

How did Stevenson  
create horror and  
tension around the  
character of Hyde?  
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Robert Louis Stevenson was a famous Scottish author who, in 1886 wrote, the chilling, fictitious novel *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Stevenson generated tension surrounding the infamous character, Mr Hyde, in a variety of ways.

Tension has been created around the character of Hyde throughout the novel. In particular, the scene where Mr Enfield describes feeling terrified and bewildered at seeing a young girl callously trampled by Hyde.

Stevenson creates tension using various methods. During the trampling scene, as throughout the book, Hyde is described as a loathsome, 'little man'. This enables the reader to identify the character, using the recurrent labels. Stevenson uses Pathetic Fallacy to portray Hyde. This is apparent during Mr Enfield's account of that 'Black winter morning.' Black is associated with evil and winter with dark, dingy mornings. Stevenson uses this sentence effectively to create tension and set the sinister scene before Hyde appears. This suggests that Hyde's actions, when he comes into the scene, are going to be corrupt and villainous.

Hyde was 'stumping along', 'at a good walk.' Stevenson has created a character that to the reader appears to move in a controlled, unstoppable manner. Hyde then 'trampled calmly over the child's body and left her screaming on the ground.' These actions were unemotional and complacent. Hyde did not care; he made no effort to stop and showed no remorse. The reader would be disgusted, just like Mr Enfield. He recounted the incident as, 'hellish to see,' which is the worst possible way of describing it, as Hell is a combination of everything evil. He also compared Hyde to 'some damned

Juggernaut'. This makes Hyde sound unstoppable and powerful and as he is 'damned' he has nothing to lose.

Mr Enfield had an encounter with Hyde after the trampling incident. Hyde was, 'perfectly cool and made no resistance' Hyde, here does not care for the girl or his actions and shows no guilt, 'but gave me one look, so ugly that it brought out the sweat on me like running.' Mr Enfield's loathing of Hyde appears to be fundamentally based on Hyde's appearance. Although, his features in this scene are not described, the reader is in no doubt that Hyde is a deformed, satanic creature.

Utterson and the spectators were even more horrified because the victim was a child. Hyde appeared more awesome and powerful when compared to the girl. Although the girl was not hurt, she was still shocked and understandably scared. This compounds to the reader the despicable, evil nature of Hyde.

There was also a doctor within the scene. Enfield described him as a plain man and 'about as emotional as a bagpipe.' This simile is an excellent way to describe Hyde, yet when he sets his eyes on Hyde; he showed his emotions, 'turned sick and white with the desire to kill him.' This, once again, compounds Hyde's ghastliness.

Mr Enfield is recounting this horrific experience to Mr Utterson, a main character who is a lawyer. Mr Utterson has a nightmare after hearing the treacherous account. This, once again gives Stevenson the opportunity to recreate the tension that surrounds his infamous character. Pathetic Fallacy

is used in the nightmare to build up tension. The room was in, 'mere  
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darkness,' illustrating Hyde's evil character. The room is curtained, reflecting the darkness and evil that entrapped Mr Enfield. The light, which is associated with good, is shut out and there is no escape.

The nightmare had two phases. The first was the story of the trampled girl told by Mr Enfield. The second phase portrayed Mr Enfield asleep in bed unaware of Hyde being present. Stevenson uses different methods within the nightmare to create tension. He uses repetition; the nightmare repeats itself, haunting Utterson. He also makes the sentences long, giving the illusion of a never-ending nightmare that Utterson was unable to escape from.

Throughout the dream Utterson never sees Hyde's face. This gives the effect of Hyde being a stranger and therefore highlighting Mr Enfield's vulnerability. An important part of human communication relies on facial expression. The facelessness of Stevenson's evil character ensures his anonymity and prevents Utterson from reading his expression's and emotion's, thus heightening tension.

Stevenson chose diction that portrayed Hyde as a powerful, creepy force. Hyde is described as 'ghostlike' and 'a figure to whom power was given,' these show how Utterson reacted to Hyde in the nightmare. Hyde is dominant, evil and ghostlike. The power described within the text compounds Hyde's invincibility.

In the Carew Murder Case chapter, Stevenson created tension in different ways. He used shocking words to create surprise, for example, 'startling' and 'all of a sudden' emphasising Hyde's actions. Stevenson made Hyde

sound evil; he used Pathetic Fallacy to do this, which has an effect on the reader, prompting them to dislike him.

Stevenson wrote in long sentences, which creates suspense in the writing, by making it sound never ending. He uses metaphors such as, ' a fog rolled over the city.' The fog gives an impression of imprisoning the city, preventing any escape and making poor visibility. This increases fear and sends the imagination into overdrive. The metaphor ' rolled' suggests and unstoppable momentum reflecting the unstoppable character of Hyde.

The maid's story is believable because the surroundings are ' brilliantly lit by the full moon', she was able to identify the murderer as Hyde because, ' the moon shone on his face.' There is a contrast between the maid and Mr Hyde, she was ' romantically given' whilst he was, ' ape-like' and appeared inhuman. Inhuman things are immoral, just like Stevenson is trying to portray Hyde. Repetition has been used to emphasise words, such as ' never' this makes the reader certain that she had definitely not done something or felt this way.

The meeting at first seemed to be a casual and polite congregation, ' it seemed to breathe such an innocent and old-world kindness of disposition.' But, quickly changed to a heated dispute. This gives the reader a surprise because they would not expect it. Hyde was carrying a heavy cane, with which he was trifling; this made him look like a threat to Carew. Stevenson made Hyde impatient and angry, describing him as, ' listening with an ill-contained impatience.' The description of Carew adds to the tension

surrounding Hyde because of the comparison of the two, Carew seems timid and harmless and Hyde is destructive and powerful.

Stevenson used powerful words to describe Hyde and his actions, ' And then all of a sudden he broke out in a flame of anger,' Carew had no chance to react to Hyde's actions, which were, sudden and deadly. The quote, ' broke out of all bounds' makes it sound like someone or something is restraining Hyde and that he needed to force his way to Carew. Jekyll might have been restraining Hyde, stopping him harming Carew; this represents the two sides of Hyde, the good and the evil.

Carew's actions made him appear confused. ' The old gentleman took a step back, with the air of one very much surprised and a trifle hurt.' He seemed surprised by the attack, which Stevenson depicted as an unprovoked murder. He describes the effect on Carew's body by writing, ' the bones were audibly shattered and the body jumped upon the roadway.' This graphic description of hearing the bones breaking makes the reader horrified and disgusted at Hyde.

Hyde was made to seem like a madman, brutally murdering Carew. Stevenson describes him, ' clubbing him to the earth.' ' Trampling his victim underfoot' and ' hailing down a storm of blows.' All of these words suggest violence and this shows that he was uncontrolled, irrational and unpredictable.

The trip to Soho is the next place where a lot of tension is created. In this scene we see Hyde's house and the surrounding area, Stevenson has been able to build tension without the presence of Hyde.

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Stevenson has used lots of powerful, descriptive words, creating a sense of horror. 'Dark like the back-end of evening...a glow of a rich, lurid brown, like the light of some strange conflagration.' Here Stevenson is describing the morning as if it was evil and harmful. Describing the light as a strange conflagration (a fire which causes great pain and distress) is a very effective way of creating horror. The reader is made to believe the morning will be full of suffering.

For the first time the reader is introduced to Hyde's house and the area where he lives. It is dark, dingy and dismal, just like Hyde. 'The fog settled down...as brown as umber, and cut him off from his blackguardly surroundings.' Hyde's house was surrounded by fog, cutting him off from the outside world. This is relevant to Hyde because he did not associate with people. Stevenson has used Pathetic Fallacy to show this.

Mr Utterson was surprised when he went inside Hyde's house. The outside of Hyde's house looked neglected and dingy, but the inside was cared for and was exquisitely decorated. This depicts Hyde with two sides. Hyde's house reflects Hyde as a person. Hyde is on the outside and Jekyll is trapped inside.

One Night Mr Poole, Dr Jekyll's servant, went to Mr Utterson's house as he was worried about Dr Jekyll. When Poole entered the house, he was shocked, worried and afraid for Dr Jekyll's safety. 'The mans appearance amply bore out his words; his manner was altered for the worse; and except for the moment when he had first announced his terror, he had not once looked the lawyer in the face.' Here Poole is worried, but the reader does not yet know

why, this builds up suspense and tension. Poole Feared Jekyll had been murdered and the murderer was still in his room.

As soon as Mr Utterson realises Poole fears for Dr Jekyll's life, he rushes to get his coat and goes to Dr Jekyll's house. Utterson's panic conveys the seriousness of the incident and shows that something terrible might happen. Outside, Stevenson uses Pathetic Fallacy to build up tension, 'It was a wild, cold,' here the atmosphere is chilling, which can be used in two ways; cooling down something or a creepy experience. This is how Stevenson related Hyde to the surroundings. 'The wind made talking difficult, and flecked the blood into the face.' When Stevenson wrote about blood it was used as a metaphor. This also makes the reader think something bad has happened as blood is related to death and suffering.

When Poole and Utterson were walking to Dr Jekyll's house, Poole stops and prays that nothing is wrong with Jekyll, 'God grant there be nothing wrong.' This confirms to the reader that Poole is very worried about Dr Jekyll and that only God could save him from the damned and evil Mr Hyde. Stevenson creates tension even though Hyde is not in this scene.

The last part of the book where Stevenson created tension was at Dr Lanyon's house. It was the first and the last time Dr Jekyll had shown anyone his transformation. Before Mr Hyde entered Dr Lanyon's house he looked back, behind him was a policeman. Policemen are associated with crime; this prompts the reader to believe something bad might happen. Stevenson lets



the reader know Dr Lanyon has a weapon. The reader is reminded how dangerous Hyde is and to anticipate something bad.

Hyde, again was described as a small man, with a, ' shocking expression on his face, with his remarkable combination of great muscular activity and great apparent debility of constitution.' And later, Dr Lanyon believed that he disliked Hyde, he thought this lied in the nature of him. This could be Jekyll, who is deep in the nature of Hyde. All of this highlights the reader's wariness of Hyde.

Before Hyde drinks the potion he asks Dr Lanyon if he wants to witness the event. He does not tell him what it will do, only that he will drink a potion. The reader is still kept in suspense, as they too, do not know what this potion will do to Hyde. Dr Lanyon decided to watch the event, as he is curious about Hyde.

When Stevenson described the transformation he used one long sentence to make it seem never-ending and create a sense of horror. Stevenson also used powerful adjectives to describe the change, ' He reeled, staggered, clutched at the table and held on, staring with injected eyes, gasping with open mouth.' This detailed description puts a clear picture of the change in the reader's head, by using powerful adjectives to create a strong sense of horror. ' He seemed to swell - his face became suddenly black' Hyde's face turned black, as black is associated with evil. Dr Lanyon, as to be expected was surprised and frightened, ' The next moment I had sprung to my feet and leaped back against the wall, my arm raised to shield me from that

prodigy, my mind submerged in terror.' The words portray a terrified man fearing for his life and doing anything to protect himself.

Whenever Hyde was mentioned in the novel, Stevenson created tension around him. This was to produce a sense of horror. The whole of this novel is based on good versus evil. Jekyll was associated with good and Hyde was associated with evil. Mr Hyde was a clever and sneaky man. He gave an impression of deformity and being inhuman. He dressed very plainly but still seemed to stand out; this might be because of his inhuman-like character. His voice was husky, broken and whispery and he laughed savagely, this makes him sound evil.

There is an underlying sense of morality and religion within the novel. Stevenson portrays the morality of a well-respected, noble gentleman who transforms into an immoral, detested monster. Stevenson appears to be relating Jekyll's metamorphosis, with the human race's constant struggle to suppress immorality. The frequent references to God and Hell give a strong religious theme, but the reader is left unsure as to whether Stevenson is a believer in God or making a mockery of religion. Stevenson writes in a gothic style, creating a sense of horror. He successfully creates horror and tension around the character of Hyde. However, tension could have been increased, by describing Jekyll and Hyde's feelings and emotions after each event.