

MR. HYDE AS THE FRIGHTENING OUTSIDER

by Rahul Gandotra

The mock essay in this document was written by one of my students. When I met him, he was scoring a 3 to 4 in his mock GCSE English language and literature exams.

After intensive tuition sessions with me, his English writing skills improved such that he was writing at a 7 to 9 level. The essay below is one such example of his improved writing.

What follows is 1) the question from a mock GCSE exam, 2) his essay, and 3) my highlighted breakdown of his essay into the essential building blocks of any essay.

QUESTION

Read the following extract from Chapter 2 and then answer the question that follows. In this extract Mr Utterson has just met Mr Hyde for the first time.

'We have common friends,' said Mr Utterson.

'Common friends!' echoed Mr Hyde, a little hoarsely. 'Who are they?' 'Jekyll, for instance,' said the lawyer.

'He never told you,' cried Mr Hyde, with a flush of anger. 'I did not think you would have lied.'

'Come,' said Mr Utterson, 'that is not fitting language.'

The other snarled aloud into a savage laugh; and the next moment, with extraordinary quickness, he had unlocked the door and disappeared into the house.

The lawyer stood awhile when Mr Hyde had left him, the picture of disquietude. Then he began slowly to mount the street, pausing every step or two and putting his hand to his brow like a man in mental perplexity. The problem he was thus debating as he walked was one of a class that is rarely solved. Mr Hyde was pale and dwarfish; he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile, he had borne himself to the lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness, and he spoke with a husky whispering and somewhat broken voice, – all these were points against him; but not all of these together could explain the hitherto unknown disgust, loathing and fear with which Mr Utterson regarded him. 'There must be something else,' said the perplexed gentleman. 'There is something more, if I could find a name for it. God bless me, the man seems hardly human! Something troglodytic, shall we say? Or can it be the old story of Dr Fell? Or is it the mere radiance of a foul soul that thus transpires through, and transfigures, its clay continent? The last, I think; for, O my poor old Harry Jekyll, if ever I read Satan's signature upon a face, it is on that of your new friend!'

Starting with this extract, how does Stevenson present Mr Hyde as a frightening outsider? Write about:

- how Stevenson presents Mr Hyde in this extract
- how Stevenson presents Mr Hyde as a frightening outsider in the novel as a whole.

THE ESSAY

In "The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde," Robert Stevenson explores the nature of evil through his main character Mr Hyde. In the chapter two extract as well as the rest of the novel, Stevenson presents Mr Hyde as a frightening outsider through his behaviour and appearance. In addition, Stevenson employs religious imagery to highlight Mr Hyde's evil and Satanic ways, thereby representing Mr Hyde as a shock to the traditional mores of Victorian society.

One of the most effective ways Stevenson uses to illustrate Mr Hyde as a frightening outsider is through his behaviour. Before Mr Hyde lets Mr Utterson into his home, Mr Hyde 'snarled aloud into a savage laugh; and the next moment, with extraordinary quickness he had unlocked the door and disappeared into the house.' This unusual and discomfiting behaviour contrasts with what a normal person would do, which is to warmly welcome a guest into their home. In addition, the word 'snarled' portrays Mr Hyde as animalistic because a normal human would not snarl.

Stevenson, moreover, extensively uses the simile 'like a mad man' to describe Mr Hyde's madness. In Victorian times, mental health was a taboo issue. When Stevenson compares Mr Hyde to a 'madman,' he cements Mr Hyde's frightening behaviour within the context of the novel. Madness is uncontrollable, which is the anathema of a controlled, intellectual Victorian society.

Stevenson also uses Mr Hyde's appearance to illustrate him as a frightening outsider. He describes Mr Hyde, for example, as 'pale and dwarfish'. This use of sensory language presents Mr Hyde to be the opposite of what a traditional Victorian man would look like: tall, strong and healthy like Mr Hyde's 'polar twin' Dr Jekyll. Such an appearance would frighten Victorian people, because it was far outside the norm.

In addition, Mr Hyde is described as having a 'deformity,' something that would have been considered frightening and looked down upon in Victorian society. People with such deformities, such as the elephant man, would be seen in shows for entertainment and shock value. In other parts of the novel, Stevenson describes Mr Hyde by saying that there is something 'wrong with his appearance,' which is 'displeasing' and 'downright detestable.' This use of alliteration in 'downright detestable' not only brings emphasis to Hyde's appearance, but it also vividly highlights Hyde's evil and fear-inducing characteristics. Since no physical deformity is ever named, one could suggest that it is Hyde's soul that is deformed.

Furthermore, Mr Hyde is also described as being 'troglodytic' or primitive, thus relating Mr Hyde to savage cavemen. Only a few decades before Stevenson's book, Darwin produced his theory of evolution. This theory states that we all evolved from one common ancestor: the primitive animal. Victorian society, at the time, was religious and too traditional to hear Darwin's radical theory. That is why Mr Hyde's appearance is so shocking and frightening, because he embodies primitivism. In a sense, Mr Hyde's

behaviour and appearance could be considered an extended metaphor of the novel that evil and savagery lies within all of us, as it does with Dr Jekyll in the form of Mr Hyde.

Finally, Stevenson employs religious and Satanic imagery to present Mr Hyde as a frightening outsider. Stevenson accomplishes this by describing Hyde as having 'Satan's signature' upon his face. It's almost as if Mr Hyde has made a deal with the devil as Satan's puppet. This metaphor is effective in painting Hyde's evil. Furthermore, Stevenson uses the simile 'like a damned Juggernaut' to describe Hyde, suggesting that Hyde is a strong and powerful force that is condemned by God. The thought of a powerful juggernaut would have scared a Victorian audience, because it steps into the realm of the occult and supernatural.

BREAKDOWN OF THE ESSAY

Each successful essay is made up of varying amounts of the following essay ingredients:

Thesis statement

Topic Sentence

Evidence Sentence / Fragment

Explanation Sentence / Fragment

Transitions¹

What you'll see below is the same essay with each sentence (or sentence fragment) highlighted by essay ingredient with the colour key above. Hopefully, this will help you see how much of each essay ingredient is needed to construct a strong essay:

In "The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde," Robert Stevenson explores the nature of evil through his main character Mr Hyde. In the chapter two extract as well as the rest of the novel, Stevenson presents Mr Hyde as a frightening outsider through his behaviour and appearance. In addition, Stevenson employs religious imagery to highlight Mr Hyde's evil and Satanic ways, thereby representing Mr Hyde as a shock to the traditional mores of Victorian society.

One of the most effective ways Stevenson uses to illustrate Mr Hyde as a frightening outsider is through his behaviour. Before Mr Hyde lets Mr Utterson into his home, Mr Hyde 'snarled aloud into a savage laugh; and the next moment, with extraordinary quickness he had unlocked the door and disappeared into the house.' This unusual and discomforting behaviour contrasts with what a normal person would do, which is to warmly welcome a guest into their home. In addition, the word 'snarled' portrays Mr Hyde as animalistic because a normal human would not snarl.

Stevenson, moreover, extensively uses the simile 'like a mad man' to describe Mr Hyde's madness. In Victorian times, mental health was a taboo issue. When Stevenson compares Mr Hyde to a 'madman,' he cements Mr Hyde's frightening behaviour within the context of the novel. Madness is uncontrollable, which is the anathema of a controlled, intellectual Victorian society.

Stevenson also uses Mr Hyde's appearance to illustrate him as a frightening outsider. He describes Mr Hyde, for example, as 'pale and dwarfish'. This use of sensory language presents Mr Hyde to be the opposite of what a traditional Victorian man would look like: tall, strong and healthy like Mr Hyde's 'polar twin' Dr Jekyll. Such an appearance would frighten Victorian people, because it was far outside the norm.

¹ When tutoring a student, I not only spend a significant time going over each ingredient, I also teach them how to incorporate each ingredient into an essay.

In addition, Mr Hyde is described as having a 'deformity,' something that would have been considered frightening and looked down upon in Victorian society. People with such deformities, such as the elephant man, would be seen in shows for entertainment and shock value. In other parts of the novel, Stevenson describes Mr Hyde by saying that there is something 'wrong with his appearance,' which is 'displeasing' and 'downright detestable.' This use of alliteration in 'downright detestable' not only brings emphasis to Hyde's appearance, but it also vividly highlights Hyde's evil and fear-inducing characteristics. Since no physical deformity is ever named, one could suggest that it is Hyde's soul that is deformed.

Furthermore, Mr Hyde is also described as being 'troglodytic' or primitive, thus relating Mr Hyde to savage cavemen. Only a few decades before Stevenson's book, Darwin produced his theory of evolution. This theory states that we all evolved from one common ancestor: the primitive animal. Victorian society, at the time, was religious and too traditional to hear Darwin's radical theory. That is why Mr Hyde's appearance is so shocking and frightening, because he embodies primitivism. In a sense, Mr Hyde's behaviour and appearance could be considered an extended metaphor of the novel that evil and savagery lies within all of us, as it does with Dr Jekyll in the form of Mr Hyde.

Finally, Stevenson employs religious and Satanic imagery to present Mr Hyde as a frightening outsider. Stevenson accomplishes this by describing Hyde as having 'Satan's signature' upon his face. It's almost as if Mr Hyde has made a deal with the devil as Satan's puppet. This metaphor is effective in painting Hyde's evil. Furthermore, Stevenson uses the simile 'like a damned juggernaut' to describe Hyde, suggesting that Hyde is a strong and powerful force that is condemned by God. The thought of a powerful juggernaut would have scared a Victorian audience, because it steps into the realm of the occult and supernatural.