

Shine Bright LLCE Cycle Terminal

File 2 Freaky dreams

Crime and policing p. 33

Adam Hart-Davis: The Victorians were fascinated by crime and Sherlock Holmes fed an insatiable appetite for the excitement of the criminal underworld. Across Britain, huge numbers of people had migrated to towns and cities. This crowding together of strangers led to feelings of distrust and insecurity and just as today public fears were stoked with sensational reports of the most lurid crimes. The Victorians began to feel that they were being swamped by a crime wave, there seemed to be an increase in lawlessness in towns and cities right across the country. Crime was becoming a political issue and action was needed. In 1829 Sir Robert Peel introduced bobbies or peelers to London and in 1839 the Birmingham force appeared but it wasn't until 1856 that the government decided that every town in the country should have its own police force. For the police to be effective they had to be recognizable by the public so they wore a distinctive uniform.

Police Museum man: The early uniform started off with a top hat like that, that's for the air of authority. You're the boss, you're telling the people what to do.

The Gothic p. 34

What is Gothic? A word that implies the sinister, the supernatural, horror. It's also a medieval style of building. Sacred architecture dedicated to the glory of God.

Gothic grew like ivy. It spawned new forms of literature, new types of painting. A new taste for terror. And weirdness. It's no coincidence that Gothic marked a midnight moment in British history, when all kinds of terrors were going bump in the night. Abroad, revolution in France. At home, new industry, with its "dark Satanic mills". New science, with its Frankenstein menace. The British could hardly bear to talk about such things out loud. Gothic allowed them to whisper their deepest desires, and their darkest fears.

Read them right, and I believe the stones of Gothic revival architecture, the terrors painted by Gothic painters, and the words of great Gothic novelists amount to a secret history of Britain itself during its age of change.

Electrified dosage p. 37

Patient: What's the method?

Frankenstein: I'm going to inject an electrified dosage into the pre-frontal cortex of your brain.

Assistant Doctor: Open your mouth.

Frankenstein: That'll be all, doctor. Thank you.

You'll have no memory of this. Not of this treatment. Not of your crimes, nor of your sins, nor of your time in this horrid place. Every moment that has benighted your life and set you on your dark course, I will take from you. You will re-enter this world an innocent lamb. After all, it is our memories which make us monsters, is it not?

Jekyll and Hyde p. 38

Sir Christopher Frayling: I think that the first-time reader is led to believe that Hyde and Jekyll are two different people.

And there is a great tradition in mid-to-late Victorian literature of Doppelgangers and mirrors and doubles, and devils, that represent the internal personality externalised in some way. So, they thought Hyde was a different person, and what's the connection between them? And only just, it's a real delayed drop in this this book, but just before the dénouement, suddenly, my God, they're the same person. It must have come as a huge shock, and in fact a lot of the reviews said that they couldn't believe the reveal when it happened. Because they had never encountered anything like this. I remember one of the early reviewers says, "We should welcome a spectre, a ghoul, even a vampire, rather than meet Mr Edward Hyde."

Sarah Dillon: Is that terrifying, that move from the Devil being outside us to the Devil being inside us?

Sir Christopher Frayling: Yeah. I think the subtlety of that, of this idea of the "brute" that Jekyll tries to repress, and the more he cages it, the more it comes out roaring. So, the more he tries to put a stopper in the bottle, the more Hyde gets really angry. Hyde's okay at the beginning, actually. He gets more and more nasty, because Jekyll tries harder and harder to repress him. That's a very interesting theme. If you try to put down your brute instincts, it actually gets worse. But also, you know, that... we're in the crucible of psychoanalysis in a way. Freud has just started going to lectures on hysteria. Charcot in Paris is experimenting on what they would eventually call the subconscious, through hypnotism, public displays of hypnotism. So all of this... people are trying to find a language to describe what goes on inside people's heads, and at just that moment, Stevenson somehow stumbles on this metaphor that says it all.