***‘The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and My Hyde’* by Robert Louis Stevenson**

**Explore how Stevenson presents Jekyll becoming isolated from conventional society, in this extract and elsewhere in the novel.** (Chapter 2. From *‘With that he blew out his candle…*’ to *‘No. Never heard of him. Since my time.’*)

The textual context of this episode is important in showing how Jekyll is becoming isolated from conventional society. Utterson has previously been concerned about Hyde’s strange relationship with his old friend, Dr Jekyll, whom he supposes to be an honourable gentlemen like himself but who has fallen foul of the strict rules of Victorian propriety, giving Hyde a sinister hold over him. In terms of social and historical context, this may have been Jekyll’s indulgence, when young, in some of the salacious pleasures which London offered in the Victorian period: the music halls, drinking dens and brothels which drove out respectable families from areas like Soho – later revealed to be Hyde’s place of residence.

Stevenson has Utterson, the morally upright lawyer, seek out a mutual acquaintance, Dr Lanyon, who represents the conventional, respected face of Medical Science, to see if he knows the connection between Jekyll and Hyde. We can infer Lanyon’s high status from the choice of diction describing him as *‘great’* and showing his talents being in demand from *‘his crowding patients’*. Lanyon states that it is *‘more than ten years since Henry Jekyll became too fanciful for me.’* This clearly shows that Jekyll and Lanyon have been estranged for a long time and the choice of adjective *‘fanciful’* shows Jekyll’s scientific experiments as being judged unconventional and not respectable, in this character’s opinion.

Even the location of Lanyon’s house lends weight to the authority of his opinion, with its connotations of great respectability: *‘Cavendish Square, that citadel of medicine’*. This metaphor implies a place of great security, a place from which conventional Medical Science rules the city. It is, of course, significant in terms of geographical context, too, being close to the famed Harley Street.

All of this allows the reader to accept Lanyon’s view that Jekyll has begun to *‘go wrong, wrong in mind.’* The emphatic repetition in this judgement leaves us in no doubt that Jekyll has, indeed, become isolated from the conventional society of medical professionals. When Lanyon continues that he regards Jekyll’s ideas as *‘Such unscientific balderdash’*, Stevenson is again underlining with this dismissive colloquial phrase Jekyll’s separation from normal, accepted Scientific thinking. Contextually, Science was continuing to make rapid advances in this era, proposing many unconventional theories, such as Darwinism, which upturned accepted beliefs – many of them challenging the conventional teachings of the church. The fact that Jeykll’s scientific ideas have isolated him completely from conventional medical practice, personified by Dr Lanyon, is dramatically summarised by Stevenson’s use of the very emphatic metaphor of friendship from classical mythology that Jekyll’s behaviour *‘would have estranged Damon and Pythias.’*

The episode ends with Utterson still no further forward in his investigations. However, Utterson will later see Jekyll more integrated into society in the chapter *‘Doctor Jeykll Was Quite at Ease’*, where he ‘is *‘giving one of his pleasant dinners’*, throwing himself wholeheartedly into charity work and becoming more focussed on religion. This is totally opposite to his withdrawal from society whilst conducting his experiments which, as revealed midway through the text, change him into Hyde. Structurally, Stevenson makes this only a temporary, brief mingling with conventional society. Lanyon rejects Jekyll again as, we understand later, he has witnessed Hyde’s transmutation into Jekyll. The last sight Utterson has of Jeykll alive is in the chapter *‘Incident at the Window*’ of his laboratory: a lonely, agitated, desperate figure who can no longer be seen in respectable society as he in unable to control his transformation into Hyde. At his death, the tragic Jekyll is isolated and friendless.

(591 words)