



JEKYLL & HYDE: UTTERSON AS AN OUTSIDER: MODEL ANSWER

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JEKYLL & HYDE: UTTERSON AS AN OUTSIDER: QUESTION

Read this extract from *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and then answer the question that follows.

This extract from the opening chapter, introduces Mr. Utterson.

Mr Utterson the lawyer was a man of a rugged countenance that was never lighted by a smile; cold, scanty and embarrassed in discourse; backward in sentiment; lean, long, dusty, dreary and yet somehow lovable. At friendly meetings, and when the wine was to his taste, something eminently human beaconed from his eye; something indeed which never found its way into his talk, but which spoke not only in these silent symbols of the after-dinner face, but more often and loudly in the acts of his life. He was austere with himself; drank gin when he was alone, to mortify a taste for vintages; and though he enjoyed the theatre, had not crossed the doors of one for twenty years. But he had an approved tolerance for others; sometimes wondering, almost with envy, at the high pressure of spirits involved in their misdeeds; and in any extremity inclined to help rather than to reprove. "I incline to Cain's heresy," he used to say quaintly: "I let my brother go to the devil in his own way." In this character, it was frequently his fortune to be the last reputable acquaintance and the last good influence in the lives of downgoing men. And to such as these, so long as they came about his chambers, he never marked a shade of change in his demeanour.

No doubt the feat was easy to Mr Utterson; for he was undemonstrative at the best, and even his friendship seemed to be founded in a similar catholicity of good-nature. It is the mark of a modest man to accept his friendly circle ready-made from the hands of opportunity; and that was the lawyer's way. His friends were those of his own blood or those whom he had known the longest; his affections, like ivy, were the growth of time, they implied no aptness in the object.

Starting with this extract, how does Stevenson present Utterson as an outsider?

Write about:

- how Stevenson presents Utterson as an outsider.
- how Stevenson presents Utterson as an outsider.

[30 marks]





JEKYLL & HYDE: UTTERSON AS AN OUTSIDER: MODEL ANSWER OUTLINE

ESSAY OUTLINE

Introduction

Hook	Since polite Victorian society was governed by an overwhelming pressure to conform to societal mores, the fear of the outsider – for example foreigners– was all the more pronounced.
Building sentences	Stevenson’s portrait of a hyper-reserved Utterson demonstrates how the pressure on men to conform to a stoic paradigm paradoxically functioned to detach them from their own sense of humanity.
Thesis statement	That said, Utterson’s tendency to tangle with more blatant outsiders (not least, Hyde) suggests that he can alternatively be construed as explicitly residing on the peripheries of polite society.

Body paragraph 1

Topic sentence	Stevenson opens the novel by giving the reader a summary of key insights into Utterson’s personality, and what is perhaps most striking is his lack of expressiveness.
Supporting sentences	The reader is informed in the opening sentence that Utterson’s ‘countenance...was never lighted by a smile’, thus signalling not only Utterson’s reticence to engage in non-verbal communication, but also, through the structural choice of opening with this observation, that this reticence is key to understanding his personality: it functions as a kind of epigraph for Utterson the man, which Stevenson reveals is a key character trait that not only makes him suitable to explore the crimes of his fellows but also to cover them up. Moreover, although the reader is informed that, when drinking, ‘something eminently human beamed from [Utterson's] eye,’ Stevenson provides a contrast with the notion that this ‘something eminently human ... never found its way into his talk’, illustrating his propensity for keeping secrets. Such extreme austerity with himself





	portrays him as almost unhuman and, tellingly, while he enjoys the theatre – an art-form that embodies expressiveness and bringing people together – he had not visited one in ‘twenty years,’ perhaps suggesting he does not associate with the average member of society.’ However, Stevenson portrays Utterson as not being completely detached from humanity; after all, while often solitary, he still socialises with other men of the middle class (Enfield on walks; Jekyll and Lanyon at dinner) and displays a range of emotions. Indeed, even this extract hints that he is still to be considered somewhat social: it refers, somewhat ironically, to his ‘ready-made’ friendship ‘circle.’
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Concluding sentence(s)	Therefore, while Stevenson portrays Utterson as an outsider to the general Victorian public, he is clearly embedded in a secretive ‘circle’ of middle-class Victorian gentlemen – all of whom, due to societal pressure to manifest stoicism and decorum, must hide each other’s aberrant behaviours from public view.
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Body paragraph 2

Topic sentence	Interestingly, Stevenson develops Utterson’s sense of reticence and self-austerity by having the narrator observe Utterson frequently finding himself ‘the last reputable acquaintance... in the lives of down-going men.’
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Supporting sentences	Additionally, the fact that Utterson chooses to associate with ‘down-going men’ implies two notions: that the circle of friends he frequents is often comprised of ‘down-going men’ – Dr. Jekyll, for example – and that his circle of companions threatens to compromise his reputability. Stevenson’s story depicts a world in which crimes are constantly being “overlooked”: witnessed and then ignored. As the story progresses, we learn that Mr Utterson’s role as a lawyer is not to seek out justice amongst his gentlemen’s network but to, ironically, strive to maintain silence about the crimes of their fellows, thus reflecting the story’s central theme of duality. However, these ‘gentlemen’ find their authority threatened by those on the periphery of this community, especially servants, who transmit knowledge of crime to the new authorities of the police and the law. Symbolically, the phrase ‘down-going men’ conjures an image of physical descent: a motif that appears persistently in Gothic fiction to connote transgression, and thus functions to emphasise the aberrant behaviour of Utterson’s associates. For example, chapter 8, “The Last night” ends not with Utterson possessing Jekyll or ever seeing him again but possessing the documents he has left behind and, once again, the theme of hypocrisy and cover up are present. He tells Poole, "I would say nothing of this paper ... I must go home and read these documents in quiet; but I shall be back before midnight, when we shall send for the police."
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Concluding sentence(s)	Interestingly, Stevenson ends the novel before we ever find out if Utterson does go to the police or whether in fact, he covers the whole thing up; this would mean he is covering up a murderer, Jekyll, because through Hyde, he has murdered (Sir Danvers Carew).
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Body paragraph 3 (OPTIONAL)

Topic sentence	
Supporting sentences	
Concluding sentence(s)	

Conclusion

Restated thesis	In conclusion, whether the reader views Utterson as an outsider depends on how far we see these secretive gentlemen's circles as a core aspect of Victorian society or as being on the peripheries.
Summary of controlling concept	Principally, Stevenson structures the novel as an exploration of the tussle for power between what he saw as the two warring dimensions of the human soul; on a societal level, he symbolises this through the contrast between the polite and the outsider, however, he concentrates this same theme in the division of good and evil between Jekyll and Hyde. According to Stevenson, man's soul is paired with both elements of good and evil, which is likely why he explores this idea both at a societal level as well as an individual level; he believed these basic elements cannot be separated because man is defined by the conflict within his inner nature and how he deals with this duality.
Author's purpose	Consequently, his purpose for writing the text appears to be two-fold: one is to explore his interest in human nature, which he often did at the Speculative Society during his university years, however, in the novel, he does this from a specific perspective, which is to explore the protagonist's struggle to be an individual. Consequently, Stevenson incorporates the themes of appearance versus reality, and, most prominently, duality, as symbolised by Dr. Jekyll, his doppelganger Hyde and even the reticent Utterson. However, another purpose could be to explore the topic of scientific advancement that Mary Shelley visited before him in Frankenstein, raising the question that just because we can create, does that mean we should? Like Shelley, Stevenson's choice of the Gothic mode helps explore Victorian fears that scientific hubris would tempt people to play God (and, perhaps, try to replace God) through the growing power of unconstrained scientific creation - a fear which lives on in more modern literary forms such as in William Golding's nuclear war dystopian novel 'Lord of the Flies' and the apocalyptic future war nightmare of the killer machines in the Terminator movies. Thus, if we view the story of Jekyll and Hyde as a tragedy, it allows us to question whether or not human society will protect and allow its evil side to win over its good side.





Final thought (what idea/message can we learn?)

Utterson's protection of 'down-going men' together with Jekyll's tragic death, on the one hand, suggest that humanity's propensity for evil is more powerful than its propensity for good; nevertheless, perhaps, the most important lesson is simply that this new-found awareness of evil is actually the first step towards getting rid of it - whether do get rid of it or not, is, perhaps, up to us.

MAKE SURE YOUR ESSAY CONTAINS ALL OF THESE QUALITIES

Tick these off when you have added them to your essay

- Methods - author's techniques
- Context
- Effects of the author's methods on the audience/reader
- Link to another part of the text - talk about the meaning of the connection
- Symbolism
- Themes
- Author's purpose

JEKYLL & HYDE: UTTERSON AS AN OUTSIDER: 100% MODEL ANSWER

Since polite Victorian society was governed by an overwhelming pressure to conform to societal mores, the fear of the outsider – for example foreigners– was all the more pronounced. Stevenson's portrait of a hyper-reserved Utterson demonstrates how the pressure on men to conform to a stoic paradigm paradoxically functioned to detach them from their own sense of humanity. That said, Utterson's tendency to tangle with more blatant outsiders (not least, Hyde) suggests that he can alternatively be construed as explicitly residing on the peripheries of polite society.

Stevenson opens the novel by giving the reader a summary of key insights into Utterson's personality, and what is perhaps most striking is his lack of expressiveness. The reader is informed in the opening sentence that Utterson's 'countenance...was never lighted by a smile', thus signalling not only Utterson's reticence to engage in non-verbal communication, but also, through the structural choice of opening with this observation, that this reticence is key to understanding his personality: it functions as a kind of epigraph for Utterson the man, which Stevenson reveals is a key character trait that not only makes him suitable to explore the crimes of his fellows but also to cover them up. Moreover, although the reader is informed that, when drinking, 'something eminently human beamed from [Utterson's] eye,' Stevenson provides a contrast with the notion that this 'something eminently human ... never found its way into his talk', illustrating his propensity for keeping secrets. Such extreme austerity with himself portrays him as almost unhuman and, tellingly, while he enjoys the theatre – an art-form that embodies expressiveness and bringing people together – he had not visited one in 'twenty years,' perhaps suggesting he does not associate with the average member of society.' However, Stevenson portrays Utterson as not being completely detached from humanity; after all, while often solitary, he still socialises with other men of the middle class (Enfield on walks; Jekyll and Lanyon at dinner) and displays a range of emotions. Indeed, even this extract hints that he is still to be considered somewhat social: it refers, somewhat ironically, to his 'ready-made' friendship 'circle.' Therefore, while Stevenson portrays Utterson as an outsider to the general Victorian public, he is clearly embedded in a secretive 'circle' of middle-class Victorian gentlemen – all of whom, due to societal pressure to manifest stoicism and decorum, must hide each other's aberrant behaviours from public view.





Interestingly, Stevenson develops Utterson's sense of reticence and self-austerity by having the narrator observe Utterson frequently finding himself 'the last reputable acquaintance... in the lives of down-going men.' Additionally, the fact that Utterson chooses to associate with 'down-going men' implies two notions: that the circle of friends he frequents is often comprised of 'down-going men' – Dr. Jekyll, for example – and that his circle of companions threatens to compromise his reputability. Stevenson's story depicts a world in which crimes are constantly being "overlooked": witnessed and then ignored. As the story progresses, we learn that Mr Utterson's role as a lawyer is not to seek out justice amongst his gentlemen's network but to, ironically, strive to maintain silence about the crimes of their fellows, thus reflecting the story's central theme of duality. However, these 'gentlemen' find their authority threatened by those on the periphery of this community, especially servants, who transmit knowledge of crime to the new authorities of the police and the law. Symbolically, the phrase 'down-going men' conjures an image of physical descent: a motif that appears persistently in Gothic fiction to connote transgression, and thus functions to emphasise the aberrant behaviour of Utterson's associates. For example, chapter 8, "The Last night" ends not with Utterson possessing Jekyll or ever seeing him again but possessing the documents he has left behind and, once again, the theme of hypocrisy and cover up are present. He tells Poole, "I would say nothing of this paper ... I must go home and read these documents in quiet; but I shall be back before midnight, when we shall send for the police." Interestingly, Stevenson ends the novel before we ever find out if Utterson does go to the police or whether in fact, he covers the whole thing up; this would mean he is covering up a murderer, Jekyll, because through Hyde, he has murdered (Sir Danvers Carew).

In conclusion, whether the reader views Utterson as an outsider depends on how far we see these secretive gentlemen's circles as a core aspect of Victorian society or as being on the peripheries. Principally, Stevenson structures the novel as an exploration of the tussle for power between what he saw as the two warring dimensions of the human soul; on a societal level, he symbolises this through the contrast between the polite and the outsider, however, he concentrates this same theme in the division of good and evil between Jekyll and Hyde. According to Stevenson, man's soul is paired with both elements of good and evil, which is likely why he explores this idea both at a societal level as well as an individual level; he believed these basic elements cannot be separated because man is defined by the conflict within his inner nature and how he deals with this duality. Consequently, his purpose for writing the text appears to be two-fold: one is to explore his interest in human nature, which he often did at the Speculative Society during his university years, however, in the novel, he does this from a specific perspective, which is to explore the protagonist's struggle to be an individual. Consequently, Stevenson incorporates the themes of appearance versus reality, and, most prominently, duality, as symbolised by Dr. Jekyll, his doppelganger Hyde and even the reticent Utterson. However, another purpose could be to explore the topic of scientific advancement that Mary Shelley visited before him in Frankenstein, raising the question that just because we can create, does that mean we should? Like Shelley, Stevenson's choice of the Gothic mode helps explore Victorian fears that scientific hubris would tempt people to play God (and, perhaps, try to replace God) through the growing power of unconstrained scientific creation - a fear which lives on in more modern literary forms such as in William Golding's nuclear war dystopian novel 'Lord of the Flies' and the apocalyptic future war nightmare of the killer machines in the Terminator movies. Thus, if we view the story of Jekyll and Hyde as a tragedy, it allows us to question whether or not human society will protect and allow its evil side to win over its good side. Utterson's protection of 'down-going men' together with Jekyll's tragic death, on the one hand, suggest that humanity's propensity for evil is more powerful than its propensity for good; nevertheless, perhaps, the most important lesson is simply that this new-found awareness of evil is actually the first step towards getting rid of it - whether do get rid of it or not, is, perhaps, up to us.

