

Worksheet 8 – Text and Textuality

Review: Lecture 7: Sex and Sexuality

Give one example of an unnamed female character in the novel.

Recall: Lecture 8: Text and Textuality

Answer these questions after watching the video lecture to check how much you remember.

- Which two of the below were nicknames for penny numbers?
 - Penny dreadfuls
 - Sixpence shockers
 - Shilling shockers
 - Threepence terrors
- Steven Greenwood called penny numbers what?
 - Dangerous
 - Pernicious
 - Evil
 - Sensationalist
- Complete the following quote from Stevenson's 1886 letter: "I do not write for the public; I write for _____, a nobler deity."
 - Duty
 - Money
 - Fame
 - Power
- What do Marxist readings argue that Hyde represents?
 - The power of the bourgeoisie
 - The brutalism of capitalism
 - The repressed underclass
 - The subconscious
- What feature do Jekyll and Hyde share?
 - Handwriting
 - Fingerprints
 - Signature
 - Shadow

Analysis

- Read this extract from 'The Mysteries of London', a penny number by George W. M. Reynolds from 1845.
 - What Gothic themes and ideas can you spot here?
 - Are there any similarities or differences with Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde?
 - In what way is the London depicted in the novel also 'a city of fearful contrasts'?

Crime is abundant in this city: the lazar-house, the prison, the brothel, and the dark alley, are rife with all kinds of enormity; in the same way as the palace, the mansion, the club-house, the parliament, and the parsonage, are each and all characterised by their different degrees and shades of vice. But wherefore specify crime and vice by their real names, since in this city of which we speak they are absorbed in the multi-significant words – WEALTH and POVERTY ... From this city of strange contrasts branch off two roads, leading to two points totally distinct the one from the other. One winds its tortuous way through all the noisome dens of crime, chicanery, dissipation, and voluptuousness: the other meanders amidst rugged rocks and wearisome acclivities, it is true, but on the wayside are the resting-places of rectitude and virtue.

Along those roads two youths are journeying. They have started from the same point; but one

pursues the former path, and the other the latter. Both come from the city of fearful contrasts; and both follow the wheels of fortune in different directions. Where is that city of fearful contrasts? – Who are those youths that have thus entered upon paths so opposite the one to the other? And to what destinies do those separate roads conduct them?

Evaluation

7. Use the internet to research and create a fact-file about penny-numbers. You should aim to write at least one side of notes. You should use the following links as starting points:

<https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20160502-the-shocking-tale-of-the-penny-dreadful>

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/penny-dreadfuls-victorian-children-literacy>

<https://crimereads.com/penny-dreadfuls/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/30/penny-dreadfuls-victorian-equivalent-video-games-kate-summerscale-wicked-boy>

Extension task: Would you call Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde a penny-number? Why / why not?

Glossary

- **Metatextual** – An adjective to describe a text that makes critical commentary on either itself or another text.
e.g. With its abundance of Biblical references, one could say that Paradise Lost is metatextual.
- **Penny-numbers** – Cheap, shocking stories, normally sold in serial form.
e.g. Penny-numbers often contained graphic, violent content.
- **Sensationalist** – Intended to provoke public interest or excitement, usually at the expense of accuracy; deliberately shocking or controversial.
e.g. Tabloid newspapers are often known for their sensationalist headlines.
- **Marxist** – Someone who supports the political and economic ideas of Karl Marx; someone who is interested in the struggle between capitalists and the working class.
e.g. Angela Davis is a well-known Marxist.
- **Literate** – Able to read and write.
e.g. It was important to the President that more of the population became literate.
- **Blasphemous** – Something that shows a lack of respect towards God or religion.
e.g. The teacher was shocked by the student's blasphemous comments.
- **Dualism** – The division of something into two opposed or contrasting aspects.
e.g. Heaven and Hell is an example of dualism in Christianity.

