

## ang070 S/Ü "Introduction to the Critical and Scholarly Discussion of Literature" Assignment 3: "Analysing Fiction"

**This assignment is a mandatory part of your portfolio and needs to be handed in on time. It is ungraded but a sample solution will be published on the Institutswiki. Additionally, you can receive feedback in the office hours of your respective instructors. Every assignment must include a cover sheet and the statement on plagiarism. Present your results in complete sentences. You may write up to three pages of text, according to the formatting specifications of our style sheet. Any text beyond the first three pages will be ignored.**

Analyse the following passage from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. 1886. New York: Norton, 2003. 47-8.

I was born in the year 18— 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 honourable and distinguished future. And indeed the worst of my faults was a certain impatient gaiety of disposition, such as had 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 life. 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. Through 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 laboured, in the eye of day, at the furtherance of knowledge or the relief of sorrow and suffering.

### **Formal and Media-specific Analysis: Narratology, focalization, and characterization**

#### (1) Narration:

- Preliminary Contextualisation: On the basis of the knowledge of the **entire text**, please identify the three main narrators in Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and categorise each narrator according to the narrative level and extent of participation.

Frame narrative: extradiegetic, heterodiegetic unknown narrator

"Dr. Lanyon's Narrative": Dr. Lanyon as an intradiegetic homodiegetic narrator narrates the hypodiegetic level

"Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case": Dr. Jekyll as an intradiegetic homodiegetic narrator narrates the hypodiegetic level

- Identify and categorize the narrator of **this passage** according to the typology of narrators and comment on the function of the narrative level

Dr. Jekyll as intradiegetic, homodiegetic narrator (addressing Utterson), narrates the hypodiegetic level

- **degree of perceptibility:** high
  - no description of setting
  - no identification of characters (except possibly “I”)
  - temporal summary: “born in the year 18—,” “when I reached years of reflection”;
  - definition of character: “endowed with excellent parts,” “inclined by nature to industry, fond of the respect of the wise ...,” “with every guarantee of an honorable and distinguished future,” etc.;
  - reports of what characters did not think or say: “I hid [such irregularities]”;
  - commentary: “... a certain impatient gaiety ..., such as has made the happiness of many,” “Many a man would have even blazoned such irregularities as I was guilty of,” “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,” “that hard law of life, which lies at the root of religion and is one of the most plentiful springs of distress.”
- **reliability:** has limited knowledge; however, it can be argued that, when compared to the other characters, he has a rather great knowledge, given the insights about his “dual nature,” while also being sincere about his double selves – sinner and scientist; is personally involved; problematic value scheme: on the one hand, he shows a profound self-consciousness and seems to know himself inside out; on the other hand, it can be argued that he places the blame for the development of his dual selves on society, perhaps even society’s moral/religious codes and expectations

functions of hypodiegesis by Dr. Jekyll:

- explicative: revelation of the various – social, religious, professional – aspects that foster the emergence of his “dual nature”
- thematic: repression of desires on the one hand, full indulgence in socially forbidden desires on the other; scientific case study of self
- arguably also actional, in that the letter may provide the ultimate trigger for his decision to commit suicide; however, the fact that the letter concludes the novella complicates this argument, because we never learn what happens after Utterson has read the letter.

(2) Focalization: Identify and comment on the use of focalization in the given passage.

external focalization: Jekyll as narrator-focalizer

focalized are the young Jekyll and his “dual nature” (48)

**from within** (“fond of the respect of the wise and good,” “the worst of my faults was a certain impatient gaiety of disposition,” “my imperious desire,” “I was guilty of,” “sense of shame,” “my aspirations,” “driven to reflect deeply,” “laid aside restraint and plunged in shame,” etc.) and

**from outside** (“fortune”, “inclined to ... industry,” “carry my head high,” “grave countenance,” “I labored ... at the furtherance of knowledge,” etc.)

[you may also have included the following as further focalized objects:

- the social norms by Jekyll **from outside**: “that hard law of life, which lies at the root of religion and is one of the most plentiful springs of distress”
- “many a man” and “the majority of men” as focalized by Jekyll **from within** (“such irregularities as I was guilty of”; “even a deeper trench than in the majority of men”]

(3) Characterization: Who is characterized by whom and with what techniques?

- **Direct definition:** Dr. Jekyll characterizes himself as
  - rich: “born ... to a large fortune”
  - talented: “endowed besides with excellent parts”
  - hard-working: “inclined by nature to industry”
  - seeks prestige: “fond of the respect of the wise and good among my fellow-men”
  - privileged: “with every guarantee of an honourable and distinguished future”
  - inclined to life’s pleasures: “a certain impatient gaiety of disposition”
  - desires to be an authority in society: “my imperious desire to ... before the public
  - self-conscious: “take stock of my progress,” “reflect deeply and inveterately”
  - two-faced, duplicitous: “committed to a profound duplicity,” “severed in me those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man’s dual nature,” “so profound a double-dealer”
  - (pathologically) ashamed: “guilty,” “with an almost morbid sense of shame”
  - pedantic: “exacting”
  - sincere: “in no sense a hypocrite,” “both sides of me were in dead earnest”
- Indirect presentations characterize Dr. Jekyll as
  - secretive – through actions of commission: “I concealed my pleasures,” I regarded and hid [such irregularities]”
  - aspiring, ambitious – through actions of commission: “the high views that I had set before me”
  - commanding, sober, grand – through external appearance: “my desire to carry my head high, and wear a more than commonly grave countenance”
  - self-indulgent – through actions of commission: “I laid aside restraint and plunged in shame”
  - an altruistic scientist – through actions of commission: “I laboured ... at the furtherance of knowledge or the relief of sorrow and suffering”
  - pedantic, exact (to the point of paranoia?) – through characteristics of speech: “an almost morbid sense of shame,” “It was thus rather the exacting nature of my aspirations than ...,” “Though so profound a double-dealer, I was in no sense a hypocrite ... sorrow and suffering.”
  - resentful towards/blaming religion – through characteristics of speech: “... which lies at the root of religion and is one of the most plentiful springs of distress.”

- self-important, pompous, arrogant – through characteristics of speech, i.e. the way he characterizes himself: “fond of the respect of the wise and good among my fellow-men,” “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 ...,”
- self-contradictory – through characteristics of speech: “so profound a double dealer” yet no “hypocrite,” “both sides of me were in dead earnest”
- apologetic, justifies himself – through characteristics of speech:
  1. by pointing to universal “laws”: “Many a man ... those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man’s dual nature.”
  2. by highlighting the particulars of his birth: “a large fortune, endowed besides with .... Hence it came about that ...”
- Reinforcement of characterization by analogy: contrasts and similarities between characters
  - Dr. Jekyll and Utterson:
 

Jekyll’s pleasure-seeking, self-indulgent as well as shameful characteristics contrast strongly with Utterson’s self-restraint, sobriety, and moral righteousness; but they also find themselves already in Utterson’s vicarious enjoyment of life’s pleasures through others, e.g., his friend Enfield
  - Dr. Jekyll and Dr. Lanyon:
 

their characters correspond with each other in their pedantry, ambition, and conviction to be the “true” or “better” scientist; whereas Jekyll’s revolutionary discovery contrasts sharply with Lanyon’s contempt at what he (Lanyon) considers Jekyll’s useless experiments
  - Jekyll compares and contrasts himself to “many a man” and “the majority of men”

### **Functional Analysis: Toward a Problem-oriented Sample Analysis**

Build your functional analysis on the data generated through your formal analysis and suggest a possible problem orientation:

- (4) formulate a research problem on the basis of your formal analysis and
- (5) produce a close reading of the passage that is sensitive to relevant contexts and references suitable secondary material.

### **Comparison: Correspondence and/or Contrast**

- (6) Suggest one other passage from the novel that corresponds and/or contrasts with the given passage in an aspect relevant to the research problem you have specified.
- (7) Briefly discuss how both passages relate to this problem. Address potential differences in representation and their possible functions.