

Deviants, Donestre, and Debauchees: Here be Monsters

Tom Tyler

Abstract St Augustine suggested that monsters (*monstra*) serve to show or to signify (*monstrare*) something, whilst Foucault argued that one ancestor of today's abnormal individual was the human monster, a class of being characterised by a composite nature. This essay examines what two very different mixed human monsters can show us. The donestre, a mediaeval race of lion-headed polyglots with a taste for human flesh, demonstrate an ancient form of monstrous transgression by their corporeal violation of both social and natural law. The strange case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, meanwhile, illustrates a modern form of monstrosity in which a person's instinctual character, their potential conduct or behaviour, marks them out as deviant. The study of monsters helps to debauch our minds with learning and thus, in the words of William James, to make the natural, explanatory power of 'instinct' seem strange.

Monstra sane dicta perhibent a monstrando, quod aliquid significando demonstrent. (The name 'monster', we are told, evidently comes from *monstrare*, 'to show', because they show by signifying something.) (Augustine, *City of God*, p. 982/XXI.8)

It takes ... a mind debauched by learning to carry the process of making the natural seem strange, so far as to ask for the *why* of any instinctive human act. (William James 1981 [1890], *Principles of Psychology*, II, p. 1007)

The normative project

Augustine suggests that monsters (*monstra*) serve to show or to signify something, that they fulfil a demonstrative function (*aliquid demonstrant*).¹ Drawing on Foucault's instructive account of monsters from mediaeval to modern times I would like to ascertain what the changing nature of monstrosity can show us today. I will examine two monsters in particular: amongst the many

¹ Augustine's derivation here follows that of Cicero (1933: 129/I.iii.7; 1923: 325/I.xlii.93): a *monstrum* is indeed a shown thing.

colourful and corporeally extravagant creatures of the Middle Ages I will consider the little known donestre, a deceitful half-human race of fearsome appearance and gruesome dietary inclination. By way of contrast I will discuss that archetypal modern figure of monstrous fiction, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. I would like to argue that what Foucault himself helps to demonstrate is that, *pace* James, it is in fact a worthy and valuable undertaking to debauch our minds with learning, precisely in order to make the natural seem strange. A study of the changing forms of history's monsters allows us to interrogate the seemingly natural norms from which they deviate. The 'universal reign of the normative' (Foucault 1991: 304), with which Foucault so often dealt in his later work, depends in part on the questionable *explanatory* role that these norms are made to play. There is, however, an indispensable difference, highlighted and exemplified by Foucault's archaeology of the monster, between demonstration and explanation.

In the first lecture of the series he delivered at the Collège de France early in 1975, Foucault stated that it was his intention to study 'the emergence of the power of normalisation' (Foucault 2003: 26).² The lectures develop themes introduced in the recently completed *Discipline and Punish* and anticipate material that would later be addressed in *The Will to Knowledge*, but they represent a project quite distinct from those two volumes. It is not the mechanics of the eighteenth century's disciplinary apparatus with which he is here concerned, but their effects. A new form of knowledge arises at this time, Foucault had observed earlier, 'organised around the norm, in terms of what was normal or not, correct or not, in terms of what one must do or not do' (Foucault 2001: 59).³ As Ian Hacking argues, the magic of the word 'normal' is that it can be used at one and the same time to say how things are, but also how they ought to be (Hacking 1990: 160–69). The seemingly innocent and objective notion of the norm 'lays claim to power', providing a foundation and legitimation for diverse techniques of institutional intervention and correction (Foucault 2003: 50). It is the growth of this 'normative project' which Foucault sets out to unearth (50).⁴

The lecture series, published much later as *Abnormal*, examines the development of an ill-defined but nonetheless discrete group of *abnormal* individuals that emerged during the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Abnormal or deviant individuals comprised at this time a new category of person that, according to Foucault, had not existed previously, but which persists, he demonstrates at the beginning of the course, as an object of knowledge today. These abnormals appeared, he argues, in correlation with a new set of institutions, mechanisms and practices of governance, but they also derived from three pre-existing historical figures.

The oldest of these figures is the *human monster*, whose origins can be traced to antiquity. The human monster, Foucault suggests, was an exception to the species in some way, a transgression of natural law. He provides as examples the monstrous races of the Middle Ages who were part human and

² Foucault's manuscript states that it is an *archaeology* that he intends to provide; I will return to this point.

³ See Davison's discussion of this passage in Foucault (2003: xxii–xxiii).

⁴ Both Foucault and Hacking explicitly draw here on Canguilhem (1989).

part animal, the Siamese twins widely studied and discussed during the Renaissance, and the hermaphrodites who preoccupied the Classical Age. The second figure is the *incorrigible individual*, who appeared during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The usual modes of training within the family having failed, these obstinate individuals resisted attempts to rectify their behaviour by means of disciplinary techniques within the school, workshop, parish, church, police, army, *et al.* The third and most recent figure who contributes to our modern notion of abnormal or deviant individuals is the *child onanist*, who appeared as an object of scrutiny for the first time in the eighteenth century. New interest was being taken in the body and sexuality of children, especially within the context of the family, and masturbation began to be seen as the root of many physical and mental disorders (Foucault 2003: 55–60, 323–28).

Each of these ancestors to the abnormal individual appears within a different frame of reference, a different arena of social scientific knowledge. The human monster, as a transgression of natural law, materialises within the interrelated realms of biology and law; the incorrigible individual preoccupies those concerned with the study of the family and society; and the child masturbator is of interest to the study and theorisation of sexuality. These are not, of course, simply abstract scientific disciplines. Each is immediately and directly immersed in the broader project of the governance of the social body. Foucault argues that attempts during the nineteenth century to understand and to control the new figure of the abnormal individual bring together these three domains of power-knowledge which had previously remained largely autonomous. They do not merge, but in the person of the abnormal individual the disciplines of teratology and embryology, the study of psychophysiology, and the theorisation of sexuality, all find a single, common subject (Foucault 2003: 60–62, 328). In what follows, it is on Foucault's treatment of the oldest and rarest figure, the monster, that I would like to focus, whose import slowly fades during the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but whose impact on conceptions of abnormality persists long after.

The mixed monster

Drawing on Ernest Martin's *Histoire des Monstres* (2002 [1880]), Foucault argues that prior to the nineteenth century the figure of the monster took a particular form.⁵

From the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century ... the monster is essentially a mixture. It is the mixture of two realms, the animal and the human: the man with the head of an ox, the man with a bird's feet – monsters. It is the blending, the mixture of two species: the pig with a sheep's head is a monster. It is the mixture of two individuals: the person who has two heads and one body or two bodies and one head is a monster. It is the mixture of two sexes: the person who is both

⁵ See Foucault (2003: 76, n. 3).

male and female is a monster. It is a mixture of life and death: the fetus born with a morphology that means it will not be able to live but that nonetheless survives for some minutes or days is a monster. Finally, it is a mixture of forms: the person who has neither arms nor legs, like a snake, is a monster. (2003: 63)

Foucault says relatively little in his lecture about mediaeval monsters, concentrating instead on the mixed monstrosities of later centuries, but his list here recalls Bernard of Clairvaux's infamous condemnation in the twelfth century of the ornate carvings that he found around him:

What excuse can there be for these ridiculous monstrosities (*ridicula monstrositas*) in the cloisters where the monks do their reading, extraordinary things at once beautiful and ugly? Here we find filthy monkeys and fierce lions, fearful centaurs, harpies, and striped tigers, soldiers at war, and hunters blowing their horns. Here is one head with many bodies, there is one body with many heads. Over there is a beast with a serpent for its tail, a fish with an animal's head, and a creature that is horse in front and goat behind, and a second beast with horns and the rear of a horse. (1970 [c.1127]: 66/XII.29)

Not all these diverting, distracting creatures are monsters, but all the monsters are mixtures, and it is with a particular, little known mediaeval hybrid that I would like to illustrate Foucault's thesis. The text now known as the *Liber Monstrorum de Diversis Generibus* (The Book of Monsters of Various Kinds), probably dating from the seventh or eighth century, provides a catalogue of almost a hundred and twenty monstrous races, creatures and serpents that were reported to exist in the hidden parts (*abditis partibus*) of the world.⁶ Included is a description of a curious and dangerous people:

There is a certain race of mixed nature (*commixtae naturae*) on an island in the Red Sea, who are said to be able to speak the languages of all nations. In this way they astonish people who come from afar, by naming their acquaintances, in order to deceive them, and eat them raw. (Orchard 1995: 280–81/1.40)

The Wonders of the East, an earlier text on which the *Liber Monstrorum* draws, provides a more elaborate account of this race, which it names 'donestre' (Figure 1).⁷ Having tricked the unwary traveller, the donestre

⁶The *Liber Monstrorum* survives in five manuscripts, and is reproduced in Latin and English translation in Orchard (1995: 254–317). For valuable discussions of the text see Orchard (1995: 86–115), Friedman (2000: 149–53), and Verner (2005: 54–65).

⁷The *Wonders of the East*, also known as the *Marvels of the East* and *De Mirabilibus Orientis*, survives in three manuscripts. The full text is reproduced in Latin, Old English, and English translation in Orchard (1995: 173–203). For discussions see Wittkower (1942), Verner (2005: 66–78), and Mittman (2006: 61–114).



Figure 1. The earliest surviving illustration of a donestre consuming an unwary traveller. British Library MS Cotton Vitellius A.XV, fol. 103v (detail), late 10th or early 11th century. © British Library Board. All Rights Reserved.

would capture his victim and consume their body, after which he would take up the remaining head and weep over it (Orchard 1995: 179, 196–97/§20).⁸ Extant copies of the *Liber Monstrorum* are not illustrated, but in *The Wonders of the East* the stages of this grisly narrative are shown (see Figures 2 and 3). Further, although the *Liber Monstrorum* provides no details of the race's *commixta natura*, *The Wonders of the East* is more illuminating. Old English translations of the text suggest that the donestre 'have grown like soothsayers (*swa frihteras*) from the head to the navel, and the other part is human' (Orchard 1995: 196–97/§20). The older Latin text, meanwhile, seems to suggest that the creature's inhuman half appears 'divine' or perhaps 'prophetic' (*quasi divini*) (179/§20).⁹ It remains unclear quite what is meant by

⁸The reason for the monster's tears remains a mystery. Scheil suggests remorse (1996: 50), though there is no evidence for this; Cohen hazards a Lacanian explanation (1999: 1–5); Eileen Joy proposes that the tears are deceptive, a mere mimicry of human despair (personal communication); Knock argues that they may even be crocodile tears (see below).

⁹Gibb (1977: 160–61) has drawn attention to the difficulties of syntactical interpretation here, due to the limited punctuation in the manuscripts: does 'quasi divini' (or, in some versions, 'divinum' or 'divine') refer to the race as a whole (Knock 1981: 797–98), their name (James 1929: 56; Friedman 2000: 15), or a portion of their body (Gibb 1977: 160–61)?

the suggestion that parts of the donestre are 'grown like soothsayers', or 'prophetic',¹⁰ but that an element of these monstrous creatures is markedly different from the human portion is left in no doubt. In the accompanying illustrations, moreover, the donestre are clearly depicted with a human body and the head of some kind of nonhuman animal, perhaps a lion with flowing mane.¹¹ This polyglot race exemplifies particularly well, then, the mixed nature of monstrosity described by Foucault.

Be that as it may, Foucault's suggestion that the monster is *essentially* a mixture in the Middle Ages requires qualification. There are accounts of all manner of *monstrousa hominum genera* (monstrous races of men¹²) (Augustine 1972: 661/XVI.8) who are *not* mixtures: we read in Augustine's *City of God* and Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, for instance, of giants and pygmies, one-eyed Cyclopes and headless Blemmyae, of races without noses or tongues or faces, of men with colossal lips or tiny mouths, of the giant-eared Panotii, the swift but one-legged Sciopodes, and the Libyan Antipodes with back-turning feet.¹³ Isidore further provides a carefully compiled taxonomy of monstrous individuals – such as those born with a body part missing, or with their fingers or toes grown together – in which mixtures comprise just two or three of fourteen distinct kinds of *portenta* and *portentuosus* (portents and prodigies) (1964: 52/XI.3.7–11). In characterising the monster as essentially a mixture 'from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century' (2003: 63), Foucault's account is unquestionably too generalised: there is considerable variety amongst both the monsters and their classification. Nonetheless, the mixed monster is a persistent and significant figure in mediaeval texts, recurring in the *Wonders*, the *Liber Monstrorum*, in Augustine, Isidore and Bernard, and elsewhere.¹⁴ In focusing on the mixed creatures of the Middle Ages Foucault highlights a monstrous, ancestral figure to the deviants of today, drawing our

¹⁰ Knock suggests that this refers to the donestre's 'oracular powers' (1981: 798), *i.e.* their ability to address travellers in their own language and to name their acquaintances. Scheil argues that the omni-lingual donestre represents the inherent alterity and potential duplicity of language (1996: 48–54).

¹¹ It seems more than likely that the text and illustrations of the *Wonders* have been drawn from different sources; see Wittkower (1942: 52), and Kim (2003: 172–74). Knock argues that the details of the donestre's habits derive from accounts of the hyena, the corocotta, the crocodile and the oracle, *i.e.* that the race is in fact a conflation by mediaeval scribes of several other creatures. This would make the donestre's mixed nature textual as well as corporeal (1981: 70–71, 73–74, 785, 797–805).

¹² It is important to distinguish the monstrous races of men from those mixed creatures entirely animal in nature; see Friedman (2000: 2). In *Abnormal* Foucault uses the term 'human monster' (2003: 55) and 'bestial man' (2003: 66) to refer to the former.

¹³ Augustine (1972: 661–64/XVI.8), Isidore of Seville (1964: 51–54/XI.3). Many more monstrous races, hybrid and otherwise, are listed in Friedman's opening chapter (2000: 9–21). An exhaustive account of the mediaeval literature on monsters, and its largely Greek origins, is provided by Wittkower (1942). For an illuminating selection of illustrations see Bovey (2002).

¹⁴ On Bernard's insistence on the monstrous nature of all manner of mixtures, a preoccupation that accords closely with Foucault's thesis, see Bynum (2001: 113–62 [Chapter 3]). See also her reflections on hybridity and metamorphosis (28–33, and *passim*).



Figures 2 and 3. The gruesome practice of the lion-headed donestre. Above: British Library MS Cotton Tiberius B.V, fol. 83v, L col. (detail), c. 1000. © British Library Board. All Rights Reserved. Below: Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 614, fol. 43v (detail), c. 1120. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

attention both to qualities that contemporary abnormal individuals inherit and, characteristically, to contrasting elements that are largely lost to modern monsters, as I shall demonstrate shortly.

Augustine suggested that monsters are signs that can point things out to us, and a good deal has been written on the meaning of the monstrous races to the mediaeval mind.¹⁵ But what do those creatures of mixed nature tell the modern reader? What do the donestre now demonstrate? Although the monsters of the Middle Ages were not consistently mixed, as Foucault seems to claim, the donestre and their hybridic kin bring to light an essential characteristic of monstrosity at this time, which was rather different from that with which we deal today. He suggests that what makes these mixed creatures monstrous is the fact that their very existence simultaneously violates the laws both of nature and of society. The monster clearly transgresses natural limits and classifications, here combining elements from two distinct realms, the human and the animal. The composite donestre upset the natural order of things: the monster is impossible and yet exists, ambiguously, as the natural form of the unnatural (Foucault 2003: 56).¹⁶ But the mixed monster also violates the laws of society, disturbing civil, canon, or religious law, which find themselves embarrassed and unable to respond. What is to be done with the Siamese twin brothers, one of whom commits a crime? Must the innocent brother be executed with his twin? Should hermaphrodites, who are both male and female, be permitted to marry or to be ordained? And what of those persons who have a human body and the head of an animal, or an animal body and a human head? Should they be baptised? Do the donestre possess immortal souls? Natural disorder upsets juridical order and the law is called into question, finding itself unable to deal with these perplexing, composite individuals (Foucault 2003: 64–65).¹⁷ Mediaeval monsters, and indeed the many varieties of mixed monstrosity that surface for centuries to come, appear ‘precisely at the point where nature and law are joined’ (65). They arise within what Foucault calls a ‘juridico-natural’ domain (65–66).¹⁸ It is to this domain of power-knowledge that monsters draw our attention,

¹⁵ See especially Friedman (1942), Williams (1999), Strickland (2003), Verner (2005), Mittman (2006), and Kim and Mittman (2009).

¹⁶ Authors from the second century to the fourteenth – including Marcus Cornelius Fronto, Sextus Pompeius Festus, Papias the Lombard, and Pierre Bersuire – maintained that monsters were *contra naturam* (Friedman 2000: 111, 116). On the other hand, both Augustine (1972: 982–83/XXI.8) and Isidore (1964: 51/XI.3.1) asserted otherwise. I discuss these divergent claims, and their significance for Foucault’s thesis, in ‘Monstrous Mixture: The Archaeology of Teratology’, forthcoming.

¹⁷ See also Foucault 2003: 55–57. Consider, for example, the quandary of the priest asked by a man in wolf’s form to administer the last rites for his similarly shaped companion, recounted by Gerald of Wales (1982: 69–72/II: 52). Gerald goes on to consider whether the killing of such a creature should be considered homicide; see Bynum’s discussion (2001: 105–09). Or, see Bernard’s concerns regarding monk-administrators: writing on their inherently monstrous, dual roles his prose ‘suggests an anxiety about both the social violation he depicts and the bodily deformity he uses as analogy’ (Bynum 2001: 120).

¹⁸ Foucault also uses the term ‘juridico-biological’ (2003: 56, 65).

functioning as indexical correlates of the institutional practices and modes of understanding that make them possible.

Foucault argues that these exceptional mixed monsters who transgressed the laws of nature and society began to fade during the course of the eighteenth century. The nature of monstrosity was changing, as we shall see in a moment. Nonetheless, we still encounter human monsters today, at least in fictional form. The modern fable of Jekyll and Hyde, as popularly understood, serves as an instructive exemplar. Dozens of film adaptations have recounted the tragic tale of Dr Henry Jekyll, who begins the story an honourable physician, selflessly devoting himself to charitable acts and the humanitarian pursuit of scientific progress.¹⁹ Early scenes in Rouben Mamoulian's celebrated 1931 interpretation have Jekyll (Frederic March) ministering to profoundly grateful patients at London free wards, 'a grand gentleman, always helping them what needs it'.²⁰ Upon drinking a potion of his own devising, however, Jekyll becomes the loathsome Mr Edward Hyde, an abominable individual intent only on his own pleasures and the torment of others. In Mamoulian's film Hyde is brutal and aggressive, heedless of others and quick with his cane. Though Jekyll's potion was invented in an attempt to help humankind, by the end of the film his evil acts as Hyde meet with the ultimate punishment, and he lies dead, slain by the forces of law and order and destined for eternal damnation. In the composite figure of Jekyll-Hyde we are confronted with a monstrous mixture on several levels.

First, of course, Jekyll is most frequently depicted as supremely good, whilst Hyde's behaviour is entirely malevolent. Such heroic and villainous archetypes are commonplace in cultural texts, filmic or otherwise, but here they are combined in a single form. No nuanced study in character development, Jekyll-Hyde embodies the extremes of good and evil simultaneously, lurching alarmingly from one to the other. In addition, Jekyll and Hyde exhibit a marked class divide. Jekyll is a refined man of culture, opening Mamoulian's film with a rendition of Bach, and soon frequenting lavish dinner parties at the home of his fiancée, wealthy society beauty Muriel Carew (Rose Hobart). Hyde, meanwhile, seeks out lower-class establishments such as the grubby music hall in which he finds the object of his own sadistic affections, singer Ivy Pearson (Miriam Hopkins). Further, Jekyll is most often depicted as a dashing and handsome figure in contrast to a physically repulsive Hyde. Frederic March, who played both roles in 1931, had been a popular matinee idol, appearing predominantly in romances and comedies (Wexman 1988: 284).²¹ Ideal as Jekyll, his manifestation as Hyde, under layers of make-up, is delightfully repellent. In fact, by means of appearance and behaviour, Jekyll-Hyde exemplifies the further perceived dualism of human versus animal being. In interviews Mamoulian

¹⁹ Wexman (1988: 283) cited 'at least sixty-nine' such films in 1988, and there have been more since. I discuss Stevenson's novella, on which the films are based, below.

²⁰ Mrs Hawkins (Tempe Pigott). The film was released by Paramount Pictures on New Year's Eve 1931, not 1932 as is sometimes suggested (Nollen 1994: 199).

²¹ Mamoulian had insisted, against the studio's wishes, that March play the part (Atkins and Mamoulian 1973: 44).

stressed that whilst Jekyll is the most civilised of individuals, Hyde is primitive and bestial. Excessively hairy and simian in bearing, the make-up was modelled on Neanderthal man: Mamoulian wanted Hyde to appear powerful and vigorous, an essentially 'animalistic' being.²² It is precisely the combination of these starkly contrasting traits in a single individual that renders Jekyll-Hyde a monster, a frightening, transgressive mixture of the sort described by Foucault.²³ Is Jekyll-Hyde one individual or two? Is he human or animal? Does he still possess a single soul? No less than the lion-headed donestre, by his very existence Jekyll-Hyde violates natural and social law, and represents a living, criminal lapse within the juridico-natural domain.

The moral monster

The mixed monster, Foucault argues, embarrasses and offends the law. There is, in effect, an underlying *criminality* to the monster's very being, and it is this criminality which serves to explain what is so wrong with the monster.²⁴ The modern period came to develop a conception of monstrosity altogether different from that which pertained during the Middle Ages, however. The monstrous nature of Jekyll and Hyde is not so easily explained according to a mediaeval schema. By the nineteenth century, Foucault suggests, the relationship between monstrosity and criminality had entirely reversed. Where once criminality underlay and therefore explained monstrosity, now monstrosity was believed to lurk behind, and thus to explain, the nature of criminality (Foucault 2003: 81–82). The transformation was due, Foucault argues, to changes in the exercise and operation of institutional power.

Prior to the modern period crime was punished by means of violently excessive public spectacle. Criminal acts were an affront to the king's sovereignty, a revolt against his will, and the business of punishment was not just one of restitution but also of vengeance. Punishment was designed precisely to *exceed* the original crime in order to overcome it and to re-establish the king's dominion: punishment served to terrorise and intimidate, to discourage and deter future infractions (Foucault 2003: 82–85).²⁵ The function of ritually atrocious torture and execution was thus to conquer the crime itself, and punitive power exhibited what Foucault calls 'a principle of excessive

²² In fact Mamoulian conceives Hyde's evil to be the result of the corruption of his natural 'animal innocence' by his human qualities (Atkins and Mamoulian 1973: 40–41). On Hyde as primitive, and the film's animal imagery, see Welsch (1981: 166–69, 177–78). On the film's innovative make-up see Turner (1999: 3).

²³ The dualisms, dichotomies and divided selves within Jekyll and Hyde are discussed at greater length in Rose (1996: 79–110) and Twitchell (1987: 227–57); see also the extracts by Tymms, Miyoshi and Saposnik in Geduld (1983).

²⁴ Consider Gerald's account of the man-calf, born in the mountains around Glendalough from the intercourse of man with cow, 'a particular vice of that people' (1982: 74/II: 54).

²⁵ See also Foucault (1991: 47–57).

demonstration' (83).²⁶ During the course of the eighteenth century, however, the punitive apparatus began to take an interest not just in the crime but in the perpetrating criminal. Now punitive practices come to be exercised only to the extent that they are necessary to prevent repetition of a crime by *this* individual. Punishment must fit the criminal, and so the motivations and interests of individuals need to be understood if the newly developing forms of government and state institution are to wield their power effectively.²⁷ Power no longer attempts to nullify the crime by means of sporadic, excessive public ritual, but rather to quash with a continuously effective system of appropriate controls the mechanisms of interest that give rise to it (86–89). Punitive power comes to exhibit 'an economy of measure' (88).²⁸

Interest is now taken in the nature of criminals and criminality in their own right. The law becomes concerned not just with what an individual has actually done, their acts, but also with what they *might* do, their potential.²⁹ A new problem here arises. An understanding is needed of the 'immanent rationality of criminal conduct, its natural intelligibility' (Foucault 2003: 89). It is no longer a matter of determining how to deal with perplexing, mixed creatures, but rather of understanding the strange, egoistical impulses that motivate a criminal. Why does such an individual break the social pact, the collective interest which makes society possible, and set their own concerns above those of everyone else? Further, what strange, internal forces could be so strong that they prompt individuals to commit crimes even in the face of potentially fatal punishment? What unnatural drives compel them to carry out acts that could endanger society and themselves? Clearly, there must be something *wrong* with the criminal individual: they must be ill in some way. Here criminality and pathology are linked together for the first time, within the juridico-natural realm, in the service of state governance. Crime becomes an index of abnormality, and criminals enter a *juridico-medical* domain of power-knowledge (89–92).

Finding itself unable to explain this perverse, pathological criminal conduct, the judicial process turns instead to a new discipline, a new form of knowledge: it turns to psychiatry (Foucault 2003: 113–17). And what psychiatry finds, Foucault argues, when it examines the abnormal, criminal individual, is the presence of *instincts*. The notion of internal forces, inclinations, tendencies,

²⁶ Compare here the status of the Anglo-Saxon outlaw, identified as a dangerous 'wolf-man' (*wargus*) or 'wolf-head' (*wulfesheud*), who was afforded no protection under the law and whom anyone was permitted to slay with impunity (Moore 2008). Agamben characterises this figure as a 'monstrous hybrid of human and animal, divided between the forest and the city' (1998: 104–11). On the complex and evolving nature of torture, execution and juridical discourse in the Anglo-Saxon period see O'Keeffe (1998), who warns against Foucault's 'sweeping generalization' in his depiction of the Middle Ages (231).

²⁷ But see also Frantzen (1983) on the Anglo-Saxon confessor's concern with a sinner's 'interior disposition' when applying penitential tariffs (7–10, 30–31, 115–19, 202–05).

²⁸ The contrast between the excessive and measured exercise of power is described and illustrated by Foucault throughout the first chapter of *Discipline and Punish* (1991).

²⁹ On the 'dangerous individual' and their *virtualitiés* (potentialities), see Foucault (1988 [1977]); see also Davison's brief discussion in *Abnormal* (Foucault 2003: xxiii).

impulses or energies which direct, influence or drive an individual toward particular acts is new to the psychiatric discourse of the nineteenth century. Instinct as an object of knowledge and mode of explanation within psychiatric discourse is in its infancy, named but not yet fully formulated (129–34). It certainly does not yet have the currency and obvious intelligibility to which William James will later appeal. But, Foucault argues, it allows penal and psychiatric mechanisms to mesh, enabling a new configuration of power-knowledge (138). And with this ‘discovery of the instincts’ (131), a new form of monstrosity becomes possible. The monster is no longer a creature born with composite form, whose very physicality is a criminal challenge to natural and social law. On the contrary, the criminal individual of the nineteenth century was monstrous because their internal, instinctual nature inclined them to abnormal acts, driving them to violate both their own natural interests and those of society. Or rather, their monstrosity lay not just in their instinctive nature, over which they had no control after all, but in their chosen conduct. The abnormal individual’s imperfect nature drives them to undertake perverse, criminal acts, but what makes them a monster is the fact that they act on these deviant impulses. These are a new breed of monster, a ‘moral monster’ (81–82), who might choose to resist their abnormal instincts, but do not. Theirs is a monstrosity not of the body but of behaviour, a monstrosity of character and conduct (72–74).

Thus, Foucault recounts contrasting treatments of hermaphrodites (Foucault 2003: 66–74). Until at least the beginning of the seventeenth century individuals of mixed sex were liable, he relates, to execution as monsters: their seemingly composite physical form condemned them to be burnt at the stake and their ashes thrown to the wind.³⁰ By the late eighteenth century a new set of discursive and nondiscursive practices had taken hold. Hermaphroditic individuals were examined by knowledgeable physicians, but now their sexual organs were judged not to be mixed but simply imperfect and malformed. Their ‘true’ sex would be determined by experts. No longer considered mixed monsters of two sexes, hermaphrodites are from this time required by law to conduct themselves appropriately, according to the sex they have been assigned. Only if they enter into relations with members of their ‘own’ sex, as determined by the medical experts, are they liable for punishment. That is, only if they choose to use their bodily irregularity, their slight natural deviation, as a pretext or excuse for abnormal behaviour, for perverse, criminal debauchery, are they considered monstrous (Foucault 2003: 72–73).³¹ The inherent criminality of the hermaphrodite’s body no longer explains the nature of their monstrosity; rather, their monstrous instincts explain, but do not excuse, their criminal conduct.

I suggested earlier that, as represented in a succession of film adaptations, the story of *Jekyll and Hyde* exemplifies the traditional mixed monster,

³⁰ Though it serves his purpose, Foucault is suspicious of this reported punishment: ‘people will tell you’, he hedges, and ‘suppose we accept this’. The single example he provides, drawn from Martin (2002 [1880]: 106), is that of Antide Collas, burned in Dôle in 1599 (Foucault 2003: 67). On mediaeval models of hermaphroditism see Daston and Park (1996: 118–23) and Cadden (1993: 201ff, 212).

³¹ See for instance, from an earlier century, Paré (1995 [1573]: 26–31).

combining in the single form of worthy, idealistic Dr Jekyll and execrable, immoral Mr Hyde, both good and evil, aristocrat and pleb, the handsome and the horrible, the human and the animal. But Stevenson's original novella was written in the late nineteenth century, at a time when the new juridico-medical conception of monstrosity was becoming firmly established. The shilling-shocker, published in 1886, was an instant success, selling forty thousand copies, garnering laudatory reviews, and immediately becoming the subject of stage adaptations in both the UK and US (Rose 1996: 42–43).³² The subtleties of the novella were often lost in its subsequent variations, however. The title character portrayed, in fact, an abnormal individual more moral monster than mixed.³³

Jekyll's motivation for developing his potion, as he reveals in his concluding statement, was to relieve the unbearable conflict that arises from 'the thorough and primitive duality of man' (Stevenson 2003 [1996]: 49). Drawing on his own troubled experience, Jekyll claims that 'man is not truly one but truly two', and that his goal was to dissociate the component elements of this dual nature, the just and the unjust, that the former might 'walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path', whilst the latter 'might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin' (48–49). Jekyll's own characterisation of his situation, and humanity's, then, is precisely one of deplorable, damaging commixture. The nature of the constituents' combination, however, is by no means so straightforward as has been suggested by those who retell his tale.

In a review of the 1941 film version directed by Victor Fleming, Borges charges Hollywood with defaming Stevenson, repeating as it does the moral errors – or 'perversion' – of Mamoulian's adaptation (Borges 2000 [1941]: 259–60). Early in the novella the lawyer Utterson tells us that Jekyll 'was wild when he was young' (Stevenson 2003: 18),³⁴ and, as Nabokov argues in his own lecture on the text, Jekyll remains vindictive and foolhardy throughout (Nabokov 1980: 182). Stevenson himself emphasised, in a letter to the journalist John Paul Bocock, that 'the harm was in Jekyll, because he was a hypocrite' (Stevenson 2003: 86). Purging the film of the doctor's moral duplicity, however, Fleming has him represent untainted decency by means of a steadfast chastity, whilst Hyde is 'a sadistic and acrobatic profligate' (Borges 2000: 260). The subtlety of Stevenson's text is reduced at once to unadulterated archetypes, baldly equated with extremes of sexuality.³⁵ As has often been

³² A selection of reviews and letters provides an insight into the novella's reception and is reproduced in the Norton edition (Stevenson 2003: 92–104).

³³ For comparison of novella and film see Rose (1996), Welsch (1981), and Prawer (1981).

³⁴ Jekyll himself alludes more than once to his 'undignified' pleasures (Stevenson 2003: 47–48, 52).

³⁵ In his letter to Bocock, Stevenson railed against the crude sexual reading of his story (Stevenson 2003: 86–87). On this matter see Saposnik (1983: 108, 115). In fairness to Mamoulian, his adaptation is by no means so simplistic as Fleming's, despite Borges' equation. Jekyll is depicted as overconfident, impatient and flirtatious, whilst Hyde is in fact a *more* complex figure than Stevenson permitted, enjoying in his early incarnations nothing more than a vigorous, energetic *joie de vivre*; see Atkins and Mamoulian (1973: 40).

noted, in fact, the full nature of Hyde's depravity is never made explicit, Stevenson choosing to leave his exploits suggestively vague.³⁶ The author later described Hyde as 'the essence of cruelty and malice, and selfishness and cowardice', but of his specific crimes and misdemeanours we hear very little (Stevenson 2003: 86). We are thereby induced to imagine the worst, of course, but the lacuna has an additional effect. As the essence of cruelty and malice, Hyde is an individual of infinite sadistic potential. It is not so much what he has done that is significant, but what he is capable of doing. Our focus shifts from the specificity of Hyde's crimes to his potentialities, from his acts to the 'immanent rationality', the 'natural intelligibility', of his criminal conduct, which is to say to the interests, impulses and instincts which lie behind his monstrous behaviour.

Jekyll describes himself as an 'incongruous compound' (Stevenson 2003: 52), but by releasing the wholly wicked Hyde from within the 'trembling immateriality' of his body (p. 49) we are faced no longer with a monstrously mixed creature. Jekyll's objective, after all, in which he is partially successful, is precisely to *separate* the component parts of the duality he suffers, that each might pursue without hindrance its own path. Those who encounter monstrous Mr Hyde experience a singular revulsion, and he is described as mystifyingly detestable, as a prodigy even (11–12, 53). Three different representatives of the nineteenth century medical profession are repulsed by his appearance and presence during the course of Stevenson's tale. An Edinburgh apothecary confronting Hyde early in the story finds himself unaccountably filled with loathing and murderous intent (9).³⁷ Lanyon, conservative critic of Jekyll's fanciful and unscientific ways, is struck by 'a disgustful curiosity' during his ill-fated encounter with Hyde (14, 45). And even Jekyll himself, though experiencing no immediate repugnance, must concede that the ugly idol staring back at him from the glass bears the 'imprint of deformity and decay' (51). But it is not just Hyde's body that makes him grotesque. Jekyll's merely 'undignified' pleasures turn with Hyde toward the truly 'monstrous' (53). His potion sunders the fortress of identity, setting free, 'like the captives of Philippi', that which lies within (52). Delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright, though by no means irreproachable, twin, Hyde is able zealously to indulge his individual, illicit pleasures, to disregard the social pact, to give free reign to his immoral instincts. This nightly depravity in which Hyde engages is the direct result of Jekyll's own determined, incautious conduct. What makes Jekyll-Hyde monstrous, then, is not so much his mixed body as his impulse and capitulation to deviant conduct.³⁸ As conventional Dr Lanyon remarks, 'there was something abnormal and misbegotten in the very

³⁶ Nabokov interprets this vagueness, somewhat harshly, as a weakness (1980: 193–96).

³⁷ Saposnik regards the doctor as representative of 'the normative medical mind' (1983: 112).

³⁸ On the significance of the body in Mamoulian's adaptation, see Wexman (1988). On instinct in the film, see Atkins and Mamoulian (1973: 40, 42) and Welsch (1981: 175, 178).

essence of the creature that now faced me' (45). Jekyll, no less than Hyde, is complicit in this monstrous, wilful abnormality.

Learned debauchery

William James' *Principles of Psychology* (1981 [1890]) was published in the late nineteenth century, just a few years after Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (2003 [1886]). The twenty-fourth chapter is devoted to the question of instincts which, James suggests, exist on a vast scale in the animal kingdom, especially in humanity, and are best understood as the functional correlatives of physiological structure: 'With the presence of a certain organ goes, one may say, almost always a native aptitude for its use' (James 1981 [1890]: 1004). An instinct, he argues, is a faculty for acting without foresight or education so as to produce a particular end (1004). To question *why* a hen submits to the tedium of incubating a nestful of eggs, or *why* a person will choose a soft bed over a hard floor, is absurd. Only a misguided metaphysician would think to raise such questions at all. 'It takes, in short, what Berkeley calls a mind debauched by learning to carry the process of making the natural seem strange, so far as to ask for the *why* of any instinctive human act' (1007).³⁹ James' target here is a characterisation of instincts in terms of their utility, as impulses toward self-evidently practical abstractions such as 'maternity' or 'self-preservation', which command obedience of individual creatures. His strictly physiological account, in contrast, casts them instead as reactions and reflexes, elements of a nervous system which are called forth by sensory stimuli. James' chief philosophical complaint is that learned debauchery brings into question the explanatory efficacy of human instinct. There should be no 'why' when it comes to the instincts: they just *are*. 'Nothing more can be said than that these are human ways, and that every creature *likes* its own ways, and takes to the following them as a matter of course' (1007).

As Stevenson tells the tale, Jekyll's mistake, or crime, is precisely to conceive as strange those natural instincts which constitute an ordinary, multifarious human individual. In deviating from the norms of common, scientific sense, in seeking to marry the transcendental and the pharmacological, it is Jekyll's debauchery, as much as Hyde's, that is his undoing. Jekyll embarks on his audacious medical intervention believing us all to be compound creatures in need of cure. In this, however, he labours under a monstrous mixture of conceptions. In appealing to humanity's dual nature as grounds for therapeutic separation, he combines a mediaeval understanding of monstrous physical hybridity with nineteenth-century notions of instinct. Jekyll does not question the utility of human instincts, or speculate on their teleology, but mistrusts rather the inevitability of their combination. His depravity, then, is tempered. In Foucault's historical analyses, however, we find a learned debauchery altogether more systematic and extensive.

³⁹ Berkeley deploys the phrase 'debauched by learning' during his discussion of the spurious paradoxes of geometry (2003 [1710]: 106/I.123).

One of Foucault's key objectives in the earlier *Abnormal* lectures is to render strange those human instincts which seemed so natural to James, to Jekyll, and to the burgeoning nineteenth-century juridico-medical institutions.⁴⁰ This debauchee does so not in order to separate the mixtures within human nature, to isolate the instincts and set them on their individual, uninhibited paths, but rather in order to demonstrate that the very notion of human instinct is an historical object, and a relatively recent one at that. Foucault's methodology in this lecture series is archaeological, providing a careful excavation of the discursive and nondiscursive practices which brought into being a strange new kind of individual, the abnormal.⁴¹ His interest is not in asking the *why* of human instincts, but in bringing into question the *how* of their historical emergence. Within the context of his archaeological investigation, instincts provide no explanations but become instead the discursive objects of analysis, elements within a contingent historical practice which made possible the medical profession's disgustful curiosity and peremptory fascination with abnormals.⁴²

Augustine suggested that monsters are so called because they *demonstrate* something to us. What does monstrosity disclose? Invoking the same play on words, Derrida argues that 'monsters may reveal or make one aware of what normality is' (1995: 385). Specifically, the appearance of the monster shows us that norms – discursive, philosophical, socio-cultural – have a history (385–87). Foucault's archaeology of teratology, his account of how the mediaeval monster gives way to the abnormal individual of the nineteenth century, traces the emergence of deviance as a correlate of social control. The deviant, abnormal individual arises when the judicial apparatus, a certain form of power, comes together with the psychiatric profession, a particular form of knowledge, in order to address the problem of criminality at a specific historical moment. It is only within this juridico-medical domain of power-knowledge that the abnormal can and does appear. Just as, *contra* James, instinct is no mere correlative of physical structure, the abnormal cannot be understood as a simple product of nature. Rather, the abnormal individual is a correlate of a 'technique of normalisation' (Foucault 2003: 25). Far from *explaining* abnormals, the invocation of instincts and interests serves to highlight the mutually supporting roles that each of these discursive objects play within specific systems of surveillance and social control. As an historical methodology archaeology does not posit explanations, but unearths correlations.

My objective, then, following Foucault, has been wilfully to engage in a form of learned debauchery. An historically informed impiety toward the

⁴⁰ Compare Barthes' claim that his work during the 1950s had been to understand 'how a society produces stereotypes, *i.e.*, triumphs of artifice, which it then consumes as innate meanings, *i.e.* triumphs of Nature' (1982: 471). The stereotype, Barthes says, is in fact a monster that sleeps within every sign (461).

⁴¹ Foucault calls his project, in fact, 'an archaeology of abnormality' (2003: 60). Brad Elliott Stone (2004) highlights the archaeological method of *Abnormal* in his careful and comprehensive review. On Foucault's archaeology see also Gutting (1989), especially Ch. 6.

⁴² On the spurious explanatory power of 'instinct' today, and much else besides, see Bateson's playful 'metalogue', 'What Is An Instinct?' (1987 [1969]).

notion of instinct permits us to understand it not as a mode of explanation but as the corollary of a particular system of power-knowledge. The monstrous natures of both the mixed donestre, a mediaeval ancestor to today's abnormal individual, and the morally duplicitous Jekyll-Hyde, its fictional instantiation, help demonstrate this evolving historical contingency. Foucault argues that a 'tautological intelligibility', a principle of explanation that refers only to itself, 'lies at the heart of analyses of abnormality' (Foucault 2003: 57). It is monsters who have helped show us this heart, but Foucault suggests that the process of the emergence of the instincts has not yet come to an end (133). This process continues to contribute to contemporary notions of the norm, 'a mixture of legality and nature, prescription and constitution' (Foucault 1991: 304). The power of normalisation is what Foucault calls 'the universal reign of the normative', to which individuals subject their bodies, their gestures, their behaviour, their aptitudes, their achievements (304). It is to this normalising power that monsters, and a little learned debauchery, can draw our attention today.

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