

Jekyll and Hyde

A COMPLETE ANALYSIS OF THE NOVELLA

CHAPTER ONE: STORY OF THE DOOR

Utterson: "Cold, scanty and embarrassed...lean, long, dusty, dreary and yet somehow loveable" – The lengthy asyndetic list is difficult to say in one breath, which not only reflects Utterson's 'long' and 'dreary' personality but could also suggest his character is perhaps hard to put into words, if Stevenson has had to use such a lengthy description. This could imply some form of mystery and perplexity around Utterson to begin with – there is maybe more to the 'scanty' gentleman that the reader initially meets. There is also juxtaposing statements within the description which not only supports this idea but is symbolic of Utterson, who, despite being 'cold', is 'loveable'. The introduction to the novel with the character of Utterson is also important as it introduces the key theme of duality of the novel within Utterson himself – Utterson may almost be a character representation of the ideals of Victorian society. This is crucial to the novel as it is important that he is a believable man so that his versions of events can be believed by the readers no matter how strange they are. He also needs to be somewhat uninteresting so he doesn't distract from the story

Utterson: "eminently human beamed from his eye" – The word 'beacon' is usually a bright light in a high or prominent position used as a signal. This could suggest that Utterson has a lot of respect, almost as if he were a beacon himself. His kind, human side is clearly evident and perhaps shows that even though it may not be apparent from his exterior, it is noticed by all. It also suggests that Utterson may have put up a front in order to maintain his reputation – something very common in the VE. Additionally, the fact that Utterson's kindness can be felt just through his eyes suggests that it is not fake and that he does have genuine feeling.

Utterson: "never marked a shade of change in his demeanour" – This just marks the extreme severity of the situation at the door, as Utterson, a man that seemingly never 'marked a shade of change' in his personality no matter what criminal case he took on, was clearly emotionally affected by Jekyll's case, as the reader learns he was troubled by it – as well as his 'demeanour' when he is described as 'putting a hand to his brow like a man in mental perplexity'. "Never" is a final adverb which also highlights his good-natured nature as his concern for his friend is evident when he is involved, and he has 'never' been changed by anything in his way before. Alternatively, the idea of a never-changing 'demeanour' implies that Utterson is using some sort of outer mask or façade, an idea that is continued throughout the novella and a very common theme in Victorian England.

Utterson: "His affections, like ivy, were the growth of time" – 'Ivy' is a plant that can be poisonous, implying that Utterson was a sensible man and recognises the harmful nature of certain relationships. Alternatively, 'ivy' is a living plant, that can, like all things living, die or be cut off. Stevenson, by using the simile to liken his affections to 'ivy' may perhaps suggest Utterson's respectability amongst his peers – he has the power to end all of his relationships. 'Ivy' though, is an evergreen plant which also presents Utterson's loyalty to those around him – a different side to him that readers weren't aware of.

Setting: "surplus of their grains in coquetry" – This imagery describes how the shops on the street would adorn their displays with advertisements. This implies that the street was full of life – sales, advertising, colours etc. Additionally, the term 'coquetry' literally means something flirtatious, which suggests that both charming and unpleasant things reside in London

Setting: "like rows of smiling saleswomen" – Stevenson likens shopfronts to 'smiling saleswomen' using a simile. Where this image may just show the inviting, full of life ambiance of the town, it may also suggest the town has something to hide, as the 'smiling saleswomen' almost seem fake or too good to be true. The sinister mood is supported by the use of sibilance with the 'smiling saleswomen', which sounds threatening as the repeated use of 's' is like a hissing sound. The happiness of the town juxtaposes this sinister layer to the town, again presenting duality within the town itself – emphasising the imminence of duality in every aspect of life and foreshadowing something sinister occurring in the

Jekyll “crystalline salt of a white colour” “blood-red liquor, which was highly pungent to the sense of smell” “volatile ether” – There is a contrast between the colours of the drugs Jekyll takes to become Hyde, reflecting the contrast in the personas of both Jekyll and Hyde and the duality within them.

Hyde: “great muscular activity and great apparent debility of constitution” – this complete contrast between the apparent strength of Hyde and the lack of intelligence reflects again the duality in Hyde, as well as the duality between Jekyll and Hyde, Jekyll being a highly intelligent member of society, the “pink of the proprieties”

Hyde: “incipient rigour, and was accompanied by a marked sinking of the pulse” – “sinking of the pulse” is interesting as readers at this point would have a high pulse due to the sustained suspense throughout the novella and the imminence of a final revelation of the peculiar actions of Hyde. This shows how Lanyon was comforted by steady reason and how he was used to the care and precaution when he undertook scientific discoveries, presenting him as an antithesis to Jekyll – someone who seemed to lack logic and control “unscientific balderdash”. It also once again presents Hyde as making an effort with Lanyon, and the idea that Hyde had recognised Lanyon’s ways – representative of the duality within Jekyll.

Hyde: “on fire with sombre excitement” – “sombre excitement” is a rather disjointed juxtaposition, excitement connoting happiness and anticipation and sombre connoting someone subdued and somewhat upset. This could reflect the duality within Jekyll – his respectable side was “sombre” and his more evil side was “excited”, however it could also be symbolic of how Hyde is once again trying to sustain himself from being his savage, dangerous self.

Hyde: “wrestling against the approaches of hysteria” – “wrestling” suggests the battle Hyde underwent to sustain himself from his aggressive nature in front of Lanyon, the fact that Lanyon picked up on it a clear indicator that this battle was without success. However, this may suggest that there was a spark of Jekyll still within Hyde – he wanted to remain on Lanyon’s good side and did not want Lanyon to experience the “roaring” side to Hyde.

Hyde: “dreadful smile” – the oxymoron here really reflects the dual nature of Jekyll – he has both an evil and a good streak. It could also reflect the two sides to becoming Hyde and a certain revelation of the damage it had done, the “dreadful” evil side coming before the “smile”, the good side, reflecting how the evil had begun to take over the good. This also shows the negative side of science and duality.

Jekyll/Hyde: “a new province of knowledge and new avenues to fame and power” – “province” has implications of some extremely large area that cannot be fully explored, suggesting that perhaps Jekyll was going into the experiment with some areas still not complete or worked on. For an accurate, precise scientist such as Lanyon, this would have struck alarm bells foreshadowing threat or danger to come of this. There’s a semantic field of maps and discovery present in this sentence, suggesting to Jekyll that his search to find a way to separate his personalities was of similar nature to some sort of hunt or expedition. This idea suggests that he had taken a long time over what he had searched for, and when he had finally hit gold as such, he was immediately overcome with hunger for this power.

Jekyll/Hyde: “he reeled, staggered, clutched at the table and held on, staring with injected eyes, gasping with open mouth” – “held on” suggests that Jekyll is battling with the extreme powers of science – despite having converted to the form of Jekyll many times science here is presented as taking complete control of what is happening and causing a strong, powerful man such as Hyde to experience such a striking metamorphosis. The rule of three has been used with “reeled, staggered, clutched”, all depicting an image of someone really struggling against a damaging and brutal force. This may imply that science, an extremely powerful force, is winning the battle against Jekyll – foreshadowing danger. “injected eyes” is what a modern audience would associate perhaps with drug abuse – suggesting that Jekyll’s transformation had similarly damaging effects to drugs. It also shows the ability science contained to inhabit and destroy every part of Jekyll.

Jekyll/Hyde: “something indescribably new” “heady recklessness, a current of disordered sensual images running like a millrace in my fancy” – The fact that becoming Hyde is “indescribable”, suggests that he has never known anything else other than the tedious nature of being Jekyll. The “current” suggests that being Hyde has given Jekyll a surge of new energy

Jekyll/Hyde: “braced and delighted me like wine” – “braced and delighted” is a juxtaposing statement as to “brace” one’s self is to prepare for something bad, and “delighted” is the complete opposite. This suggests that becoming Hyde caused him to feel a multitude of different emotions and foreshadows potential dangers within becoming Hyde. It may also reflect the duality within Jekyll.

Jekyll/Hyde: “leap of welcome” – suggests that becoming Hyde is exciting and exhilarating. The verb “leap” connotes something energetic and full of life, suggesting that Jekyll is filled with energy and strength that he wouldn’t normally have. This is further reiterated when Jekyll is described earlier as “the pink of the proprieties” and a very respectable man, not the kind of person one would imagine leaping. This could imply that Henry Jekyll felt trapped and suffocated when he bore the “grave” countenance of Jekyll and was free when he became Hyde.

Jekyll/Hyde: “ugly idol” – the oxymoron of “ugly idol” reflects how Jekyll does not value the character traits of what would normally be considered an “idol”. This statement could be a subtle mockery from Stevenson of the assumed idols of the Victorian era – reputable, respectable people. Stevenson may be saying that an “idol” doesn’t necessarily have to conform to the societal ideals of the time for them to be considered correct – indeed Jekyll’s idol of Hyde is incredibly important for him and doesn’t match idols of the time.

Jekyll/Hyde: “shook the doors of the prison house of my disposition” – the fact that Jekyll’s original form was described as a “prison house” suggests how completely trapped he felt by the limits placed on him by society. “prison” also suggests somewhere extremely confining and high-security, emphasising that no attempts to escape this would be successful. The extent of his confinement is really shown however through the fact that by changing his whole personality in an incredibly shocking and powerful way Jekyll is still unable to completely be free. If the prison doors were not opened, but merely “shook”. This shows that even going to the greatest extents can’t remove how trapped Jekyll felt. Additionally, Jekyll’s guilt at feeling the way he does may also be shown as a “prison” is a place where people who have done wrong go, suggesting that he is aware that what he has done is not correct.

Jekyll/Hyde: “this new power tempted me until I fell into slavery” – The idea that Jekyll “fell” suggests a complete loss of control – the temptation has allowed Jekyll to forget anything logical and spiral out of control. It also presents the power of science as incredibly strong as it has the power to initiate a huge fall from grace from someone as reputable as Jekyll. The idea of “slavery” suggests how Jekyll’s original form had been completely undermined by the temptation to revert back into the form of Hyde – he is no more than a slave to this power now. This implies the strength that Hyde has within him – it’s as if Hyde controls him from the inside as Jekyll is now just a slave to him. This may also suggest that Jekyll has been trapped with no way of escaping by his temptation, perhaps foreshadowing something dangerous happening as a result of this. The power of temptation has been personified with the image of the devil, as it is said that Jekyll’s power “tempted” him. This is a very interesting image as Religion was very widely believed in the Victorian Era – and disobeying God was considered one of the biggest disgraces. Jekyll here has already fallen victim to the consequences of disobeying God. Science is also presented as something inexplicably powerful in this quote as there is a huge juxtaposition between “power” and “slavery”, suggesting that science, in this instance the creation of Hyde, had the ability to go from one extreme to another. This juxtaposition may also reflect the duality within Jekyll.

Jekyll/Hyde: “plod in the public eye with a load of genial respectability, and in a moment, like a schoolboy strip off these lendings and spring headlong into a sea of liberty” – the first part of this describes Jekyll’s outer façade, which creates the impression that Jekyll has been burdened by the responsibility to maintain a respectful reputation. The plosive consonants in “plod”, “load” suggest the difficulty in maintaining said reputation, and the idea of a “load” represents not just an emotional