

The Nineteenth Century Novel
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Lecture - 49
The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Chapter 5 (Continued)

Hello and welcome back to week 11's lectures. We are in chapter five, and we are discussing the implications of the letter that Dr. Jekyll has received from Mr. Hyde. And he is entrusting that letter to his friend Mr. Utterson, and they are discussing what is the impact of Mr. Hyde on Dr. Jekyll's life.

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Dr Jekyll's views

I have had what is far more to the purpose,' returned the doctor solemnly: "I have had a lesson—O God, Utterson, what a lesson I have had!" And he covered his face for a moment with his hands.

So let us see what happens in this particular session in terms of the implications of the letter. So these are Dr. Jekyll's views about the lesson that he has learnt, and Mr. Utterson, if you remember the previous session, is glad that Mr. Hyde has gone into hiding because that would mean that Dr. Jekyll will not be harmed by Edward Hyde so that he can secure his property as quickly as possible. And Dr. Jekyll says more than that, "I have had what is far more to the purpose,' returned the doctor solemnly: 'I have had a lesson - O God, Utterson, what a lesson I have had!' And he covered his face for a moment with his hands."

So he says that he has been taught a lesson by God. Why? Because he has been associating with a criminally minded human being, and he has been punished for that because his reputation is on the line. His reputation is about to be stained because of his friendship with Edward Hyde.

And he says O God, Utterson, what a lesson I have had. So I have had a painful, you know, learning process, and he covers his face for a moment with his hands. He is you know, quite emotional at this point. And we do also get a sense as to something is off, something is wrong about the way Dr. Jekyll puts it. So Mr. Utterson thinks that he has escaped from Mr. Hyde, and he says that I have had what is far more to the purpose. So what is at stake here?

What is at stake? For Dr. Jekyll it is his reputation, which has had a close shave here, and for Mr. Utterson as we saw in the previous session, what is at stake is the life of Dr. Jekyll. And we can get a sense that this is more important than anything else from this particular excerpt, that is what comes through, and we see Dr. Jekyll very emotional and he is also sick.

If you remember the previous session, Mr. Utterson comes to pay a visit to Dr. Jekyll in his lab, and he is looking very ill. And the weird thing or the slightly odd thing about that fact is that even though he is ill, he is not in his house, he is in his scientific space. And there is a question as to why he is in this particular space rather than in a domestic space.

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Detection

- "By the by," said he, "there was a letter handed in to-day: what was the messenger like?" But Poole was positive nothing had come except by post; "and only circulars by that," he added.

Mr Utterson to the Steward, Poole

Dr Jekyll is LIVING

a) there was no postmark

b) handed in

“By the by,' said he, 'there was a letter handed in to-day: what was the messenger like?' But Poole was positive nothing had come except by post; 'and only circulars by that,' he added.” So this is the conversation that happens between Mr. Utterson and the steward, Poole. So what Mr. Utterson does is as he returns home, he just stops by the house and checks in with Mr. Poole, the steward, and asks him about a letter that was handed in today.

And very interestingly, he says that there was nothing that came in by hand and everything was by post, and only circulars, the regular messages in fact. So we do get the sense that something is very wrong in the testimony that Dr. Jekyll gave his friend. He said a, there was no postmark to the letter and b, it was handed in. And Mr. Utterson's deduction clearly tells us that Dr. Jekyll is lying.

So the deductive skills of the lawyer has found out this fact about his friend, and he does not say anything more, and he just brings the letter to his home.

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Threat of a Scandal

The newsboys, as he went, were crying themselves hoarse along the footways: "Special edition. Shocking murder of an M. P." That was the funeral oration of one friend and client; and he could not help a certain apprehension lest the good name of another should be sucked down in the eddy of the scandal.

Handwritten annotations in red ink include:

- A circle around "Dr. Jekyll" with a line pointing to the text box.
- A circle around "fear" with a line pointing to the text box.
- A circle around "Sir Danvers Carew" with a line pointing to the text box.
- A spiral symbol.



And as he is going home, he could hear the newsboys as he went, were crying themselves hoarse along the footways. So little boys were selling newspapers, and what was in the newspaper? They say special edition, shocking murder of an MP. So that is Sir Danvers Carew, who was beaten to death horribly by Edward Hyde, and Mr. Utterson thinks that this particular set of words are the funeral oration of one friend and client.

And he could not help a certain apprehension, lest the good name of another should be sucked down in the eddy of the scandal. So you know, one friend has died, one friend of Mr. Utterson has died and that is Sir Danvers Carew, and he is worried that the reputation of another friend who is Dr. Jekyll would also die, there might be a lot of scandal around his name.

So that is his apprehension, apprehension means fear. So that is his apprehension, and he fears that the good name of another friend which is Dr. Jekyll should be sucked down in the

eddy, you know, eddy is a circulating swirl of water. And it might, you know, the name of Dr. Jekyll might you know, be sucked down by the scandal which is compared to an eddy here. So scandal is what, you know, frightens many of the Victorian middle class and upper-class gentleman.

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Advice

word on his own - independently

Letter

why?

eddy

It was not to be had directly; but perhaps, he thought, it might be fished for.

Mr. Utterson wants some advice. Usually he is not a man who longs for advice, he likes to work on his own, that is what he says, on his own independently. He does not seek advice, but in this case, in the case of the letter, apparently by Mr. Hyde, he wants some advice. So this advice cannot be had directly. Why? Because that would mean he is revealing certain important details to a lot of people, and he is worried that if he reveals those details his friend's reputation might be harmed.

So what he does is he is trying to fish for, another metaphor, fish for. In the previous slide we saw the use of the eddy to talk about the circulating, you know, waters of scandals, and now he is using the word to fish for, he is trying to fish for, get some, extract some information from somebody. And who is that person?

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The fog still slept on the wing above the drowned city, where the lamps glimmered like carbuncles; and through the muffle and smother of these fallen clouds, the procession of the town's life was still rolling in through the great arteries with a sound as of a mighty wind. But the room was gay with firelight.

Handwritten annotations:
 - Yellow Days (circled)
 - Smothered (circled)
 - Fallen Clouds (circled)
 - gems
 - Mr. Guest (circled)
 - foggy atmosphere
 - contrasted with light & warmth (circled)

And he is going to get the help of a particular person who is in fact his head clerk. Okay, so before he does that he is just traveling into his home, and when he reaches there he gets the head clerk to come in and have a conversation with him. You remember that Mr. Utterson is a lawyer therefore he has a lot of clerks, and this head clerk is called Mr. Guest. We will come to Mr. Guest in a short while.

But before that, we get a picture of the atmosphere of London. If you remember the previous session, we talked about the fog that was enveloping the lab space of Dr. Jekyll. Now the same fog is also lying around on the home of Mr. Utterson. “The fog still slept on the wing above the drowned city.” Look at the imagery, you know, the fog is sleeping on the wing. It is as if a bird is sleeping as it is flying by.

Some birds do that, literally they sleep as they fly on long flights, I mean they do long journeys. Just like that, the fog is sleeping on the city where the “lamps glimmered like carbuncles.” Carbuncles mean gems. “And through the muffle and smother of these fallen clouds.” Muffle and smother, we get a sense that something is being smothered. People are being smothered by the smoke and fog and muffled, you know, people are muffling themselves up, they are protecting themselves up from this unhealthy atmosphere. So we get a sense that everything is covered up which makes breathing difficult, and that is an indication of life in the Victorian city, late Victorian city which is highly industrialized.

And look at the choice of the adjective, fallen clouds. In a Tale of Two Cities we talked about fallen days, right? And now we have fallen clouds indicating that there is moral disorder, you

know, moral turpitude. And “the procession of the town's life was still rolling in through the great arteries with a sound as of a mighty wind.” So the arteries are the streets, the roads, and there is a big sound that is travelling down this set of arteries and the wind is the one which is carrying that noise with it.

But look at the change of mood here, but the room was gay with firelight. So again we have a lot of contrast. We have the foggy atmosphere contrasted, contrasted with light and warmth of domesticity, of domestic spaces, of particular spaces. So we have the, you know, the gloomy, dingy space that is being juxtaposed against a comfortable, bright, gay means something that is happy in those days in the 19th century.

It means joy, something that is light and bright and happy. So the foggy urban spatiality is compared with the bright atmosphere of Mr. Utterson's home. So, fantastically descriptive about the urban ambience of London.

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Mr Guest

- There was no man from whom he kept fewer secrets than Mr. Guest; and he was not always sure that he kept as many as he meant. Guest had often been on business to the doctor's; he knew Poole; he could scarce have failed to hear of Mr. Hyde's familiarity about the house; he might draw conclusions...

Well aware of the context of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde.



So as I said, Mr. Guest. Look at the meaning of that word guest. He is literally a guest, he just appears once, you know, in this particular narrative, you know, he is referred to as a head clerk and we see him just once conversing with Mr. Utterson. And he is the one who is going to help him out in terms of making sense of the letter, okay. And the narrator says that “there was no man from whom he kept fewer secrets than Mr. Guest.”

So even though we see him just once in this narrative, in this novella, he is a very close aide of Mr. Utterson. In fact he knows all about all the secrets of Mr. Utterson. What are those

secrets? We do not know. So that is a kind of a minor mystery there. So maybe Mr. Utterson is also not very upright as he gives out to be. There is something hidden, you know, in his cupboard too, we do not know.

So that is a different line of path we might want to go down to when we do a little bit of close reading. Anyway, so Mr. Guest knows all about Mr. Utterson, and he was “not always sure that he kept as many as he meant. Guests often had been on business to the doctor’s; he knew Poole; he could scarce have failed to hear of Mr. Hyde’s familiarity about the house; he might draw conclusions.”

So you know, even when he kept some secrets from Mr. Guest, Mr. Utterson did not really intend to keep them as secrets, they just happened by accident. And Guest knows about Dr. Jekyll, he has gone to his home several times on business matters, and he also knows that steward Poole, and he would have heard about the familiarity of Dr. Jekyll with Mr. Hyde and he would make his own assumptions about that relationship and he might draw his own conclusion.

So Mr. Guest is someone who knows about the context. Well aware, I would say well aware of the context of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and therefore he needs no introduction to the subject that Mr. Utterson wants to broach about with his head clerk.

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Murderer’s Autograph?

“I have a document here in his handwriting; it is between ourselves, for I scarce know what to do about it; it is an ugly business at the best. But there it is; quite in your way: a murderer's autograph.”

Mr. Utterson dealing with the matter privately

he is repeating Dr. Jekyll's words

Mr. Hyde's handwriting

physical

Spiritual

UGLY

Mr. Utterson tells his friend, “I have a document here in his handwriting; it is between ourselves, for I scarce know what to do about it; it is an ugly business at the best. It is an ugly

business at the best. But there it is; quite in your way: a murderer's autograph." It is interesting, very you know, ironically, beautifully put, I would say, murderous autograph. Let us see what are the other interesting phrases and words here.

I like the phrase ugly business, and I scarce know what to do about it. If you think about this particular, you know, statement, he is repeating Dr. Jekyll's words in fact. If you remember the earlier parts of this particular chapter, Dr. Jekyll says I do not know what to do about it, I do not know whether to call the police or I thought I will just give it to you, I trust you, you are a better judge.

And the same kind of relationship, the relationship between Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Utterson is mirrored in the relationship between Mr. Utterson and his head clerk. So there is a nice pairing of these two sets of friends, and once again we see Mr. Utterson dealing with the matter privately. They do not call the police, you know, and Mr. Utterson is taking an avenue which will get him an answer privately.

He is just getting the help of his head clerk. He is keeping it in the family, so to speak. And he says that it is an ugly business. The word ugly is very very interesting because it is talking about ugliness in a whole lot of levels. There is physical ugliness, the ugliness of, you know, cruelty that Edward Hyde inflicts on, you know, innocent and vulnerable people, that is one kind of ugly.

There is also a spiritual ugliness that talks about hidden secrets, crimes which are kept secret in one's heart and, you know, hypocrisies and moral disorders, you know, falsehoods. So this is also a different kind of ugliness and that could be called as spiritual ugliness. And he says that this is an ugly business. Why is it an ugly business? There is a lot of mystery.

There are reputations at stake, and Mr. Utterson is trying to safeguard the dignity and reputation of his friend, and which is why he is, you know, discussing the matter privately with his head clerk. And he calls that the murderer's autograph, it is an interesting phrase that needs to be looked at pretty closely. So he is thinking that this is Mr. Hyde's writing. The letter is by Hyde, therefore he calls it the murderer's autograph. Let us see who wrote this letter in truth.

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Handwriting Comparison



- "Well, sir," returned the clerk, "there is a rather singular resemblance; the two hands are in many points identical; only differently sloped."
- ... "I wouldn't speak of this note, you know," said the master.
- "No, sir," said the clerk. "I understand."



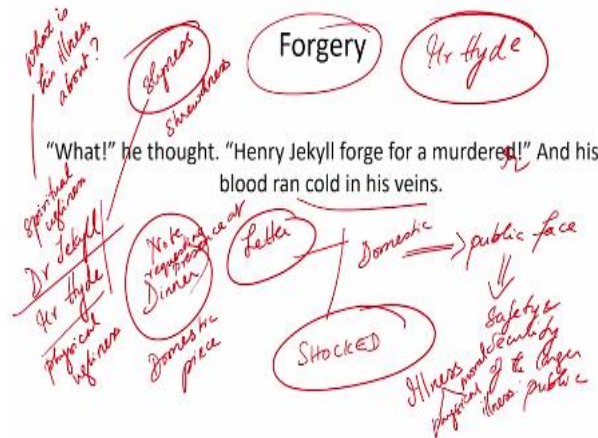
Now while they are discussing the letter, a note comes in, you know, one of the servants of Mr. Utterson brings in a note. And what is that note? That note is a dinner invitation. It is a short note from Dr. Jekyll inviting Mr. Utterson to dinner, okay, and this invitation is for Mr. Utterson. So that is brought into his house, and Mr. Guest kind of gets the letter from Mr. Utterson, and what he is doing is he is comparing the handwriting.

So there is a lot of comparison, more deductive skills are involved, and this time on the part of the head clerk. So Mr. Hyde's letter is compared to the dinner invitation written by Dr. Jekyll. And what are the results of this handwriting study? "Well, sir," returned the clerk, 'there is a rather singular resemblance'; singular resemblance, very odd, odd resemblance; 'the two hands are in many points identical.'"

The handwriting is similar, only differently sloped, only differently slanted. One letter is slant this way, the other is slant at the other way. And what does Mr. Utterson say? "I would not speak of this note." If I were you, I would not mention this note to anybody. I would not speak of this note, you know, said the master. Now Mr. Utterson becomes the master. Look at the way the narrative shifts in terms of referencing the speaker.

So Mr. Utterson is also using his authority as the boss, the employer of the head clerk, and he says that please do not speak of this to anybody, and the clerk says; no sir, I understand. I understand what is at stake, you know, if I talk about this matter to anybody. So therefore I will not.

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And now what is the assumption that Mr. Utterson draws from a study of these two notes? One is a dinner note, the other is the letter. This note requesting presence at dinner, is a domestic piece of writing. This is also domestic, but it has a public face. Why does it have a public face? Because it involves the safety and security of the larger public. And now comparing these two pieces of writing, they know that Dr. Jekyll has forged.

Dr. Jekyll has forged for his friend Mr. Hyde. That is the assumption that Mr. Utterson comes up with, and look at the statement by him. “What!’ he thought. ‘Henry Jekyll forge for a murderer!’ And his blood ran cold in his veins.” He is shocked. He is shocked by this revelation that his friend is capable of behaving in such a, you know, such a disreputable manner. And we see resemblances between Dr. Jekyll here, and Mr. Hyde.

There are similarities that we are going to, you know, come across. There are similarities that we are coming across, and now I want to go back to that earlier description of Jekyll where there was a reference to his slyness. His face had a tinge of slyness, cleverness, shrewdness. And now, if you go back to the conversation between Mr. Utterson and Dr. Jekyll, we realize that he is extremely manipulative.

And he wants Mr. Utterson to you know, leave the matter of Mr. Hyde, you know, let the matter lie low, that is what he says. And on the other hand we have Mr. Utterson you know, employing his detective skills to realize what is happening, you know, beneath the surface. And this is how chapter five ends, and we see that the reputation of Dr. Jekyll is beginning to be stained.

In terms of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, this one is about, Mr. Hyde is about physical ugliness, and we also realized that Dr. Jekyll is you know, embodying with himself an element of spiritual ugliness. And now, keeping this context in mind, we are wondering what is that illness about. Why is Dr. Jekyll ill?

Illness is a common trope in this particular novella. We see that several characters fall ill when there is a kind of a shock to the moral system. Either it is an individual's moral compass or it is a kind of a societal moral compass, people fall ill. And we will come to see that Dr. Lanyon is another figure who falls ill and dies of his illness, and we also see that Dr. Jekyll becomes frequently ill. And what does illness embody? That is a big question.

Illness is a trope that indicates both moral and physical illness. The interesting element about Mr. Utterson is that even though he realizes that his friend is getting implicated further and further in terms of Mr. Hyde, he is careful not to do anything that would kind of expose the depth to which Dr. Jekyll is linked to Mr. Hyde.

So what does that tell us about the Victorian code of conduct for Victorian gentlemen? We want to ask that question. Isn't there a lot of hypocrisy associated with that code of conduct. And Mr. Utterson also begins to be implicated for not speaking out about what he knows with regard to Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Thank you for watching. I will continue in the next

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