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Robert Lewis Stevenson: The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde - How does Stevenson establish intrigue in his novella? - Intrigue: to interest someone a lot, especially by being strange, unusual or mysterious (Cambridge Dictionaries Online). The novella "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" by Robert Lewis Stevenson manages to catch the reader's interest and attention throughout the story by using diverse methods, mediums and literally devises which cause the reader much intrigue and make him want to reading on. The most prominent literally devise used by Stevenson to create curiosity is the many narratives in the novella by different characters. Although most of the story is told from Mr. Utterson's point of view (a lawyer and main figure), key parts of the story are told from Dr. Lanyon (friend of Mr. Utterson and Dr. Jekyll) and the ending by Dr. Jekyll (creator of the "personality-switch" potion and consequently Mr. Hyde). Furthermore, each narrative is transmitted to the reader by different media, such as story-telling, speech and letters. This means that the reader doesn't just get one point of view of the events, but rather three, each of a different one. This makes the reader curious as to what each narrator will reveal about the happenings in the story and creates much intrigue. A second major devise used in the novella is character. The figure of Mr. Hyde and his secret identity is constantly chased by the main character (Mr. Utterson) and is related to all important events in the story (from Dr. Jekyll's will to Sir Danver's murder). The reader is never properly described the outer appearance of Hyde since all the information resealed about him comes from second hands, "he is an extraordinary looking man... I can't describe him" (page 15). Furthermore the strange connection between Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (the protégé of Dr. Jekyll) intrigues the reader even further, since Jekyll

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is regarded as a respectable man and Hyde a despicable one and Hyde's strange disappearances seem to be connected to that of Dr. Jekyll, who claims to be "ill" though the reader finds out later he is not. Yet it is also through the use of contrasting imagery that Stevenson achieves intrigue in his novella. The main contrast is in the use of that of dark and light imagery, which is mainly present in the two "personalities" of Dr. Jekyll, the "good side", himself, and his "bad side", Mr. Hyde. The nature of both these characters' actions varies from each other since Jekyll is portrayed as doing only good, "whilst he had always been known for charities, he was now no less distinguished for religion..." (page 40), whereas Hyde for evil, "the man trampled calmly over the child's body and left her screaming on the ground". Although Jekyll and Hyde are two separate identities and so therefore their actions, they do share one body, which challenges the reader and intrigues him as to how such a thing is possible. However not only are literary devices used to create great curiosity by Stevenson, but also the very plot itself. Throughout the novella, many unanswered questions are left open until the very end of the story ("Henry Jekyll's full Statement of the Case"), which the reader keeps asking himself throughout the novel. Questions such as "Who is Mr. Hyde?", "How is Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde connected?" and later "What is Dr. Jekyll hiding?" are constantly asked by the reader since they make the base for the plot. This makes the reader constantly curious and challenged, making him want to read further on to find out the answers. Throughout the novella "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", Stevenson achieves great intrigue and curiosity on the reader's part by using not only literary devices such as character and imagery, but also through media, such as narrative and rhetorical questions as well. It is through these that the novel

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manages to catch the reader's immediate attention and make him want to keep on reading till the very end of the book. Words: 701 Bibliography:

Cambridge Dictionaries Online " Cambridge University Press"

<http://dictionary.cambridge.com/int20%rigue80%.html> (April 1st 2007)