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MARY REILLY AS JEKYLL OR HYDE: NEO-VICTORIAN (RE)CREATIONS OF FEMININITY AND FEMINISM

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ABSTRACT. *In his article "What is Neo-Victorian Studies?" (2008), Mark Lewellyn argues that the term neo-Victorian fiction refers to works that are consciously set in the Victorian period, but introduce representations of marginalised voices, new histories of sexuality, post-colonial viewpoints and other generally 'different' versions of the Victorian era. Valerie Martin's gothic-romance* Mary Reilly *drew on Stevenson's novella to introduce a woman's perspective on the puzzle of Jekyll and Hyde. Almost twenty-years after the publication of Martin's novel, the newly established field of research in Neo-Victorian fiction has questioned the extent to which Neo-Victorian recreations of the Victorian past respond to postmodern contemporary reflections and ideas about the period. This article aims to examine the ways in which this Neo-Victorian gothic text addresses both the issues of Victorian femininity and feminist principles now in the light of later Neo-Victorian precepts, taking into consideration that Martin's novel introduces a woman's perspective as a feminist response to Stevenson's text but also includes many allusions to the cult of domesticity as a legacy of the Victorian gothic romance.*

Keywords: neo-Victorian, femininity, feminism, Victorian gothic romance, postmodernism, critical f(r)iction.

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MARY REILLY COMO JEKYLL O HYDE: (RE)CREACIONES NEO-VICTORIANAS DE FEMINIDAD Y FEMINISMO

RESUMEN. *En su artículo "What is Neo-Victorian Studies?" (2008), Mark Lewellyn argumenta que el término* ficción neo-victoriana *alude a obras que están conscientemente ambientadas en el periodo victoriano, pero que introducen voces provenientes de los márgenes, nuevas historias de sexualidad, perspectivas postcoloniales y otras versiones generalmente 'diferentes' de la era victoriana. La novela gótico-romántica* Mary Reilly *de Valerie Martin se basaba en la obra de Stevenson para introducir una perspectiva de mujer en el misterio de Jekyll y Hyde. Casi veinte años después de la publicación de la novela de Martin, el recientemente establecido campo de investigación alrededor de la ficción neo-victoriana ha cuestionado hasta qué punto las recreaciones del pasado victoriano responden a reflexiones e ideas contemporáneas y posmodernistas acerca de este periodo. Este artículo propone examinar el modo en que esta obra gótica neo-victoriana examina temáticas en relación a la feminidad victoriana y los principios feministas a la luz de los recientes preceptos neo-victorianos, tomando en consideración que la novela de Martin introduce la perspectiva de una mujer como respuesta feminista al texto de Stevenson pero también incluye numerosas alusiones al culto de la domesticidad como legado de las novelas gótico-románticas victorianas.*

Palabras clave: neo-victoriano, feminidad, feminismo, novela gótico-romántica victoriana, postmodernismo, f(r)icción crítica.

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1. A PRELIMINARY INSIGHT INTO NEO-VICTORIAN RECREATIONS

Soon after its publication, Valerie Martin's novel, *Mary Reilly*, was highlighted as an original interpretation of Jekyll's tragedy, a fresh twist on the classic Jekyll-and-Hyde story. Drawing faithfully on details from Stevenson's novel, Martin endowed this Victorian seminal novella with even further complexity, introducing the captivating character of Mary, portrayed as scarred but strong, familiar with evil yet brimming with devotion. Taking the role of Mr. Utterson, Dr. Lanyon, and even Henry Jekyll himself as male narrators of Stevenson's novel, Mary secretly sits down to write the intricacies of Jekyll's household every night in her diary, portraying not only her own account of the story, but also her own personal experience as a Victorian maid, her own narrative as Jekyll and Hyde. In Martin's

novel, Jekyll-and-Hyde's transformation merely contributes to replicating Mary's own conversion, enacting her inner progression from subdued to emerging sexuality; to use Showalter's words, from feminine to feminist and back again, gaining insight into the gradual development of her female identity. Nonetheless, *Mary Reilly* has also been highlighted as a Neo-Victorian popular romance, as Martin transformed Stevenson's gothic novella into a gothic love story.

The origin of Valerie Martin's novel lies in Mr Utterson's description of the maid servant who witnesses Sir Danvers Carew's murder at Hyde's hands, as described in Stevenson's classic in the following terms:

> A maid servant living alone in a house not far from the river had gone upstairs to bed about eleven. Although a fog rolled over the city in the small hours, the early part of the night was cloudless, and the lane, which the maid's window overlooked, was brilliantly lit by the full moon. It seems she was romantically given; for she sat down upon her box, which stood immediately under the window, and fell into a dream of musing. Never (she used to say, with streaming tears, when she narrated that experience), never she felt more at peace with all men or thought more kindly of the world (29).

This nameless maid who breaks the community's silence over Mr Hyde's deeds exists on the fringes of the privileged network, but will never belong (Lepine 2009: 85). As Chase and Levenson assert, the story of Victorian domestic discourse is to a considerable degree a tale of moving walls from which emanates the immovable barrier that separates privilege from dispossession, and privacy from public life (2005: 426). Keeping servants was a clear mark of ascendancy into respectable classes, but in the very act, the privileged also compromised their own privacy, as they felt obliged to maintain distance from those who brought so close, but were different - others. The issue of walled protection did no longer lie in how to construct an imposing barrier against the streets, but how to arrange a pattern of rooms and staircases to manage household workers, thus highlighting the boundary between inner and outer. Any assumed Victorian separation over the horizontal axis - public and private -, or the vertical axis - upstairs and downstairs -, is thus subverted in Martin's novel, from the moment a female and a member of the underprivileged classes takes the lead of the narrative. In this respect, it fulfils the aim of Neo-Victorian fiction as far as it can be described as historical narratives of that period "representing marginalised voices, new histories of sexuality, post-colonial viewpoints and other generally 'different' versions of the Victorian" (Llewellyn 2008: 165). In this respect, Martin's novel, published in 1990, accounts for the fin-de-siècle Victorian revivalism which "located the Victorian age as historically central to late-century postmodern consciousness" (Kucich and Sadoff 2000: xi).

2. PROBLEMATISING GENDER AND SOCIAL BOUNDARIES: REGRESSION AND REVERSAL

Martin's Neo-Victorian appropriation, and thus, recreation of alleged Victorian binary oppositions is manifested through metaphors of alternative enclosure and release which explore as well as subvert Victorian gender policies. Like Jane Eyre, whom Mrs Reed encloses in the red-room as a means of punishment for having scolded Master John Reed, Mary early on recalls her father locking her up in a tiny cupboard after accidentally dropping a cup. In Bronte's novel, John finds Jane perusing one of his books and reprimands her for getting above herself, and it is in retaliation that Jane beats her master badly, which ultimately brings about Mrs Reed's reproach. It is believed Mrs Reed's husband who was also Jane's uncle, died in that room, and on his death bed, asked his wife to take care of Jane in his absence. Owing to the fact his widow unfulfilled her promise, Jane firmly believes his uncle's spirit still remains in the room, and given her rampant imagination, she promptly indulges in reveries, believing her uncle has come back to haunt her to the extent she suffers spasms as a result of terror. In clear analogy with Jane's episode of enclosure in early childhood, soon after Mary's arrival at Dr. Jekyll's house, her Master - as she calls him - notices her deep scars on hands and neck, which shortly awaken his medical curiosity. As Mary unfolds, her alcoholic father used to lock her up, depriving her of her liberty, and condemned her to fit in her proper place. Nevertheless, on one occasion, her father did not leave her alone in her enclosure, as she recalls in the narrative she writes at Harry Jekyll's request.

> I knew at once that there was something in the bag, that it was meant to harm me, but what it was my childish imagination couldn't conjure. Then I felt it moving and knew it was some animal, no doubt as frightened as I was, I'd only a thin skirt on, which I had pulled down over my knees as best I could, so it wasn't long before the creature began to work its way through the two thin layers separating us in that narrow, breathless space. I felt a claw sink into my thigh, and I pulled myself up rigid, as if I could make more room, but there was no more room to make and I think the rat sense that as well as I (3).

Even if at Dr. Jekyll's request, through writing down her clinical case, Mary reflects on the source of her fears from an adult perspective - her claustrophobia and hatred of rats, the primal scene she is compelled to behold at such as a young age, her first bodily invasion, and the primitive struggle between propriety and instinct - which will ultimately reverberate in the days to come at Jekyll's house. Mary's tragic incident in her early childhood will haunt her all through her adult life as a reminder of her assigned place in society as a female servant, child of an abusive father, as well as a victim of forbidden and invisible terrors: those of her

own sexuality. With regard to the entrapped wild animal, struggling to set himself free and punish her, Mary asserts "though I never saw him, he was heavy as a dog" (9). As an untamed animal, the rodent represents both the source of sin and the agent of punishment, Mary's source of fear and her father's mediator to inflict his discipline, as well as the reification of her instincts that are soon to re-emerge again.

Dr. Jekyll's examination of Mary's scars finds its parallel in Mary's cautious observance of her master's hands, thus noticing, in the following terms, the clear contrast between her masculine and rough hands, those of a maid, and Jekyll's delicate and even feminine ones, those of a man of science.

> While he was looking at my poor hands I took the chance to look at his, and a more refined, gentlemanly hand I think I've never seen. His fingers are long and delicate, almost like a lady's, and the nails is all smooth and trimmed evenly, so I thought here are hands such as should never know work, and I wanted to hide my own rough red hands away (8).

This gender-reversal depiction anticipates both Jekyll's and Mary's duality as individuals, and further explores both characters' struggle between reason and passion, ethics and instinct, as this gender-crossing destabilises Victorian established standards of femininity and masculinity. According to Michie, during the Victorian period, "with the emergence of middle-class culture came a new norm of masculinity explicitly defined against an aristocratic model that was seen as increasingly self-indulgent, immoral, and indeed, effeminate" (2005: 413). Taking this premise into account, Jekyll shortly notices Mary's franks and earnest manners, and feels charmed at her bold outbursts when she significantly asserts "I try to speak honest, sir […] as I've nothing to hide" (9). Her statement apparently contrasts with Jekyll's subdued manners and detached approach, aware of his position as a member of the privileged, and what is at stake should he trespass any forbidden boundaries. In this respect, it is Mary who leads Jekyll to question the socially established separation of spheres. Mary soon defies Jekyll's clear scheme of social order as he discovers her fondness of reading as well as her careful style at writing. However, Mary is also highly conscious of her social condition and assigned place in society since she was a child. Owing to her upbringing, she feels utterly guilty when her master discovers her reading Macaulay's volume in his library, well-aware she must be getting above herself.

> I could hardly speak, so shocked I was to be caught out and ashamed too. But I found my voice and said, 'Oh, sir, I do apologize. It was a book that was lying open and I couldn't help but look into it and then when I saw what it was I did stop to read a page or two' (10).

3. FINDING A VOICE OF HER OWN: WRITING THE SELF

Mary's literacy leads Jekyll to ask her to write, and thus, reflect on the source of both her physical and also psychological scars. Her narrative ultimately entails Jekyll's own process of psychoanalysis, as Mary's account of the rat's success in finding his way out of the bag and her final release at her mother's hands, anticipate Jekyll's struggle for freedom and eventual creation of his alter ego. Through examining Mary's scars and reading her telling narrative Jekyll examines his own reflection, his own illicit fears.

Mary firstly writes an accurate account of her case for her master, but this initial experience of writing and shaping her own story encourage her to write her journal, thus documenting all the events that take place in Dr. Jekyll's house since her arrival. Mary's frank and honest manner, as well as her intelligence and literacy, set her apart from the rest of servants, just like Jekyll's subdued instincts render him an outcast from his own social class. Nonetheless, owing to her upbringing as a maid in Victorian times, Mary is well-aware of those limits she should not dare trespass. Thus, the encounter taking place between Jekyll and Mary threatens to destabilise their socially established assumptions, which will ultimately subvert any clearly-cut divisions between separate spheres, established social roles, as well as ontological notions of reason and instinct. Mary's narrative awakens Jekyll's unconscious fearful wishes of liberation, while Jekyll's approaches stir up Mary's dormant sexuality which results in her consequent recriminating remarks and corrective need to subdue her instincts.

> Then I fell on thinking of his cool fingers against my neck, which was a thought I knew I had no business to be entertaining and I gave myself a talking to on the subject of a servant's foolishness and how wrong it is ever to have fancies outside one's station as it always leads to misery, as I've observed myself often enough, and in the midst of lecturing myself I fell asleep (12).

At night, by candlelight, as if perpetrating a wicked deed, Mary puts down in words her daily experiences, thus also leading a double life as a maid in the daylight and as a female writer at night, which clearly contrasts with her roommate Annie, a good and hard-working girl who, in Mary's words, "seems to have no life but working and sleeping" (13). Mary's writing is initially unproblematic as she only follows master's orders, and is clearly aware of the readership she is addressing as she unveils "I thought over my writing to see had I left anything out or said anything too crudely so that he would be offended" (14). Nonetheless, Mary's literacy, her eagerness for writing her own story, subtly endows her with more confidence and high-esteem, for which she ultimately needs to reprimand herself, admitting only misery "comes of wanting to be important and feel different

from others in the same station" (16). Soon after reading Mary's account of her childhood punishment, the encounter taking place between her and Harry begins to anticipate an exchange and reversal of strength and influence. Mary increasingly feels more empowered, while Jekyll's appearance grows weaker and weaker each day as she discloses: "I stopped being nervous for myself and noticed that he [Jekyll] looked very unwell. His face was as pale as paper and his eyes had dark circles underneath" (17). Owing to Mary's narrative and her grievous past, Jekyll identifies her "profound view of social order and propriety" (17) while he subtly shows his contempt for his righteous butler Mr Poole, as a result of which Mary gains insight into Jekyll's contradictory terms as follows: "I could not feel easy about the way Master had spoken of him as 'the virtuous Poole', showing me his contempt and taking me, whom he don't know, into his confidence" (18). Mary thus gains insight into Jekyll's contradictory beliefs which clearly reflect her own position as a maid and her master's confidante.

4. SELF-REFLECTIVE DUALITIES: JEKYLL AND MARY

Jekyll may well identify both Poole's incorrupt behaviour, as a reification of his own Freudian *super-ego*, as well as Mary's unconscious double-sidedness, as a reflection of his own persona, his *ego*, struggling to do what is thought best and subduing any wishes to step off the boundaries, to give free vent to his instincts, ultimately his *id* inner self. While Jekyll seems unconcerned about his inappropriate comments on the virtuous Poole, Mary is apt to confess her guilt when she moves from her master's chamber downstairs to fill her assigned niche in the social ladder. Accordingly, Mary unconsciously notices that her master's contradictory comments voice her own inconsistent condition as an educated maid.

> When I went back into the kitchen, Mr Poole was at the sideboard decanting a bottle of port and as I come in he gave me a sharp, critical look which, because of my guilty heart, I could not meet honestly, which shows what comes of sneaking about and, as the saying goes, 'trying to serve two masters' (19).

Mary's inherent sense of guilt at getting above herself clearly contrasts with Jekyll's efforts to release his basest instincts, thus performing continuous ascending and descending moves within Jekyll's house, upstairs and downstairs, thus literally enacting their respective, and converse, inner strife, given their own disparate social positions. Jekyll's will to remain a recluse also contrasts with Mary's outings to slum-dwellings in Soho at her master's command, given Henry Jekyll's inability to move around such surroundings so as to avoid putting his status in jeopardy. In this respect, Mary possesses more freedom of movement than Jekyll, thus reversing any given notions of Victorian standards as regards the separation of public and private

spheres. Even if Jekyll, being a man, should presumably master over the public sphere, it is only Mary who dares trespass the house's threshold so as to venture into the backstreets of Victorian Soho. These continuous upward-and-downward moves within the house, as well as the public-and-private reversal of the Victorian policies of space in Martin's novel, are ultimately underlined by the subversion of gender standards. Mary's vigorous ways and strength due to her strenuous physical work contrasts with Jekyll's infirmity and increasing frailness as she beholds her master's emaciated condition every morning on serving breakfast: "Even though I scarcely looked at him I took in enough to see that he was propped on his pillow like an invalid looking as pale as death" (22). As Jekyll's basest instincts gain terrain over his morals, his alter ego absorbs Jekyll's manliness and turns it into aggressive masculinity every night, thus rendering Jekyll weaker and weaker each day, as his femininity gradually overwhelms his masculine traits.

Mary's ancestral fears are rooted in her childhood punishment, as the remembrance of the rat gnawing its way through the bag still fills her with terror. And yet, it is from this tragic episode a more prominent agent of horror emerges, that of her father, the real source of her mental fears, the presence that still haunts her in adulthood. Mary's father reminds her of her own fragility, her humble origins, and her terror at not being able to forget her past of abuse and mistreatment. As the rat struggled to be released, Mary's father also gave free vent to his degeneracy, choosing Mary as his utmost and favourite easy prey. When Jekyll attends to Mary's recollections at his request, she admits it was drink that made her father so capable of evil: " 'He was a different man then – he even looked different, sir, as if the cruel man was always inside him and the drinking brought him out' " (24). Mary's testimony of her father's disorder clearly raises Jekyll's interest as it establishes a clear analogy with his own case. Nonetheless, if Jekyll beholds his dark self in Mary's father's shadow, Mary's conversation with her master awakens latent memories to the extent she perceives her father may be still alive. Thus, Mary cannot help but establishing some link between her master and her father as her following words unveil:

> It come back to me again, as it did so hard this afternoon, that my father is alive still, even if it is only in my own poor head, that he was gone for a while and that somehow Master's kindness and interest has brought him back to life for me (36).

Mary's wish to grow a garden in the house reflects her process of digging up her own childhood, as well as the fears that come along with those bleak days that set her apart from the rest of her fellows. Despite any difference existing between master Jekyll and maid Mary, Jekyll's need to release his dark side and Mary's wish to block her memories render them parallel figures, thus producing a double figure all together as Mary asserts in this way:

> All the world was standing between us and we'd no way ever to cross it, but also that somehow we was also two sides of the same coin, doing our different work in the same house and as close, without speaking, as a dog and his shadow (30).

Even if Mary is still unaware, Jekyll stirs Mary's memories of her father as far as he foreshadows his alter ego Hyde, as his way of walking clearly resembles Mary's father's, thus becoming the presently source of her nightmares.

> I heard the door to Master's room open and he went in, so of course it was him, though there was something in the step, so halting, as if he was dragging one foot a little, whereas Master has a light, even way of walking (35).

Jekyll's gradual transformation echoes Mary's own process of puzzlement as her master's psychoanalytical endeavours reawaken her forbidden memories. If Mary is able to perceive Jekyll's apparent doubleness is precisely because her nature is also double-sided. Hyde reminds Mary of her father as far as he personifies crude instinct. Nonetheless, even Hyde himself is double-sided, as Mary is unable to distinguish Hyde's brutality from his direct appeal to her own sexuality, thus enacting a permanent process of attraction and revulsion, analogous to Mary's both deference and appeal with regard to her Master.

Jekyll's duality becomes more evident when he requires a looking-glass be placed in his laboratory. His double sidedness also emerges in his questioning Mary whether she has ever wished to have another life in which consequences or regrets had no role to play. Despite her initial puzzlement, Mary confidently asserts she believes there cannot be any actions without consequences. Her immediate and honest response puzzles Jekyll, and yet, her mere presence, and the increasing attraction Jekyll feels for her, urge Jekyll to indulge in a double life, an existence in which they could both stay together despite their social difference. In this sense, Mary acts as Jekyll's double, as she represents his both bright and darker self at once, his will to mean well along with his ultimate need to release his subdued passion. Even if unconsciously, Mary also undergoes a similar process, as she would like to hold on to her upright principles, but feels her latent and dormant feelings are bound to emerge at any time. Mary's duality manifests every time she beholds her image in any of the mirrors of the house.

> I turned to see myself looking at my own reflection in the glass, for they had it all unwrapped and in place, and as I peered at my own figure for a moment it seemed I was looking back at myself from the edge of the world, and if I didn't step carefully I would fall off into nothing. I shook myself, for I seemed to be standing in a dream, and took myself back to my work (48).

Mary thus begins to gain insight into her own complexities as well as into the latent passion she has been suppressing for such a long time. At this stage,

Mary gains awareness of her body and her sexuality, as she recalls her master's words and the deep effect they exerted over her conscience, while she beholds the reflection of her body in the mirror at night.

> I know it is that Master called me fair, and has stirred up my vanity to be something I am not. Before I sat down to write I lit the candle and looked at my face in the glass for a long time. As I put on my shift I stopped a moment to look at my body. How white my skin looks in the candlelight. I brushed my hair down and let it fall over my breasts and I thought, is this a sight my master would care to see? (48-9)

While Jekyll beholds his darker self in the mirror as he undergoes his transformation from Jekyll to Hyde, Mary also observes her duality, her righteous self as a result of a severe and repressive upbringing, as well as her subdued passionate self, which is about to emerge. Both Jekyll's and Mary's looking at their respective mirror images emulates a multilayered process of parallel images as they look at each other – Jekyll at Mary, and Mary at Jekyll - thus enacting a mutual process of reverberation, of both observance and reflection which takes place in front of the looking-glass and beyond. Likewise, both Jekyll and Mary, and their reflection in the mirror, recall Joyce's "paradoxical sense of looking forward to see what is behind us" (2002: 3).

5. SUBVERTING AND ASSUMING ROLES: EMPOWERED AND ENFEEBLED

Through a mutual process of observation and surveillance, Jekyll and Mary seem to exchange certain qualities which will ultimately result in Mary's process of empowerment and Jekyll's resulting debasement. This reversal of roles is gradually enacted as Hyde gains terrain over Jekyll, and Mary begins to exert a deep influence over her master, thus acquiring some sort of mild authority.

> I felt a little annoyed to be lectured on my stupidity, so I looked right at Master and to my surprise he seemed to blush, though perhaps it was only that the fire had made his blood rise, which I felt timid to observe in my own head as it might be another mistake on my part (51).

Even though Mary is still hesitant about her way to proceed and behave in relation to her Master, she gradually attains more confidence to the extent her presence becomes indispensable for Jekyll and his future plans, so that a sense of mutual dependence is established, as if they were two separate selves in need of each other to become a complete individual. This interactive exchange of powerfulness between Master and maid is addressed when Jekyll and Mary discuss the survival of the fittest during one of their evening conversations. As Mary observes, taking her own experience as a case in point, children "grow strong when no one cares for them and seem to love whatever life they can eke out and

will kill to keep it, while the pampered child sickens and dies" (52). In this respect, as Mary acknowledges wildness, thus unruliness, seems to entail a greater will to live, and consequently, because of the fact they are precisely more detached, these wilder creatures also seem more apt to survive than the rest.

Mary's comments seem enlightening to Jekyll to the extent he chooses her as an accomplice to carry out his experiments as opposed to his virtuous butler, Poole, as would have been expected. When Jekyll asks Mary to deliver a letter to Mrs Farraday in Soho, her righteous nature immediately leads her to ascertain "no gentleman could have any business at that address as could do anything but bring ruin to his name" (54), which again proclaims Mary's concern about appearances and social expectations. Nonetheless, althrough Mary promptly notices Jekyll must be involved in some dubious matters, even if inadvertently, she is also liable to trespass dangerous limits, even if inadvertently as the awakening attraction she feels towards her Master begins to set in.

> I stood a moment looking at his back, at his hair which is thick, silver and a little long for the fashion, curling over his collar, and I thought I would like to cut a lock of it. Then, shocked at my own strange whims, which it seems I never can control, I went out, closing the door quietly behind me (55).

Mary's altered senses and inability to take control over her awakening feelings clearly reflect Jekyll's gradual process of transformation into Hyde. Mary is caught between suppressing her feelings and giving free vent to them, between the socially-established role assigned to a woman of her social class, and the unsanctioned ways to act according to her own will. Jekyll's *super-ego* figures are personified by his male friends pertaining to the establishment such as his lawyer Mr Utterson, Dr Lanyon, who clearly disapproves of Jekyll's experiments, as well as Mr Poole, whose righteous behaviour clearly reflects social awe for order and loyalty. With regard to Mary, her rigid upbringing at school as well as her mother's devotion to labour and righteousness became her own particular personifications of the *super-ego*. Thus, high reverence for morals and social expectations are inherent in Mary due to her strict upbringing. In this respect, Mary feels fortunate her mother was able to teach her love and esteem for herself, while her father clearly personified the exact opposite of what her mother meant to her, that is, wickedness and depravity, thus inheriting a double-sided legacy between upright morals and degeneration from her parents.

Mary's walk along the streets of Soho to deliver her master's letter to Mrs. Farraday becomes specially significant to her, as she confesses she may have well become any of the girls from those streets had her mother not saved her from turning into one. In this respect, through her way to Soho, Mary undergoes a regressive process into her childhood, knowing her most acute terrors still lie

dormant. Her upbringing and her mother's intervention helped Mary move to the brightest part of the city, and even if as a maid, she managed to leave behind all the unsavoury districts so familiar to her during her dejected childhood. Her both physical and psychological journey back in time awakens Mary's guilt as she admits after her visit to Mrs Farraday's brothel. However, she appeases her sense of right and wrong by repeating she only followed master's orders "I slept poorly all night, doubtless from the weight of guilt I feel about my errand yesterday, though it does seem it isn't my own, but rather Master's, as doing his bidding is only my duty" (63).

6. GUILT AND DESIRE: AWAKENING SEXUALITY

Mary's true sense of guilt does not lie in her fulfilling her master's dubious demands, but in the awakening of her own suppressed feelings. At this stage, Mary is haunted by the belief her father is still alive, the dragging sound of steps that disturb her sleep at night, and especially, the increasingly affectionate bond that brings her closer to her Master, which is both encouraged and repelled by surrounding circumstances.

> I remembered what seemed like so long ago, when Master took my hands in his own and looked at them in the lamplight, of how shy and embarrassed I felt, but yet, I cannot deny it, pleased as well to be noticed by him, to feel I was of interest to him. As I was having these sad thoughts Mr Poole put his head out the kitchen door and called to me (68-9).

Mary leads Jekyll to question the current belief in the division of social classes. When he invites some fellows for dinner, they address the issue whether educating the poor is a dangerous pastime. Jekyll immediately draws their attention to Mary as an example of an inherently good-hearted and gifted person despite her humble origins, thus justifying the education of the underprivileged. Deep inside, however, Jekyll envies Mary's liberty to roam free in certain districts where his presence is banned, as well as her apparent capacity to do what is right, as she promptly urges him to notice being and doing are often quite different matters. Mary confesses she has never wished to do wrong, and only wishes to remain as she is. And yet, her night thoughts secretly betray her inner feelings. Her puzzlement and confusion at different ways of acting are also brought to the floor when she doubts whether her position as a maid should compel her to accept orders that deviate from her righteous conscience. And yet again, she feels puzzled so as to ascertain whether accepting her master's orders is really a sign of her submission or an acknowledgment of her forbidden desire, as can be inferred from her words.

> Can he feel that I am here, listening to him, sleepless on his account? Will he think of me as he goes into his room, lights the lamp I trimmed for him, sits on the bed

> I made for him, drinks the water I brought for him, or perhaps lights the fire I laid for him and stands gazing at the burning coals until sleep finally finds us both? (74).

Mary's increasing attraction towards Jekyll, as well as his resulting dependence on Mary as his accomplice, become more evident once Jekyll informs the servants about the arrival of his young assistant Edward Hyde at the house. Hyde embodies Mary's dormant passion and Jekyll's subdued evil. His presence gradually diminishes Jekyll's strength, his masculinity, and also Mary's principles, her femininity. Her dreams are often haunted by dim memories of her father whom she still suspects to be living, as she overhears Hyde's peculiar dragging steps that clearly remind those of her own father. Thus, Mary's newly-acquired confidence and sense of security in Jekyll's house is at points diminished, as her miserable past is reawakened and threatens to dismantle her faith in principles and discipline.

Mary's comforting memories of days spent serving Master Jekyll are gradually deconstructed by parallel episodes which recur on the arrival of Edward Hyde. Jekyll's gradual transformation echoes Mary's own metamorphosis as their body images clearly reflect their analogous internal change. Mary's tiresome appearance clearly resembles Jekyll's enfeebled condition to the extent their external look underlines Jekyll's process of feminisation and Mary's ongoing emasculation.

> I went to Master's shaving mirror and looked at my face in the glass. My hair was down and wild around my face, which looked very pale and vexed to me, and my eyes seemed bright, no doubt from being washed by tears. I saw there was two lines in my forehead and I rubbed at them. I dropped my cloak on the carpet to look at my neck and shoulders – also, it seemed to me, too pale even against the white of my night shift. But my shoulders and arms are strong, from the heavy work I do, especially getting the coal up (91).

Soon after Mary's arrival, Jekyll realised she is not an ordinary maid. Mary is not only literate but she is also very fond of reading, as Jekyll finds her perusing his books. Nonetheless, once Hyde makes his appearance in the house, Mary's reading habits are even troubled as she finds her master's books filled with Hyde's immoral scribbling.

> I wish I could say I did not know the meaning of what was written there. Certain they was such words as I have never spoke nor writ myself, though, growing up as I did, I was not spared the unpleasantness of hearing them often enough. It seemed very odd to read such filth as was there, especially written in so fine a hand (143).

Mary's furtive act of reading in the library, afraid the other servants would think she is getting above herself, becomes literally immoral when she gets to read Hyde's books filled with atrocious remarks and filthy words. As she also notices, however, Mary is familiar with such despicable language since, in her childhood,

she often found herself in close contact with this use of words. What she finds so terrifying in Hyde is that he inevitably reminds Mary of her origins, and ultimately, her own suppressed nature. Hyde clearly exerts an attracting and repulsive power over Mary to the extent she mentions, despite the revulsion she feels: "[…] there was something that seemed to hold me still and make me stare" (144). Hyde gets Mary back to her humble origins and clearly stands for her most ancestral fears. Mary often feels guilty for subverting her social position, as she is literate and able to comprehend her master. Through Hyde's endeavours and his immoral scribbling over Jekyll's volumes of metaphysics and science, Hyde echoes Mary's actions as she is imbruting and menacing to predate over the social establishment. In this respect, as Jekyll and Mary are ultimately bound together, due to Jekyll's wish to liberate his instincts and Mary's release of her emergent sexuality, Hyde also resembles Mary's darker side, as he reminds her of her inability to escape her fears and her past of abuse.

7. INSTINCT ROAMING FREE: MARY AND HYDE

If Jekyll's first approach to Mary in the library is subsequently reversed by Hyde's visit to her as she reads through his vicious scribbling on the margins of the page, Mary's confession about her father's abuse also finds it parallel with Hyde. Her intense fear of secluded places and rats, as a result of the ominous punishment Mary's father inflicted on her, is revived by means of Hyde's actions as he deliberately breaks a cup in her presence. Hyde's act of caressing Mary's face and mouth with his bleeding hands re-enacts her particular primal scene, the seminal source of all her fears.

> I stood quite still as he got up and took the few steps that stood between us. When he leaned over the table, bringing his bleeding hand to my face, I felt an aching in my chest and a sob broke out from my mouth, but still I did not pull away. I knew the tears overflowed but I could not raise my hand even to brush them away. I closed my eyes when his hand touched my face, just at the corner of my mouth, and I kept my eyes closed while he dragged his bleeding fingers slow, slow, across my mouth, pulling my lips apart (148).

If the tragic episode Mary experienced in her childhood led her to repress her past as a result of fear, Hyde awakens her subdued sexuality by enacting a parallel situation with a disparate result. Despite her intense fear and her phobia, Mary still feels attracted to Hyde as she inevitably identifies some familiar traces in him to the extent Hyde inquires "Don't you know who I am, Mary?" (148). Even if unaware, Mary perceives Jekyll's shadow behind Hyde's eyes, and yet Hyde's meaningful

question, as well as his actions, betray he knows Mary very well, so well as only a father would.

Hyde's presence also prompts Mary's transformation, which endows her with boldness and defiance to subvert socially established rules, encouraging her to indulge in daydreams and reveries about her master. Her initial subdued attraction is thus overcome when she approaches his bed in his absence.

> I felt so bold then that I went over to it and smoothed the coverlet, then rested my cheek against it. All my fear was vanished, and even it seemed most of my sense, for at the thought that Mr Poole might come in and see me in my shift, swooning over Master's bed, I had to hold down a laugh (92).

The image of Mary stifling a laugh in Martin's novel is remindful of Bertha Mason in Rochester's Thornfield, as Jane hears her laughing soon after her arrival at the house. Feminist critics like Gilbert and Gubar already pointed at Bertha as Jane's enraged double, hiding in the attic as a reflection of Jane's latent, but subdued, sexuality, thus contending "the madwoman in the attic emerges as a projection of her heroine's secret desires" (2000: 425). In this respect, Mary seems to fulfil that role with regard to Jekyll, as Mary's more masculine appearance contrasts with Jekyll's consequent physical decline after Hyde comes into being, as she herself notices.

> It shocked me to see too that he looks old, though the bones in his face are so sharp and elegant, age only makes him the more distinguished and respectable-looking. One lock of silver hair had strayed over his brow and it was all I could do to keep from pushing it back, wanting to arrange him, I thought, as if he was dead (100).

Clearly opposed to Jekyll's increasingly emaciated expression, Hyde, even if none of the servants agree on his actual appearance, is described as younger and more robust, with a more acute will to live, as can be inferred from Cook's depiction based on Mr Poole's examination:

> […] he says he is very young, that his voice is coarse though he speaks well enough and must have got some education somewhere, and that his clothes is well made, of good quality, even to his boots, which was made by Master's own bootmaker. He is small, and, as I said, has a deal of dark hair, dark eyes, and is clean-shaven (106).

Hyde's wicked endeavours at night also echo Mary's own conversion as her sexual awakening begins to take place. Every night, from her room, she attentively listens to Hyde's movements in Jekyll's library to the extent his dragging steps haunt Mary's nights as they stir latent memories of her father's abusing manners. Mary thus observes how her repressed past has come to haunt her back. In this respect, she mentions

> My hands was both of them numb when I woke so I could not move my fingers and the scars in my neck was throbbing so I thought they must be standing out, but when I looked in the hall mirror I saw I look as always (108).

Mary's protruding scars seem to evoke Mary's latent sexuality, which is about to emerge. Thus, while Jekyll explores the forbidden limits of science in his laboratory, Mary's subdued nature and basest instincts begin to emerge and assume more entity. It is at this stage Jekyll asks Mary whether she is ever afraid of herself, thus giving voice to his own personal fears as he perceives he is no longer able to control the frenzied outbursts of his evil side. Jekyll's intricate question reifies Mary's latest ponderings as regards the personal turmoil she is experiencing, which brings Mary to assert: "when I feel afraid it is what I imagine that frightens me most, which is, in a way, a fear of what is in my own head" (130). Jekyll and Mary are truly two separate selves in need of one another to feel self-fulfilled. Their social difference and upbringing forbids their mutual attraction, and yet, their magnetism prompts their need to release their instincts and thus reject any defying barrier. In Martin's novel, Hyde is ultimately the resulting figure emerging out of Jekyll's impossibility to fulfil his desire towards Mary. Likewise, Mary sets a parallelism between Hyde and her father, as prompters of sin and shame, thus perceiving her own feelings towards her master to be wicked and out of place. These evil projections are creations of their own, alternative beings that emerge as a result of a cathartic experience. Through the transformative process Mary undergoes, she confesses "I feel so confused by these last days and don't know where I stand, with Master or with my fellows" (137), thus proving her awareness of the change she is going through, and her midway between her will and her assigned place.

8. DOMESTIC DISCOURSE AND NEO-VICTORIAN ROMANCE

Even though Martin's novel revises Stevenson's novella from a female perspective, Mary's role in Victorian society is inevitably doubly invisible as she is not only a woman but also a servant. Thus, despite Martin's revisionist aim, any attempt at inscribing a feminist discourse may also be problematised as, drawing on Stevenson's novella, Martin's novel also underlines the perpetuation of a domestic discourse. If Jekyll's scientific background and status as a male endow him with the possibility of attempting to release his basest instincts, Mary may only experience a surrogate personal catharsis through Jekyll's transformation so as to gain insight into the possibility of defying socially established constraints and coming to terms with her awakening sexuality. Mary merely witnesses her master's own metamorphosis, instead of experiencing any real transformation of her own.

As was usually the case in Victorian times, women might only attain some power as a result of the influence they exerted on their male companions, and consequently, Mary may only aspire to some sort of empowerment through the love Jekyll starts professing as he chooses her to help in his experiments.

In this sense, Martin's novel transforms Stevenson's classic novella into a gothic romance whereby Mary ultimately arises as the most powerful reason why Jekyll feels the need to create his own Hyde. Likewise, Mary's gradual attraction to Jekyll transmutes into a love willing to risk anything, and yet it is precisely this which anticipates his ultimate destruction and her ultimate subservience. Mary is deeply committed to duty and service to her master, but in doing so, she goes beyond the limits of her position and her prospects, thus running the risk of stigmatisation as a woman and as a servant. Her devotion to her master betrays an ongoing dependence and submission which trespass the limits of a maid's duty. Mary's devoted submission is made clear by the editor of Mary's diaries as she admits that "it is interesting to note that she [Mary] always failed to capitalize the word 'i' and never failed to capitalize the word 'Master'" (243). Thus, her master, Jekyll, takes precedence over her own self. Likewise, Mary's increasing attraction to Hyde, as she is able to perceive some familiarity in him, underscores Mary's irrevocable attraction towards a reification of a savage and unfettered masculinity, rendering her literally in love with a monster.

In Jekyll's abode, Mary also triggers Jekyll's subdued sexuality as well as subverts the clearly-cut conventions of social classes. Mary destabilizes Victorian gender and class boundaries, but in doing so, she also becomes a source of disruption objectified in women belonging to the working classes. Thus, Mary is ultimately intimately implicated in Jekyll's downfall, despite the fact that, in Stevenson's novella, no direct connection is established between any woman and Jekyll's corruption, and consequently, no female is explicitly held responsible in Stevenson's Victorian text. Nonetheless, in Stephen Frears' cinematic adaptation of Martin's novel, some moments before his death, Hyde openly confesses to Mary that he always knew she would be the death of both, meaning Jekyll and himself, thus identifying her as the ultimate source of their destruction.

Consequently, Martin's novel is not only a Neo-Victorian recreation which subverts gender and social conventions, but it also illustrates Neo-Victorian fiction as far as it indulges in the traditionally well-known romantic plot of the governess as a protagonist, not far removed from Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, and especially, Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. Martin's novel is thus rooted in the classical concept of romance, which Light describes as "coercive and stereotyping narratives which invite the reader to identify with a passive

heroine who only finds true happiness in submitting to a masterful male" (1997: 222). After all, Mary's cathartical experience ultimately aids in reinforcing her socially and sexually subordinated place to the extent she acquires her gendered subjectivity while Jekyll is destroyed, as he gains insight into the impossibility of keeping public and private spheres separate. Nonetheless, even if Martin's novel may also be interpreted as a Neo-Victorian popular romance, romance fiction may also appear as less reactionary as it has lately been interpreted as a type of fiction indicative of women's victimisation in the capitalist market, as well as a sign of discontent and a technique for women's survival (Light 1997: 224). In this respect, according to Light, romance usually creates peace, security and ease in the end, precisely because the heroine undergoes dissension, insecurity and difficulty all the way through the narrative.

9. CORRECTING THE SELF

It is significant to notice that when her father's memories threaten to destabilise her life, Mary receives a letter reporting her mother's demise. Mary's father stands for repression and subjugation, for her permanent fears as well as her self-inflicting sense of punishment, should she step off the assigned boundaries society has set for her as a woman and a member of the working-class. Conversely, Mary's mother gave her the strength to release herself from her father's subjugating manners, and live a life of her own. In this respect, Mary has been battling against these contradictory forces all through her life, and her struggle is further enacted once again through the attraction-and-repulsion she feels towards both Jekyll-and-Hyde. Mary is thus truly Jekyll's double as she experiences the same kind of anxiety that troubles her master. Nonetheless, as a woman, she is unable to separate both selves of her being, as women were granted no place in the public sphere. Thus, Mary's inner battle is even more intimate than that of Jekyll as it involves her own sexuality, her own identity as a woman. The death of Mary's mother precisely takes place when Mary feels she can no longer trust her righteous principles, those she learnt through her mother's teaching. Deprived of her mother, when she attends to her burial's arrangements, she is informed an unknown man has contributed to pay off her debts. Mary immediately entertains the belief her father may still be alive. Her suspicions are finally confirmed by Mr Haffinger, the owner of the house where Mary's mother spent her last days. Her father's memories haunt her even more deeply on her return to Jekyll's house on learning he is still living. This pervasive presence echoes Hyde's more frequent visits in the house, as well as Mary's conviction of his criminal deeds. Mary's visit to Mrs Farraday's

brothel, as well as Sir Danvers Carew's violent death, confirm Hyde's murderous deeds as well as Jekyll's continuous struggle to defend his protégée. Hyde's increasing criminalisation goes hand in hand with Jekyll's more frequent meetings to engage in charitable initiatives, surely to appease his conscience. Nevertheless, Hyde gradually gains more strength as Jekyll is no longer able to control Hyde's enraged outbursts. Just like Mary feels both attracted and repelled by Hyde, Jekyll is horrified by his assistant's crimes and yet cannot help but admire his incessant eagerness for life.

Likewise, when Sir Danvers Carew's murder clearly incriminates Hyde, he disappears for a significant lapse of time so as to avoid prosecution. It is at this stage Jekyll, even if momentarily, goes back to his old righteous ways and meets with respectable members of society again. Similarly, aware of Hyde's disappearance, Mary feels safer and she regains some confidence by entertaining new thoughts about her father that underline his age and helplessness.

> Two times have I dreamed of my father and in both dreams he was not the cruel tyrant of my memory, but an old man, stopped and weak, a threat to no one, and in both he has tried to speak to me, but I have turned away. So I woke feeling a fine resolve, and I think perhaps right now he is dying somewhere, beaten and friendless, while I am safe in my bed (188).

And yet, Mary is well aware that Hyde's presence can still be perceived in the house as long as Jekyll is also there. Drawing on the perpetual reverberation of parallel episodes, Jekyll's approach to Mary, so as to caress the scars on her throat and ears, inevitably remind her of Hyde, and the way he pressed his bleeding fingers on her face after breaking the cup. Thus, Mary's fears are always latent as she suspects they are predictably bound to emerge again, and only remain momentarily subdued.

Mary's last encounter with Hyde takes place on the night of his last appearance, when Jekyll perpetrates committing suicide so as to get rid of his wicked half. As Otto Rank remarked, the figure of 'the double' is originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego, a denial of the power of death, and yet, when the narcissistic stage is surmounted, from having become an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny forerunner of death (1997: 166). Some instants before he dies, Hyde's disclosure of his true identity only confirms Mary's permanent suspicions, and yet helps her exorcise and expel her fears for good. As a corpse, Hyde's appearance is not entirely unlike the way Mary imagined her father to be in his last days. Nonetheless, Mary is also aware that behind Hyde's corpse also lies that of her master, thus gaining insight into the impossibilities of separating the

two sides of the same coin, kindness and wickedness, as one cannot exist without the other.

The attachment Mary feels towards both Jekyll-and-Hyde, now quite knowingly, is further confirmed in the closing scene of the novel whereby Mary lies down beside Hyde's corpse and mentions "I could hear my own heart in my ear and it seemed to be beating against his still one" (237). Holding on Hyde's corpse, she perceives her master's presence underneath, and yet it is Hyde whom she embraces as a last attempt to retain the embodiment of her desire. In Martin's novel, just like Mary leaves the memories of her father behind, as well as her fears, Jekyll manages to get rid of Hyde even if it is at his own expense. Similarly, through Hyde's demise, Mary gains insight into the still presence of her inner desire, and yet becomes aware of her inability to fulfil it as Hyde's death also inevitably entails that of Jekyll. And yet, despite Mary's need to go back to her old self, the meek Mary on whom she could only rely, her endeavours have clearly defied established beliefs with regard to women's sphere. In this respect, at the end of the novel, the editor of Mary's diaries is well aware of Mary's defiant behaviour all through her stay in Jekyll's house thus contending:

> Given the compromising situation in which she was discovered (even by contemporary standards, a domestic found late at night in her nightgown embracing her dead employer might expect repercussions), it seems probable that she did not leave Jekyll's house with that document most vital to the Victorian servant, that passport from hardship and squalor to the haven of domestic servitude: a good 'character' (243).

Mary has trespassed forbidden limits for a maid and a woman by writing down her master's as well as her own story in her diary. As the editor of her diaries mentions, the account of a housemaid unveiling her employer's endeavours should have created a scandal and a great deal of anxiety in any upper-class household. Mary discloses her dual aim at writing her diaries, stating she writes because it eases her to write what she cannot say, and because, what she writes now cannot be denied in the future. In this respect, she points at the cathartic experience of writing, secretly indulging in her sexuality through the creative process of fictionalisation.

To conclude, in Stevenson's novel, Jekyll attempts to surmount the Victorian policies of public and private spheres from a male perspective, while in Martin's recreation, Mary struggles to subdue her emergent sexuality while resorting to the namely Victorian cult of true womanhood, while Jekyll's struggle to both invigorate and supress his darker self problematises issues pertaining to traditional masculinity. In this respect, Mary's fictional testimony addresses "the self-conscious writing of

historical narratives to highlight the suppressed histories of gender and sexuality, race and empire, as well as challenges to the conventional understandings of the historical itself" (Kaplan 2007: 3). Drawing on Michie's words, for Victorians, "an imaginative and moral challenge was to get under the skin of the other, [while] for Victorianists [as well as for Neo-Victorian writers] the challenge is to come to terms with the otherness of the Victorian period" (2005: 423). In this respect, Martin's novel fulfils Llewellyn's main aims of Neo-Victorian fiction, namely, what he coined as *critical f(r)iction*, the blending of criticism and creativity, thus including the critical apparatus of gender subversion within a fictional text. Martin's novel thus fulfils the aim of Neo-Victorian fiction inasmuch as it revises a classic Victorian novel from a female perspective, as well as it transforms a Victorian gothic novella into a popular postmodern gothic romance. While questioning the established Victorian discourse of gender and social status as a revisionary text, it also reinforces a reactionary domestic discourse as Martin inscribes it within the genre of psychological romance.

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