

## The Hypocritic Aspect in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Sachiko URASAKI

*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* consists of ten sections.\* The last two sections of this novel, i.e. 'Dr. Lanyon's Narrative' (sec. 9) and 'Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case' (sec. 10), seem different from the others.

The story proceeds with the progress of time, having Utterson as a pivotal character, and it is depicted from the third person view point till the end of section 8, 'The Last Night.' In the last two, however, there seems to be no room even for Utterson to play a part though he has been present in every preceding section and watched the course of events. This is the reason why the last two sections, 'Dr. Lanyon's Narrative' and 'Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case', make the reader feel that they are rather independent of or different from the others, the former being a letter addressed to Utterson by Dr. Lanyon, and the latter a statement directed to Utterson by Dr. Jekyll. Moreover, Jekyll's letter addressed to Lanyon is included in section 9, 'Dr. Lanyon's Narrative.' In a word, it is not until another letter is introduced that Lanyon's narrative is completed.

In terms of length, section 10 is the longest section in this novel. Section 8 is quite long, too, but the last two sections form a third of the whole work. This great length of the sections is one of the elements which make the reader feel some difference.

Both of the last two sections are narratives which statè the case in detail as a retrospective report. They have a characteristic of filling a gap. That is, they give a concrete explanation to the part whose whole truth was not explicitly revealed. They depict the narrative

process until the death of Jekyll/Hide which is told till section 8. They sometimes intervene in the comparatively simple plot.

As to the structure, too, the reader cannot help having another strange impression, because the story suddenly ends with a letter and confession. It seems to me that the style is artistically easy and passable as an ending of fiction, even if it had an aim of giving an unexpected twist to the story at the end or revealing a secret. Why was this style taken? In this thesis I will study this point.

## 1. Epoch-making scene

In the last two sections, there is a passage which discloses Jekyll's inmost thoughts and also the most impactive scene which determines the impression of this work. It is an unquestionable fact that the two sections are the core of the story.

And the impactive scene is the scene of transformation where Jekyll precipitates himself into Hyde. It cannot be effaced from the reader's mind. It is not too much to say that the impression of this work is surely determined by the epoch-making scene. The fixity of the phrase, 'Jekyll and Hyde,' may reflect the impressiveness of the scene. The impactive scene of transformation is found only in the last two sections, excluding the close of section 7, 'Incident at the Window', in which there is an indication of transformation.

I will pick up each passage depicting the scene of transformation in the last two sections.

## 2. The scene of transformation in Lanyon's narrative and Jekyll's statement

Lanyon's letter addressed to Utterson (sec. 9) is the one that Utterson had tried to read in the night of Lanyon's funeral. But when Utterson opened the envelope, he found in it another envelope on

whose cover there was such a phrase as "not to be opened till the death or disappearance of Dr. Henry Jekyll" (p. 33). Lanyon's letter was in the other envelope. Utterson's sense of professional honour as a lawyer and his faith to his dead friend imposed stringent obligations upon him, and he refrained from opening it. So he put Lanyon's letter in the envelope away in his private safe with mortifying a seething curiosity.

It was not until the night in March, 18×× when Hyde's death was ascertained that Utterson read the two narratives. He was urged to read Lanyon's narrative (sec. 9) and Jekyll's statement (sec. 10) by a brief note in Dr. Jekyll's handwriting. The note called upon him to read Lanyon's narrative and Jekyll's statement. The date on the note was the same day when Hyde's death was ascertained. But Utterson has not appeared ever since, and his last words that he left for Poole were: "I must . . . read these documents in quiet; but I shall be back before midnight, . . ." (p. 48). There is not any explanation of how Utterson thought and acted after reading the two narratives. I will leave the question unanswered why there is no role for Utterson to play.

If the date marked on the narrative is true, it is in the evening on Jan. 9th, 18×× that the letter addressed by Dr. Jekyll reached Lanyon, which is introduced in Lanyon's narrative, and it is necessarily on the 13th of January in 18×× that Lanyon wrote the narrative. However, on the top of Jekyll's letter to Lanyon there is somehow the date of the 10th of December, 18×× marked clearly.

Even if the date is in December of the previous year, it is inconsistent after all. Because Jekyll had not drunk the medicine at all in great repentance since he murdered Carew in October of the year. He led a quiet and happy life, as if he had cut off himself from the temptation of metamorphosis into Hyde, up to the moment when Jekyll suddenly transformed into Hyde without taking medicine in the Regent's Park on Jan. 9th. Indeed, on Jan. 8th, the day before, Jekyll

gave a pleasant dinner and invited some old cronies, including Lanyon and Utterson. And after the unexpected metamorphosis on Jan. 9th, Jekyll wrote a letter to both Lanyon and Poole at an hotel in Portland Street.

The dating of the two letters seems to show the lapse of pen. But it has no effect on the main plot. It is somehow doubtful to think about such a trifling thing as a date. However, if the date the 10th of December on Jekyll's letter addressed to Lanyon is taken as true, it is possible to interpret the situation as follows.

On Jan. 9th Jekyll experienced an abrupt accident of transformation into Hyde without taking medicine. But, on the 10th of December of the previous year, he must have met with the same accident and exposed himself to danger, but he must have just barely come to consciousness. He came to seek for pleasure, liberty and license as time went by, after spending a few quiet months, though Jekyll had not dreamed the transformation into Hyde. Something dangerous must have happened to Jekyll, and he started writing the letter to Lanyon. But Jekyll was released from the dangerous situation for some reason or other and he ceased to write the letter in the middle of it.

I will further say that he did not still take leave of a double life. In spite of his being in terror and his having a hatred for Hyde and horrible illusion, he pursued pleasure. Jekyll camouflaged himself well enough to make others think that he was passing a peaceful and quiet life, for all that his life was not like that. Such a person as Jekyll, who deceives others thoroughly, should be called hypocrite.

In the course of the night Lanyon carries out the task conveyed in Jekyll's letter. Jekyll's private secret is finally disclosed in the presence of Lanyon. Jekyll's secret is not any longer limited to the private one. Lanyon's terror is too big to be measured, for he was shown the actual fact. Characters around Jekyll/Hyde, for example Lanyon, Utterson, Enfield, Poole, and so forth, live in the Victorian

Age. It may be said that they show, more or less, characteristics of compromise and hypocrisy attributed to the age. They are depicted characteristically as such, in other words the Victorian society is embodied in them in the story. Heretic Hyde is a being whom they should not take interests in or had better not know.

The secret of Jekyll/Hyde has to be hidden and the truth must not be disclosed absolutely if people want to live in peace and quiet, because Hyde is a being who disturbs the order of the society radically and shakes the feelings of the people. As he is a being who gets to the problem in the Victorian society, they cannot help shutting their eyes to his conduct.

Why did Jekyll/Hyde select Lanyon as a partner to show his secret?

On Jan. 9th in Regent's Park, Jekyll sat in the sun on a bench, then he was transformed into Hyde without any intention or without taking medicine. It was not the first time that such an accident occurred to Jekyll. But it must be none other than himself who was most surprised at and disturbed by the abrupt change happening inside him.

At that time he had already been put on the wanted list and pursued as the murderer, and a reward of thousands of pounds had been to be given for the capture of him. It was the most unreasonable thing for him to walk about in the town in the figure of Hyde. Exposing himself to the public eyes was, at any rate, the same as laying himself to danger of life. That is why he tried to get the habitual drug in order to return to Jekyll's figure. As it was in the press of his cabinet on the second storey of the backside building of Dr. Jekyll's house, he could not possibly get it without someone's help.

Jekyll/Hyde firstly goes out of Regent's Park to an hotel in Portland Street by hansom cab, in the direction of Cavendish Square. As Lanyon's house is near by, and it is safe to reach, Jekyll may have selected Lanyon as a partner.

But this is not the only reason, there can be other reasons. Hyde

was just going to mix the medicine and try to go back to Jekyll's figure by taking it. In acting such a performance with fine manipulation, Jekyll/Hyde is fairly determined to carry it through. As the partner a man worthy to be shown the demonstration or a man being able to see it roughly and minutely and to an end should be selected. A man having certain scientific knowledge about drugs is desirable too because such a man's observation is more concrete. Unless such man is the partner, the scene of the transformation will not have the more impact and gain the more verisimilitude. Doctor Lanyon is adequate as the partner for this reason. Lanyon was really able to see the unforeseen event at the decisive moment and, though much frightened, managed to record it in the form of a narrative. But Lanyon became feeble because of too much terror and impact. Moreover Lanyon is obliged to pass away, for he has known the fact. Nobody can live in the Victorian society, once he knows the secret.

In the last section, 'Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case', Jekyll himself reports the scene of the transformation. It relates Jekyll's reminiscences at the first transformation into Hyde by drugs. Not only the external change of Jekyll/Hyde but also internal occurrence is reported to Utterson, by Jekyll's statement and in Lanyon's narrative.

After he felt an awfully acute pain, Jekyll came to himself. What did he think and how did he feel at that time? In his sensation there was "something indescribably new, and, from its very novelty, incredibly sweet" (p. 60), and he felt really "younger, lighter, happier in body" (p. 60). Within himself, he was conscious of "a solution of the bonds of obligation, an unknown but not an innocent freedom of the soul" (p. 60). But, at the same moment, he found himself "to be more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to my original evil" (p. 60) with excitement and in an ecstasy of delight.

The last section begins with Jekyll's confession describing his own story somewhat like an excuse. He admits his own disposition to

gaiety, and he says that he imperiously desired to carry his head high and to “wear a more than commonly grave countenance before the public” (p. 57). So he cannot help hiding all his desires for pleasure and irregularity.

Ever before he succeeded in compounding drugs, Jekyll was an incongruous being, a mixture of good and evil. He may not be so different from ordinary people, but he cannot but deceive the others and the society completely and thoroughly because he has the almost morbid sense of shame and his high ideal. As a result, Jekyll stood “committed to a profound duplicity of life” (p. 57).

### 3. A Force of Hypocritical Falsehood

Jekyll's last will and testament is so strange, because it provides that all possessions of Jekyll's are to pass into the hands of Hyde in case of the decease, disappearance, and unexplained absence of Jekyll. Of course, Jekyll wishes to live in the society as a person who holds a good and high position, but in case of emergency he does not mind living as an evil Hyde. Even then, he tries to retain a rich life in which he need not feel uneasiness about money, and he also wishes to dwell in an excellent house in the same way as ever. This is the true purpose of Jekyll's making his will. Jekyll too is an ordinary person who adheres to life and material.

When he was sure that Hyde would pass away “like the stain of breath upon a mirror” (p. 63) if he had only a few seconds to mix and swallow the drug, i.e., before the Carew murder case, when the phase of affairs did not yet assume so serious an aspect, Jekyll said to Utterson, “the moment I choose, I can be rid of Mr. Hyde” (p. 18), but also pleaded, “I only ask for justice; I only ask you to help him[Hyde] for my sake, when I am no longer here” (p. 19). Jekyll plainly tries to avoid loss of money and dislikes a lower life than the present life.

Jekyll notes in his statement that "man is not truly one, but truly two. . . . I learned to recognize the thorough and primitive duality of man" (p. 58). Soon after the first transformation, Jekyll sees Hyde's feature in the glass. In spite of the ugliness of the idol leaving an imprint of deformity and decay, or rather, *because* Jekyll was all the more carried away by a sudden impulse of delight, without feeling any repugnance. At that time, he was convinced that "all human beings, . . . are commingled out of good and evil: and Edward Hyde, alone, . . . was pure evil" (p. 61). Surely Hyde once seemed to Jekyll fresh a being lively glittering and suited to be called an incarnation of evil. But in fact it is not so, Jekyll was driven to think that the very evil being hidden inside was truly a lethal factor for man.

Whichever figure he may be, he can only be himself. Hyde is extremely ugly and weird, but he is the shadow of Jekyll. He can never desert Hyde. Nor can he allow himself to accomplish thorough break-away from honor or dignity.

Then, is it possible for him to give up the position and the figure of Jekyll and to live with the appearance of Hyde? No, it is impossible because Hyde's outward looks are extremely ugly. It may be said that Jekyll's morals are poor in the Victorian society. However, it can also be said that his poor morality persistently gives an ugly shape to Hyde's wild evil.

In the last section, 'Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case,' there is a scene in which Jekyll reflects that Hyde is "co-heir with him to death" (p. 72). In fact, Jekyll/Hyde can be released only by death.

Utterson is the only person who can completely grasp the fact of the affairs and Jekyll/Hyde's end after Lanyon's decease, because it is only Utterson who can read the two narratives in this story. But, as I have previously stated, there is no room for Utterson to appear after that. Utterson does not appear in sections 9 and 10. These two

narratives, which Utterson is to read, remain intact until they come out in the last. This device has a great meaning.

The story necessarily has a force which gives priority to an established order, rules, and discipline. Therefore the fact must always remain hidden to a certain extent. Utterson is not allowed to appear because he has known the whole secret. In fact, there is no room for Utterson or any other person to appear. In other words, there is no room for further description. There is no room for their behavior, speech, life, ways of living, etc. to be depicted. There can be felt an invisible force of hypocrisy.

We can find another significance of the fact that these two narratives are set, as they are, in the very last sections.

The truth becomes clear only by the narrative reports by the parties concerned. These narratives are at the risk of being exposed in broad daylight at any moment. But they were generally accepted in the Victorian society, and were received in secrecy by Utterson and those around him.

There is no knowing whether the truth written in the narratives will be buried in oblivion with a tacit understanding, or it will be brought to light as an unprecedented scandal, in the story. In either case Utterson and others will surely think of the kind of hypocrisy in Jekyll, and reflect it on themselves or on their circle. Even if they were consciously aware of the hypocrisy, they will continue to live as if they know nothing of it. The story is concluded only by the two narratives. The ending by narrative is the most suitable form, because it hides the crucial fact hypocritically. It is desirable and necessary not to describe other things which happened afterwards.

Jekyll says in his statement, "Though so profound a double-dealer, I was in no sense a hypocrite" (p. 57). Was he really so? He may have been so if we think that he is earnest in either Jekyll or Hyde. Though he was all right until he tried to deviate from the common sense of the public in general, unfortunately after all he could not turn his

back on the common sense thoroughly. Jekyll was crushed by the great fear of too big an evil, and at last he was erased from his society. Thinking of such an end of Jekyll/Hyde's, I cannot assert that he was in no sense a hypocrite. It may be said that all the characters in this fiction, including Jekyll/Hyde, are obliged to live hypocritically, just as the ending of the story suggests.

\* Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, Tusitala Edition, "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (1886) in vol. 5: *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde, Fables & Other Stories & Fragments* (London: William Heinemann, 1924). All further references to this work appear in the text.