

Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein

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Both Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein tell cautionary tales of scientists abusing their creative powers to exist in another sphere where they cannot be directly blamed for their actions. Though [Frankenstein](#)'s creation is a "Creature" distinct from his creator while Dr. [Jekyll](#) metamorphoses into Mr. Hyde, the "double" of each protagonist progressively grows more violent throughout his story. By doing so he symbolizes his creator's repressed desires in a stifling society.

The stories have parallel structures in the three main ways. First, both Dr. Jekyll and Frankenstein are scientists who, though welcomed by society, find it constraining and often alienate themselves. Each creates an alter ego for himself to live out his liberated passions, Hyde for Jekyll and the Creature for Frankenstein. Jekyll creates his with intention for evil and Frankenstein with the idea of building a supreme being. However, it could be argued that Frankenstein unconsciously wishes his creation to commit acts of sin. Hyde's and Frankenstein's first victims are children. They each evolve over time and

develop their violent tendencies, culminating in the murder of a well-esteemed man for Hyde and Frankenstein's family and friends.

The first mention of Dr. Jekyll comes in a discussion between his longtime friends, Lanyon and Utterson, men whose names imply a traditional, hampered society. "Utterson" combines both "utter," connoting a squelched speech, with "son," defining the society's patriarchal structure, and "Lanyon" casts images of sprawling canyons that are noticeably absent in the gray, foggy London [Stevenson](#) depicts. La...

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...sire for a new society.

Hyde and the Creature's plights follow similar paths, but their motives seem somewhat different. Jekyll invented Hyde for a dive in which he could transport himself and put on display his evil psyche. Frankenstein assembled the Creature as an über-man of sorts, a prototype of a better society. Frankenstein was published in 1818, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in 1886. Perhaps Stevenson's book marks the end of Romanticism as a viable literary style in modern times. Though Frankenstein's evil hides is veiled by guilt and a seemingly upstanding society position, Jekyll's is visibly apparent. Frankenstein is a shaded man with no clear dividing line, whereas Jekyll is a black-and-white character with a subset of colors inside his dichotomies. Stevenson, drawing on Shelley's story, reflected both a new literary movement and a new psychological study.

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