
THE SYMBOLISM IN THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

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ABSTRACT

Robert Louis Stevenson, a Scottish writer of novels, best known for his famous children's adventure stories *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*. Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is full of symbolic meanings. Symbolism is a technique which is used in literature when some things are not to be taken literally. The symbolism can be an object, person, situation, events or actions that have a deeper meaning in context. This technique can enhance writing and give insight to the reader. A symbol is an object that represents, stands for or suggests an idea, visual image, belief, action or material entity. Symbols take the form of words, sounds, gestures or visual images and are used to convey ideas and beliefs. For example, a red octagon may be a symbol for "STOP". On a map, a picture of a tent might represent a campsite. Numerals are symbols for numbers. Alphabetic letters are symbols for sounds. Personal names are symbols representing individuals. A red rose symbolizes love and compassion. For example,

In Shakespeare's *As you Like It*, 'stage' symbolizes the world and 'players' symbolize men and women:

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
they have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,

Symbolism in the Novel

(1) *Mist and Moonlight*: The streets of Utterson's London are obscured by the weather, just as the mysteries of Mr. Hyde's crimes and existence, and his relationship with Dr. Jekyll, are themselves obscured. The mist makes the layout of the streets hard to follow and makes the Gothic façade in question in chapter one jut ominously from the others. Effects of light are used to forewarn and indicate the coming on of Dr. Jekyll's transformations and Hyde's violence. The moon sheds an eerie light over the most suspenseful moments.

➡ *Mist and Moonlight* appear in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and Chapter 8

(2) The Appearance of Evil: When Mr. Hyde is first described, he is associated with a strange, unnerving sensation, a sensation of evil. Mr. Enfield mentions it as a “deformity”. This shape differs Hyde from other characters, whose professionalism and reserve keep them on the right side of the law. Not only is Hyde again and again associated with this intangible deformity, but it seems also to affect those around him, who feel a kind of instinctive and powerful hatred for Hyde that is beyond their normal limits. For instance, Hyde's housekeeper, an old woman, wears an expression of “odious joy” when she thinks Hyde might be in trouble. Hyde's evil seems to bring out the dark side of others, suggesting the reality of the duality that Jekyll has been trying to prove, that there is evil and good, odious and joyous, in everything.

➡The Appearance of Evil appears in Chapter 2, Chapter 4 and Chapter 9

(3) Letters and Documents: There are many complicated, convoluted interactions between the characters in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Confessions, transfers of responsibility and even the narrative itself are all forms of documentation that create the suspense and mystery of the book. The characters are often sworn to secrecy or are repressing their own disgust or disbelief and therefore tend to put their feelings in writing rather than speaking or revealing details to each other. This creates a web of secret documents that weaves its way between scenes and between characters. The story begins with the lawyer Utterson's fear of the new will of Dr. Jekyll. This document holds power over him and over Jekyll and the final three documents that Utterson finds left to him from Dr. Jekyll make clear everything that the will is difficult to understand. In this way, Stevenson frames the whole novel with items of documentation, and plays with the line between myth and truth.

➡Letters and Documents appear in Chapter 4, Chapter 5, Chapter 6, Chapter 8 and Chapter 9

REFERENCES

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