


**SYDNEY  
THEATRE  
CO  
EDUCATION**

**ON CUE**



**Strange Case of  
Dr Jekyll  
and Mr Hyde**

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Cover: Matthew Backer and Ewen Leslie. Photo: Rene Vaile

Compiled by Kelly Young

The activities and resources contained in this document are designed for educators as the starting point for developing more comprehensive lessons for this production. Kelly Young is the Education Manager for Sydney Theatre Company. You can contact Kelly on [kyoung@sydneytheatre.com.au](mailto:kyoung@sydneytheatre.com.au)

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# ABOUT *ON CUE* & STC

## ABOUT *ON CUE*

STC Ed has a suite of resources located on our website to enrich and strengthen teaching and learning surrounding the plays in the STC season.

Each school show will be accompanied by an *On Cue* e-publication which will feature essential information for teachers and students, such as curriculum links, information about the playwright, synopsis, character analysis, thematic analysis and suggested learning experiences.

For more in-depth digital resources surrounding productions, please visit the STC Ed page on our website: [sydneytheatre.com.au/education](http://sydneytheatre.com.au/education)

### Such resources include:

- Director documentaries
- Design sketchbooks

**STC acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which the Company gathers. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and we extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with whom we work and with whom we share stories.**

## ABOUT SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY

In 1980, STC's first Artistic Director Richard Wherrett defined STC's mission as to provide "first class theatrical entertainment for the people of Sydney – theatre that is grand, vulgar, intelligent, challenging and fun."

Almost 40 years later, that ethos still rings true.

STC offers a diverse program of distinctive theatre of vision and scale at its harbourside home venue, The Wharf; Roslyn Packer Theatre at Walsh Bay; and Sydney Opera House, as a resident theatre company.

STC has a proud heritage as a creative hub and incubator for Australian theatre and theatre-makers, developing and producing eclectic Australian works, interpretations of classic repertoire and great international writing. STC strives to create theatre experiences that reflect Sydney's distinctive personality and engage audiences.

Strongly committed to engagement in the community, STC's Education and Communities programs aim to inspire theatre appreciation and participation not only in theatres but also in schools, community halls; wherever people get together. STC offers an innovative School Drama™ program; partners with groups in metropolitan Sydney, regional centres and rural areas; and reaches beyond NSW with touring productions throughout Australia. Through these partnerships and initiatives, STC plays a part in ensuring a creative, forward-thinking and sociable future by engaging with young people, students and teachers.

The theatre careers of many of Australia's internationally renowned artists have been launched and fostered at STC, including Mel Gibson, Judy Davis, Hugo Weaving, Toni Collette, Rose Byrne, Benedict Andrews and Cate Blanchett.

STC often collaborates with international artists and companies and, in recent years, the Company's international profile has grown significantly with productions touring extensively to great acclaim.

STC is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, by its arts funding and advisory body, and by the New South Wales Government through Arts NSW.

[sydneytheatre.com.au](http://sydneytheatre.com.au)

# CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS



Ewen Leslie and Matthew Backer in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Photo: Daniel Boud

## SUITABLE FOR

Students in Years 11–12

## CURRICULUM LINKS

### English Stage 5 & 6

- Crime Fiction, Victorian Gothic
- Year 11 Advanced: Narratives that Shape our World
- English Extension 1 Module: Texts, Culture and Value
- Links to *Frankenstein*, English Stage 6: Elective 2 Worlds of Upheaval

### Drama Stage 5 & 6

- Dramatic Forms and Performance Styles: Scripted Drama, Gothic Theatre, Multidisciplinary Theatre
- Elements of Production in Performance

## THEMES AND IDEAS

- The construction of identity
- The role of society in shaping human behaviour
- Temptation, pleasure, depravity, repression and the subconscious

# CAST & CREATIVES

## Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON  
ADAPTED AND DIRECTED BY KIP WILLIAMS

### PERFORMER

MATTHEW BACKER

### PERFORMER

EWEN LESLIE

### UNDERSTUDY

GABRIEL FANCOURT

### ADAPTER & DIRECTOR

KIP WILLIAMS

### DESIGNER

MARG HORWELL

### LIGHTING DESIGNER

NICK SCHLIEPER

### COMPOSER

CLEMENCE WILLIAMS

### SOUND DESIGNER

MICHAEL TOISUTA

### VIDEO DESIGNER

DAVID BERGMAN

### ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

IAN MICHAEL

### ASSISTANT VIDEO DIRECTOR

SARAH HADLEY

### VIDEO EDITOR

SUSIE HENDERSON

### FIGHT DIRECTOR

NIGEL POULTON

### VOICE & TEXT COACH

CHARMIAN GRADWELL

### PRODUCTION MANAGER

JOE FLETCHER

### PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

HANNAH WATERS

### STAGE MANAGER

SARAH SMITH

### DEPUTY STAGE MANAGER

BRIANA DUNN

### ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

BROOKE KISS

### COSTUME COORDINATOR

SAM PERKINS

### BACKSTAGE WARDROBE SUPERVISOR

SIMONE EDWARDS

### HAIR, WIG & MAKEUP SUPERVISOR

LAUREN A. PROIETTI

### LIGHTING SUPERVISOR

ANDREW TOMPKINS

### LIGHTING OPERATOR

TRAVIS KECEK

### LIGHTING OPERATOR

JESSE GREIG

### LIGHTING TECHNICIAN

ALEX MAIR

### SOUND SUPERVISOR

LUKE DAVIS

### DEPUTY SOUND SUPERVISOR

DAVID TRUMPMANIS

### SOUND SYSTEM SUPERVISOR

ANTHONY LORENZ

### SOUND OPERATOR

KHYAM COX

### SOUND TECHNICIAN

KRYSTELLE QUARTERMAIN

### VIDEO SUPERVISOR

MICHAEL HEDGES

### DEPUTY VIDEO SUPERVISOR

CAMERON SMITH

### CAMERA OPERATOR

BENJAMIN SHEEN

### CAMERA OPERATOR

EO GILL

### CAMERA OPERATOR

LUCY PARAKHINA

### FOCUS PULLER

TAHIRA DONOHUE-BALES

### VIDEO PROGRAMMER/ OPERATOR

THOMAS BENSLEY

### CAMERA ASSISTANT

JEN ATHERTON

### STAGING SUPERVISOR

CHRIS FLEMING

### HEAD MECHANIST

DAVID TONGS

### FLYS SUPERVISOR

ZACH WHITE

### VENUE HEAD MECHANIST

KANE MOTT

### STAGING TECHNICIAN

JACK GORDON

### STAGING TECHNICIAN

ANDREW MURRAY

### REHEARSAL PHOTOGRAPHER

DANIEL BOUD

1 HOUR 50 MINS, NO INTERVAL

THIS PLAY PREMIERED AT ROSLYN PACKER THEATRE, SYDNEY ON 10 AUGUST 2022.



# DIRECTOR'S NOTE: KIP WILLIAMS

I'm sure the majority of you know, on some level, the story of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde even if you haven't read Robert Louis Stevenson's nineteenth century novella. After all, the key elements of this modern myth occupy a prime position in our collective subconscious. Most conventional readings say that it's a story of split personalities and a study of the duality of human nature, the dark and the light. The concept of a deep-seated, foundational binary is certainly present in the text but I see this book more as a challenge to or troubling of this idea rather than a straightforward acceptance of it. Even Stevenson himself, in the book, acknowledges that there are more than just two facets to any individual's nature. So, for the purposes of this production at least, we are more interested in the piece being an exploration of the multiplicity of identity and a rebuke to those binaries that are so often used to regulate us.

In the context of Victorian England, and the Gothic novel in particular, the binary most ripe for exploration and dissection is the split between the public and the private. In their championing of such a proscriptive and puritanical idea of 'virtue', the Victorians (unwittingly or wittingly) created their own boogeyman – a demimonde of debauchery and depravity that exists behind closed doors and down dingy alleyways, right alongside polite society. In *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* the imposition of these two extremes literally causes Jekyll to compartmentalise himself into two distinct personae. But I don't think the narrative is necessarily suggesting these two personae are inherent or inevitable but, rather, the symptom of an individual trying to grapple with the expectations of a moral code that leaves very little room for error and grey areas. In a sense, we're focussing on the 'monsters without', as well as the 'monster within', and, specifically, how the latter is shaped and informed by the former. Another element of the original text that my team and I are bringing to the fore in this production is the friendship between Jekyll and the often overlooked protagonist of this story: Gabriel Utterson. Early in the novella, Stevenson describes Utterson as being "almost" envious of those he observes giving into their desires. This is in contrast to Utterson's own restrained and

measured character, and sets up a parallel mystery that mirrors the revelations around Jekyll and Hyde. Both characters, Jekyll and Utterson, begin as enigmas of sorts but through their friendship we discover two truths.

One, that even within the most intimate of relationships (platonic or otherwise) there are still parts of ourselves that we keep buried. And two, the human need to find spaces and people with whom we can share our true self, in all its authenticity, complexity and contradiction. These are two elements of Robert Louis Stevenson's novella I've sought to draw out more fully in this adaptation.

I am so grateful to Marg Horwell, Nick Schlieper, Clemence Williams, Michael Toisuta, David Bergman, Ian Michael, Sarah Hadley, Susie Henderson, Nigel Poulton, Charmian Gradwell, and all of our production team for collaborating to create this show – I have relished our work together. I am also incredibly excited to be working with performers Matthew Backer and Ewen Leslie again, two phenomenal artists.



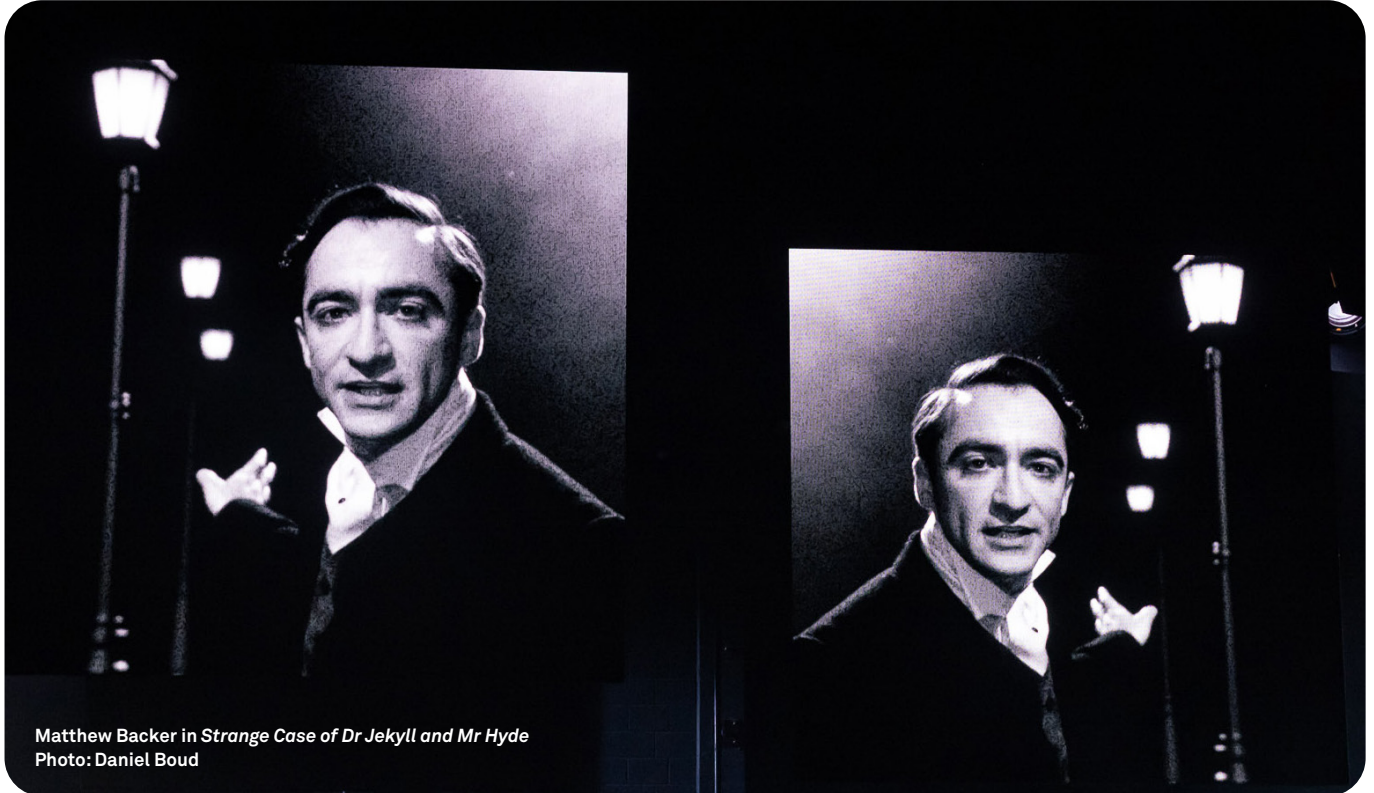
# SYNOPSIS

Gabriel Utterson is a mild-mannered, quiet and unassuming lawyer who contents himself with observing the foibles and triumphs of others, rather than diving into life himself. That is until one day he is told a horrifying and brutal tale of a crime that took place in broad daylight. Utterson becomes obsessed by the spectral figure at the centre of the story, Mr Edward Hyde, and determined to uncover the links between him and Utterson's own friend: the upstanding Doctor Henry Jekyll. What ensues is a spiralling descent into the seamy underbelly of Victorian London and the secret life of a man who presents a respectable visage to the world whilst living a shadowy existence under the cloak of night. In a race to save his friend from danger, Utterson will come face to face with the shocking truth.



Ewen Leslie and Matthew Backer  
Photo: Daniel Boud

# CHARACTER ANALYSIS



Matthew Backer in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*  
Photo: Daniel Boud

## NARRATOR

STC's production of *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is unique in that it has included a narrator. This role is unnamed, wears contemporary clothing and speaks in a broad Australian accent. Played by the actor who plays all the other characters (other than Utterson), the Narrator is a link to the contemporary audience and reminds them that the story exists within and across time.

## GABRIEL JOHN UTTERSON

Utterson is a lawyer who is characterised by Robert Louis Stevenson as being dull, dusty, boring and reliable. Utterson is connected with all of the characters in the play, having long established friendships with Enfield, Dr Jekyll and Dr Lanyon. He functions as one of the main narrative voices in the play, offering the perspective of class and gender privilege. Utterson represents wealth, privilege, accountability, value, and the Foucauldian notion of juridical power (Foucault 2020) in which power relationships are established and legitimated through the culturally accepted expressions of that power, including legal documents – wills, statutory declarations and contracts.



# CHARACTER ANALYSIS *(cont.)*



## MR RICHARD ENFIELD

Mr Enfield is a distant cousin of Mr Utterson's. He is described as being reliable, thoughtful and respected. Enfield, whilst only appearing twice in the book, is a vital part of the development of the narrative because it is Enfield who makes Utterson aware of the existence of Mr Hyde.

## DR HENRY JEKYLL

Dr Henry Jekyll is a 50 year old professional middle aged white man, born into a large, inherited fortune. From a young age, Jekyll is concerned with his concealed and duplicitous inner world – a world in which his secret and socially inappropriate desires may sit, unseen by wider society. Interested in the “mystical sciences”, Jekyll stumbles upon a formula that allows him to create a dual self (Mr Edward Hyde). This discovery provides Jekyll with the opportunity to explore his darker desires with no retribution or consequences ascribed to his person. This freedom allows Dr Jekyll to explore his inner world with increased “depravity” (Stevenson, 2010, p. 74). The decline in Jekyll's ability to control Hyde's behaviour results in the destruction of both Jekyll and Hyde.

## MR EDWARD HYDE

Mr Edward Hyde is the embodiment of Jekyll's subterranean, inner desires. Hyde is a Victorian trope, with Jekyll's evil, depraved inner world represented by a misshapen physicality. Hyde, when initially created by Dr Jekyll, is small in stature, reflecting his lack of power in Jekyll's psyche. Growing over time, Hyde's control over Jekyll becomes increasingly powerful as Jekyll's inner world is expressed externally, with free reign. Ultimately, Hyde's descent into depravity results in the ugly murder of Sir Carson Danvers, an elderly aristocratic gentleman, beaten to death in the street.

## DR HASTIE LANYON

Dr Lanyon is a friend of both Mr Utterson and Dr Jekyll. He is described as being “hearty, dapper and red-faced” (Stevenson, 2010, p. 12) with a head of prematurely white hair. Even though Dr Lanyon is friendly, loyal and engaging, he has not spoken to Dr Jekyll for some time, having argued about the importance of traditional scientific methods when practising medicine.

## SIR CARSON DANVERS

The character of Sir Danvers is a small but important one, who is described as being an elderly gentleman with a kind nature. It is his violent murder by Mr Hyde that confirms the audiences' distaste for Hyde's appalling and escalating behaviour.

## POOLE

Poole is the manservant of Dr Jekyll. He has been employed by Dr Jekyll for approximately 20 years and is a loyal and committed servant.

# PRE-TEACHING

## DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE

The following information and activities are designed to explore the context of Victorian London, the period in which Robert Louis Stevenson wrote *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

### VICTORIAN ENGLAND: CONFLICT, CONFUSION, CLASS AND THE IMPACT OF CHANGE

The Victorian period was one of immense change for England. The Industrial Revolution, having begun in 1750, meant that the British were the most technologically advanced, wealthy country in the world. The British Empire was at its zenith, with colonists around the world extracting raw materials from the lands that they had invaded and transforming these materials into manufactured goods back in the United Kingdom. These were able to be resold globally, making huge profits. Factories, owned by the middle class, were operated by the working class, who lived in poverty in the world's first industrial cities including London, Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow.

During this period, the middle class was expanding enormously and, using their wealth to leverage their interests, tried to take control of the industrial economy. This emergent economy – with its focus on free markets, enterprise, hard work and making a profit – challenged, not only the agrarian economy that had been established in Britain for centuries, but the established paradigms of class and gender. This period can be seen as a battle for supremacy between the old and new regimes for power, money and, ultimately, survival.

Whilst the traditional feudal system of agrarian wealth, inherited titles and power was in decline, the aristocracy's social and cultural influence remained as they continued to establish, dominate and reinforce cultural norms. The middle class keenly followed their lead, eagerly aspiring to enter the aristocratic classes through marriage and

the generation of new wealth. This period is characterised by a fluidity in the relationships and boundaries between upper and middle classes, both anxious about their position, future and influence.

As a result, the concept of the “Victorian Gentleman” became a site of contention, with the traditional, hereditary notion of the “Gentleman” being challenged by the middle class. The aristocracy, who had lived indolent lives supported by the income generated by their rural estates, had traditionally viewed themselves as “Gentlemen” and defined the term accordingly. A “Gentleman” lived a life of leisure on the land, had impeccable manners and taste, and demonstrated old-fashioned notions of patriarchal courtesies to women and children. One was born a “Gentleman” and remained thus for life. The middle classes, however, challenged this notion, with their vast wealth able to provide a Gentleman's lifestyle, without the birthright.

Traditional feudal notions of upper middle class professional respectability meant that older, acceptable professions, such as law and medicine, were also challenged by the emergence of a new type of bourgeois masculinity. The emergence of exceptionally wealthy trading classes, who saw themselves as equals, meant that traditional divisions between traditional privilege and new money were destabilised. These “self-made men” saw that the trappings of wealth provided the possibility to live as “Gentlemen” and they sought to do so, much to the horror of the established upper classes. The importance of the minutiae of class distinctions became more important during this period, as the aristocracy and established members of the professional class doubled down on subtle, traditional distinctions, in the attempt to retain political, economic and social power.

The Victorian period was also characterised by the development of the academic study of human sexuality. Associated with this nascent research was the emergence of forms of control of the construction of this information. Bourgeois notions of sexuality reflected the new patriarchal and capitalist values of the industrial middle class, emphasising notions of respectability, family and decorum. Anxiety about women, sexuality and their place in society resulted in middle class women being confined to their

# PRE-TEACHING

## *DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE* (cont.)

homes and shouldering the responsibilities found in providing family life, well out of the public sphere. Working class people were feared as criminals and prostitutes. The aristocracy was also feared and judged as decadent in their pursuit of pleasure and excess. The middle classes saw themselves as wedged between classes of people who were depraved, untrustworthy and disinterested in conservative values of the family, home, respectability and hard work.

The 18th and 19th centuries saw the escalation of conservative persecution of homosexual people in the United Kingdom. Middle class anxiety about working class men was conflated with fears of the working class homosexual, resulting in repressive cultural boundaries including The Labouchere Amendment to Section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act (1885). This amendment allowed strict policing of bourgeois cultural values, making acts of homosexuality illegal, causing fear and distress amongst queer people into the 20th century.

The concurrent emergence of Charles Darwin's work *The Origins of the Species* was particularly important in the process of shifting societal attitudes to those that valued profit and hard work in order to move up the social ladder. Darwin's thesis challenged the accepted story of the creation of the earth, positing that rather than a seven day creation story, the universe was begun by the "big bang" and that from there, all life slowly evolved by the process of survival of the fittest. The accepted social order, with God and then monarch at the top, was replaced by the idea that those willing to work the hardest, compete fiercely and with the most talent, would rise to the surface. These new ideas ruptured notions of accepting one's God-given position in life and encouraged the newly emerging middle class to strive for power. The working class was feared and loathed at the bottom of the social hierarchy and suffered enormously as middle class notions of the deserving and undeserving poor gained traction.

### Group Activities:

1. London was the global centre of industrial capitalism. Use the images of London slums found in the below sources from The British Library. Place students into groups and create a freeze frame in response to the images that represent what it might have been like to live in places such as these. Perform this freeze frame for the class and mind map the mood created. Class may refer back to these notes as they discuss the experiences of Utterson, Jekyll and Hyde as they move through this part of London.
  - [britishlibrary.cn/en/articles/slums](http://britishlibrary.cn/en/articles/slums)
2. The links below are from the British Library and provide historical documents that reflect the anxieties of the period:
  - a. Using student smart phones or class iPads, take digital photographs of the freeze frames performed by each group. Using photo editing tools, recreate the darkness of the Victorian slums in the image. Discuss the following question:
    - How did the use of editing technology change the atmosphere created by the images?
  - b. Project these images over the physical freeze frame and discuss the following questions:
    - How did the use of digital technology change the image? How did it change your response to it?
    - What was the effect when the edited image was placed over the immediate, physical image? Does having a virtual image of the actors change the meaning of the image?
  - c. Create an image of your capital city that symbolises contemporary class anxieties. What are some of the ways that this anxiety manifests itself?



# PRE-TEACHING

## *DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE* (cont.)

the physical differences that can be seen in the classroom between the physicality of those at the top of the beehive and those toward the bottom.

- c. Presenter Katherine Hughes notes that the destabilising influx of people into industrial cities was part of the reason why British people were obsessed with class. Place students into groups and ask them to improvise a scene in which they take on the role of a member of different classes. Improvise the conversations that might occur as each person tries to locate the 'other' in the social hierarchy. Questions could be discussed by the whole class prior to the improvisation to ensure that comparisons between the classes are clear. What might contemporary people ask to determine the same information?
- d. Use the historical source *Self-Help* by Samuel Smiles (1859) to make a list of the qualities of a "Gentleman". Generate a class list of adjectives that Smiles used to describe a "Gentleman". Embody these characteristics in freeze frames. As a class, look at the images created and determine if there are any commonalities between them. What might these be? Why might Smiles advocate the notion that "anyone can be a gentleman"?

### **ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON: CLASS, RELIGION, MASCULINITY AND THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE SELF**

Robert Louis Stevenson was born in Scotland in 1850, the only son of a lighthouse engineer – a profession that was not considered a "traditional professional" role. His parents, in a deeply unhappy marriage, also both faced mental health issues, being prone to prolonged bouts of depression and anxiety. Stevenson's father expressed his struggles through unpredictable moods and silences, creating a sense of uncertainty in those around him about what behaviour they would encounter as they approached him. Stevenson was deeply attached to his father, but found it difficult to emotionally separate from him. Stevenson sought his father's approval throughout his life.



Matthew Backer in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*  
Photo: Daniel Boud

Stevenson and his parents were also deeply religious, being staunch Calvinists – a type of Protestantism that followed the teachings of John Calvin. Emerging in Scotland after the Reformation, Calvinism can be characterised as conservative, with the belief that the Bible is the literal word of God. Importantly for Stevenson's childhood, Calvinism challenged Catholic beliefs about the importance of the priest and confession, suggesting that an individual can have their own, private relationship with God. As a result, the individual is responsible for examining their thoughts and behaviour. In Stevenson's case, this gave rise to extreme fears of hell and the importance of being aware of the importance of a pure, Christ-like inner world in order to avoid eternal damnation.

By all accounts, Stevenson was a sickly child who suffered from ill health and fevers, which added to the distress he felt when he struggled to separate fever dreams from reality. The young Stevenson also struggled with nightmares and night terrors in which the outer representation of a person would morph into a dangerous and frightening representative of the inner person, and his fear of not being able to know the inner person remained with him all of this life. (Beattie, 2001, p. 317).

# THEMES & IDEAS

All references to *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* are from the novel, written by Robert Louis Stevenson.

## CAPITALISM, POWER, CLASS STRUGGLE AND SHAPING IDENTITY

The cataclysmic changes that occurred as a result of the emergence of industrial capitalism in Britain saw a challenge to the feudal system – the traditional method of organising the agrarian economies of Western Europe throughout the Middle Ages. In this system, society was a strict hierarchy, ordained by God, in which the monarchs, their nobility and the church owned the majority of land and wealth. There was a small middle class and a large number of peasants, who were tied to the land and created wealth for their feudal overlord through the generation of an agricultural surplus. This surplus allowed nobility to live as “Gentlemen” – that is, people who were not required to work because they lived off their income. This connection between property rights, economic privilege and cultural understandings of the role of the “Gentleman” was born out of this social contract, ensuring that the nobility saw their refinement and good taste as being innate, God given and unavailable to anyone who was not born into it. Rigid barriers ensured that access to the aristocracy was all but impossible.

The “old” professional class is represented in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by the characters of Utterson, Enfield and Dr Lanyon, with Dr Jekyll ultimately a traitorous member of this group. These characters are representatives of the traditional professions, such as lawyers and doctors, who colluded to shore up class boundaries in order to maintain their privileged place in the class system. The audiences’ first experience with the character of Utterson, around whom the narrative develops and through whose eyes we see the unfolding action, places him firmly as a member of the old order:

“A lawyer with a simple countenance that was never lighted by a smile; cold, scanty and embarrassed in discourse; backward in sentiment, lean, long, dusty, dreary and yet somehow loveable” (p. 2)

His social class is clear for the audience, who would have immediately understood his long connection with the aristocracy:

“His friends were those of his own blood or those whom he had known the longest; his affections, like ivy, were the growth of time, they implied no aptness in the object” (p. 4)

The audience’s first experience of Hyde is mediated through Utterson’s experience of him. Utterson’s experience is one of revulsion, fear and, importantly, recognition. When first seen by Utterson, Hyde is twice referred to as a “gentleman” (p. 6-7) as his attire signifies his status. The audience quickly recognises that, when Utterson describes a “deformity” underneath his clothing, it is the misshapen physique of the working man. In fact, Utterson’s reference to the “troglydotic” (p. 16) nature of Hyde is a reference to the atavistic view of the working classes during the Victorian era. Aside from Hyde as the external representation of Jekyll’s subconscious desires, Hyde is a representative of the fear of both the working classes and the newly emergent trading middle classes. It is suggestive of a dangerous enemy hidden by the clothing able to be purchased by those who were not entitled to it and able to destroy the unsuspecting.

Utterson and his peers refer to Mr Hyde as a gentleman because they recognise the markers of middle class identity – his clothes identify his class. The contradictory signs of Mr Hyde’s identity is generated by the way in which Mr Hyde’s body looks underneath his clothing. Utterson is unable to articulate Mr Hyde’s identity because of the contradictory nature of the way that his body and the adornment of his body signifies to the audience. He not only represents what is unspeakable in Dr Jekyll’s inner world, Hyde also represents the unspeakable fear that the new, self-made middle class man may be hiding a challenge to the long established social order. The murder of Sir Danvers Carew can be viewed in this light – a challenge to the natural order; a challenge to the aristocracy by the newly emerging middle class.

Utterson’s role in the destruction of Dr Jekyll at the door with Poole can be interpreted as a comment on the class warfare occurring at the time, with Utterson speaking the order to Poole, Jekyll’s man servant, to break down the door, resulting in the death of Jekyll/Hyde. Utterson’s ultimate financial benefit from Dr Jekyll’s will suggests that the old order will be successful in the battle between the classes.

# THEMES & IDEAS *(cont.)*

STC's production of *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, directed by Kip Williams, uses the struggle for power between the upper and middle classes and the anxiety about challenges to the natural order of society to explore a contemporary version of this anxiety. Like the Victorian period, contemporary western middle classes are experiencing another period of crisis, generated as a result of the 20th century triumph of the bourgeoisie and the ethos of the "self-made" man. Decades of neoliberalism have resulted in middle class struggle to retain their position whilst aspiring to the lifestyles of the extremely wealthy. Williams' construction of the mystery around Mr Hyde is generated by the questions Utterson has about the nature of Hyde's activities and behaviour, which Utterson views as a challenge to contemporary notions of class based masculinity and its disciplinary boundaries.

Williams' production, like Stevenson's novel, relies on images and understandings of London as a metaphor for the inequalities of capitalism, as an important part of the exploration of class power, identity and divisions in *Strange*

*Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Utterson resides in London, and his experience of the thriving capitalist centre is presented as being that of a traditional understanding of the city, with Utterson and his distant cousin Enfield, walking:

"down a by-street in a busy quarter of London. The street was small and what is called quiet, but it drove a thriving trade on the weekdays.... and with its freshly painted shutters, well-polished brasses, and general cleanliness and gaiety of note, instantly caught and pleased the eye of the passenger" (p. 4)

Immediately after this description, the pair turn to the east, a notoriously working class area of London, and see a "sinister" (p. 3-4) building with nothing but a door Mr Hyde's connection to this building, through his fascination with the door, begins the process of blurring the audience's understanding of the distance between characters, class identity and masculinity. The connections between Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, the bright middle class street and the ugliness of East London and traditional, grand London homes with their division into smaller apartments for the lower middle classes are closely connected and frightening. Both Williams and Stevenson are suggesting that capitalism polices the connections between identity, desire and masculinity, driving them deeply underground/within/below us all.

"It is hard to say where one ends and one begins"  
(p. 7)

The notion of surveillance and control can be seen in the use of the digital cameras and projections throughout STC's production. Williams places a great deal of the action upstage, hidden behind the screens on which the actors are projected and the set pieces. The characters are confined and contained by these set pieces, suggesting that the structures (both physical and economic, social and cultural) police class and gender identity. The audience is forced to rely on the information generated by the use of digital media to deduce the "reality" of the characters' experience, reminding them that our understanding of our identity is always mediated through power structures – even structures that purport to protect us. This reality can, and is, used to control and contain the experience of humanity, replicating a binary of appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, designed to make it easier to maintain privilege.



Matthew Backer and Ewen Leslie in  
*Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*  
Photo: Daniel Boud



# THEMES & IDEAS *(cont.)*

## Classroom Activities

Use the following activities to establish an understanding of the struggle for power between the aristocracy and the new middle classes.

1. a. Using the description of Mr Utterson at the beginning of the book, embody Utterson in the performance space. Reflect on the physicality of Mr Utterson and the way that his class status is embedded in his body.
  - b. Using evidence from the book, make a list of the adjectives that have been used to describe Mr Hyde. In the performance space, compare and contrast Utterson's physicality with Mr Hyde's. What are the differences? Record the thoughts of the class.
  - c. Beginning with Utterson's blackmail (p. 5-6) of Mr Hyde after the trampling of the little girl, make a class list all of the traditional ways that Utterson and his peers are able to exert power over people, including wills, letters and legal evidence.
  - d. Beginning with Mr Hyde's trampling of the little girl, make a class list of the ways in which Mr Hyde exerts power over people.
  - e. Evaluate the differences between Utterson and Hyde. What do you think the play is saying about the differences between class exercise of power?
  - f. Using student smart phones or class iPads, improvise the scene of the blackmail of Mr Hyde. Use digital technology to record the event and become the evidence for Hyde's criminal behaviour. How might this scene be different when bystanders film the interaction? How might the incident be received differently by wider society? How does access to digital technology changed the way privileged people can exert power over others?
  - g. Director Kip Williams has added the contemporary lens of cameras, digital records and the internet to the conversation about class power. What might Williams' production be trying to add to this conversation?
2. Reflect on the designs of Marg Horwell. How has the designer created rooms for Utterson and Dr Jekyll suggestive of the traditional professional classes? Design a contemporary space for Utterson, Jekyll/Hyde,

set in a wealthy city. What does established privilege look like in a city's geography today? How does the space in which contemporary privileged men work to exclude others? What does Kip Williams production suggest about the use of digital technologies to control this space?

3. *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* uses the motifs of doors and windows into new physical spaces that represent Victorian slums, the homes of the wealthy and middle class streets. After watching STC's production of *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, make a list of the ways in which this motif is used to suggest connections and relationships within the play. How does the addition of the camera and pre-recorded digital footage change the meaning of the physical doors and windows of the set?

## SHAPING HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY: THE GENTLEMAN AND CONTAINING DESIRE

As would be expected during a period of cultural, social and economic revolution, the instability of the British class system meant that the aristocracy and professional middle classes began doubling down on the borders within and between classes in order to protect their interests. In practice, this involved developing and policing class differences in the construction of masculinity and its expression of desire with the result a strict division between what was acceptable and what was not. Written in the midst of the struggle, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* provides the audience with a fascinating insight into the anxieties of the established power structures as they struggled to retain their definition of masculinity – their cultural and economic privilege – and the fearsomely hypocritical approach adopted as they sought to demonise the expression of desire as part of the struggle.

It has been argued that *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is the most famous pre-Freudian work that explores the idea of a divided self (Beattie, 2001, p. 317). Jekyll, desperately aware of his inner, secret desires, tries to control those aspects of his personality that established society found unacceptable. The binary construction of Dr Jekyll's inner life, and ultimately his public life as Mr Hyde, are presented as being something that Jekyll is both excited by and ashamed of. Dr Jekyll speaks with excitement of Hyde's world and the possibilities for escalating behaviour

# THEMES & IDEAS *(cont.)*

and the ability to indulge without risk or retribution. These desires are not articulated for the audience but importantly, Dr Jekyll feels that they are natural and human to him in the early process of exploration, but when held against binary societal norms, Jekyll is able to see the distance between himself and (supposed) societal acceptability. That is, Dr Jekyll is unable to escape the power of the binary constructions of male relationships.

Like Dr Jekyll, Mr Utterson, established as the dependable face of the traditional construction of masculinity, alludes to a similar attraction to unspeakable desires, temptations and behaviours. Neither man specifies the nature of his desires but it is worth noting that *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is a very male oriented work, with women relegated to the edges of the narrative. Most notably, the only women are the maid who witnesses the murder of Sir Danvers Carew, Mr Jekyll's housekeeper and the little girl trampled by Mr Hyde. In a true Victorian binary, none of the male characters are spoken of as having, or having had, relationships with women.

Director Kip Williams writes:

In the context of Victorian England, and the Gothic novel in particular, the binary most ripe for exploration and dissection is the split between the public and the private. In their championing of such a proscriptive and puritanical idea of 'virtue', the

Victorians (unwittingly or wittingly) created their own boogeyman – a demimonde of debauchery and depravity that exists behind closed doors and down dingy alleyways, right alongside polite society. (Williams, 2022)

Williams' production focuses on the homosocial relationship between Utterson and his friends, Dr Lanyon, Dr Jekyll and Mr Enfield, exploring the deep and varied bonds of love and implied desire between them. These relationships, established through Williams' contemporary framing as one heavily rooted in class privilege, is referenced throughout the production in scenes that include dinner parties after the death of Sir Danvers Carew. Hidden by the walls of a house and therefore the judgement of society, lit warmly and mediated through digital projection, the camera circles around the joyous friends in a manner that suggests a romantic comedy. Love, friendship and unspoken desire is hidden away from the hypocrisy of contemporary constructions of masculinity inherited from the Victorian period, shaming expressions of love that challenge the stale and controlling binary of masculine desire as that of "mateship and women".

This experience is used to explore the shame created and imposed by societal structures on divergent experiences of masculine relationships and homosocial desire. Invoking the conventions of Film Noir as the actor playing Enfield speaks, the audience is positioned to view the discovery of the door – the symbolic gateway into desire – as shadowy, on the fringes of society. Mr Enfield says:

"... I was coming home from some place at the end of the world, about 3 o'clock of a black winter mornin..." (p. 3)

"...Mr Utterson began to haunt the door...at morning... at noon...at night under the face of the fogged city moon..." (p. 13)

Entering the door – the symbol of enacting desire – is common amongst Utterson and his friends, although none speak of it directly. It is only Dr Jekyll's ability to transform himself in order to enter his inner world with no apparent consequences that allows him to be fully himself in a harsh, judgemental society. In this way, the body of Hyde is a



# THEMES & IDEAS *(cont.)*

representation of the same of queer shame which can only be alleviated by Jekyll and Utterson's honesty with each other at the end of the production.

## Classroom Activities

1. Images of Mr Hyde abound in Williams' production – both visual and aural. Make a list of the ways in which Mr Hyde appears in the production. Decide why Director Kip Williams chooses to represent Utterson as Mr Hyde?
2. Provide groups with butchers' paper and ask them to brainstorm all of the meanings that opening and closing doors and windows could have. Introduce the concept of the limin and therefore, the liminal space. What connections to *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* can be made?
3. Use the Rotten Tomatoes link below to familiarise the class with the work of Alfred Hitchcock, with particular attention to the trailer for *Rear Window* and *Vertigo*
  - [youtube.com/watch?v=cpghVi9mSe4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpghVi9mSe4)
4. Williams and Stevenson both use the motifs of doors, windows and stairs to represent interior, psychological spaces, connection and escape. In groups of 4–5, devise a one minute performance of *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* in which the story is told in the style of Hitchcock and through the opening and closing of doors and windows.
5. Use the music from either the *Rear Window* or *Vertigo* trailer to play during the performance. Discuss as a class after the performance:
  - How would you describe the music being used in the performance?
  - What is the effect of the music on the way the audience interprets the performance?
  - How does the combination of music and performance blur the boundaries of the binary?
6. Using a mobile phone or class iPad, record and project the point of view of the camera as it looks through windows and around doors. How does the addition of the camera and pre-recorded digital footage change the meaning of doors and windows?





# THEMES & IDEAS *(cont.)*

## CONSTRUCTIONS OF MASCULINITY

*Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is a play that examines the contradictions within middle class masculinity and the impulse to divide behaviours in order to control them.

Feudal constructions of masculinity were based on an aristocratic notion of male behaviour, which valued self-discipline, high moral standards and strength of character. These attributes were made possible by the allocation of manual labour necessary for survival to those in the classes below. Traditional professions, such as lawyers and doctors, colluded to shore up class boundaries in order to maintain their connection with the aristocracy. This cohort was made up of the younger sons of the nobility, wealthy but landless families and poor boys who had entered their professions through scholarships to expensive grammar schools.

The emergent middle class saw masculinity very differently. The ownership of land remained important, but wealth was generated by new methods including factories, enterprise, mass production, importation of colonial raw materials, the money market, banking and financial sector. Middle class masculinity, therefore, was based in action, enterprise, practicality, self-determination, hard work and the banishment of women to the home. Most importantly, the slow decline of the old, agrarian economic paradigms funded this challenge to class distinctions, with upwardly mobile men aware that their wealth allowed them to adopt the lifestyles of the nobility and the “old” professional class.

Utterson’s friendship with Dr Jekyll is one generated by commonalities of class and shared personal history which Director, Kip Williams, articulates explicitly as one of class privilege as a result of the school both men attended. STC’s production initially frames the audience’s view of Dr Jekyll through Utterson’s understanding of masculinity, in which honour, reputation and good breeding shape a man’s behaviour. It is a traditional cultural construction of masculinity formulated by ideas of feudal behaviour – religion, blood ties and inherited wealth.

Jekyll’s exploration of himself, his desires and masculinity is only made possible by shifting into a newly emerging definition of masculinity – shaped by the new middle class men who saw their success and self-realisation

as something to be achieved, striven for and chased. His willingness to adopt a new approach to constructing and enacting his masculinity, including his discovery of a new scientific process, mirrors the change in wider society, placing him where he is able to break traditional societal rules, whilst protected by the costume of the professional classes. Thence, freed from traditional notions of masculinity, Jekyll is able to gratify his desires, unseen and unmonitored, through to destruction.

Part of Utterson’s horror at Jekyll’s adoption of new definitions of masculinity is connected to the appearance of Mr Hyde – clothed in the garments of middle class privilege but inhabiting the physical ugliness of working class action, activity and violence. Jekyll is a symbol of the challenges to the established class and gender binary – an image of fear and loathing to those with privilege.

The notion of danger and destruction is one that STC’s production explores and reframes as being the effect of the isolated nature of homosocial relationships, in which men are cut off from experiencing joyous, complex, complicated, messy and deep friendships with other men. Driven by his desires but unmoored by isolation, Dr Jekyll, removed from the connection of male relationships, shifts further and further into extreme behaviours. Dr Jekyll is forced to seek out experiences frowned upon by society and, when he assumes that he is the only person experiencing these desires, is destroyed by shame.

# FORM, STYLE & CONVENTIONS

*Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, by Robert Louis Stevenson, was adapted from Stevenson's novel by Kip Williams. Williams has chosen to fuse a number of theatrical styles with literary and filmic genres.

## HEIGHTENED REALISM AND MONOLOGUE

Heightened Realism is an exaggeration of the theatrical style of Realism.

Realism aims to recreate the experience of real life on the stage using all available theatrical elements, including acting, the elements of production and the narrative. The ultimate aim of Realism is to create an empathetic, emotional response in the audience.

Heightened Realism is the exaggeration of the conventions of Realism in order to create a more intense emotional experience for the audience. This means that the acting, elements of production and narrative are 'larger than life' so that the emotions generated in the audience are felt more keenly.

A monologue is a performance by one actor. It can be the performance of a long piece of dialogue within a play. Or, it can be a production that contains only one actor. STC's production of *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* contains monologues delivered by two actors. One actor, playing one character only, works alongside a second actor, who plays the rest of the characters in the play. These roles are created through a combination of live performance, live video and pre-recorded video, commenting on the struggle for male identity, class and power.

## MULTIDISCIPLINARY THEATRE

Multidisciplinary Theatre challenges traditional representations and conventional dramatic narrative in a highly visual form through new and traditional theatre technologies. The process by which new and traditional theatre technologies are deployed depends on the vision of the artist or company. Linearity, traditional dialogue and representations of character are challenged in order to create a multiplicity of meaning for an audience. In *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, the creative decision to work

with Multidisciplinary Theatre, with particular emphasis on digital projection, demonstrates the power of surveillance in policing identity and retaining power.

## BRECHTIAN THEATRE

A style of theatre developed by Bertholt Brecht in the early 20th century as a reaction to Realism, Brechtian Theatre sought to encourage critical thinking in the audience. As a Marxist, Brecht wanted his audience to understand the inequity in the workings of capitalism and provide them with the tools to analyse and respond to it. Brecht did this by disrupting the conventions of Realism in order to remind the audience that what they were watching was, in fact, a play. Rather than attaching emotionally to the work, Brecht sought to create distance from the action through the use of direct address of the audience, the use of a narrator, the creation of roles rather than characters, placards, song and episodic narrative.

## THE DETECTIVE STORY

A detective story is the story of pursuit of truth in the aftermath of an unsolved crime. The detective, usually a man and written from his point of view, follows the clues left behind by the criminal in order to solve the mystery of what has occurred. The conventions of the detective story include the assumption of the truth being revealed, the punishment of the person who has committed the crime, a series of clues that may or may not contribute to the actual truth of the event and the danger faced by the detective as they pursue the mystery.

## VICTORIAN (URBAN) GOTHIC

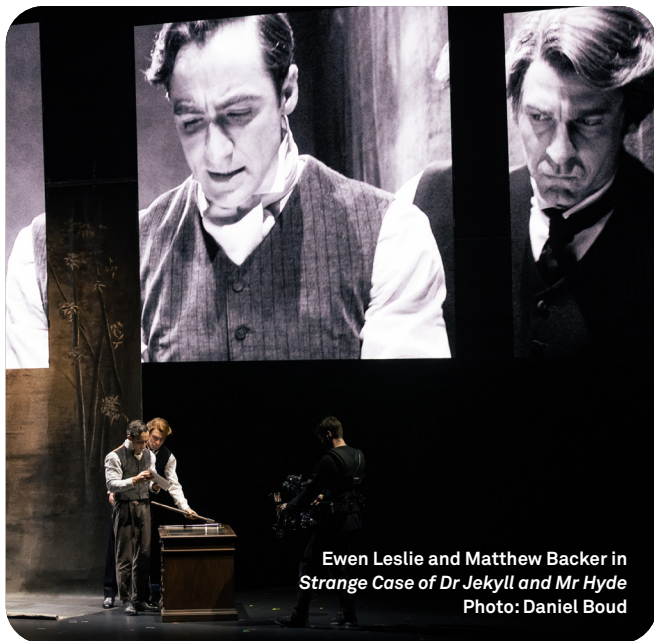
A literary style rather than a theatrical one, Victorian (Urban) Gothic is a collection of tropes (a recurrent theme or collection of images) that represent London in Victorian England. Generated out of the extremities of urbanisation, industrialisation and capitalism, Victorian (Urban) Gothic represents the cultural anxieties generated by the uncontrolled expansion of London. Victorian (Urban) Gothic tropes include representations of dirt, disease, filth and alcohol abuse. Fog was a regular occurrence as a result of

# FORM, STYLE & CONVENTIONS (cont.)

the pollution generated by factories. Gas lighting created shadows between circles of light, encouraging the fear of hidden criminals. Prostitution, alcoholism and opium use were commonplace. London was divided into vastly different spatial categories, with the wealthy living completely different lives to the poor. The East End of London was described as a “different country”, separated from the rest of the city by extreme poverty, disease and dysfunction. In *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, the East End of London is a metaphor for the lurking dangers of class conflict and the encroaching changes brought about by industrial capitalism.

## FILM NOIR CONVENTIONS

Film Noir (literally Dark Films), is a genre of film that emerged post World War Two and was given its name because of its stylised cinematography, in which stark, high contrast lighting and shadow were used to create a dark, atmospheric mood. The popularity of Film Noir was based on its exploration of crime, the flawed nature of the male hero, untrustworthy female characters and a bleak, existential depiction of society. The Noir world was one of outsiders, rain, shadow, seedy bars and low-life street criminals who struggled against the forces of capitalism that kept them at the fringes of society.



Ewen Leslie and Matthew Backer in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*  
Photo: Daniel Boud

## SCIENCE FICTION (SCHLOCK) FILM CONVENTIONS

Low budget Science Fiction and Horror films are called Schlock Horror Films. They are characterised by cheap special effects and sensationalised plots in which fantastical events occur and the protagonist triumphs at the end. Both Victorian Urban Gothic and Schlock Film rely on the conventions of Realism, allowing the contrast between reality and the monstrous world around them to heighten the triumph of human relationships.

## THE CONVENTIONS OF ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S FILMS

Alfred Hitchcock was a British film director who worked in film from the 1920s to the 1960s. He is primarily known for his mastery in building suspense in films as diverse as *Psycho*, *Vertigo*, *The Birds*, *North by Northwest*, *Rear Window* and *To Catch a Thief*. Hitchcock's work explored notions of voyeurism, the construction of identity, homosexuality, sexuality and control. His work featured motifs of staircases, falling, watching through windows, montage and a dramatic film score.

## CAMP

Camp is not a theatrical style but rather a way of being in the world. It has been generated over time by queer people as a response to long periods of oppression and invisibility. Camp involves a parody of human interactions through gesture, posture, voice, movement, style, decoration, and design. It is often ironic, exaggerated and theatrical. Over history, queer people have relied on Camp to communicate their experience of the world to those who understood, without placing themselves in danger of being prosecuted for their identities. By deploying Hitchcock filmic motifs, Film Noir and Science Fiction (schlock) Film Conventions in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Director Kip Williams is suggesting to the audience that Dr Jekyll/Mr Hyde's pursuit of pleasure and desire is diverse and outside of binary norms.



# THE ELEMENTS OF PRODUCTION



Ewen Leslie and Matthew Backer in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Photo: Daniel Boud

## SET DESIGN

The set for *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* transforms quickly to create reproductions of the many places, times and situations that are found in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. This includes London of an evening, the rooms of Utterson, Dr Lanyon, Dr Jekyll/Mr Hyde and the inner world of Dr Jekyll as he remembers and recounts his lived experiences in the underbelly of London. Working across various forms and styles of design, Marg Horwell has created symbolic representations of London streets through the use of street lamps, to a Heightened Realistic representation of a middle class bachelor's home.

The use of the walls, doors and windows of London houses that can be moved and reconfigured speaks to the class anxieties of the period. Williams and Horwell appear to be showing the audience the ugliness of capitalism, including the dismantling of what was traditionally understood as London and the changes being forced upon it by industrial capitalism. Placed alongside the six large digital

screens, the set design relies heavily on the use of digital technologies to allow the audience into the various places found in the world of the play. Both the set pieces and the digital screens do, on occasion, block the audiences' uninterrupted view of the action, forcing them to rely on the information provided by technology and symbolises the disciplinary power of the digital landscape as it reinforces the binary structures of society. In addition, the surveillance of the world of the play by the audience implicates us as bystanders in the process of policing societal and cultural boundaries.

Dr Jekyll's laboratory, then a representation of scientific progress, is a traditionally appointed laboratory, with glass implements surrounded by clutter. Lit by Lighting Designer, Nick Schlieper, the contents of Dr Jekyll's experimentation are beautifully coloured and reminiscent of Schlock Horror films in which the fantastical nature of the science is heightened visually to exaggerate human experience.

# THE ELEMENTS OF PRODUCTION (cont.)

## COSTUME DESIGN

Costume Designer Marg Horwell has worked within the theatrical style of Heightened Realism for the majority of *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, recreating the middle class attire of the characters in the play. Class, status and character traits are carefully created appropriate to the historical context.

There are three important complications to Horwell's use of the theatrical style of Realism.

The first is the costume of the Narrator, who is dressed in contemporary clothing including neutral trousers and a white shirt. His braces, attached to his trousers, are worn off his shoulders which suggests a link to the historical period in which the majority of action occurs. This choice allows a symbolic understanding of the anxieties of the middle class, particularly around masculinity and its expression, can be understood to traverse a century of bourgeois social, cultural and economic dominance.

The design of Mr Hyde's costume, wig and makeup is inspired by the Victorian (Urban) Gothic traditions found in Robert Louis Stevenson's writing, in which the secret desires of Dr Jekyll are portrayed as monstrous. Designer Marg Horwell and Director Kip Williams have extended understandings of monstrosity and have taken inspiration from the conventions of Schlock Horror films, in which heightened representations of the unspeakable are a parody of Victorian (Urban) Gothic monstrosity, rendering it Camp. Mr Hyde's appearance is, therefore, symbolic of queer shame, unable to be expressed in wider society because of the condemnation attached to it in a binary understanding of human identity.

Lastly, Designer Marg Horwell has used Queer and Camp signifiers to explore Dr Jekyll's expression of desire. As Dr Jekyll takes Utterson on a journey through his choices, they dress in costumes from the 20th Century – including representations of *The Wizard of Oz*, 1990s rave style and contemporary "onesies" that might be worn to a Music Festival. These costumes reflect a variety of queer experience over time, and speak to the rich and diverse manner in which humans may identify. It is important to note

that the image of Mr Hyde and queer shame is in complete contrast to the joyous experiences shared by Dr Jekyll with Utterson, challenging notions of the ugliness of the societal constructions of male relationships.



Ewen Leslie and Matthew Backer in  
*Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*  
Photo: Daniel Boud

# THE ELEMENTS OF PRODUCTION (cont.)

## MUSIC, DIGITAL AND LIGHTING DESIGN

Music, Digital and Lighting Design work together to evoke the seamy underside of Victorian London/contemporary global capitalism, the policing of dominant class and gender discourses, the presence of queer identities hidden under dominant bourgeois binaries and the world of the privileged middle class itself.

The influence of Film Noir is especially clear in the Music, Digital and Lighting Design in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Shadowy inner and underworlds are created through the use of high contrast lighting, dramatic music and close ups of the human face. Mystery and the quest for truth is symbolised through the Noir conventions of the street light, in which the light illuminates only part of the wider mystery. Of course, the placement of the street light, in a public place, suggests the disillusionment, disconnection and a world that exists beyond well-lit areas, symbolic of understood and social norms. The mystery of human experience and desire represented by Mr Hyde, hidden in shadows, is heightened by the formless outline of his physical presence, blurring into the background of the wider world that surrounds him. His shame is suggested by the momentary glimpses of him, partially in the light and then, gone.

The digital designs, by David Bergman, are in black and white, reinforcing the power of the binary approach to human identity. The glorious colour of Dr Jekyll's shared experience with Utterson, removed from the Noir tradition, reminds the audience that the multiplicity of colours and textures – including glitter – represents human experience and identity beyond the binary.

In addition, the Noir influence can be heard in the repetitive rhythms of the underscore, a classic feature of Film Noir, suggest violence and disaster. Reminiscent of the Wilder classic, *Double Indemnity* in which the French horn and timpani beat a slow march to destruction, Clemence Williams' sound design also heralds the inexorable journey to the end – the end of the mystery and the understanding of the truth – that bourgeois constructions of identity limit human connection.

Conventions of Hitchcock's films, including the creation of suspense, fused with the quest for the truth found in both

Hitchcock's work and the conventions of the detective story, drive *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* forward and, importantly, deeper into the human psyche. Sitting alongside the shadowy world of Film Noir, the use of Hitchcock inspired close up camera shots of the face suggest a search for understanding, but fragmented over several screens suggests that human identity is complex and difficult to integrate in the face of oppressive power structures that contain and reduce human experience. Digital stairs, digital surveillance of rooms, doors and windows allows the audience to view the action but implicates them in the voyeurism of middle class society, in which images of queer behaviour can be repackaged into scandal, preventing honest human interaction.



Ewen Leslie and Matthew Backer in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*  
Photo: Daniel Boud



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