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**The split human mind and the portrayal of good and evil in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* & Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray***

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## Introduction

In the 19th century, in a society almost as split as the human mind, religion and science were eventually set against each other, while concerns with self and morality grew stronger. With the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), an anxiety of where knowledge was heading was generated, which left Thomas Huxley (an English biologist who supported Darwinism and coined the word *agnostic*) to try "to popularize evolution to preserve the integrity of science, and, at the same time, to sustain confidence in the ability of humans to be both ethical and moral in spite of the laws of nature" (Rauch, 203). During this time, the foundations of individualism, personality, and the self, that had been expanding in the Romantic era also became more complex, which could be seen through the increasing interest in biographical and personal material to understand the person behind the work (Baumeister, 165-166). According to Roy F. Baumeister, Victorian repressiveness, caused by high moral standards, also formed Victorians into a state of self-deception and hypocrisy, while it in addition engendered self-scrutiny and an uncertainty of self-knowledge, which shed light on the hidden self (166).

While society thus seemed to turn more two-faced, it could be claimed that dualism or "the condition or state of being dual or consisting of two parts" (*OED*) became more fascinating to the Victorians. This can be shown through the rising literary works concerning morality in forms of good and evil. Two examples of such literary works are Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). In *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, a scientist, Henry Jekyll, ruminates on his own contradicting mind and finally makes a concoction that splits his personality into two different individuals, the good Dr Jekyll and the evil Mr Hyde. Everything appears to be fine until Mr Hyde starts to overrun his time of appearance and usurps the control of Dr Jekyll. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the main character, Dorian, receives a portrait of himself which causes him to wish that he could switch places with the picture in order to forever possess the appearance of innocence, youth, and beauty. His wish is mysteriously granted, and as Dorian commences a walk down a path of hedonism and immorality, his portrait serves as a mirror that reflects his moral and corporal deterioration.

In order to understand how the split human mind and the concepts of good and evil are depicted in the novels, this essay will use Freudian theories and methods, which were developed around the same time the novels were written, to interpret the conscious and unconscious as well as the views on the self and soul/psyche. While looking into dualism and some other relevant facts, the

essay aims to define certain similarities and differences in the portrayal of the split mind and good and evil in the novels *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

### **Victorian anxiety and views on psyche and self**

For a long period of time, people have been fascinated as well as perplexed by the human mind and its attributes. Whether it has been because of a desire to create order, or a greater understanding of the mind, religions all over the world appear to have one aspect in common; that is dualism. According to the *Online Oxford English Dictionary*, dualism can be seen as “the condition or state of being dual or consisting of two parts”, and in philosophical terms “the doctrine that mind and matter exist as distinct entities” or “the doctrine that there are two independent principles, one good and the other evil” (*OED*). The specific dichotomy between good and evil, what is considered desirable, approved, welcomed, and of high standards, and what is considered undesirable, harmful, unpleasant, and wicked, has not only permeated religion (e.g. God and the Devil), but culture and moral values as well.

This can be seen especially in the Victorian era, when moral concerns received an extraordinary attention as a consequence of people losing their religious beliefs, while at the same time experiencing a greater material advancement (Bin, 1). As a result of the Industrial Revolution, nineteenth century England plunged into an era that was obsessed with knowledge and there was a rapid increase in the number of books and periodicals available to the reading public (Rauch, 24). This thirst for knowledge created a more inquisitive environment, as science became more complex and extensive. New discoveries and questions about “the nature of the universe” then also led to an anxiety and “knowledge crisis” in which science and faith were set against each other (Rauch, 202).

Although religion was considered a necessity for morality and society at the time, people began to view their religious beliefs as weak, ineffective, and insecure. This in turn caused many to either look to a new faith/belief, or remain attached to their old Christian beliefs and superstitions for social and personal purposes (Bin, 1-2). These inner conflicts of faith and morality could not only be claimed to be seen in the social environment, which was created by the search for knowledge through science, but through literary works as well.

At the end of the century, two novels that shocked the public by their dark moral and psychological themes were Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) and Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). As both novels portray characters that go through a

mental as well as physical process of change throughout the story, the novels also give an interesting basis for psychological interpretations of the human mind and the perception of self and personality.

To understand the development of the self during the late Victorian era, when these novels were written, as well as how the self was perceived before and after, Roy F. Baumeister's article "How the self became a problem: A psychological review of historical research" (1987) provides useful assistance in the interpretation of selfhood through historical and literary data. It seems like a shift happened somewhere between the 16th and the 19th century when stress was put on "the distinction between the inner self and the outer self" in order to evaluate individuality, and identify "human development and change" (Baumeister, 163).

In the late Middle Ages self-knowledge and self-conception were not seen as a problem, although there was an "[i]ncreased sense of unity of single life" (Baumeister, 164). Since self-definition and fulfillment were closely linked to society and Christianity, medieval people seemed to be denying the fact that an individual could exist outside of the position which society had given him or her. Fulfillment was considered to be the acting-out of the role which one had been assigned, "because the social order had its design (and purpose) and legitimacy from God" (Baumeister, 171).

As society moved into the Early Modern era (16th to 18th century), it saw greater social mobility, while self-conception and self-definition focused more on "individuality" and "uniqueness of self" as well as "personal change and development". Even though Christian salvation was still considered a fulfillment, just like that of the Middle Ages, a developing non-religious fulfillment was found in "creativity" (Baumeister, 164). To counter this, the Puritans later focused on "predestination", which weakened the individual and created a fulfillment by defeating "sin and weakness" through work (Baumeister, 164). But at the same time, these Puritan beliefs also intensified "self-consciousness and recognized the possibility of self-deception" (Baumeister, 163).

The people of the Romantic era took these views into account, and emphasized individual uniqueness and destiny, while expanding "the realm of the hidden self" and "personality" (Baumeister, 165-166). Love and creative work also became a source of fulfillment, as they centered on "a rich inner life" (these values and concepts of fulfillment are still used today) (Baumeister, 167). The increased separation of public and private life, with a sense of individualism, created a tension between the "individual" and "society", where society was held responsible for the individual's nonfulfillment. Chances were that this was caused by the want to experience fulfillment in one's current life instead of the afterlife (Baumeister, 169).

When the Victorian era started, the attention on the hidden self increased by high moral standards which caused “repression”, “hypocrisy”, and “self-deception”. As Victorians thought that their innermost thoughts and feelings could be exposed without their control, they were constantly on guard. They even took into consideration that “clothes and other subtleties” could show “their personalities, [...] private thoughts and wishes” (Baumeister, 166). In order to eschew the public eye, “home and family” rose in value, while a profound interest was found in “exploring the self [...] by individualistic child-rearing patterns”(Baumeister, 166, 170). This could explain why there was such a growth in child literature that subtly contained “morally acceptable knowledge” and “cultural norms and practices” (Rauch, 46). Although private life was seen as a resolution to seeking fulfillment, “society was regarded as sort of a necessary evil” which created a “peaceful coexistence” between the individual and society (known as “transcendentalism”) (Baumeister, 164, 170).

Even though the values of the Victorian era are not the same as today’s, the concepts that were created at the time can still be seen in modern psychology with Freud’s theories of “[i]mpossibility of complete self-knowledge” or the “[v]alues of self-exploration” (Baumeister, 164). That is why the focal point is now going to change to Freud’s different psychological theories and concepts of the self and certain behavior in order to analyse the two novels *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

### **Freud – an attempt to map the mind**

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) is considered to be one of the most famous modern psychologists recognized by most people, along with some of his theories and concepts. Although Freud had a great interest in the unconscious when he developed his theories, he is not the inventor of this concept that probably started in the beginning of the 1700s (Rollins, 43). With that said, he did on the other hand create his own divisions of the human mind or psyche.

According to Saul McLeod, Freud developed a structure of the mind which he divided into three parts that he compared to an iceberg. The visible part of the mind, or the top of the iceberg, is known as the conscious which focuses on the thoughts to which an individual intentionally give their attention. The second layer of the mind is the preconscious where memories are stored, and the third level, which is also the most significant, is the unconscious. Although this region is unknown

and cannot be seen, it is often considered the most significant part of the mind as it helps the individual to find the real reason for certain behaviors.

Other entities within the mind that McLeod's article explains are the concepts of the id, ego, and superego. The id is according to Freud an entity within the unconscious driven by basic biological instincts, following the "the pleasure principles of the libido" (Rollins, 108). These instincts can in turn be separated into two fields: Eros and Thanatos (McLeod). Eros represents the survival instincts, such as eating, breathing, and reproducing, and Thanatos represents the death instinct that is described as destructive and comes out towards others through violence and aggression. The ego stems from the id and evolves in the stages of infancy. But later, it develops to both satisfy the id and social conventions, as it exists both in the conscious and unconscious (McLeod). By doing this, the ego uses "the reality principle" in order to create a *homeostasis* or balance (Rollins, 108-109). The last entity to be formed in the mind is the superego, which focuses on morality, and follows "the conformity [or morality] principle" that adheres to socially accepted laws and manners (McLeod; Rollins, 108). The quandary of the mind is therefore mostly caused by the incongruence of the id and the superego, while the ego tries to find harmony by acting as a mediator in the never-ending internal conflict.

For the ego to not feel overwhelmed, it uses different "defense mechanisms" (McLeod). For example, *repression* (putting an idea out of the conscious mind), *isolation* (not feeling what one normally would feel), *displacement* (shifting one's emotions from a threatening to a less threatening object), *denial* (refusing to know what one knows), *projection* (assigning one's emotions to another person), *intellectualization* (explaining away emotions instead of feeling them), *reaction formation* (convincing oneself that the opposite of a terrible situation is the case), or *sublimation* (channelling an unaccepted urge into artistic creation or fantasy) (Lynn, 198-199, 215).

There are other Freudian theories that can be interesting, e.g. "the psychosexual stages" that can be seen through Victorian repressiveness, or "dream analysis", and the ways of how the unconscious reaches the conscious in forms of memories, ideas, dreams, fears, and anticipations (Lynn, 195; McLeod). But even though there is more to learn from Freud's theories, these concepts are not necessary for the analysis in this essay. Therefore, while taking the basic theories of the mind into consideration, this essay will now focus on assessing *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* through a psychological perspective.

## **Stevenson's Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde meet Freud**

Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, which has gained much attention for being one of the most popular dark psychological fantasies written in the late 19th century, is not only interesting because of its thriller-like plot, but also because of the psychological dilemma of the main character Henry Jekyll. As clues are given throughout the whole story in order to understand what connection the main character has with another character called Edward Hyde, their relationship is revealed in a most shocking manner towards the end. Since the novel also uses many dream-like elements, it can be interesting to look into the mind of Stevenson when he wrote the story.

Taking into account that Stevenson was fascinated by psychology and the duality of the mind, as well as his own vivid dreams in which he had a hard time distinguishing "whether his conscious or subconscious was in control", it is not strange that the story of Jekyll and Hyde is similar to a dream since it "came to him [Stevenson] in a dream" (Harman, xiii, 23, 295). This makes it seem as if the story is what Freud would call a sublimation, or an allegory of the split human mind. One can therefore, after reading the whole story, interpret Dr Jekyll as the character in which the superego and ego dwell and Mr Hyde as the id.

The inference that the character of Edward Hyde is a representation of the id, which is connected to the unconscious, does not seem far-fetched. Since the unconscious is the part of the human mind which is considered unknown and hidden, it is not odd for Mr Enfield to have difficulties describing Hyde, because how does one describe a part of the mind which one is aware of but cannot fully understand? Although Enfield tries his best by stating that "[Hyde] must be deformed", he still struggles with the concept of verbally materializing Hyde as he mentions "it's not want of memory, for I declare I can see him this moment" (Stevenson, 6).

The questions that present themselves thereafter are the following: How is Hyde described, especially in physique and manner? And, how can parallels be drawn between Hyde and the id? When Hyde's appearance is described, Utterson states that he is "pale and dwarfish" (13). This description fits with Jekyll's depiction of him as "much smaller, slighter and younger than Henry Jekyll" (60). But when Hyde's hand is seen as "corded and hairy" (70), that also opens doors for other interpretations. Hyde's small stature and youth can be viewed as analogues of the id, since the id is known for being the least developed part of the mind, as well as the region which exists and controls the individual before the ego is developed. As this usually happens around early childhood, Hyde's smallness and youth can thus be interpreted as a reflection of his underdevelopment and his potentially immature behavior which is that of a child. With his hairy hands, and his wincing and



“hissing” (12), Hyde does not only resemble a young child but also an animal. As his way of behaving is described throughout the novella, similar expressions are given to describe Hyde.

Some of the simian references that are the most apparent when observing Hyde are seen in Chapter 4, where Hyde “with ape-like fury” murders an elderly man (21), and in Chapter 10, where Hyde tears Jekyll’s writing into pieces with his “ape-like spite” (74). But as mentioned earlier, Hyde does not only have characteristics making one think of him as an animal but a child as well. When the relationship between Hyde and Jekyll is presented, Jekyll is portrayed as an interested father figure, while Hyde is seen as an indifferent son (66). At one point in the story, he is not only seen as evil or related to Satan, but he is even described as “[t]hat child of Hell” (71). By taking that into account, when comparing Hyde to the id, one should also keep in mind that the id is controlled by biological instincts, mainly defined by the survival instincts and the death instinct.

By studying Hyde’s aggressive and violent behavior, one can assume that Hyde mostly functions within the destructive powers of the death instinct (Thanatos). But towards the end of the story, it is revealed that Hyde has a great fear of dying which even causes him to consider temporary suicide (or to return to the unconscious) in times of possible danger in order to remain in existence. Although Hyde hates Jekyll, and would not mind destroying himself so that he could destroy Jekyll, his fear of his own demise stops him. Because of Hyde’s awareness of his own dependence on Jekyll, and Jekyll’s power to end them both, Jekyll describes a feeling of pity for Hyde as he also remarks that “[Hyde’s] love of life is wonderful” (73). Therefore, it seems even more likely that Hyde is a representation of the id, since he shows both Eros and Thanatos. To a certain degree one could even claim that his Eros is stronger than his Thanatos, which seems to work neatly into Freud’s theory of that people would rather survive than self-destruct; thus making Eros stronger (McLeod).

What also causes Hyde to seem connected to the id is how he almost appears to be a character of a dream. In the first chapter of the story, an ambiance similar to that of a dream is created when Mr Enfield describes his encounter with Mr Hyde. Before Hyde is even introduced, Enfield mentions how he is “coming home from some place at the end of the world” on “a black winter morning” when the streets are “empty” and he enters “that state of mind when a man listens and listens and begins to long for the sight of a police” (Stevenson, 3). Shortly thereafter, an unknown man creates a great commotion as he is about to trample a little girl, and that man is Mr Hyde. But what Hyde actually is seems harder to grasp, as Enfield tries to answer Mr Utterson’s question by stating: “He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man so disliked, and yet I scarce know

why” (6). In Chapter 2, he is described as a figure without a face that haunts Utterson in his sleep. In Chapter 4, when Utterson and Inspector Newcomen of Scotland Yard visit Hyde’s living quarters in Soho, the area where he lives is described as dingy, foggy, and “like a district of some city in a nightmare” (22). Therefore, it appears that Hyde is no more than a creature or a monster found in the unconscious, which reaches the conscious in forms of dreams. But in what other ways can one assume that Hyde is a representation of the id within the hidden unconscious?

Not only does Hyde’s name seem to refer to something which is hidden, but Mr Utterson even plays with Hyde’s name and the word hide-and-seek, when he states: “[i]f he be Mr Hyde, ... I shall be Mr Seek” (11). By also having Hyde using the back door, and Poole (Jekyll’s servant) stating that “[they] see very little of him on this side [the front] of the house”, one can interpret those factors as how the unconscious, which is almost never openly revealed, is similar to the laboratory in the back, where Hyde hides all his “black secrets”(15). The mystery of Hyde also becomes more sinister when Mr Utterson, who is Dr Jekyll’s friend and lawyer, receives Jekyll’s will in which it is stated that if Jekyll were to deace or disappear, Hyde shall have all his possessions and the custody of his household (8). This creates a linkage between Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, where both characters seem to become furtive and distant. Although Jekyll becomes more social in Chapter 6, he thereafter relapses into a state of seclusion again, which only produces more questions than answers of what is happening. What does Jekyll’s relationship to Hyde signify?

If Hyde represents the id within the unconscious, Dr Henry Jekyll can be seen as the superego or the ego, mostly functioning in the conscious. Although the main focus in the story seems to be on Hyde and the unconscious, Jekyll functions as a great parallel in order to both display the similarities and differences of the split human mind. If one should therefore reverse to the reference of Hyde always being in the back or unseen and invisible parts of the house (the laboratory), Jekyll is only seen in the front of the house which is clearly visible to the eye of the public. Although it is mentioned towards the end that Jekyll stays in the laboratory, no one sees him there. In the eighth chapter, where Utterson and Poole break into the cabinet of the laboratory in order to save Jekyll, they only find the twitching body of the dead Edward Hyde. It is not until the very last chapter that the full picture of Dr Jekyll and the conscious is presented.

In *Henry Jekyll’s Full Statement of the Case* (Chapter 10), Jekyll displays the superego when he commences the chapter by describing his status, background, and behavior which he uses before the public. But as the narration continues, the ego sets in. As Jekyll confesses that he “concealed his pleasures” and thereafter felt “an almost morbid sense of shame” (57), the ego seems to speak of its struggle for balance between the conformity principle of the superego and the pleasure principle of

the id. Although Jekyll considers both of his different parts being himself, he clearly states that he is more “on the moral side” (58), which shows that Jekyll is more sympathetic to the superego. This could explain why the superego and ego are more connected to the conscious. As the struggle between “these polar twins” (58) continues, Jekyll hesitantly decides to try to end the struggle by splitting himself into two physical parts.

After drinking a potion of his own concoction, he first feels sick, but then a pleasure of releasing his “original evil” (Mr Hyde) is stirred in a way which he claims “braced and delighted [him] like wine” (60). Taking into account that an alcoholic drink is mentioned in connection to the effect of the concoction, another interesting fact about the correlation to drugs and the potion is described in Emma Kareno’s “Sherlock's Pharmacy : Drugs In Detective Stories, 1860s To 1890s”, where it is mentioned how the potion does not only fragment personality and self, but also holds the individual together. As Jekyll becomes more addicted and dependent on his drug, the potion also shows the duality of its functions (151-152), thus, making it very similar to that of an alcoholic beverage which can further explain why “[t]he drug had no discriminating action” (Stevenson, 61). Although alcohol (as well as the potion) can have both negative and positive effects, the substance in itself is not concern with how it affects the mind. But one thing which is for certain is that Jekyll seems to relish the physical split of his mind, while his ego becomes more distant from himself as it addresses the id as Edward Hyde and the superego as Henry Jekyll. When he drinks the potion again in order to return to the body of Henry Jekyll, he realizes that he (the ego) cannot split himself from the conscious which is connected to the superego. Thus, one side of him is “still the old Henry Jekyll” (62).

The former ecstasy turns to despair when he (the ego) comes to understand that he is losing control over his own mind as he shifts from Henry Jekyll to Edward Hyde as he falls asleep (64). Since he prefers “the elderly and discontented doctor” Henry Jekyll, he tries to bring back the power to the conscious superego in Chapter 6 (which explains why Jekyll becomes more social), but the “throes and longings” of freedom expressed by Hyde (trapped in the unconscious) are too much for him to bear (66-67). At the end, Jekyll’s superego is literally slipping away as he sleeps, while Hyde grows stronger and more powerful. But as this happens, both sides come to a conclusion: they cannot exist without each other (73). The hatred that Hyde feels, after knowing this, torments Jekyll to such a degree that it becomes intolerable for their co-existence. Thus, the ego decides to end the matter stating: “... this is my true hour of death, and what follows concerns another than myself. Here then, as I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end” (74).

What actually appears to happen in the last chapter is that Jekyll's ego, which has been strictly controlled by the superego (or the social standards of Victorian society), is trying to suppress the unconscious and the id. This does not work, and therefore letting the id and the superego split into two parts seems more appealing. In that way, the ego does not have to struggle between the different principles of the mind. But as the ego, which is connected to the superego and the id, becomes aware of the necessity of their coexistence, the two very different sides of Jekyll's mind are in a turmoil, vying for power (especially Hyde). The ego then realizes that the internal struggle which has become external will not cease. As a last resort, the ego or "self-destroyer" (45), which can be claimed to be hinted at the name *Jekyll* (Je=French "I" and kyll=kill), takes the final stance in determining how to end the struggle; his answer is suicide.

As the story reaches the finale, it is hard to decide who is good or bad. Although Henry Jekyll is considered to be the good, approved, or desirable character, which is expected of the superego, while Edward Hyde is the evil, unpleasant, or undesirable one, which is expected by the id, the person who ends the life of Dr Jekyll is no one but Jekyll himself. As his ego cannot stand the incessant duel within his dualistic mind, Dr Jekyll does not only kill his own ego, but his superego and id as well. By ending the existence of the conscious, he terminates the unconscious, and thus in turn all consciousness that is left. Therefore, although society approves of Henry Jekyll and scorns Edward Hyde, the two characters are really just two sides of the same mind. In the end, their rivalry over the control of the mind has no purpose, since no one wins. This could lead to two different interpretations of Jekyll's death. One, which suggests that life and its struggles have no meaning, and therefore; why not end it? Or two, the purpose is to find balance and harmony, which one can either receive through peace in death or learning to live with one's own tumultuous and contradicting mind.

### **Wilde's Dorian Gray meets Freud**

When looking at the life of Oscar Wilde, while comparing it to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, it seems that one could definitely draw parallels between the work and its author. Wilde's desire to understand the human existence as he compared love and lust, ethics and aesthetics, and "the [religious] battle of belief and unbelief" (Pearce, 38), has caused many to believe that the work reflects its creator. Just as Dorian seems to lead a double life, it is even mentioned in Joseph Peace

*The Unmasking of Oscar Wilde* that Wilde's secrecy and two different worlds which he moved in make him similar to Jekyll and Hyde (154).

In Dominic Manganiello's "Ethics and Aesthetics in 'The Picture of Dorian Gray'", the work is also compared to Wilde's psyche, as it is considered "a three-dimensional portrait of the artist" represented by the three main characters Lord Henry Wotton, Basil Hallward, and Dorian Gray (31). Taking this into account, one could also divide the characters into the different entities of the mind created by Freud, thus, making Lord Henry represent the id, while Basil becomes the superego, and Dorian the ego. In the past, people even considered the duality of Henry and Basil to represent the conflict of either two different "psychological faculties ('conscience' vs. 'libido')" or the choice between "good and evil" or "positive and negative moral influences" (Liebman, 296). Since both Henry and Basil influence Dorian in many ways throughout the story, the interpretation of Henry representing and advocating the pleasure principle of the id and Basil the conformity/morality principle of the superego does not seem too implausible.

Lord Henry Wotton who is known for his wits, scepticism and contradictory statements, which cause Dorian to give him the nickname "Prince Paradox" (Wilde, 220), is already in the beginning of the book seen as a potentially bad influence on Dorian. This is especially apparent when Basil tells Henry not to spoil or try to influence Dorian, because "[his] influence would be bad" (14). Henry, who does not appear to take this too seriously, later states that "[n]othing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul" (20), which seems to iterate the id's desire for pleasure in order to control the mind.

As Lord Henry relishes his influence on Dorian, he also compares Dorian to a violin that "answer[s] to every touch and thrill of the bow" (36), making it seem as if Dorian only exists in order for Lord Henry to dominate and play upon him so that he can hear his own music echoing back to him through the spotless mind of a boy. This seems to suggest that Dorian (the ego) is in fact in the early stages of development, and therefore has a weak superego and is still easily influenced by the id. In that perspective, Lord Henry (or the id) only has an interest in Dorian because he can see Dorian's "unconscious egotism" (101) and how Dorian can potentially become one of his own creative outlets. His fascination with Dorian lies in how easy it is for him to manipulate and make Dorian into a portrait of himself (the id). Taking that into account, it is not strange that he calls Dorian "this son of Love and Death" (37). Not only do the circumstances in which Dorian Gray was born make this nickname fitting, but also the fact that the id's main instincts are Eros (the survival instinct or another word for *love & desire* or the Greek *god of love*) and Thanatos (the death instinct).

Lord Henry continues to affect Dorian's views on both himself and the self, as he mentions how Dorian can become a symbol of "[a] new Hedonism" and that there is nothing that can stop him as long as he has his personality and youth (22-23). What makes Lord Henry a co-painter of the portrait of Dorian Gray is not necessarily that he is physically involved in the process of painting, but that he mentally influences Dorian, which eventually leads to a change in the portrait itself. He even uses painting terms when he explains that "[s]in is the only real colour-element left in modern life" (29). He also claims that any kind of influence is immoral "[b]ecause to influence a person is to give him one's own soul" (17). As the passage continues, Lord Henry explains that the individual who has been influenced is not himself because his thoughts and passions are not natural to him, "[h]is virtues are not real", "[h]is sins [...] are borrowed", and "[h]e becomes an echo of some one else's music, an actor of a part that has not been written for him" (17). These statements seem to point out how Lord Henry (the id) is the main instigator of Dorian's (the ego's) personality and behavior. If Dorian now is a musical instrument that plays the tunes composed by Lord Henry, one could claim that Lord Henry is most likely the main reason for Dorian's downfall. But somehow, the statements also seem to refer to how the painter Basil Hallward, who takes the shape of the superego in this analysis, might be an unintentional culprit in the story of how Dorian fell apart.

Just like Lord Henry, Basil Hallward (the superego) is another important character who influences Dorian in the novel. As he is working on Dorian's portrait, he tells Lord Henry that he sees too much of himself in it, and therefore does not want it to be publicly displayed, because "[a]n artist should create beautiful things, but should put nothing of his own life into them" (11). Basil, then, expresses his worries, not only those for the portrait, but the relationship and feelings he harbors for Dorian as well. As he states, "I have given away my whole soul to some one who treats it as if it were a flower to put in his coat, a bit of decoration to charm his vanity" (11), it almost comes across as if he is as much of an influence as Lord Henry, when keeping in mind that Lord Henry stated that "to influence a person is to give him one's own soul" (17). If Basil has now given his soul to Dorian, just like he gave him the portrait, he must also have (but probably accidentally) influenced Dorian to become who he is.

But how did he influence him? Taking into account that Basil represents the superego and appears to be the more moral of the two influences on Dorian, why does Dorian then fall apart? It is not odd to claim that it might be because Basil is more focused on his work in the form of painting. At one point, he is not even listening to what Henry says to Dorian, but is so engrossed in his own painting, that it seems as if he momentarily forgets the actual Dorian. This could explain why Dorian later states: "You like your art better than your friends. I am no more to you than a green

bronze figure” (26). By Basil being so absorbed in his work as well as moral and social concerns, he fits the idea of the superego. Basil’s influence, in that case, can be seen through his art.

As Basil creates Dorian’s portrait, he does not only become the creator of the mirror that reflects Dorian’s psyche or soul, but also Dorian’s everlasting physical appearance of innocence, youth, and beauty. From another perspective, it could be interpreted as the superego trying to draw rules and guidelines for the ego. His art, therefore, becomes a mental prison to Dorian, as it restricts and later shows him his inner decline. And just like the superego, which focuses on morality, and follows the the conformity (or morality) principle, Basil’s painting (or his soul) that he gave to Dorian is like a moral compass or map. Although Lord Henry (the id) is the creator and cultivator of Dorian’s personality and mentality, in this story, Basil (the superego) tries to give Dorian what he wants, while unintentionally guiding him with his art. What causes Dorian’s downfall at the end is most likely the influence of both Lord Henry and Basil, as Dorian (or the ego in this case) is too immature and cannot handle the struggle of finding harmony between the id and the superego. Since his physical self does not match his brooding inner self, he is trapped in a mental limbo which he cannot escape no matter how hard he tries.

Dorian Gray, who is the unfortunate main character in this tragedy, therefore functions as a representation of the ego in its early stages. While he tries to listen to both Lord Henry and Basil, it is obvious that he is unconsciously more attracted to Lord Henry or the id. His curiosity and fascination with Lord Henry seem to become even more apparent when Lord Henry is described, and also more menacing when it is said that “he felt afraid of him, and ashamed to be afraid” (21). Although this can potentially have many interpretations, one could argue that Dorian is afraid of Lord Henry due to him having an impending feeling of what kind of influence Lord Henry may have on him, and feels ashamed of being afraid since there is nothing sinister about Lord Henry from a mere physical view.

When Dorian is infatuated with the actress Sibyl Vane, Lord Henry does not disapprove or approve of the situation, but continues telling Dorian that the most important thing is to be in harmony with oneself since forced harmony with others only leads to discord (78), which seems to echo the pleasure principle. By stating this, it seems as if Lord Henry advocates the selfish and egotistical view of the id. Basil, on the other hand, thinks that such a way of living will mean having to pay a terrible price (79), while he also worries about Dorian’s feelings being too shallow, as he disapproves of Dorian’s potential relationship with Sibyl (74). This seems to reflect the superego’s desire to adhere to socially accepted rules and manners, while focusing on morality first. When Chapter 6 draws to an end, and Lord Henry, Dorian, and Basil are going to see Sibyl’s

performance, Basil is left alone feeling a strange sense of loss. At that moment, the narrator mentions how “[Basil] felt that Dorian Gray would never again be to him all that he had been in the past” and that “[l]ife had come between them” (80), which does not only seem to give a premonition of Dorian’s fate, but also displays how the superego is slowly being pushed to the side by the ego that rather wants to listen to the id.

When Dorian rejects Sibyl after she has lost her competence in acting due to her first real experience of true love, it only confirms that Dorian’s love is in fact an infatuation of her ability to act, and he does not really care about her, nor about the feelings she has for him. It is only when the portrait has a different expression, described as “a touch of cruelty in the mouth” (90), that Dorian starts to question his thoughts and actions. Taking into account that Dorian seems to represent the ego in its early stages, when the ego has not fully learned how to both satisfy the id and the superego, it is not weird that he blames Sibyl for being the cruel, shallow, unworthy, or childish one in the relationship (91). Because of the immature ego which Dorian possesses, he feels overwhelmed and therefore uses any defense mechanism possible in order to flee from the confinements of his own mind and inner emotions. Although he uses *projection* (assigning one’s emotions to another person) in the scenario where he thinks about Sibyl, and *denial* (refusing to know what one knows) when he thinks about the picture, he realizes that he cannot fool himself. To conclude the chapter, he claims that he will not sin and let the picture be “the visible emblem of conscience” (92), as he swears to not see or at least not listen to Lord Henry again and instead go back to loving Sibyl.

But in a cruel twist of fate, Henry knocks on the door and tells Dorian that Sibyl is dead. Though Dorian first seems devastated over Sybil’s death, and uses *reaction formation* (convincing himself that the opposite of a terrible situation is the case) when he states that “[i]t is not true! It is a horrible lie!” (99), Dorian’s reaction to the news then shows signs of *isolation* (not feeling what one normally would feel). As Lord Henry tries to distract Dorian from his own feelings, Dorian starts using *intellectualization* (explaining away emotions instead of feeling them). To cope with the situation, he claims that he sees the whole thing as “a wonderful ending to a wonderful play” or “a Greek tragedy” (101). But soon after stating this, he realizes that he cannot cope with what has happened by using his mind and thoughts only. As he says with a sigh that “I must sow poppies in my garden” (102), he seems to refer back to a thought he had earlier that “[t]here were opiates for remorse, drugs that could lull the moral sense to sleep” (97). Since he cannot stand the traumatic experience he is going through, the drugs in this case are his attempt to escape from his mind via



*repression* (putting an idea out of the conscious mind). Since his mind is not strong enough to repress its feelings on its own, he needs physical stimuli to bring about the repressive effect needed.

Dorian, who is mentally unstable, decides to follow Lord Henry's words, and as the mood darkens with "shadows [creeping] in from the garden" and "[t]he colours [fading] wearily out of things" (104), Dorian (the ego) succumbs to the tune of the id, while he murmurs to Henry: "[y]ou have explained me to myself" (105). At this very point in the novel, the umbral setting does not only seem to signify that Dorian's dark future is settled, but it can also be said to show how Dorian's real feelings are lowered into the unconscious. This claim could also be strengthened with the fact that Dorian decides to hide his portrait in the old dusty schoolroom where his past memories are locked away, which seems to signify how he wants to conceal the portrait in the subconscious, and even the memories of it, in the past.

When he is about to hide the painting, he feels that Basil could have saved and helped him resist Lord Henry's influence, if he had only told him the truth of why he covered and hid the painting, but he concludes that it is too late (121). Dorian (or the ego) is too lost to the influence of Lord Henry (the id), and continues following his teachings, while also being influenced by a book, given to him by Lord Henry, with a story and main character that seem to reflect himself. As he dwells in his senses, and only pursues self-indulgence, he goes deeper into the the pleasure principle while he loses touch with the morality principle. This builds up a great inner tension and anxiety, since the ego's purpose is to find a *homeostasis* or balance between the two. Just as his moral perception seems to slip away, so does Basil (the superego). When Basil visits Dorian before leaving for Paris, he shows great concern over the terrible rumors spreading around Dorian. But as he mentions the soul, Dorian cannot help but to finally reveal his own troubled soul (or psyche) in the form of his portrait. After showing Basil the painting, Dorian expresses contempt as well as "an uncontrollable feeling of hatred for Basil", which is described as "[t]he mad passions of a hunted animal" (161). In a split second, Dorian murders Basil. This act could be claimed as the manifestation of Thanatos, or the death instinct of the id that is controlling Dorian (the ego), but possibly also an act of *displacement* (shifting one's emotions from a threatening to a less threatening object). Since Dorian cannot erase his past, nor feels like he can destroy his soul, or even the id, he goes for the easy option of destroying his morally conscious friend (the superego) who is the creator of his moral map i.e. the portrait.

In the rest of the novel, Dorian expresses an inner anxiety and fear of dying as he blackmails and rejoices in the death of Sybil's avenging brother, and wishes for a new life, in order to survive both physically and mentally. But his pangs of guilt do not stop, and instead of trying to mature and

find an inner harmony, he once again takes the easy way out. By coming to the conclusion that Basil is the one to blame, he conjectures that to be free he has to kill the painting. His moral map/guidelines, or Basil's soul (as mentioned before), is the only memory left of Basil (the superego), and is therefore seen as the last moral obstacle Dorian has to face. But as shown in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*: if one ends the existence of the conscious (which is mainly controlled by the superego and the ego), one in addition terminates the unconscious (the realm of the id), and thus in turn all consciousness that is left. Therefore, if an immature ego tries to terminate the superego, it will lead to the termination of the ego itself as well as the id.

## Conclusion

In *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, there seems to be a stronger expression of the unconscious than in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. While the setting in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* has a resemblance of a dream, as it uses houses and rooms to signify the human mind and its different parts, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* does not give the same air of mystique although the story does resemble a nightmare. The closest expression of the unconscious in *Dorian Gray*, when looking at the setting, is either created by occasional shadows or the fact that Dorian hides his portrait in his old school room, which can signify how he represses his feelings and moral obligations.

Since the unconscious in both stories is associated with darkness, shadows, and potential threat, it is not strange for the id, which dwells in that part of the mind, to be described as bad or evil. Taking into account that Christian faith and Victorian society had strict moral standards, the id that follows the pleasure principle might in that case be accused of being both selfish and too much in touch with sin or sensual instincts. Murder out of sheer passion is also a motif in both novels that can be claimed to be associated with the id, since the id houses Thanatos, or the death instinct, which makes it violent, aggressive, and destructive.

If the portrayal of evil is seen in the unconscious and the id, that could mean that the portrayal of that which is good exists in the conscious and superego, and maybe the ego as well. The lack of focus on the conscious in the novels makes it on the other hand really hard to determine if the conscious actually is good or not, or maybe just neutral. The ego functions as a mediator of the superego and the id, which does not make it seem completely good or completely evil, and although the superego is what is generally considered to be good, the novels seem to show the loopholes of

the superego's conformity/morality principle by describing how the rigid following of socially accepted laws and manners might be too restricting on the mind.

Although both Dorian and Dr Jekyll are faced with finding their sense of self and their own soul/psyche, the approaches they have are totally different. Even though they both technically go through similar events of sensual indulgence, secrets, and murder, Jekyll knows what he is heading into and makes a conscious decision in trying to ease the burden of the ego by splitting his mind into two parts, but Dorian is not aware of the transformation he is going through until he notices a change in the painting, nor does he examine the situation as a whole before reaching drastic conclusions. He continues being influenced by Lord Henry (the id), although he proves at times that he too can think for himself.

At the end of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Jekyll, who represents the ego, knows that there has to be a balance where the ego as well as the superego and id can coexist. But since the potion is losing its effect and Mr Hyde (the id) does not want to give up fighting the superego, Jekyll consciously takes his own life as a last resort. But in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Dorian is not as conscious as Jekyll in understanding what is happening to him, nor where the real problem lies. At the end, Dorian blames everything on Basil (who represents the superego) and Basil's painting. Still not seeing that he has to accept his own emotions, while facing his inner demons, he unintentionally ends his own life when trying to get rid of the superego and his moral conscience which is a part of himself. Therefore, although both novels focus on the split human mind and what is considered good or evil, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is a story of an older man with a more mature ego who struggles in finding peace within himself and society, while *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is about a younger man with a fairly immature ego who just struggles to find himself.

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