

Which skills and techniques does Stevenson horrify his contemporaries

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In the novella *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Stevenson wants to horrify his contemporaries and does this using physical, psychological and thematic horror. The story of an upper class Victorian man who feels trapped in his role in society and leads a shady double life that eventually spirals out of control would have hit home to Stevenson's contemporaries, many of whom secretly frequented and were obsessed with maintaining a good reputation. This would also horrify today because many people lead double lives (such as having affairs etc.) and become addicted to drugs, which can ruin their lives.

The physical horror in the novel is shocking because it was very graphic for its day. Today we are more used to such graphic description and it has lost impact. The themes of the violence and evil in us all and the morality of science were very relevant in Stevenson's time and remain so today.

Psychological horror is used to great effect by Stevenson in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde* to horrify the reader. I think the most important technique used is the method of telling the story three times; first by Utterson, then by Dr Lanyon, and finally by Dr Jekyll himself.

This technique is effective because each time the story is retold we get a more person view of the situation. Utterson is a friend of Jekyll's, Dr Lanyon witnesses Jekyll's transformation into Hyde first hand, and Jekyll is the main character. Only at the end of Dr. Lanyon's narrative is the shocking truth finally revealed; that Jekyll and Hyde are the same person. Stevenson's use of this technique is very effective because we are drawn deeper and deeper into the story and gradually we discover the truth.

This has the effect of making the story more intense and three-dimensional for the reader. The second most effective source of psychological horror in my opinion is the theme of the evil in us all. Jekyll is been fascinated with the theory that man has a good side and a bad side, and he investigates his theory. He creates a potion that releases the "evil" in himself in the form of an entirely different physical person. Then he can do immoral things and feel no guilt, and all he has to do is drink the same potion and be transformed back into his original self.

The reader is never told exactly what Jekyll does when he turns himself into Hyde, but we are told that he murdered an MP, Danvers Carew. Jekyll believes that "man is not truly one, but truly two" so therefore he is Hyde all the time. This horrifies both in Victorian society and now because a lot of people do not want to think they are capable of such terrible things. When, today, we see murderers on the news, part of the reason we are shocked tends to be because we wonder how anyone could find in inside themselves to commit such terrible crimes.

In a similar way Stevenson horrifies us by personifying the horror inside ourselves inside which we do not wish to face. Linking to the issue of evil in us all the issue of everyone being vulnerable to addiction; in "Henry Jekyll's Full Statement Of The Case" Jekyll writes "... and it was as an ordinary secret sinner that I at last fell before the assaults of temptation. " I think the third most important source of psychological horror that Stevenson uses is the fact that Dr Jekyll is a respectable member of society who loses control to addiction.

This was an effective skill for Stevenson to use in order to horrify his contemporaries because at the time reputation was extremely important; so many upper class Victorian men went about their 'immoral' deeds secretly. Stevenson could give a good insight into the issue of double lives because in a way he led one of his own. As a student he drank heavily, dressed in a bohemian way, and perhaps went to prostitutes. He also married a woman who was much older than him, who had been married before. This could be seen as a rebellion against his religious upbringing.

But in later life he wrote about morality and acted very austere. In a similar way Dr Jekyll is a well-respected man, he is a charming, educated scientist. In his own words; " I was born [...] to a large fortune, endowed besides with excellent parts, inclined by nature to industry, fond of the respect of the wise and good among my fellowmen, and thus, as might have been supposed, with every guarantee of an honourable and distinguished future. " But he wishes to hold his head high so therefore he has to " conceal his pleasures" by transforming into Edward Hyde.

Eventually Jekyll is so addicted to becoming Hyde he trebled his dose of the medicine " with infinite risk of death". This is psychologically horrifying because he no longer cares about what he is doing to himself just as long as he gets his fix. In his own words; " I was slowly losing hold of my original and better self, and becoming slowly incorporated with my second and worse". Stevenson's use of this technique is very effective because it makes the point that addiction can happen to anyone, no matter what their social standing or status.

Jekyll says in " Henry Jekyll's Full Statement Of The Case" that " My devil had been long caged, he came out roaring. " With this Stevenson is trying to tell his contemporaries that if they repress their true desires it will lead to disastrous consequences. This would have horrified Stevenson's contemporaries because it was an issue that wasn't discussed. When Utterson and Enfield talk about Hyde stepping on the child, they make a deal to never discuss it again. Physical Horror is also used to horrify by Stevenson.

I think the most important source of physical horror in the novel is the " unexpressed deformity" of Edward Hyde, which comes up frequently. Almost everyone who has been is horrified by his appearance yet no one can pin down exactly what is so horrible. Stevenson uses psychological and physical horror together here. The reason Hyde gives an " impression of deformity without any namable malformation" to his beholders is because he is the personification of the evil in Jekyll.