

How does robert louis stevenson explore the concept of duality in dr jekyll and m...

[Literature](#), [Fiction](#)



Introduction

The Strange case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde was published in 1886. Robert Louis Stevenson used the concept of duality to show the differences between science and religion. Dualistic symbols and events were used through out the story but towards the end there were more religious aspects used than scientific, to differentiate the importance between them.

The characters of Jekyll and Hyde have been used to symbolize the division between science and religion, representing the theory of Darwin.

Ever since Darwin had published his book " The Origin of Species" his theory affected the thoughts about knowledge and faith in society, this also ruined the reputation of Darwin. Conveying this point, Stevenson uses science and religion to the stage where not only Jekyll and Hyde are affected but also people around them. Stevenson has not only used forms of duality in the context but has also linked two chapters together, the story begins with the description of Hyde "...extraordinary-looking man..." Ch 1 pg 17 and ends with Jekyll, mystery to solution, Stevenson did this to show the duality between the two characters and how they are dichotomous objects themselves.

Stevenson uses the fourth chapter to show what Hyde's character is, he uses dichotomies to state that Hyde is somewhere on the line between each of them " dark and light" Ch 4 pg 34 The main instrument used by Hyde is repeated several times "...broken stick..." Ch 4 pg 33 Stevenson has made Hyde completely responsible for the crime and showing how he has become

stronger than before. Hyde's incident is an influence to chapter five.

Stevenson changes Jekyll completely compared to how he was in Chapter three, by the appearance "...looking deadly sick" Ch 5 pg 37 and the ability to control Hyde "...can be rid of Hyde" Ch 3 pg 30. This change represents how Darwin had revolutionized science in the face of society with his theory.

Stevenson uses doors and windows repeatedly, mainly when either Jekyll or Hyde is present. He uses them because of the features which they have; doors are shut most of the time and anything inside cannot be observed by people of the outside. Metaphorically, it described how personality cannot be seen by just the appearance. Windows are also similar but you can only see the person inside if they let you; Jekyll showed himself in chapter seven by opening the window but when he shut it no one knew what was going on inside "...windows was instantly thrust down...glimpse had been sufficient..." Ch 7 pg 48 - 49, Stevenson had described before, how other characters feel when they are around Hyde "...strong feeling of deformity..." Ch 1 pg 17 after this incident he uses this feature to show the presence of him "...froze the very blood..." Ch 7 pg 48 the presence of both Hyde and religion shows influence on Jekyll "...God forgive us!" Ch 7 pg 49 though this chapter is short, Stevenson has used it to show how Hyde has completely dominated Jekyll.

Chapter six had the narrative by Lanyon, but it could not be read until Jekyll's narrative was attained. By using chapter eight both narratives were gathered "...first read the narrative...turn to the confession..." Ch 8 pg 62, and were read in the next two chapters by the permission of Jekyll himself,

Stevenson wanted to make two chapters explain the solution, that is why he used this method. Chapter nine shows a comparison between Lanyon and Jekyll, they each had different thoughts about science one was controlled the other was not, finding the truth about Jekyll was unbearable for him "...I have had a shock..." Ch 6 pg 43 By doing this Stevenson is showing that science can become even weaker if it is not supported, affecting Jekyll's character. Relevant to how Darwin had not only affected members of society but also his own associates of science.

The last chapter concludes why Jekyll and Hyde was the same person but different personalities. Stevenson wanted to show that Jekyll was not a trusted narrative, he achieved by showing that Jekyll was wrong about defining Hyde; Hyde can be considered as evil because he had committed murders but he cannot be considered as 'pure evil' because Jekyll is not purely good. Stevenson shows this concept by using words to associate with inherited sin "...original evil...ordinary secret sinner..." Ch 10 pg 75 & 85 this relates to how Darwin did not know well what he had discovered. Stevenson wanted to show that both Jekyll and Hyde were completely opposite to each other, by Jekyll playing God he created a character with neither science nor religion, making a character different from what was expected. Stevenson used this to make science less trustworthy; an impression of Darwin.

Stevenson has made Hyde a 'primitive' character "...troglotic...ape-like fury" Ch 2 pg 25 & Ch 4 pg 32 this relates to how Darwin had thought that humans had evolved from apes.

Though there have been many conflicts between science and religion in the story, Stevenson has also shown that if one does not exist another will also lose its existence, he used this factor to show how people with just one of these can either be uncontrollable or undeveloped, so it is better to have both in one personality than to have two separate ones “ impossible to do one with out the other...” Ch 7 pg 47

Conclusion

As Darwin had created a big effect in society, Stevenson wanted to show this in his book. He showed how science and religion had conflicts against each other; also one should not stay without the other, to create balance in personality. Stevenson uses Darwinism and different forms of duality to show that two is negative and that every person should live for their own individual purpose. He does this by varying amounts of science and religion along with forms of duality to show how conflicts can create problems for everyone.