

## Degree Project

Level: Bachelor's

### Two Sides of the Same Coin

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#### Understanding Homophobia in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

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## Introduction

“Jekyll and Hyde is a story about communities of men”  
(Showalter 107).

Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is a well-known short novel in English literature. The text was first published in 1886. Stevenson’s novel is considered a Gothic horror story. The novel can be said to be about the duplicity of human nature. Dr. Jekyll is a respected man amongst his friends and a successful doctor but he is obsessed with an experiment to transform himself into another character. He manages to transform himself into his alter ego Mr. Hyde, who is described in the text as evil and as someone with an ugly physical appearance. Dr. Jekyll writes a will and sends it to his friend lawyer Mr. Uterson. The will states that in case of Jekyll’s disappearance in a few months, everything he owns goes to Mr. Hyde. Sins and crimes are mostly related in the novel in relation to Mr. Hyde. Mr. Hyde is presented throughout the novel as mysterious because of his physical appearance, who takes over Jekyll’s life. Dr. Jekyll tries to take back control from Mr. Hyde but his eagerness to release his repressed self grows and he soon realizes that his alter ego has already taken control of him, something which results in their death. With such a plot the novel has fascinated many critics.

Some scholars have concerned themselves with Stevenson’s novel in order to discuss social and political issues; individual psychological issues have also been studied by various critics of the novel. One reason for this is that according to Jessica Cook, Stevenson represents the self as a singular entity, showing that one must learn how to resolve deep psychological conflicts within the entity or learn how to handle living in a split mind (94). Cook claims that Jekyll’s inability to live as a single

entity results in his suicide (94). Character and action are essential elements of the story and ease the way for scholars to make their claims.

Jean Fernandez investigates how the voices of narration reveal that “a servant’s potential for ‘tale-telling’ in this text impinges upon its dialogic dynamic with multiple narrators’ voices competing for space and dominance” in Stevenson’s novel (365). With this investigation Fernandez shows “how class remains an abiding preoccupation” through the narration of voices in the story (365). Hyde is mostly represented as indescribable and the reader cannot have a fixed view of his physical appearance. M. Kellen Williams argues that Hyde’s deformity which is described as indeterminate is less a result of his suspected sexuality than it is the effect of logic (413). Williams examines how Hyde’s indeterminacy works on relation to Stevenson’s own argument on sympathies between realistic “tactics of representation and late-nineteenth century medical and scientific configurations of social and sexual deviance” (413). Therefore, Stevenson’s novel can be read as a narrative pathology (Williams 413). The novel is also viewed as having a complex in narration, and Sandison writes that Stevenson’s novel consists of ten different enigmatic stories (qtd in Goh 164). Robbie B.H Goh writes that many critics have discussed Dr. Jekyll’s scientific project as an analogue for the narrative itself (158). All the distinct, disconnected and elided voices or narratives are viewed as part of Stevenson’s attempt to challenge patriarchy (Goh 158). Emma Davenport states that Stevenson suggests a theory of liberalism where readers can read the dynamic of consent and coercion (1-10). In these two aspects of consent and coercion Jekyll finds himself from within (Davenport 10).

There has been academic work on sexuality in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and for example Elaine Showalter and Antonio Sanna have treated

the novel in relation to homosexuality. Critics such as Sanna have argued that Gothic narratives such as Oscar's Wilde *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* should be read as metaphors of sexual acts (25). Showalter writes in *Sexual Anarchy* (1992), that *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* can be read as a fable of homosexual panic of the late nineteenth century, a historical period when characters discovered and resisted their homosexual selves (107). She claims that the novel is about repression of homosexual tendencies, and further discusses how Dr. Jekyll is the representation of Stevenson's own double life. As Showalter claims, Stevenson was the late nineteenth century laureate of the double life: "The double life of the day and night is also the double life of the writer" (Showalter 106). She supports her argument when discussing homosexuality in the novel, explaining homoerotic codes - something which this thesis highlights. Stevenson published his novel in 1886 the same year as the Labouchère Amendment criminalized homosexual acts (107), which led to the blackmailing and persecution of homosexuals. The Labouchère Amendment was an amendment to the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Vagrancy Act 1898, which made 'gross indecency' a crime and was used to mainly persecute homosexuals (Sanna 23). Sanna states that the Amendment supports a heteronormative and patriarchal homophobic society (23). Showalter and Sanna treat texts as a critique of society's patriarchal domination that contributed in enforcing a law to qualify homosexuality as a disease, a crime and sin. Those who involved themselves in homosexual acts were said to feel shame, sick and were considered criminals. Showalter and Sanna discuss the existence of the double in the novel as being a result of the fear of being exposed that would lead to social ostracism. While Showalter argues that the double in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll*

*and Mr Hyde* is about the panic of discovering homosexuality in the late nineteenth century, and Jekyll represents Stevenson's own double life, Sanna discuss how the law silenced homosexuals. Neither Showalter nor Sanna discuss homophobia in the novel. They only mention homophobia briefly.

However the approach taken in this thesis is different. This thesis will apply Queer criticism to discuss how the novel employs a homophobic English society in the story and how this leads to a tendency of internalized homophobia. Peter Barry points out that Queer criticism debates issues relating to sexuality and gender (98). As opposed to discussing the double as panic discovery of homosexuality or the law as silencing homosexuality, this thesis by applying Queer criticism to Stevenson's protagonist Dr Jekyll who leads a double life. This will show how the alter ego of Dr. Jekyll reveals the constraints which a homophobic society exerts, constraints that result in an internalized homophobia and, in the case of the character, eventual suicide.

This thesis will engage with the issue of homophobia by discussing how social orders and prejudices contributed in spreading homophobia. Since the field (Queer criticism) itself is broad, this paper will narrow down the topic by discussing some of the aspects that contributed to spreading homophobia such as the law, religion, the threat of social values and the secret fear of actually being homosexual oneself. The concepts crucial for this thesis are homophobia and internalized homophobia. Before moving on to discuss these aspects and concepts, it is important to note that the novel does not include any explicit sexual descriptions, but some words do suggest the existence of homoeroticism in Stevenson's text.

Homophobia is a term coined by George Weinberg. For the first time in his book *Society and Healthy Homosexuals* (1973), Weinberg explains homophobia as

a term that refers to the culturally produced fear of as well as prejudices against homosexuals. Usually the misconceptions and prejudices against homosexuals led to legal restrictions, violence and bullying, towards people who showed affection to the same gender. Mostly, according to Weinberg, this kind of hate is shown towards men who show affection and same sex desire towards other men. Internalized homophobia is a term that “refers to the self-hatred some gay people experience because, in their growth through adolescence to adulthood, they’ve internalized the homophobia pressed on them by heterosexuals” (Lois Tyson 320).

Concepts such as homophobia and internalized homophobia are relevant to this paper because homosexuality was officially and socially unacceptable during the late nineteenth century. Regarding homosexuality as illegal it led many men to conduct a double life (Sanna, Showalter). Before the discussion begins it is necessary to convey some information on how homosexuality was viewed during the late nineteenth century and briefly present the main aspects of the novel.

### **Homosexuality during the late nineteenth century**

The society of the late nineteenth century wanted to control sexuality institutionally by attempting to observe it scientifically and analyses sexuality from a psychiatric perspective (Sanna 22, Fee 633). Writing openly about homosexuality as a subject in literary work was forbidden. It was necessary for the writers to use euphemisms and cues to express themselves, while covering themes that were taboo in literature. Michael Foucault a French philosopher states that, “in complicity with what it denounced, haughty and coquettish, it established an entire pornography of the morbid, which was characteristic of the fin de siècle society” (54). In other words, there were words, expressions and gestures that described sexuality indirectly.

According to Helen H. Davis homoerotic desire was a taboo subject, it was “restricted by the social norms of the receiving community and by the textual practices of the genre” (Davis 201).

Moreover, homosexuality became an official issue of law during the late nineteenth century, and was considered a crime. If a person participated in homosexual practices, such acts were viewed as a problem of morality which should be treated and cured. Also public opinion considered such sexual behaviour as scandalous (Sanna 22). Sexologists were keen to plea homosexuality as an “incurable condition, which so heavily burdens its victims” (Sanna 22). According to studies on homosexuality during the late nineteenth century, such desires and behaviours were to be treated with moral reforms and medical treatments, because homosexuality was viewed as a disease, moreover as a mental disorder (Fee 639). Although chains and shackles were not part of the process, they still treated people in asylums with other methods (Fee 639).

The society of the late nineteenth century held different views from today regarding what is considered a crime, a sin or an immoral issue. What is right and wrong was a matter of definition. Hence in different cultures, at different eras in history, homosexuality has often been considered a mental disease and abnormal, because it stood outside the frame of that culture (Tyson 285).

Homosexuality has been a central theme of Gothic literature since the early nineteenth century. Indeed Showalter points out that “fin-de-siècle was a golden age of literary and sexual doubles” (106). According to Showalter, homosexuality represented a double life, one of the day and one of the night (106). Alongside daytime, involving family and marriage, existed a night world of homoeroticism



(Showalter 106). Homosexuality, together with other sexual performances such as masturbation were not socially accepted, therefore individuals partaking in such acts felt ashamed, which according to Sanna, led many men to live a double life (27).

### **Implicit Homosexuality in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde***

Homoerotic codes are textual cues that can create a homoerotic atmosphere in the text such as homoerotic imagery between same sex characters, which cannot stand alone but if joined with other bibliographical evidence, can strengthen a Queer interpretation (Tyson 339).

There are indications that Stevenson inserted a code for homosexual practices or the theme of homosexuality, in the novel. One secret word that is homoerotic in nature is “the unspeakable” or “nameless”, which is used in relation to discussing Hyde. Henry Jekyll’s friend Gabriel Utterson struggles to put a name on what Hyde represents: “if I could find a name for it” (Stevenson 16). Jekyll also addresses his relationship with Hyde as ‘unspeakable’: “it is one of those affairs that cannot be mended by talking” (Stevenson 19). Christopher Craft argues that homosexuality at that time was usually depicted as “the unspeakable” because it was viewed as immoral and unlawful (Craft qtd. in Sanna, 28). There are many other cryptic words and terms in the novel that can be related to homosexuality or homoerotic elements such as: mirror (55), Queer Street (9), Jekyll’s dark closets (42), halting foot or ‘pede claudo’ (17), chocolate-brown-fog (22), back-end of the evening (22) blackmailing (9), that are mentioned by Showalter as well (110-115). Left-handed writing in Stevenson’s text can be read as a homoerotic code. Hyde seems to write with his left hand, which in the text is represented as Jekyll “sloping” his hand backwards. This is an ability that supplies Jekyll with a double signature (Stevenson 58). Left-

handedness as a homoerotic code or left-handed writing will be expanded on and discussed in a subsequent section on internalized homophobia.

‘Mirror’ is considered to be a cryptic word in relation to homosexuality, and is seen as a homoerotic code. ‘Mirror’ represents an obsessive symbol in homosexual literature, and this can be applied to Stevenson’s novel (Showalter 111). Jekyll’s narrative mentions that there was no mirror in his room but later a mirror was brought in “for the very purpose of these transformations” (55). He states in his narrative that a mirror “stands beside me” (55). The mirror is a symbol that testifies to Jekyll’s effeminate narcissism and immediately suggests Utterson’s homoerotic repressed desires when he sees his face mirrored in the same mirror.

The closet is another symbol for homosexuality. During the late nineteenth century images of using violence to break the locked doors leading to someone’s private cabinets or closets was common. Showalter writes that Utterson and Pole had to use violence to break into Jekyll’s private room in order to learn his true identity or the secret behind the locked doors (110). This is a suggestion that Jekyll hides his true identity in the closet. In order for his acquaintances to know his secrets, they have to penetrate Jekyll’s privacy: “Down with the door Pole... Pole swung the axe over his shoulder; the blow shook the building, and the red baize door leapt against the lock and hinges” (41).

Other homoerotic codes are suggested to be: punishments, old sins and diseases, along with the Latin phrase ‘pede claudo’. Utterson mentioned ‘pede claudo’ in relation to Jekyll’s old sin, “punishment coming, and pede claudo” (Stevenson 17). The lawyer fears that his friend may have caught a disease and the punishment will eventually come, “there is no statute of limitation” (17). Mr Hyde’s behaviour is described as apeline, scrawling Jekyll’s hand, out of control, and

burning Jekyll's letters (Stevenson 67). His physical appearance is mostly described with a deformity. His behaviour and his physical description echoes someone contracted with syphilis. Showalter writes that such descriptions resonate with the imagery of syphilitic illnesses which can be found in the medical texts of the late nineteenth century. The expression *pede claudo* or Halting foot, along with the imagery of illnesses, suggests a bilingual pun on "pederasty" (Showalter 113). 'Pederasty' is an Ancient Greek term used for the first time in Plato's *Symposium*, as such represented a social ideal of men desiring boys for the improvement of boys' characters, but the relation may have involved sexual acts (JoAnne Myers 293). Utterson is also concerned about Jekyll's association with Hyde, a younger man and their fellowship fits with the description of the term pederasty.

There are many more words described as sexual euphemism which hint at homosexual codes. Some of the images that suggest anal intercourse, Showalter notes, are "chocolate- brown- fog", "back-end of the evening" (113). These images, according to her, show the reader that Jekyll or Hyde performed anal intercourse (113).

Blackmailing, Showalter argues, has its origin in sixteenth-century Scotland. Since society viewed homosexuality as evil and a crime, this opened up an opportunity to blackmail people who were involved in homosexuality (Showalter 112). Blackmailing is evident in Stevenson's text in the chapter "The Carew murder case". After Hyde murdered Mr. Carew, near his dead body the police found a letter "sealed and stamped envelope...which bore the name and address of Mr. Utterson" (22). Utterson is a lawyer, a man of the law and the envelope is a suggestion that Mr. Carew blackmailed Hyde to send the envelope to Utterson. The reader is never informed of the content of that letter, however Mr. Carew's death is defined as a

public injury and an offence to the law of the time. Another example of blackmailing which is more obvious is when Enfield threatens Hyde to pay a sum of money to a child's family or else he will make such a scandal that will "make his name stink from one end of London to the other" (8), this too will be discussed more specifically in a later section.

Moreover, Stevenson was, in the original draft of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, more explicit regarding sexual euphemisms (Showalter 112). In Pole's statement that "this glass has seen some strange things, sir" (43), and yet in the original draft Stevenson wrote the word "queer" which is replaced with the word "strange" in Pole's statement (Showalter 110-111). George Haggerty uses the term *queer Gothic*, that is present in the late nineteenth century literature, as a suggestion to evoke a queer world that attempts to transgress the binaries of sexual decorum (Haggerty qtd. in Marc De Cicco 8). The word "queer" has a homosexual significance and had entered English slang during the 1900, together with words such as odd, nervous, dark, fit, are defined as words to describe the double (Showalter 110-111). The double in this thesis represents a suppressed homosexuality due to homophobia.

### **Homophobia in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde***

"I would never consider a patient healthy unless he had overcome  
his prejudice against homosexuality" (Weinberg 1).

Homophobia's origin is a result of some factors such as religion, law, the threat of values, and the secret fear of being homosexual oneself (Weinberg 1-20). According

to Weinberg the fear of homosexuality is born from social constructions and attitudes taught persistently in early life (6).

An important institution that engrained resentment towards homosexuality is that of religion. The Christian Church was against homosexuality or other forms of sexual acts except inside heterosexual marriage. Weinberg states that much of our attitude and our present tradition around homosexuality goes back to Christianity and there are obvious severe prohibitions against homosexuality in the Bible (8). To implement these prohibitions, Christianity developed a new law which was called canon law. Any violation of this law was observed as offensive to the Church (Weinberg 8-9). Weinberg mentions that the Christian Church punished people by calling them sinful and argued that homosexual performances were damaging to the performer (9). The Christian Church charged and executed those who were found guilty of homosexual acts and argued that this was for their own good (Weinberg 9). Condemning and rejecting any sort of homosexual pleasure by those who sought it, calling such pleasures harmful and resisting them, the Christian Church kept alive the belief as the only chance to escape Hell (Weinberg 10). The Church of England had no different attitude in relation to homosexuality. Only during the 1950s and forward the Church of England started publicly debates or controversy about sexuality strayed beyond heterosexual (Timothy Jones 134). Stevenson's text can rather be read as blaming religion for encouraging homophobia, separating good and evil, and denying that all these prohibitions and executions were happening for people's own sake, which can be found in Jekyll's narrative,

It was thus rather the exacting nature of my aspiration than any particular degradation in my faults, that made me what I was and, with even a deeper

trench than in the majority of men, served in me those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man's dual nature. In this case, I was driven to reflect deeply and inveterately in that hard law of life, which lies at the root of religion and is one of the most plentiful springs of distress (Stevenson 52).

In the passage above Jekyll states that the suffering is caused because of the segregation of good and ill which lie at the root of religion. Targeting homosexuals as sinful or ill led Jekyll to suffer "most plentiful spring of distress" (52) and conduct a double life. The division eventually helped spread homophobia. Therefore, it can be argued that historically speaking religious motives aid society to internalize values and try to govern norms that religion presented as normal and acceptable. Also, the law that Jekyll refers to in the passage above can be read as a social order to aid difficulty in people's life whose root lie in religion.

Law is another cause for resentment towards homosexuals. Weinberg points out that the reason homosexuality is often referred to as "the crime without a name" is because judges have sentenced people to suffer in jail for such disgusting actions that no one should talk about (5). Homosexuality as the "unspeakable" matter is the reason that such actions remain ambiguous in Stevenson's text. Williams claims that Stevenson not only dramatizes realism and sexual scientia<sup>1</sup> of the late nineteenth century but he also uses aestheticism that succeeds in symbolizing 'the nameless' (415). Indeed, it is Jekyll who confesses that he has brought upon himself

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<sup>1</sup> The nineteenth century built up a vast scientia sexualis at producing true discourses on sexuality, Foucault describes as scientia sexualis', the science of sex.

a punishment and danger “that I cannot name” (Stevenson 33). Sanna also argues that when Jekyll states some of his ‘morbid pleasures’, he states the secrets that many homosexual men participated in during the late nineteenth century (27). Mr. Utterson is a man of London, well respected, a man of law. He inquires about Hyde, and suspects that Mr. Hyde has dark secrets that he could not “find a name for” (Stevenson 16). It is Jekyll that asks Utterson “only for justice” (20) reinforcing that he is the law prosecuting an individual only because he has a different sexual orientation and admitting “this, too, was myself. It seemed natural and human” (55). Both of Jekyll’s statements are asking a homophobic society for justice by explaining that he is a human being and if society is willing to leave the hate and prejudices aside, they will be able to see that homosexuality is natural. He asks the law and society for recognition and acceptance.

Law enforcement during the late nineteenth century viewed homosexuality as a disgusting act. Stevenson reveals a toxic homophobic culture intensified by law, which is shown in the following: “I feel very strongly about putting questions; it partakes too much of the style of the Day of Judgment. You start a question and it’s like starting a stone” (Stevenson 9). Enfield knows the danger of asking questions is like rolling a stone. He assumes that many other stones would be activated and many individuals would be impacted negatively by inquiring questions in a time when it seems as people rely enormously on rumours. “The style of the Day of Judgment” that Enfield refers to could reflect the Labouchère amendment, the homophobic legal system of the time. When Mr. Enfield replies to Mr. Utterson that he never asks questions when something “looks queer” he admits that such questions end up in court inquiring, persecuting and executing people for being queer. Jekyll as well, fears Lanyon’s threat that the latter will place a letter

in Mr. Utterson's hand containing as he calls "all the circumstances of my nameless situation" (44). Jekyll's fear of Lanyon's threat and Mr. Utterson's crying that "we have come too late...whether to save or punish" (42), are strong indications in Stevenson's text to display a homophobic society intensified by law. Utterson as well, strained to find a name for Hyde's obscure secrets. Jekyll's inability to put a name to a punishment that he brought to himself implies "the unspeakable" crime.

According to Weinberg "another motive for resentment toward homosexuals is that they are seen as constituting a threat to one's values" (15). Weinberg states that, a person who does not share and adopt a society's usual value system is seen as attempting to undermine the society (15). In Jekyll's narrative when the reader is informed about Jekyll's unhappiness in spite of his social status when he states, "I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end" (68), this is an indication that he is unhappy while conveying social norms. Stevenson's character, Henry Jekyll, is portrayed as wealthy and well- positioned in society, which is shown in this instance: "I was born in the year of 18- to a large fortune... found of the respect of wise and good among my fellow- men, and thus, as might have been supposed, with every guarantee of an honourable and distinguished future" (Stevenson, 52). Jekyll's privilege seems to be clear and according to his status, his life is predicted to be decent and successful if he obeys the rules and norms of the society. The ability to keep sexuality under control is also considered a habit of healthy and normal way of living. In Jekyll's situation, he is compelled to hide, a dark, immoral and unhealthy side of his personality, from public eyes.

In one of his statements Jekyll admits to concealing his pleasures "with an almost morbid sense of shame" (Stevenson 52). Stevenson's text suggests that



Jekyll has no other solution but to hide his “morbid sense of shame” by creating his alter ego: “I stood already committed to a profound duplicity of life” (52); and this implies that Jekyll is dedicated to find a way to liberate his repression. Another interesting cue that shows that Jekyll feels guilty and repressed is when he says, “[m]any a man would have even been blazoned such irregularities as I was guilty of, but from the high views that I had set before me, I regarded and hid them with an almost morbid sense of shame” (52). He is aware of what his society allows and accepts. Goh states that “Jekyll in his full statement also reveals himself to be lacking in narrative restraint, in the habits of decorous perception and articulation upon which social order seems to rest” (174). His morbid pleasures, as he refers to, certainly are considered unacceptable. As such they are a threat to society. Sanna claims that it is Jekyll who admits society’s role in causing the repression of human pleasure (26). Further, Cook suggests that Stevenson’s homophone usage (Hyde-hide) implies Jekyll’s impulses to hide his unfit sexuality because it threatens Jekyll’s ability to live by the norms of bourgeois’ society and that this is the main reason for developing his creation of Hyde (102). Being aware of his own unfit sexuality that threatens the social values of that time, Jekyll can pursue his pleasure, as Hyde, without feeling guilty or afraid of being caught. For Jekyll, the opportunity to transform into Hyde, gives him a chance to justify himself, to displace his wrongdoings into Hyde. He would rather accuse Hyde of disrespecting social values, as he concedes: “It was Hyde, after all, and Hyde alone, that was guilty” (58). This drastic physical transformation has ethical consequences for Stevenson’s protagonist. Showalter points out that Utterson ranks Jekyll as a self-destroyer, not only for the reason that he created something that led to his death, but “it is self-destructive to violate the sexual codes of one’s society” (113).

Moreover, Weinberg also highlights the fact that homosexuals were viewed, accused and prejudiced as child molesters (5), which is a misconception that has been crucial in influencing homophobia. Showalter states “the vision of blackmail as the penalty for homosexual sin was intensified by the Labouchère Amendment” (112). Blackmailing is present in Stevenson’s text in a way that can be read in relation to accusing homosexuals of molestation. Enfield describes to Utterson a scene in relation to how he encountered Hyde. He tells Utterson that he blackmailed Hyde when the latter “trampled calmly over the child’s body and left her screaming on the ground” (7). Enfield tells Utterson about Hyde and the child at the age of eight or ten who ran into one another naturally and “it sounds nothing to hear, but it was hellish to see” (7). He admits to loathing Hyde: “I had taken a loathing to my gentleman at first sight. So had the child’s family which was only natural” (7). Goh writes that characters in the novel are not equal in status and social class, but homosocial bonding takes place as protection (173). Utterson and Enfield are aware that Hyde is related to Jekyll in one or another way. Despite Jekyll’s representation as a respectable man, he cannot protect Hyde from prejudices as his malformation generates loathing, as Goh states: “Moral confusion and the dissolution of social boundaries cannot hide the obvious repulsion that Hyde generates...” (173). Due to his physical appearance that generates repulsion, Hyde succumbs to his accusers’ blackmail and pays an amount of money to the child’s family to avoid a scandal which will “make his name stink from one end of the London to the other” (8). Enfield says that Hyde is threatened with losing friends and any credit if he would not pay the sum. His response is “I am naturally helpless. No gentleman but wishes to avoid a scene” (8). Even though the scene does not have any suggestion of molestation, it still gives the idea that rumours would contribute to spreading

homophobia further. The scene shows fear of exposure as a homosexual.

Weinberg points out that the secret fear of being homosexual oneself is one of the motives for homophobic reaction (11). Weinberg explains the secret fear of being homosexual using Sigmund Freud's concept called *reaction formation*. Freud was the founder of psychoanalysis and refers to the concept reaction formation as "the mechanism of defending against an impulse in oneself by taking a stand against its expression by others" (Weinberg 11). Weinberg continues to explain how for example in an lecture held by a member of society who fought for the rights of homosexuals, Dick Leitsch, in an unexpected form heard a man from the audience saying that if one takes the laws away, everyone would end up being homosexuals (11). According to Weinberg, the man saw the law as the only healthy form preventing himself and others from being homosexual (11). Similarly, Utterson fits perfectly with the description of the man who participated in the lecture of Dick Leitsch. The reader is informed about Utterson's process of suspecting Hyde, he declares, "If he be Mr Hyde ...I shall be Mr. Seek" (14), hence he stalks him. Sanna argues that Hyde's name embodies "the secrecy of his figure" and he is a character who hides himself and his actions from the public (29). In this sense, as a man of law Utterson is persecuting a man (Mr. Hyde) suspected of homosexuality. One can conclude that the fear of being homosexual is one of the biggest contributions to making homosexuality illegal. Utterson is described as "rugged..., austere, cold..., scanty" (Stevenson 5) as a man of the law itself he praises himself as the "last good influence in the lives of down going men" (Stevenson 5). As a man of law that engrained fear in those breaking it, he considers himself as the only "good influence" (Stevenson 5), implying that as long as he is present people would behave correctly. As a person who applies the law, Utterson

is represented as a bachelor. He is never described in a romantic relation to any woman at all. Showalter mentions that all the protagonists in Stevenson's novel are middle-aged bachelors who have no relationships with women (108). This reinforces the notion that Utterson secretly lives in terror of being homosexual himself, and his reaction is nothing less than reaction formation and homophobic.

As a result of a homophobic law and social stigma about homosexuality, Hyde seeks refuge in a cabinet and his 'excursions and adventures' as he calls them, take place only during the evenings. For example, it was night time when Hyde murdered Mr. Carew. In Jekyll's confession that Hyde and Jekyll are one, he confirms that months before the crime, "I had been out for one of my adventures" (58), indicating that there had been many 'adventures' and all of them happened during the night. The double life represented in Jekyll and Hyde is a typical description of Stevenson's own double life because some of the biographers' insinuate that Stevenson was homosexual (Showalter 106-107). Showalter even coined the term Clubland which refers to "an exclusively male sphere designed to reinforce the solidity of patriarchal values in an era of gendered uncertainty" (O'Dell 514). Showalter mentions that Clubland stands also for "hysterical terror of revealing forbidden emotions between men" (107). Such illegal and unconventional repressed emotions are noticed in Stevenson's text: "You could see by his (Jekyll's) looks that cherished for Mr Utterson a sincere and warm affection" (19), and Jekyll's affirmation as he expresses a "very great interest in that young man" (20). However, Clubland's purpose was to shadow homosexuality, hence, men with double life could preserve their reputation as upright residents, avoiding social ostracism and punishment by law.

### **Internalized Homophobia in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde***

According to Ian. R Williamson, internalized homophobia occurs when people who are homosexuals, experience negative and distressing thoughts and feelings about their sexuality and are subjected to society's stigma (105). Therefore, internalized homophobia refers to the self-hatred that homosexuals experience because of prejudices, intolerance and all the negative social stigma. Homosexuals start to believe that the prejudices are true by internalizing the ideas (Tyson 320). All the misconceptions and factors that are discussed in the previous section can be said to have resulted in internalized homophobia. In the case of Jekyll's narrative the reader is informed that Jekyll is unhappy. He decides to put a theory into practice admitting "I knew well that I risked death" (54). Showalter claims that his need to pursue illicit sexual pleasures and yet to live up to standards that his society advocates is the main reason he decides to divide himself (109). This sort of duality allowed him to maintain the respect he has gained as a doctor in public while hiding his indecency. Jekyll adds: "I felt younger, lighter and happier in body" (55) as Hyde. Sanna argues that Jekyll's happiness seems to be related to his discovery of repressed homosexuality because of the will to free repressed pleasures (27). The long overdue repression is confessed through the following quote, "My devil had been long caged, he came out roaring" (61), which implies Hyde is finally setting free repressed pleasures. When Jekyll mentions the pleasures that he has experienced in disguise as Hyde, he refers to such pleasures as "undignified" (57), implying that he is aware of what he is pursuing is viewed as unacceptable. Sanna argues that such pleasures are considered as undignified because they violate social norms, not because they are vicious (26).

In spite the fact that Jekyll is happier, and lighter as Hyde he becomes more conscious of the fact that ending up like Hyde will lead to social ostracism when he is faced with Lanyon's reaction due to his other self-Hyde: "When I came to myself at Lanyon's, the horror of my old friend perhaps affected me..." (65). Sanna points out that Lanyon reacted in horror after discovering the true identity of Hyde (28). Jekyll told Lanyon his story about living a double life, for which Lanyon could not bring his "mind to set on paper" (Stevenson 51), and this resonates with homosexuality as "the nameless crime". Lanyon's reaction can be rather read as entirely homophobic, which is seen as a wake-up call for Jekyll. Living in a society when being involved in homosexual practices that are designated as a crime and sin, Jekyll calls himself a "secret sinner" (63). Showalter states that: "The reaction of the male characters to Hyde is uniformly that of 'disgust, loathing, and fear', suggestive of the almost hysterical homophobia of the late nineteenth century" (112).

Jekyll prefers his old self as a "discontented doctor, surrounded by friends, cherishing honest hopes" (61), instead of "leaping pulses and secret pleasures" that he enjoyed as Hyde (61). Living in a homophobic society, Jekyll declares, "at least before God, no man morally sane could have been guilty of that crime" (61), referring to the 'crime' he committed as Hyde. This strengthens the view that he sees himself as immoral, a law breaker and guilty to such a crime, and thus internalizing homophobia.

According to Weinberg, fear of homosexuality is coached in early life (6). Jekyll described how his father played a crucial role in his upbringing in a patriarchal society: "As a child, Jekyll recalls, he had 'walked with my father's hand,' suggesting that he had taken on the bodily symbols of the "right"—or

proper—hand of patriarchal respectability and constraint” (Showalter 115). As Hyde, he writes with his left hand, which is considered effeminate, and immoral (Showalter 115), thus his father’s teaching him to use a proper hand can be understood as subconscious conformity. Hyde is not to be denied, and he hates this father who symbolizes patriarchal and heteronormative authority. This hate is evident in Jekyll’s narrative and turns into self-loathing as well known, for example, when Hyde is “destroying the portrait of my father...he would long ago have ruined himself...” (67). For Jekyll to live as Hyde means as he states “to die to a thousand interests and aspirations, and to become a blow and forever, despised and friendless” (60). Jekyll internalized homophobia which is forced upon him in a suffocating and violent way by the homophobic society of the late nineteenth century. He intends to cast off Hyde because the latter is taking over, and therefore in compliance with the embedded norms and values of a heterosexual society. Jekyll begins to hate his alter ego. The hate is “equal on each side” (66), which means that Jekyll hates Hyde as much as Hyde hates him back. Since both Hyde and Jekyll are the same person, the hate is twofold. Firstly, he hates himself because he has to go back to his despondency of the unhappy Jekyll that would live by following social and official rules and norms. Secondly, the hate is when he discovers his homosexuality which is socially and officially unacceptable. This hate on both sides is because of the way homosexuals are viewed in society, which led to self-loathing.

A number of studies have suggested that internalized homophobia may be considered as a result of a number of psychological issues (Williamson 103). Williamson points out that acts such as self-injuring, and suicide are related to internalized homophobia (105). Self-injuring and suicide are present in Stevenson’s text: “[Hyde’s] terror of the gallows drove him continually to commit temporary

suicide” (66). Jekyll rejects his homosexual identity by trying to eliminate Hyde. He admits he has the power “to cut him off by suicide” (67), which implies that he is considering suicide. Jekyll not only hated Hyde, he also feared the “brute that slept within” (65). Although hating Hyde, Jekyll hates himself and accepts all negativity towards homosexuals, turning the hate into self-loathing. In spite of his attempt to displace himself from Hyde, by referring to Hyde in the third person as, “he I say – I cannot say, I” (Stevenson 65), Jekyll fails to detach himself entirely from Hyde. In many other cases, Jekyll denies his actions, displacing them onto Hyde, except the pleasures he “enjoyed in the disguise of Hyde” (61). When he realises that by hating Hyde and blaming him for all the ‘crime and sins’, Jekyll hates and loathes himself and because Hyde resides on him, he kills himself. Jekyll sees suicide as the only solution to end his suffering “such torments” or his “punishment might have gone on for years” (67). Such punishments, suffering and torturing are present in Oscar Wilde’s novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Henry M. Alley, in his article “The Gay Artist as a Tragic Hero in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*” (2009), discusses how homosexuality became the main reason for the tragic ending of some of the male protagonists in the novel as well as how the novel anticipated Wilde’s own tragic life. The tragic ending occurred because of “the love that dare not speak its name” (Alley 7), which resonates with homosexuality. Alley claims that Dorian Gray turns into his own enemy and stabs the portrait, and by stabbing the portrait he kills himself in a final act of internalized homophobia (9). Taking into consideration that both cases of suicide are quite similar, one might say that the final act of Jekyll’s suicide occurs because of internalized homophobia. Jekyll is not the only character in the novel that ends up dead. His friend Lanyon as well dies.



Lanyon in his narrative confesses “what he (Jekyll) told me in the next hour, I cannot bring my mind to set on paper. I saw what saw, I heard what I heard, and my soul sickened at it” (51). Lanyon’s last days are approaching the end and that he admits that he “must die”. After discovering the true identity of Hyde and realizing that Jekyll and Hyde are one, Lanyon felt sick and confirmed that he must die. The reader is never informed if he committed suicide, however one assumes suicide because of his own impending disaster. Or as Showalter claims “Jekyll-Hyde’s secret leads to death; it destroys Lanyon” (113). This, too can be read as the final act of internalized homophobia.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis has used a Queer approach in an attempt to explore that double as a literary element is used to show a homophobic society in Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. The narrative of the novel shows homoerotic codes when the novel is observed through a Queer reading, although homosexuality is never explicitly exposed. This thesis discussed the split character of Dr Jekyll/Mr Hyde, which represents a form of suppressed homosexuality that is the result of a homophobic society and internalized homophobia. This was done by analyzing the protagonists and some of the main social factors that that helped to spread homophobia: religious motives, law, the threat of violation of social values, and secret fear of being homosexual. Ultimately the analysis of this thesis helped to reveal a homophobic society in the novel, representing late Victorian society.

Consequently in late Victorian society in the novel, the social, religious and legal repression of homosexuality led to internalized homophobia, and a tendency for

homosexuals to internalize forms of self-loathing and self-damage, which is represented in the duality of Dr Jekyll/Mr Hyde.

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