

Settings and character in dr jekyll and my hyde essay sample

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How effectively does Stevenson create a sense of horror through his descriptions of settings and character in Dr Jekyll and My Hyde?

The horror genre explores ideas about monsters and other characters to describe them as horrific. The gruesome, the unknown and the undying battle between good and evil have always fascinated mankind. From ancient times, stories have been told and written to explore the dark fears that lurk within the human mind (nightmares). In horror stories things happen what cant be explained, this is absence of reason. The term ' Gothic' came to be linked with this genre when popular novellas included the key elements of the frightening and the fantastic.

Gothic style offers settings with lofty towers, obscure passages, locked attics, deep and dark shadows. Such settings, tossed by foul weather, were usually located somewhere suitably remote and mysterious in faraway corners of the globe. Many of the settings I mentioned above were usually located in the novella. Hyde is a cruel and vicious character. The question is why is Dr Jekyll connected with Hyde. This brings absence of reason on the scene and makes the reader wonder and feel unsecured. The lack of information about Mr Hyde makes the reader worried this paints a picture of secrecy has we don't know much about the character.

One of the most important aspects of any horror novella is setting. R. L Stevenson's " Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" is a groundbreaking and disturbing work that weaves a tale of passion, misery, dread, and remorse. The setting sets the atmosphere and creates the mood. In order to fully understand the world in which Stevenson was raised, it is necessary to understand that there

were two Edinburgh's, both which played a part in making his personality and outlook. On one hand was New Town, respectable, straight, deeply religious, and polite. On the other was the old town (Edinburgh), symbolized by shadiness, darkness and dark, dim passages. The combination of these two aspects compare to each other made a deep impression and strengthened his interest with the duality of human nature, later providing the theme for " Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

The original idea occurred from a nightmare, from which his wife Fanny awaked him. It eventually developed into a full-length plot. Originally, the story was a straightforward horror story. After reading the original version to his wife, however, she suggested that more could be done with the story' after initially resisting, Stevenson burned the first copy. The rewriting of the new " Dr Jekyll and Hyde" took a little, three days. It is very ironic that the whole novella developed from a nightmare suggesting the whole story is a nightmare signifying the horror genre. Nightmares are often associated with darkness, fears and horrific tales. Throughout out the story he often draws upon obscurity, which means things are indistinct and very unclear.

In particular, the novella's description of the door through Hyde enters and exits. Creates a sense of nightmare, where the atmosphere is one of horror, and of an absence of reason, in the lines " bore in every feature the marks of prolonged and sordid negligence." The word negligence makes the reader believe what ever is behind the door does not care about others and the people around him; otherwise he would of taken care of the door.

Stevenson's use of description creates a sense of horror. Why would the door be neglected people who neglect stuff is normally associated with horrific violent behaviour? This creates absence of reason and keeps the reader wondering and lack of information doubts the reader. We are told that Utterson began to 'haunt the door' to Hyde's house. The word 'haunt' frightens us. Which then successfully heightens the horror building a picture of fear.

Stevenson creates a horrific setting for nightmare in his use of description in Mr Utterson's nightmare in the lines "It was but to see it glide more stealthily through sleeping houses, or move the more swiftly, and still more swiftly, even to dizziness, through wide labyrinths of lamp lighted city". The writer creates a sense of mounting tension through repetition. This reference to the weather symbolises the split personality of Dr Jekyll. The struggle between the light below and the darkness above represents the conflict between good and evil linking back to the horror genre. The word "labyrinths" means a complex structure of interconnecting passages through which it is difficult to find your way. The loneliness that these lines suggest creates a dangerous situation, where any assistance or interruptions from other people seem unlikely. This makes the reader feel worried and what will happen next?

An overriding atmosphere is created in the line "The wind continually charging" giving a sense of horror. When the wind is charging in full pace it blocks out sound, this means most sounds can't be heard this makes the reader feel anxious as to what will happen next. Solitude is a key image

created by the writer. The word "charging" is very dominant, powering and violent, I believe the wind represents Mr Hyde who is a very cruel and vicious character. The Carew murder scene is very comparable to Mr Utterson's nightmare, which suggests the whole setting of the novella is a nightmare. They are many comparisons such as the foul weather, passageways and the darkness, which covered the city. In nightmares such possessions appear.

It is interesting to note the description of Mr. Hyde, as he first appears in the novel during this chapter. The reader is continually reminded that Hyde is similar to the devil and evil. '...Snarled aloud into a savage laugh...' which suggests how he is related to evil, like a monster. Many horror stories have monsters and other characters to portray them as horrific. 'Really like Satan'. This could be Stevenson's way of telling us that Hyde is not human but purely evil. Trying to hint to us, the reader, something.

This obscure appearance makes other characters in the book have an immediate hate for Hyde, it also implies it is a horror story; horror stories have devils, beasts and creatures of nightmares, which expose them as horrific. Stevenson uses great description to describe how Mr Utterson ought to feel. The reason being is the explanations he uses like "the dreadful face of Hyde put shivers down my spine". Stevenson really gave me a mental picture of a beast and how Mr. Utterson must have felt the first time he saw Mr. Hyde. He used a simile to describe Hyde "Really like Satan" the technique is used to build an image the reader would recognise and compare to the character.

Through out the novella nerve-jangling descriptions and settings are used. The description in the weather plays a big part in the story, it affects it by making the atmosphere feel real and heightening the horror. Stevenson lets the writer build up his own image by giving little information. Many horror stories have monsters and other characters to depict them as horrific, but Stevenson takes it a step further and makes you picture a monster of your own choice with the little information and description given to you, this builds up the tension and horror layer by layer the more you read on.