

THE FEMINIST CASE FOR DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

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The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde can be read as a male-dominated horror story set during the late nineteenth century—a period during which the marginalization of women was often overlooked. As such, the only females in the story represent seemingly oppressed roles in society. However, this paper—by examining Robert Louis Stevenson’s use of diction and by deconstructing the literal interpretation of the text—examines why this work reveals that a world without significant female characters causes men to become psychologically and even sexually unstable. Furthermore, the overt absence of females is examined as not simply Stevenson’s ignorance of women, but as this author’s way of subversively revealing a world full of male instabilities and problems juxtaposed with the total absence of female psychological problems. This ironic juxtaposition reveals that women are portrayed as superior to men because feminine instabilities are never exposed in Stevenson’s work.