Spezialgebiet Englisch

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On

Robert Louis Stevenson

His

And

OLALLA

Content

1 Foreword

Short in years his life may have been, but certainly not short of imagination. Listening to the voices in his head, or, as he used to express it, to “follow the soliciting of the little people, the Brownies”, who kept on whispering during his dreams, Robert Louis Stevenson ventured to create some stories that are unlike most tales of his time still quite prominent today. Amongst his greatest works reside the marvellous adventures the famous Scotsman bore on paper. One of these wonderful novels, every man in this world should have read as a kid, is *Treasure Island*. This is a tale that has to be devoured with a mind devoid of adult perspicacity and grown-up serenity but with childlike imagination still far from being rationalized. What great loss it is for a man never to have identified himself with young Jim Hawkins sailing along with John Silver to the distant horizon where great treasures are hidden. Another one of Stevenson’s most prominent adventure stories is known under the title *Kidnapped*. The story for young and old takes the reader on a fascinating journey through the Scottish landscape, on ship around Cape Wrath and on foot over the heathens. But to know not more than his adventure tales would be like seeing only half of the face Stevenson’s imagination assumes. There is another half, a darker side, to which Stevenson devoted himself in his work. A variation of literature very prominent all through the nineteenth century is the so-called Gothic story or Gothic novel, which will be explained later on. Here be anticipated that it deserves to be called the earliest form of a very noble kind of literature still highly prominent today: Horror fiction. Tales born on paper by Stevenson’s plume like *The Body Snatcher* or *Olalla* are perfect examples for this delicate genre. But there is one more story of his, being of such grandeur that it has entered the world’s collective consciousness and outlived its creator for a whole century and more, making him immortal. Only two other works of Gothic literature have been thus influential. These are Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, also present in the collective consciousness of the world. Stevenson’s most prominent, most famous work of horror fiction is equal on importance to these two. A case it is, a strange case, of two men being one. *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is a work of mythic grandeur. Many movies, sketches, cartoons, parodies, dramas, even one musical have been based on that terror tale. The term of a “Jekyll-and-Hyde personality” has gained access in the dominions of modern dictionaries. Interestingly, most people know Stevenson’s story without knowing it, meaning that although to the majority the central idea is clear, the actual shape of the tale of terror remains in utter darkness. In here, I dare bring light to it.

2 Robert Louis Stevenson – A Storyteller's Tale

In the year of 1850 a boy who would soon adopt the name of Robert Lewis Balfour Stevenson was born. Being a son to a more or less prosperous engineer and to a daughter of a family of lawyers, young Robert was of quite noble descent. As the oldest son he should be destined to take over the family business, as it was the thing the Presbyterian society would expect him to do. However, be it due to the voices in his head soliciting that there were greater enterprises to achieve or merely because of his distaste for his parents and their way of life that Stevenson refused to study engineering and instead ventured to commit himself to the subject law. At the age of twenty-five this is finished and the young 'advocate' is ready to practice his profession, a thing he would, as a fact, never do, for two other things were changing the path of his life at his early twenties, for good and ill. He became afflicted with a severe respiratory disease that should make him suffer all his life and initiate his desperate search for a climate, which could soothe his illness. The other thing that defined his future was the decision to become a professional writer.
Being fond of travelling it seems naturally that Stevenson's early works are about his voyages. He wrote accounts on his trips through Northern France, over the Cevennes and other regions, which were published in various magazines. In 1870 Robert Louis Stevenson (his middle name was changed on purpose from Lewis to Louis since he fancied the French form) travelled to California to marry his American acquaintance Fanny Osbourne who was ten years older than him. His first real success as a writer was in the year of 1883 as he published *Treasure Island*, the base of his future reputation for tales of action and adventure. In 1884 Stevenson returns to England settling down with his wife in Bournemouth, where the mild coast climate improved by the Gulf Stream suites his delicate health better then the rough weather of Scotland. It is here that Stevenson ventures to write his most "scary" works that show deep insight in the darker parts of the human psyche. *The Body Snatcher* is published at Christmas in 1884, *Olalla* one year later and finally in January of 1886 the great storyteller's most prominent tale *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* undergoes it public appearance. Interestingly, the writer was financially dependant of his father until the year of 1886 when this most influential story of his made Stevenson's reputation. In the very same year the writer enjoys another quite important success. In the novel *Kidnapped* he resumes the genre of the adventure tale and returns to his Scottish roots. Stevenson knew much about Scotland's cultural past and being a Scot he shows great sentiment for it as it is to be observed in works like *Kidnapped* or its sequel *Catriona*, which was written seven years later. Soon after the breakthrough of his

son, Thomas Stevenson dies. Robert Louis relation to him has been marked by life long conflict, also perceivable in his works.
In the year of 1888 the writer undertakes a trip to the South Seas where he finds great relief of his physic disposition on the islands of Samoa. After creating a few more stories of lesser importance Robert Louis Stevenson eventually succumbs to his lifelong illness in the year of 1894 at the age of forty-four.

3 The Gothic Novel

Making its appearance in mid-eighteenth century England the Gothic Novel is a genre of literature that introduced to its contemporary readership a new kind of entertainment: fear The Gothic Tale was an immediate success. People have always liked to be scared. It is with this genre that horror fiction entered the dominions of literature and there it has kept its place until today.
The shape of a Gothic Novel is quite different from case to case. However, some characteristics stay the same. In his Introduction to Bram Stoker's *Dracula* Leonard Wolf gives a quite ironic description of the typical form of such a tale. Here it is:
"Characteristically, a Gothic novel has as its protagonist a beautiful and genteel young woman who is pursued by a tall, dark villain who has darkly erotic evil on his mind. The reader follows her flight and his pursuit through a variety of ominous places: ruined castles, noisome caves, prison cells, vaults, sepulchres, monasteries or convents. There are rooms with trapdoors, secret passageways, portraits that leave their walls and walk, animated skeletons, and talking ghosts. Usually, but not always, the heroine is saved from what used to be called a fate worse than death by the heroic efforts of a young, handsome, sexually unthreatening man who, as the novel ends, turns out to be as rich as he is heroic and, coincidentally, to be in need of a wife"
Well, that may be true, in a way, for many Gothic tales, most prominent amongst them *Dracula* (1897) or even more Gaston Leroux's post-gothic gothic novel *The Phantom of the Opera* (1939), but a great number of stories belonging to the same genre are very unlike the description above claims, like Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* or *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.
However, gruesome elements like ruined castles, old mansions, dark towers or all the other features mentioned are to be found in any Gothic Tale. Oftentimes the story takes place in an eerie landscape (like Transylvania in *Dracula*) and the time of the year usually is

autumn. Characteristic for a Gothic Story is the phrase “It was on a bleak November evening that…”. And one element that can be observed in nearly every tale of this genre is the horror-fiction-writer’s good old friend “fog”, obscuring landscape and story making things seem what they are not and cause fear. Said briefly, a Gothic Novel is a tale of mystery, horror and suspense having a pseudo-medieval setting.

3.1 A Genre’s History

The first Gothic Novel ever is Horace’s Walpole’s *The Castle of* Otranto, published in the year 1764 on (how could it be different) Christmas Eve. It does already show many characteristic features like bizarre supernatural occurrences and is presented as a medieval manuscript recently found to undermine its “credibility”. What was so striking new about Horace’s tale is the fact that the novel had been hitherto concerned with rational, realistic experiences of the modern day, never accounting of strange, supernatural, medieval elements. With *The Castle of Otranto* (1794) this changed and the future novel market was destined to be flooded with other Gothic Tales.
Next in the line follows Ann Radcliffe’s *Mysteries of Udolpho* and other stories by her. Radcliffe probably is the most prominent writer of Gothic fiction in the late eighteenth century having the power to compel her readers with ingenious plots of dark mystery. Other prominent Gothic tales of that time are Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* (1796) and Charles Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820).
At the century’s change critics remarked that nearly all fiction on the market was about diabolic revenges, family curses, ancient castles, or monasteries surrounded by dark forest. The Gothic Novel was quite dominant.
It is in the early nineteenth century that a new creature that would soon be its chief representative enters the world of Gothic fiction, the vampire. This development started on a famous rainy night in June 1819 when a small group of people gathered in a villa near Geneva to eat dinner. The host was Lord Byron and his guests were Percy Shelley, his wife Mary and a physician by the name of John Polidori. The weather on that remarkable night was quite spooky and the company soon ended up telling ghost stories. Then Byron made a remarkable proposal: “We will each write a ghost story”. This was done (not on the same night of course) and two important pieces of world literature, especially Gothic literature, were produced. Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* (1816) and the physician John Polidori produced *The Vampyre*, introducing the undead to the novel.

Soon more vampires like Thomas Preskett Prest's *Varney the Vampyre* (1847) and Sheridan LeFanu's *Carmilla* (1872), the first female vampire, followed. Then the most famous undead of all time made his appearance. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) started to haunt his readership.

Of course there were not only vampire tales. At the ending nineteenth century other subjects of horror enjoyed much popularity as well. Amongst them are also tales by Robert Louis Stevenson like *The Body Snatcher* (1884) and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886).

At the turn of the century after the great success of *Dracula* the Gothic Novel kind of subsided letting other forms of literature and soon movies frighten the world. But one novel has still to be granted with the attribute Gothic: Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera* (1939) being quite as prominent as Jekyll and Hyde, Dracula and Frankenstein.

3.2 Christmas Crawlers

Christmas is a very strange time. The world is more quite, the families gather together, days are short and dark nights last longer than at any other time of the year. The people hesitate to go out at night a hide themselves in safety behind locked doors. As experience shows, the interest for supernatural and creepy tales is on its peak around Christmas Eve. Many stories have been written in this tradition, for example Charles Dickens's famous *A Christmas Carol*. Stevenson's tales of terror were also meant to be Christmas Crawlers, a term attributed to spooky stories published in the days before Christmas and enjoying great interest.

In the years when Stevenson made his contribution to horror fiction, he was living in Bournemouth with his wife and her son from an earlier marriage. Being a professional writer since fourteen years but still financially dependant on his father was quite a shame, so he set about to make some money. This was to be accomplished by the creation of some 'shilling shockers' for the Christmas market. In 1884 *The Body Snatcher* was published and for December 1885 Stevenson had prepared *Olalla* and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.* However, the publication of the latter had to be delayed according to the crowded market. It was published in January.

Stevenson's Christmas Crawlers go along with the tradition of the Gothic Novel introducing some new aspects to this genre.

3.3 Gothic Constructions

One characteristic constructional feature of the Gothic novel is its narrative complexity. The story does not consist of the unending word flow of an auctorial narrator but is composed out of a number of reports, testimonies, manuscripts or letters accounting coherently of the events. The story is a synthesis of various viewpoints, the momentary narrator never having the full picture. The effect of this is often more thrilling than it could be achieved through one single viewpoint distant to the story. The whole tale is covered with a nimbus of credibility. It feels realer.
A good example of Gothic fiction where this characteristic is developed to a very high extent is *Dracula*. In this novel the viewpoint changes many times from Jonathan Harker's Journal to Lucy Westenra's Diary to the Pall Mall Gazette to various telegrams to Dr Seward's Phonograph Diary and many more. This style is also used by Stevenson in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* where apart from the account about Utterson's view, two voluminous letters, one by Dr Lanyon and one by Jekyll himself, are presented serving the suspense. Also there is a newspaper report on the Carew murder. The parts of which the text is composed seem to come from highly reliable people, one lawyer and two physicians heightening the credibility even more. The effect of this style of account should be clear. The story is presented as being "real".

Another constructional characteristic is connected with the location of a Gothic story. In the first few pages of such a tale the reader often follows the protagonist on a journey away from civilization out into the wilderness. In addition, the story is often set some centuries in the past. This evokes a gruesome atmosphere. With the growing distance to civilization, in space as well as time, the laws of reason seem to break. Moral rules lose their significance. Most early Gothic stories take place in less civilized places where the safety and certainty of a "normal" life as the reader's is far away. A marvellous example for this transcendence from civilized grounds is again to be found in *Dracula*. It is perhaps the most fascinating part of this wonderful novel when on the first thirty pages Jonathan Harker slowly travels through the romantic East of Europe stopping in Bistritz and continuing his journey through the dark forest at the Borgo pass in a carriage, then being left alone with Dracula and the last thing he hears from the outer world is a peasant woman in the carriage crying out a part of a poem: "Denn die Toten reiten schnell" Fascinating. But this is another tale.

Robert Louis Stevenson uses the same device of a journey away from civilization in *Olalla*. Concerning *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* the situation is somewhat different. It is a so-called Urban Gothic, putting London with its labyrinth of dark passages obscured even more by endless fog on the map of horror. This surely had an effect on other writers like Oscar Wilde, Arthur Machen and most important of all Arthur Conan Doyle who contributed with help of his creation Sherlock Holmes a great bit to help London to a quite gruesome image. Writers began to realize that a foggy city can be as frightening as the dusty vaults of an old mansion surrounded by dark forest in November. When *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was published, readers soon found out that the evil was not far away or long ago anymore but right there in London at the present day. They were not safe any more. Mr Hyde was waiting outside their very houses prepared for mischief.

4 The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

With this tale the thought of double existence, split personality and diversity between appearance and real essence of man entered the public conception. Keeping its place in society's bookshelves until today, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* still is a classic with much charm that frightened, frightens and will keep on frightening its readers.

4.1 The Plot

The tale starts of with a thorough description of the lawyer Mr Utterson, a man of general respectability. In the course of a Sunday walk with his friend Mr Enfield the two gentlemen come about a certain door in a bystreet of busy London. Here Enfield starts to tell a tale of a strange encounter connected with that very door. One night, as he was returning from an ominous place, he witnessed a little man crossing the path of a hard running girl and trampling over without a regard for the now screaming girl. Enfield seized the man and made him stay while the girl's family and a doctor came about to grasp the events. The victim was hardly hurt but as time went by the group of people present seemed to develop a certain hatefulness towards the strange culprit. They blackmailed him threatening to make a scandal of the affair, would he not agree to pay a certain gratification. At this point the fellow led them to that very door in the bystreet. He went in there and came out again with

a cheque over the agreed amount. The cheque turned out to be genuine but the strange thing was the signature on it being of a very respectable man. Enfield assumes that the owner of the signature must be involved in a blackmailing affair with the strange culprit. Utterson demands to know this man's name and hearing that it is Hyde he claims to know the other man's name, which was the signature on the cheque as well. He bids Enfield not to speak of this affair anymore.

Back home on the same day we find Utterson quite at unease. He rereads a certain document endorsed as Dr Henry Jekyll's Last will. In it the doctor passes on all his possessions to a man by the name of Edward Hyde if death or disappearance should befall him. Up to date Utterson, Jekyll's friend and lawyer, has been ignorant of the identity of Mr Hyde. Now, through Enfield's tale, he came by disturbing information. Suspecting mischief he immediately sets off to visit Dr Lanyon, a friend of his and Jekyll but he seems to know nothing about Mr Hyde and seems to have had a scientific dispute with his colleague. He has never heard of Hyde. Utterson finds no peace and is haunted by visions of Mr Hyde frequenting dark streets and crushing children. What could be the reason for Dr Jekyll's strange bondage to that damnable man? The lawyer wants to know more and begins to look out for Hyde in front of the bystreet-door. "If he be Mr Hyde, I shall be Mr Seek." He eventually meets him, having a brief talk, his negative feelings towards him being verified. Also Hyde gives him his address located in (where else?) Soho. A few minutes after that encounter Utterson arrives at Jekyll's residence being not far away. The servant Poole lets him in but has to report somewhat later that the doctor is not at home. However the lawyer learns that the servants have to obey Mr Hyde as well as Jekyll. They see very little of him though. With a feeling stranger than ever that his friend Henry must have serious problems Utterson returns home. He is determined to help avoiding a scandal.

A fortnight after Dr Jekyll invites Utterson and others to dine with him. After the other guests are gone the lawyer asks Jekyll about Mr Hyde. He insures him that he is all right, that he can be rid of the young man the moment he chooses to and that he takes great interest in the fellow. Furthermore he wishes to drop the topic and makes Utterson promise to care for Hyde in case of Jekyll's death.

Almost a year passes. Then a murder "of singular ferocity" occurs. The only witness is a maidservant who tells about a strange encounter (indeed the story seems to be full of strange encounters) she observed on a foggy night. An "aged an beautiful gentleman" came walking down a lane there to meet with a very small man whom the maid recognized as Mr Hyde who had once visited her master. There was brief talk and then Hyde attacked the elder person with his heavy cane, beating him to death. Here the maid fainted. The next day

the police starts its inquiries, which lead to Mr Utterson for the not yet identified dead body was carrying a letter addressed to him in his pockets. Hearing of the circumstances of the murder, the letter, the finding of a broken half of a cane and the name of Mr Hyde, Utterson is quite troubled at once. He knows that the cane belongs to Dr Jekyll but he does not want to get the doctor into the affair. So, after identifying the dead man as Member of Parliament Sir Danvers Carew, Utterson leads the police to the address in Soho he knows from Hyde failing to mention any further knowledge. There the other half of the cane is found. The apartment makes the appearance of being left in a hurry. Now the police is searching for Edward Hyde but since nobody is able to describe him precisely, nothing of his family is known and there is a total absence of any documents confirming his existence, the case becomes a strange case.

After the murder Utterson's way leads him to Jekyll as soon as he can. Poole leads him to Jekyll's laboratory lying at the very backside of his property and having a backdoor already known to Utterson as the door in the bystreet. Jekyll looking deadly sick assures him that Hyde is gone forever and the world will never more hear word of him. He claims to have learned his lesson. He shows the lawyer a letter by Hyde in which the fugitive apologizes to Jekyll, assures him not to bother him anymore, and takes his leave. He hands it to Utterson not knowing what to do with it. However, Jekyll seems to have burned the envelope in an affliction of no thoughtfulness. Poole, the servant does not know anything about a letter that was turned in and as on the very same evening Utterson's clerk remarks that the hand of Mr Hyde and Jekyll's writing resemble each other in many aspects, the lawyer is once again deeply troubled.Why would Henry Jekyll give him a fake letter that assures Hyde's departure?

During the following two months nothing is heard of Mr Hyde. Despite a huge reward nobody finds a trace. He has simply disappeared leaving only rumours. Dr Jekyll revives. He becomes more and more his old self again, being a familiar guest on upper-class dinners again. The doctor's relation to his colleague Lanyon seems to be renewed as well. Then one day his doors stay shut. Poole explains that his master is confined to the house. Utterson is not admitted anymore and starts to worry again. Lanyon changed as well. He claims to have had a shock from which he shall never recover and wants to hear no more of Jekyll being done with that person. Further information he does not give and Utterson goes home composing a letter to Jekyll enquiring the cause of his breaking with Lanyon. The also written answer is strange. Jekyll writes that he plans to continue life in solitude. He calls himself "the chief of sinners" and "the chief of sufferers also" having brought on himself "a punishment that I cannot name". Utterson is asked to respect his silence. Three weeks after

Dr Lanyon dies in his bed, bequeathing a letter to the lawyer that tells of his fatal experience. However, Utterson dares not to read the document because its envelope says: "Not to be opened till the death or disappearance of Dr Henry Jekyll"! These are the same terms as in the strange last will of Jekyll. But why would Lanyon be inclined to set terms like these? What is Jekyll's problem after all? Now, that Hyde is gone, he should be in peace. Indeed he has been in peace for two months. What caused this remarkable change? The strange case gets even stranger. Utterson is sure the answer lies in Lanyon's document but he cannot open it without breaking the conditions of a dead friend. Another friend has to go the same way, before the answer can be revealed.

In the following time the lawyer frequents Jekyll's doorstep hoping and fearing to be admitted at the same time. He never is, but from his conversations with Poole he learns more of the strange solitude of the servant's master who locks himself in all day in the laboratory.

On a Sunday Utterson and Mr Enfield come about the door in the bystreet once more. There they encounter Jekyll leaning out of a window above it. He seems pale but not to bad, but after a brief conversation he is suddenly struck by a strange affliction of terror and despair shutting the window immediately, disappearing once again in his laboratory. The lawyer and his companion are thus shocked that they cannot speak of this event before they are far away from the bystreet.

On some later day's evening Poole comes to Utterson's house simply exclaiming: "I can't bear it no more", whatever it may be, biding the lawyer to come with him to Jekyll's place. Upon their arrival Poole leads his companion to the laboratory door where they both hear a voice very unlike Jekyll's shouting that nobody should be admitted. Who else than Jekyll could be in there? From Poole Utterson learns that with the help of written messages Dr Jekyll has been enquiring desperately a certain medicine that the servant could not get hold of. His pleas for the powder have become more urgently every day. Also, Poole thinks to have seen a man a few days ago at the laboratory door that certainly was not his master. He (or It as Poole puts it) had a greater resemblance to Mr Hyde. Armed with an axe and a kitchen poker the two men now set about to gain entrance to the laboratory. Despite a pleading cry for mercy in the voice of Edward Hyde, the door is forced open. The following things are found in there: the dead body of Mr Hyde who poisoned himself seconds ago, a new will of Henry Jekyll passing on his possessions to Mr. Utterson and a long document with a note of his "unworthy and unhappy friend" Jekyll, biding that Utterson should at first read Lanyon's report and then his own statement of the case in order to know the true story. No trace of Dr Jekyll's body is found. Has he fled? How?

Why did Hyde not destroy the will naming the lawyer as sole heir? If he has murdered Jekyll why did he stay in the laboratory? For what purpose did Hyde need the medicine so desperately wanted? Many questions. Utterson returns home and starts to read.

From Dr Lanyon's letter he learns the following: One night the doctor received an urgent letter from Jekyll begging him for their friendship's sake to do him a favour on which his life depends. Lanyon does as asked. He moves immediately to Jekyll's house where Poole and a locksmith await him. After forcing open the backdoor to the laboratory, Lanyon takes a drawer filled with strange chemicals and returns home. Then, at midnight he receives a strange visitor with way to large clothes whom he has to hand over the drawer. The little man (Hyde; Lanyon has not met him before) takes the chemicals with great relief and asks the doctor whether he will let him depart or wants to know the truth. Lanyon chooses the latter. Hyde nods and takes out a chemical. "He put the glass to his lips and drank at one gulp (…) his face became suddenly black and the features seemed to melt and alter." Hyde turns into Jekyll and Lanyon is left sickened of the sight and shocked to death.
Now, through Jekyll's report, the true story is revealed. Starting with his birth the doctor tells of a certain "gaiety of disposition" that has troubled him ever since. He suppressed it in order to lead a respectable life and thus created a deep trench between good and bad in his now divided soul. He found out, "that man is not truly one, but truly two" or even more (This and other parts of the story remind strongly of Hermann Hesse's *Steppenwolf*). Jekyll always sought a separation of his two elements and hence led his studies towards the mystic and transcendental. "If each, I told myself, could but be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable" With the help of a singular salt he eventually succeeded to prepare a potion powerful enough to split his soul. Jekyll dared to drink and for the first time turned into Edward Hyde, the lower side of himself. For him it was fascinating experience. Hyde allowed him to live the life his urges always wanted. He had to drink once more to turn back into Henry Jekyll again. As time went by the doctor began to enjoy his new double-life. He furnished Hyde with a name, a little room in Soho, a signature sloped backwards and gave his servants order to obey him. In addition he drew up the will that if anything should befall him as Jekyll, he could live on as Hyde without pecuniary loss. Hyde committed crimes, yes, but since "[i]t was Hyde, after all, and Hyde alone, that was guilty" Jekyll was not troubled. Then it occurred, that one morning Jekyll woke up in his residence as Hyde. The potion had failed to retransform him. He had to double and treble the amounts to be Jekyll again. The doctor felt that he could not go on like that and had to choose between Jekyll and Hyde. Deciding in favour of the former he

does not take his potion any more. But his longing grows and eventually overcomes him. “My devil had been long caged, he came out roaring.” This led to the death of MP Carew. Hyde was now a fugitive and Jekyll considered his existence as no longer possible, banishing him, as it seemed, forever, finally absolutely resolute in his action. “[H]e will never more be heard of.” This worked quite well. For two months Henry Jekyll was again an ordinary secret sinner. Then one January day sitting on a bench in Regent’s Park he suddenly became Mr Hyde again without any use of the potion. In terror did he conceive his situation. A fugitive, wanted, sitting in midst of public life. He needed his potion immediately, but how? The backdoor to his laboratory was sealed and the way through the house was out of question. His servants would turn him over to the police. Thus he wrote his desperate letter to Lanyon asking him to get the potion. Hiding till midnight Hyde, with the help of Lanyon, finally became Jekyll again shocking his rescuer to death. It happened more frequently every day that he suddenly turned into Hyde needing the potion desperately to wear the face of Jekyll. The doctor had to keep to his house not daring to see anyone. He felt Hyde’s presence every moment. Then the rare salt necessary for the potion ran out and another sample pure enough could not be found. Jekyll was unable to remain Jekyll. With the last of his potion the doctor succeed to write his journal to Utterson knowing that he would never be himself again. A sad end.

4.2 Themes and other interesting aspects

4.2.1 Secret Sinners

Reading the “case” in a very superficial way one might think that the story is about a man who, being not able to bear the weight of his sinning any more, ventures to separate the good and the evil in him. The pre-transformed, pre-separated Jekyll must have been a bad man already that only sought to be good and therefore brewed his fatal draught. But was he thus exceptional? Is he the only “sinner” in the story, the only one who guards a dark secret? Reading more closely one will find many open questions.
In the first Chapter we are told of Mr Enfield and his encounter with the “damnable young man” Edward Hyde. At the beginning of his conversation with Utterson Mr Enfield briefly explains: “I was coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o’clock of a black winter morning…” That is all we get to know about his business that night. Now, what could a respectable man of honour, like, Enfield possibly be up to late at night in

some strange part of London where “there was literally nothing more to be seen but lamps”? Utterson does not ask and therefore Enfield gives no answer.
Another question: When Member of Parliament Sir Danvers Carew is murdered, this is witnessed by a young maid who saw the victim “accosting” the young Hyde “with a very pretty manner of politeness” late at night at the river-side. What is he doing there? Utterson seems quite disturbed learning of the victim’s identity. Not because of the murder but of the circumstances surrounding it.
Respectable men ought not to frequent infamous parts late at night. Who should know that better than Utterson? Carew was in possession of a letter by him addressed to Utterson seeking aid. Likewise many noble gentlemen would seek the advice of the lawyer who is concerned about their problems whatever they may be. He probably knows or suspects what Enfield or Carew were up to late at night but he does not ask because the answer would not be “decent”. Robert Mighall finds the best expression in his Introduction to the strange case by assuming that Utterson’s policy is “the more it looks like Queer Street, the less I ask”. Utterson, Enfield, Lanyon and Carew are ‘ordinary’ men. That does not mean that they are angels. Everyone has his dark secrets. And the normal response to them is to hold, hide or reveal as Utterson tries it in the case of Jekyll.
The philosophy of the strange case implicates that we all are divided in our very self. As the modern man is kept prisoner by the codes of respectability and public opinion, he cannot get rid of his, as Jekyll expresses it, “lower elements”. A man of “honour” on whom the eyes of the world are fixed has to wear masks constantly. He must not dare to laugh heartily in public or to scratch his itching nose. He has to suppress his natural urges and feelings in order to keep to the current moral code and to act “good”, whatever that may be. But man cannot stand all this forever. Incessant suppression of nature builds up a heap of aggression that has to come out from time to time. Therefore ordinary people like Enfield or Carew frequent ominous areas of London deep at night to still the thirst of their nature. They sin in secret. And while they are in this state of gratification during these dark hours, stripped of all moral burdens, those men seem to be very different from their ordinary self. They seem to be someone else.
According to Jekyll, we are all compounds, consisting of various elements. Most of them have to be suppressed in order to be “moral”. These very elements that are reconciled by everyone, these are the Mr Hydes in all of us.

4.2.2 Impure Duality

Whereas ordinary people suppress their nature and only let it out occasionally, Henry Jekyll has found another way. He is the extraordinary sinner.
For all his life Jekyll sought to be good. He suppressed his lower elements, his nature and whenever it threatened to come out, he felt extreme sinfulness. The more he tightened his moral mask of goodness, the stronger became the thirst of his urge, eventually creating Mr Hyde. Then Jekyll discovered a potion to embody this compound of all his lower elements, letting his urge be stilled. On day Dr Jekyll could be more moral now, or at least he thought so. On night Mr Hyde came into place wandering about foggy London and letting pure evil join his path. For Jekyll this miracle-potion seems at first to be the solution of all his problems. On day he could resume to be steady and secure in his moral behaviour, while on night Mr Hyde might go after his needs without troubling his other self. Both could stop to annoy each other and go separate ways. For Jekyll, pleasure on good things would be finally possible, for Hyde the opposite.
The terrible deeds Mr Hyde commits that we are not told of but can assume that they reach from rape to murder, do not seem to concern Dr Jekyll at all. He denies all responsibility for his other self's actions but occasionally refers to Hyde with "I". He knows that his opposite is a terrible criminal but does not interfere because Hyde's evil actions allow Jekyll to be good.
However, the case is not as simple as Jekyll thinks. Hyde is not efficient enough to work as a perfect alibi for his other self. He is not as pure as assumed. There is still a great deal of Jekyll in him. This we experience in the first chapter where we are told that Mr Hyde is confronted with a threat to blemish his "reputation" if he should refuse to gratify the witnesses of his little accident with the young lady. Hyde's Jekyll-like response: "No gentleman but wishes to avoid a scene" He eventually offers the two threatening gentlemen a cheque carrying the name of Henry Jekyll. Now, if Hyde really were pure evil, why would he wish to conceal his behaviour? Why should he be concerned with his reputation? Because there is still some of Dr Jekyll in him that eventually leads Utterson on his quest to "help" his friend. Hyde's correct action, the evil action, would have been not to present the cheque and to stop sneering. Thus he would have preserved Jekyll's reputation, but he fails because of his impurity. The duality of Jekyll and Hyde is not absolute. Jekyll still is not free of his lower elements personified as Hyde and Hyde is not free of Jekyll bourgeois way of greeting the sacred public opinion. At the end, the experiment fails because Jekyll gets caught in the labyrinth of sin he sought to escape.

4.2.3 Demon Opinion

There is one central cause of all the mischief in the strange case of Dr Henry Jekyll and Mr Edward Hyde, one powerful element that eventually initiates much grief and the death of three/four people (Carew, Lanyon, Jekyll/Hyde). It is the source of Jekyll's desire to hide his nature in Hyde, the reason why Enfield and Carew frequent London's back streets late at night. This demon's name is Public Opinion. In the world Stevenson's tale introduces us to there is a fate almost as bad as death, for some even worse – to lose one's good name. Everybody in the story is afraid that his nature might be exposed. Even Hyde seems to fear this and pays the cheque to prevent loosing credit he never had! Utterson does not want to know about the place at the end of the world where Enfield was coming from that very night, because it could spoil a good man's credit. The world of Jekyll and Hyde is motivated to guard appearances, to wear masks and to hide the true face of reality. Everybody has a certain credit in society that can be lost easily. A good name is worth much money, hidden injustice or even death. In the course the story takes, Utterson seems to act as some kind of hobby detective. But his zeal never is to reveal the truth about his friend Jekyll but to conceal it. Thus he loses no word in his conversation about the Carew murder with the police officer that he actually knows whom the murder weapon belongs to. He wants to prevent a scandal at all costs. Masks have to be maintained. There is silence, evasion and suppression present in every scene of the story. That is how the world goes. It is all about gaining and loosing credit in the eye of the public opinion. It is all about reputation.
Almost sarcastic are the words of Utterson after Jekyll/Hyde is dead and all is over: "…we may at least save his credit".

4.2.4 Moral Evolution

It is not easy to think of the physical shape of Edward Hyde. Even the characters in the story fail to give a clear description of him. Nevertheless, a few attributes help to draw a mental picture of that strange being. A "damnable young man" he is, hairy, dwarfish as well as "troglodytic". He attacks Carew with "ape-like" fury, has a "bestial" nature. Well, sounds like Stone Age. Indeed, all descriptions given of Mr Hyde seem to remind of a evolutionary variety of man somewhere between ape and Homo sapiens.

That fits very well with the at Stevenson's age contemporary idea that criminality, sinfulness, or plainly "immoral" behaviour are but low-evolutionary by-products. Morality being the latest product of evolution, criminals are thought to be less evolved, being closer to apes. Therefore it should be possible to recognise a criminal by his shape as it is certainly possible in case of the "damnable young man" Edward Hyde. Why is he young? It was thought being low of age also meant being closer to the evolutionary origin and thus lower in morality. And since ontogenesis is a repetition of phylogenesis this should also signify an evolutionary vicinity to the apelike pre-civilization man.
Does all that really help to describe Hyde? Is it possible to imagine a face that looked upon lets a man turn "sick and white" and evokes "the desire to kill him", like it is the case with the doctor in chapter I?
Still the best probably is Mr Enfield's vague description: "He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He's an extraordinary-looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can make no hand of it; I can't describe him. And it's not want of memory; for I declare I can see him this moment."

4.2.5 Lost Sensation

This strange case certainly is one of the most influential works of horror ever written. It is a pity that it cannot be read anymore without the pre-knowledge that Dr Henry Jekyll and Mr Edward Hyde are one and the same person. To know that in advance spoils the joy of reading to some extent but since nearly everyone is informed about that, it is necessary to admit that the story's conception has changed during the last century. The story is not the same anymore, not because it changed itself but the world around it.
But how different would it be, if the reader did not yet know the truth. Being ignorant of the strange duality of Jekyll, much speculation will be preceding the final revelation. What could be the relation between Jekyll and Hyde apart from the truth? Along with Utterson, the reader thinks of many possibilities. The lower man could be blackmailing the doctor, threatening to reveal an awful truth about the respectable man's youth that would wreck his reputation. He could be Jekyll's illegitimate son. (That is why Utterson wants to see Hyde's face so badly: to conform or abolish this theory). Maybe there is some homosexual affair

between the two. Who knows? All could be possible. Then, in Lanyon's letter the reader is finally confronted with the truth. What an amazing sensation it must be when all theories are finally proofed wrong with the words: "his face became suddenly black and the features seemed to melt and alter" That is creepy. So if you know someone who is yet ignorant of the strange case, do not tell him and let him read the story like it was read a hundred years ago when Jekyll-Hyde duplicity was not yet popular knowledge.

4.2.6 Undefined Crime

We know that Hyde walks about foggy London back streets to spread evil. But what exactly does he do? We know of trampling down a girl and of murdering Carew (the worst deed he has done as we assume by Jekyll's terror). Apart from that, what are his crimes? We do not know. The doctor will not tell: "I would still be merrily disposed at times; and as my pleasures were (to say the least) *undignified*, and I was not only well known and highly considered, but growing toward the elderly man…", "The pleasures which I made haste to seek in my disguise were, as I have said, undignified; I would *scarce use a harder term*. But in the hands of Edward Hyde, they soon began to turn towards the *monstrous* … This familiar that I called out of my own soul, and sent forth alone to do his good pleasure, was a being inherently *malign and villainous*; his every act and thought centred on self; *drinking pleasure* with *bestial avidity* from any degree of *torture to another*; relentless like a man of stone.", "Into the details of the infamy at which I thus connived (for even now I can scarce grant that I committed it) I have no design of entering…" What does that all mean? We can only guess and let our imagination work. Jekyll's pleasure is undignified and not suitable for his reputation and age. Well, what could that be? Maybe women? Does he frequent whorehouses as Mr Hyde? His pleasures became "monstrous" under the hands of him. Monstrous? It can be murder, for Carew's case is exceptional. Maybe rape. The maid who witnessed the murder knew Hyde because he had business with her master. What business could Hyde possibly have? We can only guess, but this absence of surety how bad Hyde really is, only heightens the suspense.

4.2.7 Jack

Two years after the publication of the strange case Mr Hyde became real and thus made Stevenson's story even more popular. Between September and November (two months infamous for Gothic stories) of the year 1888, a series of terrible murders struck London. Several prostitutes were killed, their bodies being eviscerated. All the murders occurred around Whitechapel in the East End of London, a very poor area. At first the police thought of the murderer as being vacant in the slums of the city but as time went by a new idea induced by Stevenson's story gained influence. The idea of the killer being a respectable member of the upper class living a double live came up being strengthen by the evidence that the evisceration of the victims had been carried out with the precision of a skilled surgeon. The idea of a Jekyll-and-Hyde identity was born. That thought somewhat hindered the investigation. In effect, a theatre-version of Stevenson's story was withdrawn. The murderer of Whitechapel, today still the most famous serial killer of all time, was never found. Jack the Ripper disappeared as Mr Hyde did after the Carew case. However, his doing has rooted the myth of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde in the collective consciousness.

4.3 Characters

Gabriel John Utterson: He is a respectable lawyer and apart from Jekyll/Hyde the most important person in the tale, since the reader follows him on his quest as hobby-detective through most chapters. On the first page a thorough description of him is given. Utterson is "a man of rugged countenance, that was never lighted by a smile; cold, scanty and embarrassed in discourse; backward in sentiment; lean, long, dusty, dreary and yet somehow lovable". He also is the "last friend of down-going man". As lawyer he knows about respectability and the way his society works. All the story long Utterson stays a good friend of Jekyll who wants to help him to avert a scandal. At the end he is heir to the doctor's fortune and finds out the whole truth.

Mr Richard Enfield: He is introduced to us as Utterson's friend and distant kinsman, well known in town. It is unknown what else the two men have in common but they seem to enjoy their regular Sunday afternoon walks. "Coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o'clock of a black winter morning" Enfield has the first encounter with Edward Hyde, in whom he takes a loathing at first sight, blackmailing him to make a

scandal out of the affair of trampling over the girl, if he does not give a gratification. Despite their long business in that night Enfield fails to describe Hyde. We see him again later on another Sunday walk when he and Utterson encounter Jekyll at the window above the bystreet door. The conversation is broken up at the doctor's transformation. Enfield is not as respectable as Utterson but he knows about society and lives an ordinary life as secret sinner.

MP Sir Danvers Carew: another secret sinner. He is murdered by Edward Hyde after a strange scene. Carew was walking along a lane near the river (Thames, what else?) when Hyde came along and the MP "accosted the other with a very pretty manner of politeness" before being beaten to death. Why was an MP walking alone at night near the river in some strange part of London? Riddles everywhere.

Dr Hastie Lanyon: Being a good old friend of Utterson as well as Jekyll this doctor is an important character. We here about some scientific dispute between the two colleagues of profession, probably about Jekyll's strange views Lanyon cannot believe in. As he is asked by Hyde/Jekyll to help him gain the potion, the truth is revealed to him shocking him that much that, ripped of his beliefs, he dies not much more than a fortnight later. Before that happens, he completes a letter reporting the events preceding his shock that is not to be opened until Jekyll's death or disappearance.

Poole: He is Jekyll's faithful chief servant. Almost until the very end he does as his master asked, how strange the orders may be. Although trying desperately he cannot bring Jekyll the salt he needs for his potion. As he can no longer recognize the doctor's voice, he calls Utterson for help. Together they bring the strange case to a sad end.

The maidservant: She is the only female character and of minor importance, yet worthy to mention. She was looking up at the stars and the full moon of the cloudless night Carew was murdered from her house at the riverside where she was living alone and is described as "romantically given". Being the only witness of the "aged an beautiful gentleman with white hair" she gives valuable information. As the blood starts to flow, she faints.

Dr Henry Jekyll: He lives a respectable life but has undignified pleasures he has to suppress in order to hold his position in society. Thus, a trench between good and evil is formed in his mind. Through a potion he discovers that he can change into Mr Hyde who

can freely live these pleasures. However, Hyde becomes stronger and the potion at first needed to free him is now needed to restrain him. As the ingredients run out, Jekyll is doomed to vanish out of existence.

Mr Edward Hyde: He is Jekyll's counterpart and consists of his "lower elements". Being rather small and "troglodytic", Hyde spreads mischief and works as an outlet for Jekyll's suppressed urges. He eventually commits a murder and becomes a wanted criminal. Getting stronger he begins to dominate the doctor making his life total misery.

5 Olalla

Amongst Stevenson's Tales of Terror *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* certainly is the most prominent and most influential and yet the others should not be neglected. *Olalla* is in my opinion, even better in some aspects. It is a tale that deserves the attribute: beautiful. The Strange Case of Dr J. & Mr H. may be interesting but Olalla is beautiful. It is one of many hidden jewels in literature, known by few but still being ingenious off-springs of a storyteller's imagination.

5.1 The Plot

To quicken the recovery of an English military officer (the narrator) wounded in the "Carlist Wars" in catholic Spain, his doctor proposes to get "out of this cold and poisonous city" (which city exactly is not known, probably Madrid) and to enjoy "two months of a pure air and easy conscience". The doctor happens to know a padre being acquainted with an old aristocratic family living in a residencia surrounded by mountains. There the patient is to go to "renew his blood". The family has once been very rich of land and capital but now only the residencia is left. Their history might be noble but their present state is marked by decay. At least, that is what the doctor says. The rest of the family consists of "a mother, a son and a daughter". The officer will be admitted as a lodger. He consents to the doctor's suggestion. "I begin to think that I shall have strange experiences."
The next day the officer is picked up by Felipe, the son of the family, with a rough country cart. We follow the narrator on a typical Gothic journey through beautiful landscape away from civilization. During the trip the officer recognizes Felipe as total idiot. "The lad was

but a child in intellect". At last, it is dark already; they arrive at the residencia, "a certain lump of superior blackness", where the officer is led to his fine-furnished chamber. "A fine room (…) a very fine room." When the new lodger asks if he may thank the Señora, Felipe's mother, the lad suddenly begins to act strange, utters a determined "No" and leaves the officer alone. "And silence closed over the house."

The same night the narrator notices an old portrait hanging on the wall of his room showing a beautiful woman that has to be an ancestress of Felipe. The officer becomes obsessed of the picture looking at it till morning. "The first light of the morning shone full upon the portrait, and, as I lay awake, my eyes continued to dwell upon it with growing complacency; its beauty crept about my heart insidiously silencing my scruples one after another; and while I knew that to love such a woman were to sign and seal one's own sentence of degeneration, I still knew that, if she were alive, I should love her."

Time passes and for days the narrator sees nobody but Felipe and the picture. The lad seems to be fond of him and before long he starts to vies the officer as his master, but he is still refusing to give any information about the rest of the family. Felipe is working in the garden of the residencia a great deal and the officer offers him to join him on his walks through the beautiful scenery. There he observes the lad being happy and full of delight. "I have rarely enjoyed more stirring company." During one of these walks something strange happens. Felipe catches a squirrel on a treetop and then does something shocking with it startling the officer "I have heard and seen much of the cruelty of lads, and above all peasants; but what I now beheld struck me into a passion of anger. I thrust the fellow aside, plucked the poor brute out of his hands, and with swift mercy killed it." The narrator punishes Felipe by letting him bury the animal. He promises never to be "a brute again".

Not much later the lodger has his first encounter with the Señora who is to be found from now on everyday sitting in the courtyard. She seems to live in nearly total apathy only stirring to move with the course of sun and when she speaks to the officer; only brief salutations are exchanged at first. "A look more blankly stupid I have never met."

However, there seems to be a great resemblance between the Señora and the woman in the picture. "It should seem, I thought, as if when the master set his signature to that grave canvas, he had not only caught the image of one smiling and false-eyed woman, but stamped the essential quality of a race" As time goes time, the officer is frequently found sitting side by side with the Señora listening to her flat talk. "I had come to like her dull, almost animal neighbourhood; her beauty and her stupidity soothed and amused me." The narrator soon notices a certain enmity between mother and son, the reason for it being yet unknown.

Then the weather changes. High up in the mountains a storm is ranging producing a terrible wailing of the wind that is to be heard all around the residencia. These conditions seem to leave their mark on the inhabitants. The officer cannot find his peace, the Señora is pacing from one side of the court to the other all day long with a certain glimmer in her eye and Felipe seems very frightened. Going to bed early the narrator remarks to Felipe: “I think we are all mad today” The answer: “It is the black wind.”

This very night the officer is wakened by terrible screams shaking the residencia. He cannot get out of his room because someone locked the door. “It was no illusion; some living thing, some lunatic or some wild animal, was being foully tortured. The thought of Felipe and the squirrel flashed into my mind (…)”. At last the screams die away. The narrator resolves to solve that mystery. Also, it occurs to him that he has not yet seen the girl, Felipe’s sister, that was supposed be living here as well. The next day he explores most of the chambers of the house not finding the Señora’s daughter but her room which is full of books. He also finds a sad but lovely poem by her. Can it be that in her, intelligence has survived the decay of that once great, old family? The officer asks the padre who visits the residencia from time to time but the priest says, it is better for him not to know too much. Next he asks Felipe who speaks well of her. She has taught him much and also reproved him for his doings with the squirrel as he told her of it. As the narrator wants to know what the terrible cries were, the answer is simple: “The wind”. The officer demands to have a key for his room and gets it.

Two days later the narrator has his first encounter with Olalla. “Surprise transfixed me; her loveliness struck to my heart; she glowed in the deep shadow of the gallery, a gem of colour; her eyes took hold upon mine and clung there, and bound us together like the joining of hands; and the moments we thus stood face to face, drinking each other in, were sacramental and the wedding of souls.” Although it takes five more days until the first words between the two are exchanged, both are totally fascinated of each other. The officer is lifted in his spirits and absolutely obsessed of Olalla. The more disappointing are the first words she says to him: “‘You will go away,’ she said, ‘today.’” The narrator pours out his heart in front of her, confessing his love but despite their overwhelming attraction for each other, Olalla cannot answer his pleas. “Love burned in me like rage; tenderness waxed fierce; I hated, I adored, I pitied, I revered her with ecstasy.” She leaves a note for him in his room. “If you have any kindness for Olalla, if you have any chivalry for a creature sorely wrought, go from here today; in pity, in honour, for the sake of Him who died, I supplicate that you shall go.” In despair the narrator accidentally breaks a window cutting his hand. Needing help to stop the blood flow he moves into the court. Seeing neither

Felipe nor Olalla he addresses the Señora. "'I have cut myself,' I said, 'and rather badly. See!' And I held out my two hands from which the blood was oozing and dripping. Her great eyes opened wide, the pupils shrank into points; a veil seemed to fall from her face, and leave it sharply expressive and yet inscrutable. And as I still stood, marvelling a little at her disturbance, she came swiftly up to me, and stooped and caught me by the hand; and the next moment my hand was at her mouth, and she had bitten me to the bone. The pang of the bite, the sudden spurting of blood, and the monstrous horror of the act, flashed through me all in one, and I beat her back; and she sprang at me again and again, with bestial cries, cries that I recognized, such cries as had awakened me on the night of the high wind." The officer is rescued by Olalla and Felipe, the former nursing him during the coming days and having a long discourse over their fate. She knows his love for her and recognizes hers for him, yet they may never unite because she is cursed through her family's impoverished blood, impoverished by long inbreeding. "Others, ages dead, have wooed other men with my eyes; other men have heard the pleading of the same voice that now sounds in your ears. The hands of the dead are in my bosom; they move me, they pluck me, the guide me, I am a puppet at their command; and I but reinform features and attributes that have long been laid aside from evil in the quiet of the grave." Olalla wants to make an end to her race that has been struck by decay as the state of her mother and Felipe shoes. She is but a little rising ground in this desperate descent but her children would carry on that poisoned blood of hers, being mad or dumb themselves. And even her, as she is growing older, may more and more resemble her mother, lose her genius and develop lust for blood. Does the narrator want to share the awful fate of her father? No. He shall go from the residencia carrying the memory of her as "one who loved you indeed, but who hated herself so deeply that her love was hateful to her; as one who sent you away and yet would have longed to keep you for ever; who had no dearer hope than to forget you, and no greater fear than to be forgotten."

Lost in despair the narrator is picked up by Felipe and his cart. "[T]ake me where they will ask no questions." He is taken to a little village not too far from the mountains where the residencia is hidden. There the officer recovers and is visited on several occasions by the padre whom he tells the full truth demanding his opinion. The priest trusts Olalla's judgement. During his time in the village the narrator is also confronted with superstition amongst the inhabitants who view the residencia as an accursed place. No one dares to go there and all cross themselves if it is mentioned. Of an old muleteer the officer hears the story of Olalla's and Felipe's father. "It was there that one of my comrades sold himself to Satan; the Virgin shield us from temptations! He has paid the price; he is now burning in

the reddest place in hell." The man has been lured to the residencia by the beauty of the Señora. Nothing was heard of him ever since. "'Sure enough, he was killed, returned the man. 'But how? Ay, how? But these are things that it is sin to speak of.'

5.2 Naturally Gothic – A Tale of Atavism and Decay

The tale of Olalla is much more worthy to be called a typical Gothic than the strange case. It has most of the elements characteristic for Gothic literature. There is a journey from the city to a distant province surrounded by mountains. There are an old mansion, partly ruinous, strange family pictures, screams that echo through the edifice at night and some kind of vampirism. And overall there is a beautiful young lady tortured by an evil (heredity) and loved by an innocent young man. The end is as sad as the whole story and yet beautiful.

One major theme is degeneracy, a dominant motif in late nineteenth-century literature. Once the narrator assumes: "The family blood had been impoverished, perhaps by long inbreeding, which I knew to a common error among the proud and the exclusive". Indeed, this form of decay was often attributed to the aristocracy. More and more lack of intelligence and madness had gained hold in the family. The shape of the body stayed the same in the course of the centuries but the mind decayed as consequence of exclusiveness, meaning inter-familiar marriages. The state, the "once noble race" of the residencia is in, resembles some kind of curse. Olalla, being so far an exception to the average madness or stupidity wants to make and end to it and thus has to take leave of her love.

It is interesting that the form of atavistic decay manifests itself in the Señora as some kind of vampirism. The Lady is literately no vampire. Her state is more like a metaphor. Her body has lived and died many times like a vampire with her ancestors. Her blood is impoverished and has to be renewed through fresh blood.

Another metaphor is the residency itself. Some parts are ruined or covered with cobwebs. As the race of its inhabitants the building has been neglected and is slowly rotting away displaying its ancient beauty only in some parts.

Another interesting fact is how the story deals with paintings, which are quite central to the story showing the remarkable path of atavistic resemblance. "Never before had I so realized the miracle of the continued race, the creation and recreation, the weaving and changing and handing down of fleshy elements." Portraits have been a well-used feature of

Gothic literature already appearing in *The Castle of Otranto*. Their importance probably found its peak in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.
Apart from all that *Olalla* remains a sad tale about a love that cannot be, about a girl doomed to live in grief until her end hidden behind mountains of sorrow.

5.3 Characters

Felipe: Felipe is marked by his ancestral curse by a lack of intelligence. However, he works hard in the gardens of the residencia and is able to live a quite happy life. Still his existence is overshadowed by the strange disposition of his mother that has to be fought on windy days and at the sight of blood. Olalla probably has a great influence on her simply minded brother. So does the padre. We never get to know what Felipe exactly does to the poor squirrel but my guess would be that he sinks his teeth into it.

The Señora: In her the atavistic degeneration has manifested itself in the worst form. Sitting absent-minded and blank-eyed in the court all day long, sunk in apathy, uttering incoherent sentences indifferently, she seems to be quite peaceful, but when the circumstances are right, she turns into a horrible vampire fighting for its prey with unsuspected ferocity.

The padre: He is the only touch the inhabitants of the residencia maintain with the outer world. Being certainly a good man, the priest is well aware of the awful situation the decaying family is in. At first he tries to prevent the officer from coming to the place. He hopes that he won't ever meet Olalla because he fears that love could develop and the family grow another generation.

The villagers: In the village near the residencia, a superstitious common fear of the place goes about. They regard it as a place of sin. Only the padre can sooth the situation but he is old. It might be that the residencia will be burned to the grounds if the villagers are not prevented of following their deep fears.

The father: He was in the same situation as the officer many years ago. Held prisoner by the beauty of Olalla's mother he succumbed to love her resulting in the existence of Olalla, Felipe and his death, probably through the Señora.

The officer: He is the narrator of the story. Wounded in the “Carlist Wars” he is sent to the residencia to get some fresh air and to renew his blood. He eventually falls in love with Olalla and suffers of the disposition of the Señora who bites him to the bone. In despair he has to take leave from Olalla recognizing her situation and taking the memory of the girl with him.

Olalla: Being an irregularity of a decaying race the beautiful girl Olalla is an island of intelligence in a sea of stupidity and madness. She is determined to end the misery of her line and to do so, she has to refuse the love of the officer. She has to choose a life full of sorrow for extinction’s sake.

6 Afterword - On Horror fiction and its Charms

As old as the story is the horror or ghost story. Since the earliest form of fantasy exists, men occasionally liked to be frightened. Fear is an ancient phenomenon not necessarily negative. It wakes our deepest consciousness, heightens perception and transforms the body into a state of total alertness. It thrills. How long ago may it have been that sitting at a campfire deep at night, wolves howling in the distance, one out of a group of the primitive hunters we once were, started to tell a tale of shivering fascination, a tale of terror, appalling and yet strangely affecting and attracting his audience listening rapt in silence? This tale is still being told today and it will not end until man does himself vanish from the face of earth. We have always liked to be scared, some more, others less and now, modern life being more monotonous as it has ever been, horror fiction is more popular than ever before. There are stories that touch us, stories that move us, but the kind of stories I always liked best are those who *haunt* us, those who won’t be silenced in the mind and keep on flashing up before us, haunting us until their demons are driven away by others. Horror stories have these powers.

When I speak of a Horror story, I mean real horror at its purest kind, not the sad degenerated form, in which it is oftentimes presented to us today, as in many modern movies that try to create suspense with nothing but blood and gore or the surprise effect of an appearing face on the screen. That is not horror. Creating fiction that haunts is as noble an art as all the others. Surprisingly, horror was not an acknowledged form of literature until the late eighteenth century when the Gothic Novel made its appearance. From this

point on it has grown in importance very much. The nineteenth century had its Dracula, its Frankenstein, its Mr Hyde and Dorian Gray. Amongst all storytellers famous for horror fiction there are three I admire most, two of them also living in the nineteenth century. These were the undefied masters of horror of that time that haunted many a man and still haunt today – Edgar Allan Poe and E.T.A. Hoffmann. In the twentieth century horror fiction was destined to be transferred to a great extent to a newborn kind of art – the movies. Nineteenth century shockers were transferred on screen, others being totally new came to life on there, Boris Karloff's mummy being one example. War hit the world and for some time the horror of reality was too great to need any fictitious terror. Then, after some more revivals of old haunting stories, came Norman Bates in *Psycho* and horror was as popular as ever. In the eighties moviemakers like Wes Craven and John Carpenter knew to tell some quite good haunting stories. Then, in the nineties a new terror started to frighten the world in books as well as on screen. Being once called, the count Dracula of the computer generation, Thomas Harris' Dr Hannibal Lector made his salutations. It was at this time that real horror began to shift once more from the movies back to literature. This was mostly due to one man whom I regard as the third great lord of horror fiction. With Stephen King horror took on a new image being hard to describe. It grew. What an interesting resemblance it is that like Stevenson King speaks of his tales as being derived from the voices in his head.

Anyone can tell a tale of terror. All it takes is darkness, peace and little spark of imagination. Then the haunting entertainment at the campfire is guarantied. So if next time when someone proposes: "Let's tell a ghost story", it is nice to know that tales like these have been told a million times before in nights more dark or more fuller of stars than today, by people everywhere at all times. There have always been dark castles, old mansions, foggy street labyrinths, thick forests and other ominous places with brave heroes and terrible creatures of evil spirit with bad intention in it. At least in our fantasy.

Once upon a time on a bleak November morning Sophie was lost in the deep forests. But she was not alone… That is all it takes to create a sinister atmosphere, to wake the spirits of horror. How the tale will end is yet unknown. What it is all about is still a secret. But something is strange and as long some secrets are unsolved, the mystery lives on and the horror survives. We all like to be frightened occasionally and that tendency of man is quite good. It has brought forth some of the most amazing stories ever told.

Sources

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