

Science and Religion

In 1859, when Stevenson was nine years old, Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species*. This book became famous for introducing the Theory of Evolution to the public. Many people saw it as an attack on religion. Darwin put forward the theory that all life, including humans, has evolved from more primitive forms. Many believed that science had become dangerous and was meddling in matters which only God had control over. Charles Darwin challenged Christianity with his theory of evolution and was widely ridiculed for it.

Closely linked to the Victorians' increasing sense of the conflict between science and religion was the idea that humans have a dual nature. On the one hand, they saw the calm, rational, everyday normality of family life and employment; on the other, fantasies, nightmares, anger and violence. Later the idea of the savage nature of humans bound within civilisation became extremely famous, led by Freud (1856-1939).

The nineteenth century, was a time of unprecedented technological progress. European nations carved up the world with their empires. By the end of the century, however, people were beginning to question the ideals of progress and civilization that had defined the era, and a growing sense of pessimism and decline pervaded artistic circles.

Jekyll and Hyde

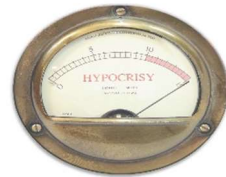
Crime, Etiquette and Hypocrisy

Victorians feared crime and were fascinated by it. 'Shilling Shockers' were stories written for upper class women about the shocking behaviour of the lower classes. True life crime stories were also widely circulated.

Victorian society was full of rules about social interactions and behaving in a 'proper' manner. A lady or gentleman's reputation was very important. It was important to appear to live a decent, Christian life. Manners, dress, behaviour had to conform to society's expectations. Sex was only to take place within marriage and was never spoken of in polite company. Victorians are often seen as 'prudish'.

Many Victorian men led secret immoral lives. There were thousands of prostitutes in London whose clients were men of all social classes.

Drinking, gambling, and prostitution were widespread. The sexually transmitted disease syphilis was very common and could not be cured.



London was a city of great contrasts. While the city grew extremely wealthy as Britain's trade and Empire expanded, 19th century London was also a city of poverty, where millions lived in overcrowded and unsanitary slums. Victorian England had a secret attraction to allegedly savage non-Western cultures, desiring to possess them as part of the British Empire.

Robert Louis Stevenson

Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on November 13, 1850, Stevenson was a sickly child, and respiratory troubles plagued him throughout his life. As a young man, he travelled through Europe and wrote two travel narratives. In 1876, he met a married woman, Fanny Van de Grift Osbourne, and fell in love with her. Mrs. Osbourne eventually divorced her husband, and she and Stevenson were married.

Stevenson returned to London with his bride, despite continued ill health he continued to write lots and was particularly successful with *Treasure Island*, written in 1883, and followed it with *Kidnapped* in 1886; both of which were adventure stories.

Jekyll and Hyde, was also published in 1886 and Stevenson described it as 'a fine bogey tale'. It was his first venture into gothic horror genre, a style of writing hugely popular at the time.

By the late 1880s, Stevenson had become one of the leading lights of English literature. But even after garnering fame, he led a somewhat troubled life. He traveled often, seeking to find a climate more amenable to the tuberculosis that haunted his later days. Eventually he settled in Samoa, and there Stevenson died






suddenly in 1894, at the age of forty-four.

What was happening in Victorian England that would have made Stevenson want to write *Jekyll and Hyde*?



CHARACTER CONTEXT

What does each character symbolise as a theme and how do they show what Stevenson thought about that issue?

Utterson 	
Dr Lanyon 	
Enfield 	
Dr Jekyll 	
Mr Hyde 	

Here are some of the themes Stevenson was considering when writing *Jekyll and Hyde*. See if you can decide what you think about these issues and what Stevenson thought about them.

Theme	Your Opinion	Stevenson's opinion
DUALITY		
SCIENCE vs RELIGION		
EMPIRE		
NATURE OF MAN		

What characters or events within the story tell us how Stevenson may have felt about the issues in society at the time he wrote *Jekyll and Hyde*?

