Who is Portrayed in Second Life: Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde? The Extent of Congruence Between Real Life and Virtual Identity

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Abstract

Virtual social environments opened the door to individual experiences that may not be feasible or possible in real physical settings; in turn bringing to question the applicability of certain more traditional theories to digital environments. Addressing some of this gap in the available literature, in the current study, we compare virtual and real life identities simultaneously, as well as explore the impact of self-consciousness on virtual identity. Our results indicate that while some of the overall trends are similar between identities constructed in the physical world and those constructed in virtual settings, different identity elements and dimensions tend to be emphasized to different degrees. Furthermore, we find evidence for the role of private in addition to public self-consciousness as influencing virtual existence.

In other words, in addition to the general emphasis concerning the role of socially influenced external elements in the formulation of virtual identities, the current study highlights the importance of more internalized and individual level attitudes and perceptions, including one’s inner thoughts, emotions, and perspectives. Implications and future directions are discussed.

Keywords

Virtual Identity; Real Life Identity; Virtual Social Worlds, Self-consciousness; Second Life

Full Text:
PDF

DOI: https://doi.org/10.4101/jvwr.v5i1.2150

The full website for the Journal of Virtual Worlds Research can be found at: http://jvwresearch.org

Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde is a gothic novella by Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson, first published in 1886. The work is also known as The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, or simply Jekyll & Hyde. It is about a London lawyer named Gabriel John Utterson who investigates strange occurrences between his old friend, Dr Henry Jekyll, and the evil Edward Hyde. The novella’s impact is such that it has become a part of the language, with the phrase "Jekyll and Hyde" being used commonly to describe a person who is capable of drastic moral swings or who has a hidden, villainous side.

Stevenson explores the struggle of the human conscience, between good and evil, noble and despicable. Jekyll, who gives in to his evil impulses becomes a prisoner and victim of his own creation. Thus, Stevenson seems to suggest that a noble, pure life is far better than one of discreet immorality. However, Stevenson also portrays the seemingly purely noble men in the novel, Utterson and Lanyon, as weak. Lanyon dies after the shock of Jekyll's transformation, and Utterson repeatedly refuses to accept the truth or pursue the novel's central mystery... These papers were written primarily by students and provide critical analysis of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Jekyll does not abandon Hyde; rather, Hyde abandons Jekyll. The ultimate theme of the two novels is that the monstrous side of living creatures is unavoidable and will be triggered in some way. In the case of Victor’s monster, it is triggered by rejection, a type of harm. Throughout The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Stevenson expresses an awareness of the consequences that are sure to arise should psychology be able to incontrovertibly define the origins of human character. If it is true that evil is inherent in all people or at least the result of people’s experience rather than divine providence, then it becomes more difficult to say with certainty that God had any role in forming the hearts and minds of human beings.