

Jekyll and Hyde - Section B

In 'The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde', Stevenson utilises the setting of Victorian London to generate a sense of danger and secrecy.

In the opening of the novella, Stevenson creates a feeling of mystery and suspense through the development of atmosphere and setting. The novella is set in Victorian London and Stevenson leaves us in no doubt that this is a city of two faces. There is the more general contrast between the wealthy and sorts extravagant homes of the social elite (such as Jekyll and Utterson) to the dark and perpetually foggy streets where tramps lurk but also the close up examination of the door which the first chapter is named for. This door is found on a street where 'the shop fronts stood (...) with an air of invitation, like rows of smiling saleswomen'. This appears to be a street like any other, this 'invitation' is ~~so~~ typical, welcoming and friendly; there is no hint of darker agendas from Stevenson. Instead, it seems he is simply introducing readers to 'life in London of convivial business. Then point of focus moves to the door. The door that 'was blistered and discoloured' and where 'tramps slouched'. Suddenly, after looking at the door the ordinary has become sinister and everything is left in shades of doubt. With immediate effect, Stevenson has broken the facade of the street. After seeing the door, the readers' eyes are opened to the truth of this place and the 'smiling saleswomen' could as well be prostitutes with 'their gains in coquetry'. Indeed certainly, the atmosphere has been

Thoughtful understanding of writer's methods/ aims.

Apt. refs integrated into interpretation

transformed and the rotting heart of London is now present for all to witness. Moreover, it would appear the city itself has become a metaphor for the divided human soul. On the one hand, there is the ^{expected} fake but good and acceptable conventions of the or values to the town that hide the dark and heinous actions beneath. By pointing this metaphor into the very setting of the novella so early on, Stevenson wishes to encompass all his characters and the events yet to unfold to be connected to this mindset. He has conveyed to the reader that the themes of hypocrisy and duality ^{are borne of utmost importance} ~~that were present in the~~ ^{*}. Therefore, Stevenson has used setting to create mystery and fear as there is an ominous suggestion of darker acts of iniquity to come than merely a two-faced street.

By fastening more now more closely on the door, it is evident that Stevenson wishes to present London as a place of death and decay. The door is the first of a series of images that Stevenson produces to ensnare his readers with the idea that this is a city of marbid influences. In this extract, it is described how the door bore 'the marks of prolonged and sordid negligence'. This 'negligence' holds connotations of decay, misuse, abandonment. It is ~~if~~ as if its owner has cast aside all hope of its recovery to a decent state and has simply left it to rot into nothing. There is a similar suggestion made about London as a whole later in the novella. In the chapter four, Stevenson describes ^{now} 'a great chariot-coloured pall lowered over heaven'. The metaphor here has moved beyond decay to actual death with the noun 'pall' suggesting London itself is a corpse. Such a

Wider links to text & Es

on last page.

Close analysis of apt refs.

gloomy and powerful bleak message will strike any reader with a sense of horror and fear. Furthermore, by tilting the sky heaven, Stevenson gives us even more alarming sign of the city becoming cut off from God. Here, there is the same sense of abandonment as faced the door but on a far greater scale. In the strictly Victorian religious and conservative Victorians etc. to lose one's faith in God would be fair cause for exile from society. Yet it is exactly this loss of faith in religion that Stevenson faced in his own life and it is possible that he is trying to subtly show this. ^{here} Indeed, when one thinks of the crimes and evils that have just occurred in the novella (Sir David the director of St. Dunstons Church has just been murdered), it is little wonder that anyone ^{should} feel cut off from all things good and holy. Thus, Stevenson has used setting to present London as a place of death, cut off from devoid of hope and light.

A final way Stevenson creates mystery and fear through setting is by use of the thick fog. The fog of London is a recurring image of pathetic fallacy throughout the novella. Of course, 'the fog that rolled over the city in the early hours' is a reference to the horrible air pollution and smog that haunted London throughout the nineteenth century. Indeed, the worst cases of air pollution in London on record came in the form of 'The Great Smog' and 'The Great Smog of London' in the 1900s. However, when we read of the fog in 'Jekyll and Hyde' it takes a more sinister role than this. The fog works to obscure the truth, obscure anything that Throughout the

Contextual links connected to detailed analysis

Context linked to interpretation

novella, the fog is present as Hyde commits his crime. In this way, the fog could even be considered to take on a supernatural element as it becomes Hyde's accomplice, hiding him from detection. The choice of verb 'rolled' creates an image of an oncoming, unremitting wave of mist. It 'rolls' over the city and consumes all. Hidden by fog, there is a growing sense of danger and secrecy in the London setting that Stevenson used to create fear and mystery in the novella.

Perceptive interpretation linked to close analysis

Band 6: 27/30.

A concise, detailed and perceptive essay, showing confident analysis of the text as a whole. Subject terminology/quote analysis is woven into interpretations.

→ More judicious links to context and more explicit connections to her initial thesis statement/the words of the question would improve her level.

* = and this forces the reader to reflect on their own mind and soul. They must consider if they are as hypocritical as the Victorian upper classes who frowned upon pleasure as they secretly masked their desires. Stevenson makes his reader explore their own soul in search of this duality. It puts his readers in a position of discomfort as they are forced to consider the limitations (or lack of) to their own secret wants.

Contextual links made