

Q) Starting with this extract, write about how Stevenson presents Dr Jekyll in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

In this extract, Stevenson describes Jekyll as looking “deathly sick”, which suggests that he has undergone a profound change and is like a different man. The adjective “deathly” contrasts the earlier image of Jekyll as a “smooth faced man of fifty”, which could suggest that Jekyll is wearing a mask under which to hide the beast within him. This presents Jekyll as unreliable as he is portrayed earlier in the novel as a sociable, well-respected professional who hosted dinner parties for his many friends. This means that Stevenson has to authenticate the plot with documents such as wills and cheques, showing the reader that Jekyll cannot be trusted. Earlier on in the novel, Jekyll is also described as having “every mark of capacity”, which would imply that he is normally fit and well, causing this sudden change of character to come out of the blue for the reader. Whereas he once invited people into his home joyfully, he now invites Utterson in with a “cold hand”, the adjective “cold” connoting images of death and endings.

Jekyll is also said to have a “changed voice” by Utterson, which would suggest that Jekyll has a completely different personality. This evokes ideas of the duality of man and how both Jekyll and Stevenson believed that “man is not truly one but truly two”. This could also show Stevenson’s own opinion that Victorian men had two sides to their personality - a good side and an evil side. This perhaps reflects the double lives of Victorian men, as many gave in to the temptation of prostitutes and immoral sexual acts at night, whilst retaining their “Christian” reputation amongst their peers. Indeed, Jekyll himself is described as a “double dealer”.

In this extract, Stevenson presents Jekyll as a man in fear of losing his reputation. We can see this through the line “The doctor shuddered”. The verb “shuddered” evokes images of his whole body pulsating with fear, which adds to the earlier image of him feeling very physically unwell. “Shuddered” perhaps also implies that he is very scared of the consequences of losing his reputation, which played a vital part in the social circle of Victorian men. From this, we can see that Jekyll is an intelligent man and well aware of the importance of his image.

Earlier in the novel, Utterson also remarks to Jekyll that “If it came to trial, your name might appear”. This reflects the importance of reputation and also helps the reader understand how Hyde gave away so much of his money when threatened with a “scandal”. The theme of reputation plays a significant role in this novel, which perhaps mirrors its role in Victorian society.

Jekyll is presented as a desperate character through his use of blasphemies like “I swear to God... I swear to God”. This confuses the reader as Jekyll is known as a scientist first and foremost, and many of his ideas contradict those of religion. The repetition of this phrase could also suggest that he is being consumed by Hyde. This new image of Jekyll with a “feverish manner” conveys his desperation, rather than the man with a steady job and religious texts on his bookshelves. Hyde is also said to have scribbled “terrible blasphemies” on Jekyll’s books, which again highlights how Jekyll is turning into Hyde involuntarily and is losing control. It also draws