



Places of Evil in
Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:	5
<u>INTRODUCTION: PLACES OF EVIL</u>	<u>7</u>
GOthic FICTION	7
THE LONDON GOthic	8
ACCOMMODATING EVIL	9
THE VILLAINOUS SELF OR BECOMING THE VILLAIN	13
<u>CHAPTER ONE: PROFESSIONAL OR SOCIABLE - WHERE TO PLACE THE RELATIONSHIPS IN DR. JEKYLl AND MR. HYDE</u>	<u>17</u>
THE ETYMOLOGICAL CONDITIONS OF THE CASE	17
THE HORROR OF MY OTHER SELF	22
RENTING THE VEIL	28
THE LAWYER	32
EYE OF THE BEHOLDER	35
<u>CHAPTER TWO: THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY - A PLACE OF BORROWED YOUTH</u>	<u>39</u>
SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCE	39
PORTRAITS	42
SOCIABILITY AS PROFESSION	45
REVERSAL OF THE FAIRYTALE PRINCE	52
A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST	57
THE FRAYED ENDS OF SANITY	59
<u>CHAPTER THREE: THE BETTER OF TWO EVILS</u>	<u>65</u>
KEEPING SECRETS	65
PROTECTING THE EXTERIOR	70
INSIDE VS OUTSIDE	72
<u>CONCLUSION: SUBSTANTIAL ISSUES</u>	<u>77</u>
FINDING THE BALANCE	77
<u>WORKS CITED:</u>	<u>83</u>

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Introduction: Places of evil

Gothic Fiction

Traditionally gothic fiction is said to have come into existence through the self declared “Gothic Story” - *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) by Horace Walpole, a story he advocated to be a “blend [of] the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern,’ the former ‘all imagination and improbability’ and the latter governed by the ‘rules of probability’ connected with ‘common life’ “ (*The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Hogle, 1). Although this particular way of writing did not immediately become popular, it “exploded in the 1790s throughout the British Isles, on the continent of Europe and briefly in the new United States” (Hogle, 1). Furthermore, during this period, the previous, as Hogle calls it, unstable genre, acquired some constant features that helped sustain its popularity well throughout the 1890s in Britain and Europe. However, as Hogle also argues, as have many others, that gothic fiction is not gothic at all but is a “post-medieval and even post- renaissance phenomenon” (Hogle, 1), hinting back at Walpole’s “counterfeit medieval tale” (Hogle, 1). Nevertheless, what he means to say is that most of these so called gothic novels had a pseudo medieval setting: “Belonging to, or characteristic of, the Middle Ages; medieval, ‘romantic’, as opposed to classical... Belonging to the ‘dark ages’” (OED)¹. “Gothic” also means “Barbarous, rude, uncouth, unpolished, in bad taste, of temper: savage” (OED), all of which are traits that are classically gothic. In addition to these rather forceful features, there is also an air of mystery, supernatural elements and elements of terror that accompany the gothic novel.

Another vital thing to gothic fiction is that setting is typically more important than the characters and characterization in the narrative, this is because the true

¹ All definitions of words referenced throughout the thesis are taken from the Oxford English Dictionary Online - www.oed.com

intention of the gothic is to create an atmosphere of terror and/or horror, to suggest that there exists something unknown and unidentifiable out there that is potentially evil and dangerous to you. Furthermore, in relation to setting it is important to note that:

a Gothic tale usually takes place (at least some of the time) in an antiquated or seemingly antiquated space - be it a castle, a foreign palace, an abbey, a vast prison, a subterranean crypt, a graveyard, a primeval frontier or island, a large old house or theatre... Within this space, or a combination of such spaces, are hidden some secrets from the past (sometimes the recent past) that haunt the characters, psychologically, physically, or otherwise at the main time of the story (Hogle, 2)

The key element here is that the narratives, and the terror they aspire to evoke, take place far away from those who actually read the tales - that is the British middle-class and those of northern Europe - usually "in 'less civilized' ages or places" (*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Tales of Terror*, Mighall, xi), as Hogle notes in the previous quote.

The London Gothic

As opposed to the more traditional gothic stories, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*², and in turn *The Picture of Dorian Gray*³, took an approach to gothic fiction that was, in many ways, more frightening and terrifying than the previous medieval and uncivilized characters and settings that represented horror in a far off place, namely that

² All quotes made from this text, throughout the thesis, taken from the Norton Critical Edition, 2003, 7-62.

³ All quotes from this text, throughout the thesis, taken from the Norton Critical Edition, Second edition, 2007, 3-184.

they are both “set in London in the present day, [1800’s] and situates horror *within* a respectable individual, with its vision of evil reflecting on a much broader section of society than had perhaps been hitherto suggested in popular fiction.” (Mighall, xvii). This specific form of gothic fiction is named “The London Gothic”, because London often features both as setting as well as a central character in its own right. However, even though both *The Strange Case* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* take place in London and London acts as frame and contributes to set the atmosphere of a dark and gritty metropolis enveloped in fog, it will, in the context of these two novels and their analysis, not be featured as a character in its own right, but will rather function as accommodation for the horror, the terror and the impending evil in the two narratives: “The dismal quarter of Soho seen under these changing glimpses, with its muddy ways, and slatternly passengers, and its lamps, which had never been extinguished or had been kindled afresh to combat this mournful reinvasion of darkness, seemed, in the lawyer’s eyes, like a district of some city in a nightmare.” (23)

Accommodating Evil

As mentioned it is this “nightmare city” that functions as the backdrop for Dr. Jekyll and Dorian’s aspiring evil, mainly because of its vastness. It allows Dr. Jekyll and Dorian to venture outside their respective environments - the upper class - and carry out their obscenities in more secluded, “back-ally” parts of London where they are protected by a mutual understanding of the importance of secrecy. Furthermore, the two men’s evolving taste for evil becomes central to the narratives, and in that respect a discussion of evil in general becomes necessary. Because the issue that the world, at all times, is preoccupied with and obsessed over, is the struggle between good and evil, and in turn what it is that embodies these two phrases - what does it mean to be good and what does it mean to be evil? This is a difficult issue to discuss, because there will always be

contrasting views on what moral codes that are valid at any given time, and this will invariably be at the root of the discussion, whether it is framed in a religious, philosophical, psychological, or any other theoretical conviction. Nevertheless, it is always agreed upon that there cannot be one without the other - no heaven without a hell, no hero without a villain and no good without evil - we require binary opposites because we need to understand things in relation to each other.

Most times this “evil” is something that we do not understand or something that is hidden, something unknown that is complicated, terrifying and unnerving to comprehend. However, these “outside” evils are often named, given a face, or they are given symbolic form so that they become embodied in a way for us to know what we are confronted with and what to be careful of. The most classic example being of course the devil depicted with horns and a pitchfork immersed in flames, or symbols such as the skull and crossbones, “666”, the evil eye, as well as the faces of dictators and ethnic cleansers - all visible manifestations of things we fear and consider evil. Even so, sometimes “the evil” becomes more complex than this, more complex than the things we can name and acknowledge outside ourselves and distance ourselves from, sometimes “the evil” - this often abstract, unspecific something that makes the outside world so frightening, is the same barbarity that lies dormant within us, with the potential to awaken and rise from the depths and make us capable of this evil that we fear in others and in the world. As it is cited in the book *The Ghost Map*, a quote by the social theorist Walter Benjamin :“ There is no document of civilization that is not also a document of barbarism” (14)- a paradox because barbarism is defined as the opposite of civilized and should not accompany it in any way. Nevertheless, this is what is frightening about the world, much like the two men in the texts, it poses as cultivated and enlightened although it is often very much the opposite.

As mentioned above, it is sometimes not only the world we have to fear, but ourselves and as Terry Eagleton points out in his book: *On Evil*; "Hell is not other people, as Jean-Paul Sartre claimed. It is exactly the opposite. It is being stuck for all eternity with the most dreary, unspeakably monotonous company of all: oneself" (22). So it seems that it is not only that we fear what exists inside us, but also being aware of it, living inside our own heads so to speak. This becomes an issue for both Dr. Jekyll and Dorian as they become more and more absorbed in their own desires and as their evil unfolds they find themselves left with no one to share their horrid secrets with, it is vital that only they can know - this indeed becomes a source of torment for them both. Nevertheless, in spite of these fears they seem to find it utterly fascinating, either to witness or participate in acts of evil and amoral, destructive behavior, and I would argue that one reason for this is because it is allowed to happen. Their behavior is permitted to take place; evil is accommodated in a sense. I would argue that this is a very significant component in both *The Strange Case* as well as *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

There is a considerable fascination with evil in general it seems, and in our time violence is an everyday occurrence, whether we see it on the news, in TV shows, games and fiction, it is obvious that violence, desires and secrets feature frequently in our everyday lives. Take crime fiction for instance, it is one of the most popular genres in the world and especially in Norway where we reserve an entire holiday (Easter) for reading and watching detective stories, in essence - watching and solving murders. In addition to this many of the most popular TV shows are based on violence and are full of supernatural elements, magic and are driven by passionate desires for something or someone. With shows and films like "True Blood", "Twilight", "Game of Thrones", and the extreme popularity of fantasy films such as: "Harry Potter", "Lord of the Rings", "Hunger Games" and "From Hell", it is obvious that the occult, the uncanny, the

supernatural, magic - very much fascinates and entreats peoples attention. Why people are captivated by evil and the dark side of human behavior is difficult to say, mainly because I believe that the fascination for evil stems from various places of interest; the need to understand evil, to see how far people are willing to go in compromising their own integrity and in harming others (the Milgram experiment on obedience to authority figures for instance), because there is pleasure in the pain of another human being, conviction of a false ideal or a false belief. There are in fact too many answers to this question, all of which I believe to be valid - for better or worse.

Many of the characteristics of gothic fiction - the presence of magic and supernatural elements mixed with romance, violence and destructively passionate relationships in a medieval like settings, are the same features that have made it into contemporary literature and films/shows. Additionally, place is still a crucial component, and in contemporary fiction and film there seems to be a fair blend between the fictional world being set in the present day or taking place in the middle ages or some fictional time meant to resemble the middle ages, with all that entails. The fascination with things of a darker nature, things that frighten us, such as ancestral secrets and bad blood between families - horror that we can slowly uncover seem to give us a thrill. This is further illustrated by "Gothic tourism" which has become very popular in recent years, both in London as well as other towns with a murderous and bloody past. Although gothic tourism does not apply directly to the two texts in question, it is a testament to the popularity of the genre of the Gothic as well as the interest in degeneracy. As Emma McEvoy brings up in her essay: "West End Ghosts and Southwark Horrors': London's Gothic Tourism" from the book *London Gothic*, "They are a new breed of tourist attraction, generic hybrids, all performance based, sitting uneasily on the boundaries between fiction and history...'Gothic narratives have...spread across

disciplinary boundaries to infect all kinds of media, from fashion and advertising to the way contemporary events are constructed in mass culture” (140). The term used to describe gothic tourism - generic hybrid- is very much in keeping with the original gothic story that was a blend of various genres such as romance, realism, horror, plays, and so on. This applies to the two novels in question as well, both structurally and with respect to the characters’ personalities. So with the current popularity of the gothic in all its various forms and people’s ever lasting fascination with the nature of evil, to consider places of evil, or the place of evil within the frames of the Gothic genre that already entails the darker side of human behavior, is only logical. I would argue that the main characters in *The Strange Case* and *Dorian Gray*, consciously or not, manipulate and exploit these “places of evil”, their ability to perform the various parts they need to, and the fact that evil actually has a place to unfold.

The villainous self or becoming the villain

One could discuss whether or not being a villain and being evil is the same thing because of the connotations that the two words imply. However, I would definitely argue that they could easily be compared to each other, and just as there are discussions of what constitutes evil, and that there are varieties or rather degrees of evil because of the conditions surrounding the act of evil - as Terry Eagleton points out in *On Evil*: “The less sense it makes, the more evil it is. Evil has no relations to anything beyond itself, such as a cause. If [they] did what they did because of boredom or bad housing or parental neglect, then ... what they did was forced upon them by their circumstances” (3). It is very difficult to imagine that evil has no cause at all, that evil is done for no reason, and I do not believe it ever is. In the context of the two novels in question the evil Dorian and Jekyll perform is neither forced upon them nor is it without reason. It is a product of several things among which are the social circumstances.

Just as there are degrees of evil so it is with villainy. I mention this because these two words will be somewhat interchangeable through out the thesis, and I use the word villain because its original meaning contrasts so beautifully with the two main characters in the narratives. They are both well to do, rich, respectable men who one would not think to ascribe any criminal behavior, and least of all evil or villainous tendencies. However, as an enormous distinction from these pleasant descriptions: villain, as defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, means: "Originally, a low-born base-minded rustic; a man of ignoble ideas or instincts; in later use, an unprincipled or depraved scoundrel; a man naturally disposed to base or criminal actions, or deeply involved in the commission of disgraceful crimes". In addition to this the villain is defined as someone whose evil motives or actions form an important element in a plot, and as I would argue, drives a story forward, which I would say is absolutely true of the two narratives in question. Villain is also a somewhat milder term than evil, and the characters are not evil through and through, but become villains, or rather develop villainous manifestations of themselves as the stories proceed. They are given a way to liberate the before mentioned potential evil within, and they realize it only when it is too late. Now, in my view this closeness of terror mentioned in relation to the London Gothic - discovering that evil is no longer found only in the middle ages and in castles long forgotten, but exists now also by your very side in your city, perhaps even your own neighborhood, and in the case of the main characters, evil exists in your very own soul. This is absolutely spine-chilling and nightmarish, and is far more paralyzing than ghostly encounters reviewed at a safe distance.

Another feature that is fascinating about these narratives, and that makes them still effective and forceful is the portrayal of selfishness and vanity displayed by nearly all the central characters. This makes the characters more relevant and realistic,

although they do take it significantly much further than the average person would in worshipping themselves, be it their looks or their intelligence. Their self-admiration also makes it extremely easy to influence them, with both threats and flattery. They let themselves be controlled by their desires, their lusts and their emotions, and their actions are usually motivated by the accustomed thrill of getting what they want. What they see as their needs trump everything else, and they both become obsessed with themselves and their needs. However, their villainous qualities are very complex and nuanced - they misuse their powers of status, looks and intellect to get their way. They come off as good-natured, yet they harbor both the potential and the appetite for villainy and evil.

I will argue in the case of both novels that the motive for Dr. Jekyll and Dorian's developing villainy is very much socially conditioned. It all revolves around the Victorian era with its Puritan views of ethics and sexuality as well as its aptitude for secrets. Because of the two main characters' positions in society they have had to suppress the before mentioned lusts and desires. As a reaction to the forced suppression, when given the chance, they exaggerate the part of their life they have had to stifle. In addition to exploring the socially conditioned background for Dr. Jekyll and Dorian's evil, I will examine the way the two men perform the various roles they need to play to protect their places in society, and the places they keep their secrets.

Chapter One: Professional or sociable - Where to Place the relationships in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

The Etymological Conditions of the Case

Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is my opinion a story that is made up of many layers that cover the many aspects of this chilling horror story. This layering is a way of disguising and keeping secret the endeavors of Dr. Jekyll, and is reflected in the narration as well as in the various characters' relations to each other. The relations between the various characters very much revolve around the difficulty of incorporating two different roles in a relationship - should you act a friend or a professional? Client/patient or lawyer/doctor? Are you both or neither? This problem of duality, layering and of knowing your place, is indicated in the narrative of the story as well. Even though the story mainly follows Mr. Utterson, there are quite a few brakes in his narrative where other observers' accounts of incidents intrude to reveal another layer, or rather to piece together the fragmented story of Jekyll and Hyde. These shifts in narration enhance a feeling of something split, something un-resting - something very much like Dr. Jekyll's divided consciousness. The story holds back key moments of revelation, although small pieces of the puzzle are handed out through the supplemental accounts given by, for instance, Mr. Enfield and the maid servant. These partial explanations work to increase the doubt and the feeling that things are fractured. In addition to the layers of narration, the use of language, or rather the use of certain words, lends the story an additional dimension and opens for the possibility of additional meanings.

What to me appears to be a problem in the story is connected to the dual roles and the layered "performance" by the story's main characters. They all seem so insecure about how to treat each other, and as mentioned, which role to take on in the company

of one another. This appears to be a side effect of things being kept secret - it is easier for them to lean on their professions and professionalism in strained situations instead of being intimate, familiar or close - it is easier for everyone to stay in the proper occupational place so to speak. The intriguing aspect of this is certainly how this social/professional dynamic works, how they actually act and react around each other and how these places affect them physically and mentally. Additionally, it is fascinating to note how one word alone can add to the dimensions and layers of the text.

The title of a story always bears significance in one way or another, and Stevenson's *Strange Case* is no exception. As it often is with titles they give subtle indications of what we can expect to be presented with, and with *The Strange Case* much of the story's appeal and mystery is embedded right in the title. It gives a premise of something out of the ordinary and there are several words in the title that create a certain anticipation of what is to be expected. A great deal of the expectations are linked to a few key words such as: *strange, case and Doctor*. Are we to take part in a medical experiment, ground breaking medical research or perhaps a biological rarity out of a vaudeville freak show? For it is indeed a strange case we are promised, is it not? Nevertheless, it is exactly one of the words, more specifically the word *case* that becomes increasingly interesting as the story proceeds, for not only is the term used very appropriately considering the central characters' occupations - Mr. Utterson the *lawyer*, Dr. Lanyon and of course *Dr. Jekyll*, but they all in some form rely on the word *case* to describe their work as it is widely used in both legal and medical terminology. Furthermore, the word suggests a certain air of professionalism, expertise, and class - critical components when discussing the relationships in *The Strange Case*. One of the most interesting relationships in the text is of course, the one between Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Before addressing the professional relationships and their place I would like to point out something that Thomas McLaughlin notes in his essay: "Figurative Language" from the book *Critical Terms for Literary study*, namely that words have an interesting history and usage which reveal that they have figurative force, meaning that they have a significance beyond the one that is attributed it today, as well as a meaning beyond that which we grant it when it acts as a metaphor or other forms of figurative language. McLaughlin argues that the history of reference, or the etymology of a word can conceal another level of meaning and that the figurative history of a word is part of its meaning and is therefore in turn "appropriate to a poetic interpretation whether or not the poet [author] was aware or intended it." (85). This is what I would argue for the word *case*, which is largely in focus here - its historic and etymological definition creates an extended meaning when looked at in certain contexts.

The word *case* has developed from the Latin word *casus*, into Old French *cas*, into the word we use today - *case* - from Middle English. Now, the word *case* can of course refer to many things. Nevertheless, as mentioned, this single word embodies not only the professional features of the characters in the narrative - their occupations - but it also holds much of the essence of the text itself, precisely because of its many meanings and uses. The most common use of the word is in reference to "a thing that befalls or happens to any one; an event, occurrence, hap, or chance" (OED). This is exactly what we are dealing with in this context, a very special occurrence where something special befalls everyone rather than anyone. Furthermore, we see the appropriateness of the use of *case* when considering some of its other definitions, such as: "An instance or example of the occurrence or existence of a thing (fact, circumstance, etc.); "The actual state or position of matters"; a "state of matters relating to a particular person or thing", and quite fittingly; "A condition, state (of circumstances external or internal)" (OED). All

of these uses or aspects of the word describe features and point to characteristics of the characters in *The Strange Case*. In addition, of course, there is the professional expression of the word, referring to the characters' occupational positions, for instance, being used in a legal sense it refers to: "The state of facts juridically considered"; "A statement of the facts of any matter drawn up for consideration of a higher court"; "The case as presented or put to the court by one of the parties in a suit; hence, the sum of the grounds on which he rests his claim" (OED). Although the higher court and common law do not figure very prominently in this story, it is represented by Mr. Utterson who in more ways than one embody the law in the text. Much like the word *case*, which also includes the meaning: "An incident or set of circumstances requiring investigation by the police or other detective agency" (OED), Mr. Utterson partly functions as the investigator of this "strange case".

Staying within the realm of occupational contexts, *case* is also relevant within the field of medicine, and the "medical conditions" of this story to say the least: "The condition of disease in a person" - "An instance of disease, or other condition requiring medical treatment; 'a record of the progress of disease in an individual. Also (colloq.), patient"(OED). *Case* also entails some phrases that are relevant in this context, "case - history": the record of a persons origin/history compiled for diagnostic purposes and comprising all matters relevant to an episode of illness in a patient (OED). Equally interesting is "case- study": "the attempt to understand a particular person, institution, society, etc., by assembling information about his or its development; the record of such an attempt" (OED). Also, lastly but very importantly, "a case of conscience": "A practical question concerning which conscience may be in doubt; a question as to the application of recognized principles of faith and obedience to one's duty in a particular case or set of

circumstances" (OED). This particular feature is displayed very clearly in the last chapter of the story, in my opinion.

Furthermore, one of the most interesting features of "case" is found in the Latin meaning of the word, which is: 'fall, - related to the word *cadure* - 'to fall. Now the title can now also rightfully mean [*Strange*]fall of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. A fall that can be interpreted both as a major plunge in social standing and professional position, as well as a fall in the sense of succumbing to temptation or to lapse into sin, or to be more specific - moral ruin. Dr. Jekyll's "fall" also becomes important when discussing the relationships in the text, because for Mr. Utterson the fall of Henry Jekyll is what he seeks to prevent at any cost and it is also what makes him investigate Mr. Hyde and the strange circumstances surrounding him.

Now, having established the various meanings of the word *case* in the text, we can look more closely at the significance it has in connection to the relationships in the story, starting with the relationship between Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde - the one that puzzles everyone - where can one place their relationship, what is their true connection? Some critics such as Elaine Showalter and Colm Toibin have suggested that the relationship between the two men is of a homosexual nature. However, this is something that I do not really agree with, although I see how Stevenson's readers may have ended up with this interpretation. Therefore I chose to read the narrative in view of Stevenson's own explanation of the existence of the tale, namely: "I had long been trying to write a story on this subject [doubleness], to find a body, a vehicle for that strong sense on man's double being which must at times come in upon and overwhelm the mind of every thinking creature" (Stevenson, [The Dream Origin of the Tale], 90) - the struggle between man's dual nature and the outcome of this conflict.

The Horror of My Other Self

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde's relationship is of course most elaborately described in the last chapter of the book - "Henry Jekyll's full statement of the case" where he gives a personal statement of how and why this strange case came to be. What is striking about the narration in this chapter is how Dr. Jekyll speaks about himself in relation to Edward Hyde - his other self.

Dr. Jekyll starts his confession by speaking of himself, Henry Jekyll, and how he has long had to suppress those questionable pleasures that are unfit for a man of his stature. This suppression of desire seems to be the reason for his initiation of this strange experiment with man's duality. It is also because of the suppression of secret pleasures that Dr. Jekyll has long suspected, and to some extent has been proven right, that "man is not truly one, but truly two." (48). As we move further into the doctor's narrative, it starts to resemble an article from a doctor's journal, or as described earlier, a case study written to try and make sense of and understand the development of a patient whose condition strikes terror in everyone who either reads the journal or should attempt to repeat the experiment. It also serves as a form of documentation in the event that, as Jekyll seems to think, he should disappear forever. Dr. Jekyll describes his transformation and the events leading up to it as if he is keeping a professional distance from himself, or rather as if he was describing a patient - relating the circumstances around the experiment, his thought process and deliberation over whether or not to put his theory into practice. He notes the "patient's" reaction and symptoms to the drug/medication, the dosage and how to compound the ingredients, as well as the development of the "patient" and the drug.

Dr. Jekyll seems to have gone into this experiment in the professional mindset of a doctor, meaning that he, as a professional, has a certain code of conduct and a moral

obligation to uphold, and is granted a certain trust in return. Therefore I do not believe that he means to hurt anyone with his experiment, but that he rather wants to push the boundaries of science, to see if it is possible to separate man's two identities so he can be free of all moral responsibility - if he chooses to engage in amoral behavior, that is. He does spend a very long time contemplating whether or not to put his theories into practice, all the while knowing that it involves a major risk if he chooses to do so. He even is professional enough to conduct the experiment on himself and, not initially, harm anyone for his own experimental purposes, or perhaps he just wants to keep the workings of his experiment secret in case it should work. Jekyll seems to believe that his experiment, if it works, will also benefit those who share his secret pleasures, but like him cannot indulge in them for fear of public exposure.

I saw that, of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both; and from an early date, even before the course of my scientific discoveries had begun to suggest the most naked possibility of such a miracle, I had learned to dwell with pleasure, as a beloved daydream, on the thought of separation of these elements. If each, I told myself, could be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable. (49)

As we can gather from this, Dr. Jekyll starts out with a professional attitude and speaks about his experiment in a very professional manner. However, his reasons seem to stem, not from a professional place for the greater good of medicine or to directly provide help for anyone. It rather stems from a personal wish, a personal need for moral freedom, a selfish process that enables him to indulge in his unfitted pleasures and sinful ventures

without having to take a moral standpoint or having to take moral responsibility for any of his actions - "the particular nature of Jekyll's appetite for pleasure, sexual or otherwise, may matter far less than the fact that by living a double life to avoid moral accountability, he shuts the door of his soul to conscience" (Linehan, "Sex, Secrecy, and Self- Alienation in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*", 205-206). Also, he would not have to worry about his social standing or reputation being damaged by whatever he should wish to revel in. Furthermore, as we can gather from the quote on the previous page, he is aware that he has conflicting needs and desires within his consciousness. In addition to the moral freedom mentioned above, I believe Dr. Jekyll wants to accomplish this split so he can be liberated from the opposition within him. He has a hard time being torn between these opposing elements, and that is why he daydreams and dwells on with pleasure the thought of successfully being able to separate these conflicting elements. If only he can detach these two different sides of himself, and as he says, house them in separate identities, life would not be so unbearable. He obviously struggles with being conscious of his own potential of being sinful or "evil", and wants to be freed of the urges of desire, to no longer feel or have a yearning towards these pleasures that are considered shameful and wrong to his inner circle of social equals. It also conflicts with the honorable side of his consciousness. What he really wants is a way for the good and the evil or the virtuous and the sinful elements of his consciousness to go their separate ways. He wants to house them in different places in a way, just as he tries to house Hyde away from his home and his everyday life. It is necessary for Jekyll to keep these two versions of himself in different places. This is a clear indication that he does not want to be both, to share a body and a consciousness with malevolence and evil - that is why this divide is so important to him -

the unjust might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin; and the just could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path, doing the good things in which he found his pleasure, and no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of extraneous evil. It was the curse of mankind that these incongruous faggots were thus bound together (49)

In the last sentence of the quote above lies, in my opinion, a great deal of the motivation behind Dr. Jekyll's experiment. He manages to express very clearly how he believes that mankind has been wrongfully designed and that man is imperfectly made. It comes across as a tactless indication of God's incompetence that Dr. Jekyll will put to rights with his experiment. It is almost as if Dr. Jekyll wants to have a go at playing God or at least try and put to rights what God has failed at in his creation. This is indicated by Jekyll's use of religious language in the quote above: "The unjust being delivered", "remorse", "walking the upright path", "disgrace" and "penitence". It is as if Dr. Jekyll employs his experiment as some kind of redemption as opposed to God who has thoughtlessly made us possess within our consciousness an "unharmonious, conflicting "bundle" of elements that do not form any genuine unity" (OED), and this constellation of elements within man is what Dr. Jekyll wants to change for the better. He wants to break this "curse" that stifles mankind, or rather stifles Dr. Jekyll, forcing him to restrain himself in his pleasure seeking endeavors. This seems to be the reason why he has decided to "free himself", and possibly others, from this excruciating inward affliction.

However, what becomes problematic when experimenting on oneself is that you lose both the perspective and the accredited professionalism that is expected of the occupation, and for Dr. Jekyll it becomes increasingly strenuous to handle being his own doctor as well as his own patient, because it seems to make him doubt which place he

belongs in and if he can handle being in both places and being both manifestations of himself at once. At times in his confession he seems to completely dissociate himself and talk about his case as if he was an outsider, an omniscient narrator or even a doctor outside the situation commenting on a patient struggling with multiple personality disorder. This accents the unrest that inhabits Dr. Jekyll, he makes himself an ambiguous focalizer, something that in turn transfers the uneasiness and feeling of being fragmented to the reader. This way of distancing himself, not only from Edward Hyde, but also from his personality as Henry Jekyll the professional physician, we see most often when he explains and relates the horrid things that Hyde has done. Dr. Jekyll disregards all his responsibilities, both for executing the horrid deeds, and the responsibility for what he has created and what he allows his other self to do. He makes excuses for them both in a sense - because Hyde is such an extraordinary case, so unusual, the ordinary laws of society do not really apply, and because Jekyll claims that it is Hyde who is solely responsible for his actions he thinks himself to be guilt free - "Henry Jekyll stood at times aghast before the acts of Edward Hyde; but the situation was apart from ordinary laws, and insidiously relaxed the grasp of conscience. It was Hyde, after all, and Hyde alone, that was guilty. Jekyll was no worse; he woke again to his good qualities seemingly unimpaired" (53). Dr. Jekyll does not really seem able to distinguish between conscience and consciousness. Because Hyde exists both within Dr. Jekyll's consciousness and is a physical creature in his own right, Dr. Jekyll seems to think that Hyde is responsible for his/their actions without any direct involvement or guilt on his part - this is the real separation he wants. Even though Hyde's origin is within Jekyll's consciousness they do not share a conscience, according to Jekyll their actions are separate, especially when Hyde has been out on one of his "rampages".

As Dr. Jekyll continues his statement, we learn that, much as his way of addressing himself - being unsure of what name to use and which personality to speak in - his experiment starts to take the same turn, it is no longer controllable. His transformations into Hyde now occur without Dr. Jekyll initiating the switch with his potion, it has become organic. One personality is getting stronger because it is given much more room to grow, it is like feeding an addiction - the more he does it, the stronger its grip becomes - and it becomes so strong that it takes over his free will and all control of his transformations. The experiment is no longer thrilling or interesting neither from a professional nor a personal point of view. Dr. Jekyll's lust for and desire to experience his previously suppressed pleasures and the evil side of man, is now something that both scares and repulses him, he is no longer able to enjoy his desire driven ventures. Having found out that he no longer can control his transformation, not only does he have to come to terms with the fact that he will no longer be Henry Jekyll - the preferred "elderly and discontented doctor, surrounded by friends and cherishing honest hopes" (55), but he will have to remain that fallen "child of Hell" (59), Hyde, for the rest of his days. The only other option to escape is to commit murder/suicide and thus separate the two in a very different manner. Also, what seems to bother him is to know that his experiment has failed, he has not managed to do properly what he set out to do, and all of his sacrifices have been in vain.

Although Dr. Jekyll presents his case as an experiment and takes on the role of both patient and doctor, his relationship with Hyde has never been a professional one. I believe most of the problem has been that Dr. Jekyll is too emotionally, or rather personally involved. As I have mentioned, there is no real professionalism in experimenting on oneself, not that he directly harms anyone else with his experiment, but he does harm himself, and considering the previous argument that he is his own

patient as well as doctor, he is very much in breach of his doctoral oath - the Hippocratic oath was practiced at that time, as it is still. He lets himself come to harm, he distributes deadly drugs, and he does not in purity and holiness guard his life and art, all of which he, one can assume, has sworn to do. His experiment is not, as mentioned, for the benefit of public health and medicine like other doctors chose to do at that time, things that would benefit the public, for instance the work with and study of diseases and how they spread, like Louis Pasteur's demonstration that microorganisms are the cause of many diseases and the research and experiments with nitrous oxide, ether and chloroform that would result in the very useful anaesthetics. I suppose what would be more appropriate to say instead of; it is unprofessional to experiment on oneself in general, is that in Dr. Jekyll's case his experiments are plainly selfish, it is wholly for his own benefit. His isolated, self-obsessed experiment calls to mind associations of the classic "mad professor" character, which is what I would say that Dr. Jekyll is reduced to during the time of his experiment.

Renting the Veil

Dr. Jekyll's fall into Hyde is what becomes interesting as a suggested alternate meaning of the word *case* that was mentioned earlier. For it is indeed a fall in many respects. Not only is it a fall from grace, it is a fall in social stature and it is a moral fall. In many ways *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* illustrates, in my view, the gradual disintegration of a person overcome with the lust for something, a desire so strong it must inevitably be acted on, and the more the desire is suppressed, it comes out with all the more force. Dr. Jekyll is like a drug addict, the need to be Hyde, the addiction to the rush, the ecstasy, the false freedom becomes too great to pass up. It is now close to the only existing thought in his head - how to find an outlet for his desperate desires - "I began to be tortured with throes and longings, as of Hyde struggling after freedom; and at last, in an

hour of moral weakness, I once again compounded and swallowed the transforming draught" (56). Afterwards, of course, the horror and shame of what he has done and how low a threshold he has for letting himself be tempted by his own desires time and again, as well as how easily he slips back in, will always be present. He understands his own weakness in a sense, perhaps even the selfishness of his experiment:

The veil of self-indulgence was rent from head to foot, I saw my life as a whole: I followed it up from the days of childhood, when I had walked with my father's hand, and through the self-denying toils of my professional life, to arrive again and again, with the same sense of unreality, at the damned horrors of the evening. I could have screamed aloud; I sought with tears and prayers to smother down the crowd of hideous images and sounds with which my memory swarmed against me; and still, between the petitions, the ugly face of my iniquity stared into my soul. (57)

In this quote we find strong biblical references, and it can be classified as a true moment of revelation for Dr. Jekyll. It is a moment when he realizes the extreme grip Hyde has on him, that Hyde is taking his place - that Hyde is him. The first sentence of the quote above - the renting of the veil - is an allusion to Matthew 27: 45-54. Here Jesus has just been crucified and he cries out to God - why have you forsaken me? The people around Jesus mockingly suggest - well, let us see if God will come save you. Jesus once more cries out: "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened". (*American King James Version*: <http://kjv.us/matthew/27.htm>). Now the people cannot doubt that he truly is the Son of God Much like they do, Dr. Jekyll truly realizes what he has done

and is gravely remorseful and frightened. His life even flashes before his eyes, and both he and we realize that this “beast” has always existed within him, and it will no longer do to try and suppress it in favor of his professional and reputable self.

It seems to be argued indirectly within the story that crime and evil are reserved for the lower classes, or rather the lower part of humanity - the ones that have not completely developed in looks and stature, but rather still share an animalistic temper and look with the apes. This is perhaps the one thing that is subject to most comment in the story - the apelike undeveloped looks of Hyde: “And next moment with ape-like fury, he [Hyde] was trampling his victim under foot... Particularly small and particularly wicked looking” (22). Dr. Jekyll also comments frequently on the fact that Hyde is the lower part of him, uncivilized, rude, and as he puts it: pure evil (51). This belief, that criminality was inherited and that you could tell which people were criminals simply by looking at them - determining by their physical appearance and the shape of their skull whether or not they were criminals, is in keeping with the theories of Cesare Lombroso, an Italian physician and criminologist who published *L'uomo Delinquente* in 1876. He was the founder of the Italian school of positivist criminology and was convinced that one could tell if someone was a criminal by studying their distinctive anthropological features. This is elaborated on by Robert Mighall in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Tales of Terror*, as well as in the Norton Critical Edition of the book (132-134).

With this in mind, it is also suggested that Dr. Jekyll thinks less of Mr. Hyde, or perhaps actually thinks less of this evil/low quality in people, but he is determined that it must be indulged somehow to create a balance in the soul, ideally to separate them. Nevertheless, this does not stop Dr. Jekyll from feeling very close to, and very invested in his other self; it is and cannot help being a close relationship between the two, and as

one falls, so does the other - that too is inevitable. In the quote below, taken from the last pages of the book, Dr. Jekyll has regretfully come to terms with the fact that he will never be himself again. Although he looks in the mirror it is not Jekyll he sees anymore, Hyde has become obvious in his features even without the potion and the change. He has realized that he, Henry Jekyll, has no control of his body or his mind anymore, and whatever happens next no longer concerns him - the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll has come to an end.

This, then, is the last time, short of a miracle, that Henry Jekyll can think his own thoughts or see his own face (now how sadly altered!) in the glass. Nor must I delay too long to bring my writing to an end... Should the throes of change take me in the act of writing it, Hyde will tear it to pieces... And indeed the doom that is closing on us both, has already changed and crushed him. Half an hour from now, when I shall again and forever reindue [re-endue] that hated personality... Will Hyde die upon the scaffold? or will he find the courage to release himself at the last moment? God knows; I am careless; this is my true hour of death (61-62)

The inescapable relationship between Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is not the only influential and interesting relation in the text. There are two more characters that indeed contribute to the professional tone and the general professionalism of the story. As with Jekyll and Hyde, these relations stem from a professional place. The question of professionalism as well as the involvement of the word *case* become even more prominent seen in light of Mr. Utterson's occupation as a lawyer.

The Lawyer

Firstly, Mr. Utterson is continuously referred to as “the lawyer” so his profession is obviously of importance, and he is described as a very dependable man, someone that everyone trusts, a man that has earned the respect of his clients, and that has acquired a pristine reputation. Mr. Utterson is also described as the last good influence on fallen people - “ ‘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 on the lives of down - going men.”

(7). Now, this could surely be interpreted as a stroke of kindness in the man, however, I would suggest that his preference to let people “go to the devil in their own way”, is a representation of his professionalism as a lawyer, he does not really need to have an opinion of his clients, all he has to do is represent them and look out for their best interest in their darkest hours, he knows his place - as is the case with Dr. Jekyll. For even though Mr. Utterson and Dr. Jekyll are said to be old and close friends, it appears that Utterson’s interest in Dr. Jekyll’s case is, to start with, strictly professional. What starts off the lawyer’s investigation is the wording of Dr. Jekyll’s last will and testament, where the sole benefactor of his possessions and money is the mysterious Mr. Hyde - “This document had long been the lawyer’s eyesore. It offended him both as a lawyer and as lover of the sane and customary sides of life” (13). Here we see the clear contrast between Mr. Utterson and his client Dr. Jekyll. Where Dr. Jekyll is desperate to find an outlet for his passions, Mr. Utterson prefers, as he says, a sane and customary way of living. He has his routines and seems to get his portion of wickedness through his downcast clients. “It was his custom of a Sunday, when his meal was over, to sit close by the fire, a volume of some dry divinity on his reading desk, until the clock of the neighbouring church rang out the hour of twelve, when he would go soberly and

gratefully to bed" (12). It is obvious that it is important to Mr. Utterson that things happen a certain way, this is probably why the strange clauses of Dr. Jekyll's will make Utterson take a keen interest in the Jekyll and Hyde case.

Although part of his interest stems from a professional point of view, he does seem to care about Henry Jekyll, and their friendship appears to date back to their younger days, Mr. Utterson even calls Henry Jekyll "Harry" which must be a name used only by his closest friends. Utterson is immensely worried that an old secret of "Harry's" might be the reason for this Edward Hyde's place in the will, he also worries that Hyde's want for money will eventually end in poor old Harry's assassination. Even though Mr. Utterson is involved with Dr. Jekyll on a personal level, he still retains a professionalism. He is even asked by Dr. Jekyll to treat him like he would any other client and continue to protect his assets and interests and not get too personally involved, so Dr. Jekyll can avoid lightening his heart as a true friend would:

"You know I never approved of it," pursued Utterson, ruthlessly disregarding the fresh topic. "My will? Yes, certainly, I know that," said the doctor, a trifle sharply. "You have told me so." "Well I tell you so again," continued the lawyer. "I have been learning something of young Hyde." The large handsome face of Dr. Jekyll grew pale to the very lips, and there came a blackness about his eyes. "I do not care to hear more," said he. "This is a matter I thought we had agreed to drop." ... this is a private matter, and I beg of you to let it sleep. (20)

Dr. Jekyll implores Mr. Utterson to leave the will be as it is, and to honor the strange clauses of the will, both as a friend and as a lawyer, " I only ask for justice; I only ask you to help him for my sake" (21). Even though Dr. Jekyll has begged Mr. Utterson to be

professional, he simultaneously appeals to Utterson as a friend. He is purposefully ambiguous to ensure that his wish is properly seen to. Their friendship does not extend to full disclosure in such a highly personal matter - the secret must be kept - but nevertheless, it does serve to keep the respect of both their professional careers and personal lives - let the doctor experiment in peace, and the lawyer shelter his client's secrets and interests.

Secrets are a big part of this story, and in my opinion Dr. Jekyll's secrets are what Mr. Utterson tries to keep, and they are part of what makes him so interested in the clause in the will and the presence of Mr. Hyde. As formerly mentioned, the *case*, or in this connection the *fall* of Dr. Jekyll is what Mr. Utterson seeks wholeheartedly to prevent. Because connected to the professionalism of their respective occupations comes a certain social standard, as well as a social perception of who they are and how they carry themselves outwardly. Nevertheless, the point is that Mr. Utterson worries about Dr. Jekyll because he believes there are socially damaging secrets that have put his friend in a compromising position, something that is sure to ruin the doctor's reputation, and perhaps in turn his own reputation. He sees himself as the last reputable acquaintance to the downtrodden and miserable men, and manages this without any marked "change in his demeanour" (7). However, as far as we know this is only true when he deals with people outside his social circle, he might be the recipient of a much different reputation by association if a close friend and a doctor at that, has involved himself in something way below his social stature - especially because he has to serve as his lawyer and protect his interests no matter what he is guilty of. Nevertheless, Mr. Utterson is the only one who is trusted it appears, perhaps this is also partly because of his profession, for he is the one to which everyone chooses to tell their story, to confess, and will inevitably be the one who conveys the story further - as Dr. Jekyll admires: "

This is very good of you, this is downright good of you, and I cannot find words to thank you in. I believe you fully; I would trust you before any man alive, ay, before myself” (20). Even so, Jekyll does not trust him enough to share his secret, perhaps because he is ashamed for both his desires and his way of coping with them.

Eye of the Beholder

Another point to mention is how the language in the text contributes to the creation of an atmosphere of professionalism. This in turn underlines the importance of the main characters’ occupations, it also strengthens the air around the characters’ social reputations. Firstly, as already mentioned, the title of the story provides certain associations; already here we encounter the anticipated professionalism of a doctor and one of his case studies. However, as we reach the last chapter: “Henry Jekyll’s full statement of the case”, the associations around the word have changed. Now the case is no longer the doctor’s, it now belongs to the lawyer, or some other authority. It is now a statement of a criminal case, or rather a confession of guilt or, as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, a case of conscience. Nevertheless, all the while professionalism is the main link that ties both associations together.

In Dr. Lanyon’s narrative we encounter complete professional behavior as well as curiosity. Like Dr. Jekyll in his dealings with Hyde, Dr. Lanyon takes on the role as physician when his friend and colleague makes the unusual request of bringing him a drawer out of his cabinet and deliver it to a stranger that shall present himself in Dr. Jekyll’s name. However, in contrast to Jekyll, what becomes strenuous for Dr. Lanyon is being Dr. Jekyll’s friend and at the same time respect him as a colleague. Again this balance between friend and professional proves difficult, and Dr. Lanyon chooses to relate the strange favor that is asked of him to his professional knowledge - he immediately diagnoses Dr. Jekyll with a case of cerebral disease - he acts professional

first and friend second. Also when Hyde makes his appearance to gain access to his potion and once more change back to Dr. Jekyll, Dr. Lanyon before anything else assumes the position of the professional - " I showed him an example, and sat down myself in my customary seat and with as fair an imitation of my ordinary manner to a patient" (45). The curiosity of the doctor, strictly from a professional point of view of course, is indeed what kills him in the end, for when given the choice between witnessing Hyde's transformation or letting him leave with no questions asked he chooses the former, with grave repercussions.

Think before you answer, for it shall be done as you decide. As you decide, you shall be left as you were before, and neither richer nor wiser, unless the sense of service rendered to a man in mortal distress may be counted as a kind of riches of the soul. Or, if you shall so prefer to choose, a new province of knowledge and new avenues to fame and power shall be laid open to you, here, in this room, upon the instant; and your sight shall be blasted by a prodigy to stagger the unbelief of Satan. (46)

The phrasing in the quote above is interesting, and I think it emphasizes the contrast between man's conflicting natures, as well as proves that the offer of receiving just a little more power and knowledge of something new and potentially career changing, something that might put you ahead professionally, is too tempting to pass up. For the choice is given entirely to Dr. Lanyon, although I would argue that the language and choice of words that Hyde makes use of is a little devious - it shall be done as *you* decide, *you* can choose to stay the same or be changed forever for the better, is what Hyde is

essentially implying. At the same time we see that Hyde is aware that there is a possibility to do and be “good”, that a service to a fellow human being can give just as much pleasure to some, as agony and other unusual pleasures give him - this is perhaps just Jekyll shining through. On the other hand Hyde paints a picture of a possibility to be almost almighty, however, with the powers of evil, and what will prove to Dr. Lanyon to be almost a demonic ritual. Furthermore, whatever happens it is made sure that it is Dr. Lanyon’s own decision. Hyde simply supplies the choices. Ironically enough, Hyde makes the doctor swear to uphold their profession - the part of the Hippocratic oath that says what you see or hear in the course of a treatment, must not be spread abroad. So even in a situation so extreme none of them forget their place or forget to be a professional. However, in the end it seems that no matter the amount of professionalism or the position one occupies in society, the necessity to, one way or another, quiet the impulse and slake the thirst of the suppressed desires that lay latent and unfulfilled within man’s primitive duality, must be taken care of in some way, and it seems in that respect that Dr. Jekyll’s transformation was inevitable. Was there really a way that the permanent transformation - that in turn led to Jekyll/Hyde’s murder/suicide- could have been avoided? Or would the curiosity as well as the greediness of a dual soul have dragged the doctor back into the destructive co-dependant relationship of his inner good and evil?

Chapter Two: The Picture of Dorian Gray - A place of borrowed youth

Social Circumstance

The Picture of Dorian Gray is undoubtedly Oscar Wilde's most famous and controversial work of fiction. As Nicholas Frankel mentions in his introduction to the 2011 annotated, uncensored edition of the novel: "[it] was the work that made him an iconic figure, in the eyes of both his supporters and his detractors, and that would later play a part in his downfall" (5). Wilde's first edition of the novel (1890) was indeed used as evidence against him, and he was in the end convicted of "gross indecency". The passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 made sexual activity of any nature between men unlawful, and Wilde was accused and tried for posing as a sodomite, in his writings among other things (Frankel, 16). Wilde was sentenced to two years of hard labor, after which he lived as an exile in France for the last three years of his life - "broken in spirit and body, bankrupt, and ostracized from respectable British society" (Frankel, 2).

Respectable British society features heavily in the novel, and can easily be accredited with a share of the "blame" when it comes to Dorian's immoral ventures. The Victorian era with its "Conformity, moral pretension and evasion", and living "in a period of much higher standards of conduct... to accept the moral ideals of earnestness, enthusiasm, and sexual purity" (Houghton, [Hypocrisy], 146-147), in other words a society with extremely strict views on morality and sexual restraint, has without doubt had a strong influence on Oscar Wilde and has in turn influenced the novel. However, Wilde is very clear in his view of art that it cannot be criticized from a moral stand point, as he puts it: "*There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all.*" (3). It is clear that he did not attempt to write "a moral tale", and that the influence of strict Victorian principles, as mentioned above, are

held up to criticism. The novel also shows the hypocrisy of the “respectable morality” among the upper classes. Dorian himself is perhaps the best example of this as he can move through various layers of society - he is a respectable member of high society and acts accordingly when he is in the presence of Ladies and Lords, however, his soul swap with the portrait triggers lusts and desires which are well outside the norms. He seems to want to commit certain acts that go so strongly against the strict moral guidelines of Victorian society that they have to be kept secret. One of these exploits is undeniably connected to Oscar Wilde’s own incarceration for being a homosexual. Yet, whether or not Dorian participates in any homosexual activity is unclear, although critics have made assumptions about him as well as other characters in the novel:

early British readers were cognizant of the ways in which the novel challenged conventional Victorian notions of masculine sexuality, particularly through its preoccupation with the homoerotic and emotional relations between the three main male characters... *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is one of the first novels in the English language to explore the nature of homoerotic and homosocial desire... it plays a cat- and- mouse game of hiding and revealing the fact that homoerotic desire is the force that animates its still gripping, macabre plot. (Frankel, 7-8)

Within the novel itself we are presented with a scenario that suggests his involvement with someone who he has had a relationship of that very nature with, namely Alan Campbell who Dorian blackmails to get rid of Basils body.

‘I am so sorry for you, Alan,’ he murmured, ‘but you leave me no alternative. I have a letter written already. Here it is. You see the address. If you don’t help me,

I must send it. If you don't help me, I will send it. You know what the result will be. But you are going to help me. It is impossible for you to refuse now. I tried to spare you... Campbell buried his face in his hands, and a shudder passed through him. (143)

As Robert Mighall notes in his introduction to *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Tales of Terror*, "Blackmail and homosexuality have a long history of association" (xix), so the nature of Dorian and Alan's relationship comes across as rather straightforward. No wonder blackmail was so easy, when being a homosexual was punishable by death until 1861, and continued to be illegal (in Britain) until the late 1960's. Nevertheless, this specific "crime" is only part of what makes Dorian "the villain" of this story, for although it is difficult to write anything on *The Picture of Dorian Gray* without commenting on Oscar Wilde's own life and relationships, the homosexual undertones of the novel will not be the focus of this chapter. As I am using the second edition of the novel, the revised and expanded version of the text in my view makes the contrast between Dorian's performances very well defined, especially where Sybil Vane is concerned. It also shows very well the development of Dorian as he finds that he has the potential to be, not only immortal, but also beautiful, however, also paranoid and terrorized as a consequence of his callous and despicable way of life.

In addition to social circumstances, it is also his relationships with both Basil and Lord Henry that are intriguing. Their effect on Dorian is very significant, and one can almost hold them responsible for creating him - like a Frankenstein monster built of vanity and selfishness. However, Basil and Lord Henry cannot be responsible for everything, and I doubt that Lord Henry at least, ever imagines that his influence is anything other than interesting, sprinkled with the right amount of controversy. He truly

enjoys having a follower, a protégée whose ideas and “philosophies” he can shape and then hear them repeated back, perhaps with a little extra shock value. Lord Henry is an expert in supplying phrases that he passes off as his life philosophies, although it is rather said to shock and delight his audience of likeminded friends, who are his ever so loyal audience - “He was brilliant, fantastic, irresponsible. He charmed his listeners out of themselves, and they followed his pipe laughing. (39). Basil on the other hand seems to understand the consequences of his flattery, but by then it is too late, and Dorian must be held accountable for his actions.

Portraits

As discussed in the first chapter of the thesis, the changing meaning and the etymology of certain words can lend an extra depth to the story and extend the meaning of something in one direction or other. Again, take the title of the novel, although this title does not seem to contain the same mystery as the title of *The Strange Case*, there are several aspects to the word “picture” that especially concern the theme of “an other” and in turn, place.

The portrait has always served a purpose through out history, and it has been normal to either paint or sculpt people, specifically people of great power or of great wealth, to commemorate a leader for instance, or to honor deceased family members, or simply because you had money to commission one. Furthermore, portraits were used in the 1400 and 1500’s by doctors to give diagnoses - the patient being the person in the picture. Portraits were supposed to depict the personality as well as the physical state of the person represented in the picture. Therefore a gifted painter should be able to properly transfer all traits of the sitter on to the canvas, and was often held responsible if the portrait did not match up with looks, health and personality. Marriage based on

attributes as shown in a portrait remained common until the latter part of the 1700's, even though diagnosing a patient by their portrait stopped being conventional during the 1600's.⁴ Although the practice of using portraits as a means of diagnosing patients ended long before the release of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the portrait in the novel is indeed used as an indicator of Dorian's physical and mental state, perhaps with greater weight on the latter. As Dorian's morals deteriorate, so does the painting, and it becomes a very accurate indication of the state of his soul.

Furthermore, when it comes to the meaning of the word "picture", it is defined in several ways, but in the interest of the novel there are four uses of the word in particular that are of interest. Firstly it can mean "a mental image, an impression or idea created in the mind; the sum of impressions apprehended mentally; an intellectual model or framework of understanding" (OED). The portrait very much acts as a framework, it is the very reason for the story's existence. The portrait also contributes to the understanding of the change going on in Dorian, and at the same time it lets Dorian see the change that goes on in him, and as he mentions on several occasions, he uses the picture as a moral compass - "For every sin that he committed, a stain would fleck and wreck its fairness. But he would not sin. The picture changed or unchanged, would be to him the visible emblem of conscience. He would resist temptation" (78). Of course he never does follow his own avowal. Two other meanings of the word are: "the circumstances as they are"(OED) and "a person or thing seen as the embodiment of some quality"(OED). The portrait shows the circumstances as they really are and it embodies quite strongly the qualities that Dorian has chosen to adopt. Still, it is only known by Dorian himself and the reader how precisely the picture mirrors his soul. Of

⁴ All information on this subject taken from: "Hva er Portrettets Diagnose?" by Daniel Johansen. Tidsskrift for Norsk Legeforening, nr. 12/13. 2012; 132.

course Dorian has chosen to place the painting far away from the world so the true nature of things can stay hidden, and the true nature of his being will not be exposed to anyone but himself. Lastly, there is a meaning of the word portrait that describes the circumstances around Dorian and the painting as doubles which very accurately sums up who Dorian has become: "A person who strongly resembles another; a person who appears to be a likeness or image of someone or something else. Also (in early use) derogatory: a person who is a poor imitation of someone or something else; a counterfeit" (OED). It is mainly the derogatory part of this definition that is on the mark in relation to Dorian. He indeed becomes a poor imitation of the Dorian that everyone thinks they know. He is a counterfeit version of himself, meaning that he is a false representation of what people believe him to be. Just like a forged coin his looks do not equal his value so to speak. He manages to deceive everyone around him exactly because of his looks - only the portrait knows the truth about his mismatched body and soul. The picture is both a poor imitation of the man Dorian used to be and a very accurate vision of who he is gradually becoming. The picture displays the corrupted soul that lives in Dorian, while his exterior conceals the reality of his disposition. The picture also serves as a mirror for Dorian, a way for him to observe his evil deeds unfolding through observing the change in his features. He also marvels at his own cleverness, how easily he can carry out all this maliciousness without any noticeable change in his outward appearance while his soul quite clearly changes on canvas.

Often, on returning home from one of those mysterious and prolonged absences that gave rise to such strange conjecture among those who were his friends, or thought that they were so, he himself would creep upstairs to the locked room, open the door with the key that never left him now, and stand, with

a mirror, in front of the portrait that Basil Hallward had painted of him, looking now at the evil and aging face on the canvas, and now at the fair young face that laughed back at him from the polished glass. The very sharpness of the contrast used to quicken his sense of pleasure. He grew more and more enamoured of his own beauty, more and more interested in the corruption of his own soul. (106)

He seems delighted that he can observe his own transformation - watch himself deteriorate and rot on canvas - and then compare it to the bewitching, charming face he wears outwardly. Part of his thrill is the fact that the portrait is hidden, that he is the only one who knows of the hideous soul concealed in the house, in the play-room of his childhood. Also, as a true narcissist, Dorian finds it fascinating to watch himself watching the portrait and then to watch himself in the mirror - he is obsessed with his appearance, never mind which version of himself he is studying.

In addition to the importance of the portrait, and its many meanings, there are the equally significant relationships that have a considerable effect on young Dorian. As with *The Strange Case*, the relationships are central to the story, and represent both the importance of place in society as well as the significance of influence and the various roles that come with these relationships. There are several important relations in the text, between Lord Henry, Basil Hallward and Dorian in particular. However, Dorian's swift romance with Sybil Vane, as well as his relationship with the portrait of course, is very much of importance.

Sociability as Profession

What seems central to the character of Lord Henry is his indifferent view of the world and his self-centered way of life. He is a hedonist through and through, and this is exactly what he indoctrinates Dorian to do and be as well. Their relationship is based

solely on this carefree and dispassionate connection with the world and people from other walks of life than themselves. Similarly central to Dorian and Lord Henry's relationship is their position in society. They are both men of means, either through inherited wealth or wealth obtained through someone else's labor, the main point is that they have never, nor will they ever work for their privileges. Both of them, Lord Henry in particular, fall to the category of "the dandy" - someone whose finest achievement is to be simply himself, to look smart and elegant, to be magnificent in social gatherings and to always have a witty comment ready at hand to dazzle his audience. The main focus of the dandy, and in turn Lord Henry and Dorian, is to not have a job, at least not what one would call a proper job. As Lord Henry's uncle points out to his nephew: "I thought you dandies never got up till two, and were not visible till five" (30). Their job is precisely to be visible and to be visible in the right places at the right times. Their "occupation" is to be social, to attend parties, plays and dinners with their social equals. They live exclusively for that which is pleasurable:

The dandy has no occupation, and no obvious source of support... The dandy's achievement is simply to be himself. In his terms, however, this phrase does not mean to relax, to sprawl, or (in an expression quintessentially anti- dandy) to unbutton; it means to tighten, to control, to attain perfection in all the accessories of life, to resist whatever may be suitable for the vulgar but is improper for the dandy. To the dandy the self is not animal, but a gentleman. (Moers,18).

The dandy is also said to be "perfect in externals and careless of anything below the surface, a man dedicated solely to his own perfection" (13). This of course becomes the epitome of Dorian's existence, it is very much reflected in his relationship with Lord

Henry and of course in his obsession with the painting. The surface is always what's in focus, so to penetrate the surface is terribly uninteresting and no one ever pays it any attention. Nobody, not even Dorian and Lord Henry, really know each other beyond their exterior, the only indicator of personality seems to be through reputation, and that can be presented in so many ways - for better or worse. Lord Henry's interest in Dorian is purely physical - it is youth he wants, both the appearance as well as the young and impressionable mind. With respect to the issue of the profession of the dandy, looks is ever so crucial. It is worth noting their disdain for those who immerse themselves in the studies of the learned professions - any profession where one studies at university in order to pursue a desired occupation. Being intellectual is equal to being ugly and unpleasant to look at:

real beauty, ends where an intellectual expression begins. Intellect is in itself a mode of exaggeration, and destroys the harmony of any face. The moment one sits down to think, one becomes all nose, or all forehead, or something horrid. Look at the successful men in any of the learned professions. How perfectly hideous they are! (7).

Having a profession that contributes to society, which is very important in *The Strange Case* for instance, is more or less absent in Dorian's world. One would perhaps assume that, even though they do no manual labor, or labor in general, they would at least contribute economically to society or at least be moved by the suffering that they hear exist around them. However, this is not the case with Lord Henry, and therefore not with Dorian either -

“I can sympathize with everything, except suffering,” said Lord Henry, shrugging his shoulders. “I cannot sympathize with that. It is too ugly, too horrible, too distressing. There is something terribly morbid in the modern sympathy with pain. One should sympathize with the colour, the beauty, the joy of life. The less said about life’s sores the better” (37).

It appears that as long as it is out of sight it is out of mind and it is precisely this behavior of arrogance and thoughtlessness that is part of shaping Dorian’s mind. However, I do not believe that Lord Henry’s disregard for those less fortunate derive from a place of evil or malice. He simply does not have the capacity to care about anyone but himself, especially if there is no pleasurable aspect in it for him, he simply cannot be bothered. This is similarly seen in Dorian as he often manipulates incidents and his own feelings to correlate with whichever truth is most convenient at the time. As mentioned in the introduction of the thesis both Dorian and Jekyll misuse their power of status and Dorian his “power” of looks to get his way. This is seen in his relation to Sybil Vane - but also Basil and various others - something I will comment on later in the chapter. They always put their own needs before anything else, they live to worship themselves and seek only what gives them pleasure. Fortunately their place in society allows them these freedoms of self- indulgence.

It is evident that professions do not apply to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in the same way they do in *The Strange Case*, and therefore do not affect the relationships in the same way. In *The Strange Case*, professions are absolutely crucial to the relationships depicted in the novel and the roles that are performed by each character as I discussed in Chapter One. With Dr. Jekyll the issue is balancing the role of friend and professional in his relationship to Mr. Utterson. But with Lord Henry and Dorian there is

more of a master/apprentice relationship where Dorian parrots everything Lord Henry passes off as his philosophy of life.

It is only shallow people who require years to get rid of an emotion. A man who is master of himself can end a sorrow as easily as he can invent a pleasure. I don't want to be at the mercy of my emotions. I want to use them, to enjoy them, and to dominate them." "Dorian this is horrible! Something has changed you completely...It is all Harry's influence. I see that. (90-91)

Lord Henry is delighted by the idea of having someone to dominate. He loves the idea of, as he puts it, projecting his soul into someone else, especially someone who is young, beautiful and charming. This is Lord Henry's version of immortality, and Dorian plays right into his manipulations:

There was something terribly enthralling in the exercise of influence. No other activity was like it. To project one's soul into some gracious form, and let it tarry there for a moment; to hear one's own intellectual views echoed back to one with all the added music of passion and youth... He [Lord Henry] would seek to dominate him - had already, indeed, half done so. He would make that wonderful spirit his own. (34-35)

As mentioned, this one way influence is the cornerstone of their relationship, and has been since the first time they met - which is incidentally also when Lord Henry convinces Dorian that "youth is the only thing worth having" (26). Dorian of course enjoys the attention he gets from this older and wiser gentleman, and Lord Henry

similarly enjoys creating this “mini me” that echoes his life philosophies - then he can take credit for creating this “Prince Charming”. However, Dorian, instead of being this empty-headed vessel that mechanically repeats what he has been told, uses what he has learnt from Lord Henry - how to be cynical, selfish and vain, to corrupt other people - “They say that you corrupt every one with whom you become intimate, and that it is quite sufficient for you to enter a house, for shame of some kind to follow after” (128). Dorian does not only corrupt his own soul, he sort of becomes a reverse King Midas, everything he touches, or rather, everyone he meets is shamed and corrupted by him. What is striking though, is that Lord Henry does not notice the infamy that follows Dorian around. This is a side effect of his egotism - he barely notices that Basil is gone and they are supposed to be relatively close friends. When Dorian confronts Lord Henry with the possibility that he can do evil, and more or less confesses to Basil’s murder, Lord Henry once again uses Dorian’s beauty as an excuse. As I discussed in Chapter One, good looks and criminality are not associated with one another. Crimes are reserved for the ugly and the poor.

“What would you say, Harry, if I told you that I had murdered Basil?” said the young man. He watched him intently after he had spoken.

“I would say, my dear fellow, that you were posing for a character that doesn’t suit you. All crime is vulgar, just as vulgarity is a crime. It is not in you, Dorian, to commit a murder. I am sorry to hurt your vanity by saying so, but I assure you it is true. Crime belongs exclusively to the lower orders” (175-176).

This of course underlines the superficial nature of Dorian and Lord Henry’s relationship, and again the only thing relevant to Lord Henry is Dorian’s vanity. However, Lord Henry

is right about Dorian posing for a portrait of an ever changing character, this he does constantly - as discussed previously in this Chapter - he pretends to be, or rather presents various versions of himself depending on whose company he is in. When he is with Lord Henry and the rest of the social elite, he is the jovial protégée, the ever beautiful, young, witty, delightful Dorian - center of attention. In darker company he becomes the evasive, mysterious “Prince Charming” who conceals himself in the opium dens of London’s misty docks where he can “buy oblivion, dens of horror where the memory of old sins could be destroyed by the madness of sins that were new” (153) - known to the people there only as “the devil’s bargain” (157). Dorian is indeed a Faustian character, he has bargained his soul for beauty and eternal youth, and has, as Colm Toibin points out in this connection, “added the Faustian pact to an Irish legend, the story of Tir na nOg”⁵. Furthermore, not even when Dorian is alone and safe in his own home does he seem to know who he is. He is a combination of being extremely paranoid about anyone becoming aware of his secret in the upstairs room, and at the same time he relishes the changes he observes in the portrait. Nevertheless, none of these changes in personality seem to incapacitate Dorian in any way, except towards the end of the novel when his soul seems to be on overload, filled to capacity with sin, evil and paranoia. Even so, his various performances allow him to transgress certain social structures and move freely between geographical areas and contrasting environments. Again, central to his ability to transgress these boundaries are his looks -his beauty makes his evil excusable - this is very much due to his narcissism. However, there is one thing that it seems every member of the upper class have in common, namely the fear of

⁵ “The hero, Oisín, spends three hundred years in Tir na nOg - The Land of the Young - and thinks it only three years; then on returning to Ireland, ‘he instantly became a withered, bony, feeble old man,’ just as Dorian was found withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage” (*London Review of Books*, On Some Days of the Week, Colm Toibin, 8)

scandal. It is also in this respect that Lord Henry, much like Mr. Utterson, steps up to fill the role of friend and protector, to make sure his devotee is not connected to anything scandalous, such as the death of his former sweetheart. Sybil Vane's death indeed marks the beginning of Dorian's degeneration, and the start of his destructive relationship with the portrait.

Reversal of the Fairytale Prince

Dorian, who is starting to be very much run by his desires and emotions, taking after Lord Henry in pleasure seeking - "Out of its secret hiding-place had crept his Soul, and Desire had come to meet it on the way" (49) - suddenly falls hopelessly in love with the actress Sybil Vane. It is important to stress that it is the actress he falls in love with, the passionate performer who is all the great Shakespearian heroines wrapped up in one -

Night after night I go to see her play. One evening she is Rosalind, and the next evening she is Imogen. I have seen her die in the gloom of an Italian tomb, sucking the poison from her lover's lips. I have watched her wandering through the forest of Arden, disguised as a pretty boy in hose and doublet and dainty cap. She has been mad, and has come into the presence of a guilty king, and given him rue to wear, and bitter herbs to taste of. She has been innocent, and the black hands of jealousy have crushed her reed-like throat. I have seen her in every age and in every costume. (46)⁶

⁶ All parts in Shakespeare's plays - *As You Like It*, *Cymbeline*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and mostly relevant to this novel and the relationship between Dorian and Sybil a reversed - *Romeo and Juliet*

The only role he has not seen her in is as herself, and it appears that nobody else is ever themselves either. It is not only Dorian who performs, acting and playing a role is also central to the figure of the Dandy. And Lord Henry constantly behaves as if his life is a theatrical work and that he has the leading role in everybody else's lives as well as his own. Furthermore, Dorian is so mesmerized by the fact that she is an actress that he seems to forget that she is a real person. He sees her more like a thing that he wants and therefore must have and marry, no matter the cost: "I love her, and I must make her love me...tell me how to charm Sybil Vane to love me! I want to make Romeo jealous. I want the dead lovers of the world to hear our laughter, and grow sad. I want a breath of our passion to stir their dust into consciousness, to wake their ashes into pain" (49). What he describes is a desperately passionate romance, fairytale love, love that is all passion - love that most often ends in tragedy (see literary reference in footnote 2) - unfortunately Dorian falls as quickly out of love as well if it does not exceed or live up to his expectations. Then this "thing" he had to have has loses all its value and can easily be thrown away.

In the revised edition of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (the text I am working with) Sybil has been given an entire chapter (chapter 5), here her side of this sudden romance is described. This chapter, in many ways, sets the scene for Dorian's change and exposes his callousness and his tendency to make himself the victim if the situation should acquire it, as it often does it seems. Sybil's existence is structured like a fairytale, she is being whisked away from poverty as a struggling actress to be with a rich, handsome Prince Charming that will care for her and love her forever, or so she thinks. She envisions her life as a fairytale plot - the hero, or prince has now rescued her, the fair maiden in distress, and they shall live happily ever after. However, "Dorian's performance as Sybil's Prince Charming is a cruel reversal of the fairy tale prince"

(footnote in text, 53), and the fantastic romance she envisions for herself, the way she speaks about her own life and her brothers' life, the things she imagines for the both of them, some fantastic story that always has a happy ending, rather takes on the property of one of Oscar Wilde's own fairytales that often come across as sorrowful and tragic. The entire energy of Sybil's chapter overflows with romantic notions and blissful ignorance - "She was free in her prison of passion. Her prince, Prince Charming, was with her. She had called on memory to remake him. She had sent her soul to search for him, and it had brought him back. His kiss burned again upon her mouth. Her eyelids were warm with his breath...I love him because he is like what Love himself should be"(54). Needless to say she is desperately in love with this version of Dorian that appears to be the personification of love, her very own Romeo. However, this is not a part Dorian has agreed to play, he does not want to be "Prince Charming" in her fairytale production. Sybil's nonfictional love gets in the way of the authenticity of fictional, fake love - the kind that Dorian prefers - that she portrays on stage. The captivating performance that made Dorian fall in love and want to marry her is now just a detached, dispassionate presentation, and the most famous love story in history (*Romeo and Juliet*) is turned into a source of hostility towards the actress: "she was curiously listless. She showed no sign of joy when her eyes rested on Romeo. The few words she had to speak... were spoken in thoroughly artificial manner. The voice was exquisite, but from the point of view of tone it was absolutely false. It was wrong in colour. It took away all the life from the verse. It made the passion unreal" (71). It is indeed ironic that the true, real life passion is what makes Sybil's acting completely devoid of enthusiasm. This repels Dorian, as he seems to enjoy the fake version of Sybil, the Sybil that pretends to be someone else, the Sybil who presents life as an epic tale - a distorted version of life and love. " Dorian's relationship with the actress Sybil Vane condenses these attitudes

towards the poor and represents an early — but flawed — attempt at converting social experience into aesthetic pleasures... this performance is also what enables Dorian to maintain a slummer's fantasy of love between the classes; as soon as she stops acting, he loses interest" (Joyce, "Sexual Politics and the Aesthetics of Crime: Oscar Wilde in the Nineties", 414). It is solely the fact that Sybil is an actress - a poor one - that has Dorian worshipping her, perhaps because that version of Sybil compliments his own fake, shallow nature. However, Dorian does not appreciate Sybil's love when it is given only to him and not to her characters on stage, it makes him ashamed of her, and he behaves like a spoilt child who has just been given the wrong toy. When she pours her heart out, confesses her love and explains that he has changed her life with his love.

You taught me what reality really is. To-night, for the first time in my life, I saw through the hollowness, the sham, the stillness of the empty pageant in which I had always played...the words I had to speak were unreal, were not my words, were not what I wanted to say. You had brought me something higher, something of which all art is but a reflection. You had made me understand what love really is. My love! my love! Prince Charming! Prince of life! (73-74)

Dorian's response to this is so horribly cold and heartless. Her confession should be something that makes him happy, something that should make him love her even more, however, Dorian is directly hateful and claims she has ruined his life:

"You have killed my love," he muttered... You used to stir my imagination. Now you don't even stir my curiosity. You simply produce no effect. I loved you because you were marvelous, because you had genius and intellect, because you

realized the dreams of great poets and gave shape and substance to the shadows of art. You have thrown it all away. You are shallow and stupid. My God! How mad I was to love you! What a fool I have been! You are nothing to me now. I will never see you again. I will never think of you. I will never mention your name.

(74)

Indeed her Prince Charming has become a villain, and the first sign of evil, his cruel treatment of Sybil, has made its way into Dorian's soul and onto the portrait. As Dorian discovers the touch of cruelty in the painting he reflects briefly on his own behavior, but then he, as is usually the case, ascribes the blame of his lost love to Sybil - "It was the girl's fault, not his...she had disappointed him. She had been shallow and unworthy" (77). This placement of blame is very unjustly distributed, and it is of course ironic that Dorian places the blame on Sybil when it is he who destroys their relationship. Dorian only feels sorry for himself, but upon seeing the change in the portrait he swears he will resist temptation and use it as an emblem of conscience. However, Dorian grants himself forgiveness all too quickly - "When we blame ourselves we feel that no one else has a right to blame us. It is the confession, not the priest, that gives us absolution. When Dorian had finished the letter, he felt that he had been forgiven" (81). So when he gets the terrible news that Sybil has committed suicide, most likely because of his malicious outburst the night before, he has already forgiven himself and therefore finds it much more appropriate to join Lord Henry in the opera rather than waste his tears over Sybil Vane. The only one, who reacts to the complete insensitive behavior by both Lord Henry and Dorian, is Basil Hallward. Basil tries to be the moral voice in Dorian's life, although his voice is not heard until it is too late.

A Portrait of the Artist

The relationship between Basil and Dorian is initially strictly artistic. Dorian is Basil's muse and inspiration, and Basil even claims that Dorian's personality could encourage "an entirely new manner in art, an entirely new mode of style" (13). It is almost an understatement to say that Basil is obsessed with Dorian. He is not just a motive for Basil's art, but seems to be the energy, or force behind his creativity. Although Basil mentions that Dorian's presence is stronger in pictures where he does not himself figure: the infamous portrait of Dorian Gray is quickly given the title of masterpiece. One of the reasons Basil gives for not wanting to exhibit the portrait is that he claims to have put too much of himself into it

every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter. The sitter is merely the accident, the occasion. It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself. The reason I will not exhibit this picture is that I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my own soul. (9)

This of course generates the discussion of who the picture is really of - is it a projection of Basil's soul, Basil's perception of Dorian, or of Dorian Gray, and in that case, which Dorian is it? Perhaps it is a combination of all of the above and perhaps it changes throughout the story. What the secret of Basil's soul is can only be guessed at, but it is fair to make the assumption that the secret is connected to Basil's intense worship of Dorian, his complete idolization of this beautiful youth. The way he describes his meeting with Dorian and the vital presence of him in his life sounds like he is describing a lover, or a romantic relationship: "we were destined to know each other... I couldn't be

happy if I didn't see him every day. He is absolutely necessary to me" (11-12). He is indeed blinded by Dorian's beauty, and, as Donald L. Lawler remarks in his essay "Keys to the Upstairs Room: A Centennial Essay on Allegorical Performance in *Dorian Gray*": "Dorian's appearance of perpetual innocence enchants as it deceives all who do not know him" (*The Picture of Dorian Gray: A Norton Critical Edition*, 1988, 444). I have argued previously regarding Lord Henry and which also goes for Basil neither of them really know Dorian. However, Lord Henry has taken it upon himself to indoctrinate Dorian and therefore, in my view, knows him better because he is part of shaping Dorian's mind. Basil on the other hand, being the only one with morals, or at least with morals similar to the Victorian ideals of goodness, honour and purity, wants to be the voice of reason in Dorian's life but fails terribly. "As a moralist, Basil gives Dorian what the latter sarcastically refers to as "good advice" tells Dorian to ignore Henry's cynicism, and makes him aware of the rumors about his destructive influence on others" (Liebman, "Character Design in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*" 450-451). Because of Basil's exceptional infatuation with him he does not manage to see past Dorian's beautiful exterior or beyond the ideal Dorian that he has painted. But worst of all, for Basil I believe, is that he does not manage to have any influence on Dorian whatsoever, although he does get his fair share of the blame in making Dorian extraordinarily vain and obsessed with beauty.

Furthermore, if we are to continue the discussion of the portrait and what, or who it actually depicts, it is worth taking the author's own opinion into consideration. Oscar Wilde states in the preface to the novel that: "*It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors*" (4). In my view this is exactly right and supports the idea that the portrait contains more than just one projection of Dorian so to speak. It holds the vision that everyone has of Dorian, but it is shaped by their own personality, meaning that they

literally see him through their own eyes - Basil sees the Dorian that he worships and therefore cannot see his faults, Lord Henry sees the Dorian that can be dominated and molded as he wishes, and Dorian himself gets to see, not only the intensity of his own beauty that causes him to make, just like Faust, a soul selling wish for personal gain it is also as a result of this he finds that displayed on the canvas is the true nature of his soul. Dorian's duality is apparent already from the moment the portrait is finished.

The painter bit his lip and walked over, cup in his hand, to the picture. "I shall stay with the real Dorian," he said, sadly.

"Is it the real Dorian?" cried the original of the portrait, strolling across to him. "Am I really like that?"

"Yes; you are just like that."... "At least you are like it in appearance. But it will never alter," sighed Hallward. "That is something" (28).

So the question of identity becomes relevant right away, for all the main characters it seems. To Basil the real Dorian is the one he has imagined on the canvas, and, as mentioned is disappointed that Dorian would rather fall pray to Lord Henry's bad influence than stay with him and be adored by someone with good influence. It is ultimately Basil's anguished attempt at good influence, or rather attempt at forcing Dorian to realize that his evil undertakings have gone too far, that gets him murdered in a manner very much resembling Dr. Lanyon's demise in *The Strange Case*.

The Frayed Ends of Sanity

The absolute turning point of the story is Basil's confrontation with Dorian, the attempt to get him to be repentant for his actions. Basil is horrified by all the rumors he has heard about Dorian and is desperate to know if this man he has made an idol is in fact a

corrupted devil disguised by the mask of youth. This is very provoking to Dorian who blames both Basil and Lord Henry for the way he has become. When Basil questions if he knows and has ever known Dorian at all - "I wonder do I know you? Before I could answer that I should have to see your soul." (128), Dorian sees the opportunity to show Basil just how devilish and evil his soul has become. In a scenario that is very reminiscent of Dr. Lanyon's deathly decision to witness the transformation of Mr. Hyde into Dr. Jekyll, Basil is taken to the secret hiding place of the portrait.

He felt a terrible joy at the thought that some one else was to share his secret, and that the man who had painted the portrait that was the origin of all his shame was to be burdened for the rest of his life with the hideous memory of what he had done..."I shall show you my soul. You shall see the thing that you fancy only God can see." ... "You insist on knowing, Basil?" "Yes." ... "So you think it is only God who sees the soul, Basil? Draw that curtain back, and you will see mine." The voice that spoke was cold and cruel. (128-130)

The sight of the once pristine portrait, now a nightmarish display of Dorian's rotting soul, both frightens and horrifies Basil. However, his shock and disgust seems only to provoke Dorian, who, embracing his "uncontrollable feeling of hatred for Basil Hallward" (132) murders him. Yet again the playroom of his childhood is the place of a vile secret.

This marks a turning point in two ways. Firstly it marks the beginning of Dorian's increasing paranoia, he is terrified, both that people will find out he has murdered Basil and that they will discover the long hidden secret about his everlasting youth. Secondly, Dorian has now brought evil to a whole new place. Previously he has, again much like in

The Strange Case, kept his evil outside his own home, and in turn outside his social circle. He has now crossed a line in the sense that he has brought evil to a place that used to be a sanctuary away from his sinful ventures, a place that he can immerse and surround himself with beautiful things, so he can forget the ugliness that lives in his soul: "For these treasures, and everything that he collected in his lovely house, were to be to him means of forgetfulness, modes by which he could escape, for a season, from the fear that seemed to him at times to be almost too great to be borne" (117). However, now he has no place that is not tainted with his villainy, he no longer has a safe haven so to speak.

In addition he has also crossed the line from, what one can assume are sexual and drug related crimes, to extreme violence. He has never previously physically injured anyone, but Basil's murder is indeed very violent and dramatic. So his house is now a place of violence and of evil, and there is no amount of beautiful things he can fill his house with that will make him forget. However, as Dorian points out: "forgetfulness was possible still"(154), so he, as he has done so many times before, goes off to cure the soul by means of the senses, to buy oblivion in one of London's many opium dens. This is where Dorian runs into the main cause of his paranoia, Sybil Vane's brother, who had vowed to murder him if he ever broke her heart, and James Vane intends to make good on his promise. Even though James Vane is accidentally killed in one of his pursuits of Dorian, his presence has made Dorian very much on edge and has even convinced him to start doing good deeds. Unfortunately, Dorian is still shallow and vain, and his "good deeds" are only what normal human beings would call common courtesies and respect for fellow human beings. Besides he is not doing good to help others. He only tries to behave less villainously for his own benefit. Dorian is desperate for the portrait to change back so that he may have some peace of mind, and so that he can forget and

relinquish all responsibility for his evil undertakings, in addition he would no longer have to live with the image of his own corrupted soul. Upon contemplating his own will and ability to change, Dorian, in true fashion, pushes away all responsibility for his actions, all responsibility for his vanity and callous nature.

Basil had painted the portrait that had marred his life. He could not forgive him that. It was the portrait that had done everything. Basil had said things to him that were unbearable, and that he had yet borne with patience. The murder had been simply the madness of a moment. As for Alan Campbell, his suicide had been his own act. He had chosen to do it. It was nothing to him...Was he always to be burdened by his past? Was he really to confess? Never. There was only one bit of evidence left against him. The picture itself- that was evidence. He would destroy it... It had been like conscience to him. Yes, it had been conscience. He would destroy it. (182-183)

Dorian, being more or less at wits end, not knowing how else to escape his haunted soul, once more ascends the stairs to confront the source of all his misadventures. Dorian, ironically, destroys the painting and murders himself with the same knife that he used to murder the artist of the portrait. As it is with all soul selling contracts there comes a time when one must pay and so must Dorian. He would of course argue that he has been paying his whole life for one weak moment of vanity. This only enters the long line of excuses that Dorian has been making his whole life, and that others have made for him on account of his looks. However, when the painting is slashed

they found hanging upon the wall a splendid portrait of their master as they had last seen him, in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty. Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage. It was not until they had examined the rings that they recognized who it was. (184)

Dorian's body and soul has finally been returned to their actual state, and it is rather pitiful that something as unlikely as the premise of wanting to do good, to put his evil behind him, should be what ultimately caused the end of Dorian Gray. Nevertheless, whether or not he actually meant to change his ways one can never know, although, I do believe it was too late for him to change, that he would never be entirely free of his past or the influence of Lord Henry. The end of Dorian's evil is also sort of the start of pity for him, ever since he made the wish to stay young forever his fate had been sealed, since he chose to use his "powers" for evil, he would never manage to rectify his reputation with a few apathetic good deeds, so he had to die as the villain. It was never in his repertoire to perform the part of a hero, he was too fond of accommodating his own lusts and desires, and just like Lord Henry, too busy caring about himself to bother with the lives of others. Nevertheless one could wonder, just like with Dr. Jekyll, if all the evil, and murders, both Basil's, his own and the suicides he caused, could have been prevented somehow, or if the curiosity and greed for beauty and pleasure would have forced him into the dependence of the soul containing portrait.

Chapter Three: The Better Of Two Evils

Keeping secrets

Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* have been paired together more than once and seem to be a popular couple among critics when it comes to comparisons.⁷ It is not difficult to recognize that the two main characters, Dr. Jekyll and Dorian, have plenty in common and share many similarities both when it comes to their dual natures, as well as their acquired taste for evil and the journey there.

Similarities between the two novels are also found in the surrounding social structure that is created in the texts that in turn mirrors the social structure of the time period the novels are written in, especially with regard to their closest friends and acquaintances.

Also, what is relevant in both cases is unquestionably the way that the two novels present the question of evil within the two main characters and their surroundings.

Comparing the two novels has, as mentioned, been done many times before, especially with respect to the issue of doubling, or “The reliance on doubling as a symptom of a darkness within both culture and the mind” (Riquelme, “Oscar Wilde’s Aesthetic Gothic” 498). As well as being paired together because they both belong to the gothic genre, the question of homosexuality also features prominently with some critics. The focus of my

⁷ The two novels are compared and likened to each other for instance in *London Gothic* edited by Lawrence Phillips and Anne Witchard, *In Frankenstein’s Shadow* by Chris Baldick, as well as in some of the critical essays in The Norton Critical Edition of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Elaine Showalter’s *Sexual Anarchy*, and probably countless others.

comparison however, will be the main points of discussion that have permeated the two previous chapters, especially the importance of secrets, relationships and places of evil. To place Dr. Jekyll and Dorian's personalities side by side will perhaps further enlighten the question of accommodating evil and the circumstances around the two men's degeneration.

Firstly, one of the most important aspects of both stories is the issue of secrecy. Because of the watchful eye of society and the general public Dorian and Jekyll have to keep their true selves, as well as the qualities of their "others", secret. As a consequence of their secrecy, the nature of their undertakings falls prey to vicious speculations. Considering again the time in which the two narratives were written, as well as the previously discussed controversy surrounding Oscar Wilde, certain critics have made the assumption that these undisclosed ventures were of a homosexual nature. This is more than likely and has been proven many times over, in the case of Dorian Gray. *The Strange Case* as I have mentioned in Chapter One, differs wildly in my view when it comes to this particular angle of interpretation, although the before mentioned critics, Elaine Showalter and Colm Toibin, have made the suggestion that homosexuality is a topic in *The Strange Case* as well. Certainly the relationship between Jekyll and the mysterious Hyde - sneaking around, letting him live in his house and "providing" for him - would imply and indeed make Stevenson's contemporary readers believe that Hyde was blackmailing the good doctor, and as I have mentioned in the previous chapter - blackmail and homosexuality were closely connected at the time. Nevertheless, in addition to arguing that homosexuality is a backdrop in *The Strange Case*, Toibin also mentions in his book review "On Some Days Of the Week":

He [Robert Louis Stevenson] never mentioned that there were passages of his book which could be read as being about homosexuality. Nothing, it seemed, was further from his mind. But *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* was written in the year male homosexuality was criminalised and some readers at least would have been able to draw their own conclusions (7)

I believe that Stevenson, as Robert Mighall also suggests, made the nature of the relationship between Jekyll and Hyde seem to be of an erotic variety quite purposefully exactly so his readers would suspect that this was the reason for Jekyll's extensive secrecy where Hyde was concerned - "These circumstances appear to be carefully plotted to point to, without actually specifying, a suspicion that some erotic attachment is at the bottom of Jekyll's relationship with Hyde" (*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Tales of Terror*, 2003, xix). This theory has to be rejected of course when it is revealed that Jekyll and Hyde is one and the same. What is striking about both narratives though, nevermind the true intention of the homosexual undertones, is that this seems to be where the horror of the stories lies for Wilde's and Stevenson's contemporary readers. Both stories are indicators of how utterly shameful it was to have a sexual relationship, or for someone to think you had a sexual relationship with another man. It is also implied that sexual desires in general are inappropriate. As there are no explicit descriptions of what goes on when Dorian and Jekyll let their other selves take control of their lives, only that shame, anguish, and damaging rumors follow their secret exploits, the reactions of those around them, as well as the readers of the stories, are bound to ascribe them certain characteristics. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, and the introduction, the values of Victorian society do not correlate in the slightest with Jekyll's or Dorian's lifestyle. Social conventions and restraints are, for both

of them, a constituent that renders it necessary to keep secrets - their lusts and desires are considered highly inappropriate. And must be kept away from the judgmental eyes and ears of society. Furthermore, there is one thing the two men definitely have in common and that is the need for them, or perhaps more so for their associates, to keep their reputations pristine. The top priority of Dorian's and Jekyll's friends is to keep both of them, and themselves, in their respected positions in society, which in turn is the reason they need to keep their ventures hidden from the public eye. As I have argued previously, the extreme restraints and moral pressure is part of why the two men act out in the way they do, they need an outlet for their inappropriate desires - hence the experiment and the soul selling wish. Unfortunately, they both start exaggerating, they get carried away and come to enjoy their wickedness and the crossing of lines when they find out exactly how far they can go, how easily they can get away with it and how easily they can both be excused, or excuse themselves. Also they find it easy to manipulate the people around them into, unknowingly, protect their secrets.

Another interesting feature of both stories regarding secrets is that they prove to be deadly to those who learn the truth about Dorian and Jekyll's secrets first hand. One thing is speculating and making assumptions about what they do, another is to experience the actual root of their evil so to speak. Dr. Lanyon witnesses Hyde's transformation back to Jekyll, and Basil has to experience the portrait in all its hideousness, both encounters result in a very dramatic and agonizing death for the two of them. Both Dr. Lanyon and Basil fall victim to their own curiosity. They are presented with the choice of either experiencing something otherworldly - an insight to creation that will change their life, an opportunity to take part in something they "fancy only God can see" (128) - or to remain ignorant of that which is, or rather should be reserved for a higher power. Both Dorian and Jekyll promise their friends some form of higher

comprehension of their inner most secret, they offer them the chance to be spectators of something that will grant them “a new province of knowledge and new avenues to fame and power” (46). However, this revelation is so horrifying and inhuman to witness, that it cannot be unseen, it cannot be incorporated into their normal understanding of the world, there is nowhere to place the experience within their moral or professional understanding of the world, it ruptures the frame of reference and comprehension for both of them. The image of the ghastly portrait and the physical transformation from monster to man indeed disturbs the fragile minds of Basil and Dr. Lanyon, and it seems to be as equally tormenting to them as Dorian and Jekyll’s awareness of their own degenerating nature. As mentioned, it is impossible for the two observers to know where to place this incident in their realm of comprehension because they cannot share the information with anyone. They are more or less forced to carry the burden of these secrets and simultaneously keep them away from the outside world. The main point is that a secrets are destructive, they slowly work on the psyche, opening it up to paranoia and terror. These particular secrets also prove to be deadly, and contrary to what Dorian and Jekyll believe about their undertakings, their actions do have consequences and do affect their surroundings. Keeping secrets and balancing a double life is what undoes both Dorian and Jekyll, similarly it also ends the lives of Dr. Lanyon and Basil. What is also crucial in both texts and that the four of them have in common is their role as spectators. Basil and Dr. Lanyon as witnesses of the transgression from the normal to the supernatural. Comparably Dorian and Jekyll have to witness their own deterioration of body and soul. However, this is not all the leading men and their acquaintances have in common. What connects the narratives and what in many ways prove crucial to Dorian’s and Jekyll’s actions are the relationships they have with the people closest to them.

Protecting the Exterior

In my view the men in two novels rely very much on the involvement of “friends” and acquaintances, both as influence and as protectors of Dorian’s and Jekyll’s controversial reputations. The relationships in the two texts are central to the main characters’ development into their iniquitous other selves, to some extent because their associates are part of and represent the morality of the late Victorian society. However, as relationships have been discussed quite thoroughly in the two previous chapters, there is no reason to elaborate on these features here, except in the interest of comparing the outcome of the relationships in the two novels. In *The Strange Case* the relationships are not based on influence - very much in contrast to Dorian Gray where influence is everything. Dr. Jekyll’s entourage does not influence him at all in the way he conducts himself or his experiment. All he lets them do is protect his reputation, perhaps to spare their own reputations in turn, where as Dorian is much more exposed, and like a sponge he soaks up every little bit of input he gets from the infamous Lord Henry. In both cases however, their respective companions do all they can to protect Dorian and Jekyll from scandal and unfavorable exposure, in fact it appears to be more important to their social equals that their reputations stay immaculate than it does to them. The way that Dorian and Jekyll present themselves and the way they look to the outside world, both their physical appearance as well as the persona they display to their social circle, is very important, exactly because of their need for a solid reputation. Furthermore, physical appearance is equally important as reputation in both of the texts, though in slightly different respects. Dorian as we know depends on his looks in every aspect of his life. He uses it to cover up and smooth over the imperfections of his emotional and mental state.

Dr. Jekyll on the other hand, having the advantage of changing his appearance entirely - becoming the apelike, savage looking Hyde who indeed matches the description of a criminal low life - can distance himself completely from his twin in looks of crime and evil, and can instead get sympathy for his kindness to this hideous and suspicious connection of his, and so to the world Jekyll still looks the part of a trusted and respected doctor.

Another aspect of keeping up appearances for Dorian and Jekyll is to perform different roles in various parts of their lives. Performance is an important feature of both novels, not just for the main characters, but for several of the supporting characters as well. To all of these people it appears that "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" (*As you Like It*, Act 2 Scene 7, *The Oxford Shakespeare - The Complete Works*, 666). This I believe to be a fitting description of the characters in the two novels, especially in Dorian's world. In Dr. Jekyll's sphere the roles are fewer than with Dorian, but they are equally important. The focus of these performances is the issue of balancing the part of friend and professional, as discussed in Chapter One. Besides the double act of Jekyll and Hyde, there is the issue of performing professionalism for all the involved parties - Mr. Utterson, Dr. Lanyon and Dr. Jekyll. As mentioned in the chapter on *The Strange Case* it is easier for them all to stay "in character", to wear the mask of professionalism and propriety in each of their occupations. They all hide their friendship, their curiosity or their evil behind the pretense of professional interest. With Dorian and his acquaintances however, performance and acting are organic. They all behave exactly as if the world, and their lives were a giant stage: Lord Henry in particular who treats the people around him like an audience at all times. Furthermore, as I mention in Chapter Two, Dorian performs various parts depending on his

contemporary situation. However, the only play he refuses to be a part of is Sybil's fairytale production. Sybil whose life has revolved around acting, being someone else, finds it difficult to suddenly experience genuine emotions and to live a life that is her own, that she cannot rehearse for. Therefore she seems to create a fantasy for herself where she casts Dorian in a role he absolutely does not want, that of Prince Charming. Nevertheless, it seems that it does not really matter exactly what any of the characters do, or who they do it as, because the reason that they all rely on performance to keep their secrets, is to present society with a version of themselves that they know is conventional and correct - the proper version of a doctor or a Dandy. Furthermore, these various performances contrast because of people as well as places, something I have argued are crucial elements in both novels.

Inside vs Outside

There are many places that are important for the narratives and the two men in them. The places are often separated, both by what happens there, as well as where the places are located within the geography of London and within the homes of Dorian and Jekyll. Both of them seem to have purposefully separated their private spheres from the spheres where they execute their shady ventures, which are often geographically located away from the classy neighborhoods of their usual social circle. Both men have made their homes their safe havens, a place where they do not practice any evil, nor let any evil in. Dorian surrounds himself with material beauty in his home to shut out the images of horror and sin, and Dr. Jekyll keeps his "evil twin" out of the house and inside the laboratory in which he was made. Nevertheless, although they both do their very best to keep what happens outside detached from the sanctity of the inside, the lines are

inevitably crossed and so keeping them apart is no longer possible. For Dr. Jekyll the transformation into Hyde becomes inescapable, and as a consequence of not being able to control his transformation, Hyde moves into places he should never be - Jekyll's home and social circle - and worst of all he takes the place of Dr. Jekyll's personality. Dorian has also kept his endeavors out of his home and out of his social circle, however, as he commits murder in the most significant room of his house, evil has permanently made its way inside. In addition to their doubles, or double natures, extending from outside to inside in a physical manner, they also eventually take over Dorian and Jekyll's inside - their mental condition - in addition to the already effected exterior. This is also mirrored in the developing careless behavior that is seen in both Dorian and Jekyll transgressing from desires to violence - and as they cross these lines their inhibitions are not just lowered but slowly vanish, and so their other becomes more and more visible in their demeanor - both on portrait and in person. They both develop for the worse, their villainous tendencies and proclivity for evil only increase the further into their secrets and cover ups they get.

It seems to me that the motivation for both Dorian's and Jekyll's change is not to be villainous or to purposefully embrace evil - that is rather somewhat of a taste they acquire over time - it materializes from some wish of personal gain. Evil seems to be a consequence of their selfishness and vanity. As Terry Eagleton points out in his book *On Evil*: "We are born self-centered as an effect of our biology. Egoism is a natural condition, whereas goodness involves a set of complex practical skills we have to learn" (36). It appears that the "skills of goodness" become suppressed, and indeed surpassed by the biological sense of selfishness. It is evident that it is easier to nurture self-obsession and desire when these sides of Dorian and Jekyll's personalities have been suppressed and they have both more or less been forced into a place in society that does not approve of

such shameful features in the rigorous moral establishments they have made. Therefore the learned skills of goodness are pushed aside in favor of instinctive skills of selfishness, which is then accommodated and allowed to thrive. As this happens, both Dorian and Jekyll become more and more reliant on becoming their other selves - the projected manifestation of their souls. Both the portrait and Hyde start to take over and dominate the two men's psyche, as they become more and more addicted to having "an other" on which to project their guilt, responsibility and shame. Although there is a certain sense of remorse displayed by both the main characters - by Dr. Jekyll more so than Dorian - they somehow seem reluctant to let go of their unusual companionship even though they are very aware of the damage it does to their own minds. As Terry Eagleton also points out: "Evil is something which threatens to return for ever", Zizek writes... There is a kind of "obscene infinity" about evil— a refusal to accept our mortality as natural, material beings. Lots of men and women hope to live forever; the damned are those for whom this seductive dream has become atrociously real" (50-51).

This is partly what happens to the two men, the wish for eternal youth and a life without moral responsibility does not come without a cost, and it seems that towards the end of the narratives the atrociously real dream of eternal life, of never being rid of the other and of being left solely in one's own company has only one way out for Dorian and Jekyll. There is no way to stop their transformation, neither the rotting of the canvas of Dorian's soul nor the compulsive, uncontrollable shifts into Hyde. They have to destroy the outer manifestations of their souls, and unfortunately, as a side effect they simultaneously destroy themselves. For Dr. Jekyll death does not come as a surprise, it is rather expected, even slightly welcomed. Dorian however, is unaware that by destroying the picture he is destroying himself. For him it is an act of desperation, an attempt to get rid of the emblem of his conscience and his other consciousness so to speak. This to me

marks a big realization, and signifies an important point in the question of evil within the two novels. As the title of this chapter suggests, a choice has to be made by the two leading men. Just as they have both chosen to surround themselves with, and use their “powers” for evil, so they must consequently contemplate which evil they will inflict upon themselves in a sense. They have two options the way I see it, they either loose their lives by their own hands, or they live with the torturing knowledge of their past actions gnawing away at their sanity. Although we know how the two stories end, I believe that what had been worse for them would be the latter option that adds to the argument Eagleton makes in the quote above, as well as his argument quoted in the introduction to this thesis - hell is being stuck for all eternity with oneself - and all that entails. For it seems that the realization of the corruption in their own soul’s is what, on some level, makes them welcome death, or take to drastic measures such as splitting a portrait. On the other hand it is not until they learn of the irreversibility of their split minds that they start regretting their previous actions. Death is just a means of escaping everlasting insanity. So, are they really evil and selfish till the very end, or are they performing a favor by ending the lives of these unhappy men?

As I have tried to illustrate in this chapter, there are many similarities between the two novels, probably loads more than have been put into words here. For me much of the appeal of the two novels is linked to the reasons the two men have to either wish for eternal youth or a separation of consciousness, namely the social codes and standards of their time. Double consciousness or not, they must have been living double lives already because they are denying themselves to live by their true nature - this is destructive to all of them. This is truly the origin of their wicked ventures, and is what force them into places of evil. Being denied exploration and self-development makes

them vicious and vindictive towards society, and makes them blame others for their shortcomings so to speak.

An interesting aspect of the gothic that Judith Halberstam points out in her essay "An Introduction to Gothic Monstrosity" is that "most Gothic novels lack the point of view of the monster" (131). It is the other way around here I would argue - we get the point of view of the two men after their transformations are complete, and I would indeed call the transformed versions of Dorian and Jekyll the actual monsters. People become monsters either when they want something they cannot have, or when they are reluctant to give up their power, and Dorian and Jekyll fit the description. However, just like the most famous Victorian monster, Frankenstein's monster, they are "put together" by somebody else. They are products of the environment of their society, but does this really make their actions excusable?

Conclusion: Substantial Issues

Finding the Balance

Realizing that in the previous chapter I have actually summed up both Dorian's and Jekyll's characteristics, reasons, and justifications for their behavior, and in turn have concluded the discussion with posing a moral question. Therefore, having concluded the discourse and analysis of the two men, this section will comment on the larger, and I dare say unanswerable issues raised in the introduction: the issue of good and evil, especially the conflict it creates within us.

Discussing evil is always difficult, because the conditions of the debate are ever changing, and consequently nothing seems especially final or "concluding". All we can do is find new frames in which to place the discussion and hope they will provide some new insight to the phenomenon. However, one thing about evil that seems undeniable is, as Terry Eagleton points out - something that threatens to return forever - though I believe, always in new shapes and places. It sometimes appears that people are too enthusiastic when it comes to the invention of new and horrifying ways to harm and torment each other. This is what makes the aspect of discovering that evil is not just reserved as a label for "apparent monsters", but is something that can exist within anyone and everyone as well. It is frightening to imagine that we carry the potential to do and be evil and that it can be in existence anywhere. This is part of what Dorian and Dr. Jekyll illustrate with the creation and exploitation of their other selves - their infatuation with the darker side of human nature. What seems particular to this development of the other self is how it is strengthened in equal measure to it being stifled and suppressed by social convention. The more something is covered up or forced underground, the more

power it retains and so the more forcibly it erupts - "My devil had been long caged, he came out roaring" (*Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 56). The background, which contains and constrains both men's roaring reaction is their social surroundings and their professional standing in a community. Because they feel the need to hide the other part of themselves, they have to stage performances to shift focus away from their evil Other. This adjustment to various people and places underlines the difficulty of recognizing where and within whom evil is found. This is the most frightening thing about evil, it can be anywhere and everywhere, it can disguise itself as something safe and familiar and then suddenly change its features. What these secret places and performances illustrate is how the two sides of man cannot be separated, neither by science nor magic. All of the attempts to detach the two sides from each other only result in a further take over by the side that has built up the most survival power - the side of unexplored desires and evil endeavors. This is not to say that people in general are likely to let evil dominate their personality, although people are indeed fascinated by it. This is certainly seen in the many contemporary gothic, fantasy, and fairytale like TV shows and films. To quote one film in particular that deals with the topic of meaningless evil versus the sacrificial good - film number two of Christopher Nolan's Batman trilogy: *The Dark Knight* - "you either die a hero, or you live long enough to see yourself become the villain". Although this sounds very black and white, like you have to be either or, to me it connects with the two narratives discussed in the thesis because of the contrasting identities fighting for domination in both texts. As Dr. Jekyll points out: "if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both" (49). This is exactly what we see fought out in the two novels, the ancient struggle between good and evil, except that evil seem to have the advantage. Although I doubt that either Dorian or Jekyll possess the qualities of the traditional hero, however, initially they are not bad,

but as Dorian points out “Each of us has Heaven and Hell in him” (131). Hell only wins out because of circumstance, which I believe to be the root of their villainy.

Being opposed then to Terry Eagleton’s argument mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, that evil is without a cause, or rather without reason. This to me is an unacceptable premise, therefore I have chosen instead to see Jekyll’s and Dorian’s development in connection to their social influence - morality, class restrictions, the importance of reputation, and the pressure to hide parts of who they are.

The question if the villainous development of Dorian and Jekyll could have been prevented, or if curiosity and selfish needs would have been too overwhelming to ignore is more or less what I feel that the authors are asking - giving the reader food for thought because we have to consider the two sides within ourselves. Taking things to extremities illustrates the seriousness of the issue. Most of us have the ability to control our desires and our other impulses, so what makes Dorian and Jekyll different? I actually do not believe them to be so different. If we leave out the magic and supernatural elements of the stories, we are left with the belief in their own supremacy and plain old selfishness. All is done for personal gain and whether or not, as I have tirelessly argued, one can blame social circumstance and influence for setting them off, Dorian and Jekyll are the ones left with the responsibility of their actions, something they try to escape but cannot avoid. Even though there is some notion of pity for the two men in their final moments when they seem to realize the extremity of their actions, there is also a feeling of justice being served. It would be naïve if one were to accept the premise of their promise to stop and to change. Both because it is physically impossible for both, and because they are too mentally affected, which makes it impossible to move on. Even though they display some sense of remorse, it is not good enough so to speak. Their repentance is

denied in a sense because it is not perceived as genuine. They are sorry for themselves, not for all the people they have harmed along the way.

Being part of the gothic tradition, the two narratives aspire to evoke terror in the reader, and what these novels evoke are the several terrors of finding that evil can quickly escalate from the little things and how easily we change ourselves to fit the conventions of others. This makes us harbor resentment and vengeful thoughts because we are discontent with having to perform in a world constructed by somebody else. Nevertheless, neither of these tales was invented to serve as moral education. They are tales of entertainment, and are supposed to be exiting to read. To analyze them however, makes you speculate about the human condition - how susceptible we are to our surroundings, and how fascinated we are by things that are unexplored to us - in this case evil. As Terry Eagleton reminds us: "which seems central to the idea of evil. It has, or appears to have, no practical purpose. Evil is supremely pointless" (84). Perhaps this is why we continuously keep exploring the subject because it is not acceptable that if evil has no meaning or purpose, it is allowed to continue to happen. So we, either through analysis and discussion or by literally choosing for ourselves acts of evil, try to understand its nature. It is of course when we stop recognizing ourselves and the person we have become, that is when we know it has gone to far. Exactly because evil is so pointless the reason for it seeming so gratifying to many is baffling. However, that just leaves us, again, with the question of what evil is, because people are the varying factor. The cliché answer is always that there is no answer, or at least no right answer. Nevertheless, aren't books written both to provoke and to force us to think about the human condition, social conventions, morals and big questions just like what is good and what is evil? Judging ourselves as better or worse than Dorian and Jekyll really has no purpose. What we actually should strive for is to find a balance between the two selves

because that is what we need - as I have mentioned, we need opposites so we are able to see things in relation to each other - that is why the balance between the two are all-important. If we are either, we are radically both and must find some stability between the heaven and hell within. It is not life that the two novels really mirror it is the readers and their perception of good and evil.

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