

when was jekyll and hyde written

when was jekyll and hyde written is a question that often arises among literature enthusiasts and scholars intrigued by classic gothic tales. The story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is a seminal work in English literature, exploring themes of duality, morality, and the human psyche. Understanding the timeline of its creation provides valuable insight into the historical and cultural context that shaped this iconic narrative. This article delves into the specific period when the novella was written, the author behind the work, and the circumstances that influenced its publication. Additionally, it explores the impact of the story on literature and popular culture since its inception. For those curious about the origins and significance of this gothic masterpiece, the following sections will offer a comprehensive overview.

- The Historical Context of When Jekyll and Hyde Was Written
- Robert Louis Stevenson: The Author Behind the Novella
- The Writing Process and Publication Timeline
- The Themes and Influences During the Time of Writing
- Legacy and Impact Since the Writing of Jekyll and Hyde

The Historical Context of When Jekyll and Hyde Was Written

The question of when was Jekyll and Hyde written cannot be separated from the broader historical and literary context of the late 19th century. The novella was penned during the Victorian era, a period marked by strict social codes, rapid industrialization, and significant scientific advancements. This era's cultural atmosphere deeply influenced the themes and narrative style of the story. In particular, concerns about morality, the nature of evil, and the duality of human nature were prevalent topics in Victorian society. The gothic literary tradition was also flourishing, providing a rich backdrop for Stevenson's work.

The Victorian Era's Influence

The Victorian period, spanning from 1837 to 1901, was characterized by a complex interplay of progress and repression. The tension between outward respectability and hidden vices found expression in literature, often through gothic and horror genres. This societal duality is mirrored in the story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, where one person embodies both good and evil. The era's fascination with psychology and emerging scientific theories about human behavior also shaped the novella's themes.

Scientific and Philosophical Developments

During the late 19th century, scientific discoveries and philosophical debates challenged traditional views of identity and morality. Ideas from fields such as psychology, neurology, and evolutionary biology questioned the fixed nature of the self. These intellectual currents influenced Stevenson's exploration of the fragmented self in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, written against the backdrop of these evolving ideas.

Robert Louis Stevenson: The Author Behind the Novella

Understanding when *Jekyll and Hyde* was written also involves recognizing the biography and career of Robert Louis Stevenson, the Scottish author who created this enduring work. Stevenson was a prolific writer known for his adventure novels and psychological depth. His personal experiences and health struggles played a significant role in shaping his literary output, including the novella in question.

Stevenson's Background and Literary Career

Born in 1850 in Edinburgh, Scotland, Stevenson developed an early interest in literature and travel. Despite suffering from chronic illness, which affected his lungs, he pursued a successful writing career. Before writing *Jekyll and Hyde*, Stevenson had already published several works, gaining recognition for his storytelling and narrative style. His interest in human nature's complexities is evident through his works leading up to the novella.

Personal Influences on the Writing of *Jekyll and Hyde*

Stevenson's fragile health and frequent periods of isolation contributed to introspective themes in his writing. Some scholars suggest that his own experiences with duality—balancing his public persona with private struggles—may have inspired the exploration of a split identity in *Jekyll and Hyde*. Additionally, Stevenson's fascination with gothic tales and contemporary scientific ideas further influenced the novella's conception and themes.

The Writing Process and Publication Timeline

Pinpointing exactly when *Jekyll and Hyde* was written involves examining the timeline of its creation and publication. Stevenson composed the novella relatively quickly, and its development reflects both creative urgency and the influence of various literary traditions.

Composition Period

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* in 1885. He reportedly completed the novella in a matter of days, inspired by a vivid dream or nightmare that provided the core idea. This rapid writing process was unusual for Stevenson but resulted in a tightly woven narrative that captivated readers.

Publication Details

The novella was first published in January 1886 by Longmans, Green & Co. in London. It was released in both the United Kingdom and the United States almost simultaneously, which was somewhat rare at the time. The immediate success of the book established Stevenson as a major literary figure and ensured the story's place in the canon of gothic literature.

Key Milestones in Publication

- 1885: Stevenson writes the novella over a few days.
- January 1886: First publication as a standalone book.
- Late 1880s: The novella is adapted into stage plays, increasing its popularity.
- Subsequent editions and translations expand its international reach.

The Themes and Influences During the Time of Writing

The period when *Jekyll and Hyde* was written is crucial to understanding the novella's themes and literary influences. The story reflects a confluence of social anxieties, scientific curiosity, and gothic storytelling conventions prevalent in the late 19th century.

The Duality of Human Nature

The central theme of the novella is the duality of human nature, depicting the struggle between the respectable Dr. Jekyll and his sinister alter ego, Mr. Hyde. This theme resonates with Victorian concerns about the hidden darkness beneath societal facades. The idea that every individual harbors both good and evil impulses was a provocative concept at the time.

Gothic Literature and Symbolism

Stevenson drew on gothic traditions characterized by suspense, horror, and the supernatural. The use of London's foggy, shadowy setting enhances the atmosphere of mystery and dread. Symbolism also plays a significant role, with the transformation potion representing the unleashing of repressed desires and the fragmentation of identity.

Contemporary Scientific Thought

The novella reflects contemporary interest in psychology and the emerging science of the mind. The late 19th century saw growing exploration of subconscious impulses and the complexity of personality. These scientific ideas are woven seamlessly into the narrative, giving the story a

psychological depth that was innovative for its time.

Legacy and Impact Since the Writing of Jekyll and Hyde

Since its writing and publication in the mid-1880s, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* has had a profound influence on literature, psychology, and popular culture. Its exploration of duality and identity continues to inspire adaptations and scholarly analysis.

Adaptations Across Media

The novella has been adapted into numerous films, stage productions, television series, and even comic books. These adaptations reinterpret the story's themes for new audiences, demonstrating its enduring relevance and appeal. The character of Mr. Hyde has become synonymous with unchecked evil and inner darkness in popular imagination.

Influence on Psychological and Literary Studies

The concept of a split personality introduced in the novella has informed psychological theories and discussions about dissociative identity disorder. Literary critics also regard the work as a pioneering exploration of the fragmented self, influencing genres such as horror, thriller, and psychological fiction.

Key Points in the Legacy

- Continued study in academic fields including literature, psychology, and ethics.
- Frequent reinterpretations reflecting contemporary societal concerns.
- Recognition as a foundational text in gothic and horror literature.

Frequently Asked Questions

When was 'Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' first published?

'Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' was first published in 1886.

Who wrote 'Jekyll and Hyde' and when?

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote 'Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde', which was published in

1886.

What year was the novella 'Jekyll and Hyde' written?

The novella 'Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' was written and published in 1886.

Is 'Jekyll and Hyde' a 19th-century work?

Yes, 'Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' was written and published in the 19th century, specifically in 1886.

How old is the story of 'Jekyll and Hyde'?

As of 2024, the story of 'Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' is 138 years old, having been written and published in 1886.

Additional Resources

1. The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Written by Robert Louis Stevenson in 1886, this novella explores the duality of human nature through the story of a scientist who creates a potion that transforms him into the evil Mr. Hyde. It is a classic work of Gothic fiction and remains one of the most famous tales of psychological horror. The book delves into themes of identity, morality, and the struggle between good and evil within a single person.

2. Robert Louis Stevenson: A Biography

This comprehensive biography details the life and works of Robert Louis Stevenson, including the period when he wrote "The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde." It provides historical context about the late 19th century and Stevenson's inspiration for the novella. Readers gain insight into the author's personal struggles and creative process.

3. The Victorian Gothic: Literature, History, and the Supernatural

Focusing on the Victorian era, this book examines the Gothic genre's development, including Stevenson's 1886 novella. It investigates how societal anxieties of the time influenced stories like Jekyll and Hyde. The analysis provides a deeper understanding of the cultural and historical backdrop against which the novella was written.

4. Duality and Identity in Victorian Literature

This scholarly work explores themes of duality and identity in 19th-century British literature, with a special focus on "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde." It discusses how the novella reflects contemporary concerns about science, morality, and human psychology. The book is useful for readers interested in the intellectual environment surrounding the story's creation.

5. Gothic Tales and Their Origins

This book traces the origins and evolution of Gothic tales, highlighting key works including Stevenson's Jekyll and Hyde. It discusses how the novella fits into the broader tradition of Gothic literature and its impact on later horror fiction. Readers learn about the genre's conventions and how Stevenson both adhered to and subverted them.

6. *Science and Morality in 19th-Century Literature*

Exploring the intersection of scientific discovery and ethical questions in Victorian literature, this book includes an analysis of "The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde." It considers how advances in science influenced literary themes of transformation and the human soul. The book provides valuable context for understanding the novella's enduring relevance.

7. *Classic Horror Stories: Origins and Impact*

This collection examines the origins of classic horror stories, with a chapter dedicated to the writing and publication of Jekyll and Hyde in 1886. It explains how the novella shaped the horror genre and inspired countless adaptations. Readers get an overview of the story's historical significance and legacy.

8. *The Literary London of Robert Louis Stevenson*

Focusing on the setting of Stevenson's works, this book discusses how Victorian London serves as a backdrop for "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde." It explores the social and urban dynamics of the city during the late 19th century. This perspective helps readers understand the novella's atmosphere and its reflection of contemporary urban anxieties.

9. *Psychology and the Gothic Imagination*

This book investigates psychological themes in Gothic literature, emphasizing the duality present in Stevenson's 1886 novella. It analyzes the portrayal of the human psyche and the conflict between conscious and unconscious impulses. The work is ideal for readers interested in the psychological underpinnings of Jekyll and Hyde's story.

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