

# [Comparing the signal man and the monkey’s paw essay sample](https://assignbuster.com/comparing-the-signal-man-and-the-monkeys-paw-essay-sample/)

Although both ” The Monkey’s Paw ” and “ The Signalman ” were written in Victorian times, both stories show great contrast in showing us the way of thinking and acting in Victorian times. The authors also show very different methods of not only keeping the reader’s attention but keeping the reader in suspense and on the edge of their seat.

“ The Monkey’s paw” was written by WW Jacobs in 1901 right at the end of the Victorian period, the story is about a magical paw that is passed down to a family from an army sergeant, the paw grants the man who is holding it 3 wishes but at a very severe consequence as the family learns in time. The story changes our view of the Victorian times. We know Lifestyle in Victorian times as men being in command and women staying at home at all times but the monkey’s paw totally contradicts that.

“ The Signal man” was written by Charles Dickens in 1865 midway through the Victorian period; in the story a rail track signal man is getting premonitions of supernatural spirits that predict horrible incidents and death. With no one believing the signal man and the narrator thinking he needs a doctor, the premonitions coming true will be disastrous. This story also introduces to us how people in Victorian times acted towards trains and new technology.

In both stories I don’t think the endings served as a good solution to the plot of the stories. In “ The Monkey’s paw’s” ending to the story the wishing of the return of the son and then his death again suggests to us that the third wish has been used and so nothing more can be done, which is fine unless you argue that there might still be a consequence for third wish as there were consequences for the first 2 wishes.

Surprisingly enough there isn’t much contrast in the ending of “ The Signal man” as it is also a good solution. Because the Signal man was the only one getting premonitions of supernatural warnings we now assume since his death there will be no more premonitions which leads to the end of the accidents and deaths. One twist at the end of the story where one man continued the dreaded word “ Halloa bellow there” which gets you thinking “ Is there another twist to the story?”.

Section 2:

Both the” Signal man” and “ The Monkey’s paw” have very contrasting behaviour when compared to the expected way of acting during the Victorian period( behave differently than the way people were expected to behave at that period). During the Victorian period women were considered to be the weaker sex they were supposed to be seen and not heard and their role was to stay at home all day to bake and clean. “ She then waited as patiently as her sex would permit”, this shows us that women were expected to be more patient and take a back seat to all questions and arguments.

“ The Monkey’s paw” opposes the basics of Victorian behaviour as shown above. Not only women in the story acted differently but the men did too. Men in the Victorian period are supposed to be strong and masculine but Mr. White in the story acts weak and feminine. “ The old man smiled faintly and dropped a senseless heap to the floor.”. This showing us the very un masculine actions displayed by Mr. White. This was considered to be irregular or out-of-order at that time.

The Victorian mind was a very inquiring mind looking for new information and loved to explore new worlds with different cultures and people. “ I’d like to India myself”. This shows us that new land and places were of extreme excitement and pleasure for them.

The Victorian’s Inquiring minds didn’t stop there they were also very fascinated by supernatural mysteries and ghost and spirit stories. “ The monkey’s paw” is a good example their supernatural interest. “ Monkey’s paw? Said Mrs White curiously. Well it’s a bit of what you call magic perhaps. Said the Sergeant major.”. This explains to us the curiosity of the Victorian population over the supernatural. Another example is in “ The signal man”. This way.” This is very descriptive, it is written in a way to make the ghostly figure described sound very mysterious and this keeps the readers on the edge of their seats.

Horses, carriages and even on foot were the ways of travel in the early Victorian period. The people were safe and used to their safe ways of transport. Then all of a sudden new technology arrived slowly taking over. The people were scared even terrified of the new technology and who would blame them? “ Just then came a vague vibration in the earth and air, quickly changing into a violent pulsation, and an oncoming rush that caused me to start back”. This shows us that the general Victorian public weren’t really used to new technologies and that it really startled them. Imagine us getting a new time travelling technology, wouldn’t you be scared of the possibilities.

Section3:

The setting of the story is very important in laying out the mood of the story. Both stories are set in rural and almost deserted areas which give you the idea that the inhabitants are a bit lonely or uneducated. “ That’s the worst of living so far out… of all the beastly, slushy, out-of-the-way places to live in, this is the worst. Path’s a bog, and road’s a torrent. I don’t know what people are thinking about”. This shows us not only that they lived in poor conditions and that they knew it too as said by Mr. White.

“ The cutting was extremely deep, and unusually precipitous. It was made through clammy stone that became oozier and wetter as I went down. … When I came down enough upon the zigzag descent to see him again. I saw that he was standing on the rails on the way by which the train had lately passed”. This description of the Signalman’s setting shows us the creepy air and lonely tracks on which one man lives alone, this emphasises his loneliness.

“ The shorter perspective in the other direction terminating in a gloomy red light, and the gloomier entrance to a black tunnel. In whose massive architecture there was a barbarous, depressing and forbidden air”. This showing the suspense being built by the writer through the gloomy and spine chilling description of the area, here the writer is very detailed in describing the entrance to the tunnel, emphasising on its forbidden air and gloomy features. All this of course to support the claim of the terrible and lonely place the Signalman lives in.

Descending upon the zigzag path the narrator is shown as if he is descending into hell itself. He mentions the gloomy entrance and” clammy, oozy and wet stone” that got worse as the cutting got deeper. This gives you the feeling as if this cutting is a gateway into hell!