

Good essay about comparison and contrasting two victorian texts

[Countries](#), [England](#)



Introduction

During the Victorian era, there was a great evil in the society, albeit disguised in the good. The novel, "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," authored by Robert Balfour Louis Stevenson, is an account of what the author had dreamt. It describes a situation in which a doctor, Jekyll, is living a dual life, good and evil. However, he is tired of this kind of life and through conducting an experiment on himself. He can set free his evil life from the good by transforming to Mr. Hyde, a renowned evil man. The aim of the author is to create a picture of the dualism in the society, in general, and the city of London, as well. The estimable cities were next to cities that were ill-famed with violence and squalor. Conversely, an excerpt from "The Condition of the Working Class in England", authored by Friedrich Engel, gives an account of how unfavorable the living conditions of workers during the Victorian era were. The society cared less about what was going on and did nothing to ameliorate this condition. The concept of dualism, the existence two opposing irreducible rationales in the society, is evident in these Victorian texts. Given the setting of both texts, Victorian era, it is evident that the evils described were a representation of the dualism in the Victorian Cities and its inhabitants. The importance of these accounts in the modern society is authentic.

Both texts are founded dualism that was encountered in the Victorian Cities. In the book, the residential area of Dr. Jekyll is described to be associated with rich surgeons only. In other words, he belonged to the upper class in society. In the same vein, Mr. Hyde enters a building that the author describes as to be exhibiting an air of sustained and squalid negligence (5).

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In essence, the author presents a case in which the same building, the front, and the back side, are described differently. The gist here is that the louche and respectable existed in close propinquity. Moreover, Stevenson shows living in respectable places did not guarantee that the evils of the disreputable surrounding would not affect a person. Also, Mr. Enfield encounters Hyde knocking down a child in front of the door of the deserted house, on his way home. However, it is sensible to question where Mr. Enfield was coming from at three o'clock in the morning (Engel 5-6). Even though, he encountered the wrong-doing by Hyde, he is not innocent. The dualism in a Victorian City of London is real in this respect.

Additionally, dualism in the Victorian City is presented by Stevenson through the duplex consciousness of Dr. Jekyll. The consciousness of the doctor is split into moral and immoral aspects. In the face of the public, Dr. Jekyll wanted to come out as civilized, whereas a secret desire to commit vices. His vexation in this kind of life prompted him to conduct an experiment on himself using a compound of mixtures, and he turns into Hyde. This situation meant that his evil side was represented through his physical appearance (Stevenson 76-77). By so doing, he was free to practice his vicious ways in London without dreading recognition. In the ultimate end, evil part won the battle.

Similarly, Engel clearly brings out the concept of dualism in "The Condition of the Working Class in England" by alluding to the Victorian City of Manchester. He points out that there existed a large gap between the working class and the middle class. It was attributed to the improper planning of the city, which favored the middle class at the expense of the

working class. People in the fortune class had enough space to operate whereas the working class endured suffering and squalor. The society did not view this as a big deal there was no initiative to salvage the situation (Engel 8).

However, Engel's account differs from Stevenson's in the manner in which the differences in society influenced the lives of the inhabitants of the Victorian Cities. Engel maintains that the planning of the cities was constructed in such a way that the advantaged class was insulated from the sufferings of the working class. Moreover, the " tacit agreement", which directed the Victorian City's inhabitants to maintain their side based on the class they belonged in, led to the development of social wars. People pursued things that benefitted them without considering the effect such activities would have on the others. As such, the line was drawn between different classes in society (Engel 11). Conversely, Stevenson asserts that, despite the dualism in society, one side of the society often influenced the other in one way or the other. For instance, Dr. Jekyll was influenced by the evil ways of Hyde to a point that he chose him as his heir and instituted no restrictions on him visiting his house (Stevenson 20). Besides, the evil self of Dr. Jekyll won the ultimate battle when the doctor changes to Hyde (76). In this respect, Stevenson shows that despite the differences in the society during the Victorian era, the opposing sides influenced each other, and the negative side came forth as strong.

Additionally, both accounts depict the concept of dualism through the use of letters in the Victorian era. Engel describes the letter that he found, which has been written by an English workman on his frustrations of the fact that

men had taken up the roles of women, domestic roles, and vice versa. The content of the letter depicts the concept of dualism in this way; the domestic's roles for both genders had totally changed and were different. This change of roles shows dualism concept. The letter goes further to elaborate these differences (dualism) by criticizing the move by men to accept domestic roles instead of working in the mills. This how dualism, which was elaborated in the paper affected the Victorian Society;

- The working class parents were forced to work for long hours, while their children were mistreated in the nursing homes where they were left.
- Some men decided to engage in domestic chores as the women worked in the mills after the deaths of the 225 people caused by accidents involving children were reported. This initiative was loathed by other working men (Engel 13-15).
- After the death of Lanyon, a letter is found in his apartment, which contained prove that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde were no two different people. Rather, it was the same person presented in two physical beings (Stevenson 63-64).

In conclusion, the Victorian era was characterized by separations in society on the grounds of the social group an inhabitant belonged. In some cases, different social groups influenced others. Besides, people who lived double lives were forced to settle with the negative side since this is what they deemed to be freedom. The morals of these two texts are very relevant in the modern society since there are a myriad of things to relate to. For instance, as humans, we undergo the battles that Dr. Jekyll encountered with a dual consciousness. In the public, we want to be seen as genteel while

deep inside we desire to do immoral things. Also, Stevenson's account can be seen as criticism to the double standards that the modern society set. On the other hand, Engel's account is important to the modern reader since it creates a benchmark through which the amelioration of the living conditions of workers can be evaluated, across the world.

Works Cited

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Stevenson, Robert L. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Baronet Books. Print.