionally feminine terms. It seems that RLS did not quite succeed in defusing the central metaphor of femininity by the end; rather, the image of brownness is inextricably bound up with Stevenson’s entire body of work. Perhaps in our attention to RLS’s attempts to communicate his personal battle through the unconscious, miasmatic metaphor of brownness, Stevenson’s damaged perception of himself as a man can finally dissipate, leaving us instead with the literary and cultural insights of a remarkable nineteenth-century artist whose work continues to engage readers around the world.

Endnotes

(1)Eve Sedgwick coined the term in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia UP, 1985), noting that homosociality exists on a continuum with homosexuality.(^)

(2)In her chapter titled “Reading the Boys’ Own Stories: *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Heart of Darkness*,” Ruth Robbins, *Literary Feminisms* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), provides a useful discussion of the pervasiveness of this masculinity crisis and its effect on the literature of the fin de siècle.(^)

(3)As noted by Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*. Transl. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978), British imperial culture at this time traditionally associated a darkness/blackness with the Other, that heart of darkness we must all strive to repress and then vilify (whether it be non-white, non-European, underclass, woman, criminal, sexual deviant or some combination of these), thereby enacting a kind of Foucauldian “repressive hypothesis.” In order to avoid seeing themselves in any of these societal outsiders, the “normative” Victorian elite (i.e. the middle class bourgeoisie) turned their panoptic gaze onto those Others and in turn created a discursive ideology they hoped would both divide and control them. For further discussion of discourse theory and “Foucault’s perceived link between confession and a compulsive search for the truth of sex in the nineteenth century,” as well as a study of *J&H* as a fiction that “rel[ies] upon gendered concepts of the ‘truth’ of a perverse Darwinian sublime...in which the female represents the threatened indeterminacy of meaning which confession seeks to cancel out through a narrative constructed in the service of father-son bonding”(Shires 87), see Marion Shaw, “‘To tell the truth of sex’: Confession and abjection in late Victorian writing” in Linda M. Shires, ed. *Rewriting the Victorians: Theory History and the Politics of Gender* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992) 87-100. Likewise Stephen Heath, in “Psychopathis sexualis: Stevenson’s *Strange Case*” *Critical Quarterly* 28:1-2 (Spring/Summer 1986): 93-108, argues that “Stevenson, in *his* fiction,...gets it right—the imbrication of the male sexual, the criminal, the medical, the terror at night in the London streets, as an available reality for the contemporary imagination” (106). To read more about London in the 1880’s, see George

Augustus Sala, "Gaslight and Daylight with Some London Scenes they Shine Upon" (London: Tinsley Brother, 1872) and J. Milner Fothergill, "The Town-Dweller: His Needs and Wants" (London, 1889). For more on the contemporary conception of London's working class and criminality, see Gina Lombroso Ferrero, "Criminal Man According to the Classification of Cesare Lombroso" (New York, 1911). Each of these short excerpts appears in Martin A. Danahay, ed. *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press Ltd., 2000). For a more up-to-date discussion of this phenomenon, see Stephen D. Arata, "The Sedulous Ape: Atavism, Professionalism, and Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*" *Criticism* 37: 2 (Spring 1995): 233-59.(^)

(4)According to biographer Bryan Bevan, *Robert Louis Stevenson: Poet and Teller of Tales* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), his famous phrase was first written in a letter to Henry James while Stevenson was living in Samoa. Stevenson's other biographers and critics often mention this expression as well. See, more recently, William Gray's *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Literary Life*. (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).(^)

(5)This view of Stevenson's work is common; however, see Anne Stiles, "Robert Louis Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde* and the Double Brain" (*SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. 2006 [Autumn] 46.4: 879-900) for an innovative take on the novel. Stiles traces the inspiration for Stevenson's novella back to two famous French case studies of dual personality attributed to bilateral brain hemisphere asymmetry, a condition Stevenson faithfully depicts in his fictional *Strange Case*.(^)

(6)Biographer Jenni Calder, in *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Life Study*, agrees, although for different reasons: "Certain facts of existence, he argued, should be left out of literature because they would be no help in the necessary process of making the most of life...[o]f course the medicine bottles and the blood on his handkerchief *did* colour his life; without them he would not have been quite so determinedly optimistic" (215). I don't interpret RLS as optimistic so much as performing properly masculine stoicism.(^)

(7)In accordance with my assertions here, Stephen D. Arata also comments on Stevenson's associations with prostitution: "What begins to emerge is a cluster of veiled equivalences, with threads linking Stevenson, his creative Brownies, Edward Hyde, and the prostitute-writer within a larger web comprising middle-class ideology, commerce, and the ethics of professionalism. *Jekyll and Hyde*, I would argue, is in part a symbolic working through of these linkages" ("The Sedulous Ape" 250).(^)

(8)There are a few other references to the "Brownies" in Stevenson criticism, as well as some that mention the image of the color brown, but they do not take it beyond its associations with Stevenson's childhood nightmares. Patrick Brantlinger and Richard Boyle, "The Education of Edward Hyde: Stevenson's 'Gothic Gnome' and the Mass Readership of Late-Victorian Britain," in William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch, eds., *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde after One Hundred Years* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988) 265-78, suggest that the "Brownies" represent his ambivalent feelings about popular culture's pressures on the literary marketplace. In "Children of the Night: Stevenson and Patriarchy," Veeder argues that the "brown" fog that

permeates Utterson's world is "the farthest emanation of Louis's terrors, which emerged first as a childhood nightmare about the color brown, then reemerged as a boyhood nightmare about a brown dog, and eventually shaped itself into the Brownies who personified for him the unconscious processes themselves" (114). James Pope Hennessey, in *Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), makes mention of the 'peculiar shade of brown'...a color which, entirely harmless in his waking hours, became ineffably threatening when he was asleep" (20). Biographer Frank McFlynn, *Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: Random House, 1993), also briefly mentions this issue of brownness: "An interesting study could be made of writers' simultaneous fascination with and aversion to certain colours...For Stevenson the key colour was brown: this was the colour that terrified him in his childhood nightmares, it was the colour of the diabolical dog in the dream, of the 'Brownies' and the fog of *Jekyll and Hyde*...Fortunately, it is not our task here to tease out the layers of meaning in *Jekyll and Hyde*, not to attend to the myriad 'readings' of the text" (257). Here, I am taking that task on myself.(^)

(9)Biographer James Pope Hennessey argues that it was also Stevenson's childhood nurse, Cummy, who "managed to inflame the child's mind and diligently to facilitate the awful entrance of the night hag into the shadowy bedroom" ("The Night Hag's Victim" 33). Other critics, such as Doane and Hodges, have identified the connection between Fanny's appearance and the Brownies. Quoting Margaret MacKay, they note how "Fanny was described as having 'grizzling hair' and a 'little determined brown face'" (67). It has also been noted by Elisabeth Gitter, "The Power of Woman's Hair in the Victorian Imagination" *PMLA* 99 (1984): 936-954, that a woman's hair was another indication of power in the Victorian imagination. Clearly, Fanny's appearance and corresponding behavior make her a threatening figure in RLS's life, something I will discuss in more detail later in this article.(^)

(10)For a well-developed and useful discussion of Stevenson's "A Chapter on Dreams," see Irving S. Saposnik, "The Anatomy of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*" in Harry M. Geduld, ed., *The Definitive Jekyll and Hyde Companion* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1983) 108-126. Here, Saposnik also mentions the image of brownness that I am exploring: "The Brownies, like the uncanny brown dog, had their origin in that primordial and nameless 'brown feeling' that constituted Stevenson's earliest dream content and which, in modified form, shaped his fantasies and constituted the driving force that created his literature and directed to such a great extent the entire course of his life" (123). Saposnik comes closest of all the Stevenson critics to asserting my point about the profound pervasiveness of this image in Stevenson's life and art, but stops short of investigating it any further in this article.(^)

(11)Jenni Calder, in her chapter titled "Too Little in Life," explains Stevenson's strong affinity with children and the childhood imagination with a compelling description of his relationship with Fanny's young son Lloyd, who seems to have idealized Stevenson.(^)

(12)Calder notes in the same chapter that there remains some doubt as to whether Stevenson was in fact tubercular. Modern opinion conjectures that he might have had a chronic bronchial condition as a result of the repeated attacks of bronchitis and pneumonia he suffered as a child (152-3).(^)

(13)For more on disease and Victorian notions of psychology and criminality, particularly in relation to *J&H*, see M. Kellen Williams, “‘Down With the Door, Poole’: Designating Deviance in Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*” in *English Literature in Transition* 39.4 (1996): 412-29.(^)

(14)For further discussion of Fanny as RLS’s editor (and her perhaps domineering attitude in that role), see Hennessey’s biography, which refers to Fanny as Stevenson’s “self-appointed censor” (124). Malcolm Elwin, in *The Strange Case of Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: MacDonald and James, 1950), was one of the first to suggest that Fanny censored her husband’s work for fear that his writing was too profane.(^)

(15)Other readings of *J&H* have run the gamut. Recent critics have read Hyde as a figure for the perverse violence of male sexuality, *J&H* as a homoerotic novel, as a reflection of the blurred gender categories brought on by the New Woman phenomenon, as a confession of social and sexual deviance... For instance, Harriet Hustis, “Hyding Nietzsche in Robert Louis Stevenson’s Gothic of Philosophy” (*Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 2009 [Autumn] 49.4: 993-1007), argues that *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* testifies both to the fundamental instability of origins and to the incorporation of a principle of synthesis within a framework of apparent antithesis in terms that clearly echo Nietzsche’s *Beyond Good and Evil*. Interestingly, Nina Auerbach, *Woman and Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982), argues that heroic female demons can be contrasted with Hyde: “Demonic man does not include divinity in his nature, and thus a poor stunted counterpart to grandly demonic womanhood” (103). Janice Doane and Devon Hodges, *Demonic Disturbances of Sexual Identity: The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr/s Hyde in Novel: A Forum in Fiction* 23.1 (Fall 1989): 63-74, view Stevenson’s marriage and collaboration with Fanny Stevenson as evidence of “dramatic examples of cultural ambivalence about sexual difference and its representation”(63) in *J&H*. I find the notion that *J&H* was a collaborative text, denoting a positive cooperation between RLS and Fanny rather than a female force upon the text that he was trying to ward off as rather suspect. Ruth Robbins convincingly argues that mirror imagery destabilizes male identity in *J&H*.(^)

(16)McFlynn argues that “feminine sensibility...is by no means banished from *J&H* but, significantly, what remains is...to use Jungian terms, the *anima* kind; it is Fanny and the kind of woman that stands for assertive sexuality that is absent” (265).(^)

(17)For an excellent extended discussion of the theme of pregnancy in the novel, complete with a comparison with Kristeva’s conception of abjection and reversible birth, see Jerrold E. Hogle, “The Struggle for Dichotomy: Abjection in Jekyll and his Interpreters” in William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch, eds., *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde After One Hundred Years* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) 161-207. Doane and Hodges also explore the connections between Hyde’s physical characteristics and nineteenth century cultural perceptions of femininity.(^)

(18)Hogle’s note at the end of his essay is worth quoting in its entirety, because it sheds additional light on how Stevenson’s biography reflects upon his fiction, and it supports all of my argument, with the exclusion of my point about the brownness metaphor: “Stevenson must have

been well attuned to this ambisexuality both in his acts of writing and his own body language. First of all, if the imposition of coherence is a supposedly 'masculine' act, he places himself in the 'feminine' position when he submits his story to his wife's allegorization, thereby positioning her as a fatherly 'grid of intelligibility.' Then, too, he sends his text out toward the market from a sickbed where he continually bleeds from within, almost in a menstrual fashion, even as he tries to impose conventional patterns of discourse on the various suggestions of body language out of control. The multiplicity and not strictly gendered movement of the birth process revealed in Hyde in 'pregnant' moments of style has to reflect Stevenson's own very person sense of a body always becoming different from itself, flowing out of itself toward discourse, and thus being quite female within its masculinity. Here is the biographical basis for *Jekyll and Hyde* (and so much else) that manifestly cries out for further scholarly exploration" (206-7n). I could not agree more, and such is the task I am striving to fulfill.(^)

(19)For more on the hysteria debate in *J&H*, see Doane and Hodges, Stephen Heath, and Elaine Showalter, "Dr Jekyll's Closet," all of whom argue that Hyde is a hysteric. Yet Doane and Hodges conclude that Heath's text, like Stevenson's account of marriage, "admits the possibility of a violent, feminine force located within the masculine, then represses this disruption so troubling to notions of fixed sexual difference" (66). Veeder accounts for *J&H* as a representation of male anxiety surrounding the weakened Victorian patriarchy. See also Jennifer Beauvais, "In the Company of Men: Masculinity Gone Wild in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*" in *From Wollstonecraft to Stoker: Essays on Gothic and Victorian Sensation Fiction*. Ed. Marilyn Brock (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009).(^)

(20)For further study of female sexuality and its relation to *J&H*, see Stephen Heath. Heath discusses the lack of male or female sexuality in *J&H*, arguing that, "The negation of male sexuality goes along with the exclusion of a woman...female sexuality is query, riddle, enigma... 'the two sexes' are clear and simultaneously all the difficulty is with the woman" (98). Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) also speaks to this cultural phenomenon of anxiety surrounding female sexuality and disquieting feminine influence. As the young gentleman Lockwood stares out the window in dread at the phantom waif, Catherine Earnshaw, he admits that "terror made me cruel" and he savagely "pulled its wrist on the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes" (Brontë 67). Here he expresses the fear that women may force a kind of "menstruation," or fearful malady, onto weak men; it is significant that it is the projection of his cruel disgust and horror that impels *her* blood to soak *his* bedclothes, much like the bloody spittle on Stevenson's sickroom sheets. See also the discussion of Foucault in M. Kellen Williams, "'Down with the Door, Poole': Designating Deviance in Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*," where Williams draws upon Foucault to argue that Utterson's quest follows the late nineteenth-century's scientific attempts to analyze and codify the deviant body, which was often female.(^)

(21)For more on Stevenson's struggle with misogyny, see William Veeder's argument that RLS's misogynist compulsions led him to depict the violence against women in *J&H*.(^)

(22)Calder notes Stevenson’s “plea that prostitutes should be regarded with greater respect and not treated as outcasts” (56). Perhaps this affinity with the plight of prostitutes made RLS feel less corrupted as an artist.(^)

(23)See Marion Shaw, who also views Stevenson’s hemorrhaging as providing a “written text which was expelled, abjected...with...inspirational violence” (94).(^)

(24)Showalter goes on to note that “Nineteenth-century literature is stocked with descriptions of almost symptomless, unfrightened, beatific deaths from TB, particularly of young people, such as Little Eva in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*” (16).(^)

(25)Frank McFlynn makes an intriguing note on Fanny’s influence when it came to RLS’s view of Nature, arguing that “Fanny’s sense of a hostile and malevolent nature fed into RLS’s abiding sense of Calvinistic evil” (444) reflected in the passage reflecting the natural landscape of Vailima.(^)

(26)James Pope Hennessey, among others, attests to RLS’s somewhat womanish stature from the time of his youth: “These magnificent eyes were set in a long oval face, which seemed even thinner than it was for being framed in the glossy light-brown locks which flowed carelessly to his shoulders, a Bohemian fashion...It was his hair style, together with his sparse figure, gesturing, nervous, tapered fingers and classically beautiful profile, that sometimes gave people a totally false impression of effeminacy” (18).(^)

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