Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

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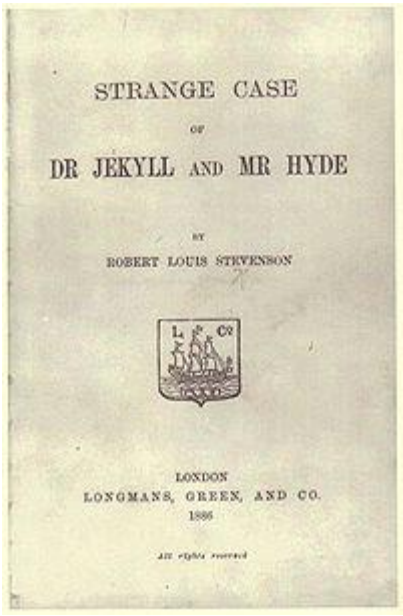
STRANGE CASE
OF
DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE
BY
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1886

Title page of the first London edition (1886)

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Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde is the original title of a novella written by the Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson that was first published in 1886. The original pronunciation of Jekyll was "Jeekul" which was the pronunciation used in Stevenson's native Scotland. The work is commonly known today as ***The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*** or simply ***Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde***.[1] It is about a London lawyer named John Gabriel Utterson who investigates strange occurrences between his old friend, Dr Henry Jekyll,[2] and the misanthropic Edward Hyde.

The work is commonly associated with the rare mental condition often spuriously called "split personality", wherein within the same person there are at least two distinct personalities. In this case, the two personalities in Dr Jekyll are apparently good and evil, with completely opposite levels of morality. The novella's impact is such that it has become a

part of the language, with the phrase "Jekyll and Hyde" coming to mean a person who is vastly different in moral character from one situation to the next.[3]

However, some readers have argued that the "dual personalities" interpretation is overly-simplistic. Jekyll himself notes that a person may be divided into many more than two distinct personalities--he expects that researchers in the future will discover that a person is made up of many different selves. In his discussion of the novel, Vladimir Nabokov argues that the "good versus evil" view of the novel is misleading, as Jekyll himself is not, by Victorian standards, a morally good person [4].

Another popular interpretation is the "civilized versus animalistic" approach. Other readers have argued even further that the split between Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde represents the civilized and the animalistic version of the same person. The description of Hyde as an almost prehuman creature and his actions that occur without thought, suggests that Hyde is more animal than man. Dr Jekyll on the other hand, can be seen as existing in a constant state of repression, with the only thing controlling his urges being the possible consequences imposed by civilized society.

Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde was an immediate success and is one of Stevenson's best-selling works. Stage adaptations began in Boston and London within a year of its publication and it has gone on to inspire scores of major film and stage performances.

Stevenson had long been intrigued by the idea of how personalities can affect a human and how to incorporate the interplay of good and evil into a story. While still a teenager, he developed a script for a play on Deacon Brodie, which he later reworked with the help of W. E. Henley and saw produced for the first time in 1882.[5] In early 1884 he wrote the short story "Markheim", which he revised in 1884 for publication in a Christmas annual. One night in late September or early October 1885, possibly while he was still revising "Markheim," Stevenson had a dream, and upon wakening had the intuition for two or three scenes that would appear in the story. "In the small hours of one afternoon," says Mrs Stevenson, "I was awakened by cries of horror from Louis. Thinking he had a nightmare, I woke him. He said angrily, 'Why did you wake me? I was dreaming a fine bogey tale.' I had awakened him at the first transformation scene ..."[*cite this quote*]

Lloyd Osbourne, Stevenson's stepson, remembers "I don't believe that there was ever such a literary feat before as the writing of *Dr Jekyll*. I remember the first reading as if it were yesterday. Louis came downstairs in a fever; read nearly half the book aloud; and then, while we were still gasping, he was away again, and busy writing. I doubt if the first draft took so long as three days".[*cite this quote*]

As was customary, Mrs Stevenson would read the draft and offer her criticisms in the margins. Louis was confined to bed at the time from a haemorrhage. Therefore, she left her comments with the manuscript and Louis in the toilet. She said that in effect the story was really an allegory, but Louis was writing it as a story. After a while Louis called her back into the bedroom and pointed to a pile of ashes: he had burnt the manuscript in fear that he would try to salvage it, and in the process forced himself to start again from nothing, writing an allegorical story as she had suggested. Scholars debate whether he really burnt his manuscript; there is no direct factual evidence for the burning, but it remains an integral part of the history of the novella.[*citation needed*]

Stevenson re-wrote the story in three to six days. A number of later biographers have alleged that Stevenson was on drugs during the frantic re-write, for example, William Gray's revisionist history *A Literary Life* (2004) said he used cocaine, while other biographers said he used ergot.[6] However, the standard history, according to the accounts of his wife and son (and himself), says he was bed-ridden and sick while writing it. According to Osbourne, "The mere physical feat was tremendous and, instead of harming him, it roused and cheered him inexpressibly". He continued to refine the work for four to six weeks after the initial re-write.

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde was initially sold as a paperback for one shilling in the UK and one dollar in the U.S. The American publisher issued the book on 5 January 1886, four days before the first appearance of the UK edition issued by Longmans; Scribner's published 3000 copies, only 1250 of them bound in cloth. Initially stores would not stock it until a review appeared in *The Times*, on 25 January 1886, giving it a favourable reception. Within the next six months, close to forty thousand copies were sold. The book's success was probably due more to the "moral instincts of the public" than any perception of its artistic merits; it was widely read by those who never otherwise read fiction, quoted in pulpit sermons and in religious papers.[*citation needed*] By 1901 it was estimated to have sold over 250,000 copies.[*citation needed*]

Contents

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[edit] Plot

In London, John Gabriel Utterson, a prosecutor, is on his weekly walk with his relative Richard Enfield, who proceeds to tell him of an encounter he had seen some months ago while coming home late at night from Cavendish Place. The tale describes a sinister figure named Mr Hyde who tramples a young girl, disappears into a door on the street, and re-emerges to pay off her relatives with 10 pounds in gold and a cheque signed by a respectable gentleman — Dr Henry Jekyll, a client and friend of Utterson's — for 100 pounds. Jekyll having recently and suddenly changed his will to make Hyde beneficiary, Utterson is disturbed and concerned about this development, and makes an effort to seek out Hyde. This

is instilled by Utterson's fear that Hyde is blackmailing Dr Henry Jekyll for his money. Upon finally managing to encounter Hyde, Utterson is amazed by how ugly the man seems, as if deformed; though Utterson cannot say why exactly how this is so or why it is, Hyde seems to provoke an instinctive feeling of revulsion in him. Much to Utterson's surprise, Hyde willingly offers Utterson his address. After one of Jekyll's dinner parties, Utterson stays behind to discuss the matter of Hyde with Jekyll. Utterson notices Jekyll turning pale, yet he assures Utterson that everything involving Hyde is in order and to be left alone.

A year passes uneventfully. One night, a servant girl witnesses Hyde beat a man to death with a heavy cane - MP Sir Danvers Carew, also a client of Utterson. The police contact Utterson, who suspects Hyde of the murder. He leads the officers to Hyde's apartment, feeling a sense of foreboding amid the eerie weather (the morning is dark and wreathed in fog). When they arrive at the apartment, the murderer has vanished, but they find half of the cane (described as being made of a strong wood but broken due to the beating) left behind a door. It is revealed to have been given to Jekyll by Utterson. Shortly thereafter, Utterson again visits Jekyll, who now claims to have ended all relations with Hyde. Jekyll shows Utterson a note, allegedly written to Jekyll by Hyde, apologizing for the trouble he has caused him and saying goodbye. That night, however, Utterson's clerk points out that Hyde's handwriting bears a remarkable similarity to Jekyll's own.

For a few months, Jekyll reverts to his former friendly and sociable manner, as if a weight has been lifted from his shoulders. Later, Jekyll suddenly begins to refuse visitors, and Dr Hastie Lanyon, a mutual acquaintance of Jekyll and Utterson, dies suddenly of shock after receiving information relating to Jekyll. Before his death, Lanyon gives Utterson a letter, with instructions that he not open it until after Jekyll's death or disappearance. Utterson goes out walking with Enfield, and they see Jekyll at a window of his laboratory; the three men begin to converse, but a look of horror comes over Jekyll's face, and he slams the window and disappears. Soon afterward, Jekyll's butler, Mr Poole, visits Utterson in a state of desperation and explains that Jekyll has secluded himself in his laboratory for several weeks. Utterson and Poole travel to Jekyll's house through empty, windswept, sinister streets; once there, they find the servants huddled together in fear. They go to see the laboratory where they hear that the voice coming from inside is not the voice of Jekyll and the footsteps are light not the heavy footsteps of the Doctor. After arguing for a time, the two of them resolve to break into Jekyll's laboratory.

Inside, they find the body of Hyde, wearing Jekyll's clothes and apparently dead from suicide. They find also a letter from Jekyll to Utterson promising to explain the entire mystery. Utterson takes the document home, where first he reads Lanyon’s letter and then Jekyll's. The first reveals that Lanyon’s deterioration and eventual death were caused by the shock of seeing Mr Hyde drink a potion and, as a result of doing so, metamorphose into Dr Jekyll. The second letter explains that Jekyll, seeking to separate his good side from his darker impulses, discovered a way to transform himself periodically into a creature free of conscience, this being Mr Hyde. The transformation was incomplete, however, in that it created a second, evil identity, but did not make the first identity purely good. At first, Jekyll reports, he delighted in becoming Hyde and rejoiced in the moral freedom that the creature possessed. Eventually, however, he found that he was turning into Hyde involuntarily in his sleep, even without taking the potion.

At this point, Jekyll resolved to cease becoming Hyde. One night, however, the urge gripped him too strongly, and after the transformation he immediately rushed out and violently killed

Sir Danvers Carew. Horrified, Jekyll tried more adamantly to stop the transformations, and for a time he proved successful by engaging in philanthropic work. At a park, he considers how good a person he has become as a result of his deeds (in comparison to others), believing himself redeemed. However, before he completes his line of thought, he looks down at his hands and realizes that he has suddenly once again become Mr Hyde. This was the first time that an involuntary metamorphosis had happened in waking hours. Far from his laboratory and hunted by the police as a murderer, Hyde needed Lanyon's help to get his potions and become Jekyll again; when he undertook the transformation in Lanyon's presence, the shock of the sight instigated Lanyon's deterioration and death. Meanwhile, Jekyll returned to his home, only to find himself ever more helpless and trapped as the transformations increased in frequency and necessitated even larger doses of potion in order to reverse themselves. It was the onset of one of these spontaneous metamorphoses that caused Jekyll to slam his laboratory window shut in the middle of his conversation with Enfield and Utterson.

Eventually, the potion began to run out, and Jekyll was unable to find a necessary ingredient to make more. Ironically, Jekyll learns that this most necessary ingredient was in the first instance of his experiments, sullied. He assumes that subsequent supplies are pure and thus lacking the quality that makes the potion successful for his experiments. His ability to change back from Hyde into Jekyll slowly vanished. Jekyll writes that even as he composes his letter he knows that he will soon become Hyde permanently, and he wonders if Hyde will face execution for his crimes or choose to kill himself. Jekyll notes that, in either case, the end of his letter marks the end of the life of Dr Jekyll. He ends the letter saying "I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end". With these words, both the document and the novel come to a close.

[edit] Analysis

Richard Mansfield was mostly known for his dual role depicted in this double exposure. The stage adaptation opened in London in 1887, a year after the publication of the novella. Picture 1895.

This story represents a concept in Victorian culture, that of the inner conflict of humanity's sense of good and evil.[7] In particular the novella has been interpreted as an examination of the duality of human nature (that good and evil exists in all), and that the failure to accept this tension (to accept the evil or shadow side) results in the evil being projected onto others.[8] Paradoxically in this argument, evil is actually committed in an effort to extinguish the perceived evil that has been projected onto the innocent victims. In Freudian Theory the thoughts and desires banished to the unconscious mind motivate the behavior of the conscious mind. If someone banishes all evil to the unconscious mind in an attempt to be wholly and completely good, it can result in the development of a Mr Hyde-type aspect to that person's character.[8] This failure to accept the tension of duality is related to Christian theology, where Satan's fall from Heaven is due to his refusal to accept that he is a created being (that he has a dual nature) and is not God.[8] This is why in Christianity, pride (to consider oneself as without sin or without evil) is the greatest sin, as it is the precursor to evil itself; it also explains the Christian concept of evil hiding in the light.[8] The novella has also been noted as "one of the best guidebooks of the Victorian era" because of its piercing description of the fundamental dichotomy of the 19th century "outward respectability and inward lust," as this period had a tendency for social hypocrisy.[7]

Various direct influences have been suggested for Stevenson's interest in the mental condition that separates the sinful from moral self. Among them are the Biblical text of Romans (7:20 "Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it."); the split life in the 1780s of Edinburgh city councillor Deacon William Brodie, master craftsman by day, burglar by night; and James Hogg's novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), in which a young man falls under the spell of the devil.

Literary genres which critics have applied as a framework for interpreting the novel include religious allegory, fable, detective story, sensation fiction, doppelgänger literature, Scottish devil tales and gothic novel. Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde has been the influence for The Hulk, Two-Face and the general superhero genre for the story's ties to a double life.

The duality in the novella has led to a variety of different interpretations. These include readings which see the work as being a Victorian morality tale of unleashed sexual depravity or an allegory for the necessarily double life of the Victorian homosexual.[9] A common interpretation sees the novella's duality as representative of Scotland and the Scottish character. On this reading the duality represents the national and linguistic dualities inherent in Scotland's relationship with the wider Britain and the English language respectively, and also the repressive effects of the Calvinistic church on the Scottish character.[9] A further parallel is also drawn with the city of Edinburgh itself, Stevenson's birthplace, which consists of two distinct parts: the old medieval section historically inhabited by the city's poor, where the dark crowded slums were rife with all types of crime, and the modern Georgian area of wide spacious streets representing respectability.[9][10][11]

[edit] Characters


This unreferenced section requires citations to ensure verifiability.

[edit] Dr Henry Jekyll / Mr Edward Hyde

Dr Jekyll, a "large, well-made, smooth-faced man of fifty", feels as if he is occasionally battling within himself between what is good and what is evil, thus leading to the struggle between his dual personalities of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. He has spent a great part of his life trying to repress evil urges that were not fitting for a man of his stature. He creates a potion in an attempt to mask the hidden evil within his personality. However Jekyll is transformed into the smaller, younger, cruel, remorseless, evil Edward Hyde. Dr Jekyll has many friends and has a friendly personality, but as Mr Hyde, he becomes mysterious and violent. As time goes by, Mr Hyde grows in power. After taking the potion repetitively, he no longer relies upon it to unleash his inner demon i.e. his alter ego. Eventually, Mr Hyde grows so strong that Dr Jekyll becomes reliant on the potion to remain himself.

Stevenson never says exactly what Hyde takes pleasure in on his nightly forays, generally saying that it is something of an evil and lustful nature; thus it is in the context of the times, abhorrent to Victorian religious morality. Hyde may have been reveling in activities that were not appropriate to a man of Jekyll's stature, such as engaging with prostitutes or burglary. However, it is Hyde's violent activities that seem to give him the most thrill, driving him to attack and murder Sir Danvers Carew without apparent reason, making him a hunted outlaw throughout England.

Realizing he will soon be Hyde forever, Jekyll leaves behind a testament; pointing out that while Jekyll often felt like a charlatan, Hyde felt like a "genuine man" years younger and far more energetic than his more "sociable" self. He also states in his final confession that although Hyde knew people recoiled from him, he did not.

[edit] Dr Hastie Lanyon

A late friend of Jekyll's, Hastie Lanyon disagrees with his "scientific" concepts, which Lanyon describes as "...too fanciful". He is the first person to whom Hyde's identity is revealed (Hyde transforms himself back into Jekyll in Lanyon's presence). Dr Lanyon helps Utterson solve the case, when he describes the letter given to him by Jekyll. When Lanyon witnesses the transformation process, (and subsequently hears Jekyll's private confession, made to him alone), Lanyon becomes critically ill and later dies of shock. As an embodiment of Victorian rationalism, materialism, and skepticism, Lanyon serves as a foil to Jekyll.

[edit] Mr Gabriel John Utterson

Gabriel John Utterson, a lawyer and loyal friend of Jekyll's (and Lanyon's), is the character the narrator focuses on, and follows in Utterson's quest to discover the identity of Hyde. Utterson is described as a measured, and at all times emotionless, bachelor—who nonetheless seems believable, trustworthy, tolerant of the faults of others, and indeed genuinely likeable. However, Utterson is not immune to guilt, as, while he is quick to investigate and judge the faults of others even for the benefit of his friends, Stevenson hints he has old secrets: "he was humbled to the dust by the many ill things he had done". Whatever these secrets may be, he does not partake in gossip or other views of the upper class out of respect for his fellow man. Often the last remaining friend of the down-falling, he finds an interest in others' downfalls, which creates a spark of interest not only in Dr Jekyll but also regarding Mr Hyde. He comes to the conclusion that human downfall results from indulging oneself in topics of interest; as a result of this line of reasoning, he lives life as a recluse and "dampens his taste for the finer items of life". Mr Utterson concludes that Dr Jekyll, conversely, lives life as he wishes to, by enjoying his occupation.

[edit] Poole

Poole is Dr Jekyll's butler who, upon noticing the reclusiveness and changes of his master, goes to Mr Utterson with the fear that his master has been murdered and his murderer, Mr Hyde, is residing in the chambers. Poole serves Jekyll faithfully, and attempts to do a good job and be loyal to his master. Yet events finally drive him into joining forces with Utterson to discover the truth.

[edit] Richard Enfield

Richard Enfield is Mr Utterson's distant relative and is a well known 'man about town', suggesting a certain sexual licentiousness - this may be evidenced that he first sees Hyde at about 3am in an episode that is well documented as Hyde running over a little girl. He is the person who mentions to the lawyer the actual personality of Jekyll's heir, Mr Hyde. Enfield witnessed Hyde running over a little girl in the street recklessly, and the group of witnesses, with the girl's parents and other residents, force Hyde into writing a cheque for the girl's family. Enfield discovers that the cheque was signed by Dr Jekyll. The cheque is found to be genuine. He says that Hyde is disgusting looking, but finds himself stumped when asked to describe the man. Perhaps it is Hyde's personality and mannerisms that distinguish him from his fellow human beings, making it impossible for them to identify with such a character.

[edit] Inspector Newcomen

This Scotland Yard inspector is joined by Mr Utterson, after the murder of Sir Danvers Carew. They explore Hyde's loft in Soho and discover evidence of his depraved life.

[edit] Sir Danvers Carew

A kind, white haired, old man and important Member of Parliament. He was killed in the streets of London, on the night of October 18th (sometime between 11pm and 2am by the testimony of the maid), by Mr Hyde in a murderous rage. He was 70 years old. He was however carrying on his person, at the time of his death, a letter addressed to Gabriel Utterson. As a result the police subsequently interviewed Utterson with regard to the murder. Although there is no clear reason for his murder, Carew openly greets Hyde immediately prior to the killing. Coupled with this, both characters have a direct link to Utterson.

A Maid

After the death of Sir Danvers Carew, a maid, whose employer Mr Hyde had once visited, is the only person to have witnessed the murder committed by Hyde.

[edit] Adaptations

Poster from the 1880s.
Main article: Adaptations of Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

There are dozens of stage and film adaptations of the novella; over 123 film versions alone, not including stage and radio versions.[12] However, there have been no major adaptations to date that remain faithful to Stevenson's original. Most omit the figure of Utterson, telling the story from Jekyll's and Hyde's viewpoint (as well as using the same actor for both roles)—thus eliminating entirely the mystery aspect of the true identity of Hyde, which was the story's twist ending and not the basic premise that it is today. In addition, almost all adaptations introduce a romantic element which does not exist in the original story.[9]

[edit] References

1. ^ Stevenson published the book as *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (without "The"), for reasons unknown, but it has been supposed to increase the "strangeness" of the case (Richard Dury (2005)). Later publishers added "The" to make it grammatically correct, but it was not the author's original intent. The story is often known today simply as *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* or even *Jekyll and Hyde*.
2. ^ English pronunciation: /ˈdʒiːkəl/ is the Scots pronunciation of the name, but /ˈdʒɛkəl/ is the accepted general pronunciation.
3. ^ "Jekyll and Hyde definition | Dictionary.com". Dictionary.reference.com. Retrieved 2009-05-28.
4. ^ "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: An Introductory Essay." Signet Classic, 2003
5. ^ Swearingen, Roger G. *The Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson*. London: Macmillan, 1980. (ISBN) p. 37.
6. ^ Possibly with the help of cocaine, according to William Gray's revisionist history *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Literary Life* (2004). ISBN 978-0-333-98400-0
7. ^ [a] [b] Nightmare: Birth of Victorian Horror (TV series) Jekyll and Hyde (1996)
8. ^ [a] [b] [c] [d] Sanford, John A. *Evil The Shadow Side of Reality*. Crossroad (1981)
9. ^ [a] [b] [c] [d] The Beast Within The Guardian, 13-Dec-2008
10. ^ *Robert Louis Stevenson and His World*, David Daiches, 1973
11. ^ "Edinburgh: Where Jekyll parties with Hyde". *The Daily Telegraph* (London). 1998-07-25. Retrieved 2010-05-24.
12. ^ Derivative works of Robert Louis Stevenson

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- "The Beast Within", Freudian fable, sexual morality tale, gay allegory — the novella has inspired as many interpretations as it has film adaptations. By James Campbell, *The Guardian*, December 13, 2008

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