

Analysis of the strange case of dr. jekyll and mr. hyde



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

When reading literature and viewing movies much of the important messages and ideas can fly right by the audiences head without their knowledge. The best way avoid this is by entering the art we view with a purpose. The perspective in which we obtain information can change all we know about the piece we are viewing. This holds true when reading novels such as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, or even watching movies such as Birdman. Whether the audience is reading or watching the piece of art, viewing it thinking of Sigmund Freud's theory of the psyche can change everything believed beforehand. Studying his theory can completely unravel some of the unsolved mysteries of the story.

This theory is very applicable to the story of, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson. The double character in the story is at constant battle with himself throughout the novel. When Mr. Utterson first encounters Mr. Hyde he describes him as, " pale and dwarfish, he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile, he had borne himself to the

lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness, and he spoke with a husky, whispering and somewhat broken voice." (Stevenson, 43) I believe this is a very significant part of the novel understanding Freud's theory of the psyche as well as the background of the novel. Every person that encounters Mr. Hyde has a negative perspective of him. Despite Mr. Hyde being Dr. Jekyll people can only see his alter ego which is viewed as displeasing. According to Sigmund Freud's theory of the psyche, Dr. Jekyll's, " Id" is overpowering his " Ego" (Sheppard, 65). This is a concept that that is easily left for interpretation, but I believe that Stevenson is trying to portray

<https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-the-strange-case-of-dr-jekyll-and-mr-hyde/>

our alter ego's as more powerful than just our personality. This is the reason that people lose power of their Id and develop psychological issues. For many people, the ego is just outweighed by their desires and needs, and it may change them as a person. One of the most interesting parts of the novel is the fact that we get to see the deterioration of Dr. Jekyll as the story progresses. " I fell in slavery. I had but to drink the cup, to doff at once the body of the noted professor and to assume, like a thick cloak, that of Edward Hyde." (Stevenson, 80) Dr. Jekyll had to consume a potion that would tame his alter ego. As the story continues he finds himself losing control and having to take larger dosages just to stay his ego, Dr. Jekyll. This potion is a metaphor to his ego fighting back, despite losing the battle to his id; Mr. Hyde. Being able to apply Sigmund Freud's knowledge to the novel allows the reader to interpret the genius of Stevenson's grand metaphor.

These same concepts are even possible to apply to the art of cinema. The entire movie, Birdman directed by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu is a storyline of Riggan Thompson losing control of his Ego to his Id. Throughout the movie we find Riggan Thompson having conversations with himself, Birdman. Whenever he is alone in the film we catch him using supernatural powers that Birdman would possess. Many would be led to believe that he truly possesses these abilities, but Inarritu is depicting Riggan's deteriorating self conflict. Despite these supernatural abilities, the beginning of the film depicts minimal obvious battle between Riggan's Id and ego. The most subtle form of his conflict is shown through his attempt to leave the label he has received as Birdman and become an, " actor" through his Broadway production. Without the actors direct conscious being aware, he is trying to

make his name as renowned actor in order to fight his Id as Birdman. At the end of the day all he seeks is his desire to be famous and relevant with the modern times. Transparent to, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, we observe Riggan's state of mind deteriorating throughout the story. By the end of the movie Thompson is having full arguments with his Birdman Id and eventually the alter ego becomes visible. Once his Id becomes visible the audience can assume that Riggan's ego has lost control of his Id according to Freud's theory of the psyche. Riggan gives out a screech and embodies the desires of his Id. He has embraced his alter ego and finally lost that battle that we watched over the course of the film.

The perspective in which we observe the art around us can make all of the difference in the world. Applying the concepts of Sigmund Freud has allowed me to decipher and enjoy many productions of the literature throughout this course. Authors and directors such as, Stevenson and Inarritu were able to illustrate their own perspective of the deteriorating psyche of the human being leaving the audience with an open mind on the subject.