

"two identities to play with:" dual personality in the strange case of dr.

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In the analysis of the Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, written by Robert Louis Stevenson, the major theme is often debated. Why exactly did Stevenson create Jekyll's dual personality? [They say] that Stevenson created Jekyll's dual personality in order to demonstrate man's need for an outlet, in order to escape his dull, meaningless life. Emmett Early, researcher with the C.

G. Jung Institute of San Francisco, asserts that Stevenson " gives us the definite feeling . . . that it was not just hedonism that attracted him, but the energy of life itself" (32). They believe that " the central issue is the necessity for moral and social flexibility" in an otherwise insignificant existence (Saposnik).

Stevenson further discusses this when the police inspector describes Jekyll's materialistic life. Throughout the book, the philosophy of " money's life to" Jekyll, is widely exercised (Stevenson 50). It is generally believed that money can't buy happiness, so they say that Jekyll needed Hyde to escape his boring, albeit materialistic life. Thus, they believe that this is the reason for Stevenson's creation of a dual personality. However, [I say] that Stevenson created Jekyll's dual personality complex in order to demonstrate man's innate evil, as well as man's need for an outlet to express the evil within himself. Primarily, I hold this belief due to the situational and circumstantial evidence that Stevenson himself has created in the novella.

Jekyll never mentions that he is particularly unsatisfied with his life.

[Backing] In his letters to both Lanyon and Utterson, Jekyll's sole reason for creating his alter ego, Hyde, is to create an outlet for his inner evil; a means

to deter the suppression of his more base, and wicked yearnings. He felt compelled the ability to exhibit immoral, diabolical behavior: to steal, murder, to do whatever it took to feed his need and to release his malevolent, tumultuous emotions. Jekyll needed to entertain hedonistic pursuits, but by doing so he gave strength to the beast, to the evil, within him (Early 32). As exhibited in Jekyll's behavior, Stevenson aims to prove that man needs an outlet for evil.

Additionally, he reveals that Jekyll's evil alter ego, Hyde, " had been much less exercised and much less exhausted" than the good, Jekyll (Stevenson 84). More so, Stevenson intended to demonstrate that evil is innate or a basic instinct residing within mankind. It is a character trait that consumes man, and until the need to enact evil is fed, it tortures him. Furthermore, Emmett Early insinuates that at the core man " is voracious, and becomes instantly angry when impeded" (32). With this description, man is portrayed much like a wild animal: vicious and easily provoked. Poke the wasp's nest with a stick, and the effect is instantaneous and ferocious.

At the beginning of the story, from Mr. Utterson's perspective, Stevenson tells us that Jekyll " was wild when he was young" (Stevenson 88). This furthers the contention that man is born with evil within him. Some would argue that Jekyll " has the perfect life, two identities to play with," one evil, one pure (Charyn 88). However, how ideal is this sort of life? After all, the story culminates with Hyde's suicide and Jekyll's simultaneous, resulting death.

Through this climax, Stevenson depicts the exhibition of how one's dual personality only leads to turmoil and tragedy. Individuals cannot continually act upon evil, or even good intentions without severe consequences.

Stevenson illustrates this to the reader concisely: He thought of Hyde, for all the energy of life, as something not only hellish but inorganic. This was the shocking thing; that the slime of the pit seemed to utter cries and voices; that the amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned; and that what was dead, and had no shape, should usurp the offices of life. (95) This excerpt clearly reveals that evil consumes man's inner being.

This ideology is truly the intention with which Stevenson wrote this book. He proposed that the evil within is perpetually lurking beneath the surface, slowly eating away at man's psyche until he gives in to his evil aspirations. At first, the impiety may commence with stealing or simply cutting another driver off in congested traffic. From there, it escalates and eventually turns to assault, or even arson and perhaps murder. Every small act of evil can potentially turn into something far worse. In fact, this progressively negative behavior and coinciding personality change correlates directly with poor perceived behavior and well-being (Human).

Under the surface, every man has the potential to partake in truly horrific endeavors, as exhibited by Hyde's increasingly disturbing behavior.

However, [Naysayers] society might argue that people are not born evil, that it is an acquired character trait. It is believed that it is through the "distorting lenses of cultural discourses . . .

such as those associated with art, pop, culture, religion, economic, policy, politic and so forth" that causes evil to emerge within humanity (Withers 649). Therefore, they may argue that what I say is incorrect. They believe that Stevenson was aiming to prove that man is affected by his own daily living environment; that he is negatively influenced by potentially harmful interactions with other immoral individuals or circumstances that in turn influence his own behavior. This could not be farther from the truth. There is no supporting evidence of Jekyll's unhappy life as presented in the narrative; he has a well-respected profession as well as two good friends in Mr.

Uttersson and Mr. Lanyon. Moreover, Stevenson depicts Hyde "trampling his victim underfoot and hailing down a storm of blows, under which the bones were audibly shattered and the body jumbled upon the roadway" in an apelike manner (Stevenson 43). This corroborates the point that Stevenson aims to prove; that man is inertly evil. While man may have the capability to overcome this evil, at his roots, he is truly evil. Consequently, it is a battle to overcome this inner hostility and enmity.

[Making it matter] In my opinion, this topic is significant, as it correlates with one of the most widely debated issues of both past and present day. Since the beginning of time people have argued whether or not human beings are born evil. Furthermore, my perspective conveys a more significant impact and meaning to the book. If what they say is correct, and the discussed book is simply about escaping a monotonous life via a dual personality, as well as being negatively influenced by one's environment, then this novella has little import. However, if the story's theme pertains to man's inner evil, then it will

have accomplished something far greater. It will have become a literary work that is not just a Classic novella, but evidence that answers to the everlasting question, " are we born evil?"