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“This, too, was myself”: Empathic Unsettlement and the Victim/Perpetrator Binary in  
Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Brittany Bruner

A thesis submitted to the faculty of  
Brigham Young University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

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## ABSTRACT

“This, too, was myself”: Empathic Unsettlement and the Victim/Perpetrator Binary in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

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At first glance, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is a tale that reinforces binaries. One of these is the self/other binary that is central to David Hume’s and Adam Smith’s theories of sympathy that conceive of a self imaginatively identifying and experiencing fellow-feeling for an other. However, this notion is complicated because Jekyll and Hyde are the same person. Further, many critics argue that Stevenson actually challenges binary thinking. While Hume and Smith do not challenge the self/other binary in connection with sympathy, trauma theory critics do challenge a self/other binary that lies at the heart of sympathy: the victim/perpetrator binary. Noted trauma theorist Dominick LaCapra develops a method of empathizing called empathic unsettlement where a secondary witness listens with empathy to a victim’s traumatic witness while recognizing the difference of his or her position as a witness. He argues that perpetrators may also warrant understanding, but this understanding does not come through empathy. However, one of the hallmarks of empathic unsettlement is that it does not neatly resolve or replace traumatic narratives. Therefore, I argue that empathic unsettlement could also be a useful method for allowing a perpetrator to witness. While practicing empathic unsettlement for a perpetrator may not be worth the risk in real life, performing a thought experiment in literature can test how using empathy might provide a better way to theorize perpetration. Using two witnesses who attempt to practice empathic unsettlement for Jekyll and Hyde, Dr. Hastie Lanyon (who fails), and Mr. Gabriel John Utterson (who succeeds), I will show how empathic unsettlement could be used for both a victim and perpetrator to tease out the complexities of assessing a traumatic situation.

Keywords and terms: Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, John Utterson, Hastie Lanyon, Henry Jekyll, Edward Hyde, sympathy, David Hume, Adam Smith, fellow-feeling, empathy, Dominick LaCapra, empathic unsettlement, binary, self, other, victim, perpetrator

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## Introduction

When unfolding his gruesome, fantastic tale, Robert Louis Stevenson's iconic character Dr. Jekyll states that "all human beings, as we meet them, are commingled out of good and evil," but "Edward Hyde alone, in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil" (45). However, when Jekyll looks at his reflection after he has transformed himself into Hyde, he regards Hyde with a "leap of welcome" (45). "This, too, was myself" (45) he says. Jekyll sees Hyde as both foreign and familiar, both other and self, a problematic paradox because an other cannot be a self.

From the nineteenth century to the present, critics have regarded *Jekyll and Hyde* first and foremost as an exploration of this contradictory duality. Noting this, Jill Matus writes, "In a general way, Stevenson's novel is *the* literary expression of divided being: 'Jekyll and Hyde' is a phrase that has entered common parlance as a synonym for the split self, and, as Stevenson explained later, he wanted to give voice in the tale to the 'strong sense of man's double being'" (161). The iconic duo of Jekyll and Hyde represents all kinds of conceptions of good and evil, and this was recognized even in Stevenson's time. Nineteenth-century newspapers featured various stories using Jekyll and Hyde as a metaphor for people living secret lives or presenting (and hiding) dual agendas in fields as diverse as medicine, religion, and politics.<sup>1</sup> Contemporary scholarship has expanded this discussion to a host of other binaries, including the culture/nature binary (Ferrer-Medina), the relationship of duality in Freud's seminal text *The Interpretation of Dreams* (D'Amato), the role of the left brain and the right brain in creating dual personalities (Stiles), the binary between Western civilization and perceptions of non-Western people as

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<sup>1</sup> See "A Psychological Study" for an example of people acting like Jekyll and Hyde in relation to contemporary medical cases; "Dr. Jekyll in England, Mr. Hyde in Ireland" for an example of a writer using Jekyll and Hyde as a metaphor for duality to compare governments and politicians; Walker for a review of the novella that comments on duality; "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", a review in *Star*, for a discussion of Stevenson experiencing duality in his dreams in order to come up with the novella; "A Jekyll and Hyde" in the *Hampshire/Portsmouth Telegraph* for a story about a Jekyll and Hyde evangelist criminal; and "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde at the Colonial Office" in *Freeman's Journal* for an example of a complaint against a government official in which he is compared to Jekyll and Hyde when acting against the best interests of Jamaica.

savages (Shyalaja), the binary of private and public personas as explored through the motif of doors (Frank), the duality of hidden and exposed expressions of masculinity (Cohen), and the duality between social class and social status (Danahy), to name a few.

However, one binary—the binary of self and other that resides at the heart of discussions of sympathy—has been overlooked by critics of Stevenson’s novella, an odd omission considering Stevenson’s general interest in the concept of feeling for others. Stevenson was a great advocate of sympathetic relationships, believing that the best way to practice sympathy was to try “putting oneself in the place of others, and appropriating the situation so as to conceive it from within and not from without” (Kelman 194). As he outlines in a letter on his experiences with the Samoan people, Stevenson viewed sympathy as a way “to enter into something outside of oneself, something that does not touch one’s next neighbor in the city omnibus.” Being able to do this was “the proof of not being a barbarian” (qtd. in Kelman 194). Stevenson’s personal views on sympathy influenced the way that he developed his characters and stories, as noted by John Kelman: “[Stevenson’s] writing gave him a wide and open field, and it is because of his extraordinary power of putting himself in the place of others that the characters are so natural and the situations so impressive” (194).

Sympathy is a major component of *Jekyll and Hyde*, and Stevenson’s notions of sympathy were most likely informed by Adam Smith and David Hume, fellow Scots for whom sympathy functioned as a product of imagination. Their theories provide a useful method for considering the sympathetic relationships between the other characters and Jekyll and Hyde when they are conceived of as two separate people, because their theories rely on the self/other binary. Thinking about sympathy in the novella in this way is difficult, however, because in *Jekyll and Hyde*, the self, Jekyll, is also the other, Hyde. To deny sympathy to Mr. Hyde, an evil

perpetrator, would also cause one to deny sympathy to Dr. Jekyll, a victim of Hyde. This leaves characters in the novella with a difficult choice: do they sympathize with Dr. Jekyll, and, by extension, Mr. Hyde? Or do they refuse sympathy to both?

This blurring of the self/other binary presents a unique complication with regard to the question of how one should feel for an other. Theories of sympathy during Stevenson's time do not address this complication, but modern theorists of trauma do. Noted trauma theorist Dominick LaCapra is specifically concerned with the self/other binary that lies at the heart of sympathy: the victim/perpetrator binary. When we introduce trauma theory and notions of perpetration and victimization into Stevenson's text, the complicated conception of self and other presented in the novella is complicated still further. For while Hyde perpetrates against Jekyll (among others), making Jekyll a victim, Jekyll also perpetrates against Hyde. With whom, then, should the characters align their sympathies, and what is at stake in doing so?

LaCapra believes there is a lot at stake when we use empathy to theorize trauma. Unlike Smith and Hume, he does not think specifically in terms of sympathy but rather discusses the limitations of empathy, which he defines as an "affective component of understanding [that] is difficult to control" (*Writing History* 102). His definition of empathy is similar to a Smithean "fellow-feeling" that "limits objectification and exposes the self to involvement or implication in the past, its actors, and victims" (102). LaCapra observes that when one chooses to empathize with a victim of trauma, bearing witness to the pain of perpetration, there is the potential that one might overidentify with the victim and begin to displace the victim's narrative with one's own. Thus, he suggests that "desirable empathy involves not full identification but what might be termed empathic unsettlement in the face of traumatic limit events, their perpetrators, and their victims" (102). Empathic unsettlement protects victims by allowing them to witness to an



empathetic person while recognizing that they can never approach a level of understanding on par with the victim's understanding of the experience. It "poses a barrier" to the kinds of "closure in discourse" that come from a listener's attempt to impose a narrative of healing, resolution, or even understanding onto the traumatic experience (41); instead, the listener remains empathic but distant, unsettled. This notion of empathic unsettlement was originally conceived in discussions of Holocaust traumas, but writers and theorists—including literary critics—have employed LaCapra's idea in their examinations of written texts as a way of exploring trauma and fellow-feeling.

Using the concept of empathic unsettlement can become problematic, however, because it relies on a sharp division between victim and perpetrator, but the victim/perpetrator binary is often blurred in life, as it is in *Jekyll and Hyde*. Victims may be perpetrators before, during, or after their victimization. Similarly, perpetrators may have been victims at one point and may even see themselves primarily as victims, which they may believe leads them to perpetration. Sharon Lamb argues that "the large majority of perpetrators had enough free will not to do what they did, and, more controversially, that more than a few victims also had enough free choice to make their self-blame, at times, reasonable" (12). She goes on to suggest that this causes perpetrators who were once victims to deny responsibility for their actions, but she contends that "victimization should not mean absolution from all responsibility" (21). At the same time, one cannot ignore a perpetrator's own victimization; it, too, is a component of the trauma inflicted by the perpetrator on others.

Studying both victimization and perpetration, then, is essential to coming closer to understanding most traumatic situations. Refusing to consider the situation from the perspective of the perpetrator solidifies a binary that is rarely black and white. In the difficult process of

assessing trauma, not recognizing the ways in which a perpetrator might be treated with empathic unsettlement forces a division of self and other that may not accurately reflect the reality of the situation. This is the case in the literary example of *Jekyll and Hyde*. If Jekyll were seen only as a victim who had no cause for blame, readers would not fully understand the actions of Hyde, nor would they be acknowledging the fundamental premise of Stevenson's tale: that Jekyll is Hyde. Keeping victim and perpetrator in separate categories would also mean failing to see the ways in which Jekyll perpetrates against Hyde and the ways in which Hyde is a victim of Jekyll's experiment. In Stevenson's novella, it is necessary to study perpetration in the same way we study victimization in order for the trauma narrative to be accurately represented. This is where empathic unsettlement has the potential to become a useful tool.

Because *Jekyll and Hyde* presents us with a victim who is also a perpetrator and a perpetrator who is also a victim, Stevenson's text provides us with the opportunity to test LaCapra's victim-only notion of empathic unsettlement in ways that LaCapra—who is working with real people instead of fictional characters—cannot. LaCapra is hesitant to extend empathic unsettlement to perpetrators, but when one extends this kind of empathy to the victim Jekyll, one necessarily extends it to the perpetrator Hyde. A successful application of this type of empathy allows readers to witness an experiment involving empathic unsettlement toward one of Victorian literature's most nefarious perpetrators. Stevenson presents two characters who, motivated by empathy, undertake this action: Dr. Lanyon, who fails in his attempt, and Mr. Utterson, who succeeds. Dr. Lanyon represents the fears one may have in practicing empathic unsettlement for a perpetrator. As LaCapra predicts, Lanyon's efforts to feel for Hyde result in his overidentification with Hyde. He becomes another victim of this perpetrator, traumatized to the point of death. Through Mr. Utterson, however, Stevenson shows that practicing empathic

unsettlement for a perpetrator does not require one to excuse perpetration and does not lessen the victim's experiences, nor does it necessarily result in more trauma. Utterson succeeds in doing what LaCapra suggests is not possible; he extends empathic unsettlement to a perpetrator as part of a process of traumatic witnessing, and he is therefore able to offer a more complete explanation of the trauma surrounding Jekyll/Hyde.

Stevenson's text thus provides a roadmap for analyzing empathetic reactions to the characters of Jekyll and Hyde. There are many instances in which characters practice a Humean and Smithean version of sympathy (similar to LaCapra's empathy before employing empathic unsettlement) for Dr. Jekyll that relies on imaginative identification, fellow-feeling, and a self/other binary that causes them to express revulsion toward Mr. Hyde. But these moments, when considered in the context of eighteenth-century notions of sympathy, cannot account for the blurred binary of self/other or victim/perpetrator represented by Jekyll/Hyde. When considered in the context of LaCapra's notion of empathic unsettlement, however, we find a case study in *Jekyll and Hyde* that demonstrates how empathy might be extended to both victims and perpetrators, making empathic unsettlement a method by which to document and critique a traumatic experience from multiple perspectives.

#### Sympathy in *Jekyll and Hyde*

Eighteenth-century theories that conceive of sympathy as a bringing together of self and other via imagination provide a lens by which to understand sympathetic expression in Stevenson's novella. Adam Smith, whose 1759 *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* has had a large influence on theories of sympathy, believed that sympathy involves imagination put in action by "our capacity to transport ourselves, imaginatively, from the position of spectator to actor, and then back to the position of spectator" (Mitchell 78). This is a fluid relationship in which the

person inhabits the mind of those he or she sympathizes with and then returns to his or her own consciousness. Smith writes that “by the imagination . . . we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike [his sensations]” (2). This is a process that Smith refers to as “fellow-feeling.” However, Smith is careful to note that this experience still only exists within ourselves: “[Our senses] never did, and never can, carry us beyond our own person” (2). Thus, for Smith, sympathy requires a working imagination in which the sympathizer identifies intensely (but without any unsettlement) with an other and yet remains separate from the person requiring sympathy. One might become “the same person” with the other and may even feel the same emotions as the other, but all of this takes place metaphorically, in one’s head. The sympathizer is never actually transported outside of himself or herself.

Hume, writing in the second volume of his influential *A Treatise on Human Nature* (1740), outlines a similar process of practicing sympathy, also emphasizing the importance of the imagination in the sympathetic relationship. Hume suggests that sympathy can even arise through a description of an event that happened long ago or far away: “’Tis certain, that sympathy is not always limited to the present moment, but that we often feel by communication the pains and pleasures of others, which are not in being, and which we only anticipate by the force of imagination” (169). The observer can use an imaginative process to generate sympathy for a situation that may not be presently occurring. Hume claims that this transmission of feelings is possible and is partly dependent on physiognomy (Duncan 286). Observing someone physically in distress may create an opportunity for sympathetic identification, but it might also generate antipathy if the person in distress possesses a physiognomy that does not elicit

sympathy. Thus, sympathy, according to Smith and Hume, is often dependent on visual or written cues that appeal to the senses in a way that triggers sympathy or a lack of sympathy from the observer.

Stevenson's novella models Smith's and Hume's conceptions of sympathy by presenting characters who sympathize with Jekyll by first observing his distress and then imagining themselves in Jekyll's situation. Part of this ability to imagine Jekyll's feelings is dependent on his pleasing physiognomy, which invites characters to feel sympathy for him. Stevenson describes Jekyll as "a large, well-made, smooth-faced man of fifty, with something of a slyish cast perhaps, but every mark of capacity and kindness" (Stevenson 12). These marks of kindness draw sympathy from Mr. John Utterson, a lawyer and Jekyll's friend who narrates much of the novella. Utterson feels sympathy for Jekyll the moment that he learns of Jekyll's association with Hyde. He believes that Hyde might be the manifestation of one of Jekyll's past misdeeds, "[a]nd the lawyer, scared by the thought, brooded awhile on his own past" (11). He places himself in Jekyll's situation and worries about how it would feel to have the ghost of old sins return. These imaginings are heightened by visible changes to Jekyll's "well-made" physiognomy that signal to Utterson the need for even greater sympathy for his friend, as Jekyll's troubles compound. When Utterson questions Jekyll about Hyde, for example, Stevenson writes, "The large handsome face of Dr. Jekyll grew pale to the very lips, and there came a blackness about his eyes" (13). Utterson can physically see Jekyll's distress at the mention of Hyde. "I am painfully situated, Utterson," Jekyll tells him, "It is one of those affairs that cannot be mended by talking" (13). In a signal that Utterson cares for Jekyll, and perhaps imagines himself in Jekyll's situation, he promises Jekyll, "You know me: I am a man to be trusted. . . . [A]nd I make no doubt I can get you out of it" (13). While in this situation he does not explicitly state that he has placed

himself imaginatively in Jekyll's position, Utterson feels sympathy toward Jekyll and promises to help him after seeing and hearing Jekyll's distress.

Jekyll's staff, too, experience fellow-feeling when they fear that the doctor is being blackmailed or held captive by Hyde. His servants declare that they are willing to "place [them]selves in a position of some peril" to help Jekyll, an indication that they feel deeply for the man (31). Poole, the butler, is even ready to face danger in rescuing Jekyll, so great is his fellow-feeling. His feelings for Jekyll are, in fact, paramount in Poole's desire to help rescue Jekyll from the man he believes is holding him captive: "A man has his feelings," he explains to Utterson when asked why he is willing to help (32). More than just feeling *for* Dr. Jekyll, however, Poole states that he feels emotions *similar to* Jekyll's when hearing of Jekyll's sorrow, suggesting that his desires to help the doctor are fostered by a sympathetic reaction rather than just loyalty. He tells Utterson that when he put his ear to the locked door of Jekyll's office and heard weeping "like a woman or a lost soul," he felt as though he could cry as well: "I came away with that upon my heart, that I could have wept too" (32). This moment, in which Poole starts to feel the same emotions as the man he assumes is Jekyll weeping inside his office, suggests that he is imagining the despair that Jekyll must be feeling. Poole is sympathizing with a man fearing for his life to the degree that he, too, could weep as though his soul were lost. And this intense sympathy motivates Poole and Jekyll's other servants to rescue Jekyll.

In contrast with their sympathetic feelings toward Jekyll, the characters in *Jekyll and Hyde* refuse to identify imaginatively with Hyde, a man with whom it seems impossible to sympathize. Because of his displeasing physiognomy and his violent interactions with others, the characters cannot feel for Hyde even before they know of his evil misdeeds. Stevenson gives unpleasant descriptions of Hyde early on in the novella, calling him "small, and very plainly

dressed” with an appearance that, even from far away, “went somehow strongly against the watcher’s inclination” (9). Physically, “Mr. Hyde was pale and dwarfish; he gave an impression of deformity without any namable malformation, he had a displeasing smile, . . . and he spoke with a husky, whispering and somewhat broken voice” (10). These descriptions suggest that the characters have an instinctive revulsion toward Hyde, but they cannot specifically describe what they hate about him. They are simply unable to imaginatively identify with him at all. Hume predicts this reaction, writing, “We sympathize more with persons contiguous to us, than with persons remote from us: With our acquaintance, than with strangers: With our countrymen, than with foreigners” (340). Utterson analyzes Hyde’s uncanny figure, which leads him to dehumanize Hyde: “There *is* something more, if I could find a name for it. God bless me, the man seems hardly human!” (Stevenson 10). Hyde’s body feels foreign to the other characters to the extent that they view him as inhuman, which makes him as foreign to others as a person can be. They do not desire to identify or sympathize with this inhuman fiend, whose very body conveys his otherness.

Compounding his deplorable physiognomy, Hyde perpetrates great acts of evil, seemingly justifying a negative response and a removal of sympathy on the part of the other characters. Hyde’s first act of violent perpetration occurs when he tramples a little girl. Other characters are astonished at his cruelty. The physician who attends to the little girl, whom Utterson describes as “about as emotional as a bagpipe” (3), reacts with anger despite his typically emotionless demeanor. Utterson, after he has hold of Hyde, writes of the doctor:

Every time he looked at my prisoner, I saw that Sawbones turned sick and white with the desire to kill him. I knew what was in his mind, just as he knew what was in mine; and killing being out of the question, we did the next best. We told the man we could and

would make such a scandal out of this, as should make his name stink from one end of London to the other. (3)

Here, Utterson is willing to sympathize with the doctor. They know and understand each other's minds and work together in reaction to the situation. In contrast, not only do Utterson and the physician refuse to feel sympathy for Hyde, they feel anger towards him, even desiring to kill him.

After witnessing the heinous crime against the girl, Utterson and other characters become hardened against Hyde. Smith explains that one feels resentment toward those who perpetrate, primarily because of one's fellow-feeling for those we believe are wronged: "Our sympathy with the person whose motives we go along with, and whom, therefore, we look upon as in the right, cannot but harden us against all fellow-feeling with the other, whom we necessarily regard as in the wrong" (94). This hardening first takes place in the novella as a result of Hyde's attack on the child. After Hyde tramples the small girl, Utterson remarks that "if [Hyde] had any friends or any credit, we undertook that he should lose them" (Stevenson 3). Utterson is ensuring that Hyde will be shunned and therefore unable to function in Victorian society. Utterson goes on to describe the enraged women who witness this crime to be "wild as harpies," forming "a circle of . . . hateful faces" around Hyde (3). They, too, resist any kind of feeling for Hyde and go so far as trying to physically attack him.

Characters react with similar outrage after Stevenson describes Hyde's murder of the M.P. Sir Danvers Carew with chilling detail. A maid first sees an exchange between Sir Danvers Carew and Hyde, believing that Carew was simply asking for directions. She describes Carew as one who "seemed to breathe such an innocent and old-world kindness of disposition" (14). Hyde, on the other hand, "seemed to listen with an ill-contained impatience" to Carew (14). This



impatience apparently boils inside of Hyde until he suddenly “broke out on a great flame of anger . . . [and] with ape-like fury, he was trampling his victim under foot, and hailing down a storm of blows, under which the bones were audibly shattered and the body jumped upon the roadway” (15). Jekyll’s maid witnesses the crime, but, “at the horror of these sights and sounds, the maid fainted” (15). The maid is physically overcome with the horror of what she sees Hyde do. Rather than allowing her imagination to conjure up the feelings of Hyde at this moment, the maid goes unconscious, which is the furthest one can get from entering into another’s mind. Instead of working through the unsettlement created by considering Hyde’s point of view, she refuses to look, refuses to think, and therefore refuses to imagine and sympathize.

In terms of the self/other binary of sympathy, the characters are able to feel with Jekyll, but they are unable to feel for Hyde and cast him off as an other. Sympathy, then, becomes a reinforcement of larger thematic binaries in the text. However, while we can see this binary reflected in the text, it is problematic to think of *Jekyll and Hyde* in binary terms because it is a text that blurs binaries: Jekyll is Hyde and Hyde is Jekyll. Although readers and characters in the novella look upon Hyde with revulsion as a being separate from Jekyll, Jekyll recalls after seeing Hyde for the first time that “when I looked upon that ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance, rather of a leap of welcome. This, too, was myself. It seemed natural and human” (45). Even though at times he refers to Hyde as an “it,” Jekyll very clearly identifies as Hyde, whom he deems to be a “natural” and “human” part of himself. Therefore, after learning of Jekyll’s transformation, the characters will have to confront the horror that having sympathy for one (Jekyll) necessitates having sympathy for the other (Hyde). Further complicating this, Jill Matus points out that neither Jekyll nor Hyde is quite as unidimensional as he first appears. She claims that “while Hyde is the evil side, Jekyll ought to be purely good. But he is still the

mixture of the two, ‘that incongruous compound of whose reformation and improvement I had already learned to despair’ (64)” (174). Thus the binaries that seem to divide a text like *Jekyll and Hyde* so neatly do not “necessarily affirm binary logic, but complicat[e] it by demonstrating how closely related binary opposites are” (Hendershot 35). This is where Smith and Hume fall short when one attempts to analyze the workings of sympathy within the novella: Smith and Hume’s theories of sympathy recognize people only when they are occupying one side or the other of the self/other binary. Matus reminds readers that Jekyll and Hyde are both and thus cannot be regarded in light of those notions of sympathy.

Recognizing this blurring shows that, despite the characters’ sympathetic alignment with Jekyll, Jekyll is a perpetrator as well as a victim—not only because he *is* Hyde but also because he commits questionable acts himself. He knows, for example, that his experiment has great risks, which is evident in his musing: “I hesitated long before I put this theory to the test of practice. I knew well that I risked death. . . . But the temptation of a discovery so singular and profound, at last overcame my suggestions of alarm” (Stevenson 43–44). Jekyll is driven by a desire for prominence and worldly success, even being initially willing to risk death in order to discover something noteworthy. He also admits that, along with his desire for worldly success, his motivations for becoming Hyde are not strictly objective—he enjoys his time as Hyde. This enjoyment seems to stem from the idea “that Jekyll had already committed certain indelicate acts” as is evident in his hiring a housekeeper who he knew would keep quiet (Ferrer-Medina 76). “How could Jekyll have learned of the housekeeper’s silence and apathy for virtue if not by her indulgence of his past indelicacies?” Patricia Ferrer-Medina insightfully asks (76). His indulgence in committing “indelicate acts” leads him to continue to take the drug that changes him to Hyde. Jekyll recognizes that “the drug had no discriminating action; it was neither

diabolical nor divine” (Stevenson 45). In other words, the drug itself does not choose whether or not another evil or good version of Jekyll is created; rather, it is influenced by Jekyll’s mood.

While Jekyll cannot mitigate the effects of the drug that “shook the doors of the prisonhouse of [his] disposition” (45), he is still the one who “concocts and drinks the potion unleashing the diabolical Hyde” (D’Amato 101). The violence in the novella is inflicted by an agent: Jekyll.

In addition, Hyde, who is birthed from Jekyll’s experiment without a moral conscience, is not solely a perpetrator but is also a victim. Hyde was bred to be evil and is not given a conception of morality; he is therefore doomed to the fate that Jekyll creates for him, a fate that involves death, Hyde’s biggest fear. Jekyll says that “Hyde alone, in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil” (45), suggesting that Jekyll knows that Hyde’s passions will be problematic, but Hyde is unable to conceive in moral terms the danger his existence presents to others. Jekyll, as Hyde, feels “younger, lighter, happier in body,” but he is also “conscious of a heady recklessness, a current of disordered sensual images running like a mill race in [his] fancy, a solution of the bonds of obligation, an unknown but not an innocent freedom of the soul” (44). Like a child, Hyde is reckless and unaware of any obligation to others, but unlike a child, his “freedom of the soul” is not “innocent.” He is denied that innocence by Jekyll, who brings him into being for the sole purpose of being able to perpetrate and then shift the consequences of his perpetration onto Hyde, whom he knows will be reviled for his actions. When Jekyll laments his own loss of social standing and quality of life, an unanticipated result of his experiment, he acknowledges that Hyde does not have a full conception of what it means to function in an ethical society: “To cast [my lot] in with Hyde was to die to a thousand interests and aspirations, and to become, at a blow and for ever, despised and friendless” (48). Even though he admits that Hyde “would be not even

conscious of all that he had lost” (48–49), this example still suggests that Jekyll knows well that Hyde’s existence will always be one of pain, isolation, and rejection.

This subjugated existence, in which Hyde can only receive pleasure without structure or discipline, would suggest that he might deserve some kind of sympathy as a victim as well as a perpetrator. Created to fail in society, Hyde does not elicit sympathy from the characters in the novella, but he does receive it from one early critic. Writing in 1888, Reverend Dr. John Aldwell Nicholson asks of Jekyll’s and Hyde’s situation, “Who was to blame, who was the more guilty—that poor animal that ravened through the world?” or Jekyll, “whose will . . . had done all, and his will was guilty of all” (103–04). In the case of the “poor animal,” Hyde, “it must be destroyed, . . . [but the destroyers] could almost weep for it while they destroyed it” (104). For Nicholson, the criteria for identifying with the victim comes through will: Jekyll had the will to make everything happen, whereas Hyde simply followed his instincts, as he was created to do. Nicholson still wishes for Hyde to be destroyed and still views him as an “it,” but he sympathizes with Hyde, the poor creature who is sacrificed to Jekyll’s pretentious experiment.

Notably, there is one more important figure who, perhaps unsurprisingly, also feels sympathy for Hyde: Jekyll. Jekyll’s feeling for Hyde is first apparent when he tells Utterson of his “great interest in poor Hyde” (13), a confession he makes as he asks Utterson to help Hyde if the time ever comes when Jekyll is no longer around. While this could appear to be selfish for those who know of Hyde’s true identity, Jekyll still feels for Hyde as a separate entity, especially when corresponding with people who do not know the truth. Jekyll’s use of the word “poor” suggests that there is something unfortunate about Hyde’s situation that could elicit sympathy. Jekyll also sympathizes with Hyde briefly when he later recalls that Hyde’s “love of life is wonderful; I go further; I, who sicken and freeze at the mere thought of him, when I recall the

abjection and passion of this attachment, and when I know how he fears my power to cut him off by suicide, I find it in my heart to pity him” (54). Here Jekyll taps into a Smithean version of fellow-feeling; while Smith believes that sympathy encompasses “fellow-feeling with any passion whatsoever,” he argues that “pity and compassion are words appropriated to signify our fellow-feeling with the sorrow of others” (4). Therefore, even in all his bitterness and disgust toward Hyde, Jekyll still pities Hyde as the victim of his experiment. In a seemingly clear perpetrator/victim binary, the roles of perpetrator and victim are not easy to delineate.

### Trauma and Empathic Unsettling

After decades of thinking about the perpetrator/victim binary, trauma theorists have noticed the same problem in life that Stevenson illustrates in literature: it is often difficult to distinguish between perpetrators and victims. Sharon Lamb writes of the perpetrator/victim duality, “As much as we might wish to return with clarity of vision to this simple duality, it may be impossible to do so” (5). She suggests that blurring the lines between the perpetrator and the victim can elicit critical thought about traumatic acts—acts like those Jekyll perpetrates as Hyde. This needs to be undertaken, for, according to Lamb, “Too many books have examined victims or perpetrators alone and so have not been challenged to commit to a consistent view of people and apply the arguments they make for one (in terms of determinism, choice, and responsibility) to the other” (3).

Dominick LaCapra similarly argues that perpetrators deserve a more nuanced understanding, but he does not explicitly state it should come through empathy, in light of the blurring of roles between perpetrator and victim. The traumatic situation, according to LaCapra, is too simplified when the perpetrator and victim are considered as separate entities. He argues that while some criticize the breakdown of the victim/perpetrator binary because of its potential

to remove distinctions, which can run the risk of re-victimizing victims, and/or justifying perpetration, “the deconstruction of binaries is fruitful in undoing the bases of a scapegoat mechanism (sharply dividing self and other with the source of anxiety projected onto the nefarious other)” (*Writing History* xxvi). LaCapra is particularly interested in thinking about victims of trauma, but he also wonders, “May certain perpetrators not have earned or deserve mourning (even empathy) but instead warrant modes of understanding insistently related to critique?” (215). Finding such “modes of understanding” for perpetrators, however, is a difficult and problematic process.

LaCapra does not explicitly theorize this process, but he does offer a potential tool for thinking empathetically about perpetration and perpetrators in “empathic unsettlement,” which is a more nuanced method of empathizing with an other. Although LaCapra applies this idea only to victims of perpetration, he nevertheless suggests a way that all actors in a traumatic situation might be considered empathically outside of binary terms. Empathic unsettlement involves bearing witness to trauma by putting “oneself in the other’s position while recognizing the difference of that position” (LaCapra, *Writing History* 78). This is a useful mode of critique because it allows people to understand the traumatic experience of a victim without overly identifying with it. LaCapra is careful about this because overidentification runs the risk of the secondary witness practicing an “empathy [that] gives way to vicarious victimhood” (47), a dangerous situation in which a witness begins to imagine himself or herself in place of the victim and replaces the victim’s narrative with his or her own perceived victimhood. This would make the secondary witnessing process futile by making the victim voiceless, replacing his or her experience with the imagined experience of the witness.

Unsettlement, then, exists as a conscious awareness of being an other, a witness, who will not be fully able to understand the experiences of the victim even when one feels empathy for that victim. LaCapra explains, “The role of empathy and empathic unsettlement in the attentive secondary witness does not entail . . . identity” but rather “involves a kind of virtual experience” (78) that is distinctly separate from one’s own experience. Like Smith and Hume, LaCapra posits the necessity of imagination in understanding a victim’s position. LaCapra extends Hume’s and Smith’s conceptions, however, because for him, empathic unsettlement is a deliberate process meant to witness, record, and critically consider a traumatic situation rather than just a method of sympathizing with a person who experiences it. This allows LaCapra to understand an other sympathetically, with empathy, cultivating a modern equivalent of Smith’s “fellow-feeling” that foregoes identification and also gives victims their own voices.

LaCapra is hesitant to extend empathic unsettlement to perpetrators, however, because he fears that doing so would raise a number of ethical issues. Despite his hypothesizing about perpetrators who might “warrant modes of understanding,” he believes that this understanding can and should happen without empathy. He argues that although one can discuss a perpetrator’s experiences as a type of “trauma,” thinking about this kind of trauma must not “entail the equation or identification of perpetrator and victim” (*Writing History* 79). LaCapra does recognize that there is a different kind of unsettlement (“antipathy, hatred”) that witnesses may feel when hearing about acts of perpetration (104). But this unsettlement is not the unsettlement felt for victims. It is an unsettlement that “may justifiably resist empathy in the sense of feeling or understanding” (104). This leaves readers to wonder what kind of understanding, if not empathic understanding, one should extend to perpetrators. For LaCapra, this understanding must remain detached, for overidentifying with perpetrators (a risk that empathy entails) may

devalue or possibly re-create the horrific acts committed. LaCapra is also concerned about generalizing major losses in traumatic situations in a way that victimizes everyone, such as in the case of mass genocide. “As a consequence,” he writes, “one encounters the dubious ideas that everyone (including perpetrators or collaborators) is a victim, that all history is trauma, or that we all share a pathological public sphere or a ‘wound culture’” (*Writing History* 64). This suggests that one major problem with practicing empathic unsettlement for perpetrators is that they will become conflated with victims, misidentifying the roles of victim, perpetrator, and trauma.

Other trauma theorists are also well aware of the problems of extending empathy to perpetrators. Roy F. Baumeister worries that by studying perpetrators too concertedly and trying to “understand the perpetrators’ inner processes and attitudes,” people may “come to see their crimes as considerably less heinous” than others judge them to be (367–68). Baumeister thus raises the imperative ethical question: Is studying perpetrators worth the moral risk? Lamb believes that it is worth the risk and that studying perpetrators can be done without justifying perpetration. However, she recognizes that, regardless of who holds the status of perpetrator or victim, it is important that people are careful not to ignore perpetration or to avoid holding perpetrators accountable for their wrongdoings. She asserts, “We might and can still blame; we just can’t do it as easily as we used to” (6). Lamb ultimately comes to the conclusion that any discussion of perpetrators needs to involve censure so as not to minimize the experiences of the victim.

The same fears resonate with literary critics who similarly find danger in the prospect of readers responding empathetically to fictional villains. Susan Brison believes that romanticizing villains in texts compromises how people perceive victims’ experiences both in fictional



accounts and in real life, even more than if readers hated fictional and actual perpetrators. She calls for more empathy for victims, arguing that “we are not taught to empathize with victims. In crime novels and detective films, it is the villain, or the one who solves the murder mystery, who attracts our attention; the victim, a merely passive pretext for our entertainment, is conveniently disposed of—and forgotten—early on” (10). According to Brison, this fascination with villains fosters a lack of empathy for victims, who experience the greatest repercussions from traumatic events. Brison points out that even in fiction, characters and their traumatic situations can be difficult to assess and can foster an attitude of apathy toward victims both real and fictional.

LaCapra and Brison are concerned about the ethical implications of analyzing victims and perpetrators, even in fiction, but, as LaCapra suggests, it is important to consider the perpetrator’s experience in context of a traumatic situation to capture a fuller picture of the experience. Fiction provides an opportunity for presenting a thought experiment in which empathic unsettlement may be extended to perpetrators without the same ethical risks of performing such an experiment with actual perpetrators. As it stands, LaCapra’s notion of empathic unsettlement provides an ethically responsible method for serving as a secondary witness to trauma victims. But by refusing to extend this same empathic unsettlement to perpetrators—even within the fictional world of a text—we also make the perpetrators voiceless in the traumatic experience and make the narrative incomplete. While perpetrators certainly cannot be equated with victims, and while they may not deserve equal empathetic consideration, they, too, deserve the right to witness. In actual traumatic situations, it does not seem worth the risk to extend empathic unsettlement to perpetrators, especially in light of the problems that victims face in the witnessing process. But that risk greatly diminishes when the experiment is used in literature where perpetration and re-victimization will not happen again. Having

characters extend empathic unsettlement to perpetrators in a text provides the opportunity for readers to observe the risks and benefits of allowing perpetrators to witness in the traumatic experience. It also allows readers to see how extending empathic unsettlement might be done successfully. In other words, one might use literature as a model for extending empathic unsettlement in life. While this may seem dangerous to Brison, empathic unsettlement requires a careful method of witnessing that could be applied to victims and perpetrators in a way that does not ignore the victim.

*Jekyll and Hyde* is the perfect novella to practice such an experiment because it challenges the binary thinking inherent in empathic unsettlement. Because the self/other or victim/perpetrator binary is dismantled in *Jekyll and Hyde*, readers are presented with a situation in which it is impossible to empathize only with the victim and not with the perpetrator or to forget the victim in light of the perpetrator. *Jekyll and Hyde* also allows the reader to see the potential consequences of extending empathic unsettlement to a perpetrator. Stevenson's novella further recommends itself for this experiment because within the text, the extension of empathic unsettlement to both perpetrator and victim, or something that looks very much like it, is undertaken twice. The first, unsuccessful attempt is carried out by Dr. Hastie Lanyon, a former colleague and one-time friend of Dr. Jekyll's. The second attempt, which seems reasonably successful, is carried out by Mr. Gabriel John Utterson, a lawyer acquainted with both Lanyon and Jekyll and the executor of Jekyll's will. While Lanyon's attempt suggests it is dangerous to empathize with perpetrators, Utterson shows that through empathic unsettlement, an empathetic secondary witness can successfully allow victims and perpetrators to witness to a traumatic event without compromising either testimony, condoning perpetration, or ignoring victimhood.

Empathic Unsettlement in *Jekyll and Hyde*

Dr. Lanyon was, at one point, one of Jekyll's closest friends, which is why Jekyll approaches Lanyon first when he finds himself in need of help. Lanyon, "a hearty, healthy, dapper, red-faced gentleman, with a shock of hair prematurely white, and a boisterous and decided manner" (7), agrees with Utterson that their shared friendship with Jekyll forms a "bond of common interest" among the three of them (7). Lanyon has distanced himself from Jekyll because of Jekyll's "scientific balderdash" which Lanyon thinks has begun to make Jekyll "wrong, wrong in the mind" (7), but he "continues[s] to take an interest in him [Jekyll] for old sake's sake" (7). Relying on this friendship and common interest, Jekyll reaches out to Dr. Lanyon for empathy, reminding him of their longstanding friendship and begging for help in procuring the necessary items to continue mixing the potion he has created. Despite the fact that they "may have differed at times on scientific questions, [Jekyll] cannot remember, at least on [his] side, any break in [their] affection" (36). Jekyll hopes this will be enough to elicit Lanyon's fellow-feeling, along with his assertion that "there was never a day when if you had said to me, 'Jekyll, my life, my honour, my reason, depend on you,' I would not have sacrificed my left hand to help you" (36).

Lanyon, although wary of Jekyll's experiments and motives, is still willing to imaginatively identify with Jekyll and help when he is asked. He shares bonds with Jekyll, bonds of professionalism, friendship, and real concern. Jekyll only asks Lanyon for help when he can no longer help himself—when he has started to transform into Hyde without taking the potion that he concocts, and he is out of his supplies. Lanyon, who is also a doctor, has access to the supplies that Jekyll needs. Without explanation, Jekyll asks Lanyon to bring him a phial with his mixtures and his notebook with enigmatic writing about the experiment. At this request, Lanyon

wonders if Jekyll has gone insane but concludes that “till that was proved beyond the possibility of doubt, I felt bound to do as he requested” (37). He is confused by Jekyll’s requests, acknowledging that they “whetted his curiosity” (38) but “told [him] little that was definite” (38). However, Lanyon, as a fellow doctor and scientist, understands the importance of materials and notes in conducting experiments, and he brings the needed items to Dr. Jekyll, even though he is a bit unsettled by Jekyll’s requests. Action, here, is the surest sign of Lanyon’s empathy.

When Lanyon brings the requested items to Jekyll’s home, he expects to find the poor Dr. Jekyll who will offer an explanation for his seeming madness; instead he meets the “abnormal and misbegotten” Hyde (39). “I had never set eyes on him before,” he remarks. “He was small, as I have said; I was struck besides with the shocking expression of his face and . . . with the odd subjective disturbance caused by his neighborhood” (38). Lanyon’s observation of the uncanny Hyde, whose face is “so ghastly to see that I grew alarmed,” repels him and immediately dissipates any fellow-feeling or empathy Lanyon was ready to extend to Jekyll (40). It does not, however, dispel his curiosity, and Lanyon decides that he has “gone too far in the way of inexplicable services to pause before [he] see[s] the end” (40). So he fearfully watches Hyde consume the potion and then struggle until he completes the transformation into Jekyll, who appears “like a man restored from death” (41). The transformation of Hyde into Jekyll is horrifying to Lanyon: “‘O God!’ I screamed, and ‘O God!’ again and again” (41). In this moment, he experiences the psychological trauma of seeing the perpetrator and victim blur into the same being. His empathetic identification with Jekyll is erased as Jekyll becomes the embodiment of the other. Lanyon witnesses this transformation grossly unfold, his mind “submerged in terror” (41), and he is shattered.

After this psychologically traumatic witnessing, Lanyon is unable to put Hyde/Jekyll's account of the experiment and the work leading up to it on paper—the “narrative” he eventually writes for Utterson omits this information (36). When Utterson inquires about Jekyll, Lanyon refuses to give him any information, telling him, “Some day, Utterson, after I am dead, you may perhaps come to learn the right and wrong of this. I cannot tell you” (23). Even when his written tale is revealed, it only outlines Lanyon's experiences meeting Hyde and watching the transformation take place. He does not record anything after the transformation, saying, “What he told me in the next hour I cannot bring my mind to set on paper” (41). Lanyon even describes his witnessing experience as traumatic: “My soul sickened at it . . . My life is shaken to its roots; sleep has left me; the deadliest terror sits by me at all hours of the day and night; I feel that my days are numbered, and that I must die; and yet I shall die incredulous” (41). The psychological terror brought upon Lanyon at this revelation is too much for him to bear, and he commits suicide. The only thing he says of Jekyll is, “As for the moral turpitude that man unveiled to me, even with tears of penitence, I cannot, even in memory, dwell on it without a start of horror” (41). Lanyon's reaction is full of judgment. After witnessing Hyde become Jekyll, he sees Jekyll as the nefarious and evil other with whom he cannot imaginatively identify or empathize.

Lanyon is unable to practice empathic unsettlement because he cannot conceive of extending the empathy that he grudgingly had for Jekyll to Hyde. What LaCapra fears will happen does happen in Lanyon's case; Lanyon gives in to vicarious victimhood and his own tale of horror replaces the original trauma narrative. Although he does record Hyde's words during the actual transformation, he frames Hyde's experience around himself, describing his horror. Further, when Jekyll tries to explain what happens, he ignores Jekyll's witness because he is “submerged in terror.” A successful application of empathic unsettlement “involves virtual not

vicarious experience” (LaCapra, *History* 135), but Lanyon vicariously rather than virtually experiences the brutal transformation, which ultimately causes him to commit suicide. The only thing Lanyon writes of Jekyll’s testimony is that Jekyll is Hyde. After his traumatic incident, he tells Utterson, “I wish to see or hear no more of Dr. Jekyll . . . I am quite done with that person; and I beg that you will spare me any allusion to one whom I regard as dead” (23). By regarding him as dead, Lanyon cuts off Jekyll’s ability to witness as either perpetrator or victim.

Lanyon’s response to Hyde and Jekyll is devoid of empathy and instead filled with his own opinions, which he attributes to righteous indignation rather than mere hate. Lanyon first defines his reaction to Hyde as “idiosyncratic, personal distaste” but then feels he has “reason to believe the cause [of his reaction] to lie much deeper in the nature of man and to turn on some nobler hinge than the principle of hatred” (39). Part of his response to the situation is to ensure that he can no longer act as a secondary witness to Jekyll/Hyde by taking his own life. Lanyon’s trauma “is so potent as to shock this seemingly robust person literally to death” (Eigner 146–47). Lanyon is unable to practice empathic unsettlement for Jekyll because in doing so, he would be forced to imagine himself in Hyde’s position without overly identifying with either man. He is simply unable to do this because he is horrifically unsettled by the transformation and cannot imagine a way to defend Jekyll. In an unexpected way, Lanyon thus becomes a secondary victim of Jekyll’s experiment. The only escape he (like Jekyll) sees from the horror of the transformation is suicide. Lanyon’s response, as though confirming LaCapra’s fears, suggests that there is something gravely dangerous about empathizing with a perpetrator.

Mr. Utterson, on the other hand, does not become a vicarious victim; he manages to extend empathic unsettlement to Jekyll/Hyde such that he becomes a successful secondary witness to the trauma experienced by both victims/perpetrators. Part of the process of empathic

unsettlement involves the witnesses understanding their own subjective involvement in the witnessing process in order to avoid inserting too much of themselves into the narrative. Utterson recognizes his subjective involvement when he shows his own understanding of the ways in which binaries might be collapsed in a single individual: himself. Utterson has a number of negative qualities: he is “dusty [and] dreary” (1), “drank gin when he was alone” (1), and is “incline[d] to Cain’s heresy” (1). These qualities paint him as an unfriendly person who is not inclined to be his brother’s keeper. Rather, he lets his “brother go to the devil in his own way” (1), a description that would seem to mark him as a particularly unsympathetic character. But Utterson is also “somehow lovable” (1), “thrives upon the mastery of the self” (O’Dell 513), and therefore has control of his faculties. In addition, he does care for other people. He “ha[s] an approved tolerance for others” and is “inclined to help rather than to reprove” (Stevenson 1). Because of his willingness to associate with and help others at the moment of their downfalls, he is “frequently . . . the last good influence in the lives of downgoing men” (1). But even when interacting with these men, his face never reveals any disgust or horror. He “never marked a shade of change in his demeanour” upon receiving them in his home (1). Utterson realizes that something like Hyde lurks within him, but he also recognizes that he is not Jekyll or Hyde. He sets himself up to identify his own subjectivity without claiming the experiences of Jekyll and Hyde. This ability to be a nonjudgmental witness with a necessary amount of distance makes him a prime example for practicing empathic unsettlement for a perpetrator because, “Utterson can easily negotiate his contemporary landscape without falling victim to the threat of gross improprieties” (O’Dell 513). Thus, Utterson can witness “improprieties” without becoming tainted by them or horrified to the point of silence.

Another of Utterson's qualities that prepares him to invest empathy in Jekyll is his commitment to act even when it seems that nothing can be done. This propels him to help Jekyll even when he suspects that Jekyll is mixed up in shady business. Stevenson explains that Utterson's "affections, like ivy, were the growth of time" (1), and he has been friends with Jekyll for a long time. Utterson reminds Lanyon of this when they are discussing Jekyll's strange behavior, asking if he can do anything for Jekyll because he wants to maintain his longstanding friendship. Even with Lanyon's bold declaration that "nothing can be done" to help Jekyll (23), Utterson is "uneasy about poor Jekyll" (25) and believes "the presence of a friend might do him good" (25). And Jekyll trusts Utterson to take care of Hyde: "If I am taken away, Utterson, I wish you to promise me that you will bear with him and get his rights for him. I think you would, if you knew all" (13). Jekyll trusts that Utterson is committed to his friends and to the law and will therefore advocate for people when no one else will.

However, Utterson does not immediately extend empathic unsettlement toward Hyde—in fact, he feels strong resentment toward him. At first, "it was his ignorance of Mr. Hyde that had swelled his indignation" (6), but Utterson's indignation grows even greater when Hyde's name "began to be clothed upon with detestable attributes" (6). He learns from Mr. Enfield that Hyde trampled a small girl. He later replays the scene in his mind until it leads him to feel a kind of horror through his imagination. The scene takes on many disturbing forms to the point that Utterson's "imagination [is] engaged, or rather enslaved" (8) by "Mr. Enfield's tale" (8). As he lies in his bed, he reimagines the city, Hyde, and the child, and he finally sees in his imagination "that human Juggernaut tr[ea]d the child down and [pass] on regardless of her screams" (8). His disgust for Hyde causes him a great deal of unsettlement that at times also extends to Jekyll, which makes Utterson wary of extending empathy to his friend. He critiques Jekyll for



associating with Hyde and for being close enough to him to sign over his possessions to the detestable man in his will, a “document [that] had long been the lawyer’s eyesore” (6). Utterson struggles to understand Jekyll’s motivations. He studies Hyde’s handwriting and is shocked when he discovers that Hyde’s handwriting resembles Jekyll’s. “Henry Jekyll forge for a murderer!” (21), he exclaims at the discovery, and “his blood ran cold in his veins” (21).

Rather than denying Jekyll empathy altogether, however, Utterson tries to understand Jekyll’s motives for associating with Hyde. He begins to muse that Hyde must be coercing Jekyll into doing his bidding. At first, Utterson believes that Jekyll’s association with Hyde stems from madness, but he then “begin[s] to fear it is disgrace” (7). His fear for Jekyll and his lack of understanding regarding Jekyll’s will encourage him to find out exactly who Hyde is and what his relationship with Jekyll is: “If he be Mr. Hyde,” he posits, “I shall be Mr. Seek” (8). His unsettlement for Hyde compels Utterson toward empathy for Jekyll, and he attempts to understand the situation in order to help his friend. He also believes that he will understand Jekyll’s problem by finding and confronting Hyde, postulating that if he sees Hyde, “he might see a reason for his friend’s strange preference or bondage” (8). He follows Hyde to Jekyll’s residence and learns from Jekyll’s butler, Poole, that Hyde comes and goes from Jekyll’s place. Rather than reproving Jekyll for his association with Hyde, he empathizes with him. “Poor Harry Jekyll,” he says, “my mind misgives me he is in deep waters!” (11). He believes Jekyll may be in trouble because of “the ghost of some old sin” (11). Utterson compares Jekyll’s past with his own in order to empathize with him, asserting that “his [Utterson’s] past was fairly blameless . . . yet he was humbled to the dust by the many ill things he had done, and raised up again into a sober and fearful gratitude by the many that he had come so near to doing, yet avoided” (11). This practice of empathizing with Jekyll by relating his actions to his past mistakes sets Utterson

up to practice empathic unsettlement for Hyde because he already understands that each person commits, and has the potential to commit, ill actions.

Uttersson is willing to empathize with Jekyll past the point that Lanyon was willing to practice empathy for Jekyll. Uttersson is prepared to offer empathy to Jekyll when Poole seeks Uttersson's help in saving Jekyll from Hyde. When Uttersson goes with Poole to Jekyll's office, he stumbles upon "the body of a self-destroyer" (33): Hyde, who has committed suicide. At this point, Uttersson believes that Hyde may have killed Jekyll, and he searches for evidence. Rather than condemning Jekyll, however, he tells Poole that they "must be careful. I foresee that we may yet involve your master in some dire catastrophe" (35). Uttersson, still believing that Jekyll is a different person from Hyde, is now trying to protect Jekyll. He finds some evidence, a collection of papers, to help him understand Jekyll's plight: a note from Jekyll describing the contents of the papers, Dr. Lanyon's narrative, and Henry Jekyll's "Full Statement of the Case." Before reading all of this, Uttersson tells Poole to "say nothing of this paper. If your master has fled or is dead, we may at least save his credit" (35). He is willing to empathize with Jekyll enough to protect his reputation.

It is remarkable that Uttersson is able to react empathetically to Jekyll after discovering the truth, but it is even more remarkable that Uttersson allows Jekyll to witness in his own words while he remains untraumatized by listening to the witness. In privacy, Uttersson reads the three documents starting with Jekyll's note, moving to Lanyon's narrative, and then ending with Jekyll's confession. Uttersson can hear Jekyll's traumatic situation through the words of another, Lanyon, and then through Jekyll's own words. In Lanyon's tale, offered to Uttersson in a letter written just before his suicide, Lanyon describes Hyde's transformation in terms of Lanyon's own experience and reaction. It becomes the story of Lanyon's trauma, and not Jekyll's, as

Lanyon refuses to record Jekyll's narrative. However, Utterson is presented with the opportunity not only to read Jekyll's narrative, but to also present it in Jekyll's own words. Rather than refusing to witness or inserting his identity into the narrative, he offers Jekyll's "Full Statement of the Case" for all to read. Utterson thus does what LaCapra describes and participates in "a kind of virtual experience," putting himself "in the other's position while recognizing the difference of that position and hence not taking the other's place" (*Writing History* 78). Utterson does this by reading Jekyll's tale and then allowing Jekyll to speak directly to readers (*Jekyll and Hyde* concludes, in fact, in Jekyll's first-person voice, which comes through the narrative mouth of Utterson). But Utterson does not supplant Jekyll or attempt to offer commentary on his letter, nor does Utterson allow his empathy for Jekyll to draw him close enough to be traumatized by Jekyll's "Full Statement." He witnesses with both sympathy and objectivity, empathy and unsettlement, and he also dispels any fear that he will not hold Jekyll responsible for what happened. While he goes home to read Jekyll's "Full Statement" privately, he also commits to come back to Jekyll's office with Hyde's dead body before midnight to "send for the police" (35). Thus, Utterson will hear the confession, allowing Jekyll to witness, but will also seek restitution for perpetration, especially because he does not know before reading the documents whether Jekyll is still alive or if he murdered Hyde.

While readers do not see Utterson directly practice empathic unsettlement for Hyde in the text, we do find him doing so for the story's other perpetrator: Jekyll. This empathic unsettlement, by extension, also applies to Hyde. Mr. Utterson's empathic unsettlement for a perpetrator is not a perfect model because he first believes that he is extending empathic unsettlement to a victim. He, too, is repulsed by Hyde, but his friendship for Jekyll outweighs his disdain for Hyde. After Jekyll begs him to "bear with [Hyde] and get his rights for him" (13),

Utterson replies, “I can’t pretend that I shall ever like him,” to which Jekyll replies, “I don’t ask that . . . I only ask for justice; I only ask you to help him for my sake, when I am no longer here” (13). “Well,” Utterson says in return, “I promise” (13). This promise suggests that empathic unsettlement starts for Utterson with his loyalty to a friend, and it is not reliant on agreeing with or liking the perpetrator. Utterson’s desire to do this for the perpetrator Hyde may only come about through empathy for a perceived victim, Jekyll. Thus, while Utterson is not a perfect model for empathic unsettlement for a perpetrator, he has an open mind, which allows him to protect Jekyll and to promise to protect Hyde to the best of his ability. He therefore identifies with Hyde as a person who may need help and empathy by listening to Jekyll’s pleas for Utterson to help Hyde. This implies that empathic unsettlement may require an identification with perpetrators that goes beyond mere fellow-feeling, that asks witnesses to cultivate an active discomfort with the process of witnessing (which, in this case, is virtual) that recognizes one’s separateness from the perpetrators or victims. It requires an understanding that perpetrators, too, might need an empathetic secondary witness who utilizes empathic unsettlement to give voice to their part of the traumatic situation, which can happen without identifying with or condoning the perpetration.

### Conclusion

By the end of the novella we are left with three dead bodies (those of Carew, Lanyon, and Jekyll/Hyde) and three stories (by Utterson, Lanyon, and Jekyll) that all witness, to differing degrees and in different ways, to the trauma recounted by Stevenson. On the surface, it would seem that Mr. Hyde received his just reward for perpetrating great acts of evil, including murder. However, one could argue that Jekyll is just as responsible for the acts that were committed at

the hands of Hyde. Both are perpetrators, and both are victims, making it impossible to utilize empathic unsettlement only for victims.

It is noteworthy that Utterson is able to practice empathic unsettlement for both a victim *and* a perpetrator, a potentially dangerous process that LaCapra believed would result in great pain. And it does result in great pain for Dr. Lanyon, who dies in his attempt to witness for and empathize with a perpetrator. In Mr. Utterson's case, however, something unique happens. Utterson is able to feel for and with a perpetrator *and* a victim, ultimately becoming a secondary witness to both traumatic experiences. He does this without becoming mad or committing suicide, and he is able to withhold judgment without withholding empathy. Unlike Lanyon, Utterson realizes that Jekyll is Hyde, and he quietly, thoughtfully accepts this blurring of binaries without withdrawing his empathy for a man he knows is also a perpetrator and without becoming psychologically compromised in the process. Utterson both protects Jekyll/Hyde and acts as a witness to the traumatic acts committed by him/them. Occupying a position in between the binaries of good and evil himself, he practices empathic unsettlement by allowing Jekyll to witness without pardoning his deeds or injecting any of his own fears or biases into Jekyll's testimony. Utterson is slow to condemn without facts and does not allow personal feelings to get in the way of these facts. He also recognizes his subjectivity in the witness process and is careful to try to remove himself from Jekyll's narrative. His fictional practice of empathic unsettlement is thus able to capture the traumatic experience from the angle of both the perpetrator and the victim.

By doing this, Utterson participates in a difficult witnessing process and uses his unsettlement to hear Jekyll's narrative as a victim and as a perpetrator without attempting to bring the narrative to some kind of successful resolution. LaCapra argues that "one might

contend that in all cases [unsettlement] inhibits or prevents unmodulated, neopositivistic objectification, unmediated identification, and harmonizing narratives” (*History* 136). Thus, even in the cases of perpetrators, empathic unsettlement avoids turning a narrative of trauma into a narrative of hope or healing that ignores the manner in which the perpetrator affected the traumatic situation. A harmonizing narrative of *Jekyll and Hyde* would ignore the fact that Jekyll was Hyde; it would show Hyde’s perpetration as senseless acts committed by an inhuman fiend, and it would paint Jekyll as a fully blameless victim of the monstrous Hyde. This depiction makes Hyde seem more heinous than he is, and it also absolves Jekyll from all responsibility. Empathic unsettlement provides a way to prevent this from happening.

Mr. Utterson’s extension of empathic unsettlement is not, of course, perfect. He initially eschews Hyde as all of the other characters do. Utterson’s fierce loyalty to Jekyll is the only reason that he even associates with Hyde. However, it is this fierce loyalty to Jekyll that allows him to consider things from Jekyll’s perspective as Hyde. Utterson does what Lanyon cannot do: he gives Jekyll, both as a victim and perpetrator, a voice. He models the necessary qualities for practicing empathic unsettlement for a perpetrator: being able to recognize the potential for everyone to do evil, being willing to identify with someone enough to understand motive and perhaps prevent future perpetration, and giving perpetrators a chance to have a secondary witness record their side of the story so as to mitigate biased representations of a traumatic situation. Notably, he moderates his unsettlement by refusing to condone the perpetration, but he avoids neatly reconciling the narrative by not offering moral commentary on Jekyll’s or Hyde’s actions after reading Jekyll’s full confession. Rather, he is the means by which the story is able to be told, and he presents the opportunity for critical thought and discussion about the nature and genesis of perpetration.

Mr. Utterson also extends empathic unsettlement to Jekyll as a victim. Utterson tries to help Jekyll in his time of need and is moved by his distress. Though he is unsettled by Jekyll's association with Hyde, he agrees to help Hyde and do Jekyll's bidding, even though he does not understand their attachment, showing that his empathy goes beyond mere fellow-feeling. Through his unsettlement, Utterson recognizes the difference of his position with Jekyll and constantly gives Jekyll the benefit of the doubt. To avoid his subjective part in the witnessing when he does provide the whole narrative, he presents the tale from the words of the actual victims and perpetrators, the only parts of the novella that are not told from Utterson's perspective. In so doing, readers are allowed to feel empathy for Jekyll and to better understand his attachment to Hyde and the horrors of his transformation.

Viewing Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde* through the lens of empathic unsettlement suggests that LaCapra's theory does provide a way to assess the traumatic situation in greater complexity. The narrative becomes more complicated, but empathic unsettlement allows one fact to remain central: that Jekyll is Hyde. Unsettlement is necessary for one to enter into the mind of Jekyll as Hyde because he is a nefarious other, but refusing the witness of him as a perpetrator refuses the witness of him as a victim. Additionally, ignoring a perpetrator like Hyde and denying him empathic unsettlement would result in the loss of his narrative—an essential part of the narrative of trauma recounted by Stevenson. If the goal of empathic unsettlement is to avoid both “unmediated identification and harmonizing narratives,” then extending empathic unsettlement to both perpetrators and victims achieves that goal. Without Utterson's empathic unsettlement toward Jekyll, and by extension Hyde, one of the greatest tales of good and evil would not exist. One cannot understand Jekyll without knowing the nature of Hyde, suggesting that empathic

unsettlement is most powerful when it is extended to both perpetrators and victims as a tool for witnessing.

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