Upgrade your analysis!

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| **If you wrote this…** | **What’s wrong with it?** | **…try this instead!** |
| This relates to Victorian times… | * Too vague. * ‘What’ relates to ‘Victorian times’? What specifically about the Victorian era could you comment on? | At the time Stevenson was writing, the idea of mental or physical deformity was **abhorrent** to most people. Stevenson’s deliberate portrayal of Hyde as ‘*pale and dwarfish’* is intended to create a feeling of fear and revulsion for the Victorian reader. Both adjectives portray Hyde as unattractive and in some way dislikeable as a physical deformity such as ‘*dwarfish’* would link the character with moral corruption. |
| Stevenson describes Hyde as strange. This can be supported by the quote ‘*he gave an impression of deformity*’. The word ‘deformity’ connotes that he is deformed. | * The general description of the character is clear but basic * Clumsy integration of the quotation. The word ‘deformity’ doesn’t *connote* he is deformed, it simply says that he is deformed. No connotation there – just denotation! * Using the same word in the quotation to explain the quotation doesn’t show an understanding of the effect of the writer’s choice of language. | Stevenson describes Hyde as strange and instantly dislikeable as he ‘*gave an impression of deformity*’. The use of the phrase ‘*impression of’* implies that there is nothing definite that Utterson can specifically point to in relation to Hyde’s appearance, but that Hyde evokes an uncomfortable feeling in Utterson; **subconsciously**, Utternson dislikes Hyde immediately based purely on his appearance. Furthermore, Stevenson’s use of the word ‘*deformity’* creates further suspicion as the Victorians were typically mistrustful of people who looked unconventional or unusual, and viewed them as with suspicion. Deformed means to be incomplete or disfigured and a man who is described in this way would be viewed with suspicion. Hyde’s physical appearance is therefore offensive to Victorian readers. |
| Stevenson’s presentation relates to the theory of Darwinism. | * Yes, an understanding of context, but not developed to show understanding of *how* Stevenson was influenced by events at his time of writing (context of production), or *how* his readers (context of reception) would have interpreted his writing. | Stevenson **alludes** to the newly proposed Darwinian theories of evolution in presenting Hyde as having ‘*hardly human’* characteristics which imply his animalistic and therefore **feral** features, rather than his noble human characteristics. This reference to Darwin would have very divisive and controversial to Stevenson’s Victorian readers who would have been alarmed by an attack on **orthodox** Christian beliefs. |
| This quote makes the reader want to read on. | * Avoid. This. Phrase if you want examiners to give you any marks. It is banned in my lessons! | The phrase ‘*he had a displeasing smile’* encourages the reader to view Hyde with suspicion. Utterson feels uneasy by Hyde’s appearance, but cannot explain why. The adjective ‘*displeasing’* contrasted with ‘*smile’* immediately implies an image of **duality** and therefore mistrust in the character of Hyde: how can his smile –something typically pleasant and friendly, be interpreted as something that is unpleasant? The deliberate lack of clarity about Hyde enhances the mystery surrounding him early in the novel allowing Stevenson to develop a dark and intriguing journey of discovery into psyche and personality. |
| Stevenson presents Hyde as a caveman | * Incorrect. He presents him as strange, abnormal, dislikeable. You need to ‘*show your working’* (like in maths!) about how you arrived at this view of Hyde. | Stevenson presents Hyde as unpleasant and dislikeable through his descriptions of his physical appearance and the Victorian reader’s awareness of newly-emerging Darwinian theories of evolution. For example, when Utterson says ‘*Something troglodytic, shall we say?*’ he is expressing some uncertainty about Hyde conveyed through the use of the tentative question. Utterson is aware that there is something crude and base about Hyde and his questioning of his dislike reveals his assumption that Hyde’s physical appearance is linked to his unrefined and **degenerate** character. Furthermore, the adjective ‘*troglodytic’* hints at something primitive and **savage** which Utterson feels is linked to Hyde thereby exploiting common fears around the conflict between science and religion at the time. |
| This is shown by the quote ‘hardly human.’ This suggests that he is different… (etc) | * No need to use ‘this is shown by the quote’ (and it’s quotation, not quote!). Embed the quotation in the sentence instead. * *This suggests*… ‘**What’** suggests? Zoom in on the key word and explain and analyse it. * Remember there is a writer ‘behind’ these words. Words are chosen for specific effect! | Stevenson’s choice of the exclamation ‘*God bless me, the man seems hardly human!*’ conveys Utterson’s disgust at his first view of Hyde, and the reader can infer that to a sensible and practical lawyer like Utterson, Hyde is **abhorrent**. The words ‘*hardly human’* encourage the reader to see something morally repugnant about Hyde as in the Bible, humans were considered to be God’s perfect creation and superior to all other forms of life. By suggesting that Hyde is ‘*hardly human’* Stevenson is implying that Hyde has no superior or noble qualities about him at all and that he is comparable to animals and therefore less intelligent than and inferior to humans. Overall, this presents Hyde as someone to be both unattractive and untrustworthy. |