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## Darwin and Freud in "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and "The Stolen Bacillus"

The representation of science is a trope often used in Gothic Literature. In this essay, I will compare how two Gothic texts, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson and "The Stolen Bacillus" by H. G. Wells, represent science in terms of duplicitous personalities. I will examine how scientific thought on instinctual emotional responses and the idea of duality corresponds to the portrayal of science in Gothic Literature.

Charles Darwin (522) establishes a connection between how human beings and animals display emotions, suggesting "primitive" (523) responses emerge in human beings under certain emotional situations, such as the appearance of anger. Though many Gothic texts deal with Darwin's observations, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is possibly the most significant of these texts. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are two different sides of the same character. They are seemingly opposite in every way including personality and appearance. Dr. Jekyll is portrayed as a moralistic man, while Mr. Hyde is described as an animalistic version of a human, "like some damned Juggernaut" (Stevenson 9). However, it becomes clear throughout the course of the text that Mr. Hyde is really just a repressed version of Dr. Jekyll. Jekyll uses Hyde as a mask for his own primeval instincts, which Darwin (523) would suggest are inherent instincts of all human beings. Hyde's monstrosities are clearly evident through his appearance and distinctly evil conduct, but I would argue that Jekyll is the more monstrous of the two. He attempts to hide his monstrous nature under the guise of scientific enquiry when really his intention is to commit evil crimes, as Christina Schneider (5) posits, without the pressure of social and moral obligations.

Sigmund Freud (547) discusses the idea of the "double" in Gothic Literature as not only being two individuals that are alike, but also a singular individual with multiple aspects to their personality. *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* demonstrates Freud's idea through the two characters that are actually one; Hyde is as much Jekyll as Jekyll is Hyde's creator. Jekyll demonstrates a "doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self" (Freud 547) through his creation of Hyde as a reflection of his own darker, more primitive self as suggested by Darwin (523).

Freud's double is also evident in "The Stolen Bacillus" through the characters of the Bacteriologist and the Anarchist. The Anarchist is portrayed as the obvious villain, with his appearance and gleeful demeanor at causing harm to others clear indications of his monstrous nature. The Bacteriologist, on the other hand, is portrayed as being slightly submissive and half-

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witted, but is considered in the texts as a good man. However, a closer reading of the text reveals the Bacteriologist's hidden nature. He appears to enjoy possessing a harmful weapon, even giving a speech that poetically describes "death – mysterious, untraceable death, death swift and terrible, death full of pain and indignity" (Wells 409). But it is perhaps his suggestion of a great power that he has that reveals his true motivations. He implies his power over the bacillus through his ability to contain such a harmful disease, proclaiming, "Yes, here is the pestilence imprisoned" (409). Perhaps this is suggestive of his own "primitive" (Darwin 523) desires of power. He even admits to his wife his desire to "astonish" (Wells 412) the Anarchist with the deadly virus and acknowledges his own foolishness suggesting he is aware of his social and moral obligations (Schneider 5).

Keir Waddington discusses how "Gothic writers were fascinated by questions of identity and the idea that outward appearances concealed something sinister within" (59). This is in agreement with Darwin's and Freud's ideas about the duplicitous self; however, I would suggest that Gothic writers are interested in establishing the possibility for anyone to have sinister motivations not just those with the outward appearance of evilness. Dr. Jekyll is the prime example of this, outwardly he appears to be a respectable, moral citizen, but really this is a mere semblance for his true self, Mr. Hyde. Even the Bacteriologist in "The Stolen Bacillus" is shown to have darker ulterior motives, though not to the same extent as Dr. Jekyll. Both texts contain opposing characters, Jekyll versus Hyde and the Bacteriologist versus the Anarchist, and both texts contain opposing, or competing, motives within the same character, human versus animal and obligation versus power. While these sinister motives were obvious for the *bad* characters, they were not as clear for the supposed *good* characters; however, both Robert Louis Stevenson and H. G. Wells hinted at conflicting motivations for these characters before eventually revealing their own sinister motives.

*Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* portrays the extreme version of the Freud's (547) double and emphasizes the primal instincts that Darwin (523) attributes as inherent in all human beings. Hyde is the epitome of the monster, but it is Jekyll's monstrous nature that is most shocking as he does not possess the "outward appearances" (Waddington 59) of a true monster, making him an even more terrifying prospect. "The Stolen Bacillus" also discusses Darwin's (523) and Freud's (547) ideas, but portrays a much less grim view of humanity than *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. While we do see primitive ulterior motives from the Bacteriologist, it is his ability recognize these motivations as wrong that makes him a foolish hero unlike the monstrous Jekyll. Gothic Literature uses scientific theory to establish a duplicitous self, implying that all human beings have an inherent ability to revert back to primitive motivations allowing for conflict within oneself.

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