

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE
ADAPTED BY JEFFREY HATCHER

PRODUCED BY THE PUBLIC THEATRE
OCTOBER 2009

A STUDY GUIDE
BY MARTIN ANDRUCKI
Charles A. Dana Professor of Theater
Bates College

THE AUTHOR Like any adaptation, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is the work of multiple authors, in this case, the creator of the original story and the dramatist who later brings that narrative to the stage.

Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde was first published in London in 1886, the handiwork of Scottish author, Robert Louis Stevenson. Born in Edinburgh in 1850, Stevenson entered Edinburgh University ostensibly to follow in his father's footsteps in the study of engineering. Stevenson, however, spent most of his time pursuing his real interests, reading literature and teaching himself how to write. Eventually he dropped the pretence of studying engineering and took a law degree instead, a credential of which he made little professional use.

Throughout his twenties, Stevenson entered ever more deeply into the world of literature and the arts, a source of enduring conflict with his practical-minded father. Eventually he made his way to France, where he associated with artists and writers and met his future wife, Fanny Osbourne, a married woman ten years his senior. By 1877 he had begun publishing both short stories and non-fiction accounts of his travels on the Continent.

In 1879 he traveled to Monterey, California to join Fanny. The rigors of the journey and his impoverished life in the new world brought on a severe physical breakdown whose most serious symptom was persistent hemorrhaging of his lungs—a condition that was to afflict him throughout the remainder of his life.

In 1880, Fanny having divorced her first husband, she and Stevenson married, spending their honeymoon at an abandoned mining camp overlooking the Napa Valley in northern California.

Returning to Europe later that year, Stevenson sought relief from his illness, dividing his time between the healthful climate of the Scottish Highlands and the Swiss town of Davos, well-known as a resort for patients suffering from tuberculosis and other diseases of the lungs.

During this period he began to write *Treasure Island*, a pirate story initially intended to entertain his young stepson. Eventually the narrative was published in installments in a children's magazine, and then issued as a novel in 1883. With the appearance of this classic tale of a boy and a buccaneer, Stevenson achieved wide-spread and enduring fame as a writer.

For the remainder of his life, Stevenson sought a place where he could live in health and concentrate on his writing. This pursuit took him from Bournemouth in England to the Adirondack Mountains in New York to Honolulu and finally to Samoa in the South Pacific, where he died in 1894, shortly after his 44th birthday.

In 1885, while at Bournemouth, Stevenson had a dream which laid the foundation for what would become the story of Jekyll and Hyde. As he tells us in an essay from 1888, "I had long been trying to write a story on this subject, to find a body, a vehicle for that strong sense of man's double being which must . . . come in upon and overwhelm the mind of every thinking creature." Following two days "racking my brains for a plot" he finally, "dreamed the scene at the window, and a scene afterward split in two, in which Hyde, pursued for some crime, took the powder and underwent the change in the presence of his pursuers. . . . All that was given me was the matter of three scenes and the central idea of a voluntary change becoming involuntary." The rest of the story, he informs his readers, was the product of his conscious mind.

These three dream-scenes and the "central idea" that unites them are among the most powerful and vivid elements of Stevenson's narrative. It is Jekyll's loss of his power to control the emergence of Hyde that constitutes the central horror of the story—the triumph of the dark side of the double self. This triumph becomes clear in the three scenes dreamt by Stevenson: in the "scene at the window," two of Dr. Jekyll's friends see him seated at a window. They invite him to join them in their walk, but he cannot leave his laboratory because he is terrified that the triumphant Hyde will emerge at any moment. He has become Hyde's prisoner. In the other two scenes, Hyde has broken out into a life of uncontrolled criminality. As a fugitive being pursued by the law, he cannot enter the Jekyll laboratory to administer the potion to himself. Instead, he requires the assistance of another character, who then becomes a witness to the appalling physical transformation.

This fictional combination of raw dream-imagery with the conscious inventions of a gifted writer created a sensation in Victorian London. Printed as a short novel in paperback just after the New Year in 1886, the story sold more than forty-thousand copies in England within its first few months on the market. It was also a huge success in America, with something like 250 thousand copies being sold by the turn of the century.

In addition to its success as a book, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* became an immediate theatrical attraction, at first parodied in London in May of 1886 as *The Strange Case of a Hyde and a Seekyl*, then in New York in 1887 as *Dr. Freckle and Mr. Snide*. A serious stage version that first appeared in Boston in May of 1887 went on to a long run in New York, where it became the model for subsequent silent film versions.

Early Hollywood star John Barrymore played the dual role on screen in 1920. Within a few years additional cinematic versions had been produced in England, Germany, and Denmark. By this time, the phrase “Jekyll and Hyde” had taken on a life of its own, conjuring up in the minds of millions who had neither read the story nor seen any of its many adaptations the sinister image of a self split between good and evil.

With the advent of the talkies, the Jekyll and Hyde story continued its spine-tingling march through world-wide popular culture. In 1931, matinee idol Frederic March played the disjointed doctor; in 1941 it was Spencer Tracy, with Lana Turner and Ingrid Bergman as the good and bad girls that called out to his two selves.

Following World War II, films from Mexico, Italy, Argentina, France, Spain, and Russia told Dr. Jekyll’s story; recent decades have introduced gender-reversals and pornography into the narrative, or transformed it into musical theater. The lead role has been played by Michael Caine, John Malkovich, and, if one wants to stretch the point (i.e., *The Nutty Professor*), by Jerry Lewis and Eddie Murphy.

Film scholar Charles King tells us that, as of 1997, there had been “at least 88 film and television adaptations,” of the Stevenson work. He also notes that, “Since 1908, there has not been a period of longer than five years without a version of the story, and multiple versions in the same year are not uncommon (158).” And according to the current (2009) Internet Movie Data Base, in the dozen years since Prof. King published his survey something like a dozen new screen versions of Jekyll and Hyde have appeared.

Like those other haunted Victorians, Ebenezer Scrooge, Dracula, and Dorian Gray, the two-faced Jekyll/Hyde has ascended to the status of cultural archetype, becoming a permanent figure in our mental landscape.

The theatrical version of the Stevenson story currently being produced by The Public Theatre is the work of Jeffrey Hatcher, a prolific playwright who grew up in Steubenville, Ohio and attended Denison University.

Originally intending to pursue a career in acting, Hatcher eventually decided to seek fulfillment as an author—a goal he has pursued with impressive energy. The Playwrights Data Base lists more than forty plays written by him since 1987—an output larger than Shakespeare’s.

Many of those works are stage adaptations: of fiction, of non-fiction, or of other plays. Notably, he has created theatrical versions of Henry James’s ghost story, “The Turn of the Screw,” of

Herman Melville's novel, *Pierre*, and of Mitch Albom's personal memoir of his conversations with a dying mentor, *Tuesdays with Morrie*.

In an interview for the American Theatre Wing, Hatcher explained that he is attracted to the process of adaptation because it provides an opportunity to "re-energize" himself by working with plots and characters created by someone else. "Sometimes," he noted, "when you're writing a lot of your own material you can go to the well . . . once too often." Adaptation, in other words, allows him to dip into another imaginative "well" while his own is being replenished, allowing him to store up the creative juices until the next time "you do one of your own original pieces."

Both in his original plays and in his adaptations, Hatcher notes the recurrence of plots having "to do with the slippery notion of identity." In an interview for Theater Communications Group, he told Toby Zinman that this theme grows out of his own early interest in acting, "and also the way in which any person in the theatre remakes themselves. . . . I also think my interest in illusion versus reality comes from the desire to want to have fun with the audience—pull out some rugs, do some magic-box tricks, that kind of thing."

The story of Jekyll and Hyde certainly focuses on "the slippery notion of identity" as the central character oscillates between two contradictory selves: the respectable doctor, and the savage criminal. As for "magic-box tricks," the metamorphosis of one into the other on stage certainly qualifies.

Jeffrey Hatcher's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* had its first production at the Arizona Theatre Company in January 2008. There have been subsequent productions in several theaters across the United States. This production at The Public Theatre is the Maine premiere.

(Much of the information in this section is drawn from The Norton Critical Edition of Stevenson's story.)

THE SETTING The action both of Stevenson's novella and Hatcher's adaptation takes place in London in the 1880s.

If Paris is known as "the city of light," Victorian London might be called "the city of gloom." "A combination of coal-fired stoves and poor sanitation made the air heavy and foul-smelling," says one on-line historical guide to the city. Another source notes that, "Both the rich and the poor had to contend with the evil air around the city. . . . Every surface was coated with soot from the use of coal. New buildings being constructed of Portland stone didn't stay pristine for long. The air people breathed was often foggy with the smoke from coal fires."

This is the city of darkness captured in the fiction of Dickens and Conan Doyle, where Scrooge makes his solitary way through the fog to his ghost-infested house, and where Sherlock Holmes hails a cab on a murky street in pursuit of a master criminal fleeing through the shadows. And

two years after the publication of Stevenson's story London became, in real life, the city stalked by Jack the Ripper, another denizen of the smoggy night.

Like Jekyll and Hyde, Victorian London presented contradictory faces to the world. It was simultaneously the seat of a global imperial and financial power and the site of some of the world's most wretched slums. As Dickens shows us in *Bleak House*, it was the city both of Sir Leicester Dedlock and of the homeless street sweeper, Jo. With a population that grew six-fold during this period—from one to six million—it presented a vast spectrum of social life, exhibiting everywhere across the urban landscape—Jekyll-and-Hyde-like—the polarities of the human soul.

The play makes no attempt to replicate on stage the physical locations of Stevenson's London—the streets, parks, laboratories, and domestic interiors. Instead, the script calls for the various settings of the action to be, "suggested by moveable desks, chairs, serving tables, lab tables, hospital gurneys, and the like." This scenic minimalism makes it possible to move from scene to scene with "maximum speed" and for "transition time to be kept to an absolute minimum." This fluid movement approximates the instantaneous changes from scene to scene in a piece of narrative fiction—which is the original format of the Jekyll and Hyde story. On the page, the author merely needs to tell us that we have moved from the street to the living room for the transition to occur. This is the sort of instantaneous alteration in space and time that Hatcher is aiming for in his play.

The one "vital" piece of scenery for this stage version, according to the script, is "The Red Door that is moved from place to place during the performance." In Stevenson's original, there are two doors that figure prominently in the narrative. The first is described as the "old dissecting room door," leading from the street into Dr. Jekyll's laboratory. It is near that door that we first meet Hyde in the story, and it is through that door that Hyde frequently passes on his nocturnal comings and goings. On one side of it sits the murky London street; on the other lies Hyde's secret lair.

The second door that appears in the story leads to an anteroom adjacent to Jekyll's medical laboratory. This door, "covered with red baize," opens into the chamber where Jekyll compounds his transformative potions, where he changes back and forth from himself to Hyde, and where he finally dies.

The playwright combines these two doors into one, which then is used scenically to define the boundary between two worlds: the secret haunt where Jekyll and Hyde exchange identities, and the domain of everyday experience.

One further scenic element is crucial to the action of the play: Hyde's cane. The script calls for Hyde to be played by several actors differing in appearance and sex, a convention that could lead to audience confusion. To avoid this, the actor playing Hyde in a given scene carries a silver-headed cane as a distinguishing emblem. The author chooses a cane to identify Hyde

because this is the instrument he uses to commit his most vicious crime, the murder of Sir Danvers Carew. It symbolizes his malicious nature.

THE PLOT

The play begins with a “Prologue” in which five unidentified actors inform us that this is to be a recounting of “events as [we] would recall them,” one of them cautioning us that, “I cannot speak for what I have not witnessed.” Immediately, we enter a world of ambiguity and subjectivity. We will encounter limited and partial accounts of characters and circumstances too complex and too elusive ever to be grasped with objective finality.

There follows a blackout, a scream, the shriek of a police whistle, and a violent burst of energy as the actors break through “The Red Door” into a room whose contents are obscure and confusing. *“Now we see a body on the floor. . . . It might even be two bodies. All we can see is a swirl of dark clothing.”* One of the actors speaks a line that becomes a theme for the play to follow: “Is it him? IS IT?!”

The Prologue is followed by a swift succession of short scenes, some no more than two or three lines, only two longer than three pages. Many of these scenes are presented as enactments of diary entries, thus emphasizing their subjective nature. In the end we return to the ambiguous scene presented in the Prologue, with a clearer understanding of the physical contents of the room, but with no certainty as to the meaning of it all.

The first scene begins with Utterson, Jekyll’s lawyer and old friend, strolling on a London street with Enfield, his business associate.. Their walk has accidentally taken them to a part of town where Enfield has recently had a bizarre experience, which he recounts to Utterson. As he does so, the event is re-enacted on stage.

He tells of seeing a young girl being brutally knocked over on the street by a man hurrying to some destination. An indignant crowd gathers and demands that the mysterious man—eventually identified as Hyde—compensate the girl for whatever harm she might have suffered. He grudgingly agrees, opens the door to a dismal room, and produces a bank check and a letter attesting to his good credit. Enfield ends his story by pointing out two disturbing facts about the affair: the first is that Hyde, whom he had never met before, knew his name. The second is that the letter of credit for this dubious character was signed by their friend, the highly respectable Dr. Henry Jekyll.

The second scene takes us to Jekyll’s home, where he and his friends have just finished a convivial dinner. In the course of their conversation Lanyon, a friend of Jekyll’s, has told the story of a Scottish criminal who murdered his wife and children. When the police arrive and find him covered in blood, the killer asks, “What have I done?” Jekyll sees those words not as a rhetorical question, but as an expression of sincere confusion by a man who does not know his own self—a hint of what is to come for Jekyll.

We then learn that the senior physician at Jekyll's hospital, Sir Danvers Carew, wishes to obtain the body of one of the dead children for public dissection. Jekyll expresses his contempt for Carew's morbid sensationalism in planning such a demonstration, establishing a clear point of conflict between him and his professional superior.

Utterson and Enfield then query Jekyll about his connection with Hyde, wondering how the latter knew Enfield's name and why he would have a letter of credit signed by the respectable doctor. Jekyll's answers are elusive and ambiguous. He says he pointed Enfield out to Hyde one day on the street. And he asserts that Hyde, "is someone who has done me services in the past. I cannot approve his actions. I condemn them. . . . But . . . I owe Edward Hyde a debt." Both Enfield and Utterson receive Jekyll's explanation with cool skepticism, but press the matter no further. As the scene ends, Utterson turns to the audience and informs us that he has discovered that Hyde's refuge is "much closer to [Jekyll's] than I would have thought. In fact, one would almost say it backed onto his garden where his laboratory was." So underlining Jekyll's "debt" to Hyde is the fact that their dwellings are virtually connected to one another—adjoining wings of the same building.

The next scene takes place in the dissecting theater of the College of London Hospital where Dr. Carew is exhibiting and discoursing on the body of a prostitute, presumably bitten to death by a savage dog. Carew seems to gloat over the body's wounds, taking almost pornographic pleasure in pointing out the dead woman's "exemplary" breasts and "swollen" sexual organs, deriding her misshapen brain, with its dwarfish "intellectual spheres" and distended regions "devoted primarily to the pursuits of lust and degradation."

An enraged Jekyll challenges Carew's analysis of the corpse, charging him with both incompetence and dirty-mindedness: "If you want lurid depictions, Sir Danvers, buy a postcard from a Frenchman." A group of medical students then ask him how to distinguish between what one can do and what one should do as a doctor. Jekyll says the answer lies in one's character. "Don't you mean the soul, sir? You do believe in a soul, don't you . . . ?"

Jekyll avoids a direct answer, which then leads us into the next, very brief, scene in which he wrestles with the question posed by the student, making it clear that his beliefs in this area are highly unorthodox. As Jekyll turns upstage, Utterson enters, reading from a newspaper an account of the theft of a prostitute's corpse—the subject of Carew's lecture—from the hospital and its replacement by a dead pig wearing a monocle. As Utterson reads the report, we see the Hyde from a previous scene toss the identifying cane to another actor, who, cane in hand, then proceeds to enact the theft of the prostitute's body and the substitution of the pig. During this action, the actor playing Jekyll has stood on stage, facing away from the audience. He now turns to us, "*his eyes closed. . . .breathing heavily, as if in the middle of a dream.*" In this way, we are to understand that Jekyll has morphed into Hyde, using his other, reprobate, self to rescue the abused human corpse, and to deal a personal insult to his enemy, Carew, whom he caricatures as a monocle-wearing pig.

We then find ourselves at a staff meeting at the hospital, with Carew berating Jekyll for his unorthodox medical practices and opinions—particularly his fascination with non-western forms of healing. “The man spent fully two years abroad in every cesspool he could find, every jig-jig voodoo –” Carew rants, exposing his intolerance of forms of knowledge outside his limited purview. Carew then demands a public apology from Jekyll for the confrontation over the corpse of the prostitute. Jekyll refuses, lambasting Carew as a, “fool! If he can’t cut into it, he can’t fathom it.” He then tells his colleagues of his experiences, “in jungle clearings and island shores,” where he encountered, “levels of understanding advanced beyond anything contemplated in a college lecture hall!” He then discourses about the mind and the brain, and of discovering, “Two streams within the consciousness, one on the surface, the other subterranean.” Clearly, he is revealing the insights that have led him to, and grown from, his experiments in self-transformation. He raises the vision of a scientific process that would enable a man to filter out the evil elements from his nature, thus creating “[s]erenity. . . . peace of mind.” Talk of the beastly side of human nature prompts Utterson to ask if Carew knows about Hyde, and if Jekyll would like to hire a private detective to investigate the latter. Jekyll rejects the idea together with Utterson’s advice to apologize to Carew.

An exasperated Utterson takes steps on his own to learn about Hyde in the following scene, positioning himself near the door where Enfield first encountered the shady figure. Eventually Hyde appears, and Utterson describes him as a man whose “desires had ravaged him, crippled him, his features like that of an old and evil child.

At this point a new and important character appears, a woman named Elizabeth, sister of the girl trampled in the first scene, who comes to Hyde’s quarters to see for herself what sort of man would behave with such brutality. When Hyde pulls a knife from the head of his cane, the scene morphs into a disturbing synthesis of flirtation and menace. Elizabeth defies Hyde, refusing to be intimidated by his blade-wielding, and Hyde is intrigued by her boldness. He returns the knife to its sheath, and informs Elizabeth that the door is unlocked, so she is free to go. But before she leaves, he has a final word to say:

HYDE. Wait! I’m not always ‘at home’ when friends come calling here. (*Takes out a card from his pocket, hands it to her.*) They know me at this house. If ever you have need. What’s your name?

ELIZABETH. . . . Elizabeth. Elizabeth—

Clearly, each has been attracted by the other. It’s not surprising that Hyde should find a pretty and spunky young girl appealing. Far more puzzling is Elizabeth’s willingness to give her name to a man who has just been waving a knife at her. Perhaps this illustrates Jekyll’s theory about the impenetrability of the human soul.

As this improbable couple takes their leave of one another, we see Jekyll lurching into the light as if just waking from a terrible dream. His servant, Poole, informs him that he has been crying out in his sleep, screaming the name, “Elizabeth.”

Shaken, Jekyll consults his physician friend, Dr. Lanyon, under the guise of inquiring about a patient of his own, whom he describes as an experimental devotee of some unnamed stimulant. Now, Jekyll confides, there are occasions when the “patient” cannot recall “what’s occurred in one of his ‘states.’ It’s as if a hand has pulled down a shade to block his view.” Lanyon’s advice: have the man confined.

A very brief scene follows, in which Jekyll informs his servants that he will be “away for a few days on business.” We understand that he intends to liberate Hyde during this “business” trip.

Our assumptions are confirmed immediately, as Elizabeth encounters Hyde in Regent’s Park in central London. The scene gradually becomes a kind of seduction, ending with Elizabeth agreeing to accompany Hyde back to his rooms. The staging here calls for the presence of a kind of chorus of Hydes, with each of the actors who has played the character in previous scenes joining in the flirtatious exchange, including a female Hyde who ultimately becomes the chief seducer, lending a homoerotic note to the moment. More disturbingly, the various Hydes express gruesome sadistic desires, one declaring, “I want to slit you in two”; another hissing, “I want to rend you on the green”; and a third proposing, “to ravish you and ravage you and leave you bleeding.” Elizabeth doesn’t actually hear these unspoken obscenities; instead she senses the ferocity of Hyde’s desire, which is finally irresistible. Jekyll, too, participates in the seduction, speaking through the Hydes, like a ventriloquist through his dummies, so that the full force of the Jekyll/Hyde composite is brought to bear in this act of sexual enthrallment.

As Elizabeth and Hyde head off together, Jekyll steps forward to divulge, as if to his diary, that three days have just dropped from his life in a terrifying spell of amnesia.

Next we move to the office of the private detective, Sanderson, earlier recommended by Utterson. Jekyll has come to hire Sanderson to follow Hyde and report on his activities—obviously because, as we have just learned, Jekyll no longer has any ability to remember the behavior of his other self. Hyde is growing ever more independent of Jekyll.

There follows a re-enactment of Sanderson’s report, which describes Hyde’s movements from a pub, to a restaurant, and finally to a brothel, where he tortures a prostitute, carving in her back the words, “Wrong One,” then slashing his hand with his cane-head knife. The words “wrong one” indicate that Hyde was aware of Sanderson, and that he knew that Jekyll was having him followed to discover the identity and whereabouts of Elizabeth. It is his message to Jekyll that his efforts have failed.

After Sanderson delivers his report, Utterson arrives with papers he has just received by mail—Jekyll’s will which leaves his entire estate to Hyde. Jekyll realizes at once that Hyde has produced this document, further demonstrating his independence and his determination ultimately to supplant Jekyll.

Utterson, who has also been following Hyde, delivers his own report of the reprobate’s recent behavior:

A docks man the size of a bank safe hurled across a bar, his back broken. An old man asleep in an alley, his face doused with lamp oil and lit by a match. Brothels, cellars, dens of iniquity, every evil act you can conceive. . . . A villain. A brute. A sensualist of the perverse and a predatory beast who knows neither care nor conscience.

Utterson has also discovered the name and the workplace of the woman whom Hyde has been seeing, a pair of facts of urgent interest to Jekyll. The name, as we know, is Elizabeth. Utterson adds a surname, Jelkes, and a place where she can be found: at the Charing Cross Hotel.

Which is where the next scene is set, with Jekyll checking into a room tended by Elizabeth, who works as a chambermaid. In his clumsy attempts to learn more about Elizabeth, he arouses her mistrust and, as he presses his questioning, she becomes frightened. When he begs her to stay away from Hyde, she breaks away and runs off crying for help.

Back at his house, Jekyll seemingly makes a decision to have done with Hyde, and orders Poole to burn his double's clothing. But before he finally repudiates his dark side, he takes the potion for what he declares will be, "One last time."

As Hyde he meets with Elizabeth for what he intends to be a final tryst. Having fallen in love with her, she is heartbroken, wishing she could "take away the demons" in his head. Noticing the bloody slash he gave his hand in the scene with the prostitute, she implores him to remember that "there's just us. . . . Just us in the world, you and me. . . ." But Hyde insists on the termination of their affair, and when she runs off in anguish, he turns to the nearby figure of Jekyll and spits out his rage and loathing: "I would kill you if I could! But you're my vessel, the good, gray corpse that carries me to my pleasures. No, I cannot kill you. . . . But annihilate Henry Jekyll as the same, I shall."

On that ominous note, the action moves to a London park where Sir Danvers Carew, "*a bit tipsy*," encounters a man who turns out to be Hyde. In an act of totally gratuitous violence, Hyde begins beating Carew with his stick "*over and over until [his]cane snaps in two*," keeping up the vicious assault until his victim is dead. This scene is actually an enactment of the "[p]olice statement" of a maid who witnessed the crime from her window, and who expresses her regret for not having intervened more quickly: "When I had my wits about me, I . . . called for the constable. . . . I'm sorry. The better me would have called out sooner . . . but the bad in me . . . wanted to watch." Which makes it clear that Jekyll is not alone in having a dark side to his personality. With the murder of Carew, the first act comes to an end.

Act two begins in the morgue at Scotland Yard as Utterson and representatives of the police discuss the condition of Carew's battered corpse—a moment of irony in which the former dissector himself becomes the object of dissection. As it turns out, Carew was carrying a note addressed to Utterson reading, "Urgent we talk about our mutual friend"—a broad hint that Jekyll, the "mutual friend," is somehow implicated in this unsavory matter. There is another

piece of evidence, though not one that points directly toward Jekyll: the bottom half of the broken cane used to kill Carew.

With these ambiguous clues in hand, Utterson and the Inspector confront Jekyll in the next scene. The doctor has heard of Carew's murder, but it's not clear whether he realizes that he, as Hyde, was the killer. As the Inspector and Utterson press him with questions about the note and the broken cane, the scene begins to fill with the various Hydes who have appeared previously on stage, all of them converging threateningly on Jekyll. They are collectively determined to prevent Jekyll from acting on his resolution to eradicate Hyde by blackmailing the doctor with manufactured evidence of his guilt for the murder of Carew. As one of the menacing Hydes says, "I'm embarrassed to admit I can't find the cane Lanyon gave you when you were young and innocent. I'm sure I put it somewhere safe." Hyde is using his possession of the telltale end of the cane—the head, with its distinctive ornamentation linking it to Jekyll—as a weapon to beat the doctor into submission to his dark self. Unless Jekyll continues to liberate Hyde, the latter will make the cane available to the police, thus incriminating the doctor.

Jekyll defies this intimidation by pointing out that the evidence, when looked at with his particular knowledge, actually points to Hyde as the killer. If Hyde becomes the object of a police dragnet, then Jekyll will never dare to take the potion and risk being apprehended for murder. Preparing to lead the police to Hyde's hidden lair, Jekyll addresses the other self that has become his nemesis:

You can't come out now, Hyde. Your hovel behind the red door will be barred. The entire Metropolitan Police Force, nay, the whole of English law enforcement will be looking for you. Drawings of you posted everywhere. Edward Hyde. Murderer of Sir Danvers Carew. You have no place left. You can never come out again.

It turns out, however, that Jekyll is deceiving himself about his ability to expunge Hyde from his life. In fact, because of Jekyll's repeated conjuring of his sinister self, Hyde has developed the power to emerge unbidden from the darkness. Which is what he does in the next scene, back in Regent's Park, where we see Jekyll complacently theorizing about human nature with Utterson. His placid afternoon is wrecked when Elizabeth crosses his path, a tempting apparition that arouses the lurking Hyde. Chasing Utterson away, Jekyll, "*(falls to his knees, trembling, eyes closed.)* No, no, no, no, no, no, let it not be, let it not be! . . . *(And out of the shadows comes an actor, twirling a broken cane. It's Hyde. . .)*"

Of course, now that Hyde is wanted for murder, he cannot show his face anyplace where he will be known—which means he cannot return to Jekyll's house for the transformative potion. Instead, he sends a note to his friend, Lanyon, begging his colleague to secure the necessary chemicals and bring them to his own medical office. This Lanyon does. Hyde then mixes and swallows the potion, and before Lanyon's eyes metamorphoses into Jekyll. But now that Lanyon knows that Jekyll and Hyde are one—and have murdered Carew—he is in possession of a secret that will cost him his life: "*Jekyll springs at Lanyon and grabs him around the throat.*"

Lanyon struggles, but Jekyll forces him to his knees, strangling him." We now see that the wall separating Jekyll and Hyde has been breached. Not only can Hyde emerge physically at will, but now Hyde's evil self is seeping into the previously virtuous soul of Jekyll. The barrier between good and evil is down, and the doctor has become a Hyde-like murderer.

The next scene returns us to Jekyll's house, where Elizabeth calls on him, having recognized him in the park as the man who accosted her in the hotel room. She has delivered to his house a package containing the missing head of the cane that killed Carew—a piece of evidence she had been concealing to protect her lover, Hyde. She begs for information about Hyde, who had earlier given her Jekyll's card—evidence of their connection. Jekyll declares that he has no knowledge of Hyde's whereabouts, but Elizabeth persists in her pleas for information, asserting repeatedly that she is hopelessly enthralled by her demon lover. During their heated exchange, Jekyll uses a vivid phrase Hyde had spoken earlier. When she hears the words, she looks at Jekyll searchingly, then seizes his hand and examines his palm, which bears the scar of the knife wound she observed on Hyde's hand on the night he broke with her. In a flash of understanding, she grasps the fact that Jekyll and Hyde are one.

Now that Elizabeth, like Lanyon before her, has learned the secret, Jekyll must prevent her from disclosing it to the world. When Utterson and his servant, Poole, bang on the door intending to inform Jekyll of Lanyon's murder, the doctor restrains Elizabeth from escaping. She faints; Utterson and Poole enter the room, and Jekyll tells them that Elizabeth has conspired in his death by leading Hyde to the house. When they rush off to find the police, Jekyll carries Elizabeth to the secret chamber behind the red door.

In the feverish confusion, Jekyll confronts a phantom Hyde who insists that Elizabeth will not betray either of them. But Jekyll cannot take the risk of trusting her. Instead he has concocted a story that will allow him to murder Elizabeth as he murdered Lanyon, both threats to his guilty secret: "I am Dr. Henry Jekyll, I am respected, I am admired, and I will not be destroyed because some slut knows things she never should have learned!" At this point, "*Jekyll turns to Elizabeth, holding the blade . . . Hyde 3 steps in front of him. Elizabeth screams.*" There is a blackout—and we find ourselves back at the opening moments of the play, as Utterson and a crowd of others break through the red door to confront the mystery on the other side.

After a moment, the dark confusion on the floor resolves itself into the body of Jekyll, and the figure of Elizabeth, rising from her swoon. Expecting to find Hyde in the room as well as Jekyll, Utterson and the others are baffled by the presence of only one of the two. Elizabeth assures them that there was no one else in the room. They then demand to know whether she stabbed Jekyll:

ELIZABETH. He did it himself.

INSPECTOR. Dr. Jekyll took his own life? (*Utterson cuts him off.*)

UTTERSON. That's not what she means. (*To Elizabeth.*) Is it? (*Elizabeth doesn't respond.*)

Utterson's question and Elizabeth's answering silence tell us that Utterson is beginning to understand the mystery: the "he" who killed Jekyll was the Hyde who had come to hate his progenitor, not the doctor whose increasingly criminal self was prepared to murder Elizabeth.

The play ends with a speech by Hyde that stands the customary relationship between him and Jekyll on its head:

I had the strangest dream... I dreamt I was a man named Henry Jekyll. Everyone loved me and thought I was the finest person they'd ever known... And I was so unhappy. So lonely. Thank God I woke in time to know I wasn't him.

THE CHARACTERS

Characters on stage are defined by what they want and what they do to get it. The first important piece of information we acquire about **Henry Jekyll's** character is that he deeply dislikes his medical superior, Sir Danvers Carew. Carew, as we have seen above, wants to conduct a public dissection of a child whose recent murder has created a public sensation. Jekyll regards this proposal as perverse and admits that Carew "does not bring out the best in me."

What Carew does bring out we see in the following scene where Jekyll rises in the midst of Carew's public dissection of the corpse of a prostitute and denounces his superior as medically inept and morally repugnant, creating a public scandal before an audience of students. So we learn from this action that Jekyll's ethical convictions—his beliefs about what a doctor "can do and what [he] should do"—are strong enough to propel him into a confrontation with a more powerful colleague who could damage his career. In general, such admirable convictions, together with the willingness to take personal risks in support of them, confer stature on a character—a sense of moral weight or substance.

However, ambiguities soon enter the picture as we discover Jekyll's fear of revealing his beliefs about the human soul to a group of enquiring students: "Gentlemen these are questions for the college chaplain. Go to him." Later, alone in his study, he reproaches himself for his reticence about "these questions": "Why could I not tell them there is no soul? Tell them that, and word gets 'round I am Jekyll the Agnostic, Jekyll the Atheist. . . . More fuel for the fire. More ammunition for Sir Danvers Carew, the pornographer of death. . . ."

So Jekyll is eager to challenge Carew on matters of medical ethics, but he shies away from revealing his private thoughts on metaphysical or theological concerns, especially regarding the soul, the essence of one's identity. In Jekyll's first three scenes, then, we encounter a figure who strikes us as strangely divided: on the one hand he is willing to make a public scene about the professional behavior of his superior, but on the other, he is apprehensive about revealing his theological doubts to that same man for fear that this will somehow undermine his reputation.

This latent duality becomes luridly explicit in the following scene, where Hyde steals the prostitute's body and replaces it with a pig's carcass. Throughout, Jekyll stands on stage, enthralled by the spectacle of Hyde's behavior, and at the end of the action, he turns to the audience, "*his eyes closed. . . . breathing heavily, as if in the middle of a dream.*" Clearly, we have been watching Jekyll witness his own desires enacted through the person of Hyde. Not only does Carew "not bring out the best" in his colleague, he calls forth the monstrous other self that Jekyll must keep vigilantly concealed.

We see, then, that Jekyll is a character full of rage. Some of it he can publicly express, but the more ferocious depths of this passion he must delegate to Hyde.

Jekyll's most important action is consenting to become Hyde, a process that has already been going on for several months as the play begins. He is motivated by a desire to discover a scientific method for isolating the primitive evils that live on in the human mind and eliminating them:

[Y]ou will find not one mind but two. Two streams within the consciousness, one on the surface, the other subterranean. . . . Coursing through our veins is the river of our old ways, before man created morality. . . . Morality harnessed our bestial instincts, but it did not kill them. . . . They're all still deep inside us. . . . If we could find the chemical balance that would isolate . . . these horrors, wouldn't we pursue their cure?

What, Utterson asks, is Jekyll's goal in this desperate quest? "Serenity," the doctor answers. "You don't know what peace of mind means until you've been tortured by its opposite." Clearly, Jekyll is just such a tortured man, plagued by the demons of primitive violence and licentiousness that express themselves as Hyde. His objective in becoming Hyde—what he wants, what shapes his character—begins as an attempt to conjure his demons in order to exorcise them.

However, this objective is gradually, and then catastrophically, supplanted by another, far more sinister goal: to indulge his demons without incurring the responsibility for their crimes. This is the moral situation in which we find Jekyll in his first scene on stage with Hyde: he has liberated his doppelganger in order to take vengeance on Carew by playing the grotesque practical joke of substituting a pig for the body of a prostitute. The only harm done here is to Carew's self-regard, but the body-snatching raises the specter of grimmer developments to come.

From this point on, Jekyll becomes more and more a bystander to Hyde's increasingly independent behavior—a powerless observer of the ascendancy of his own worst impulses. As he begins to grow terrified at the thought of Hyde supplanting him entirely, he realizes that he must take steps to rein in, and ultimately to destroy, this usurper.

But while Jekyll is growing more helpless, Hyde is developing an increasingly exciting life, the center of which is his scorchingly erotic relationship with Elizabeth. Thanks to Hyde's growing

independence, Jekyll is only dimly aware of this new train of events, and so he must take action to discover exactly what his other self—over whom he once had control—is now doing without his knowledge. In other words, he undergoes a character change from active to reactive, from being the mind in charge of his divided soul to acting as Hyde’s pathetically emasculated tag-along.

We see this first in Hyde’s audacious drafting of a will for Jekyll, in which he makes himself the doctor’s beneficiary, thus setting up the possibility of eliminating his progenitor while inheriting all his wealth. Is he planning to erase Jekyll? Next we see the doctor’s fecklessness compared to Hyde in his bungled attempt to establish some sort of human contact with Elizabeth in the hotel room. Unlike Hyde, the knife-wielding demon-lover, Jekyll comes off as just a dirty old man, offering money to a chambermaid who clearly finds him repulsive and creepy. His objective in this scene is to persuade Elizabeth to abandon Hyde—to score an erotic victory over his darker self. Instead, his clumsy attempts drive Elizabeth from the room screaming, right back to Hyde’s blistering embraces.

Jekyll now forms the determination to eliminate Hyde, writing in his journal, “This shall be the last entry regarding the case of Mr. Edward Hyde.” His doppelganger has passed from being a useful extension of his repressed passions to threatening his continued existence as Jekyll. But he yields to the temptation to indulge in one last foray into the world as Hyde. When this valedictory excursion is over, Carew has been murdered, a crime expressing not Hyde’s depraved appetites, but Jekyll’s deep-seated rage. Hyde swung the cane, but Jekyll willed the crime.

Not only does this murder satisfy Jekyll’s hatred of Carew, it also provides the perfect trap for Hyde. In denouncing Hyde to the police as the murderer, Jekyll thinks he has built a wall around himself, a defense over which Hyde will never climb again.

But Jekyll’s will is no longer his own—or rather, it no longer belongs to the Doctor Jekyll who initiated the experiment with Mr. Hyde. Instead it now belongs increasingly to the suppressed force of evil within Jekyll—to the dark thing that he naively thought he could conjure, indulge for a time, and finally exorcise. We see this collapse of will in the park when Hyde emerges unbidden at the unexpected appearance of Elizabeth.

The boundary between Jekyll and Hyde has broken down, a collapse that becomes terrifyingly clear when Jekyll—in his own person—becomes as murderous as Hyde, killing Lanyon, and plotting the murder of Elizabeth, both crimes intended solely to save his own skin. At the beginning of the play, Jekyll was a man of moral stature, willing to risk professional damage and personal censure in the service of medical ethics. As the play ends, he has devolved into a creature of pure expediency, with no convictions beyond self-preservation. His attempt to achieve “serenity” and “peace of mind” has led him to unbearable anguish and near madness. His scientific tinkering with the elusive balance of the human soul—whose existence he denies—throws his whole being into chaos. Moments before his death, he declares to Hyde, “I’m not you, am I? I’m not some deformed creature with sin writ on his brow, writhing in filth

and sickness and depravity!” The irony, of course, is that in describing Hyde he is exactly describing himself.

Edward Hyde makes his ultimate objective clear at the end of the scene in which he breaks off with Elizabeth: “(*Hyde rushes to Jekyll’s side and balls his fist at him. [He] comes close to but never touches Jekyll.*) Henry Jekyll! I would kill you if I could! But you’re my vessel, the good, gray corpse that carries me to my pleasures. No, I cannot kill you, tho’ you would kill me. But annihilate Henry Jekyll all the same, I shall.”

Here he lays out both his intention and the major obstacle standing in its way: he can’t kill Jekyll, because to do so would be to kill himself. What, then, does his threat to “annihilate” Jekyll mean?

According to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, the word “annihilate” means “to reduce to nonexistence.” How can Hyde put Jekyll out of existence without killing him? The next scene suggests one possible approach to that paradoxical task: we see Hyde murdering Carew, and we learn shortly afterwards that he has planted evidence on and around the body that implicates Jekyll in the crime. To be accused of murder—even to fall under intense suspicion of such an act—would, in a real sense, “annihilate” Jekyll. It would knock him off his pedestal of professional and moral respectability and transform him into someone else: a scoundrel, a pariah, an outcast. In other words, it would turn him into something like Hyde.

But Hyde has no intention of revealing the evidence he has implicating Jekyll. Instead, he holds it in abeyance as a means of forcing Jekyll to do his will: “Know this, Jekyll. I am your protector now, as you are mine. I cannot do without you. And you, I think you now realize, cannot do without me.” So here we have a second variation on the theme of “annihilation.” Jekyll as the master of himself, as the agent who determines whether and when Hyde will be liberated, is to be erased. Now Hyde controls Jekyll, not vice-versa, thereby “annihilating” the doctor’s autonomy.

Hyde desires to annihilate Jekyll in order to be free to pursue another set of objectives, what he calls “my pleasures.” What are these? As enumerated by Sanderson and Utterson, they include breaking people’s backs, setting fire to homeless beggars, and carving up prostitutes with a knife. In drama as in life, we judge people by their actions, and these are the acts of a monster, someone who should arouse absolute disgust and moral repulsion in the spectator. But the playwright complicates our sense of Hyde by introducing another character, Elizabeth, the woman who loves him.

In life we often say of someone we dislike: “He can’t be all bad . . . look at what a lovely wife he has.” Or, “Look at how well his kids turned out.” Or, “Jack likes him, and Jack is a swell guy.” We are inclined to modify our opinions of someone based on the nature of the people who admire, befriend, or love him. This is the logic behind, for example, political endorsements.

And so, when Elizabeth—a reasonably attractive, not conspicuously deranged woman— falls in love with Hyde, we are prompted to assume that there must be something loveable about him to make this happen. This is one of the clearest differences between Jeffrey Hatcher’s adaptation and the original story. In Stevenson’s work, Hyde is totally repellent to everyone who meets him. Not a single character contradicts Utterson’s reaction to the man: at the sight of Hyde he experiences “disgust, loathing and fear.” And he concludes, “God bless me, the man seems hardly human!”

But in Hatcher’s hands, Hyde becomes a romantic figure, an embodiment of the dark glamour of the bad-boy lover, bearing the aura of Lord Byron and Dracula, of James Dean and Marlon Brando. He may be a sadist and a killer, but that’s only because, as Elizabeth says, he has “demons in [his] head”—painful forces that make him irresistibly attractive to a nurturing woman.

In the end, as Jekyll turns to murder in order to protect his reputation, Hyde begins to seem like the moral equal, if not the moral superior, of the respectable doctor. When Elizabeth ambiguously declares about Jekyll’s death, “He did it himself,” what she means is not that Jekyll committed suicide, but that Hyde, disgusted at the depravity of his “vessel,” killed Jekyll to rid the world of a murderous hypocrite. Jekyll has turned into something worse even than Carew, and Hyde has turned into something like a righteous avenger.

Hyde recounts this reversal in the last words of the play:

I dreamt I was a man named Henry Jekyll. Everyone loved me and thought I was the finest person’ they’d ever known. And I was so unhappy. So lonely. Thank God I woke in time to know I wasn’t him.

Earlier, Jekyll had said something strikingly similar: “Perhaps I’ll come to believe this was but a nightmare . . . and I just dreamed him. Edward Hyde. . .” The movement of the play is from Jekyll’s “dreaming” of Hyde to Hyde’s “dreaming” of Jekyll. Each needs the other, but each is the other’s nightmare. In the end, like positive and negative numbers, they cancel each other out.

Elizabeth Jelkes is important as a foil to both Jekyll and Hyde. A “foil” is a character whose presence enhances or underlines the qualities of another character, like a piece of shiny metal foil that serves as the setting of a gem.

By falling in love with Hyde, she makes us see him as somehow attractive despite his crimes. By recoiling from Jekyll, she makes us see his inability to make human connections—a weakness that underlies his prestigious position in the professional world.

Her actions in the final scenes of the play intensify these impressions. We learn that she has been concealing the weapon used to kill Carew from the police to shield Hyde, even though she believes him guilty. We hear her plead with Jekyll to deliver her letter to Hyde saying, “I love

him . . . I'm bereft." Even when Jekyll presses her to acknowledge that Hyde is "a murderer. . . . [A] vile creature, inhuman, his appetites would shame the devil," Elizabeth's only response is, "I know that, and it hasn't mattered. I love him. . . . He's the only man I've ever loved. I'll never love another. . . . He never hurt me." Nothing Jekyll can say will raise the stakes high enough for Elizabeth to fold her cards. Her absolute love forces us to see Hyde at least partially through the prism of her feelings.

Conversely, when she realizes that Jekyll is also Hyde, she sets up the situation in which the doctor reveals how far he has fallen into moral squalor. Jekyll now knows she knows his secret—as did his unfortunate friend, Lanyon. Not so much a foil as a catalyst at this moment, Elizabeth's knowledge drives Jekyll into a self-defining action—his decision to murder her and blame her death on Hyde. And at the same time, Elizabeth's loyalty to Hyde makes Jekyll's utter self-absorption seem all the more despicable.

Why is Elizabeth so attached to a creature like Hyde? As we have already noted, she doesn't seem deranged, and she is physically appealing enough to have attracted the attentions of more than one prospective husband. So why does this fascination with a man whose first encounter with her involves insults and an unsheathed knife?

We can begin to see the seeds of Elizabeth's passion for Hyde in that unpromising first meeting. When Hyde tells her he pays his women not to say "no," she responds, "You're sad. You have to frighten women to keep them. You have to pay them not to go." Immediately, she feels she has seen into Hyde, has recognized some weakness or pain underlying the aggressive façade. To know his vulnerability in effect makes her stronger than Hyde, puts her in a position to ease his pain, to tend his wounds. When Hyde asks, "What makes you so brave?" her answer is cryptic: "You'll never know me well enough to understand." So she can penetrate his mystery, but he will never grasp hers. Again, her insight gives her the emotional advantage in their relationship.

This sense of having power over a man—especially a dangerous man like Hyde—would be intoxicating for a young woman such as Elizabeth. After all, apart from Hyde, her life is humdrum, empty, and uneventful. As she tells Hyde at their second meeting, "I work at the Charing Cross hotel where I share a room with another girl six nights a week, come back to my mother's in Soho on Saturday, stay the night, then return to the hotel by Sunday noon."

What are her chances of escaping from this routine? We learn that there is a desk clerk at the hotel who has been "after" her, as well as a "tailor's assistant with [a] stammer and good prospects." Neither of the lives she can envision with these men offers anything like the excitement of her involvement with Hyde—a figure of mystery with sufficient means to write large checks, to keep a trysting place in London, to dress like a gentleman, and to pursue his pleasures at will. And having seen into the heart of his mystery, having understood his pain, she is in some sense on an equal footing with him. This chambermaid with a drunken mother and a numbingly dreary life suddenly finds herself transported into who knows what far reaches of erotic adventure night after night with the dangerous Mr. Hyde, who, despite his thrilling

criminal aura, “never hurt” Elizabeth Jelkes. Given all this, it makes perfect sense for her to succumb when he seduces, to look past the knife blade and the threats, and to take a romantic leap into the promising unknown.

The other characters in the play, like Elizabeth, are foils, though without the depth and complexity the playwright bestows on her.

Utterson is the most fully-developed of these foils. His hard-headed lawyer’s pragmatism stands in contrast to Jekyll’s philosophizing about the good and evil aspects of human nature. Utterson, however, is drawn into Jekyll’s world far enough to grasp Elizabeth’s meaning at the end of the play when she says, “He did it himself.” He realizes that she does not mean that Jekyll committed suicide, but that Jekyll was killed by Hyde. In other words, like Elizabeth, he finally understands Jekyll’s secret. This insight into his friend’s torment brings about a change in his own view of the world, enabling him to see beyond his initial one-dimensional perspective.

Carew also has more fully-realized traits than most of the other characters. His brutal and pornographic treatment of the prostitute’s corpse and his contempt for Jekyll’s studies of non-western medicine mark him as a man of limited sensitivity and imagination. On top of this, he demands respect out of all proportion to his merits—all qualities that lead us to recoil from him as a character. However, when he is brutally murdered by Hyde, we are forced to recognize the terrible disproportion between his faults and the criminal violence he suffers at the hands of Hyde, who, at some level, is acting for Jekyll.

THE THEMES. The duality of human nature is an idea with deep roots in western culture. St. Paul in his Epistle to The Romans (VII, 19) gives us one classic formulation of this theme when he writes, “For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.” In this adaptation of Stevenson’s story, Henry Jekyll is a man who engineers his own destruction by trying to solve that problem, i.e., by trying to eliminate the inclination toward evil that destroys his “peace of mind.”

The great narratives of the western tradition offer many examples of proto-Jekylls, characters who change identity—usually from better to worse— in the course of the story through the intervention of some external agency. For Jekyll, it is the potion that opens the door of his soul to the emergence of Hyde. For characters in antiquity, such transformations often came at the hands of the gods—the pre-scientific forerunners of Jekyll’s chemical brew.

The shipmates of Odysseus are changed into animals by the witch Circe, each becoming a beast whose nature reveals some hidden inclination in his soul. Euripides shows us the macho warrior-king Pentheus transformed by the god Dionysus into a simpering transvestite yearning to observe the Bacchic orgies on the mountainside. The Roman poet Ovid’s major work is a collection of stories called *Metamorphoses*—tales about the transformation of men and women into an astounding array of beasts, birds, plants, and inanimate objects.

With the classical tradition behind them, and the image of Christ—both God and man— ever before their eyes, the poets of the Middle Ages and Renaissance repeatedly returned to the theme of human duality, man as an uneasy synthesis of angel and beast. Hamlet expresses the conventional view of human nature that prevailed from Periclean Athens to Enlightenment Europe:

What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving, how express and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god: the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals. And yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust?

Man is a kind of angel made of dust—a view by no means peculiar to the Danish prince, and a vision that pops up constantly among Elizabethan dramatists. Marlowe gives us Doctor Faustus, the most brilliant man of his age, who sells his eternal soul to the devil in exchange for transient earthly joys, swapping his angelic potential for a handful of dust. Among the most vivid scenes from Marlowe’s play are the moments when a good and bad angel stand on either side of Faustus, grappling for possession of his soul—a preview of Jekyll torn between his better self and the demonic Hyde.

In *Macbeth* we watch a man transformed from an awesome hero into a traitor and a murderer, despised by all who know him—the emergence of his evil inner self set in motion by the witches and their seductive prophecies.

As we move into the modern era, stories about human transformation become less dependent on the intervention of gods, demons, or witches and more focused on the role played by psychological or environmental forces as agents of change. Not long after Stevenson wrote *Strange Case . . .* Joseph Conrad produced *The Heart of Darkness*, a story about a colonial administrator renowned for his enlightened high-mindedness who goes into the African jungle in pursuit of ivory, and turns into a homicidal monster. The heart of Mr. Kurtz’s darkness is exposed not because of the devil, but because the temptations of imperial authority and the absence of civilized restraint are too difficult to overcome.

Stevenson’s story, and Hatcher’s dramatic adaptation, straddle the line between the supernaturally motivated metamorphoses of the past and the naturalistic transformation tales of the modern era. On the one hand Jekyll is a physician, a man of science, and his story is framed as an experiment in psychology. On the other, the chemical potion and the laboratory are thinly disguised variants of the witches’ brew in *Macbeth*—the fire burns, the cauldron bubbles, and out of the toxic fumes emerges a monster. Unlike *Macbeth*—or any of the other subjects of moral transformation—Jekyll doesn’t slowly evolve into Hyde. Instead, these two sides of the human soul are present at the same time, their conflict producing Jekyll’s unique anguish.

Hatcher’s adaptation explores another theme much favored in modern culture: the idea of the criminal as moral paradigm. Romantic heroes were often social reprobates, men who felt their exceptional moral and spiritual status exempted them from the constraints of ordinary

bourgeois convention and behaved accordingly, leading lives that were scandalous in the eyes of their contemporaries. The names Rousseau, Shelley, and Byron spring to mind.

In the eyes of their admirers, however, their outrageous behavior illustrated not the shortcomings of the romantic reprobates, but the pinched and stultifying morality of the middle class that condemned them. Goethe's *Faust*, for example, is not damned for his deal with the devil. Instead, the play holds him up for admiration as a soul impatient with the stifling constraints of ordinary life, and committed to the everlasting pursuit of spiritual adventure, even if that requires moral transgression. Shaw's plays are full of transgressors as heroes, one of his best known announcing its perspective in its title: *The Devil's Disciple*.

In the twentieth century Jean Genet, who began life as a thief and a male prostitute, won literary acclaim for plays built around the sympathetic portrayal of murderers, whores, and revolutionaries. The title of Jean-Paul Sartre's biography of this author—*Saint Genet*—perfectly expresses the reversal of values in the modern veneration of the criminal as moral exemplar.

In the United States Norman Mailer, widely acclaimed novelist and political oracle, published a book called *Advertisements for Myself*, in which he praised the cathartic value of murder as a release from the oppressive constraints of a neurotic culture. He would also stab his wife in a drunken quarrel, an act of existential "authenticity" that he cited during his campaign for mayor of New York, boasting that he was the only candidate to have been declared sane as the result of a criminal proceeding. Later, Mailer would work for the release from prison of convicted murderer, Jack Abbott, arguing that Abbott's talents as an author entitled him to freedom. After all, his status as a "criminal" was merely a judgment imposed on him by the discredited "system." More importantly for Mailer, this so-called "criminal" was a prophetic witness to the injustices and absurdity of the culture itself. Abbott would go on to murder again during a brawl in a New York restaurant—six weeks after his release.

The idea of the criminal or the outcast as hero was making its way into popular culture by the 1950s, especially in the figure of Marlon Brando who, in *The Wild Ones*, plays the leader of a motorcycle gang, an outlaw whose gutsy authenticity puts all the small town squares to shame. At around the same time, James Dean, in *Rebel without a Cause*, was showing us a vision of the outcast as an alienated young man—the sensitive victim of the banality of middle-class life.

More recently, we have seen the glamorization of the transgressive emerge as the virtual default mode in popular culture. Madonna celebrates an ethic of erotic abandon and rappers spout obscene lyrics in praise of violence and sexual abuse. Meanwhile, Google lists 466,000 citations for the phrase "bad-boy actors"—that is, actors who in their lives, or in the parts they play, specialize in glamorously illicit behavior.

It is from this post-romantic cultural well that Jeffrey Hatcher draws in creating his version of Edward Hyde. In Stevenson's version of the story, as noted above, Hyde is instantly and

unanimously detested by everyone who encounters him. There is no Elizabeth who falls in love with him, because for Stevenson he is absolutely repellent and unlovable.

Hatcher has other designs. As noted, Hyde's affair with Elizabeth humanizes and glamorizes him, while Jekyll's loveless life emphasizes the emotional emptiness of the respectable middle-class man.

It is Jekyll who must conceal his real appetites, while Hyde is free to pursue his pleasures openly and shamelessly—to be the guilt-free transgressor whose authenticity, like that of Marlon Brando's biker, exposes the hypocrisy of the world around him. And we see that this hypocrisy is universal, a fact that the play underlines by having every actor play Hyde—which is to say, by showing that every one of the respectable Victorian gentlemen and ladies on stage is every bit as tainted by criminal desires as Jekyll.

Just as Hyde is framed as unblushingly direct in his wickedness, we see Jekyll becoming ever more deceitful as the play progresses. At first a stalwart opponent of the odious Carew, Jekyll ends up as a murderer and a liar, a man who kills a lifelong friend to save his reputation. Hyde is, in some perverse way, an honest monster, while Jekyll devolves into that object of universal post-romantic loathing: the bourgeois fraud.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why does Jekyll begin taking the potion? What is his objective?
2. Why does Jekyll object so strenuously to Carew? What does he see in Carew that motivates his anger?
3. What does the fact that Hyde knocks down a child without stopping to see if she is hurt tell us about his character?
4. What does the fact that Jekyll has studied non-western medicine tell us about his character? Why does Carew object so strenuously to this aspect of Jekyll's past?
5. Why is Elizabeth attracted to Hyde? Do you think it is probable that she would accept his invitation to a private encounter?
6. Why does Hyde slash his hand in the scene where he carves the prostitute's back?
7. Why does Jekyll begin to lose control over Hyde?
8. Why does Jekyll insure that the police will identify Hyde as the murderer of Carew?
9. Why does Hyde emerge in Regent's Park even after Jekyll has seemingly made his return impossible? What's the cause and why does it work?

10. What do Jekyll's actions late in the play tell us about his moral development? What has happened to him?