

Victorian villains in  
great expectations,  
oliver twist, and dr  
jekyll and mr hyde...



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This essay is looking at the nature of Victorian Villains. In doing this I shall consider extracts from three pre twentieth century novels; Great Expectations, Oliver Twist both written by Charles Dickens and Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by R. L Stevenson.

The Victorian Villains could be described as a stereotypical figure and this is what my essay will focus on, discussing the different aspects of atmosphere and setting, the appearance and behaviour of the male villains, their language and actions and finally there reactions of other characters to them. Firstly, I will discuss atmosphere and setting and note how all extracts share common traits/elements. In the Oliver Twist, extract the setting is firstly described as “ obscure” which states that it is unclear in the pub. Charles Dickens then says that the pub is “ situated in the filthiest part of Little Saffron Hill - a dark and gloomy den” there is irony in this sentence as a Saffron is very expensive. A “ flaring” gas-light also burns all day in the wintertime, besides this no ray of the sunshines into the pub in the summer. The text above creates a startling atmosphere, inside the pub it would be dark unclear and the air would be strongly impregnated by the smell of alcohol.

In the second extract, (Great Expectations) the atmosphere is rather different as it is outside and not inside. It is located in a marsh country, close to a river and twenty miles of the sea, Charles describes the afternoon as raw this would mean that it would cold and damp. It is then described as a bleak place overgrown with nettles. The land beyond the churchyard is dark and flat but intersected with a few mounds. The wind is described as rushing from the sea, which would mean it is speeding up. This creates a

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supernatural feeling/atmosphere as it is plotted in a churchyard, which is very gothic and frightening.

The weather is brutal as the wind is rushing. In the third extract, the setting is located in a city at night and inside a building, which happens to be empty, but the building happens to be nightly patrolled. All three settings are very different firstly; all of them are in very different locations with different atmospheres apart from they are all fearsome. The physical appearance of Bill Sikes is that he is a physically strong man.

Firstly, in the extract he is brooding which indicates he is in intense thought in a menacing way, which is rather emotional. His velvet coat is strongly impregnated with the stench of alcohol. He is not very hygienic as Charles Dickens mentions that he is easily recognisable to the police for the wrong reasons of course. He is usually in the same clothes, which do not help him out in anyway. He is of course a drinker as he is sat in a public house with a strong smell of liquor surrounding him. His dog is described as having faults of temper in common with his owner; he ends up having a bout with his dog the result of which his dog runs off.

Bill Sikes is then disappointed in the dog's participation of the bout. Which then he transfers his share of disappointment on the newcomer that just entered the pub. Overall, his physical appearance is being a physical man who likes to throw his weight around and enjoys being feared by other men or even women. The man in the second extract comes across as a man who has escaped from a prison or a ship as if he was a criminal. You can tell this as he is wearing bristly grey clothing and he has a great iron on his leg,

which is surely a reference to him being a criminal. He does not wear a hat, hats were common in Victorian times it he would look rather odd as he didn't wear one.

He has broken shoes; he has an old rag tied round his head. He was soaked with water, smothered in mud, lamed by stones, cut by flints, stung by nettles, torn by briars. This would mean he would be hurt. This is acknowledged as Charles Dickens says that the man limps, shivers, glares and growls. Which states his walking is effected, he is also cold as he shivers and his teeth are chattering.

He comes across as a mean person who is rather cunning than more of a brute force kind of man like Bill Sikes. Mr. Hyde's physical appearance is rather different as he looks rather like a beast more than a man. He has odd light footsteps, which alerts the man who patrols the building, which is odd, the man patrolling signalises that his footsteps do not match his appearance. Mr.

Hyde is small and is very plainly dressed. He is also described as pale, dwarfish and malformed, also mentioned is his displeasing smile, which is a surreal image as a beast/man with a distressing smile. In addition he has a deep voice. Overall the physical appearances of the three characters are that they are alarming but in there own way. There appearances are all different with Mr. Hyde being the best presented and the man from Great Expectations being the least well presented as he as escaped from a prison or ship etc.

Bill Sikes actions in this extract are very violent to Mr Sikes firstly he is in intense thought, he gets so caught up in his thoughts that he kicks his dog. Then Sike's dog retaliates and bites Mr. Sikes. The dog is linked with having temper problems like his owner. Mr. Sikes then begins to attack his dog by throwing pewter at it and so on.

Sikes shows signs of his animal qualities as he bites the poker between his teeth like a wild beast. He swears, strikes and blasphemes at the dog. When the dog escapes he turns his attentions at the new comer to the pub. The words used to describe him when he hears about his wife are savage, furious, angry and psychotic. Fire in his eyes is mentioned these words give the impression that he is an ill-tempered man and it doesn't take much for him to blow his fuse.

Bill also likes to keep his wife in his sight. He most probably has an anger problem. Further on in the extract he attacks his wife and ends up murdering her. He rudely awakes then he thrusts his hand before her, when he starts to strike his wife she clings on to him and starts begging him to spare her life. But he shrugs violently to release his arms, he grabs his pistol and he knew if he were shoot her it would mean immediate detection, so he beats her twice with the handle.

She then prays to god to forgive Bill. Bill is shocked when Nancy actually dies. He can't believe what he is looking at so he covers his eyes. This burst of rage shows his lack of control and temper. To me he seems like he is not mentally stable obviously his lack of control is what has got him into trouble with the police.

The man in Great Expectations is very forceful he takes advantage of a child called Pip who happens to be on his own in the churchyard. He uses fear to take advantage. He turns him upside down to get a greater advantage. Later on he places Pip on a high tombstone by doing this Pip can't escape his questioning so the man is in full control. He eats the bread ravenously this shows animal like actions and states the obvious that he is starving. He shakes his head in a threatening manner to Pip this is a reminder of his power over Pip.

He tilts Pip over, so to give him a greater sense of helplessness and danger. He uses a story to threaten Pip; he does this to get his own way. When he walks off he hugs his body as if to hold himself together this makes you feel sorry for him. He walks off looking very uncomfortable as well. The repetition of sore feet is mentioned while he walking away. The actions of Mr.

Hyde in this extract are when he is talking to the lawyer he shrinks back with a hissing of breath. This is as if he is afraid. But this fear is only momentary. He answers the man coolly then.

He grunts and hesitates this means he is not socially nice. He hides his face in shadow away from the lawyer. He later answers a question with a flush of anger, he snarls which is followed by a savage laugh he speaks inappropriately to the lawyer. Later on in the extract London is startled by a big crime, which seems to involve as he murders a pleasant old gentleman.

Mr. Hyde brutally attacked this gentleman because of the stress of his insensate cruelty. A maid saw this horrific crime and she thought nothing of

Mr. Hyde when she first saw him this means he is not noticeable. Mr. Hyde is <https://assignbuster.com/victorian-villains-in-great-expectations-oliver-twist-and-dr-jekyll-and-mr-hyde/>

carrying a heavy cane, which he uses to brutalise the gentleman, he said to have broke out in a great flame of anger, stamping with his foot and brandishing his cane like a madman.

He clubbed him to the earth. Then in ape-like fury he tramples his victim under his foot. Hailing down a storm of blows. The maid said she could hear Hyde shattering the mans bones, because of this brutal beating the maid fainted. This shows that Mr.

Hyde has many animal characteristics; he also has extraordinary quickness, which is another animal skill. He is practically a beast. His characteristics show us this. The way Bill Sikes speaks is pretty roughly. He uses lines as “ you born devil! ” and “ D’ye hear? ” his lines are also described as very harsh.

He speaks fiercely in some parts i. e. “ Hells Fire” and “ Get up”. He threatens his dog. His language is not exactly upper class.

It is common as he uses no big or posh words and he speaks very hoarsely. The man in Great Expectations gives orders, commands and demands rather than speaking. His vocabulary is very forceful like “ Tell us your name” followed by “ quick” and “ Show us where you live” “ Pint out the place! He reminds Pip of his authority by saying “ who d’ye live with-supposin’ you’re kindly let to live”. Ominously he replies “ Blacksmith” which could help the man.

He threatens to get his own way by saying “ heart and your liver shall be torn out roasted and ate” and “ comparison with which young man I am an

angel". Overall his language is common and threatening he is always reminded Pip of his authority and power over him. Mr. Hyde does not speak much, however when he does he speaks a little hoarsely "Common Friends" echoed Mr Hyde, a little hoarsely.

And in one part he is like an animal that is frightened. He cries which reminds me of a wolf. Besides that he laughs very savagely. His language is somewhat higher class than the other two men.

As under Mr. Hyde somewhere there is a certain Dr Jekyll. Other characters feel threatened and scared by Bill example Fagin throws many threats by Sikes and his wife Nancy is happy to first see Bill but then become scared when she knows he is livid with her. The Other character feels frightened by the man from Great Expectations. He threatens the young boy constantly.

He trembles with fright around the man. The young boy thinks that the man has rose from the dead when he first sees him as he appears from behind a tombstone. At the end of the extract Pip thinks the man is a pirate ghost returning to his shackles as if to hook himself up again. He sees the cows lifting their heads to gaze at him, he wondered if they saw it too.

Other characters are puzzled when they see Mr. Hyde; the lawyer was puzzled, as Mr. Hyde's footsteps did not match his physique. But he was not scared of Mr. Hyde, which surprised me, as his appearance wasn't like the stereotypical human being. After meeting Mr.



Hyde the lawyer is left unsettled. But the nurse sees Mr. Hyde assault a pleasant gentleman, which the nurse seems happy to see. Her reaction to this is she faints.

To sum it up all three villains are different, by the way they dress example the man from Great Expectations wears bristly grey wear and Mr. Hyde wears an presentable suit, there physical appearances are different as Mr. Hyde is dwarfish, Mr. Sikes is quite big and the man from Great Expectations is as if he has been in war with all his wounds, and actions as Mr. Hyde attacks a old man, Mr.

Sikes beats his wife to death and the man from the second extract threatens a young child to get his own way but in their speech there is a slight link of them speaking similiar, as they all seem to talk a bit roughly.