



## A PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NOVELLA STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE WRITTEN BY R.L. STEVENSON

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### ABSTRACT

This article explores the psychological aspects of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* through the lens of Carl Jung's concept of the *shadow*. The novella portrays the duality of human nature, with Dr. Henry Jekyll representing the socially acceptable, conscious self, and Mr. Edward Hyde embodying the repressed, darker impulses of the psyche. Using Jungian theory, this article examines how Jekyll's attempts to separate and control his two identities lead to psychological fragmentation and moral decay. By analyzing the characters of Jekyll and Hyde, this paper highlights the psychological consequences of refusing to integrate the unconscious and emphasizes the necessity of confronting and accepting the *shadow* for psychological wholeness.

**Keywords:** Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Carl Jung, shadow self, duality of human nature, psychological fragmentation, repression, unconscious mind, individuation, moral decay, identity, psychological integration, self-destruction.

### INTRODUCTION

*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, written by Robert Louis Stevenson, is often regarded as a classic exploration of the human psyche, particularly the duality of human nature. Published in 1886, the novella tells the story of Dr. Henry Jekyll, a respected scientist, and his transformation into the monstrous Mr. Edward Hyde. Through the lens of psychological analysis, the novella offers profound insights into the complexities of identity, morality, and the subconscious mind. In this article, we will explore some key psychological concepts of the work, including the repression of impulses, self-dichotomy, and the impacts of an uninhibited subconscious.

At the heart of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* lies the theme of duality—an exploration of the two conflicting sides of the human psyche. Dr. Jekyll, a fine and upstanding citizen, invents the evil Mr. Hyde as an outlet for his baser instincts. This duality means that within each person lies good and evil, and both have the capacity to live, sometimes at odds with one another. Psychology supports this notion at the level of the "self" being nothing more than an assemblage of multiple aspects of you. Applying Sigmund Freud's theory of the psyche to this scenario, Dr. Jekyll represents the ego—the part of the mind that is rational and organized and is at the forefront of our awareness—whereas Mr. Hyde represents the id: the animalistic and subconscious forces within us that drive us to seek immediate pleasure and fulfillment without any regard for social rules nor moral standards. The internal

struggle between these opposing forces echoes the common psychological conflict individuals face in balancing their desires and social conformity.

A significant psychological theme in the novella is repression. Dr. Jekyll creates Hyde as a way to indulge in his darker desires without tarnishing his reputation or societal standing. This act of repressing his urges and projecting them onto another identity reflects the psychological concept of the unconscious mind, where repressed thoughts, feelings, and desires reside.

Freud's theory of the unconscious is central to understanding the transformation of Jekyll into Hyde. According to Freud, individuals often repress their unacceptable-by-social-norms desires to avoid conflict with their social environment. In Jekyll's case, his darker impulses are repressed because they contradict the expectations of Victorian society. By creating Hyde, Jekyll tries to disassociate himself from these repressed desires. However, the novella shows the dangers of such repression. As Jekyll's transformations become uncontrollable, it suggests that repressed desires can resurface in destructive ways if not properly integrated into the psyche.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The novella has long been the subject of intense literary and psychological analysis. The novella's portrayal of the duality of human nature, moral conflict, and the dangers of repression has sparked significant scholarly interest, with interpretations ranging from psychological to sociocultural readings. This literature review explores various scholarly approaches to the text, focusing on psychological interpretations, literary criticism, and the cultural implications of Stevenson's work.

### Psychological interpretations of duality and repression

A significant body of scholarship has focused on the psychological aspects of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, with many critics using Freudian and Jungian frameworks to analyze the characters and themes. One major theme in these studies is the duality of the human psyche, represented by Dr. Jekyll and his alter ego, Mr. Hyde.

Dualism derives from the Latin word *duo*, meaning two. Simply put, dualism can be understood as a thought that facts about the world in general or of a particular class cannot be explained except by supposing ultimately the existence of two different, often opposite, and irreducible principles. Dualism is most often discussed in context of the systems of religion and philosophy (Robinson H. 2003). According to Freud's model of the psyche, Dr. Jekyll embodies the *ego*—the conscious, rational self—while Mr. Hyde represents the *id*, the primal, instinctual forces that seek immediate satisfaction without regard for societal norms (Freud, 1923). Jekyll's creation of Hyde is a desperate attempt to separate these conflicting impulses, illustrating the tension between the conscious and unconscious mind. Jekyll's eventual loss of control over his darker self represents the failure of repression, a central theme in Freudian psychoanalysis.

Carl Jung's theories about the shadow — the unconscious, repressed parts of the personality — have also been used to read the text. According to Jungian criticism, Hyde can be seen as the manifestation of Jekyll's "shadow" self, which Jekyll denies and externalizes in an attempt to rid himself of his darker impulses. Stevenson's portrayal of Jekyll's transformation into Hyde highlights the dangers of repressing the shadow, as doing so leads to psychological fragmentation and eventual self-destruction. Therefore, Hyde is only useful to Jekyll if they are separated

but united; this might be what Jekyll fails to understand, and what causes both his experiment to fail. (Fernandes F. S. 2010). This interpretation emphasizes the need for learning the darker aspects of the self for psychological health.

### **Social Morality and Social Critique**

In addition to psychological readings, scholars have examined the novella in the context of social norms and moral codes. As many critics have pointed out, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* reflects the strict moral framework of Victorian society, which demanded outward respectability and moral integrity. Jekyll's public persona as a respectable doctor contrasts sharply with his darker desires, which he is forced to suppress. By creating Hyde as a way to escape social constraints, Jekyll's psychological conflict embodies the tensions between Victorian ideals of propriety and the reality of human desires. Stevenson's portrayal of Jekyll and Hyde highlights the dangers of living a double life and the consequences of repressing one's true nature.

### **The Legacy and Cultural Impact**

*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* has had a profound impact on popular culture, with the concept of "Jekyll and Hyde" becoming shorthand for a person with dual personalities or conflicting moral tendencies. Literary scholars, such as David Seed (2010), have explored how the novel has influenced both literature and popular media, giving rise to a wide range of adaptations in film, television, and theatre. Seed suggests that the novel's exploration of duality and human nature has made it a lasting cultural symbol, with subsequent adaptations often focusing on the tension between the surface persona and hidden darkness.

Moreover, the enduring popularity of the novella reflects its universal psychological themes. The ongoing relevance of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in contemporary discussions about identity, morality, and the unconscious mind demonstrates the timeless nature of Stevenson's exploration of human complexity.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* has inspired a wide range of scholarly interpretations across various disciplines. Psychological readings, particularly those rooted in Freudian and Jungian theory, provide rich insights into the novella's portrayal of duality, repression, and the unconscious mind. Literary critics have also highlighted the novella's critique the dangers of social repression. The novella illustrates how an individual who refuses to confront their unconscious desires can experience a loss of self-control, psychological fragmentation, and moral disintegration. Jekyll's tragic downfall serves as a cautionary tale, demonstrating that embracing and integrating the *shadow* is necessary for psychological health and wholeness. By exploring these themes, Stevenson's novella offers profound insights into the complexities of the human psyche and the destructive effects of denying one's true self.

Ultimately, the novella serves as a powerful psychological allegory about the complexity of human nature and the consequences of failing to integrate all parts of the self. Through Dr. Jekyll's tragic story, Robert Louis Stevenson underscores the importance of self-acceptance; accepting his both good and bad sides. In an era that prized outward respectability and moral conformity, Stevenson's work remains a timeless reminder of the intricate dynamics between the conscious and unconscious, good and evil, and the self and society.

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