

DR. JEKYL AND MR. HYDE'S TRIUNE BRAIN**HOPKINSVILLE, KY ATHEMAEUM****SEPTEMBER 1, 2011**

"He put the glass to his lips and drank at one gulp. A cry followed; he reeled, staggered, clutched at the table and held on, staring with injected eyes, gasping with open mouth; and as I looked there came, I thought, a change--he seemed to swell--his face became suddenly black and the features seemed to melt and alter--and the next moment, I had sprung to my feet and leaped back against the wall, my arms raised to shield me from that prodigy, my mind submerged in terror.

"O God!" I screamed, and "O God!" again and again; for there before my eyes--pale and shaken, and half fainting, and groping before him with his hands, like a man restored from death--there stood Henry Jekyll!" (1)

Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, Mr. Secretary-Treasurer and Fellow
Athenaeum Members.

I began my presentation this evening with a quote from Robert Lewis Stevenson's gothic mystery novel, *The Strange Case of Dr. Henry Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. The quote is from Chapter 9, "The Incident of Dr. Lanyon. It occurred when Dr. Lanyon, a medical colleague of Dr. Jekyll, witnesses Mr. Hyde drinking the potion that transforms him from the hideous and evil Mr. Edward Hyde back into the respectable Victorian English gentleman and physician Dr. Henry Jekyll.

Witnessing this transformation is so upsetting to Dr. Lanyon that he soon becomes ill and dies. Before his death Dr. Lanyon writes a letter, which he leaves, only to be opened upon the death of Dr. Jekyll, with his and Jekyll's mutual friend, attorney, Mr. Utterson.

The story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is narrated, largely by Dr. Henry Jekyll's friend and attorney, Mr. Utterson, a proper, respectable, rational English gentleman.

The story is about Mr. Utterson's investigation and elucidation of the mysterious relationship of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, a relationship that is only clarified when Mr. Utterson breaks into Dr. Jekyll's office/laboratory and finds Dr. Jekyll is absent and the body of the dead, Mr. Hyde on the floor. It is at this time Mr. Utterson reads both Dr. Lanyon and Dr. Jekyll's letters and is surprised and shocked to learn that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are one and the same being.

Dr. Jekyll says of himself:

"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 honorable and distinguished future. And indeed the worst of my faults was a certain impatient gaiety of disposition, such as has made the happiness of many, but such as I found it hard to reconcile with my imperious desire to carry my head high, and wear a more than commonly grave countenance before the public. Hence it came about that I concealed my pleasures; and that when I reached years of reflection, and began to look round me and take stock of my progress and position in the world, I stood already committed to a profound duplicity of me. Many a man would have even blazoned such irregularities as I was

guilty of; but from the high views that I had set before me, I regarded and hid them with an almost morbid sense of shame. It was thus rather the exacting nature of my aspirations than any particular degradation in my faults, that made me what I was, and, with even a deeper trench than in the majority of men, severed in me those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man's dual nature. In this case, I was driven to reflect deeply and inveterately on that hard law of life, which lies at the root of religion and is one of the most plentiful springs of distress. Though so profound a double-dealer, I was in no sense a hypocrite; both sides of me were in dead earnest; I was no more myself when I laid aside restraint and plunged in shame, than when I labored, in the eye of day, at the furtherance of knowledge or the relief of sorrow and suffering. And it chanced that the direction of my scientific studies, which led wholly towards the mystic and the transcendental, reacted and shed a strong light on this consciousness of the perennial war among my members. With every day, and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual, I thus drew steadily nearer to that truth, by whose partial discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck: that man is not truly one, but truly two. I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. Others will follow, others will outstrip me on the same lines; and I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens. I, for my part, from the nature of my life, advanced infallibly in one direction and in one direction only. It was on the moral side, and in my own person, that I learned to recognize the thorough and primitive duality of man; I saw that, of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both; and from an early date, even before the course of my scientific discoveries had begun to suggest the most naked possibility of such a miracle, I had learned to dwell with pleasure, as a beloved daydream, on the thought of the separation of these elements. If each, I told myself, could be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable; the unjust might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin; and the just could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path, doing the good things in which he found his pleasure, and no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of this extraneous evil. It was the curse of mankind that these incongruous personalities were thus bound together—that in the agonized womb of consciousness, these polar twins should be continuously struggling. How, then were they dissociated?" (1)

In this quote Robert Lewis Stevenson describes his concept of the duality of human nature including his own. He felt by the use of a chemical elixir he could separate the good from the evil and to thereby ameliorate the evil. As we shall see they are both inextricably linked and to destroy one is to destroy the other.

This story represents Western culture view, that of the inner conflict of mankind's sense of good and evil. In particular Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde has been interpreted as an examination of the duality of human nature (that good and evil exists in all of us), and that the failure to accept this tension (to accept the evil or shadow side of oneself) results in the evil being projected onto others. Paradoxically in this argument, evil is actually committed in an effort to extinguish the perceived evil that has been projected onto the innocent victims. In Freudian Theory the thoughts and desires banished to the unconscious motivate the behavior of the conscious mind. If someone banishes all evil to the unconscious mind in an attempt to be wholly and completely good, it can result in the development of a Mr Hyde-type aspect to that person's character. This failure to accept the tension of duality is related to Christian theology, where Satan's fall from Heaven is due to his refusal to accept that he is a created being (that he has a dual nature) and is not God. This is why in Christianity, pride (to consider oneself as without sin or without evil) is the greatest sin, as it is the precursor to evil itself; it also explains the Christian concept of evil hiding in the light.

The story has also been noted as "one of the best guidebooks of the Victorian era" because of its piercing description of the duality of the 19th century "outward respectability and inward lust," as this period had a tendency for social hypocrisy.

In the Middle East and India, Zoroastrianism, the first monotheistic religion was built on a dualism of Ahura Mazda-Light and Ahriman-darkness.

The Yin Yan, A Chinese and Taoist symbol represents the two polar opposite and complementary forces found in the world. Yang is white and "light" and "sunny", it corresponds to the day and more active functions. Whereas yin, is dark and black and shady and corresponds to night and dormancy. This idea has been around for centuries throughout the Orient, and Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is similar to its idea. In the western and more Christianized world, this idea is sometimes known as dualism.

In our Christian tradition, St. Paul, talks of this in the seventh chapter of Romans when he says:

"It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love to do God's will so far as my new man is concerned but there is something else deep within me, in my lower nature, that is at war with my mind and wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. In my mind, I want to be God's willing servant but instead I find myself still enslaved to sin." Romans 7:21-24. (2)

Dr. Paul MacLean, PhD, MD studied the evolutionary development of the nervous system and described the human brain as a "triune brain" made up of three major layers or "brains" each representing a distinct evolutionary stratum that had formed upon the older layers before it, like an archaeological site. The three brains were established successfully in the course of human evolution. The oldest layer is the reptilian brain, reptilian

system or "R" complex; the second oldest is the mammalian brain or the "limbic" system and the most recent, having been formed about 50, 000 years ago, is the neomammalian brain or neocortex.

Each of the three brain layers represents an evolutionary stratum that has formed upon the older layers before it like an archeological city. Each is connected by nerves to the others; each has a separate function but all three layers interact. The three layers of the brain operate much like three interconnected biological computers, each with its own special intelligences, it's own subjectivity, each it's own sense of time and space and its own memory.

Each brain operates as its own brain system with distinct capacities for perceiving and responding to the environment and each can become dominant, depending on the circumstances.

The Triune Brain hypothesis has forced us to rethink how the brain functions. Until this time we thought the highest level of the brain, the cortical hemispheres, the neocortex, dominated the two lower levels, the reptilian and limbic brains. MacLean has shown that this is not the case and that the physically lower limbic and the reptilian system can hijack the higher mental functions when they are aroused by an appropriate stimulus or trigger, such as a threat to our life, intense fear, anger or rage.

St. Paul and historically Christianity and the major living religious traditions

have seen the source of our personal trouble as residing outside in the world and in others, being alien to oneself. But it is the Animal, the Beast that is the source of this.

It should be noted that only humans have significant frontal lobes. These frontal lobes play an important role in many of the thinking and executive processes that distinguish humans from other animals. The frontal lobes are important for abstract thinking, for imagining the likely consequences of actions and for our executive functions.

It must be remembered that the Beast in us furnishes the energy of the basic drives and is the motivating force of one's personality.

We must learn to accept and understand our basic drives the primitive/beastly feelings, so we can control rather than repress or harshly deny them. One must not deny or fear the animal; the beast in us-this is the worst thing we can do with this part of our nature.

Dr. Will Menninger of the Famed Menninger Clinic formerly of Topeka, KS but now of Houston, TX listed as one of the *Marks of Emotional Maturity*:

"The ability to sublimate, to direct one's instinctual and hostile energy into creative and constructive outlets."

Stevenson ends his novella by having Jekyll say:

"There comes an end to all things; the most capacious measure is filled at last; and this brief condescension to my evil finally destroyed the balance of my soul. And yet I was not alarmed; the fall seemed natural, like a return to the old days before I had made my discovery. It was a fine, clear, January day, wet under foot where the frost had melted, but cloudless overhead; and the Regent's Park was full of winter chirrupings and sweet with spring odours. I sat in the sun on a bench; the animal within me licking the chops of memory; the spiritual side a little drowsed, promising subsequent penitence, but not yet moved to begin. After all, I reflected, I was like my neighbours; and then I smiled, comparing myself with other men, comparing my active good-will with the lazy cruelty of their neglect. And at the very moment of that vainglorious thought, a qualm came over me, a horrid nausea and the most deadly shuddering. These passed away, and left me faint; and then as in its turn faintness subsided, I began to be aware of a change in the temper of my thoughts, a greater boldness, a contempt of danger, a solution of the bonds of obligation. I looked down; my clothes hung formlessly on my shrunken limbs; the hand that lay on my knee was corded and hairy. I was once more Edward Hyde. A moment before I had been safe of all men's respect, wealthy, beloved--the cloth laying for me in the dining-room at home; and now I was the common quarry of mankind, hunted, houseless, a known murderer, thrall to the gallows." (3)

The final end to both Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is Hyde's committing suicide by drinking poison. They could not live together, but they could not be fully separated. Dr. Jekyll says, in his final confession:

"Will Hyde die upon the scaffold? or will he find the courage to release himself at the last moment? God knows; I am careless; this is my true hour of death, and what is to follow concerns another than myself. Here, then, as I lay down the pen, and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end."

In the end, though, the actual nature of Hyde and Jekyll sins prove less

important than Stevenson's larger point, which is that the lure of the dark side, the Animal or Beast side, constitutes a universal part of our human nature. We are all Jekyll's desperately trying to keep our Hydes under control even as we are desperately fascinated by what they do and envious of their frightening freedom from moral constraints.

I believe that I, we are created beings who are a dynamic equilibrium of our animal or lower nature and our human or higher nature. Hopefully most of us with time and growth; with the support and guidance of loving parents or caregivers; our schools, our churches, synagogues, temples or mosques and the structure of a society ruled by the "rule of law", learn more and more to control or sublimate our animal self into our higher self.

To use an old and out of date Wesleyan concept, we are "going on toward perfection."

The following story attributed to Cherokee wisdom was quoted by the Rev. Dr. Sharon E. Watkins, General; Manager and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the homily she gave at the National Prayer Service in Washington, D.C. the morning of President Obama and Vice President Biden Inauguration, January 21, 2009:

One evening a grandfather was teaching his young grandson about the internal battle that each person faces.

"There are two wolves struggling inside each of us," the old man said. "One wolf is vengefulness, anger, resentment, self-pity, fear . . . "The other wolf is compassion, faithfulness, hope, truth, love . . ." The grandson sat, thinking, then asked: "Which wolf wins, Grandfather?" His grandfather replied, "The one you feed."

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