

Big News: Dr. Jekyll joins the Faculty

Dr. Henry Jekyll joins the faculty as Distinguished Visiting Professor of Global and Community Health. That's right, and Mr. Hyde too! Last semester, students in GCH 332 examined Stevenson's portrayal of good and evil as metaphors for health and disease. They wrote profusely in response to the novel, and here are some examples.

Note: Professor James Metcalf routinely incorporates literary classics into his health science classes. Read more at <http://gazette.gmu.edu/articles/12959/>

"Moderation is the key to a happy life. Dr. Jekyll feels that Victorian morals provide no freedoms. High standards—whether real or imagined—led him to experiment with drugs, pursuing indulgence. Today, a psychologist might counsel him to "let his hair down" a bit. Finding a balance between work and play can prevent the stress that sometimes pushes one over the edge."

- Laura Poisson

"Mr. Hyde haunted Dr. Jekyll similarly to the way some people are haunted by their own personal health demons. There are times when health issues creep up on people and maybe even surprise them. The people suffering will have to fight these diseases their whole lives and go through times of relapse and times of victory. After a long struggle Dr. Jekyll became aware that eventually he could no longer fight off Mr. Hyde. Sometimes health problems become too severe or out of control that there is nothing left to do but to accept defeat, similarly to the way Dr. Jekyll accepted his."

- Madilyn Curd

Enlightenment Rx for Medical Professionals and Patients: Jekyll and Hyde

"An exploratory reading of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde can be quite beneficial for medical practitioners as well as patients today. Much relevant material can be found in the romantic writings of Robert Louis Stevenson. For this 19th century author surely knew what gruesome forms disease can take when infecting persons as he himself suffered illness numerous times. Under this light, perhaps Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde could be perceived as a sort of a testimony of a patient. Thus, medical professionals would be beneficiaries of much enlightenment into

the fearful, helpless, and transmogrified experience of their patients throughout the course of their illnesses.

From the book one can see that disease has no respect of persons. It pursues the poorest of species as well as the most accomplished. It is monstrous and is capable of the most brutal of afflictions. It can do unthinkable things to the most innocent and undeserving of humanity. Think of Mr. Hyde's battering of an unsuspecting child. Likewise, the ties that bind loved ones and comrades together are helpless in liberating a victim from its clutches. Think of Utterson's inability to appeal to his dear friend Henry Jekyll. He could not reach him. He could not persuade him to renounce his relationship with Hyde. Furthermore, Dr. Lanyon, a physician, died following his encounter with Hyde. One could draw from Lanyon's death that often doctors and medicine are incapable of rendering any help at all to those cry out for it. They have become quite dead to their patients, so to speak. Disease, like an evil madman has set its sights on destroying its prey. It is also seen in the novel that high morality and attainments-even scientific knowledge as Dr. Henry Jekyll possessed is no guarantee of an escape from the course of mauling and destruction that disease is prone to take. Such examples as these prove how relevant and applicable classic literature can be when applied to the realm of medicine. A novel such as the Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde administers enlightenment to those who both deliver and receive medical care.”

- Nicole Boswell

“Passion is a double-edged sword. Stevenson may not have agreed with Director Mamoulian’s interpretation of Dr. Jekyll’s unraveling, but the dichotomy of passion as presented in the 1932 film version was a character trait Stevenson would have understood. Mamoulian’s artistic license suggests Jekyll’s unfulfilled lust for his true love drove him into the darker side of himself. Stevenson writes a scientific curiosity was the impetus for Dr. Jekyll’s path to self-destruction. Void of passion, neither love nor science would have been worth pursuing. Passion has motivated some of the greatest discoveries and destroyed some of the greatest individuals.”

- Lee Anne Kaniut

“The pursuit of science can be both wondrous and devastating. Science reveals the unknown and leads to great knowledge. However, knowledge creates comprehension and changes your perception of reality. The new world you find may be lonely and can lead you to dangerous places. The insights you gain through science can leave you remorseful and in solitude.”

- Abigail Hart