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Urban Hermitage in Literature of the City

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URBAN HERMITAGE
IN LITERATURE OF THE CITY

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of
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Mark Mengel

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of
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ABSTRACT


Since Aristotle, theory and literature concerning the city has centered around the participant—those citizens who operate within the city system in more or less recognizable ways (i.e. politicians, police, rioters, workers, etc.). This thesis adds to that body of work by investigating the emergence and significance not of the participant, but rather of the nonparticipant who exists within the city system but is denied interaction within that system. I term this figure the hermit.

Chapter 1 focuses on establishing a theoretical framework for the hermit’s emergence, using primarily Michel De Certeau’s notions of city participation from his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*. De Certeau’s ideas are then supplemented with Paul Virilio’s theory of the accident as well as Hayden White’s investigation of the emergence of the Wild Man in Western thought, both of which help to explain one way in which we can understand hermitage as emerging within various city systems.

Chapter 2 uses Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* to explore a relatively basic manifestation of urban hermitage as seen specifically from the perspective of an upper class, Western viewer. This is then contrasted in Chapter
3, which uses Indra Sinha’s Animal’s People to 1) expand the idea of hermitage from the individual to the community (namely, the postcolonial city), and 2) allow us to investigate hermitage from a vantage point within hermitage itself. In both case studies what emerges by way of conclusion is not hermitage as a positive force, but rather as a diagnostic tool for identifying problems within social systems which might otherwise go unnoticed and unarticulat
CHAPTER 1: HOW TO SPEAK ABOUT ABSENCE

“One who is incapable of participating or who is in need of nothing through being self-sufficient is no part of a city, and so is either a beast or a god” – Aristotle, *Politics*

“One ought not even consider that a citizen belongs to himself, but rather that all belong to the city; for each individual is a part of the city” – Aristotle, *Politics*

"But those things which have no significance of their own are interwoven for the sake of the things which are significant" - Saint Augustine, *The City of God*

From literary classics such as Charles Dickens to popular contemporary authors of urban fiction such as Paul Auster, it seems the city is constantly portrayed as a space of mass connection and participation. And certainly this must be true for most city-dwellers. After all, cities themselves were first built as sites to facilitate the exchange of goods and resources (including protection and security) amongst various groups of people. Nevertheless, I propose that the far more interesting (and understudied) urban figures are those who exist within the city, but resist (either by choice or force) this typical connection or participation with it. Nevertheless, this general ideology that fixates on the city scene as strictly a place of participation is a hard one to break. In fact, this

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1 Perhaps best known for *The New York Trilogy*, which operates as a reworking of the popular city detective fiction of the early 20th century.
2 For a very thorough study on the emergence and development of cities see Paul Bairoch’s *Cities and Economic Development: From the Dawn of History to the Present*.
3 For a very thorough study on the emergence and development of cities see Paul Bairoch’s *Cities and Economic Development: From the Dawn of History to the Present*. 
inclination can be traced as far back as 350 B.C. when Aristotle wrote in *Politics* that the ideal city was made up of participants—and *only* participants. As far as Aristotle was concerned, the only exceptions to this "natural" participation were beasts and the divine. And though our contemporary moment finds us centuries away from Aristotle, our views on the city have remained startlingly similar. To be sure, the tenor of how we think of the city has certainly changed. Outside of political campaigns or nostalgic fireside talks with friends just returned from vacation, the “ideal” city rarely gets mentioned anymore. Instead what pervades conversation is that of improvement plans or methods for restructuring existing systems; notions that point to a system broken and in need of repair. However, despite this modern skepticism towards the city, even amongst giants of the urban scene from George Simmel to Michel De Certeau, conversation still revolves around the participant, those who operate in a more or less recognizable way (politicians, architects, police, rioters, businessmen, consumers, etc.). Never do we get a view of those figures who exist within the bounds of the city, but do not participate in it in any recognizable or even discernible way.

It is this gap in scholarship that this study will begin to bridge. Specifically I will look at the trope of the nonparticipant, a type of hermitage if you will, within city literature. This hermitage could be anything ranging from a citizen physically holed up in his or her apartment without contact from others to a citizen or community being cut off figuratively from a system of order. However, this all raises questions about how to

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3 i.e. gentrifying communities, reforming school systems, improving traffic systems, etc.
4 what we might colloquially call a home-body or a recluse
5 For example, economic or political separation might cause a kind of metaphorical hermitage within a system. This type of hermitage will become clearer when investigating Indra Sinha’s *Animal’s People* in chapter 3.
speak about absence and really what that absence means, why that absence matters.

Certainly an easy way to answer these would be to ride the coattails of Saint Augustine and the sentiment he expresses in his epigraph to this chapter, that these absences have no significance in and of themselves, but rather serve to somehow define that which does have significance. In other words, one might be inclined to say that the nonparticipant exists only as that which the participant may be defined against.\textsuperscript{6} This view however, suggests that nonparticipation in the city is in and of itself a form of support for the city system, and in turn a form of participation. It suggests also that mere existence within a system is enough to constitute participation; a circular logic which lands us right back in the company of those who value the participant as the only figure worth serious study.

However, to resist favoring the participant in scholarship is not to argue that the city system itself does not favor the participant. In fact, one would even go so far as to say that the city system demands participation, which is why nonparticipation itself is such a problem and why the hermit (who represents resistance to that participatory inclination) becomes such a complex figure within the city novel. That is to say, the hermit is a figure worthy of study for its own significance rather than simply as a foil. In the following pages I will seek to first define our understanding of the term city hermit and then explore the ways in which we can understand this hermit as emerging within the city system, its primary characteristics and behaviors in this system, and, lastly, its importance for scholarship. From there one will be equipped to understand the greater body of this thesis, which turns to two case studies concerned with how the city hermit

\textsuperscript{6} A famous argument that runs parallel to this can be found in Hayden White's "The Forms of Wildness" in which he argues that historical western discourse about "savages" (i.e. Native Americans and other various non-white, non-European populations) developed specifically as a foil to help define what exactly people meant by "civility."
trope actually plays out in contrasting city systems. These case studies will focus on the characters of Jekyll and Hyde in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Animal in Indra Sinha's *Animal's People*.

**Defining Absence**

My use of the term hermit is purposeful. Though the urban hermit is certainly a modern phenomenon, its characteristics still plant it firmly as an extension of the original hermit trope within literature. Traditionally, the hermit has been associated with monastic life in which an individual separates oneself from society in order to foster a deeper spiritual relationship with God. This separation usually takes the form of an individual, self-sustaining habitation in the wilderness where the monk would live out his days in prayer and reflection. The medieval literary tradition riffs on this premise by typically according these hermits mystical powers or specialized knowledge which frequently places them in the rather positive role of *deus ex machina* in various knight's tales.

The modern day hermit in city literature is obviously quite different from the medieval hermit, but in many ways has developed within this same vein. For starters, the city hermit remains separate from society. However, this separation now comes from within the city system itself, an included exclusion. I propose that this change is demonstrative of a very real fear of the city system. Whereas the medieval literary tradition found hermits in the wilderness outside the city, the increasingly industrialized

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7 For a discussion of the hermit and their popular religious roots see John Howe's "The Awesome Hermit: The Symbolic Significance of the Hermit as a Possible Research Perspective."
8 See “hermit” entry in Jean-Charles Seigneuret’s *Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs* for a discussion of several noteworthy examples of this and other hermit characteristics in early medieval tradition.
and populated modern city begins to see the internalization of that once external wilderness into the city itself; a phenomenon which allows the hermit of the woods to become the hermit of the city.

To be certain though, this separation from within does not manifest itself uniformly across all instances of this trope. As we will see in our two case studies, this separation can range from the classical sense of being holed up in a room without contact from others (Stevenson's Jekyll) to more nuanced understandings such as the use of nontraditional space or even nontraditional use of traditional space so that one can pass by without actually being seen (Sinha's Animal). In any case, the fact always remains that these hermits utilize their individual spaces in such a way so as to remain a/part from the city.

With this separation also comes the notion of self-sustainment. Whereas for the medieval monk this meant living off of the land, for the modern city hermit this has more to do with their relationship to money. Once again, the nature of this relationship will vary, but in each case we will see how the hermit's monetary situation (and by extension their relationship to self-sustenance) becomes a nonissue either because of his amassed capital or because of his unique relationship to the use of money.

To be sure, the above characteristics of self-sustainment and separation form society would seem to suggest a certain stability of identity. After all, both characteristics

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9 In the case study we will examine this is an abandoned factory, but in other examples across the literature this might constitute things such as sewer drains, abandoned warehouses, libraries after close, etc.

10 For example, on a literal level, in Sinha’s text Animal talks about living comfortably off of only 4 rupees (10 cents US) a day (Sinha 176). At a more figurative level, the poor community in Sinha’s text (who as we will see, constitute a collective hermitage) repeatedly refer to their “power of zero” which simply means that, having nothing, nothing can ever be taken from them and thus they can never be defeated. In other words, they appropriate their lack of monetary currency into a kind of currency of power nevertheless.
make possible a living condition in which the hermit can avoid interaction with outside forces. It is at this point however, that our modern city hermit takes on his most interesting quality, a characteristic I will term "the Split." As I will show, in each instance of the modern city hermit one can find some sort of stark division within their identity (which is, in turn, made manifest in and through their physical body). A division that, furthermore, operates in a very utilitarian way for the system, separating manageable and unmanageable parts into separate identities so as to be able to deal with them appropriately. In other words, this Split allows for the city to treat some aspects of the hermit figure as waste or deviance and thus subject to discipline and administration (i.e. Hyde's crimes), while other parts which do not fit into the schema of the system are allowed to simply be thrown out, to cease to exist within the city system (i.e. the "non-death" of Jekyll). This division will manifest itself in different ways in terms of temporality, but will always be accompanied by a specific encounter with an accident of a city technology (from the impurity of a scientific potion in Stevenson's text to the chemical spill of a factory in Sinha's text).

Thus we can see how, though the modern city hermit may look very different from the traditional hermit at first glance, its primary characteristics still place it firmly within the eremitic tradition. I am not so much identifying a new literary trope as I am drawing attention to an overlooked extension of this trope within city literature.

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11 The distinction is between, for example, a character such as Hyde and Jekyll who split and are joined multiple times across one timeline versus a split that occurs once and remains fractured as is the case with Animal’s identity.
Context of Absence

Before we dive too deeply into the characteristics of this city hermit, this exception, it is important to first understand the context from which it is rising, the rule which it is breaking. Given the city hermit's status not only as exceptional, but also as immobile (whether that immobility be metaphorical or literal), it makes the most sense to defer to Michel De Certeau's well-known study in *The Practice of Everyday Life* in which he focuses on the typical city figure who operates primarily through movement and interaction with the city. An investigation of De Certeau's concepts of the city can then be applied to our city hermit in order to round out our understanding.

Perhaps the most basic element of De Certeau's theory is his distinction between space and place. For De Certeau, place is what we might think of as the physical reality of an actual location. He writes that place is "an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability" (117). Thus buildings, streets, parks, etc. all constitute physical locations that exist in a set position, and therefore constitute places. Spaces on the other hand, are what is constituted when people interact with those places. Space, as De Certeau puts it, "exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocity, and time variables." So if we were to gaze out on an empty street, we could only think of that street as a place, not a space. However, if suddenly a crowd came along and populated that street with their movements and interactions, we could then think of the street as both a place and a space. In short, "space is a practiced place."
This distinction is important to keep in mind when considering De Certeau's primary division of the city system. On the one hand, we have the panoptic,\textsuperscript{12} planned city which is characterized by its visual readability. This city is the one that is discernible from the top of a skyscraper or from the seat of a helicopter. This is in many senses the geographic, mapped city which allows us to say, "Yes, I can see that downtown is over there, but if I look over in this different direction I can see the bridge that leads to the neighborhood over there." The panoptic city is, in other words, the city of places. However, De Certeau points out that this view, despite its stability, is misleading. The panoptic city is only a "theoretical city" (93), which does not take into account the actual movements and uses of the places being gazed at.

For De Certeau, the real city is that which is constituted by the actual movements of people throughout this planned, readable city. These movements, De Certeau argues, are what "weave places together" and constitute one of the real systems that actually make up the city (97). This view too, though, is misleading. De Certeau argues that "the act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statement uttered" (97). Walking and movement in a city can be thought of as an "acting out of place [...], as a space of enunciation." This means though, that when we look at the movements of people in the city system, we are only seeing the signed, and not necessarily the signified. Thus De Certeau labels even this view of the city as a ""metaphorical city' which slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city" (93).

\textsuperscript{12} De Certeau uses this term following Michel Foucault’s establishment of it in \textit{Discipline and Punish}. Both use it in the same way to refer to a totalizing view of a system or place.
This view of the city is not without its hiccups, however. With the pedestrian's power to create and imbue the city with its city-ness so to speak, comes the power of "distorting it, fragmenting it, and diverting it from its immobile order" (102). For example, if we are thinking of the pedestrian's movements through the city as a walking rhetoric, then we can think of the places which try to control that rhetoric as grammar rules constituting the city's "immobile order." For example, stoplights, street signs, sidewalks, etc. all imply a certain set of rules which mandate how they are to be used. We all know though, that grammar rules are very easily broken, even without completely sacrificing meaning. Thus when someone cuts down an alley or jumps a fence we can understand this as violating expectations of use, and thus as constituting a sort of rhetorical slang or flourish. It follows then, that the pedestrian is imbued with the ability to supplant the expected walking rhetoric with a "second, poetic geography on top of the geography of the literal, forbidden or permitted meanings" (105).

This dovetails nicely into what De Certeau means when he discusses a "certain play in the machine" of the city system (30). Through pedestrians' ability to determine their own movements within the physical space of the city, they are able to subtly undermine that system of power, to "manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them" (xiv). De Certeau argues that it is these practices, these "silent technologies," which "determine or short-circuit institutional stage directions" (xiv). In other words, the pedestrian can only act within a small window of opportunity from within the system, but those movements nevertheless still affect the system and cause it to react.
De Certeau terms the two primary elements of this interaction as strategies and tactics. Now, strategies are what institutional powers use to attempt to predetermine the conditions of a relationship. Strategy "assumes a place that can be circumscribed as proper and thus serve as a basis for generating relationships with an exterior distinct from it" (xix). Thus something even as simple as a door marked "employee's only" serves as an exclusionary strategy to separate the worker from the consumer. Tactics on the other hand are what are used by the everyday citizen to manipulate or undermine these institutional strategies. These however do not have a proper place like strategies, but rather must take advantage of temporal opportunities. "It [a tactic] must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse" (37). De Certeau's own example of such a tactic is "la perruque." He writes, "La perruque is the worker's own work disguised as work for his employer. [...] La perruque may be as simple as a secretary writing a love letter on 'company time' or as complex as a cabinetmaker's 'borrowing' a lathe to make a piece of furniture for his living room" (25). In any case, the main point is that la perruque diverts time from the factory for work that is "free, creative, and precisely not directed toward profit" (25). It is at this division between tactics and strategies that we can begin to re-examine our notion of the city hermit.

13 French for "the wig." An implication of disguise.
Absence in Context

Earlier I spoke of the Split as one of the primary characteristics of the city hermit. It is this Split in fact which makes the hermit such a unique object of study within this city system as it allows the hermit to skate the line between what is permitted (though perhaps not desirable) and what is not. And as stated previously, the degree to which this Split occurs in each case study will vary, but what is important is that always the Split will result in at least two variations of the subject identity: one that is allowable (or rather definable and therefore administrable) within the system and one that is not. For example, deviance such as trampling a child on the streets\textsuperscript{14} may not be desirable behavior within the city system, but it still falls within the means of the system to handle it and is therefore conceded. Simply not participating in the system, however, is not administrable and thus results in the system throwing the figure out.\textsuperscript{15} It is in this way that we can see how the hermit serves as a sort of double problem for the city system. On the one side of the Split we see various kinds of deviancy that one might be inclined to call tactics except that they tend to draw attention to themselves and thus fall subject to disciplinary measures to reign them in. On the other end of the Split however, we have the hermit proper which presents problems because its non-participation represents not only non-

\textsuperscript{14}i.e. Hyde's actions which instigate the main narrative plot in Stevenson's text.
\textsuperscript{15}i.e. Jekyll never actually dies, he just stops existing. Also, it is arguable that ejection from the system could in and of itself be considered a form of administration, but consider the matter more closely. For example, when someone performs a crime he or she can be, in one sense, removed from the system via one’s incarceration and/or death (via capital punishment, for example). However, both these processes still occur within and as a result of administrative duties. Even in the case of capital punishment one is left with the physical duties of paperwork and disposing of the corpse—real, physical actions which lend weight to the historical realities of these administrative practices. However, ejection from this system on the other hand speaks to an incapability of being able to handle the problem within the system. Thus it might be better to think of these figures not necessarily as being ejected, but as falling out of the system. They are naturally relegated or deferred to a place of irrelevance where the relationship between the system and their (non)existence no longer matters, for the frame of reference from which to contextualize their being or meaning has fallen away.
support of the system but also a blind spot in an otherwise well-oiled machine. It in essence takes that "play in the machine" and creates a space of unknowability and thus a place where institutional measures of discipline and administration are powerless. The hermit, in essence, defines a weak spot in the network of institutional power.

Thus within the same subject identity (i.e. the hermit) can exist a multiplicity of behavioral types, or "ways of operating," via the phenomenon of the split. In fact this very multiplicity in and of itself serves as a violation of the city system as well. For example, if we consider that place constitutes the physical manifestation of a thing, we can then think of the body as a place—a mobile place albeit, but a place nonetheless. If this is the case, the "law of the 'proper'" which De Certeau formulates demands that "the elements taken in to consideration are beside one another, each situated in its own 'proper' and distinct location, a location which it defines." (117). However, the split which manifests itself in the city hermit means that there are competing identities or ways of operating (i.e. deviancy vs. hermitage, Hyde vs. Jekyll) housed within a single physical body or space. This begins to explain one reason why only a single manifestation of this split ever survives for long; the narrative which produces these figures can never resolve while more than one manifestation of the split is competing for property rights, so to speak, of the body/place.

Emergence of Absence

All of this leads finally and inevitably to a question about why and how this absence emerges. To answer this question, it is first useful to look at how we might understand the Split itself as emerging within the hermit. Now, recall our earlier
comments concerning the internalization of a desert within the city, a phenomenon which we can think of the city hermit trope as rising from. That somehow civilization has allowed not only a wilderness (read: hermitage, a space outside direct control by the system) to develop within it, but also that that wilderness has become populated by a figure, the hermit. Hayden White's now famous study on the ideas of savagery and wildness in his book *The Tropics of Discourse* speaks to this very fear. In it, White traces the historical development of western man's notions of savagery and wildness up to our contemporary moment. In exploring White’s study I propose that we can begin to think of the hermit figure as one manifestation of the same “wildness” which White refers to.

According to White, notions of savagery or wildness began as a way to define civility by negation. He writes, "in times of sociocultural stress, when the need for positive self-definition asserts itself but no criterion for self-identification appears, it is always possible to say something like: 'I may not know the precise content of my own felt humanity, but I am most certainly not like that" (151). Thus wildernesses and the "wild people" that populated them became useful tools for supposedly civilized man to project anxieties and then define himself against those projections.

However, the dawn of industrialization saw a rapid decrease in these wildernesses as each of them became either "domesticated or marked out for domestication" (153). This resulted in the idea of the Wild Man becoming progressively despatialized. "This despatialization was attended by a compensatory process of psychic interiorization [...]. So that, instead of the relatively comforting thought that the Wild Man may exist *out there* and can be contained by some sort of physical action, it is now thought [...] that the Wild Man is lurking within every man, is clamoring for release within us all" (153-4).
White termed this process of interiorization a "re- mythification" because it functioned in the same way that ancient myths about the Wild Man did, as a projection of repressed desires and anxieties. Starting with this interiorization, ideas about the Wild Man were treated "not as conceptual instruments for designating an area of inquiry or for constructing a catalogue of human possibilities, or as symbols representing a relationship between two areas of experience [i.e. civilized city life vs. savage life in the wilderness], but as signs designating the existence of things or entities whose attributes bear just those qualities that the imagination, for whatever reason insists they must bear" (154). In other words, the Wild Man, no longer constituted actual savagery or wilderness, but rather simply functioned as place-marker for the anxieties of the civilized man.

Applying this to our current study, we can understand that in the city system of control which is based on movement and participation (and, furthermore the administration and discipline of that movement and participation), we can think of the hermit as a sign designating the anxiety of a fracture in the system. For example, as we will see in our texts, if the system has anxieties about social propriety the hermit might manifest with characteristics of deviancy and criminality (i.e. Jekyll’s Hyde), whereas if the system harbors anxieties about inhumane treatment of a community the hermit might bear markers of that anxiety (i.e. Animal’s animality).

However, within the narratives we will look at, the anxiety which the hermit represents does not remain interior but rather asserts itself dramatically and physically into the city system proper. In a sense then, the psychic split which White's interiorization and remythification represents is reversed so that the myth, the hermit, is forced to
manifest itself into the system, and in so doing ceases to be myth but rather a real problem which the system must deal with.

   It is in this reversal, in this physical manifestation of anxiety that we can begin to see the accident-like nature of the hermit's emergence. In order to better understand this let us turn to Paul Virilio's work in *The Original Accident*, in which he develops a theory centered around technology and the accident. For Virilio, accidents are in fact one of the primary phenomenon of everyday life. He writes that from "incidents to accidents, [...] everyday life has become a kaleidoscope where we endlessly bang into or run up against what crops up, *ex abrupto*, out of the blue, so to speak" (Virilio 3). He elaborates on the nature of these accidents:

   According to Aristotle, 'the accident reveals the substance.' If so, then invention of the 'substance' is equally invention of the 'accident'. The shipwreck is consequently the 'futurist' invention of the ship, and the air crash the invention of the supersonic airliner, just as the Chernobyl meltdown is the invention of the nuclear power station. (Virilio 5)

Thus, in applying Virilio's theory to our current study,\(^{16}\) one might think of the De Certeau-ian city as the substance, or technology, in question. If this is the case, the essence of that city technology has been shown to be "ways of operating"\(^{17}\) which leads

\(^{16}\) This application is potentially contentious, but it is important to realize that just as Virilio argues that the accident should be accepted, should be sought out and looked for, so too should hermitage. Certainly hermitage acts as a resistance force (and therefore will be portrayed as negative from the vantage point of the system in power), but it is for this reason that hermitage, just like the accident, can serve as a diagnostic for ways in which the system in power is failing and should be improved upon.

\(^{17}\) Whether it be employing those operations from a pedestrian standpoint or controlling those operations from an institutional standpoint.
naturally to the accident as a way of *not* operating, of not participating.\(^{18}\) The hermit emerges then, *ex abrupto*,\(^ {19}\) as the accident in the city technology, the latent anxiety of loss of power. In this sense the hermit emerges as one of those "contradictory movements" which De Certeau says emerge in the city "without points where one can take hold of them, without rational transparency, they are impossible to administer" (De Certeau 95).

Notice too, how similar Virilio's accident theory is to De Certeau's own allowances when discussing the creation of a "play" in the city system. De Certeau writes,

> It [city discourse] makes room for a void. In that way, it opens up clearings; it 'allows' a certain play within a system of defined places. It 'authorizes' the production of an area of free play (*Spielraum*) on a checkerboard that analyzes *and classifies identities*. […] It is a crack in the system that saturates places with signification and indeed so reduces them to this signification that it is 'impossible to breathe in them.' (106, emphasis added)

In essence then, De Certeau is saying that the system has built into its very nature the allowance for "cracks," for what we might think of as accidents. However, similar to Virilio's observation that accidents serve as diagnostic for technology (Der Derian), De Certeau points out how these gaps or cracks exist only so as to allow for the system to

\(^{18}\) Consider too how this city hermit has emerged specifically with the dawn of the industrial age. An age which increasingly demanded specialization of labor tasks and thus increased interdependence on (read: participation with) the rest of the population. Thus as this specialization increases, it was only a matter of time before there emerged the accident which threw a wrench into the spokes of this system.

\(^{19}\) This is particularly relevant because as we will see, none of our hermit figures begin their existence as such. Rather, they begin their lives as typical city participants and only after encounters with specific city technologies do they suddenly become hermits.
analyze and classify them into a specific mode of signification and thereby strengthen the already present system of order and power. In other words, the system appropriates the meaningfulness of these gaps into its strict order. De Certeau writes that "stories and legends that haunt urban space like superfluous or additional inhabitants […] are the object of a witch-hunt, by the very logic of the techno-structure. But their extermination […] makes the city a 'suspended symbolic order'" (106).

As the accident, the city hermit is like "the legend that haunts urban space like a superfluous inhabitant." In this way too, one can begin to understand the system's desire to administer the hermit and, in turn, the difficulties that arise when attempting to apply this administration. After all, the hermit's split nature between normality and deviance, participation and nonparticipation, only allow for a portion of his or her subject identity to actually be administrable. Thus the hermit rises within a crack in the city system and is immediately hunted down by that system until it can be either administered or ejected (or, as we will see, in some cases both).

**Importance of Absence**

It is at this point that one can finally begin to transition into why any of this matters. What, really, the significance of the hermit as a trope of the urban novel is.

Firstly, one should recognize that unlike ancient views of the Wild Man, the hermit operates not simply as a foil, but rather holds significance in and of itself. For example, De Certeau argues, "It is through the opportunity they [legends] offer to store up rich silences and wordless stories, or rather through their capacity to create cellars and
garrets\textsuperscript{20} everywhere, that local legends […] permit exits, ways of going out and coming back in, and thus habitable spaces" (106). If the hermit can be likened to the legend as we have shown above, then it can likewise be seen as a way of entering and exiting the city system, and thus a new viewpoint from which to analyze the urban scene.

Secondly, this dovetails nicely into De Certeau's discussion of frontiers and bridges, those things which we might qualify as the primary significance of the hermit. According to De Certeau, stories "have the function of founding and articulating spaces" (123). As we have seen though for the hermit, this founded space is likened to that of the cellar or garret, places to enter and exit a system. Thus the hermit can be seen simultaneously as the limitation of the system (that is to say, the system in power) as well as a bridge and a frontier to a new way of operating. In this vein, De Certeau writes,

By considering the role of stories in delimitation, one can see that the primary function is to authorize the establishment, displacement, or transcendence of limits, and as a consequence, to set in opposition, within the closed field of discourse, two movements that intersect (setting and transgressing limits) in such a way as to make the story a sort of "crossword" decoding stencil […] whose essential narrative figures seem to be the frontier and the bridge. (123)

Thus, we will see how in our case studies, the traditional city narrative is displaced and transgressed by our hermit figures, opening up bridges to new frontiers of urban analysis.

\textsuperscript{20} Note the implication here of hiding or evading (the cellar) as well as defense (the garret). Urban hermits quite nicely fills both these roles. On the one hand, they serve as a hiding place in that the system can't get a hold of them because of their nonparticipation. On the other hand, the space they create serves as a sort of defense against the system's efforts to appropriate everything within it.
Works Cited


CHAPTER 2: EMERGENCE OF THE URBAN HERMIT IN STEVENSON’S THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

“A person does not end with the limits of his physical body or to the area with which his physical activity is immediately confined but embraces, rather, the totality of meaningful effects which emanate from him temporally and spatially.” Georg Simmel, from “The Metropolis and Mental Life”

“The force of what is not known is all the more effective for not being perceived as such” – Barbara Johnson, from “Melville’s Fist: The Execution of Billy Budd”

“Think of it—I did not even exist!” – Dr. Jekyll in Robert Louis Stevenson’s The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Victorian London: Backdrop to an Accident

Conceivably the greater scope of this project could find its genesis in the ancient metropolis of classical literature, but for several reasons the Victorian era presents itself as a particularly apt starting point. To begin, this era presents us with a city firmly in the wake of the industrial revolution (and thus for the first time beginning to resemble the technological cities we know and live in today). This new industry was very much urban centered, and in conjunction with the increasing enclosure of land, began to break up rural patterns of living: “The stability of a long accepted social structure was being dissolved amid the pressure of new types of work and new social roles” (Punter 193). These new social roles, namely the maintenance of an elite class of gentleman, are in fact what will lead to the production of our urban hermit.
These new social roles and urban living were perhaps nowhere more prominent than in England. By the middle of the nineteenth century, for the first time in history in any country, over half the population lived in cities as opposed to the rural country (Nord 510). At the center of this urban migration was London, a place which, as Lynda Nead argues in her study *Victorian Babylon*, was the “center of a global commerce that was subjugating the rest of the world; it was the seat of an empire that was defining contemporary history” (Nead 3). It is perhaps this pressure of defining contemporary history which leads to the anxieties inherent in the production of our urban hermit.

These new social roles and, in turn the anxieties they produce, are perhaps nowhere more apparent than in our first case study, Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

In one of the opening scenes of the novel we are presented with the sinister figure of Hyde who tramples a small girl on the streets and continues on his way, unfazed. So is set immediately the initial tension of an excess within the city system. However, what this study will try to tease out even more than the excess that is Hyde, is the significance of its counterweight, the anxiety of nonparticipation to which Hyde’s excess points. Ultimately, my central claim in this chapter is that anxieties surrounding the social propriety of the gentleman class will lead to manifestations of hermitage and excess at both the level of the real London city as well as the metaphorical city-body of Jekyll which Hyde serves as a citizen within.
Prelude to an Accident

In his essay, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” from which I take an epigraph to this chapter, Georg Simmel discusses how a person is not limited to the confines of his or her body or the space in which he or she operates but rather by the extent to which these operations make meaningful effects in the world around them. In Stevenson’s strange case though, what we find is that the only people making meaningful effects are the social elite. Stevenson in fact, makes a particular point of establishing Jekyll not only as a gentleman, but as a skilled gentleman operating regularly in a group of his peers.

However, Stevenson is careful to first present us with Mr. Utterson, who stands essentially as an unsullied representative of this gentlemanly class with which we are then later able to compare Jekyll’s own fall from grace. In order to understand Utterson’s position as a sort of rhetorical standard for the city system it is important to recall De Certeau’s notion of the real city system as being composed of the “walking rhetoric” of its citizens. The city depends on the movements of these citizens to transform its city places into city spaces; to imbue the city with its city-ness so to speak. This rhetoric by its very nature implies rules and expectations for how it should be composed. In Stevenson’s novel then, there is no character that more closely follows the expected rules and expectations of proper participation than Mr. Utterson. Even Utterson’s name seems to speak to his status as rhetorical standard where “utter” literally implies a speech act, a participatory gesture in a system of rhetoric.

21 With the exception of Jekyll’s butler Poole, however as we will see, even Poole’s actions serve to support this socially elite class.
22 That is to say, he is by no means an armchair intellectual, but rather actively engages in his own scientific pursuits and interacts with the city’s greater intelligentsia.
Additionally, one of the first things we learn about Utterson is that though his outward countenance is rather grave, “something eminently human beaconed from his eye; something indeed which never found its way in his talk, but which spoke […] more often and loudly in the acts of his life” (Stevenson 1645, emphasis added). Found throughout the novel, these participatory acts defend the “customary sides of life,” operating under the notion that “the fanciful was the immodest” (1649). At their most harmless, these acts entail things such as Utterson’s regular Sunday walks with Mr. Enfield, in which he casually immerses himself in the social operations of the city streets. Significantly though, these walks lead to Utterson’s knowledge of both Hyde and Jekyll’s odd behavior and, in turn, lead to his rather aggressive institutional disciplinary measures.23

In any case, Utterson stands as a sort of immovable pillar of the proper way to be a gentleman. It is perhaps no surprise then that it is to Utterson that Jekyll desperately appeals in his “final statement” at the end of the novel. Notably, despite the time crunch under which this statement is produced,24 Jekyll’s first order of business is to establish his elitism—as if trying to plead a case with Utterson for a social standing he no longer enjoys. Jekyll opens the statement, writing that he was born “to a large fortune, endowed besides with excellent parts, inclined by nature to industry, fond of the respect of the wise and good among my fellow-men, and thus, as might have been supposed, with every

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23 Namely, his lead role in the investigation against Hyde in the Carew murder which runs parallel to his very public disapproval of Jekyll’s reclusiveness. Actions which, as we will see, lead directly to the final resolution of the novel.

24 Jekyll produces his final statement after having used the last of his transformation drug, which means that at any moment he will transform back into Hyde and no longer be able to author anything in the personality of Jekyll again. Thus one must consider the significance of the hierarchy of information Jekyll chooses to produce.
guarantee of an honourable and distinguished future” (1675). There are several things to notice here. The first is that Jekyll did not earn his money over time, but rather was born into wealth. We are therefore assured that Jekyll has never crossed class lines and thus serves as a sort of “pure” gentleman. Furthermore, Jekyll claims to have been naturally talented and to have inclined these talents towards industry. Given his birth in the wake of the industrial revolution and the subsequent demand for industry, Jekyll can be seen as the ideal city citizen; one who has the capital, ability, and desire to forward industrial progress. What’s more is that Jekyll assures Utterson that he was in good company from the start (having the respect of his good and wise fellow men) and thus, all things considered, had a promising future guaranteed to him. He is, in short, from birth the archetype of a Victorian gentleman.

Besides simply the content of the opening lines of Jekyll’s final statement, the mere fact of their existence should be remarked upon. After all, Jekyll is specifically writing this statement to Utterson who is both a friend and fellow gentleman and furthermore, as Jekyll’s personal estate lawyer, is particularly aware of Jekyll’s monetary and social status—he hardly requires a reminder in Jekyll’s statement. Thus Jekyll’s decision to open with such unnecessary comments (especially when time is of the essence), seems to point to a desperate desire to speak the truth of his gentlemanliness back into existence. I say “back” here quite simply because at this point in the story Jekyll has all but forfeit his position as a respected, noble gentleman.

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25 I make this point simply to say that one could not argue that the Split and hermitage that later occurs is a result of some remainder from previous existence at a different socio-economic level.
26 Recall that Jekyll is producing the letter when under the influence of the last of his drug. Thus he must finish the letter and provide ample time between its completion and his permanent return to the figure of Hyde so as to prevent Hyde from noticing the letter and destroying it.
Nevertheless, before this forfeiture occurs in the story, one should note that Jekyll’s status as a respected gentleman derives perhaps less from wealth and more from his acquisition of knowledge. It is in fact this knowledge which Stevenson cleverly prefaces in Jekyll’s will, making sure to have Utterson first list out a few of his titles, “M.D., D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S., etc” (1649) before getting to the strange business of leaving all his belongings to the mysterious Edward Hyde in the event of either death or disappearance. Though signatures become quite a focus later in the plot, it is this first signature which is particularly significant for our present study of urban hermitage.

The most obvious point to take away from this signature, along with its slew of accompanying titles, is that Stevenson is carefully showing that Jekyll is himself a learned man, and, given his law degrees, no doubt very aware of the legal implications and irregularities of the request he makes in his will. Furthermore, the “etc.” points to the fact that Jekyll has additional titles that would demonstrate either additional social currency or additional expertise (the latter being more likely since the titles that are listed are all of an academic nature rather than a social one). Whatever the case though, even an incomplete list of Jekyll’s titles is quite impressive.

Particularly noteworthy is Jekyll’s status as a Fellow of the Royal Society. Though this scholarly society has existed since the 1600s, in 1847 a new mandate passed that allowed members to be elected into the society solely on the basis of their scientific expertise and not their potential as patrons. Jekyll’s membership can be understood then as recognition of his scientific work specifically within a network of his peers rather than

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27 Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Civil Law, Doctor of Laws, Fellow of the Royal Society

28 It is a forged signature which first alerts Utterson to Jekyll’s apparent collusion with Hyde’s crimes (1660).
simply the fortune he was born into. In short, in this small detail we are given a glimpse into Jekyll’s past as an expert working with other experts to forward the acquisition of what the society calls “natural knowledge” (“History”). In other words, Jekyll has a history as one who is contributing actively to society; he is not (yet) holed up in his laboratory, separate from the greater scientific and social community. Nevertheless, it is at this point that we can first begin to see Jekyll’s departure from the expected and accepted social roles of his position.

In order to understand the full implications of such a departure, let us once again turn to De Certeau’s study in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. As Stevenson has established in the evidence cited above, Jekyll is absolutely a specialist in his scientific field. According to De Certeau, however, the specialist is “often driven to *also* be an Expert, that is, an interpreter and translator of his competence for other fields” (De Certeau 7, emphasis in original). It is this drive which we see in Jekyll when he begins to use his scientific competence (i.e. concocting effective transformation drugs) to solve metaphysical problems of the soul (namely, the problem of man’s evil nature).

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29 Concerning the language employed by the Royal Society itself, it is also interesting to note their motto, “Nullius in verba” which translates as “take no one’s word for it.” The Royal Society’s own commentary on this motto reads that “It is an expression of the determination of Fellows to withstand the domination of authority and to verify all statements by an appeal to facts determined by experiment.” Now to be sure, Jekyll certainly employs this in his own practices, but it is ironic then that at the end of the text no one who has witnessed the actual transformation is left alive. We as readers are thus forced to toss away the society’s motto and, quite frankly, take Jekyll’s word for it.

30 A perhaps semantic, but interesting connection with this idea is the fact that Jekyll records all his findings during the Hyde experiments in a “school version book,” which the Norton addition of the text footnotes as a “notebook used to record translations” (1672).

31 In the introduction to this study I spoke about the urban hermit being firmly within the eremitic tradition proper. In his book *The Hermit in English Literature from the Beginnings to 1660*, Charles P. Weaver recognizes three stages in the hermit’s appearance in literature: the religious, the semi-religious or social, and the unreligious or philosophic (7). It is interesting to note then De Certeau’s comments on the Expert. He argues that the Expert “blots out (and in a certain way replaces) the Philosopher, formerly the specialist of the universe” (De Certeau 7). It makes sense then that Jekyll as Expert (one who replaces the Philosopher) would turn into Jekyll as hermit (following the third, philosophic stage of the hermit).
Furthermore, when Utterson begins to inquire after Jekyll’s activities with Jekyll’s friend and colleague Dr. Lanyon, we can understand Lanyon’s response that it has been “more than ten years since Henry Jekyll became too fanciful for [him]” with his “unscientific balderdash” (1649-50) as a marker of the beginning of Jekyll’s “translation” of his competence into fields outside his realm.

Naturally, Lanyon’s frustration is well-founded. De Certeau points out that competence or expertise in one field does not make for competence and expertise in another. So when one tries to translate this expertise, one begins to exchange one’s competence for authority (that is to say, they use their reputation in one field to try to speak meaningfully in a field to which they have no footing). In this vein De Certeau goes on to say, “During the process of conversion, he [the Expert] is not without some competence (he either has to have some or make people think he has), but he abandons the competence he possesses as his authority is extended further and further, drawn out of its orbit by social demands” (7). It is in fact, this insistence that one still has competence which we see in Jekyll’s final statement as he begins to “speak by theory alone,” desperate to offer answers about the phenomenon of Hyde when really in the end he is simply guessing. Jekyll has in essence been driven out of his orbit. He is no longer speaking or acting scientifically, but rather lapsing into guesswork which only stands as an attempt to “make people think he has [competence],” as De Certeau would put it. Furthermore, we can read this lapse in scientific practice as a lapse in Jekyll’s traditional social role (namely, his role as a competent gentleman scientist) and thus one manifestation of the emergence of his hermitage, of his nonparticipation.
This final desperate attempt to offer answers to Utterson (who stands as his one last link to social propriety and, as it were, the keeper of Jekyll’s good name) becomes particularly pathetic when one considers that the social demands that drive Jekyll out of his orbit in the first place (and that in turn trigger his questionable experiments) are largely self-induced.\textsuperscript{32} Consider Jekyll’s own admittance that he tended towards an “impatient gaiety of disposition […], but such as [he] found it hard to reconcile with [his] imperious desire to carry [his] head high, and wear a more than commonly grave countenance before the public” (1675). What one should take away from this statement is not Jekyll’s mixed disposition but rather his insistence that he must fully repress that side of him which he himself deems inappropriate.

Jekyll goes on to describe how these tendencies led to a “profound duplicity of life” in which he both delighted in the good deeds of his public life as well as those unnamed acts which made him feel “plunged in shame” (1675). To be sure, this duplicity presents itself as a particular problem for Jekyll simply because of his class; as a member of the socially elite he is in fact expected to behave within tight parameters of acceptability. However, what Jekyll fails to realize is that absolute rigidity of his social class is a fantasy he produces himself and that his extreme repression in order to fit this imagined rigidity is that thing which will ultimately cause the complete failure of his social propriety. In other words, the demand to be absolutely good and show no evil or lapse in social propriety is never a real expectation placed on him. Nevertheless, his treatment that it is such is what causes him to attempt to solve his moral problem by

\textsuperscript{32} Which is not to say that there are not social demands placed on Jekyll, but rather that the desire to fill these demands perfectly without any “play in the machine” as De Certeau would say, is an anxiety that Jekyll himself produces.
creating Hyde, which ultimately leads to his hermitage on the one hand (in the figure of Jekyll) and criminal deviancy on the other (in the figure of Hyde).

Nevertheless, the point to be taken is that within these statements Jekyll is self-identifying as one who struggles to assert the expectations of his class identity. In a manner of speaking, he lacks what we might call class competence. What he has an abundance of however, is scientific competence. In order to balance this equation Jekyll begins to take his scientific study towards the “mystic and the transcendental” (1676)—things which by their very nature cannot be scientific. Thus Jekyll unconsciously finds himself converting scientific competence for moral authority.33

It is in partial recognition of this translation that Jekyll writes that the two sides of his intelligence (moral and intellectual) led him “steadily nearer to the truth, by whose partial discovery [he has] been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck” (1676). It is in this brief moment34 that Jekyll becomes, as De Certeau puts it, like one of those few individuals who “after having long considered themselves experts speaking a scientific language, have finally awoken from their slumbers and suddenly realized that for the last few moments they have been walking on air, like Felix the Cat in the old cartoons, far from the scientific ground. Though legitimized by scientific knowledge, their discourse is seen to have been no more than the ordinary language of tactical games” (8). As we see in Jekyll’s case though, these tactical games were largely concerned with a self-justification for making his own social struggles more manageable. He writes that his experiments led him to the discovery that man is not one identity, but two; a good half

33 i.e. his competence in creating scientific concoctions misapplied to solve the moral problem of internal evil.
34 Within the statement, Jekyll quickly reverts back to an attempt at feigned competence, presenting theories about the nature of Hyde’s projection.
and an evil half. Jekyll writes of his aspirations for these halves: “If each [...] could but be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable; the unjust might go his way, delivered of the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin; and the just could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path [...] no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of this extraneous evil” (1676). Jekyll is in essence trying to refine the system of social identity as it relates to social participation. What happens though, is that instead of refining the system, his experiments bring out its deficiencies (i.e. social deviancy such as criminality is projected and proper or expected social participation is repressed).

The key points to take away from all this is that, for one, Jekyll has in the past established himself as a meaningful and participatory member in society (specifically through his scientific prowess as evidenced by his status as a Fellow of the Royal Society). Nevertheless the maintenance of this social standing becomes difficult for Jekyll as he feels inclined towards his “lesser” nature. To remedy this, Jekyll makes the mistake of converting his scientific competence into an authority in a “transcendental” and moral realm which he does not fully understand. The result is the “shipwreck” he refers to above; what we will come to see as the accident of his split identity between Jekyll and Hyde.

Accident of the Split: Physical Manifestations

In order to fully understand Jekyll’s overextension of his competence, one might consider Paul Virilio’s ideas when discussing the emergence of accidents as they relate to technology. Virilio argues that scientists operating under the banner of progress (as is
certainly the case with Jekyll) operate in such a way that “[t]echniques are always streets ahead of the mentalities of competent personnel in the area of innovation” (Virilio 12). This is of course true simply because one cannot become competent in a technology until it has been created. However, with that creation one immediately introduces into the world the possibility (and for Virilio, the certainty) that the technology that has just been created will fail—will, in short, have an accident. It is in fact, this accident itself and the diagnostic it operates as which makes progress possible. For example, a car crash serves as a diagnostic for the car company to know in which ways it should improve the maneuverability, safety features, etc. in order to avoid the same crash (read: accident) again. Thus, competent personnel can only really emerge post-accident for any given technology. This means that scientists who operate at the frontier of their field creating new technologies, necessarily position themselves in such a way that they cannot reach competence with that technology until it fails.35

With this concept in mind, it is perhaps not surprising that Jekyll does not fully understand the technology of the potion which he has created.36 After all, he does in a sense have a certain amount of competence in science, but just not in this particular scientific venture. Thus we can understand Jekyll’s translation of competence into authority as being particularly problematic because the competence which is being translated is already paper thin when it comes to this new technology. What emerges

35 Admittedly, Virilio’s notion of the accident does differ slightly from my use. For Virilio the accident is a phenomenon which is desirable and necessary for the system to perpetuate its own power structures. What we see with the split nature of the hermit accident though, is that only one half of this split presents itself as material for perpetuating the status quo, while the other half falls outside the ability of the system to reintegrate it into its system of order (i.e the disciplinary fate of Hyde vs. the non-death of Jekyll).

36 That is to say, he neither understands the metaphysical implications of its effects (read: the nature of identity) or really even the basic physical nature of the potion either (which we later find works only because of an unknown impurity in the original formula).
then, as Virilio predicts it must, is the accident: the famous Split between Jekyll and Hyde.

At this point it is important to step back and consider the premise of this emergence. Jekyll is a figure who has social propriety (including participation in the community) particularly demanded of him and who struggles against this demand. Thus the accident which emerges is a projection of the anxiety that this social participation will fail. In other words, in trying to produce a technology that would normalize the anxiety surrounding social participation, the accident that occurs creates a space of absolute non-participation, the urban hermitage.

The reality of this split, and the hermitage that ensues, plays itself out within the text on both a literal and an abstract level. The literal and more recognizable hermitage concerns Jekyll within the real London city. Stevenson’s text is sparse concerning this first hermitage, but what we do know is that at least early on after Jekyll has begun transforming into Hyde, he still makes an effort to perform social duties. However it should be noted that the two social duties we know about to a certainty are both concerned with compensating for the problem of Hyde’s existence: first a meeting with Utterson to write up a will naming Hyde as heir, and second, a dinner party with Utterson and several other gentleman to alleviate Utterson’s suspicions shortly after he meets Hyde for the first time. This second meeting ends with Jekyll insisting that Utterson honor his will and drop the matter in future conversation. Utterson agrees and the next thing the reader knows a whole year has jumped in the text.

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37 I specify this only because, as I will show later, Jekyll’s body constitutes a sort of metaphorical city for Hyde.
It is in this missing year that the first literal hermitage is alluded to. The text picks back up again shortly after Hyde’s murder of Sir Danvers Carew, a loved public figure. At this point in the text we know little about what went on during the missing year, but the narrator does tell us that following Carew’s murder, Jekyll “came out of his seclusion, renewed relations with friends, became once more their familiar guest and entertainer […]]. He was busy, he was much in the open air, he did good” (1660, emphasis added). These statements show that Jekyll, following Utterson’s assurance that he would honor his wishes, sunk into a life of seclusion for almost a year. Thus Jekyll’s sudden re-inscription into society serves as a sharp contrast from his year of elusiveness. It is in fact this sharp contrast which makes it so hard for Utterson to accept Jekyll’s declaration so soon after that he means “from hence forth to lead a life of extreme seclusion” (1661). Utterson is obviously shocked by such a decision and in so sharp a turn, and thus christens Jekyll an “inscrutable recluse” in a house of “voluntary bondage” (1662).

It is after Jekyll’s decision and the ensuing return to hermitage that we first see the positive treatment of participation side-by-side with the negative view of nonparticipation. Utterson and his cousin, Richard Enfield, are out for a walk when they find themselves near Jekyll’s home. They are both fully aware that Jekyll will not admit any visitors and yet Utterson nevertheless proposes that they enter the court for a closer look saying, “even outside, I feel as if the presence of a friend might do him good.” Thus even before the scene proper starts, we are presented with the contrast of two gentleman out and about on the town (read: actively engaging with the city) against a man who has

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38 We later learn that much of this time was spent in sharp degrees of Hyde doing evil and Jekyll scrambling after to make amends. Thus he is admittedly not fully a hermit at this point, but rather can be understood more as increasingly dropping the ball of his gentlemanly social obligations.
voluntarily removed himself into seclusion. What is more, Utterson’s faith in the power of participation and relations with others is so strong that he feels even bringing their presence near Jekyll without necessarily even actually making contact will do him good.

Enfield and Utterson are of course spared the testing of this superstition when they are in fact able to speak to Jekyll, albeit through the second story window. It should come as no surprise then that when Jekyll tells of his low spirits, Utterson’s immediate diagnosis is one of movement, of reinscription into the activities of the city: “You stay too much indoors [...] You should be out, whipping up the circulation, like Mr. Enfield and me” (1663). Jekyll of course turns down the proposal, but in a short turn Enfield and Utterson, faced with the horrors of Jekyll’s body beginning to transform into Hyde, press the same diagnosis on themselves. Rather than crying out for help or even screaming in terror, they both wordlessly exit the courtyard, travel back up the by-street, and not until they reach a “thoroughfare, where even upon a Sunday there were still some stirrings of life” do they look at each other and comment on what they saw (1663). It is as if they must first immerse themselves in the safety and normalcy of the city operating as it should before they can deal with the anomaly that is Jekyll and his strange hermitage.

Intimately tied up with and contrasting the physicality of Jekyll’s hermitage is of course the physicality of Hyde’s participation in the city. A participation one might call deviant or excessive. Take for instance a matter as simple as the way in which Hyde physically moves through the city. In the opening scene with the trampled child we are told that Hyde was stumping along eastward at a good walk.” To be sure, “good walk” doesn’t exactly imply an excessive ferocity of speed, however “stumping along” certainly indicates a manner of irregular movement. What’s more is that this is taking place when
the streets are “all lighted up for a procession and all as empty as a church.” This detail can be read in several different ways, each pointing to a similar deviancy. On the one hand, we might see Hyde as simply being out and about in an hour at which few others are. Another reading though, might imply that Hyde’s presence serves as an excess that fills the space of the absent crowd which the streets are all lit up for. In essence, the system cannot tolerate both the typical crowd and the deviant tour de force that is Hyde in a single location.

Whatever the case, the real problem with Hyde’s movement in this passage comes when he “tramu[les] calmly over the child’s body […] like some damned Juggernaught” and continues on his way as if nothing has happened (1646). For Enfield, the gentleman who witnesses the offense, this would of course be a problem regardless of the social status of the perpetrator. It is however particularly noteworthy that despite Hyde’s behavior, Enfield refers to him as a “gentleman.” This implies that Hyde too is expected to live up to the social demands from which Jekyll was trying to flee with the creation of Hyde in the first place. Hyde is not allowed to pass off as a typical ruffian or criminal, but rather is treated as one who has just scuffed the good name of his own class.

In order to remedy this discord (that is to say, the discord of Hyde being a gentleman but not acting in the expected gentlemanly fashion), Enfield and the others set their minds to discrediting his reputation, saying that they will “make his name stink from one end of London to the other” thereby ensuring that if “he had any friends or any credit […] he should lose them” (1647). The group’s solution to Hyde’s deviant behavior is to ruin his reputation as a gentleman and cut him off from any existing upper class social
Significantly, this is not a form of discipline in which Hyde is being punished for a crime, but rather stands as an attempt to reposition him into his proper place within the system; take away his status as a gentleman and suddenly his crude behavior makes a little more sense (at least within the logic of the novel).

Additionally, though admittedly not a description of Hyde in the real world, it is interesting to note Utterson’s own anxieties about Hyde’s movements after hearing Enfield’s story of the trampled child. Stevenson writes, “[I]f at any time he [Utterson] dozed over, it was but to see it [the figure of Hyde] glide more stealthily through sleeping houses, or more swiftly and still more swiftly, even to dizziness, through wider labyrinths of lamp-lighted city, and at every corner crush a child and leave her screaming” (1650). In a sense, Utterson’s anxieties here represent the anxieties of the city system itself. An anxiety that this excess which has infiltrated the city is going to continue to behave in deviant ways with increasing speed and with increasing ferocity—thus the need for loyal and normalized figures of the city such as Utterson to take action and put a stop to it.

Utterson’s anxiety is in fact what leads him to investigate Hyde and, in turn, shows us an even more interesting description of Hyde’s movement worth quoting at length:

Mr. Utterson had been some minutes at his post when he was aware of an odd light footstep drawing near. In the course of his nightly patrols he had long grown accustomed to the quaint effect with which the footfalls of a single person, while

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It should be noted too that this response only comes after overcoming the desire to kill Hyde; a desire which is even shared by the unemotional doctor who arrives at the scene. It is this evidence as well as Poole’s testimony that Hyde’s weeping weighed so heavily on his heart that he could have wept too (1668) which serves as additional evidence for Hyde’s excessiveness—that his emotions are so strong, they inexplicably bleed over and affect the emotions of those around him.
he is still a great way off, suddenly spring out distinct from the vast hum and clatter of the city. Yet his attention had never before been so sharply and decisively arrested; and it was with a strong superstitious prevision of success that he withdrew into the entry of the court. (1651)

Here then we are presented with Utterson, our gentlemanly rhetorical standard, citing the oddness of Hyde’s very footfalls. Note too that Hyde is not engaged in any particular crime or otherwise deviant behavior at this point. Rather his normal existence is simply falling outside the realm of expectations. His footsteps represent a perversion of the accepted walking rhetoric of the city.

It is perhaps because of an awareness of this deviance of movement that Hyde chooses to locate his residence in Soho. Upon visiting the neighborhood, Utterson describes it as a “dismal quarter” with “muddy ways, and slatternly passengers […] like a district of some city in a nightmare” (1656). It would seem then that Soho is the part of the city which, in Utterson’s eyes anyway, most closely matches Hyde’s own rhetoric of movement. The problem however, is that Hyde does not limit himself to this area, but rather ventures all around the city including frequent returns to Jekyll’s neighborhood where his movement and behavior strike a strong discord with the accepted rhetoric of the city.

Accident of the Split: Metaphysical Manifestations

Thus far I have discussed the physical manifestations of both Hyde as an excess or perversion within the system as well as Jekyll as a nonparticipant, a hermit. Far more interesting than these physical manifestations however, are their metaphysical, even
metaphorical, counterparts. Perhaps most notable of these is the way in which Stevenson sets up Jekyll himself as a sort of city system to which Hyde dually becomes citizen and hermit.

This is first alluded to when Utterson reflects on his first meeting with Hyde saying, “God bless me, the man seems hardly human! Something troglodytic, shall we say?” (1652, emphasis added). Note here Utterson’s use of the word “troglodytic,” a way of describing “one who lives in seclusion” or, more generally, a “cave-dweller.”

Though Utterson passes over this idea as quickly as he comes to it, it is actually quite apt and worth pausing on. Hyde, after all, has lived within Jekyll for the majority of his “life,” much in the same way that a hermit might live in a cave. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Utterson is making this comment not about some man met out in the country, but rather in reference to a fellow gentleman met on the city streets of London—a man for whom Utterson has been waiting no less, on the exact premise that Hyde is one who “comes and goes” (1653). A man who, in other words, is active in the city system, not holed up in a cave or otherwise reclusive. Thus Utterson’s immediate urge to classify Hyde as a hermit despite the context of theme meeting on the streets of London is significant. Consider too this notion we have set up of Utterson as the ideal representative of the city system. As its representative, he recognizes deviation from the norm which his very body and actions represent.

In fact, Jekyll too corroborates Utterson’s evaluation of Hyde in his final statement. Jekyll writes, “Hyde was indifferent to Jekyll, or but remembered him as the mountain bandit remembers the cavern in which he conceals himself from pursuit”

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40 From the Oxford English Dictionary entry for “troglodyte”
(1680). Here again we have the notion of Hyde as troglodytic, compounded now by the notion of Jekyll as the cave. There is an important distinction to make with Jekyll’s extension of the idea, though. Whereas Utterson’s use of “troglodyte” early on in the story implies actually dwelling in a cave, Jekyll’s reference to himself as a cavern is only in terms of a place of refuge. We can therefore understand Hyde’s relationship to Jekyll as having developed into one of visitation rather than habitation. He operates as one no longer simply occupying a place, but rather creating spaces.41

This development of Hyde’s movement and participation is problematic for Jekyll on several accounts. Most obvious of these is the problem of the villainy which Hyde deals out in the real city of London—villainy which Jekyll, having shared memories with Hyde, is aware of and, in turn, troubled by. More to my point though, is that when Hyde is out practicing this menace in the real city, he leaves the Jekyll-city empty. To understand this, consider Jekyll’s own comments on the nature of his relationship to the phenomenon of identity Hyde represents. Jekyll describes how “man is not truly one, but truly two. I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. Others will follow; others will outstrip me on the same lines; and I hazard the guess that man will be known for a mere policy of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens” (1676, emphasis added). The first thing to notice in this statement is Jekyll’s posing of these facets of human nature as independent operating bodies contained within man himself. Jekyll thus aptly names these facets “denizens” implying a citizenship in the city-body of the host. Nevertheless, in Jekyll’s case when he says that

41 Recall De Certeau’s discussion of “space as practiced place” (117).
his body is Hyde’s “city of refuge” (1682), we can understand that this particular city has a population of only one.

This notion of Jekyll as a city-body and Hyde as a citizen is useful in understanding why when Hyde leaves the city (i.e. Jekyll drinks the potion and manifests as Hyde), Jekyll ceases to exist. As I discussed using De Certeau in the introduction to this study, a real city is not constituted by its streets and buildings, but by the people who operate within it and thus create the space of the city. In other words, the citizens who operate within a cityscape are what imbue that place with its city-ness. Thus the physical disappearance of Jekyll when Hyde is out can be understood metaphorically as Jekyll’s city-body ceasing to be a true city when its citizens abandon it.

Additionally, this absence of Jekyll’s city-body can in a way also be considered a hermitage, albeit a metaphysical one. Consider for instance Jekyll’s description of his first transformation into Hyde. He says that after taking the potion “that thing that was projected out was Edward Hyde” (1678, emphasis added). Again later, when Jekyll is describing the continued habit of drinking the potion, he refers to Hyde as that part of him which he had the “power of projecting” (1680). If we are considering Hyde as a projection into the real London system, it follows that we must conversely think of Jekyll as a kind of depression out of it. Thus every time Hyde enters the world, Jekyll leaves it—or, in his own words, “falls” from it (1680). This may seem like a rather obvious point, but consider the implications. Jekyll is ultimately cheating the system. He is able to commit a temporary suicide of sorts, sink into a no-place while his projection wreaks havoc, and then return with none of the effects of Hyde’s actions being traced directly back to him. In a sense then, we can see the projection of Hyde as an allowance for
Jekyll’s temporary, metaphysical hermitage outside the real London system. A hermitage
that perverts the rules of the system and allows a member to exist (at least, in a sense
exist) while completely separating oneself from other’s actions as well as preventing
one’s own (non)actions to cause ripples of meaning and relation within the system.42

Resolving the Accident of the Split

It is within the vein of these metaphysical hermitages that we can begin to
understand the true implications of the final scene in which Hyde dies, not Jekyll. Recall
that under the framework we have established, the city and its rhetoric demands
participation and thus any non-participation constitutes a chink in the system which must
be either disciplined or eliminated. So, if Jekyll serves as a city-system for the citizen
Hyde, then we can understand the nature of Hyde’s containment within that system as a
type of hermitage within it (and therefore problematic). In other words, the system that
makes up even Jekyll’s city-body demands Hyde’s movement within it. Metaphorically
speaking, if Jekyll’s body is the city then Hyde’s movements within that city might be
manifested by Jekyll’s deferment to some vice for instance. In other words, since Hyde is
really just Jekyll’s internal evil, in order for Hyde to have proper participation within
Jekyll’s city-body, Jekyll would have to practice a little evil so to speak.43

42 It is also interesting to consider how though this hermitage is problematic in the ways discussed, the
reality that Jekyll cannot be around while Hyde is and vice versa, is actually a fulfillment of De Certeau’s
law of the proper which maintains that “elements taken into consideration are beside one another, each
situated in its own proper and distinct location” (117). However, what happens with the split is that there is
competition for this “distinct location,” hence the fluctuation back and forth between Jekyll and Hyde.
43 In thinking about this internal, metaphorical participation in a city-body, it is also interesting to note how
Stevenson tends to frame knowledge acquisition in terms of space and movement. Perhaps the best
example of this is when Hyde is about to drink the potion in front of Dr. Lanyon and tells him that if he can
stand to watch the transformation, then “a new province of knowledge and new avenues to fame and power
shall be laid open to you” (1674, emphasis added).
However, what we know from Jekyll’s own account is that for the large part, he does not practice this evil. In his letter to Utterson he writes that his has been “nine-tenths a life of effort, virtue and control” (1677). Then later after experiencing his first accidental change, Jekyll writes that “[f]or two months […] I led a life of such severity as I had never before attained to, and enjoyed the compensation of an approving conscience” (1681) yet this living in nine-tenths virtue and later in even stricter severity means that Hyde is not exercised within the city he inhabits. Jekyll in fact describes him as being “caged” within him (1681). It is for this reason that we can understand Hyde’s initial and subsequently more frequent manifestations as an acting out against his forced hermitage within Jekyll’s city-body. In other words, Hyde manifests as a means of escaping one city system which will not allow him to participate, Jekyll’s body, into another city system, London, which will allow for it (though admittedly with disciplinary kick-backs when he acts to excess). In this way Hyde moves from being the hermit of one system to being the excess of another.

The means by which this manifestation from one system to another occurs can best be understood using De Certeau’s notions of tactics and strategies. In the case of Jekyll’s city-body, we can understand the primary strategy as being one of maintaining always his socio-moral “uprightness” (and therefore falling neatly in with the strategies of his own London system which regulate the “proper” behavior of divided social classes). Each of Hyde’s emergences then can be understood as a De Certeau-ian tactic in which Hyde is “vigilantly mak[ing] use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers” (37). It is in fact one of these cracks which Jekyll mentions when he describes the moment of his first transformation into Hyde: “At
that time my virtue slumbered; my evil, kept awake by ambition, was alert and swift to seize the occasion; and the thing that was projected was Edward Hyde” (1678). After this moment it is understood that Jekyll is aware of Hyde’s evil nature. Thus thereafter the very act of taking the potion represents another weakness, a crack, in his strategic virtue which makes room for Hyde’s tactical projection outward. Even later when Hyde begins to project himself outward without the potion, it is always made possible by a crack in Jekyll’s surveillance of his own good virtue.⁴⁴

In any case, when Hyde employs these tactics from within Jekyll’s city-body and projects himself into the London system, we find that his particular method of participation always tends towards deviance. We’ve of course seen this once already in the description of Hyde trampling the little girl on the street corner. It should be noted too though, that even when Hyde is trying to make amends for this slight via the financial compensation the family demands, his actions are seen as suspect. Enfield, in recounting the story to Utterson, explains how he “took the liberty of pointing out to my gentleman [Hyde] that […] a man does not, in real life, walk into a cellar door at four in the morning and come out of it with another man’s cheque for close upon a hundred pounds” (1647, emphasis added). It is significant here not only that Enfield reads Hyde’s actions as not belonging to real life, but also that he poses the observation as instruction (“I pointed out to my gentleman…”) to a man who clearly seems unaware that his actions are irregular.

Though we later learn of other stories of Hyde’s violent and disreputable past (notably filled with “strange associates” (1660)), the only other actual detailed account

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⁴⁴ For example, Jekyll’s moment of arrogance on the park bench when he glories at his own goodness as related to those around him. A thought which, by its completion, finds Jekyll once again transformed into Hyde (1682).
we get of Hyde’s behavior is the murder of Sir Danvers Carew. Even before getting into
the specifics of the murder it should be noted how the crime “elicited a great deal of
public feeling” and is ultimately “resented as a public injury” (1660, emphasis added).
Thus we see Hyde’s last significant act in the London system as being one against not
just a fellow gentleman, but the people themselves.45

The specifics we learn from the maid who witnessed the crime are telling too and
worth quoting at length:

As she so sat she became aware of an aged and beautiful gentleman with white
hair, drawing near along the lane; and advancing to meet him, another and very
small gentleman […]. When they had come within speech […] the older man
bowed and accosted the other with a very pretty manner of politeness […].
Presently her eye wandered to the other, and she was surprised to recognize in
him a certain Mr. Hyde, who had once visited her master, and for whom she had
conceived a dislike. He had in his hand a heavy cane, with which he was trifling;
but he answered never a word, and seemed to listen with ill-contained impatience.
And then all of a sudden he broke out in a great flame of anger, stamping his foot,
brandishing the cane, and carrying on […] like a madman. The old gentleman
took a step back, with the air of one very much surprised and a trifle hurt; and at
that Mr. Hyde broke out of all bounds, and clubbed him to the earth. And the next
moment, with ape-like fury, he was trampling his victim under foot, and hailing

45 Note the implication here that though the novel only tells us the actions of the gentlemanly class, the
whole system seems to support their actions and social status. The upper class is thus not perceived as a
subjugating bourgeoisie, but rather as a proper manifestation of social order.
down a storm of blows, under which the bones were audibly shattered and the body jumped upon the roadway. (1655)

The first thing we should notice is that this event occurs on the street, the city place specifically designed for movement and for public, social interaction. The second thing we should notice is that, like Enfield before him, Carew recognizes in Hyde a fellow gentleman and treats him as such. At this point Hyde even seems to make an effort to fall into his social expectations (after all he doesn’t merely trample the man without pause and continue on his way as he did with the little girl), but cannot seem to hide his impatience. When this impatience breaks, it is those items which Hyde uses to move through the system (a walking stick and feet) which he manipulates to perform this act of deviancy. Thus it seems that Hyde’s deviancy is always betrayed by his footfall, from the trampling of victims to the odd rhythm of step that gives him away to Utterson first on the street corner and later when he is hiding in the cabinet.

It is important to realize though, that despite the deviancy that Hyde represents, the London system is prepared for it. In this way we can understand Hyde’s actions as being permitted. In a sense he represents that characteristic of the accident which Virilio says is “integral.” The system accepts and even expects this type of accident because it allows systems of discipline and administration (such as the police force, or in our case Utterson who represents the social norm) to practice and extend their power. Similarly,

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46 This walking stick deserves comment. For one it is interesting that it was first a gift from Utterson, our rhetorical standard, to Jekyll, our figure struggling with his own rhetorical expectations. Thus the stick would seem to operate both literally as an aid to walking and also metaphorically as an aid to proper rhetorical participation. Furthermore, it is interesting that Hyde’s use of the stick marks the level of his rhetorical competence. First when he is “trifling” with it we can understand him as at least attempting social niceties, and then when he uses it to beat Carew, we can understand him as having grossly deviated from and even broken the rhetorical rules he is supposed to be following.
De Certeau discusses how progress allows an increasing number of “waste products of a functionalist administration (abnormality, deviance, illness, death, etc.) […] to be reintroduced into administrative circuits and transforms even deficiencies […] into ways of making the networks of order denser” (94-5). Thus Hyde behaving publicly as an excessive and deviant gentleman allows the system to employ means through which to increasingly administer the desired behaviors of the gentlemanly class, and thus the status quo.

We in fact see this very stretching of disciplinary measures in the sense that it is not really the police who investigate and eventually bring justice to Hyde, but rather Utterson, a regular citizen47 (albeit a gentleman lawyer, and so in a sense still at least a type of administrator). Furthermore, it should be noted here that when Jekyll (really stuck as Hyde) retreats to his cabinet at the end of the narrative, it is Poole, a member of the servant class, who seeks out and employs Utterson’s help in restoring the status quo. Thus we can see members of several social classes all in support of this same idea of normalcy, of proper behavior.48

However, whereas Hyde is subject to discipline,49 Jekyll is most certainly not. He cannot even be said to be a waste product in the way that death might be considered a

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47 Certainly an argument can be made that all citizens are police citizens in the sense that anyone who is part of a system automatically polices those around him or her who are also part of that system (a few rather harmless examples might be honking a horn at an aggressive driver, breaking up a fight at a bar, etc.) Nevertheless, my point here is that Utterson’s role as a police citizen is accented almost to the point of him operating seemingly with the authority and intentionality of a governmental police force itself.

48 For a good discussion of Poole and the other servants in Stevenson’s text see Jean Fernandez’s “‘Master’s made away with…’: Servant Voices and Narrational Politics in The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde’

49 Though Hyde technically has two options (to “die upon the scaffold” or to “release himself” (1685)) we can understand the difference between the two as negligible since it is only when Utterson forces his hand that Hyde in a frenzy kills himself and goes “to his account” (1669).
waste product. Rather he represents a part of the accident which, though it may still serve as diagnostic for the system, is not capable of being reintegrated in order to make more dense the networks of order.

It is at this point that De Certeau’s discussion of the city system finally fails us. He, like Hayden White and other cultural theorists, stops short of the problem of complete nonparticipation. However, we can still use his discussion of death as an adequate springboard to conclude our understanding of Jekyll’s ultimate non-existence. De Certeau writes, “Along with the lazy man, and more than he, the dying man is the immoral man: the former, a subject that does not work; the latter, an object that no longer even makes itself available to be worked on by others; both are intolerable in a society in which the disappearance of subjects is everywhere compensated for and camouflaged by the multiplication of the tasks to be performed” (190-1). We in fact see this camouflage via the multiplication of tasks to be performed in Stevenson’s text when Utterson insists that he must first go home and read through both letters and then return at a later time to call the police. Following the death of Hyde we are in this way immediately presented with a list of tasks to be performed which will apparently take care of the matter. It is significant though, that the story stops short of seeing all these tasks performed, thus sparing Stevenson (and the characters themselves) the problem of actually confronting Jekyll’s non-existence.

De Certeau goes on to explain that “the dying man raises once again the question of the subject at the extreme frontier of inaction, at the very point where it is the most

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50 i.e. a corpse as a non-productive body, but a body nonetheless
51 Specifically this anxiety concerning social status and proper behavior therein
pertinent and the least bearable. In our society, the absence of work is non-sense; it is necessary to eliminate it in order for the discourse that tirelessly articulates tasks and constructs the Occidental story of ‘There’s always something to do’ to continue. The dying man is the lapse of this discourse. He is, and can only be, ob-scene. And hence censured, deprived of language, wrapped up in a shroud of silence: the unnamable” (191). Thus, if De Certeau understands the dying man as the threat of inaction which must be eliminated (read: made subject to discipline), the hermit stands as the fulfillment of that threat which can no longer be made subject to discipline or administration. The hermit is, in essence, one step beyond De Certeau’s discussion of the dying man. If death is, as De Certeau says, “an elsewhere,” then hermitage is a nowhere. Specifically though it is a nowhere within the confines of a defined system of places and spaces; the hermit is in effect the presence of an absence. An absence that specifically speaks to the limits of institutional power; if the dying man is at the frontier of inaction, the hermit is themself that frontier. Whereas Hyde was a gentleman who acted to excess, Jekyll was a gentleman who shunned the very system that produced his privileged status. Jekyll in effect opted out of the final product of social normalcy which the system was attempting to uphold. Thus the system, unable to take action against him, simply threw him out. He became a nonfactor just as he was non-contributor.

Nevertheless, Jekyll’s hermitage is still significant in its demonstration of the system’s anxieties. Anxieties which, furthermore, the system tries to cover up via its partially successful attempts to administer and discipline those products of the accident which emerge as a result of these anxieties. We can thus understand the power of the hermit not in its ability to evade the system, but in its ability to highlight that which the
system wishes to, but is unable to, make fit. Hermitage is not in and of itself a positive thing, but recognition of hermitage can be used diagnostically to address and problem solve negative aspects of the systems which produce it. Therein one can find the pressure points which might be utilized in order to make positive change rather than simply reinscribing the status quo.
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CHAPTER 3: REPRESENTATIONS OF POSTCOLONIAL URBAN HERMITAGE IN

INDRA SINHA’S ANIMAL’S PEOPLE

“After two millennia of experiments and failures, of accidents of all kinds, with globalization the third millennium inaugurates the paradox of the failure of success for it is the success of Progress that provokes disaster. An integral accident of a science now deprived of a conscience, whose arrogant triumph wipes out even memory of its former benefits.

This is a major event in a long history of knowledge whose tragic nature globalization both reveals and conceals at one and the same time.” - Paul Virilio, The Original Accident

“Spatially and socially the city condenses the contradictions of social formations. It responds both to the logic of accumulation and to social struggles. To the social scientist it provides an entry point to the study of wider questions. […] An inquiry into the city is of necessity an inquiry into the vital social processes that give rise to such monstrosities as the post-colonial city.” - Neera Chandoke, “The Post-Colonial City”

“It’s like every good thing in the world is dying and the people of the world, they see but do not care. These mourners are defiant, never will they give into evil powers. […] what I like is the defiance, I like it a lot.” Animal, in Indra Sinha’s Animal’s People

Introduction: Textual Perspective

In any text, we may define hermitage as a state constituting a lapse in participation within a particular system of power. The hermit as a trope though, is not a rigid, unbending concept, but rather manifests as a reflection of the anxieties of the systems which produce it. The hermit produced out of industrialization in Victorian

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52 Certainly it would be easier to simply say “nonparticipation” as I will throughout this chapter, but I want to point out here that the nonparticipation of hermitage is often preceded by some element of “normal” participation. Thus hermitage is not simply the state of nonparticipation itself, but rather a state of having fallen into nonparticipation.
London is by no means the hermit produced out of globalization in the postcolonial city. Nevertheless, a side by side study of the two phenomenon is useful in demonstrating 1) those operations which do manifest themselves consistently across both instances (and should therefore be looked for as markers of the trope in other texts), and 2) the ways in which our textual perspective of this hermitage greatly influences our understandings of the power dynamics inherent in its production.

In the previous chapter we saw how Jekyll’s hermitage served as a marker of anxiety in a system of social hierarchy with rigidly defined expectations of proper behavior and participation for those at the upper strata of that hierarchy. This presentation of hermitage was only made possible though, through the rather limited view of one who existed himself at the upper strata of that social hierarchy from which the hermitage was falling (in other words, the text is viewed largely from Utterson’s perspective looking down on Jekyll). In Indra Sinha’s book *Animal’s People*, we will see how this perspective is inverted so that the reader is allowed to view hermitage from within its very manifestation. Instead of viewing the hermit from the anxieties of the system in power, we view it from the vantage point of those forced into hermitage because of those anxieties. In this way we will see how a postcolonial exploration of the concept of hermitage is key in demonstrating how the powers-that-be can utilize for their own purposes the absence which hermitage represents. In other words, though these powers may not be able to appropriate hermitage so as to make their networks of order more dense, they can utilize it in order to defer the threat of having the legitimacy of those networks challenged.
Postcolonial City as Hermitage

The best place to start in this exploration is no doubt with an understanding of the effects of globalization on the postcolonial city itself. In order to serve as a reference point towards this goal, it is first important to anchor our discussion in the historical basis of Sinha’s novel.

In an interview following the novel’s publication, Indra Sinha himself argued that his text “is about people, not about issues” and that it “could just as easily have been set in West Africa or Indonesia, because the story is really about how powerless, disenfranchised people deal with the monstrous injustices that are heaped upon them” (“Q&A”). We can therefore understand the broader concepts in the novel, such as hermitage itself, to be generally representative of what the author sees operating in various manifestations of the postcolonial city. Nevertheless, the immediate context of the conflict in Animal’s People is very much a close fictionalization of the real life disaster that occurred at a pesticide factory in Bhopal, India in 1984.

The factory itself was established in 1969 by Union Carbide, an American multinational corporation. In 1979, the factory began the production of methyl isocyanate (MIC), a highly reactive and toxic chemical used in the production of agricultural pesticides. By 1980 however, the company was massively bleeding profits. In an effort to alleviate these losses, the company began cutting corners in safety protocols and, in addition, cut over 200 jobs including half of the workers responsible for the MIC unit and two thirds of the maintenance crew for the entire factory. The disastrous results of these decisions came to a head on the night of December 2, 1984 when a poisonous cloud of MIC and other toxic compounds leaked from the factories storage containers into the
surrounding urban sprawl. The initial death toll numbered around 8,000, but gas-related injuries and diseases continue to plague the population and the environment to this day.

Soon after the accident, legal struggles concerned with accountability and compensation for damages began. Despite having the case moved from the U.S. to the more forgiving Indian legal system, company officials continually refused to appear in court where they would be forced to address the $3.3 billion dollar damages claim the Indian government had placed against them. Eventually a settlement was reached in the amount of $470 million dollars and was subsequently upheld by the Indian Supreme Court. All pending individual claims were officially dropped, but to date legal struggles continue in opposition to what is widely viewed as an outrageously low settlement.

Such is the background conflict in Sinha’s text which picks up nearly 19 years after the initial disaster. Sinha, however, substitutes Bhopal for the fictional city Khaufpur and instead of directly naming Union Carbide, simply refers to the “Kampani.” Nevertheless, the ramifications of globalization which create the postcolonial hermitage rein true just as much in Sinha’s text as they do in its real world counterpart.

At the center of this postcolonial hermitage is very much the notion of visibility, or more to the point, an invisibility which occurs as a result of spatial and temporal distancing. In the opening of Pablo Mukherjee’s discussion of Animal’s People, he draws attention to the fact that the very geographical presence of the factory within the confines

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53 Reports of actual average pay out of this settlement vary from $2,200 per victim (Boughton 7) to as low as $500 (Shrivastava). Either way, when considering the extensive long term medical and environmental effects of the accident, compensation even at its high end is nowhere near sufficient.

54 Throughout the text, the supposed transcription of the indigenous first person narrator is figured in phonetic representations of the dialect. Thus “Company” becomes “Kampani,” “James Bonding” becomes “jamisponding,” “Saint John” becomes “Sanjo,” etc.
of the city “raises the question of the spatial politics of environmental toxicity, about who decides to build or dump what where and how these decisions affect a disproportionate number of human and nonhuman beings who have little say in the matter” (216, emphasis added). It is in fact to these very spatial politics that Frederick Engels referred nearly three decades earlier in his criticism of capitalism noting that, “The breeding place of disease, the infamous holes and cellars in which the capitalist mode of production confines our workers night after night, are not abolished, they are merely shifted elsewhere!” (71, emphasis added). The elsewhere in this case however, has become the postcolonial city itself. A place which is both spatially elsewhere and, as Mukherjee points out, also vocally elsewhere; a place where the people are not allowed reasonable means to engage in the participatory act of speaking out against the hermitage which is forced on them. We can thus begin to see how the postcolonial city itself is strategically positioned as a sort of forced hermitage within the global community. A hermitage whose continued existence ensures that those within it will not be able to challenge the power of those countries and corporations outside of it.

However, the answer to the question of spatial politics which Engels only partially addresses in his suggestion of the capitalist’s “breeding place of disease,” is perhaps best articulated by Rob Nixon’s notion of “risk relocation” (46). Spatially, we can understand this risk relocation as, quite simply, Western corporations not allowing an underequipped factory producing wildly dangerous chemicals to exist within the confines

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55 Rob Nixon argues that this spatial distancing allows for an invisibility which renders citizens of this real place to be considered “virtual uninhabitants” from the perspective of distant powers which need to depopulate the land (at least rhetorically) in order to justify their violent uses of it (in this case, building a factory, but other good examples Nixon uses include the building of a dam and the establishment of a nuclear test site) (153).

56 A “voicelessness” which demonstrates itself best in the failed attempts at litigation against the Kampani.
of a Western city. Thus the spatial relocation of the factory itself to India constitutes a relocation of the risk into a geographic place less visible to those constituents which support and maintain the company’s power in the global community. As Mukherjee argues though, this spatial risk relocation (as well as the refusal of accountability that followed the disaster) exposes the premise that “the very concept of human carried radically different values in the global north and south” (217). It is the anxiety of this exposure (that is to say, the blatant treatment of humans as non-humans) which leads to a fully formed hermitage of the postcolonial city not only spatially but temporally as well.

In order to flesh out this point, it will become increasingly beneficial to draw comparisons between hermitage as manifested in Stevenson’s text and in Sinha’s text. Though there is no straight one to one comparison between the operations of hermitage in each novel, it will nevertheless be useful to refer to the following charts which present a

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57 from direct constituents such as stock holders and customers to indirect constituents such as media outlets and human rights organizations.
58 This argument follows a political reading of the spatial relocation of the factory into the postcolonial city and the resultant hermitage. However, though outside of the direct scope of this study, one might also consider a more economic based argument dealing with the “green revolution.” The green revolution ultimately refers to the corporatization of rural third world environments purportedly under the banner of ending world hunger. The direct result of this is genetically modified crops and pesticides which allow for more output in the short term, but whose use makes the farmers permanently dependent on the corporate entity. In her discussion of the postcolonial city, Neera Chandoke argues that the operations inherent in the green revolution are “alienating the people from their means of subsistence and simultaneously converting these means into commodities without providing to the people the wherewithal to participate in the market economy” (2868). Thus one can see how, accident of the factory aside, even the non-accidental operations of the factory in Bhopal/Khaufpur (which presumably produced pesticides for efforts such as the green revolution), served to throw the community into a sort of economic hermitage from the global market. For more information on the green revolution especially as it relates to India, see Akhil Gupta’s Postcolonial Developments: Agriculture in the Making of Modern India (Duke University Press Books, 1998).
59 At various times throughout this chapter I will refer to the treatment of humans. Unless otherwise stated, I am specifically thinking of humans in terms of basic and equal distribution of human rights (specifically between Western representatives of the Kampani and the postcolonial subjects of Khaufpur). So even though human rights as a broad concept is debatable, for our purposes we may see any lapse in treatment of the postcolonial subject as compared to the Western Kampani’s representatives as a lapse in the equal distribution of human rights we are arguing for.
simplified version of the relationships between the two texts, which will in turn help us better characterize the nature of hermitage and its emergence:

figure 1:

figure 2:
As we know from our discussion of Stevenson’s text in the last chapter, even before the occurrence of the accident, Hyde constituted a hermitage within Jekyll. Similarly, we can understand the previously discussed spatial politics of the Kampani’s presence in the city before the accident as already implicating Khauppur into what is recognizable as a hermitage. After all, the factory’s presence devalues the humanity of the surrounding city citizens and dismisses any participation with or political engagement against the Kampani itself. It follows then that the accident that occurs does not constitute a new hermitage for the postcolonial city, but rather simply a deeper and more blatant one. A hermitage in which, as Nixon puts it, the Kampani becomes “omnipresent in its effects” but “visibly absent” in its literal, physical presence within the city (58).

Furthermore, consider Nixon’s argument that Sinha’s novel forces us to interrogate the Kampani’s “plasticity of ownership, how foreign corporate practices inside India can be owned (for short-term period) and disowned (for long-term consequences to environmental and human health)” (57). This interrogation of plasticity is in fact very similar to our own previous questioning of Jekyll’s fluctuating relationship to Hyde. For instance, recall that Jekyll would often revel in Hyde’s deviant behavior (“owning” it in a matter of speaking), but then through the phenomenon of the split, found himself free of the consequences of those actions. Thus, when Nixon says that “we come to see the Kampani as both incorporated and unincorporated into the national body” (58), we can understand this as parallel to Jekyll and Hyde’s joint incorporation and un-incorporation within each other.

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60 For instance, Union Carbide maintained a majority control over the factory and continually disregarded the input of the local Indian engineers which, if followed, may have been able to prevent the disastrous events of Dec 2, 1984 (see Mukherjee 219-20).
However, if we are to fully understand the relationship of the Kampani with the city (and, in turn, the fluctuation of the city from an integrated hermitage to a de-integrated hermitage), it is necessary to discuss the nature of the accident whose resultant split reveals the city’s second hermitage. Recall that in Stevenson’s text, the accident of nonparticipation stemmed from a social anxiety about proper participation. The accident in Sinha’s text too can be traced to social anxiety, but of a far more complex nature.

I have shown above how the Kampani’s very presence in the city can be understood to already constitute a hermitization of the city itself. However, this understanding is only made possible through the critical lens of this study. The people themselves do not really understand their status within a hermitage until the manifestation of the accident which reveals what was actually true the entire time. The spatial politics of invisibility which characterize the city’s hermitage (i.e. temporal and geographic distancing), also make it possible for the Kampani to easily disguise its violent actions via camouflage such as the rhetoric of the green revolution.61

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61 As demonstrated in figure 3, the green revolution was a move to exponentially increase crop outputs in developing countries via the use of pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals. However, these chemicals were largely created and sold by Western entities, so that any country participating in this supposedly green revolution would in turn become dependent on that Western entity to maintain its agricultural production. Thus the green revolution can in many ways be understood as a neo-colonial practice.
Science helps build a new India

Oxen working the fields . . . the eternal river Ganges . . . jeweled elephants on parade. Today these symbols of ancient India exist side by side with a new sight—modern industry. India has developed bold new plans to build its economy and bring the promise of a bright future to its more than 400,000,000 people. But India needs the technical knowledge of the western world. For example, working with Indian engineers and technicians, Union Carbide recently made available its vast scientific resources to help build a major chemicals and plastics plant near Bombay. Throughout the free world, Union Carbide has been actively engaged in building plants for the manufacture of chemicals, plastics, carbons, gases, and metals. The people of Union Carbide welcome the opportunity to use their knowledge and skills in partnership with the citizens of so many great countries.

WRITE for booklet S-5 "The Exciting Universe of Union Carbide," which tells how research in the fields of carbons, chemicals, gases, metals, plastics and nuclear energy keeps bringing new wonders into your life.

Union Carbide Corporation, 270 Park Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.
For example, in the above advertisement from 1962 which pictures a god-like hand pouring pesticides into a farm field, Union Carbide claims that for India to fully realize its “bright future” it needs the “technical knowledge of the western world”—a technical knowledge that, Union Carbide assures the viewer, it is happy to provide via a brand new factory. Company officials are thereby able to mask their capitalist exploitation of Indian communities within the rhetoric of a supposedly humanitarian effort to bring those communities to a western standard’s “bright” technological future.

It is the contradiction of these two elements (i.e. rhetoric that inscribes value to the community, while actions undermine it) to which a character in Sinha’s text calls attention when she appeals to a Kampani official saying, “we lived in the shadow of your factory, you told us you were making medicine for the fields. You were making poisons to kill insects, but you killed us instead. I would like to ask, was there ever much difference, to you?” (306). The point this woman is drawing to the surface is that the accident at the factory has made clear the “uneven distribution of universal human rights in the global south” (DeLoughrey 33) that existed in Khaufpur even before the accident, despite what the Kampani claims. We can thus read the Kampani’s original anxiety as a private awareness of internal contradictions concerning the nature of its relations to humanity, contradictions which the accident at the factory bring to light.

However, as opposed to openly recognizing the accident at the factory as a blatant action against humanity, the Split occurs in which the Kampani separates itself spatially from the city and temporally from the consequences of its actions. The Kampani is therefore, once again able to re-inscribe the city into the same terms of hermitage as before. A hermitage that asserts the Kampani’s view of the citizens of Khaufpur as less
than human. Thus it is no longer the neocolonial presence of the factory that is a problem, but rather, as Nixon puts it, “the weight of absentee corporate colonialism” (52).\textsuperscript{62}

In short, one could simplify an understanding of this process by saying that it is the anxiety of the Kampani being “found out” (that is to say, found out concerning the inhuman treatment that the spatial politics of the very presence of the factory represented) that leads to the accident that exposes the Kampani’s actions for what they are. Recall though that Sinha has inverted the text’s perspective to a view from within hermitage rather than from within the system of power. We can understand then that the exposure of the Kampani’s inhumane actions is only made manifest to the people within the hermitage itself. It is not a public exposure.\textsuperscript{63} Rather, the split allows the Kampani to distance itself spatially away from the disaster zone and then proceed in a temporal distancing via the endless deferral of accountability. We can therefore understand the deeper hermitage that the city sinks into after the split as being a direct result of this new degree of spatial distancing (Kampani’s retreat to America) compounded by temporal deferral (extended, unresponsive litigation).

This temporal deferral is best understood within the context of what Rob Nixon terms “slow violence.” Nixon defines slow violence as “violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all” (2). He describes

\textsuperscript{62} The notion of an absentee is potentially misleading in that it could suggest the colonial power itself as falling into a hermitage. However, it is important to realize that hermitage always constitutes a fall away from systems of power. Thus we can understand this as an absenteeism as viewed from within the hermitage looking at the system it has been pulled out of.

\textsuperscript{63} This is of course a debatable point. Yes, this author can concede that there are limited exceptions. For example, the western doctor Elli who comes to help the people is proof of a certain leakage in the containment of the city’s hermitage. This leakage though, is due to specific acts of resistance from within the hermitage that will be dealt with later in this chapter.
these attritional acts of violence as being “marked above all by displacements—temporal, geographical, rhetorical, and technological displacements that simplify violence and underestimate, in advance and in retrospect, the human environmental costs. Such displacements smooth the way for amnesia, as places are rendered irretrievable to those who once inhabited them” (7). Within this frame, we can understand the Kampani’s actions even before the accident as employing several of these displacements. Only after the accident occurs however, does the company employ a temporal displacement in which they endlessly refuse to appear in court. While this refusal occurs though, the long-term effects of the initial accident continue to compound. By refusing to appear in court though, the Kampani not only defers accountability but also wagers on the assumption that eventually the acts of violence from which the people suffer will be so temporally separated from the initial accident that they will no longer be traced back to the Kampani’s involvement. In other words, they depend on the “imperceptible change whereby violence is decoupled from its original causes by the workings of time” (11). Nevertheless, despite the seemingly hopeless nature of the postcolonial city’s hermitage endlessly deferred across time and space, Sinha’s text significantly differs from Stevenson’s in that the hermitage is not passively accepted (as was the case with Jekyll), but rather actively resisted. In fact, one of the primary modes of this resistance is the way in which the Split occurs and is dealt with at the level of character.

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64 Geographic displacement via the factory in India (and later via the Kampani’s flight from India), rhetorical displacement via the rhetoric of the green revolution, etc.
65 i.e. prolonged disease from the initial encounter with the poison, continuous seepage of the chemicals into the water supply, etc.
66 This temporal deferral is also compounded, albeit extra-textually, by the merger of Union Carbide into Dow chemical. Just as Jekyll sought to hide Hyde within himself and thereby defer the consequences of Hyde’s actions, Dow Chemical seeks to defer the consequences of Union carbide’s actions by hiding it within itself.
Human Representations and Animal Tacticians

Recall that in Chapter 1 of this study I defined “the Split” as the manifestation of at least two distinct representations of a single subject identity: one that is allowable within the system and therefore administrable, and one that is not. For example, the anxiety of upper class social propriety which instigated the accident in Stevenson’s text resulted in 1) Hyde, who was deviant in the London system and therefore subject to discipline and 2) Jekyll, whose social and physical hermitage fell outside the system’s administerial reach (resulting in his eventual oblivion).

We have already explored a similar process in Sinha’s text, albeit on a much larger scale, with the splitting of the Kampani from the city that it was initially a part of. As we have already discussed, this Split results in 1) the Kampani, which is indeed deviant in its criminality, and 2) the city of Khaufpur, which falls outside of the global community and is thereby sentenced to a hermitage and the threat of eventual oblivion similar to that experienced by Jekyll.

However, what is far more interesting in Sinha’s text is the Split that occurs at the level of character from within the hermitage of the postcolonial city itself. Now whereas in Stevenson’s case this Split was a reaction against anxieties surrounding social propriety (thus resulting in Hyde’s problematic deviancy), in Sinha’s text the anxiety has more to do with the inhumane treatment of a community of people. Thus the resultant

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67 To be sure, the Kampani is acting as any company would be expected to in that it is concerned with making money and only with making money. However, the means by which it is allowed to pursue this end is still limited by laws and customs. Thus the Kampani’s actions here, though perhaps not surprising, can still be legitimately characterized as deviant and criminal. Nevertheless, one should recognize that this deviancy is performed by an elite entity and is thus accommodated by the system. A metaphorical comparison for this might be the politician’s son who performs a crime, but gets away with it because of his parent’s influence; the crime itself is still an act of deviancy, but because of the specific nature of the subject in question, it is allowed for.
Split is appropriately a physical manifestation of this anxiety where one character, Animal, literally strips off his identity as human and appropriates an animality not that dissimilar from the way in which the Kampani treated the members of the community in the first place. His humanity in essence slips into a place of nonparticipation, a hermitage where it remains dormant, inactive in the wider world of the city he inhabits. Meanwhile, Animal’s identification as a non-human beast allows him to operate in tactical ways within the city system. What is key in the difference between Stevenson and Sinha’s text though, is that whereas Jekyll sought simply to reverse the Split and thereby erase the meaningful effects of it in the world (and thus all evidence of the anxiety which it marked), Animal seeks rather to maintain the fracture and even make peace with it. Thus in the end we will see how Animal’s appropriation of both sides of the Split serves as a resistance against the negative effects of the accident while still maintaining markers of the anxieties which caused it.

The Split: Animality

The character that best demonstrates this Split is Animal, the 19 year old narrator of the text who was born right before the night of the accident. Early on in the

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68 This is a bit of a contentious point. I don’t mean to imply that either animal life or plant life deserves to be treated with the violence that the Bhopal community endured and continues to endure. Rather, I merely seek to point out that Union Carbide (and parallelly, the Kampani) treated the citizens of the community as “less than human,” one manifestation of which might be thought of as non-human, animal life.

69 This point will be complicated in a moment when we discuss how Animal’s voices serve as a sort of projection of his own felt humanity across the split which has occurred in his identity.

70 It is conceivable to explore the Split in other characters as well (for instance, concerning Ma Franci’s language issues before and after the accident, Zafar’s life as an ivory tower intellectual vs. a grassroots activist, Pandit Somraj’s relationship to music, etc.), however it manifests itself most obviously and in the most nuanced ways in Animal himself.

71 A fictional editor’s note that prefaces the text claims that the entire novel is a direct transcription of tapes which Animal has recorded.
text, Animal reports to the reader that his own encounter with the poison gas resulted in a “smelting” of his spine so that his bones “twisted like a hairpin,” forcing him thereafter to walk on all fours. This transformation leads the other children to harass him shouting, “‘Jaanvar, jungli Jaanvar.’ Animal, wild Animal” (Sinha 16). Rather than resist this harassment though, Animal appropriates the name and proceeds to think of himself, not altogether unfondly, as a new unique species of animal.

Even from these baseline details of the story we can already begin to see Animal as a direct response to the Kampani’s anxieties surrounding the accident and the slow violence which characterizes the ensuing hermitage. In the opening lines of the text Animal says, “I used to be human once. So I’m told, I don’t remember it myself” (1). First and foremost this claim marks an awareness of a transition in Animal’s identity—a transition that of course was caused by the accident itself. Thus if we can think of the original, pre-accident hermitage as demonstrating the Kampani’s view of the people as less-than-human, then we can think of the accident itself (along with deferred accountability) as a confirmation of this view. The result of this confirmation (via the manifestation of the accident of the chemical spill) is the physical manifestation of “beastliness” in Animal’s body. In essence, Animal is a literal representation of how the Kampani has treated the people all along. 72

72 If one is willing to make additional inferences from the extra-textual timeline of the Bhopal disaster, another layer of meaning reveals itself. We know, for example, that though Animal’s deformity is a result of his exposure to the poison gas, the actual physical manifestations of this do not reveal themselves until he is around 6 years old. If we trace the historical events of the Bhopal tragedy we find that it was around this time (February of 1989) that Union Carbide was able to settle the damages at $470 million dollars against the original claim of $3.3 billion. Thus if we see the accident as an assertion of the Kampani’s lack of value for the humanity of Bhopal, we can see this settlement as further confirmation. Thus the “animality” that laid latent in Animal while the case was being handled is suddenly manifested with the company’s confirmation of this animalized perspective of the people. Conversely, one can surmise that had
However, just as Animal appropriated the harassment of the children, so too does he appropriate the meaningful effects of his body’s deformity. Rather than let his deformed animal-like body stand as a marker of subjugation, Animal appropriates it into a tool of power.

This appropriation is best understood once again within the framework of De Certeau and tactics. Recall that in Stevenson’s text, our primary tactician was Hyde who took advantage of the “cracks” in Jekyll’s surveillance to project himself outward into the London system. These tactics though, always seen from the seat of social power that Utterson and Jekyll represented, were naturally portrayed as negative. However, what we will see in the inversion of perspective Sinha’s text allows for, is that these tactics are repositioned as liberating acts performed by disenfranchised people in the cracks of the social inequality that has been heaped upon them.

At their most meagre, we can see these tactics at work via Animal’s strategic appropriation of base animality\(^3\) that allows him to procure basic sustenance early on in life. For instance, Animal recounts a story about a fight with a stray dog over a scrap of food in which he rushes the dog, “snapping [his] jaws, growling louder than she [the dog], the warning of a desperate animal that will stick at nothing” (17). In this instance, it is clear that it is only through a display of his animal nature that he is able to feed himself. Cleverly though, Animal soon learns that this display need not be so extravagant. Instead of scavenging in the alleys, he learns to get into what he calls “tricks” (18)

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\(^3\)I use the term strategy here not in the De Certeau sense of strategy vs tactic, but rather in its literal sense as a “plan of action.” After all, though Animal continues to identify as an animal throughout the text, it is only in specific moments such as survival that he literally acts like an animal.
outside various cafes and restaurants. What these “tricks” basically entail is a public show of begging with the business’s clientele. The result is either easy money from the patrons, or more to the point, a meal from the proprietors in order to get him to go away because “nothing puts a person off their food more than a starving Animal watching every mouthful.” It is through this trick, Animal tells us, that he learned, “if you act powerless, you are powerless, the way to get what you want is to demand it” (19).

Any power “demanded” from Animal’s begging and other street-work though is admittedly self-serving. A more meaningful portrayal of Animal’s appropriation of his own form is the tactical nature of the work he does for Zafar, the community’s lead activist. Animal himself calls this work “jamisponding [James Bonding]” (174) due to the secretive information collecting the work often entails. Certainly one way this covert information gathering is made possible is through Animal’s diminished stature. That is to say his height and means of moving allow him to pass largely unnoticed beneath the radar, so to speak, of the average citizen. Animal tells us that “the world of humans is meant to be viewed from eye level. Your eyes. Lift my head and I’m staring into someone's crotch. Whole nother world it's below the waist” (2).

Admittedly though, Animal’s actual mode of operation seems quite conspicuous. Animal reports to the reader: “I walk, also run, by throwing my weight on my hands, hauling my feet forward in a kind of hop” (15). The conspicuous nature of this way of moving is even mentioned by Animal himself when after a crime he says, “not many Khaufpuris go on fours, that’s how Fatlu Inspector got his hands on me” (121). However,

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74 One should not entirely discount the self-serving though. As we will see, Animal’s very presence and success within the system serves as a resistance force against the hermitage and those powers which placed him there.
Animal’s exposure is only made possible here only because his crime marks him as a target. Usually though, Animal is not seen, quite simply because he is never looked for. Consider for instance the stealth nature of one of Animal’s most significant instances of “jamisponding.” He sneaks onto the compound of a socially elite hotel where he witnesses what appears to be the betrayal of Elli (a western doctor who befriends him) colluding with Kampani lawyers. Animal reports, “I wait my moment then creep out, low to the ground. My dark bare skin is blended into the Jehannum night, my kakadu shorts are dark because filthy. No one sees. People see what they are looking for, no one is looking for me” (270). Animal thus seems to invoke his own disenfranchisement (i.e. invisibility resulting from his physical deformity) as the source of his tactical abilities—tactics which in turn can be read as assertions of animal’s own felt humanity. After all, his very ability to perform tactics speaks to a humanity that he himself openly denies. Furthermore, his “jamisponding” and other work performed with Zafar can be read as operating to assert the community’s humanity as a whole. Whether it be checking the authenticity of Elli and her clinic for the community, spying on Elli and the lawyers, bringing Elli to care for Aliyah, confronting corrupt moneylenders, etc., Animal’s actions always seem to resist the basic devaluation that the community constantly encounters in their day to day lives. Thus, by Animal accepting his own disenfranchisement instead of lamenting it, he is able to focus on resisting the greater community’s disenfranchisement instead.

75 Unless otherwise stated, whenever I use the term “community,” I am specifically referring to the residents of the slums and those people directly affected by the violence of the gas leak.
All of Animal’s tactical actions described above, can be made more clear by comparing them to a separate discussion De Certeau has about the tactical nature of the indigenous Indian populations under Spanish colonial rule. De Certeau writes, “Indians often used the laws, practices, and representations that were imposed on them by force or fascination to ends other than those imposed by their conquerors […]. They metaphorized the dominant order: they made it function in another register. They remained within the system which they assimilated and which assimilated them externally. They diverted it without leaving it” (32). In the case of Khaufpur then, we can think of the imposed colonial order as including, in part, the meaningful effects of the slow violence imposed on them by the factory. This order was a devaluation of their humanity which is symbolized physically in Animal’s deformity. However, instead of acting like the devalued animal the Kampani sees him as, Animal organizes his tactical behaviors and begins to poach, as De Certeau would say, in the cracks of the postcolonial city system he is a part of. Thus he does not leave the system or even forsake its perceptions of him as an animal, but rather diverts the dominant order for his own resistant uses.

It should be noted, however, that Animal’s felt humanity is only really expressed in this tactical way after he meets Zafar who encourages him in this vein. Therefore a discussion of their relationship and its significance is necessary. As I’ve mentioned previously, Zafar is the community’s lead activist, concerning himself primarily with fighting the Kampani in court and assisting victims of the gas leak. This being the case though, it is interesting to note that Zafar himself is not a native member of the slums.  

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76 Sometimes in a primal way to procure food amongst the poor conditions (which too are not mutually exclusive from neocolonial pressures), sometimes in a community supportive way such as his work with Zafar and his activists, and sometimes in blatantly subversive ways such as his spying on the Kampani lawyers.
Rather, we learn early on that “he has given up everything in his life for the poor” (22). Nisha later explains this further, telling Animal that he had once been a scholar, “but when he got news of that night, he straight away quit his college and came to Khaufpur to organise the fight against the Kampani, which he has been doing ever since” (27). We can understand Zafar then as being uniquely positioned to assert his own humanity within the community because he himself was not directly affected by the dehumanizing nature of the accident. He is a sort of immigrant within the hermitized city.

In this context we can begin to compare and contrast the representational status of Animal and Zafar. On the one hand, Animal is more or less born into the accident and thus serves in his representational status as that which the Kampani sees the people as. That is to say, they treated the community as nonhuman, and so Animal manifests as nonhuman. Zafar, on the other hand, integrates himself into the community from outside and therefore is not fully subjected to the violence of the accident. He, quite contrary to Animal, fully embraces his humanity and the basic rights he feels this humanity deserves. In this way we can see Animal as a representation of how the people actually feel and are treated, and Zafar as a representation of how the people desire to feel and be treated. Thus, we can read Animal’s apprenticeship under Zafar as a shrinking of the gap between these two poles.

This shrinking is significant especially when we recognize that Zafar constitutes the Utterson of the postcolonial city. However, whereas Utterson was simply the rhetorical standard in Stevenson’s text, we can understand Zafar more as the ideal for a rhetorical standard that is not being fully realized because of the injustices of the city’s forced hermitage.
Thus, Zafar’s continued attempts at litigation towards the Kampani for compensation constitute, at least on one level, an attempt to return his community to the rhetorical standard he represents (that is to say, the standard of both being human, and being treated as human). Furthermore, since this litigation originates with Zafar operating within and as a representative of the hermitized city, we can think of it as a projection of hermitage across the Split onto the non-hermitized Kampani. In essence, this litigation, this projection of hermitage, serves as a reminder to the Kampani that the city is still there, refusing to sink into an oblivion like Jekyll.

This persistent reminder is obviously problematic for the Kampani which causes them to send their own lawyers to the city to negotiate a settlement and end the case once and for all. So, if litigation from Zafar and the city towards the absent Kampani constitutes a projection of the hermitage out of itself, then we can think of the lawyers’ trip to the city to negotiate a settlement as the Kampani temporarily extending itself down into a hermitage with the city. This extension is significant for two reasons. The first is that it forces the Kampani to bridge the split and in so doing recognize the city’s status as a hermitage. Furthermore, their presence within the city grants the citizens a unique opportunity to access the Kampani.

It is with this frame in mind that we can begin to understand Zafar’s intervention and the closing events of the novel. Zafar and the other city citizens realize that a settlement would mean an absolute foreclosing of ever getting compensation for the atrocities the Kampani is responsible for. However, they are also aware that the Kampani does not respond to their attempts at traditional means of administration (i.e. legal

77 Refer to figure 2 for a visualization of this interaction.
action). Zafar’s intervention constitutes a rather unique approach to the problem. Whereas Utterson’s intervention was poised as an act of hyper participation, Zafar’s is the complete opposite. He and Farouq both go on a hunger strike in which they deny themselves both water and food until the Kampani agrees to come to court. Considering their previous status as highly functioning activists, we can read this hunger strike as a complete break-down of participation within the system. Remember that the anxiety here is of a community of people not being treated like humans, thus Farouq and Zafar who have previously fought tooth and nail to assure their humanity, pull a full 180 and deny their status as humans beings in need of sustenance. When Elli hears of this decision, she argues with them saying that they are “making [their] own desert” (292). She of course says this to draw attention to the absurdity of their proposition, but what she fails to grasp is that they are simply invoking fully the standard that the Kampani has already seemed to assign to them since the building of the factory. In so doing they draw attention to the difference between their hard-fought humanity and the abysmal treatment the Kampani has given them. This, in turn, instigates the events which lead to the climax of Animal’s story.

Bridging the Split: Animal’s Humanity and the Voices of the Dead

However, before we investigate this end scene, it is first important to understand the most resistant force in the novel, the representational power of Animal’s own felt
identity. That is to say, he sees himself as fully an animal, albeit one with special “skills and talents.” In part these skills and talents consist of Animal’s physical movements as described in the above section. Animal himself, however, considers his greatest talent the ability to hear “Voices.” As we will see, these Voices often constitute specifically human desires, emotions, knowledge, etc. and therefore stand as a sort of externalization of Animal’s own suppressed humanity. In essence then, we can see Animal as uniquely existing across the Split. He at once fully appropriates the physical effects of the violence performed against his body by accepting his “animal” form, but then forecloses the notion of fully denying his humanity by projecting his human identity onto these external Voices which he engages with.

This unique nature is first alluded to in the scene where Animal and Zafar meet for the first time. Upon learning of Animal’s self-identification as non-human, Zafar immediately euphemizes Animal’s disability, insisting that he is simply “especially abled.” Given Animal’s no-nonsense personality, it would stand to reason that this comment would be met with, at best, a slew of sarcasm. Animal however responds neither sardonically nor defensively to this seeming naïveté, but rather skeptically, thinking, “I’d not told him about my Voices” (23). The implication here is that Animal completely agrees with Zafar that he is especially abled; it is simply that the terms of this conclusion are different for each character. For Animal, it is not his body that makes him

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78 He admittedly wishes to be human on multiple occasions, but this secret wish is always cast as a thing both outside of his reach and, by nature of the wishing, always not already true (despite the logical fact that he is, essentially, human).

79 This word will be capitalized wherever it indicates an external personality or entity that Animal is able to communicate with.
special per se, but rather the myriad Voices to which he is privy. Animal’s own introduction to these Voices is delivered directly to the journalist early on in Tape Two:

Since I was small I could hear people’s thoughts even when their lips were shut, plus I’d get en passant comments from all types of things, animals, birds, trees, rocks giving the time of day. What are these Voices, no good asking me. […] the Voices, some are like fireworks cracking the nearby air, others are inside me, if I listen carefully I’ll hear them arguing, or talking nonsense. (8)

Admittedly, as Animal hints at in this passage, these Voices come in a variety of formats, but the important thing to realize is that they can all be understood as operating on one of two levels. The first is as a coping mechanism for the trauma of the Split which Animal exists across. That is to say, Animal externalizes his own felt humanity onto “the Voices” in his head so as to avoid appropriating his human side and forsaking his

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80 It is possible to read these voices as a symptom of schizophrenia as Heather Snell has argued “Assessing the Limitations of Laughter in Indra Sinha’s Animal’s People” (1). Certainly a strong case could be made for such a supposition, but to do so would be to grossly underestimate the weight of the violence performed against Animal and others in the community. Rather we should read this and other similar character traits (i.e. Ma Franci’s sudden inability to recognize anything but French as a real language) as coping mechanisms for the trauma inherent in the forced hermitage the community has been subjected to. In other words, we can read the experience of Animal’s voices as directly resulting from his encounter with the accident at the factory. That being said, the term schizophrenia does appeal to me given its etymological root “schizo-“ (from Greek, meaning “division”), given the relationship between Animal’s voices and the metaphor of the Split we are dealing with.

81 As opposed to the majority of the narrative which is delivered to the “Eyes,” Animal’s name for the future readers of the book the journalist will transcribe.

82 Each traditional “chapter” pertains to a transcription of a specific recorded tape.

83 voices of nonlinguistic natural elements (animals, trees, celestial bodies, etc.); the voices of living, present human beings (often this comes in the form of hearing their thoughts, or translating their language even if the language is not one Animal actually knows); and the voices of the dead

84 Note that though this is true for the majority of the novel, there is a key turning point toward the end at which point Animal externalizes his Animality instead and therein flips the agency of either side of the Split.
animal identity. In this way he is able to continue to think of himself as fully animal while still engaging with human emotions and concerns.

However, despite the possible redemptive nature of this negotiation, Animal’s actual exchanges with the Voices are often quite crude and even hostile. For example, one of the most frequent types of exchanges Animal has with his Voices is over his own felt human sexuality and the conflict that this brings given his Animal body. Consider the first such example Animal gives us on Tape Four:

*Pussy pussy pussy,* says a voice full of dark horrifying laughter.

Fuck off, says I, refusing to be scared. Not all the Voices are mocking or hostile. Some are friendly, they tell me not to worry, I should listen to them, they will tell me the best way to proceed. You too can fuck off, I tell them. You are all pathetic. Voices without bodies, what the fuck is the use of you. Without me you’re nothing.

_We’ve minds, blinds, and lemon rinds._

But no bodies. It’s why you get so excited, having no bodies of your own you can only feel sexy when I do. This is why you’re always putting thoughts in my head. […]

_Thing you want takes two. What girl will do it with you?_

Fuck off, fuck off, fuck off! (44-5)

At the surface this seems like a rather counter-productive exchange, but really this is quite demonstrative of the power of the relationship between Animal and his Voices. First, Animal recognizes his own power over the Voices. He has a body and a physical presence in the world, they do not. He does not let them coerce him, but rather claims the
power granted to him by this physical body (albeit a deformed one). Thus we can begin to see Animal as a sort of receptacle or mouthpiece for these Voices that might otherwise be mute (a point which will become increasingly important when considered in tandem with the Voices of the dead which Animal bears witness to later).

Additionally, it is important to note that these Voices are specifically prodding Animal to recognize an aspect of his own buried (read: hermitized) humanity. His sexual desire is not akin to that of an actual animal: Nisha is not an animal in heat, and Animal is not simply a male with an arbitrary genetic trigger to reproduce offspring. Rather, we can read this sexual desire as a subtle but important marker of Animal’s own lingering humanity. That same humanity which he continually denies.

Consider that throughout most of the book there are two specific things that Animal hopes for which he believes will make him “normal,” will make him human. The first is that his spine is straightened. The second is that he finds a woman who will have sex with him. The former is an obvious hope to reverse the effects of the violence performed against him, and therein return his bent form to the upright stance he sees the people around him using. The latter desire is a sort of alternative wherein Animal imagines that if the violence performed against his body cannot be reversed, perhaps it can be ignored so that he can demonstrate his humanity despite his physical appearance. On Tape Fifteen, Animal indulges in a rant toward this end:

I want to fuck. Everyone’s at it, why not me? The whole world fucks away day and night, why am I the only one left out? […] It hurts when people hint, never do they say it to my face, that I should face facts, no woman will want me. Eyes, admit it, even you have thought this. Why shouldn’t I be wanted, even loved?
Nisha loves me, okay not how I’d like, but she will when my back’s straight. It’s why even in his sickness I hate Zafar, he could have any woman, but he’ll take the only girl who treats me like normal, which by god I am, one day I’ll prove it by plunging this thing of mine into a living woman. (231)

In this passage we can clearly read Animal’s own understanding that to invoke human sexuality is to claim human identity in and of itself. Thus the Voices’ continued arguments over his sexuality serve as an important prodding of Animal to recognize and engage with his own humanity despite the Split between animal and human that the accident at the factory has created. In this way the Voices can be understood as a sort of bridge across the Split form Animal’s hermitized humanity to his appropriated identity as an animal. In other words, the Voices and Animal’s continued engagement with them stand as a sort of resistant force to the negative effects of hermitage. His humanity is not allowed to sink into an oblivion, but rather continually attempts to re-assert itself into the realities of Animal’s world.

figure 4:
The second level that Animal’s Voices can operate on is as historical projections of the past into the present. Recall that in the case of the postcolonial city, hermitage operates in both a geographic/spatial sense as well as a temporal sense. That is to say the accident which projects the city into a hermitage occurs firstly in a geographical elsewhere (from the perspective of the responsible Western parties anyway), but is then further deferred by a temporal distancing (due largely to the long term effects of slow violence and the amnesia towards the original causes which can develop over time). Thus, by Animal bearing witness to Voices of the dead (specifically those who died the night of the accident), he serves as a sort of handhold for history’s persistent presence in the present, which in turn constitutes one more form of resistance to the negative effects of forced hermitage.

There are two examples of Animal’s Voices serving as a historical persistence in the present. The first is as a rather generalized cacophony of the dead in the factory. Early on, Animal describes these simply as ghosts that “fly shrieking up and down the empty pipes [of the factory]” (32). Later, however, Animal elaborates on this shrieking as the Voices of the dead begin to condense into specific demands:

Inside [the factory] are Voices and it’s like they’re screaming. […] I have the power to understand these things. I know right away what this is, it’s the dead beneath the earth, it’s their bones and ashes crying out in rage against their murderers. The dead are shrieking at me that the good earth has been defiled by blood. […] The blood cries out for justice. Once the earth has tasted blood it craves more, now the killers must be killed. […] Give us justice, screams the blood. (274)
However, rather than simply submit to the demands of the dead, Animal responds in a rather illuminating rebuttal to their complaints:

I say to the dead, who the fuck do you think you are to threaten me with your reedy fucking complaints? If you had power you would have long ago taken your revenge, you are as powerless as us living, all you can do is wail in empty pipes, nothing can you do to the people who took your lives, they will grow fat and we will die and they will build factories above our graves and use our ashes for cement. […] You can hurl what curses you like, but I’ve already lost my place in the human world, plenty of people already despise me, but you are dead and I am alive. (275)

To be sure, Animal seems resistant to the dead in this passage. Nevertheless the fact remains that he is, despite its unpleasantness, bearing witness to the past. Rob Nixon has said that Animal’s physical form serves as a “bodily shorthand for Khaupur’s transnational plight” (52). However, I would not limit the representational power of Animal simply to his bodily form, but would also include his reluctant status as historian to the violence of the accident. It is not just what Animal looks like, but also what Animal bears witness to that serves a representational function. Whereas the Kampani officials make it a point to forget the accident, the people of Khaupur, and Animal especially, are not allowed to forget. They continually see, hear, and live the evidence of that night each day of their lives. Sinha simply condenses this sentiment into an easily digestible metaphor by having Animal literally bear witness to the dead victims of the gas leak. Therein, Animal himself becomes a kind of reluctant historian of the accident and its
effects. He becomes the sounding board, if you will, for a history that the Kampani would rather see disappear.

It is perhaps for this reason that at one point Animal describes the experience of hearing these Voices and being inducted into their privileged knowledge as being “Like rejoicing, the world’s unspoken languages are rushing into my head. Unusual meanings are making themselves known to me. Secrets are shouting themselves into my ear, Seems there’s nothing I cannot know. Ssspsss, haaarr, khekhekhe, mmms, this is how the Voices are” (11). One of the most interesting occurrences of such secret-divulging manifests as a sort of self-revelation of the Split which Animal has endured. This occurs not in a conversation with ghosts of the dead, but with the physical body of Khã-in-the-Jar. Recall that Khã-in-the-Jar is in reality an unborn fetus, badly deformed during development by the poisons of the gas leak. The primary characteristic of this deformity is a second head growing from the side of his neck. Animal first encounters Khã-in-the-Jar when visiting the hospital where Khã is on display in a jar of preservative chemicals. Naturally the fetus cannot actually speak or think, but this does not prevent Animal from having conversations with him (both in dreams and in real life encounters). A particularly illuminating conversation occurs when Animal encounters Khã-in-the-Jar while visiting Elli’s clinic to see if he might be able to have an operation to have his spine straightened:

[Y]ou and I are not so different. Doublers both, we’re. Two of me there’s, two also of you. […] My two heads rise from one neck. From your hips, at the point

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85 Note also that Animal, as a self-declared nonhuman, is the only one who can successfully navigate the cobra and wild-dog infested space of the factory grounds. Admittedly, the people attempt to hold a demonstration there at the end of the novel, but one should note that once the people storm the gates they are at such a lost as to what to do that they simply sit down. It is Animal himself who must go through the crowd calming the people and warning them not to start a fire.

86 According to the text’s glossary, “Khã” is a Khaufpuri term of familiarity similar to “mate” (Sinha 370).
where your back bends, rises a second you who’s straight, stands upright and tall.

This second you’d there all the time, has been there all along, thinks, speaks, acts, but it’s invisible. (139)

Now to be sure, Khâ-in-the-Jar is a complicated character. Certainly we can think of him in one sense as once again a projection of Animal’s own psyche. Thus his observations can be seen, in part, as Animal’s own recognition of his dual, split nature. In another sense though he is very much a mythologization of nature itself, at one point going on a rant that he is the “egg of nature” (139) who will undo all the harmful effects of the Kampani (237). Both of these claims are key for understanding Animal’s actions at the end of the novel, and the eventual marriage of the Split which results from them.

Marriage Across the Split

Recall that Animal operates more or less as Zafar’s apprentice. Zafar teaches and encourages Animal to use his body tactically within the city system to serve the people. Despite this positive relationship though, towards the middle of the novel Animal begins systematically poisoning Zafar with Datura\(^\text{87}\) in order to decrease his sexual drive and thereby, in Animal’s mind, protect Nisha’s honor.

It is for this reason that when Zafar engages in his hunger strike and falls ill, Animal begins to blame himself for Zafar’s rapid deterioration in health. When Animal gets news that Zafar has died, he immediately seeks out Nisha to comfort her, even going

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87 Datura is a powerful hallucinogenic plant containing primarily Scopolamine and atropine. It has a long history of being used in divination, initiation ceremonies, love magic, the treatment of medical ailments, and as a poison. In his study on Datura in tribal uses, John R. Baker notes that, “The toxic potential of Datura is great, and reports of poisoning following accidental and intentional ingestion of the plant are common” (Baker 220).
so far as to propose marriage and devote his life to making her happy (332). When she turns him down, Animal, naturally feeling scorned, insists that the only reason she would turn him down is because he is an Animal. However, unlike Nisha’s insistence throughout the book that Animal is in fact a human, in this moment she tells him, “If you are an animal then fuck off and be one! Go and live in the jungle and see how much of an animal you are!” (333).

This rebuke represents the first time that Animal encounters confirmation from the human world that he in fact does not belong. Certainly he receives insults throughout the book from the likes of Farouq about his animal-like movements and body, but never does anyone actually confirm Animal’s own insistence that he is in fact, or should be, an animal. Thus when Nisha, who has denied his animality throughout the book, suggests he in fact become animal, Animal fully embraces the suggestion. He not only denies his humanity, but denies the entirety of the human world by attempting suicide, ingesting the remainder of the Datura he had been using to poison Zafar.

While Animal waits for the drugs to kick in, he stops by Elli’s clinic to save Khā-in-the-Jar from the violence of the rioters that are storming the city with torches in response both to Zafar’s death and the impending settlement with the Kampani. Animal takes Khā-in-the-Jar to the factory where he breaks open the jar and lights him on fire. This act of violence is significant for several different reasons. On the one hand, the burning of Khā-in-the-Jar represents a fulfillment of Khā-in-the-Jar’s own wishes to “free” him from the jar. Relatedly, by destroying Khā-in-the-Jar, Animal metaphorically

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88 To be fair, this narrative detail is never openly stated. However, it is a reasonable conclusion when considering evidence from Animal’s hallucinogenic narrative (namely, Animal snapping his fingers into flame and the Khā-in-the-Jar rising like a “two tall angels” (344)) and the fact that Farouq later finds Animal’s zippo in the burned remains of the factory (362).
prevents the Kampani from acquiring the sacred knowledge of nature that Khā-in-the-Jar claims to have within him (59). Thus, the burning of Khā-in-the-Jar can be read as an act of resistance against the prolonged violence of the Kampani. Furthermore, it is even more significant that this act of resistance against the Kampani takes place on the site of the Kampani’s most violent act, the factory grounds itself. If the Khā-in-the-Jar represents the egg of nature, then Animal’s release of the Khā-in-the-Jar on the factory grounds can be read as a sort of pitting of nature vs. the Kampani.

Admittedly this is a contentious argument since the burning of Khā-in-the-Jar starts a fire in the factory, thereby re-releasing poison gases from the original leak and making it, as Zafar had warned, “that night all over again” (30). However, given the amnesic symptoms of hermitage and slow violence, I would argue that this resurgence of “that night” can be read as a timely (though certainly not ideal) reminder of the original violent act that the lawyers are trying to bury during their settlement negotiations.

In any case, once Animal has completed this final human act, he retreats to the jungle to become fully an animal. At this point, hallucinations from Animal’s Datura overdose have fully set in, making him hear Voices from all aspects of the jungle surrounding him. The most notable of these exchanges occurs with a lizard that Animal traps with the intention of eating it. When Animal realizes he has injured the lizard though, he feels remorse and lets it go. As he leaves the lizard says to Animal, “A broken rib may mend […], but your nature you can never change. You are human, if you were an animal you would have eaten me” (346). This basic sentiment is then confirmed by all

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89 It is notable too, that Animal retreats to the jungle to become fully an Animal only once he has destroyed Khā-in-the-Jar who had first proposed Animal’s split duality as animal and human. His actions in this section can be read then as first a denial of humanity and then a destruction of any evidence or witnesses to the contrary.
other aspects of nature Animal encounters. Thus, in seeking community with real animals, Animal realizes that he in fact is human—a realization which is confirmed by both Zafar and Farouq when they finally find Animal in jungle several days later.

It is important to realize though, that this realization does not constitute a denial of his otherwise Animal nature. Consider, for instance, that at the end of the book we learn that Animal is specifically narrating this story in order to decide whether or not he should have a surgery performed in the U.S. that would straighten his back and thus fully transform him into the image of a typical human. In working through his own story though, Animal realizes, “If I’m an upright human, I would be one of millions, not even a healthy one at that. Stay four-foot, I’m the one and only Animal. […] I am Animal fierce and free/ in all the world is none like me” (366, italics in original). He therefore, decides to use his money to instead buy his friend Anjali out of prostitution.

The final acts of Animal in the novel can be read then as a reassertion of his own unique Animality while simultaneously extending an acknowledgement of human value to Anjali who has had it denied her. He does not simply reverse the Split and think of himself as just human, but rather accepts both sides of it. He fully appropriates both his animality and his humanity. He can therefore be understood as a marriage of these two identities where he both remains a marker of the violence that has been performed against him while still asserting the humanity that has been continually denied to him (and the community) by the Kampani’s endless deferral of accountability.

So even though we do not see the novel end with the city itself emerging from hermitage, we do see the primary representational figure from within that hermitage become a fully realized body of resistance.
Conclusion: Crisis Narrative as Diagnostic

Despite the realization of Animal as a fully formed body of resistance, it is easy to read the end of the novel with no little amount of hopelessness. After all, the last lines do read: “All things pass, but the poor remain. We are the people of the Apokalis. Tomorrow there will be more of us” (366). However, I think it is important to read this ending with several caveats. Firstly, this warning constitutes an assurance that the poor are not going anywhere. They refuse to simply disappear into the eventual oblivion of hermitage like Jekyll, but rather persevere despite the balance of the system being against them. Additionally, Animal assures the reader that their numbers will only increase which in turn can be read as an ever increasing looming presence (or literally, a looming absence) from within this hermitage. A presence that demands attention and a restructuring of the system which has produced it.

In his article on Animal’s People, Anthony Carrigan likens the text to a crisis narrative, following Sarah Amsler’s assertion that crisis narratives do not portray turning points that lead to recovery or death, but rather operate politically to help “define complex social situations as critical moments of possibility, and to articulate the necessity of alternatives within a normative critique of existing conditions” (Amsler qtd. in Carrigan 168-9). This is strikingly similar to the way in which hermitage itself operates, not as a solution, but rather as a diagnostic tool for problems inherent in various social systems (from the anxieties of upper class Victorian men in Jekyll and Hyde to imbalances in the economy and politics of globalization in Animal’s People). The important thing is to recognize these narratives and these manifestations of hermitage for the diagnostic tools they are and utilize them toward a solution in the future.
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