

The Dead

• Past and tradition

The setting of the story is the house of the Morkans. It is a place where tradition is upheld as, every Christmas they host a social event where many people, including Gabriel, are invited and that is highly regarded within the community. The theme of tradition is extremely important as, through traditions and customs, older generation leave their mark onto the present thus influencing the life of those who are living in the present.

Gabriel speech focuses around the theme of tradition and preservation of ancient values. He ends his speech by again highlighting the main theme of the story: the world of the dead. He mentions the fact that the memory of those who are dead will leave on in younger generation and their ancient value will always be remembered.

Time, space and remembrance

The entire story is filled with references to distant places and memories, thus expanding the narration in terms of time and space. They are unable to break from the activities that they know, so they live life without new experiences, numb to the world.

• Music and art

Music is an underlying theme of the entire narration as it does not only offer a device through which memories are brought back to the mind, but it also serves as a background to all the actions that are being described. Music and the sounds made by people attending the party mix together harmoniously. This creates an atmosphere of social cohesion and chirality. Life in general is subtly compared to music as the juxtaposition of sometimes contrasting elements. Throughout the entire story there are constant mentions of theatre and opera: on one side this helps highlighting the theme of music as an accompaniment, on the other, references to stages and theatres, reveal the underlying theme of hypocrisy and façade. It is an overwhelming element of the short-story. Sometimes it is made by singers or piano player but sometimes it is made by the voices and the noise of the guests at the party. They create a lot of different themes which compose the background of the story and sometimes Gabriel focuses on them. They become a flux. The music of the party and the noise of conversations seem useless and nothing seems to happen, but there are some details, i.e it is the piano that causes the revelation.

• Vision and perspective

Joyce, in this short story, jumps from one point of view to the other thus giving the idea of a choral narration. Every character is described from a different perspective thus revealing, through description, the relationship existing between each character and the other.

• Snow

Snow has the ability to cover anything it falls on. It hides the truth and confuses objects. The colour white also brings the reader back to an idea of purity and blankness. For these reasons, it offers Gabriel an escape from the situation he finds himself in. Snow is the key

element of the conclusion. Snow has the power to soften differences and blurs the thin line that separates the world of the living from that of the dead.

THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

- The duality of human nature:

Through the entire novel, human nature is perceived as dual. This theme does not completely emerge until the last chapter in which Dr. Jekyll, one of the two main protagonists, fills all the blanks left during the narration and explains his relationship with Mr. Hyde. Despite this general aura of mystery, the reader witnesses the theory of duality throughout the characters and their different behaviors. Thanks to Jekyll's experiment we understand that the man is not truly one, but truly two. The human soul is painted as a battlefield who hosted two struggling figures: "The Angel" and "The Devil" who fight to gain mastery and overpower the other one. The difference between Hyde and Jekyll is that the doctor knows both good and evil, Hyde instead has no angelic part, he is pure evil. We can compare this idea to the "element of sublime" explained in Coleridge's "The Rimes of the Ancient Mariner": sublime is both frightening and amazing through the eyes of men; nature has two contrasting elements within itself and the man perceive both of them and doesn't know how to explain it. In a similar way everyone recognizes something strange in Hyde but cannot explain what. He is both physically strong but psychologically scared (DUALISM).

the wedding guest wants to join the wedding party at first, but in the end he changes his mind. After he listens to the Mariners tale he becomes a wiser but sadder man thus, according to Coleridge, a higher level of knowledge brings men to a more pessimistic view of human life. We can also consider dualism as one of Stevenson's narrative techniques: something positive, such as the front door of Jekyll's house, is always associated with something negative, such as the backdoor of the laboratory.

- The importance of reputation:

For the characters in the novel, the preservation of their social life emerges as something really important. The importance of reputation in the novel also reflects the importance of appearances, facades and surfaces, which often hide a sordid underside. This theme is strictly connected with the one that regards duplicity of human nature. Duality of human nature and importance of society are strictly connected because in order to be respected and well known we have to follow rules imposed by society and hide something that, even if strange, is part of us and our real nature. We can compare the theme of society presented in Jekyll and Hyde to the one pictured in Swift's "Gulliver's travels"; while traveling in mysterious lands, Gulliver understands that society is corrupted and in the end he leaves. In Jekyll and Hyde's strange case instead, society wants people to join, therefore they force themselves to fit in and hide their darkest pleasures. In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (Coleridge) society plays an important role too and it is filtered through the act of marriage; a wedding guest is about to join a wedding party by gets stopped by an ancient mariner who leaves out of society. The wedding guest has no time for the story of the

ancient mariner but is forced to listen, because of the captivating eyes of the old man. He listens to the entire tale and at the end he doesn't want to join society anymore. Considering the entire Ballad, we can tell that society is something that keeps us far from God and Nature; we need to live out of it and abandon it completely, because only by doing this we can appreciate and love Nature and all the things God created. We can say that both Stevenson and Swift think that humans are happy when they follow virtue but degeneration leads them to passion and desire.

But it is not good or evil itself that causes distress, is the separation of this two sides that causes it. Separating good and evil is a mistake and Jekyll's experiment could be considered as an evidence.

- Silence:

Is also connected with reputation. In the first chapter Utterson refuses to share his hypothesis about the strange case. Moreover, no one knows Hyde's secret vices. These are only two examples that show the Victorian society's attitude towards irrational events and thoughts. This kind of society prizes reputation above all and represses truth, if it has the possibility of upset conventions.

- Vision and Fragmentation:

Is unclear and generally focused on Hyde. We see him and all the witnesses describe him, but their descriptions are unclear, they lack of details and are only partially correct. Darkness and mystery and Vision are connected because the visions that the characters have are unclear and lack of details, as if they were covered in fog. This short story is interested in internal events rather than external facts; description instead of explanation is due to the fact that what really matters is the internal conflict (good vs. evil, dualism)

Gulliver's Travels

- Estrangement

It is the technique of describing unusual feelings through familiar elements and familiar objects and situations through unfamiliar details. Swift describes familiar object in a way that makes them appear strange and unusual: he filters the vision of these objects through the Lilliputian's eyes. The fact that Gulliver is introduced to this new point of view by reading a document is significant, much like in Jekyll and Hyde, the letter represents a partial view on situations and events as it does not give an objective point of view instead, everything is filtered through the author's eyes.

- Vision

The act of seeing. It is through vision that we learn about the world around us. Vision can be both physical and metaphorical. As the eye naturally seeks light, so does the soul that naturally seeks truth and virtue. Light is in strong opposition with darkness which metaphorically represents sin and uncertainty. The vision of the other is particularly

important: the other is both outside and within us. Indeed, by noticing differences between us and what surrounds us we can define ourselves and enter a relationship with what's around us. In the first three books Gulliver acted as an observer who described the societies he met and pointed out the corruption and vices he witnessed among them. In book three the situation is overturned: he is the one to be judged. His master Houyhnhnm points out everything wrong about human society and appearance. Gulliver is then able to plainly see in himself the corruption he previously saw in other societies. He becomes his own Other. His voyage in a sense comes to an end in the moment when acknowledge his own nature. He has had the chance to compare himself to other societies: until now he had been the beholder who witnessed corruption within the others, now he is the one to be judged. To put it simply, Gulliver learns about himself by becoming his own Other. This metaphorical voyage has brought him to have a broader view on things, he realizes that human society is deeply rotten and no longer wishes to come back to his homeland.

- Corruption

Swift was considered a pessimist: he believed humans were inherently corrupted as they still bear within themselves the burden of the Original Sin and are not able to escape their condition. Western society is deeply corrupted, no matter how greatly European princes are depicted.

Gulliver is a European man and is thus filled with the corruption of his society. As a matter of facts, when first confronted with the Lilliputians he immediately feels the desire to destroy them. This episode hints to the destruction and violence that English colonizer had brought into the colonies. Politics is seen as a matter of spectacularity. In origin however, politics were meant to be a positive thing, which valued statesmen for their actual competences but overtime, the system has been corrupted. Swift moves a strong critique to lawyers who, in the human world, are trained in order to twist truth as a way of profiting. Humans have corrupted the system of justice which is no longer objective but is left to one's ability to twist reality. Gulliver gives an overall account of European society: the description he offers underlines the large number of oppositions present within human society. Gulliver still tries to somehow justify his society but fails miserably as he is gradually starting to realize how corrupted and cruel the human world is.

- Pessimism

Swift believes human beings are irrational creature who hold within themselves the power to aspire to a greater good but still decides to pursue physical and earthly pleasures.

In book 1: England is described as grand. Gulliver ironically tries to defend England.

In book 2: Gulliver starts to doubt England. He realizes it might not be that majestic, the book ends on a pessimistic note.

In book 3: Critique to European society in the context of education.

In book 4: Irony is substituted with the ugly truth. Gulliver feels ashamed because he has to reveal his own corruption.

- Education

Swift is very keen on underlining the corruption that concerns the school system. Special attention will be given to this subject in book 3, when Gulliver will arrive in the island of Laputa. In Lilliput men and women are given the same education. They are equally expected to pursue virtue and justice. Curiosity is portrayed as a virtue that encourages men to find out more about the world around them and to better themselves on the base of what they have learned. People in Laputa, much like Europeans at the time, believe their culture to be superior to any other culture and do not accept anyone who does not conform to their standards. Language is seen as something reserved to creatures of higher level thus Gulliver, who is now seen as a *lusus naturae*, is not expected to have this kind of ability. Conciseness of language helps avoiding the corruption of spoken words: by using few and simple words the message is delivered clearly and without any possibility left to misunderstanding. Swift really makes a satire of himself given that his entire work is based on the usage of words. The elimination of language is a form of corruption. Language is one of the first thing that is affected by human corruption: since the very beginning multiple politicians have lied and changed their promises in order to gain consent.

- Individual vs. Society

Swift inspires himself both from the description of Plato's *Republic* of the *polis* governed by the wise and Thomas More's *Utopia*. Even if Swift's view is more sceptical. One of the main aspects of famous historical utopia is the tendency to privilege collectiveness over individuality. View: education in Lilliput. Lilliputian think of themselves as the perfect representation of utopia, but their reality is in fact torn by conspiracies, jealousy and backstabbing.

In the land of Houyhnhnms there is a lack of individuality and identity and the inhabitants represent the opposite of Gulliver who no longer feels a sense of belonging to his original society and exists only as an individual. The fact that Gulliver is unable to fit into any society could represent modern alienation. Swift mocks aspects of both individuality and communal life.

- Limits of human understanding

According to Swift it is important to leave life in a wise way like Houyhnhnms and people in Brobdingnag without aspiring to a level of knowledge that is abstract from earthly matters because it will just lead the citizens to unhappiness: we should not look too closely to ourselves. Gulliver initially lacks of self-reflection abilities whereas in the end he comes to self-loathing by realizing his corrupted nature

THE RYME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

- Emphasis on the individual:

In order to express the feelings it was considered the content of art had to come from the imagination of the artist/poet considered as "literal creation" or as a poetic voice, not as the

historical figure in itself. Romantic art addressed its audiences with what was intended to be felt as the personal voice of the artist. So, in literature, much of romantic poetry invited the reader to identify the protagonists with the poets themselves.

- Human Nature:

Romanticism was interested in the importance of nature, particularly in the effect of nature upon the artist when he is surrounded by it. The role played by Nature in Romantic poems represents its violence, indifference and wilderness as an enemy for human beings. One of the most important elements in Romanticism is the sublime: a feeling associated with the strong emotion we feel in front of intense natural phenomena (storms, hurricanes, waterfalls). It generates fear, terror, awe but also attraction, admiration all at once; these feelings evoked by the sublime overwhelm rational thought and make people aware about their frailty.

- Sublime:

a feeling associated with the strong emotion we feel in front of intense natural phenomena (storms, hurricanes, waterfalls). It generates fear, terror, awe but also attraction, admiration all at once; these feelings evoked by the sublime overwhelm rational thought and make people aware about their frailty.

- Nature and the Development of the Individual

Coleridge, Wordsworth, and other romantic poets praised the unencumbered, imaginative soul of youth, finding images in nature with which to describe it. According to their formulation, experiencing nature was an integral part of the development of a complete soul and sense of personhood. The death of his father forced Coleridge to attend school in London, far away from the rural idylls of his youth, and he lamented the missed opportunities of his sheltered, city-bound adolescence in many poems, including "Frost at Midnight" (1798). Here, the speaker sits quietly by a fire, musing on his life, while his infant son sleeps nearby. He recalls his boarding school days, during which he would both daydream and lull himself to sleep by remembering his home far away from the city, and he tells his son that he shall never be removed from nature, the way the speaker once was. Unlike the speaker, the son shall experience the seasons and shall learn about God by discovering the beauty and bounty of the natural world. The son shall be given the opportunity to develop a relationship with God and with nature, an opportunity denied to both the speaker and Coleridge himself. For Coleridge, nature had the capacity to teach joy, love, freedom, and piety, crucial characteristics for a worthy, developed individual.

- The albatross itself is a symbol of innocence and beauty. When the seaman hang the dead albatross around the Mariner's neck, it becomes a symbol of his sin, which he bears like a mark of shame. Ultimately, the albatross' death leads the Mariner to a spiritual epiphany, allowing him to understand his relationship with God and nature.

- Coleridge personifies the figures of both Death and Life-in-Death, depicting them as two supernatural beings playing dice in order to determine the Mariner's fate. Death takes the two hundred hired seaman on the Mariner's ship, but Life-in-Death wins the Mariner, whose "ancient" appearance suggests, if not immortality, then a wizened old age.
- The poem in fact can be read in three ways: Religious Social Poetic The voyage of the mariner can be represent the life of Man, the mariner a sort of Everyman, the albatross the end of the link with life when is killed by the mariner. So the poem can be an allegory of life where the crew represents mankind, the albatross the pact of love that unites all God's creatures and the ship a microcosm where the evil of a single person has a repercussions on others has often happens in life.
- This poem has been interpreted in many ways: it may be the description of a dream, which allows the poet to relate the supernatural and less conscious part of the psyche to a familiar experience. Coleridge's poems can also be an allegory of the life of the soul in its passage from crime through punishment, to redemption. The interpretation that seems most relevant, however, is the one which sees the poem as a description of the poetic journey of the Romanticism. The Mariner is the poet who is drove by guilt, guilt that origins the actual poetry. It is the regret for a state of lost innocence caused by the industrial revolution, or an attempt to re-discover it by telling symbolic story of its loss.

Ancient Mariner

The poem's protagonist. He is unnaturally old, with skinny, deeply-tanned limbs and a "glittering eye." He sets sail from his native country with two hundred other men who are all saved from a strange, icy patch of ocean when they are kind to an Albatross that lives there. Impulsively and inexplicably, he shoots the Albatross with his crossbow and is punished for his crime by a spirit who loved the Albatross. He is cursed to be haunted indefinitely by his dead shipmates, and to be compelled to tell the tale of his downfall at random times. Each time he is compelled to share his story with someone, he feels a physical agony that is abated only temporarily once he finishes telling the tale.

Wedding Guest

One of three people on their way to a wedding reception; he is next of kin to the bridegroom. The Ancient Mariner stops him, and despite his protests compels him to sit and listen to the entirety of his story. He is afraid of the Ancient Mariner and yearns to join the merriment of the wedding celebration, but after he hears the Ancient Mariner's story, he becomes both "sadder and...wiser."

The Sailors

Two hundred seamen who set sail with the Ancient Mariner one clear, sunny day and find themselves in the icy world of the "rime" after a storm, from which the Albatross frees them. They feed and play with the Albatross until the Ancient Mariner inexplicably kills it. They begin to suffer from debilitating heat and thirst. They hang the Albatross's corpse around the Ancient Mariner's neck to punish him. When Life-in-Death wins the Ancient

Mariner's soul, the sailors' souls are left to Death and they curse the Ancient Mariner with their eyes before dying suddenly. Even though their souls fly out, their bodies refuse to rot and lie open-eyed on the deck, continuously cursing the Ancient Mariner. After the rain returns, the sailors come alive and silently man the ship, singing beautiful melodies. When the ship reaches the harbor, they once again curse the Ancient Mariner with their eyes and then disappear, leaving only their corpses behind. The Ancient Mariner is destined to suffer the curse of a living death and continually be haunted by their cursing eyes.

Albatross

A great, white sea bird that presumably saves the sailors from the icy world of the "rime" by allowing them to steer through the ice and sending them a good, strong wind. The Albatross, however, also makes a strange mist follow the ship. It flies alongside the ship, plays with the sailors, and eats their food, until the Ancient Mariner shoots it with his crossbow. Its corpse is hung around the Ancient Mariner's neck as a reminder of his crime and falls off only when he is able to appreciate the beauty of nature and pray once more. The Albatross is loved by a powerful spirit who wreaks havoc on and kills the sailors while leaving the Ancient Mariner to the special agony of Life-in-Death.

Death

Embodied in a hulking form on the ghost ship. He loses at dice to Life-in-Death, who gets to claim the Ancient Mariner's soul; instead, Death wins the two hundred sailors.

The Night-mare Life-in-Death

Embodied in a beautiful, naked, ghostly woman with golden hair and red lips. She wins at dice over Death and gets to claim the Ancient Mariner's soul, condemning him to a limbo-like living death.

Hermit

A recluse who prays three times a day and lives in communion with nature in the woods. He accompanies the Pilot and the Pilot's boy on the small boat because "he loves to talk with mariners / from a far countree." The Ancient Mariner reveres the Hermit as a righteous and holy man, and asks him to absolve him of his sin. The Hermit is the first person to whom the Ancient Mariner is compelled to tell his tale.

