

Novel college essay



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This essay is going to deal with the problem of duality seen from different angles as well as comparing of both novels and the way Valerie Martin was able to see this original horror story from another point of view.

Robert Louis Stevenson was a typical author of Victorian times. He had an ability to describe scary events in a very exciting way. His novel *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

. *Hyde* can be seen at different levels. Firstly, it tells us that there can be both - the good and the evil in all of us. The novella has been interpreted as an examination of the duality of human nature, and that the failure to accept this tension - to accept the evil - results in the evil being reflected on others, especially innocent victims.

Secondly, it criticizes Victorian society of the 19th century in a sense of "outward respectability and inward lust," as this period had a tendency for social hypocrisy and double face.

And last but not least, it is an interesting psychological study in which we can see and study structural personality theories earlier described by S. Freud. The word dualism is derived from the Latin word *duo*, which means two. It can be understood as two different, usually opposite principles.

Dualism is most often discussed in context of religion and philosophy, but also can refer to moral dualism - the conflict between good and evil, mind-body or mind-matter dualism Cartesian dualism or physical dualism - the Chinese Yin and Yang From the psychological point of view, the characters in the novel can be seen as representatives of the Freud's structural theory of

mind, when id is the principle of delight – animally, gratification, superego is the principle of morality, which is formed by educational pressures. Id and superego constantly stand opposite each other. And finally ego, standing between these two.

Ego represents the principle of reality.

2 When this is transferred to the main characters, Mr.. Hyde would be clearly the representative of the id- he longs for instant gratification, has aggressive instincts with no moral reminiscences and social constraints. Dr. Jekyll is the ego, he is rational with fixed morale.

And he is writhing between id, represented by Mr.. Hyde and superego, represented by strict morality of Victorian society of that time. It can be also seen as “ civilized” versus “ animalistic” approach”. Jekyll and Hyde are not the only examples of duality in the novel.

One of them is the city of London.

The novel starts on a London street and also a great part of the story takes place outside in the night time. It is portrayed on two different, contrasting levels. Firstly, it is described as beautiful, idyllic, well kept, bustling center, which changes into a dangerous, dark, foggy, and mysterious place. Both main characters need a different surroundings and environment for living. Dr. Jekyll needs freedom of the modern, bustling city for his experiments, because he is able to realize them only in case of absolute anonymity.

And then Mr..

Hyde can live unnoticed in the London 's underworld, poor districts, surrounded by beggars, prostitutes and strangers. Throughout the novel, Stevenson makes a link between the urban landscape of Victorian London and the dark events surrounding Hyde.

He achieves his desired effect through the use of nightmarish imagery, in which dark streets twist and coil, or lie in fog, forming an ominous landscape exactly suited for the crimes that take place there. Bleak visions of the city also appear in Deuteron 's nightmares: " He would be aware of the great field of lamps of a nocturnal city...

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The figure (of Hyde) haunted the lawyer all night; and if at any time he dozed over, it was but to see it glide more stealthily through sleeping houses, or move the more swiftly through wider labyrinths of lamp-lighted city, and at every street corner crush a child and leave her screaming. " 3 In such images, Stevenson describes Hyde as an urban creature, completely at home in the darkness of London - where a lot of crimes take place without anyone knowing. Dualism can be also found in society of Victorian London as the whole, not only in individuals.

Aristocracy, which was superficially mannerly and refined also had dark side of its life - secrets, which were hidden in their posh houses from the public. Mr.. Hyde enters and leaves Dr. Jekyll's house through the back door - this can be an example of the two -faced society, where the evil is hidden behind the facade of the genteel class. A kind of dualism can be also seen in

the fact that Stevenson prefers to set into his novel more male characters than female ones.

The novel contains very few references to women. The only women a reader can meet are the poor little girl trampled by Mr.

Hyde in the first chapter, the maid who witnesses Sir Dangers Care's murder, and finally the woman, who is one of the Jewell's servants. All of them are described rather as passive, weak, and helpless. Interesting is, that none of the male characters in the story has a female relationship.

Jewell, Deuteron, Enfield and Lyon appear to be bachelors. The reader may think that Dr. Jewell might be a homosexual and that one of the reasons why he has created Mr. Hyde is how to hide his homosexuality but at the same time how to gratify it in the body of Mr.

Hyde. Dualism is also found in the Stevenson's method of balancing the rational and the irrational. Much of the novel would be seen unbelievable, especially concerning Jewell's experiment, but the rational thinking and social respect of Deuteron and Enfield sounds believable. On one side there is reality, on the other a nightmare world. Valerie Martin, an American novelist and short story writer, had an idea to look at the classic Stevenson's story *The Strange Case of Dr. Jewell and Mr.*

. Hyde from a totally different point of view.

She named it *Mary Reilly* and it is, in fact, a retelling of the original story by the diary of an intelligent housemaid Mary, living and working in a Dr. Jewell's prestigious house.

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Mary is the main heroin in Martin ' s version and the whole story is told through her eyes - in the first person, while in the original story she is only an unnamed character. The reader can feel Mary' s experiences and feelings throughout the whole story. She gradually reveals her childhood nightmare when her tyrannical father used to abuse her as well as her bound to her Master DRP. Jewell.

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Another difference can be found in writing style.

Stevenson uses difficult structure of sentences and for a modern reader his language might not be always understandable. The reason is the time period when the novel was written as well as the fact that it is told by the upper-class characters. Martin ' s story is much more easier to read and it is really a pleasure to follow her Tory. There are some differences in characters: Martin, for example, omits Mr..

Deuteron as a primary character and replaces him with Mary and the whole story is focused on her, while original version is focused on DRP.

Jewell. She also lets Jewell show his emotions much openly than Stevenson did, emotions play a big role in her story. Emotions are important in Stevenson ' s story too, however, he rather hides them as upper-class of that time suppressed emotions. Jewell ' s thoughts are not so visible. The reader is supposed to reveal them on his own with help of his own imagination, while Martin makes this side of the story more understandable, it is easier for

the reader to empathic with the characters: “ I was thinking how dear your face is to me, Mary’.

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. And how sad it would make me if I were never to see it Although the reader knows from the beginning how the more... ” 4 story will continue and what secrets will be revealed at the end, Martin picked up the story in a Way that provides many surprises. The reader is surprised or even shocked many times within the story and does not know what will follow.

This Martin ‘ s ability was also used in the movie, which was filmed in 996, starring Julia Roberts and John Milkmaids: “ It is to Valerie Martin ‘ s credit that what does follow is seldom quite predictable. 5 Another Martin “ s triumph in her retelling of the story is that she made Mary Reilly and her life so convincing. One of the strongest and most thrilling moments comes when Mary glimpses her tyrannical father again and the reader does not know what will follow. “ Valerie Martin’s treatment of his story actually succeeds in ways Stevenson himself could not have brought off and might well have admired”. Concerning Mr..

Hyde, he is not seen in Martin ‘ s eyes as only embodiment of pure evil. She wants to show that such Jewell Hyde duplicity is not uncommon and we can meet with that on everyday basis, in any person.

In a novel, she explained: ‘ You want to surprise and shake up your reader, but at the same time, you want to entertain them and draw in. “ 6 According

to Michael Wilmington, a Chicago Tribune Movie Critic, in a film Mary Reilly sex influences almost everything.

This is quite usual for all the other film adaptations. The original story is re-imagined from a psycho-sexual angle. Mary is in fact the reason of Jewell ; s madness, why he goes crazy. The film tells us that it is a lust that is hidden beneath Jewell ' s kindness and civility, he remains respectful but feels repressed as he lusts after Mary.

Hyde, on the other hand, is uninhabited, he leers at Mary without any difficulty, grabs her breast.

.. 7 To summarize the problem of duality in The strange case of DRP. Jewell and Mr.

. Hyde, it is necessary to mention that duality is not found here only in the two characters Of Jewell and Hyde - duality of human nature, but it is apparent from different points of IEEE as well: Victorian society and its social hypocrisy, the city of London with its two different faces, Stevenson ' s only male characters versus lack of females, rational and the irrational - reality and the nightmare world.

Valerie Martin had a wonderful idea of retelling the original story from the point of view of somebody who might have witnessed all the events but was not visible for Robert Louis Stevenson. Her style of writing, and retelling the story in the 1st person by Mary Reilly, a maid, in a form of a diary is definitely very exciting experience for many readers and takes a different

approach at engaging the audience Valerie Martin was awarded by the Kafka Prize for Mary Reilly.