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Psychoanalytic Personality Theory in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*

The origins of "The Gothic Novel" are typically linked to Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* written in 1764. The 1790's introduced "The Gothic" as a popular and recognized genre of literature, which has since undergone many revivals in past centuries. Inspired by gothic architecture dating back to the medieval period, one of the characteristics often portrayed in these novels is the setting, which includes dark and haunted castles, dungeons, underground passages, basements or ruined buildings. These elements provide the sense of gloom and fear. The supernatural or inexplicable occurrences function to create mystery and suspense. Events that take place in the gothic novel often border between reality and unreality in order to evoke terror in the readers. An important convention that emerged through a second wave of gothic writing is the motif of "the double" or echo characters which often function to explore the human psyche and behavior. It explores the terror that lurks in our own minds. William Godwin's novel *Caleb Williams* uses the relationship between a servant (Caleb) and his master (Ferdinando Falkland) as a character echo. Caleb is given the burden of keeping his master's secret and identifies with Falkland so much that he becomes him. In Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the dual personality of the main character explores the unconscious and conscious mind.

According to Sigmund Freud's theory, the human has three parts of the psyche; the id, the ego and the superego. The id is the primitive, instinctual state, the ego is the realistic part that tries to meet the needs of the id in a socially acceptable manner and the superego is the moral and critical part of the personality. The subjects of each novel are split and through the

repression of their inner conflicts, the fragmented egos of Caleb Williams and Dr. Henry Jekyll are depicted. This essay will look at the psychological experiences and three distinct egos of the main characters from each novel as well as the effect of repression and the double.

In *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* the double is portrayed through only one character, often seen as a personality disorder, and depicts the conflict between good and evil. The duplicity of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde manifest the characteristics of Freud's psychoanalytic personality theory. Firstly, Mr. Hyde represents the id. This part explains the most basic wants and needs of human behavior, "the id operates unconsciously, accords with primary process, and impels the organism to engage in need-satisfying, tension-reducing activities, which are experienced as pleasure" (Lapsley and Stey). There are no moral or social rules to follow which causes the need for instant gratification and aggressive instincts. The id is very primitive. Hyde is extremely violent and impulsive and gains enjoyment from acting upon these feelings. In Jekyll's last statement, he uses lots of terms to emphasize this, for example "drinking pleasure with bestial avidity from any degree of torture to another" (LABL 1812) or "tasting delight from every blow" (LABL 1816). Hyde is murderous and has no moral judgement. The scene in which he harms a child is extremely shocking, "then came the horrible part of the thing; for the man trampled calmly over the child's body and left her screaming on the ground" (LABL 1781). The language used in the story underlines the horror and terror that results directly from unfiltered human behavior. Hyde harms people or murders for small things, or to get revenge at Dr. Jekyll for trying to repress the primitive nature of himself. The id does not feel guilty about what it wants and has no social obligations. The id's actions function under the unconscious mind. The three parts of the human psyche are essential for sanity and to protect oneself from self-destruction which is something that the story points to:

I declare, at least, before God, no man morally sane could have been guilty of that crime upon so pitiful a provocation; and that I struck in no more reasonable spirit than that in which a sick child may break a plaything. But I had voluntarily stripped myself of all those balancing instincts by which even the worst of us continues to walk with some degree of steadiness among temptations; and in my case, to be tempted, however slightly, was to fall. (LABL 1814)

In this statement about the murder of Sir Danvers, Dr. Jekyll explains that as Mr. Hyde, his actions have no consequences. There is no thought process or hesitation, just a desire to fulfill aggressive needs. This is why the personality needs the ego and superego to balance behavior.

The ego and the superego are less obvious than how the id is portrayed in Mr. Hyde's character. Dr. Jekyll's nature is much more concerned with the morals of his situation and can easily recognize that Mr. Hyde's behavior is wrong. This is a case of good versus evil. His morality is what allows him to understand his own split subjectivity:

It was on the moral side, and in my own person, that I learned to recognize the thorough and primitive duality of man; I saw that, of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both (LABL 1809).

Dr. Jekyll uses a concoction to repress Hyde's evil and be capable of staying his good and conscious self. The concoction represents trying to separate the id from the superego. Eventually, Dr. Jekyll can no longer control his transformations. The dark side of human nature starts to take over the good. His mind is the ego, it is the part of his nature that goes back and forth between the id and the superego. It tries to satisfy the needs of the id (Hyde) in a way that is morally acceptable (superego). However, in a way, Dr. Jekyll is curious about Hyde's behavior and it

allows him to be free from the constraints of society. Therefore, the ego's function is lost. Jekyll has repressed his violent urges as a direct result from Victorian societal expectations. Through Hyde, he can express these without consequences. Dr. Jekyll specifically says how Hyde acts after repressing these urges, "my devil had been long caged, he came out roaring" (LABL 1814). Therefore, the double in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* serves as a social critique.

In Godwin's *Caleb Williams* the double is depicted by two separate characters that serve as echoes. Caleb identifies so much with Mr. Falkland that he becomes him. Mr. Falkland is his ego ideal. According to Sigmund Freud, in association with his theory about personality, the ego ideal is what the ego strives to become. It strives for perfection. The superego, in this case Caleb, is "the vehicle of the ego ideal by which the ego measures itself, which it emulates, and whose demand for ever greater perfection it strives to fulfill" (Felluga). The ego ideal is what the self is constantly aspiring to be. Many of the characters in Godwin's novel are projected versions of Caleb's self. As an orphan, Caleb is always subconsciously looking for parental figures. Mr. Falkland becomes the ideal for perfection. Caleb even considers Laura as a mother figure. Caleb reveres Mr. Falkland but at the same time begins to pity and despise him. Caleb is constantly being rejected by his new father figure. For example, when Mr. Falkland confesses that he murdered Tyrell, he tells Caleb that he will be punished by death if the secret is let out. Mr. Falkland lets Caleb know the boundaries of their relationship, "You shall continue to be in my service, but can never share in my affection. I will benefit you in respect of fortune, but I shall always hate you" (Godwin 136). Caleb understands that the only way he can be free is if he exposes Mr. Falkland's secret. Hiding the secret is what makes him destroy his father ideal. This can be associated with Freud's Oedipus Complex, wanting to kill the father in order to become him.

Like the character of Dr. Jekyll in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Caleb is constantly struggling with his sense of self and the morality of his situation. Although he starts off as an innocent servant, like Dr. Jekyll starts as a good, moral doctor, both characters are curious about the other side of their nature which causes self-destruction and ruin. Caleb speaks about his undeniably curiosity and says:

My offence had merely been a mistaken thirst of knowledge. Such however it was as to admit neither of forgiveness nor remission. This epoch was the crisis of my fate, dividing what may be called the offensive part and the defensive which was the sole business of my remaining years. (Godwin 130)

Caleb's divided parts can be seen as a projection of Mr. Falkland or vice versa. Mr. Falkland has placed his guilt in Caleb's hands and becomes the externalization of Caleb's inner conflict. The guilt in both Mr. Falkland and Caleb Williams forces them to act on impulses. For Mr. Falkland this is shown through his fits of distemper and anger. This can be seen as his id. Although in order to keep his secret, maintain his reputation and stay out of jail, his ego and superego battle over what is moral (the cause of his guilt) and what society will think of this (superego). The ego, after hearing about Caleb's miseries, his guilt forces him to confess the murder publicly. In Caleb, the id is the part that makes him curious about his master's moods and once hearing the reason, makes him want to expose Mr. Falkland. The superego and ego are the parts of Caleb that makes a public murder charge in order to "[vindicate his own character]" (Godwin 303). The superego uses the moral complex and the ego uses a realistic strategy. The superego (or conscience) is what causes Caleb's guilt. In the end, Caleb explains that once he confessed Falkland's murder he believed that he would be rewarded, "I thought that, if the guilt of Mr. Falkland were established, fortune and the world would smile upon my efforts" (Godwin 302).

Although Caleb tries to be the perfect or ideal self (which comes from the superego) he was not rewarded and was left isolated by society.

Caleb Williams, like *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* can be seen as social and political critiques as well as good examples of psychoanalysis and Freudian theory. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde represent the good and bad nature that lives within every human being. The story of Caleb Williams represents the horror of our own minds and the need for redemption. The split subjectivity in both stories symbolize very multifaceted identities of each person. The doubles in these stories are used as ways to explain the complexity of human behavior and the sense of self. The stories act as examples of how our unconscious mind caused by inner forces or feelings direct our behavior without our awareness and how our conscience deals with the morality of the consequences. The unconscious feelings about morals and society are externalized through Dr. Jekyll's transformation into Hyde and Caleb's self-transformation and his relationship to Mr. Falkland. Dr. Jekyll struggles between his morality and his curiosity of not having to deal with consequences after satisfying his needs. In the end he is forced between him and Hyde. It would be interesting to analyze which side prevails, good or evil and to determine who really killed who. Did Dr. Jekyll kill Hyde or did Hyde kill Dr. Jekyll? Caleb goes through the same struggle of curiosity, redemption and morality. It would be equally interesting to read more into the Oedipus complex aspect of the novel and perhaps analyze the relationship between Falkland and Caleb in homosexual terms.

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