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# Madness as Resistance: A Socio-Psychological Analysis of Non-Conformity in Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Manto's Toba Tek Singh Shameen Imran

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# **ABSTRACT**

This paper investigates the concept of madness as a form of socio-psychological resistance in Robert Louis Stevenson's novella, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and Sadat Hassan Manto's short story, "Toba Tek Singh". Drawing upon the theoretical frameworks of Michel Foucault's notion of madness, Emile Durkheim's theory of anomie, and Branimir M. Rieger's thought of madness in literature, this study examines political, psychological and social concepts of madness in conjunction with duality in social structures, human cognition and geographical boundaries. In both texts, madness emerges not simply as an aberration from reason or sanity but as a narrative tool that critiques widely accepted and oppressive norms, whether moral, social, or political. Through a comprehensive close reading, it has been argued that Dr. Jekyll's descent into psychological duality due to the overt emphasis of Victorian values on upholding benevolent appearances and Bishan Singh's refusal to conform to Partition's binary nationalism represent acts of rebellion against systemic repression. The study culminates in the deduction that in both Victorian England and Partition-era South Asia, madness serves not as a collapse of reason, but as a radical form of non-conformity and existential dissension.

**Keywords:** Madness, Resistance, Non-conformity, Victorian Literature, Partition Literature, Postcolonial Literature, Socio-Psychological Analysis.

#### Introduction

The idea of madness in literature has often been misrepresented as mere insanity or an irrational deviation from reason. This paper has challenged the traditional views of madness in terms of clarity, distinction and duality within the confirmed demarcations in human minds and societal ideas. The concept of madness is a grey area that cannot simply categorise a person as sane or insane subject (Sirois, 2014, pp. 8-11). This research contends that suppression of the true nature of individuals and non-conformity to social and political values leads to the non-conformist being labelled as mad or suffering from a mental disorder in the selected texts. By drafting a nexus of sociological, psychological and literary theoretical perceptions of human madness, this paper has scrutinised the cause of so-called lunacy as well as the reason behind its aggravation. In this paper, it is argued that madness in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) and Saadat Hasan Manto's "Toba Tek Singh" (1955) functions as a powerful metaphor for non-conformity, fragmentation of identity, and resistance to hegemonic ideologies prevalent in human societies.

The demise of the respective protagonists occurs as a consequence of overwhelming mental distress, which underscores these deaths as a common theme in both stories, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and "Toba Tek Singh". Stevenson's novella opens with the character of Mr. Utterson, a reserved lawyer, hearing from his friend Mr. Enfield about a man named Mr.

Hyde who violently trampled a young girl but avoided scandal by producing a cheque for the affected party from a respectable gentleman. Utterson's concern grows when Dr. Jekyll's will names Hyde as the sole beneficiary. A visit to Dr. Lanyon by Utterson reveals a rift between Dr. Lanyon and Dr. Jekyll over Jekyll's "unscientific balderdash" (Stevenson, 1886, p. 17), which demeans the work of Dr Jekyll, thus making him socially recoil to a certain degree from his friends. In the meantime, upon meeting Hyde, Utterson finds him repulsive and unsettling. A tragedy strikes when Hyde murders Sir Danvers Carew and disappears, while Jekyll briefly seems reformed before withdrawing entirely from society. Eventually, Utterson discovers Jekyll dead by suicide, and a confession reveals that Hyde and Jekyll were the same person, torn apart by irreconcilable moral and psychological conflict. On the other hand, Bishan Singh is an inmate of a mental institution in Lahore. Some years after 1947, the year of independence of Pakistan and India, he was to be sent to India under an exchange program of 'mad' between the two countries. He cannot fathom the partition of the South East Asian subcontinent. In layman's language, he truly is a madman because his speech is not lucid, and the only comprehensible word in his gibberish speech is 'Toba Tek Singh'. Unlike Stevenson's story, "Toba Tek Singh" is a short story with fewer plot twists, so the twist in the story comes twice. Once, when the respective governments of India and Pakistan decide to exchange the 'lunatics' in their asylums by segregating them based on their religions, a second twist occurs when an anxious Bishan Singh dies on the border of the two countries. His death can be construed as defiance of conformity to the wants of society and the authorities.

Bishan Singh's and the death of Dr. Jekyll are studied in this research paper, along with the factors which paved the path for their occurrence. The argument on madness and its social perception in both texts is going to positively contribute to the existing academic research literature because the previous studies encompassed the perceptions about madness either as a secondary theme or one of the lesser variables. Despite their distinct cultural and historical contexts—Victorian London and Partition-era South Asia—both texts use madness to cross-examine systems that marginalise and ostracise individuals. Dr. Jekyll's internal division into Jekyll and Hyde illustrates the psychological toll of repressing one's desires under the burden of Victorian moralism. Bishan Singh's incoherent speech and refusal to leave the no-man's land reflect the traumatic absurdity of Partition and the collapse of coherent national identity. Using theoretical insights from Foucault on madness as a social construct, Durkheim on anomie and suicide, and Rieger on literary madness, this paper examines how both characters are rendered 'mad' by social forces and how that madness transforms into a form of resistance.

#### **Literature Review:**

In the article "Carrying On Like a Madman: Insanity and Responsibility in Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," the author spins the discussion on Robert Louis Stevenson's Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886) alongside medico-legal debates about the nature and scope of insanity; and argues that the novel seeks to shore up the idea of individual responsibility in Victorian society. It takes the legal debate of incarcerating or acquitting the accused murderers on the grounds of different medico-legal definitions of madness and insanity in Victorian society, precisely when the novel Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde was published. It takes the viewpoint of the cognitive test of insanity that emerged from the M'Naghten case of 1843, which considered a person lawfully irresponsible for his acts if, due to a defect of reason resulting from mental disease, he was unable to perceive the nature and quality of his acts or to know that they were wrong. To challenge the loophole in this test of broad spectrum and talking about the case of murder committed by Dr Jekyll in terms of "emotional or impulsive insanity" where a person is not in control of his actions, but he knows he is doing wrong, Ganz has argued that Stevenson

put full responsibility of the murder committed by Hyde on Dr Jekyll (Ganz, 2015, p. 368) by giving a medical definition of madness and utilising the related jargon in the analysis of Dr. Jekyll's character.

One more research paper, "Psychologising Jekyll, Demonising Hyde: The Strange Case of Criminal Responsibility," takes up the same issue of responsibility in the terms of the legal milieu, but here the focus is on the flip side of Dr. Jekyll, which is Mr. Hyde. It has lauded and discussed Robert Louis Stevenson's grasp of contemporary psychiatric, evolutionary, and medical thought in his time. The article discusses Hyde and Jekyll as symbols of criminality and criminal responsibility in the context of litigation. The article brings in the debate of "defects of consciousness", which is concerned with the psychological practices (Lacey, 2010, p. 109). It talks about the duality of man's nature. It also talks about the dissociation between 'crime' and 'innocence' in relation to character analysis. The binary is related to both the connection to human consciousness and the clear demarcation of different ideologies within the character of a single person, which is related to my research work.

Another discussion in academia is on the moral grounds, which is the very milieu of Victorian values. One such research work is the article, "Reputation and Social Perfection: The Social Creation of Mr. Hyde," which talks about the whole concept of reputation in the literature and is specifically associated with the character of Dr. Jekyll. According to the author of this research work, it is the very fear of preserving reputation in society which drives Jekyll into building an alter-ego where the negative elements of the character of Dr. Jekyll could be exhausted without fearing the tarnishing of reputation. This alter ego is Mr. Hyde, or the other side of Jekyll's personality. Hence, Mr. Hyde can be taken as the product of Jekyll's vanity to withhold his social standing, but this effect is not without cause. The Victorian age was renowned for its outstanding moralities and societal customs, where "London was said to be the pinnacle of excellence and a place of prosperity, where people behaved within the boundaries of the highest moral standards" (Mack, 2012, pp. 1-2). The confirmation of these high standards resulted in the fragmentation of Jekyll's personality. Other researches with variations also follow the same tradition of investigating duality concerning morality and religion.

Unlike *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Sadat Hassan Manto's *Toba Tek Singh* is not outrightly concerned with morality. Still, it has everything to do with religion and duality. The difference lies in the political ideology and the historical aspect of the story. The hierarchy of good and evil in the Victorian religion is replaced with the good and evil connotation of the type of religion of the lunatics confined in asylums. It is in the context of the partition of 1947. The authorities of both sides of the border decide, after much serious deliberation, that the Muslim lunatics will be sent to Pakistan and the Hindu and Sikh lunatics will be sent to India. (Trivedi et al., 2000, p. 351) This ludicrous agreement shows the political aspect of religious identity and pretty much shows the historical side of the story, as it is lauded by Rushdie when he talks about "writer of low-life fiction" (Nagappan, 2005, p. 86).

Besides the political and nationalist debates, academic investigations have been conducted on the phenomenon of madness, but this madness is again taken as a symbolic representation of the era and place, which has been used by the writer as the setting of the story. This story of Manto's is mostly studied as madness in conjunction with the practice of mindless violence and massacres. The madness is taken as a metaphor used to negotiate the idea of the border and the duality of one's identity enforced upon people (Iqbal et al., 2025, p.4). Another view is the marginalisation of the mad people. Saadat Hasan Manto, in "Toba Tek Singh", while writing about the border, a margin that divides, was writing about the marginalised, the people who had no say in a decision that would affect and haunt their lives for generations to come. The madmen

are a representation of those marginalised people who were kept at bay from the mainstream political arena but whose fates were decided by the ones at the centre (Das, 2005, p. 206). It provides a "subaltern perspective" into the "human dimension" (Tiwari, 2013, p. 50) of the partition and its impact. The madness is symbolic of the wound, which 'will not heal', incised onto the minds, and many times the bodies of the people with the carving of the boundary. Drawing upon different variables and issues from the above-cited scholarly inquiries, orchestrated on and about the texts, Robert Louis Stevenson's novella *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Sadat Hassan Manto's "Toba Tek Singh", this research has furthered the discussion with a focus on the theme of madness. The two texts are analysed here under the lens of socio-psychological perception of madness, along with the variables of duality, conformity and non-conformity in slightly variant forms.

# **Theoretical Framework and Analysis:**

To begin the analysis, it is imperative to define madness in terms of a social construct. Michelle Foucault has talked about madness in his books Madness and Civilisation and Language, Madness, and Desire. In the first book, he discusses the demonisation and dehumanisation of the mad people in the age of reason and logic, where they are alienated and locked up in separate establishments away from society. This is to prevent them from mingling in society (Foucault, 1967, p. 223). This concept can be seen in both the characters of Dr. Jekyll in The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Bishan Singh of "Toba Tek Singh." From the very beginning of the story, Bishan Singh is cloistered within the very walls of the mental asylum in Lahore, where mad and conveniently mad (i.e. murderers escaping the gallows) live: "There were some inmates who weren't mad. Most of them were murderers. Their relatives had had them committed after bribing the officers so that they would be spared the hangman's noose" (Manto, 2015, p. 209). Both kinds of lunatics do not fit within the supposedly 'normal' people of the society, so the reason of masses cast them away from the activities of the social dwellings. Dr. Jekyll, on the other hand, is not locked up in any mental institution, but it can be seen from the story that after the death of Dr. Lanyon, Jekyll cuts himself off from society and confines himself in his laboratory as he slowly goes insane and loses himself to his alternate personality of Mr. Hyde. This brings us to the discussion of the binary of normalcy and abnormality. Bishan Singh is locked up because he fits only in the construct of abnormality, and Dr. Jekyll locks himself up because he no longer lives a 'normal life'.

The very difference in the lunacy of Dr. Jekyll and Bishan Singh, as well as the cause of their madness, brings us from the convergent debate of conformity and non-conformity, or normalcy and abnormality, to the divergent point where the social construct of madness differs across different societies. In the second book, *Language, Madness, and Desire*, Foucault gives us the concept of social discrepancy when it comes to the definition, dealing and construction of madness in different cultures and societies: "Every society, every culture, assigns madness a very specific place, preparing a defined structure for it in advance; thus, the group of so-called reasonable men is defined in opposition to the mad on the basis of its proscriptions" (Foucault, 2015, p. 5). Keeping this in view while further probing into the analysis of selected texts of Stevenson's and Manto's work, it can be established that though there are commonalities in the factors resulting in madness in two characters, differences are bound to be there, too.

Moving from the social theorisation, social construct and concept of madness, the psychological aspect of madness talks about the causes of madness. According to Branimir M. Rieger, the insanity of daily existence and absurd situations can devastate tender psyches. Anger, a reaction to the insanity of the world, can be viewed as a microcosm of madness (M. Rieger, 1994, p. 2). Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll falls victim to this very 'insanity of daily existence' where he wants to

conduct an experiment to appease his curiosity, but people like Lanyon deem the experiment as "unscientific balderdash" but he is not shown venting his anger, which is the "microcosm of madness" and a way of dealing with life. This reaction is rather unnatural in Dr. Jekyll and can be seen in the mirror of another point of madness, where Rieger says: "...we often repress our mad or wilder sides in reaction to the pressures of society or pretend to be saner than we are" (M. Rieger, 1994, p. 2). Therefore, to maintain the personality of the very amiable Dr. Jekyll, which everyone knows, Mr. Hyde sprouts out as a result of too much repression of anger. Of course, there is the element of brewing potion and consuming it, which negates the possibility of multiple personality disorder in the pet sense, but one cannot deny that Dr. Jekyll drinks the potion willingly, and he even protects this 'evil' Mr. Hyde. He confesses his interest in Hyde in front of Mr. Utterson: "...there's one point I should like you to understand. I have a very great interest in poor Hyde. I know you've seen him; he told me so, and I fear he was rude to you. But I do sincerely take a great interest in him..." (Stevenson, 1886, p. 33).

Dr. Jekyll's 'pretending to be sane' act goes on successfully because all negative emotions within him find their way out in the shape of Mr. Hyde. While not everyone in society may be mad, per se, many have frustrations, tensions and anxieties which can lead to madness, but the unrealistic expectation of high morality in the respectable people in the Victorian era thus leads to the duality of good and evil aspects of every human personality to come out in a morbid result of polarisation. Writers have been especially sensitive to such inner conflicts and have portrayed characters' lives with psychological realism (M. Rieger, 1994, p.2). Similar to Stevenson, Manto has also written about the psychological repression and inner conflicts of the inmates of the mental asylum in Lahore. The deviation comes here, unlike the character of Dr. Jekyll, who for the major part of the book had some sanity in his possession, repressed negative emotions and refrained from reacting unless he was turned into Hyde. But in "Toba Tek Singh", the 'lunatics' have no control over sanity or any reputation to uphold in society except being mad, so they regulate their emotions towards absurdities or 'insanity of daily life' by expressing their 'anger' in a vivid way. One incident in the story shows the reaction of a lunatic to the news of the exchange of inmates of mental asylums between Pakistan and India:

One inmate got so mixed up about this business of Pakistan—Hindustan, Hindustan—Pakistan that he became even crazier. One day, while sweeping the floor, he suddenly climbed a tree, perched on a limb, and for the next two hours held forth non-stop on the delicate matter of Pakistan and Hindustan. (Manto, 2015, p. 209)

Upon the intervention and beseeching of the staff of the asylum, he said clearly: "I don't want to live in Hindustan and I don't want to live in Pakistan; I'll live here in this tree" (Manto, 2015, p. 209). This very opinion to live as he pleases brings in the question of both as to whether that madman was truly a madman or just an outcast, or was he fooling everyone? Despite the affirmation of any option, madness here is used blatantly as a mode of non-conformity, and it also captures the attention of people because aberrant conduct is riveting here.

Socially deviant behaviour has always both repelled and fascinated mankind. It is interesting to observe and study the non-conformists, the sinners or the rebels, who violate society's supposedly normal standards. Social scientists continually debate the definitions and labelling of what is deviant and what is not. While the general public might assume that abnormal equates to 'sick', 'crazy', or 'insane', many episodes of abnormal behaviour are borderline cases between sanity and insanity (M. Rieger, 1994, p. 3). The clear duality in the personality of Dr. Jekyll saves him initially from being labelled as mad. The fascination with deviant behaviour only materialises in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* when Mr. Hyde appears; otherwise, according to the 'general public' view, Dr. Jekyll is a perfectly sane person, and by the same viewpoint, Bishan

Singh is a victim of madness. The safe play of Dr. Jekyll does not keep him away from eventually being accused of madness because his behaviour proved to be self-destructive: "Freud claimed that abnormal repression ...befalls when the internalised anxiety and the super-ego influence repression, making it develop and lead to illogical, self-destructive" (Tris, 2016, p.7). Dr. Jekyll's behaviour is self-destructive as he is constantly preyed upon by Hyde. He knows about the murders and assaults, but still decides to bequeath everything to Hyde once he is no more. Similarly, Bishan Singh's habit of staying in the standing position and never sleeping, never resting, does make him mad by the norms of books and the definition of psychology, but another shade of psychology begs to differ with absolute definitions and demarcations of sanity and insanity.

There is a particular criticism of the entire field of mental health. R.D. Laing (1960, pp. 16-18), in *The Divided Self,* and Thomas Szasz (1960, p. 113), in *The Myth of Mental Illness,* both argue eloquently that mental illness is merely a term by which we designate people whose behaviour deviates from the norms of society. A "mad" person, in the Shakespearean wise-fool, "reason in truth" tradition, can also utter truths that most people of a supposedly sane society would never observe or verbalise. Bishan Singh, in this respect, can be deemed a sane person who speaks his language, which sounds gibberish to others as he utters this sentence "*Upar de gurgur de aiynks de be-dhyaana de mung de daal aaf de Pakistan government*" and "Later, though, he changed *aaf de Pakistan government* to *aaf de Toba Tek Singh government*, and started asking the other loonies where Toba Tek Singh, the place he came from, was." (Manto, 2015, p. 211). He can also be termed sane because of the ending scene of the story, for he fully comprehends the situation and does not want to cross the border and just wants to go back to Toba Tek Singh.

Feder articulates the idea that literary madness reflects society's prohibitions and values (Feder, 1980, pp. 3-4). Both characters under discussion want to break free from these prohibitions. Laing advocates a very romantic notion of mental disorder as a state and process that can confer a deeper understanding of the world. While Laing and his followers, Artaud and Norman Brown, celebrate madness as liberation from oppressive cultural constraints, one must be careful not to glorify real clinical madness, thereby demeaning the anguish of the truly insane (M. Rieger, 1994, p. 5). Dr. Jekyll's secret experimentation and harbouring the lethal secret can be seen as liberation from the oppressive constraints of his contemporary morality.

Moving on to the deaths of Dr. Jekyll and Bishan Singh, Durkheim's theory can explain the end of stories and characters in alliance with conformity and non-conformity. The whole discussion on the concept of confinement in Foucault's philosophy is also reflected in the theory of 'anomie' by Durkheim, where misfits live away from society. This theory is primarily related to suicide (Pickering, 2002, p.83). The madness or seeming madness is an experience that provides important revelations about self or society. Characters can also experience a kind of anomie in which society seems intent on crushing their personalities, which results in their separation from the human community. Anomie, or sociological madness, depicts characters estranged from society's "sane," "normal" or "rational" behaviours, like Melville's Bartleby or Camus's Mersault in The Stranger. Frequently, a writer utilises this literary madness to satirise the society which has produced the "mad" individual (M. Rieger, 1994, p.8). The alienation on societal scale is defined as anomie by Durkheim and as to its association with suicide, it does sees its reflection in the death of Dr. Jekyll whose demise in terms of confinement and alienation falls in the category of "egotistical suicide" where Dr. Jekyll succumbs to the death because he is no longer a 'normal subject' and cannot protect his reputation (Mack, 2012, pp. 10-13), so he alienates himself entirely by committing suicide. This alienation can be construed as a refusal to conform to the Victorian models of morality and normalcy. On the other hand, although it was not suicide,

the death of 'mad' Bishan Singh can also be considered an act of rebellion like his 'madness' (Tiwari, 2013, pp. 55-56) because his estrangement from conformity is translated in his refusal to submit to the will of authorities who want to transfer him to India away from his hometown, Toba Tek Singh.

#### **Conclusion:**

It can be concluded that in order to conform to the norms of society, individuals negate or repress their wishes and thoughts. This suppression of true nature can lead to the plantation of mental illness or personality disorder in people, which can be seen in the character of Dr. Jekyll of Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and with variation in Bishan Singh of Manto's "Toba Tek Singh" as well. Somehow, the consequent madness and aggravation of madness in both characters augment a sort of liberation from conformity, while conjugating madness with non-conformity. Though it takes both of the characters to isolation and confinement eventually but their madness is a kind of subtle resistance against the oppressive forces of society, which force man to mould according to its whims and conditions. Madness, in both selected fictional works, is a product of rigid societal expectations instead of individuals' failures. It appears from the psychological and ethical violence of conformity, whether to Victorian morality or nationalist beliefs. Dr. Jekyll and Bishan Singh are tragic characters whose narratives portray the price of duality, repression, and exclusion of individuals against the masses. By construing these texts together, we see that madness is not merely a failure of reason. It is a place of protest—a denial to accept the terms levied by an unjust society. Whether through Jekyll's lethal admission or Bishan Singh's last stance, both characters declare, in different ways, their right to exist outside the coerced binaries of morality and political ideologies. In doing so, they transmute madness from a symbol of shame into a potent sign of resistance.

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