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***Anger Causes Trouble***

Spirit of perverseness has been a broad definition throughout the Gothic literature. According to Edgar Poe, as he has his own definition of the word perverse, it is best known for making people do things they know will be bad for them. The point is trying to get across is that is no one is innocent; we’ve all done things that could be bad for us or even breaking the law. For instance, violating traffic rules such as speed limit even though we know it could cause an accident. Many authors of Gothic stories have been using the spirit of perverseness (SOP) to enhance their points to make it more interesting and Gothic. When it comes to evil acts, setting plays a huge role, especially in Gothic literature which is best known as dark, to cause terror and horror. Throughout this piece, two main characters from different stories will be compared. Mr. Hyde from “The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” by Robert Stevenson, and The Invisible Man from “Invisible Man” by Ralph Ellison. Where the similar actions that led them to make evil choices will be compared, including their setting and SOP, discussing the difference between these characters.

In “The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” by Robert Stevenson, the author talks about a scientist that created a potion to split his own personality into two completely different people; one representing his evil side, and the other as a respected Doctor. As the story progresses, a well-known lawyer tries to investigate and uncover all of the scientist’s mysteries. The lawyer tried to help him out, but in the end, the scientist decided to end his own life after he tried to redeem himself while being jammed between both personalities. In this fictional novel, Mr. Hyde is characterized as an evil person.

On a regular night, the well-known lawyer Mr. Utterson went on his regular Sunday night stroll with his companion Mr. Enfield. They came across a strange door that had no doorbell nor a knocker. Mr. Enfield remembers a disturbing scene of a mysterious creature stamping on a little girl that seemed like the age of eight to ten years old. According to the writing, “‘Well, it was this way,’ returned Mr. Enfield: ‘I was coming home from someplace at the end of the world, about three o'clock of a black winter morning, and my way lay through a part of town where there was literally nothing to be seen but lamps. Street after street, and all the folks asleep — street after street, all lighted up as if for a procession and all as empty as a church — till at last, I got into that state of mind when a man listens and listens and begins too long for the sight of a policeman. All at once, I saw two figures: one a little man who was stumping along eastward at a good walk, and the other a girl of maybe eight or ten who was running as hard as she was able down a cross street. Well, sir, the two ran into one another naturally enough at the corner; and then came the horrible part of the thing; for the man trampled calmly over the child’s body and left her screaming on the ground. It sounds nothing to hear, but it was hellish to see. It wasn’t like a man; it was like some damned Juggernaut…’” *(chapter I)*. It is already known by the reader that this mysterious little man is being referred to as Mr. Hyde, this was wrong, and he knew this himself that it was. Leaving the girl on the street says a lot about his actions. He still committed this bizarre action knowing that he would get in trouble. This specific scene is incredibly relevant and important to highlight in this story because it demonstrates a spirit of perverseness.

The “Invisible Man” by Ralf Ellison is about a man that faces racial injustice on a daily. At the beginning of the story, he described himself as a regular person with feelings, but the only difference was that he is invisible to society. Being invisible to society caused him to have anger, frustration, and distrust in people. One of the major events that occurred throughout this excerpt is when the invisible man came across a tall blond man on the street. They bumped into each other, but at the beginning, the blond man didn’t handle the situation the right way, which leads the invisible man to build up anger that almost caused the death of the tall blond man. According to the writing, “I sprang at him, seized his coat lapels, and demanded that he apologize. He was a tall blond man, and as my face came close to his he looked insolently out of his blue eyes and cursed me, his breath hot in my face as he struggled. I pulled his chin down sharp upon the crown of my head, butting him as I had seen the West Indians do, and I felt his flesh tear and the blood gush out, and I yelled, 'Apologize! Apologize!' But he continued to curse and struggle, and I butted him again and again until he went down heavily, on his knees, profusely bleeding. I kicked him repeatedly, in a frenzy because he still uttered insults though his lips were frothy with blood. Oh yes, I kicked him! And in my outrage, I got out my knife and prepared to slit his throat, right there beneath the lamplight in the deserted street, holding him by the collar with one hand, and opening the knife with my teeth -- when it occurred to me that the man had not seen me, actually; that he, as far as he knew, was in the midst of a walking nightmare! And I stopped the blade, slicing the air as I pushed him away, letting him fall back to the street” *(page 2)*. This violent action could have been caused by the anger and desperation of the invisible man. Knowing that he has been suffering for years, he simply asked for an apology, but it was denied due to bigotry. The invisible man has been oppressed. From the beginning of the story to the end, there wasn’t a shift in society’s mindset. Do you think the author purposely did this to demonstrate social injustice in our daily life? How can this apply to our modern society now in the 21st century? These are good questions to think about. To finalize, the spirit of perverseness that is shown in this excerpt demonstrates that the invisible man, due to the tall blond man’s lack of respect and knowledge, became extremely violent to a point where he almost ended an individual’s life. Even though the invisible man knew that he could get in trouble, he still committed this action which contributes to the point of spirit of perverseness.

Setting plays an important role in these two stories, which is relevant in Gothic literature. Late night walks, dark, empty streets, terror, and even violence are some points that contribute to the definition of Gothic. With the help of these descriptions, we can imagine the scenes in these stories. Throughout “The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde”, it is noticed that Mr. Hyde mostly appears at night, most of his evil crimes are done in the dark. One night he met up with a well-known man by the name of Sir Danvers Carew, which started a conversation between them. This conversation did not end well and caused Mr. Hyde to end this man’s life. According to the text, “Although a fog rolled over the city in the small hours, the early part of the night was cloudless, and the lane, which the maid’s window overlooked, was brilliantly lit by the full moon”*(chapter IV)*. This evidence proves that this following event occurred at night; “And as she so sat, she became aware of an aged and beautiful gentleman with white hair, drawing near along the lane; and advancing to meet him, another and very small gentleman, to whom at first she paid less attention. When they had come within speech (which was just under the maid’s eyes) the older man bowed and accosted the other with a very pretty manner of politeness… Mr. Hyde, who had once visited her master and for whom she had conceived a dislike. He had in his hand a heavy cane, with which he was trifling; but he answered never a word and seemed to listen with an ill-contained impatience. And then all of a sudden, he broke out in a great flame of anger, stamping with his foot, brandishing the cane, and carrying on (as the maid described it) like a madman. The old gentleman took a step back, with the air of one very much surprised and a trifle hurt, and at that Mr. Hyde broke out of all bounds and clubbed him to the earth. And next moment, with ape-like fury, he was trampling his victim under foot and hailing down a storm of blows, under which the bones were audibly shattered, and the body jumped upon the roadway. At the horror of these sights and sounds, the maid fainted” *(chapter IV)*. This scene is a good representation of horror since the setting is placed in a dark isolated location. In the “Invisible Man” on the night, the invisible man tried to kill the blonde man, it coordinates well with the setting; a dark night. According to the text, “One night I accidentally bumped into a man, and perhaps because of the near darkness he saw me and called me an insulting name”*(page 2)*. Something incredibly fascinating is the coordination of the scene and actions in both stories. The author of “The Invisible man” commenced this scene with this description followed by the problem that caused the horrifying incident. Compared to “The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” in the above crime shown, the author described the setting from a point of view of a maid looking through the window. The descriptions of the settings in both stories inspire the readers because the incidents can be visualized using imagination and creativity.

These two stories are interesting due to the wide demonstration of Gothic Literature. Throughout both stories, we can discover many things that are relevant to the Gothic, describing the relevancy of the setting and how useful it can be for readers. Spirit of perverseness (SOP) also provides a great understatement of a character’s point of view since it gives us inside knowledge of the character itself. The character’s point of view helps readers know why they committed such a violent and evil action. Overall, it is learned the use of SOP, and the important role of setting is used in two great stories to prove important points. To conclude, comparing both characters, Mr. Hyde and the Invisible Man both have similarities and differences. They are similar when it comes to violence, and they are different when it comes to what caused their actions to happen. To add on, Mr. Hyde killed someone, and the Invisible Man did not end up killing anyone--the tall blonde hair man, because he remembered that no one never noticed him.