

Spring 5-2023

## The Human That Is Not Human: Examining the Doppelganger Through David Hume

Brittnea Anne Holland  
*Old Dominion University*, [ashoccultlike@gmail.com](mailto:ashoccultlike@gmail.com)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/english\\_etds](https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/english_etds)



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), and the [Rhetoric and Composition Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Holland, Brittnea A.. "The Human That Is Not Human: Examining the Doppelganger Through David Hume" (2023). Master of Arts (MA), Thesis, English, Old Dominion University, DOI: 10.25777/2gyn-jd56 [https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/english\\_etds/155](https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/english_etds/155)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the English at ODU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ODU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@odu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@odu.edu).

THE HUMAN THAT IS NOT HUMAN: EXAMINING THE  
DOPPELGANGER THROUGH DAVID HUME

by

Brittnea Anne Holland  
B.A. December 2018, Georgia Southwestern State University

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

ENGLISH

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY  
May 2023

Approved by:

Rosaleen Keefe (Director)

Kevin DePew (Member)

Kevin Moberly (Member)

## ABSTRACT

### THE HUMAN THAT IS NOT HUMAN: EXAMINING THE DOPPELGANGER THROUGH DAVID HUME

Brittnea Anne Holland  
Old Dominion University, 2023  
Director: Dr. Rosaleen Keefe

The roots of horror are deeply entangled with the concepts presented through Enlightenment thinkers, especially in terms of the self and what makes a human truly a human; David Hume's essays and discussions on human nature lend themselves easily to the analysis of horror throughout the ages, particularly both in terms of what makes humanity human and in terms of metaphysical and theological concepts--and the rejection of them. This, coupled with Sigmund Freud and Otto Rank's concepts of the uncanny, allows for the ability to perceive what makes creatures like the Doppelganger everlasting throughout humanity. Though horror as a concept includes many supernatural elements, at the heart lies a true fear of what it is to be human, and what it is to be not human; the Gothic functions to drive this point home through the usage of the Doppelganger to illustrate both the human and the human that is not human, including James Hogg's novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*.

As a direct descendent of the focus on the horror of humanity, certain internet horror projects, such as the YouTube series *i am sophie* and Alex Kister's *Mandela Catalogue*, use the concept of the Doppelganger to juxtapose known humanity against unknown inhumanity and to underscore the true core of what makes the Doppelganger effective as a monster: twisting human nature, death, and humanity as a concept into something unknowable and alien to its audience,

but just close enough to human to be unsettling—a creature haunted just enough by uncertainty to be, in the eyes of humans, wrong.

Copyright, 2023, by Brittnea Anne Holland, All Rights Reserved.

This thesis is dedicated to those that supported me throughout the process, including my parents, my partner, and my friends, all of whom helped me keep going when I thought that I couldn't anymore. Thank you, and I love you all very much.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank my committee members for their advice and guidance through the process of writing this thesis and listening to me ramble about Doppelgangers for probably too long. I especially want to thank Dr. Keefe for taking the time to answer my random emails and questions and meeting with me to help ease my anxiety about everything. I couldn't have done this without their guidance.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
THE CONCEPT OF HORROR .....	1
DAVID HUME AND HUMAN NATURE .....	4
HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY AND HORROR .....	9
II. RHETORIC AND PSYCHOLOGY – THE DOPPELGANGER .....	15
HISTORY OF THE DOPPELGANGER .....	15
PSYCHOLOGY OF THE DOPPELGANGER .....	17
THE DOPPELGANGER, NARRATIVE MECHANICS, AND SOCIETY .....	18
III. THE DOPPELGANGER IN THE VICTORIAN NOVEL .....	24
EXAMINATION OF CULTURAL CONTEXT .....	24
CASE STUDY: <i>THE PRIVATE MEMOIRS AND CONFESSIONS OF A JUSTIFIED SINNER</i> .....	27
IV. THE DOPPELGANGER IN INTERNET HORROR .....	39
EXAMINATION OF CULTURAL CONTEXT .....	39
CASE STUDY: <i>I AM SOPHIE</i> .....	42
CASE STUDY: <i>THE MANDELA CATALOGUE</i> .....	50
V. CONCLUSIONS .....	60
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	65
VITA .....	69



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Horror as a genre has come far from where it once was, shifting through various versions throughout the decades and changes within society. Still, the focus on the Other has remained strong, and in fact is one of the core foundations of the genre overall, particularly an Other that resembles humanity too closely to be comfortable; there are many movies, novels, and other media sources that use the concept of the Double or Doppelganger to inflict unease on an audience—whether one that has knowingly sought it out or one that has found it unwittingly. This leads into multiple questions that should be explored. What *is* horror? What is the appeal? And most importantly, where does the Doppelganger fall into how horror affects people? Through examining the Doppelganger through David Hume’s (1740/2016; 1748/2016) concepts of identity, imagination, impressions, and ideas within his works *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, and *A Treatise of Human Nature*—along with Freud (1919/2003) and Rank’s (1971) concepts of the uncanny and the Double figure within psychological constructs—the usage of the Doppelganger as a rhetorical device within the horror genre can be further explored and discussed. In doing so, three texts will be examined: James Hogg’s *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, the YouTube series *i am sophie*, and Alex Kister’s *The Mandela Catalog*; these three versions of the Doppelganger will be compared and contrasted with one another, utilizing Hume’s concepts to tease out where the root of the fear of the Doppelganger truly lies—the concept of identity and the fear of losing it.

### THE CONCEPT OF HORROR

In order to more fully comprehend the Doppelganger and its intended usage, there must first be some necessary discussion on the horror genre and how it has been shaped over time.

Horror stories and tales have been around for centuries, often hearkened back to campfire stories during the middle of the night; over time, there has been a steady progression of horror and what it intends to do, whether to simply unsettle the audience or to inspire a deep fear within them. In many cases, the definition of horror has fluctuated slightly, though predominantly remains the same: to inspire fear or disgust within an audience (Strohl, 2012). How the creator goes about doing this can change immensely depending on both their style of storytelling and the narrative that they are intending to convey to their audience; it can range anywhere from using something internal, such as a primal or primeval fear, to a tangible fear of a killer or creatures like spiders or snakes, all the way to something that examines and reflects society back at the audience (Bantinaki, 2012). Horror thus is used as an attempt to cope with and understand fear and threatening situations, using imagination to create situations and creatures in which humans possess agency; this way, humans can explore the concept of things that might in any other situation be a direct threat either to the physical body or the mind (Asma, 2014). In this way and in almost all cases, the genre of horror can be boiled down to two parts: internal and external. That is, the psychology of a person and the threat of a monster or the unknown outside of one's mind; both halves of horror can be particularly effective depending on who is viewing the media in question, and though they often are used interchangeably, the effectivity can vary depending on who is watching or participating (Strohl, 2012). Complicating the matter further, "horror" is itself an umbrella, catch-all term for a multitude of smaller subgenres, from larger known ones (monster movies and psychological horror spring to mind) to smaller or more specific ones, such as analog horror and splatter horror.

When discussing the concept of the Doppelgänger, the most important subgenre of horror to examine and define is that of psychological horror. Psychological horror has its own elements

and key tropes that factor into what makes it such, and the predominant element is the fixation and focus on the mental state and fears of the main character or even characters (Prohászková, 2012). During the psychological horror text or project, the audience follows the deterioration of the protagonist's mental state, often watching the protagonist be forced to come to terms with a trauma in their past, the dissolution of their faith, the "monster" that they see themselves becoming or that they have become, or something that threatens the way they see the world—and, generally, themselves. Many psychological horror movies fixate on this division of the self, using it as a way to demonstrate mental instability and vulnerability (Hauke, 2015). In still other cases, there is a concrete monster outside of the protagonist's own mind, though these creatures and monsters often serve to make the protagonist—and, at times, the audience—question their own sanity, leaving the protagonist even more psychologically tormented throughout the narrative. This is precisely how the Doppelgänger impacts psychological horror, through usage of the external monster to influence the inner horror of the protagonist.

In order to accurately represent and portray the concepts of psychological horror in particular, it is imperative that creators take into account a multitude of rhetorical devices and concepts that further their narrative in increasingly disturbing ways—at least, until the ending, if the creator chooses. These rhetorical devices have existed for decades, and function to create a framework upon which creatures like the Doppelgänger can be placed. Horror is often meant to inspire strong, generally aversive feelings within the audience, using various formal features to do so; while these can vary by medium, narrative structure is one that transcends virtually all forms of horror, as the narrative is often imperative to create a compelling monster or sense of foreboding (Bantinaki, 2012). By using the narrative to create a world for the monster to live in,

the effectiveness of the monster only grows, particularly if the monster is the antagonist of a world similar enough to reality to inspire a strong sense of unease within the audience.

#### DAVID HUME AND HUMAN NATURE

David Hume (1740/2016), notably, agrees with this concept, noting that in order for works to have a profound effect on the reader, the work must necessarily be set as realistically as possible. Hume was a philosopher born in 1711, and his works focus on a wide range of topics, including history, religion, and morality; each topic is “unified by at least one fundamental characteristic,” most notably Hume’s usage of the experimental method to examine human nature (Norton, 2009, p. 4). Most importantly, however, for the purposes of examining the rhetoric of horror and the Doppelgänger, Hume writes at length regarding the concepts of identity, the self, imagination, memory, and the difference between ideas and impressions—all of which remain strikingly relevant in terms of what makes the Doppelgänger both effective and culturally relevant, as it has been for centuries. Hume’s predominant focus throughout his multiple works is that of human nature and in understanding the morality present within it; he also focuses strongly on the mind and how the human mind processes objects, identity, and philosophy as a whole. In his works, Hume questions modern philosophers and ancient philosophers alike, frequently questioning their thought processes and the conclusions that they come to over time and maintaining a distrust of “a priori reasoning” in lieu of a more scientific method based in experience and observation (Norton, 2009). In fact, Hume (1748/2016) often rejects their systems and methods of thought, instead opting for a new way of thinking and reasoning—based strongly in empiricism (EHU 1.12). Empiricism is paramount to Hume, and to him, there is “no other source of knowledge besides experience”; no other way of claiming knowledge is legitimate where he is concerned (Biro, 2009, p. 42). Still, Hume notes

that even through viewing human nature through what can be observed and experienced, there are some concepts of which humans will remain ignorant, despite all attempts to understand or make sense of them (Norton, 2009). Hume (1748/2016) pursues understanding of what he can through the usage of what he terms "perceptions," of which there are two categories: impressions and ideas. These are separated, respectively, by equating them to feeling versus thinking, allowing for a sharp distinction of the two; importantly, perceptions as a whole can be either simple or more complex, allowing for clusters of simple impressions or ideas to form a complex impression or idea. Hume also discusses thought and imagination in detail, noting that imagination is entirely "confined within very narrow limits" (EHU 2.4). In order to imagine a concept, humans must first have experienced a concept that is either the same or similar; it is also possible that humans can imagine a concept based off of ideas or impressions that, while originally not conjoined, may be clustered together to form a new, imagined concept (T 1.2.2).

Further, Hume notes that human thoughts are connected via association, which he breaks into three principles: resemblance, contiguity in time and place, and causation (Owen, 2009). Resemblance and contiguity in time and place both have their own place within Hume's conceptualization of how the human brain processes thoughts and how they connect to each other; all three are intertwined with one another to a certain degree. Nonetheless, causation is the strongest, working in terms of cause and effect and vice versa (EHU 4.1). Causation allows for inferences to be made via what humans know; in essence, this allows humans to connect the dots and fill in the gaps between their knowledge of how the world exists, producing the concept of a "necessary connection." In order to fully understand something, humans must first have a grasp of a similar or related concept, allowing them to project a similar theory to an unknown object or concept; this leads to a kind of belief in what an object may do or mean, strengthened by past

experiences (Owen, 2009). Even still, Hume notes that the source of this connection and type of causation is not related to the objects in question, but to the human mind; it is the human mind that creates these connections and then enforces them over time. This is especially the case in terms of past experiences that humans have, through which humans can make connections and associations to the outcomes of particular events or experiences; this kind of association allows the understanding of how causal beliefs—that is, beliefs based in causation and pre-existing evidence or experience—are formed (Owen, 2009; Bell, 2009).

Without Hume's discussions of how humans perceive objects and identity, understanding Doppelgangers becomes much more difficult; without Hume's discussions on imagination, memory, and the self, understanding these creatures becomes more difficult still. The concept of the imagination, in particular, is integral to understanding horror as a whole, and most importantly, the Doppelganger; Hume (1748/2016) notes that to "form monsters, and join incongruous shapes and appearances, costs the imagination no more trouble than to conceive the most natural and familiar objects" (EHU 1.13/916). In this way, therein lies the true concept of horror: that the human brain already possesses the knowledge needed to create monsters and creatures, including the Doppelganger, and does so by combining dangers already accessible to the human mind and imagination. By creating these kind of monsters, and projecting them outward into the media that humans consume, there then exists a possibility of their true existence, rendering the horror of these mysterious creatures that much more palpable and concerning to audiences (Clasen, 2012; Hauke, 2015). Clasen (2012) makes the commentary that monsters, while they vary between sources and texts, are based predominantly on themes and concepts that the brain is already aware of and on the lookout for; Asma (2014) agrees with this conclusion, noting that monsters rely on schema that humans have developed over the course of

evolution in order to provide the best possible ability to survive threats presented throughout history, allowing for human brains to make quick assumptions of danger based on initial encounters with unknown yet similar creatures.

Relatedly, Hume (1740/2016) notes that there are two concepts within the human brain which are integral to imagination and memory, that of impressions and that of ideas; impressions are quick, strong feelings evoked from a—generally external—source, while ideas contain more thought and often lack the strength of feeling that impressions are known for (T 1.1.1). He displays that “all ideas are derived from impressions, and are nothing but copies and representations of them” and that these impressions and ideas “differ only in their strength and vivacity” (T 1.1.7/43). That is, impressions and ideas may well be the same thing, though the true difference between the two is how well and how strongly the brain perceives them; in the case of the impression, the brain perceives it strongly, allowing for a passion of sorts to impact the brain and thus the body. Ideas, on the other hand, are much less vivid, and pale in comparison to impressions in their strength; importantly, ideas are derived from impressions, and thus are connected to the idea of memory, a core concept related to human identity and identity as an overall theory (Norton, 2009). Hume (1748/2016) discusses identity and how the mind perceives and creates it, writing that the mind often confuses similar things for each other, unless the mind can perceive a sharp difference between the two (T 1.4.2); he also describes identity as something that cannot entirely be trusted to remain the same when the senses do not perceive it for any amount of time (T 1.4.2).

The identity of a person is, in Hume’s opinion, created through a collection of perceptions, rather than one solidified whole; these perceptions change and grow over time, though humans generally perceive themselves as the same person despite these shifts (McIntyre,

2009). In this way, humans do not fundamentally remain the same, though their identity generally does. Identity is a core issue within Hume's work, and he spends plenty of time discussing the identity of objects and how these identities are perceived; objects that remain unchanged remains the same over time, though the human mind perceives objects with only subtle changes to be the same object. For example, if a cup's handle were to break and then be repaired, the mind perceives it as the same cup; similarly, the category of "cup" as an identifier allows the mind to make connections between objects that, though they aren't the same, are similar enough in composition to achieve the same kind of identity. Despite this, humans cannot be sure whether identity remains the same once an object is out of view and thus unperceived by the person in question, leading to a sense of instability in identity. This instability is furthered by the aforementioned tendency of humans to be unable to perceive subtle changes, continuing to place the same identity on an object that has received minor changes (McIntyre, 2009; Hume, T 1.4.2, 1740/2016). This is because humans perceive the world as connected, and often find connections between objects that then link them together until that connection is somehow broken; this is often done through words, allowing for ideas and words to be joined together—a clear example of a connection. Hume (1740/2016) writes that "because such a particular idea is commonly annexed to such a particular word, nothing is required but the hearing of that word to produce the correspondent idea" (T 1.3.6/103). This holds true for multiple genres of media and is just as vital for the horror genre overall. There are many connections made within horror, allowing imagination to connect one concept strongly to another, fueling the fear that the genre attempts to elicit within the audience.

Fittingly for horror overall, Hume also discusses the concepts of belief and sympathy, along with how beliefs are created and solidified, both in individuals and in society. His concept



of belief is rooted in causal expectations and connections, wherein humans understand that “one sort of object or event, B, has always followed another contiguous object or event, A,” which leads humans to believe that because event A has occurred, event B will then follow (Owen, 2009, p. 86). Belief is equally as strong as an impression, and needs that kind of strong feeling in order to be solidified as a belief; sympathy is similar, needing a conversion to an impression in order to produce an emotion that can be considered equal to what an impression might provide (Owen, 2009). Humans inherently sympathize further with those that resemble them strongly, hearkening back to the concept of resemblance and the mind’s inherent bent toward making connections among similar objects (Hume, T 2.1.11, 1740/2016). Belief and sympathy have a strong connection to horror, perhaps just as strong as imagination does; horror works to have the audience imagine a monster—the Other—that generates a strong enough fear response to create a strong impression, ideally making the audience sure of its belief in either the monster or a similar monster’s existence, as well as sure in how they sympathize with the protagonists of the narrative.

## HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY AND HORROR

Hume and his focus on what the imagination entails and how it works is a large chunk of where horror comes into play for many audiences. The imagination is something that allows humans to conceptualize ideas and forms that otherwise may seem impossible; more importantly, though, the imagination is rooted in reality itself. Not only does imagination need a basis in reality, it stands to reason for Hume (1740/2016) that if humans can imagine something, that same something can in turn exist in some form or fashion (EHU 2.13). As Dorsch (2018) notes, humans “cannot recall, imagine or think about something blue (or salty, musky, etc.) unless we have experienced something blue (or salty, musky, etc.)” (p. 2). In the realm of horror, this

concept is one that scratches at the root of why horror can be extremely effective when done properly—if the monster can be imagined, it can then in turn exist. In some ways, perhaps the fear is that somehow the monster can exist *because* humans can imagine it. There are plenty of examples of humans worrying about this concept in many ways, from simple things like telling each other not to speak something into existence, knocking on wood when something unsavory is mentioned, or otherwise superstitious actions and beliefs. It only stands to reason that the same might work for horror as a genre, and it is likely that this type of superstition will continue to exist throughout the lifespan of humanity.

This superstition carries on through the horror genre, for better or worse. Many horror concepts involve manifesting spirits, demons, or other kinds of creatures that may not have existed prior to the individuals' beliefs in them. This is particularly prevalent in online spaces and online horror, which have their own roots in the placebo effect of the urban legend; belief makes the monster real, allowing for a greater sense of horror. The imagination is, after all, what forms most monsters; Hume (1740/2016) might argue, perhaps, that even being able to generate these kinds of monsters and superstitions proves in some way that something similar may once have existed, or may yet (EHU 2.13; Prohászková, 2012). Further still, Hume (1740/2016) also notes that the “act of the mind, which renders realities more present to us than fictions, causes them to weigh more in the thought, and gives them a superior influence on the passions and imaginations” (T 1.3.7/107). That is, the monster that humans fear exists or may yet exist becomes more real, and therefore more of a threat than a monster that humans consider far-removed from them; this is only expanded when the monster is one that the protagonist or even viewer has conjured into existence on their own terms and with their own minds. This comment by Hume further underscores the importance of keeping horror carefully constructed amidst

reality; while some fantastical elements do not detract from the horror, too many will stop interesting even the most gullible of audiences—or, at the least, will detract from the horror tropes within the piece of media in question.

By keeping horror rooted in reality, after all, creators are able to directly prey on the fears that haunt humanity in the dead of night. Many dominant horror tropes are easily traced to a fear latched firmly onto the psyche of humans cemented centuries in the past: the masked killer in the woods, the home intruder, the creature lurking in the dark closet. Each of these monsters is a threat to a person's safety, most often from the outside, and it is clear where they may have been imagined from—the fear of danger hiding within the darkness of the night (Clasen, 2012). Interestingly, these monsters—and the threat that they pose—make audiences seek them out all the more frequently, with audiences wanting to understand them and how they work, both in terms of what the monster is or can be and in terms of how the monster impacts the audience; it is this kind of curiosity that helps dispel the fear of the shadowy figure in the window, especially when it is revealed that the killer is someone the audience suspected all along or a figment of imagination (Bantinaki, 2012; Tozzi, 2020). Some things, however, cannot easily be understood or disproven, which is what furthers the fear that these creatures or concepts generate; these creatures are mysterious and captivating, while still maintaining the shred of secrecy needed to prevent the audience from thoroughly understanding—and thereby conquering—what truly makes them terrifying.

Though humanity possesses many fears, the root of many of them is simple: mortality. Fearing mortality is something that humans often struggle with, to the point of an abundance of *mementos mori* within the Victorian era; going hand in hand with this fear is the fear of losing the self—or worse, the self being replaced. This connection between the two fears tends to allow

for a kind of feedback loop between the two; if the person dies, so then does the self, and so on. The Doppelganger as a monster preys heavily on this concept, using the fear of the death of the self to propel itself into humanity's collective consciousness and maintain its status among varied cultures throughout the world. The Doppelganger exists as a double threat, capable of harming the protagonist physically and also mentally; this makes it all the more dangerous and concerning to those that encounter this type of creature. Not only are they able to kill the body, but they are effectively able to kill and replace the self, rendering a person's concept of identity both in danger and at the same time useless; in a world where individuality has become scarce, this lends an extra layer of fear to the Doppelganger as it threatens the last remaining bit of uniqueness that humans possess (Daffron, 2001). Even their appearance, when done properly, is jarring, making it difficult for the protagonist to keep their sanity without being strongly disrupted by the image of themselves where there is no mirror. Most importantly, Doppelgangers are often creatures crafted by humanity and how humanity perceives them; societally seen as evil and a threat, they continue to remain those very things, and so the cycle perpetuates itself. Doppelgangers are a type of creature that reflects humanity back at itself, forcing humans to question their identity not only psychologically, but physically and as a species; with the existence of Doppelgangers, humans become truly prey for something that they cannot understand, no matter how much they attempt to do so.

For the protagonists of many horror projects that involve them, encountering Doppelgangers causes an immediate reaction, particularly in recent media depictions; the majority of the time, if not consecutively, the reaction is visceral and painful, a sense of dread or something being entirely wrong. These instant sensations align with Hume's (1740/2016) discussion of impressions and how they work in terms of memory and how the human brain

works; in doing so, this opens the possibility of considering the media itself as Hume's explanation of the idea, wherein the idea is meant to emulate the passions that the impressions evoke in a person (T 1.1.1). Even in this way, the media presenting the Doppelganger is meant to underscore the threat that the Doppelganger presents humanity; from behind a screen or a page, however, it is generally impossible to feel the same intensity of impressions that the protagonists experience within the confines of their narrative. In some ways, visual media such as films or online videos tend to be more successful in translating these impressions, though they do not always manage to do so effectively; it can often be a case of trial and error, at the risk of alienating an audience with different stylings of how the horror is presented (Rank, 1971).

This intersection of each of these concepts creates a nuanced image of the horror genre and how psychology directly impacts what makes horror both frightening and alluring. Humans fear what they do not know, and horror monsters are a prime example of things that the human mind at times cannot comprehend, no matter how much it tries to do so. Examining Hume's (1740/2016; 1748/2016) essays and discussions of complex concepts like identity and impressions or ideas is paramount to more carefully understanding precisely why the Doppelganger is so effective at terrifying audiences—and how it has maintained its status as a horror monster for so long. The Doppelganger represents a terror both internal and external, threatening both the identity and the physical body; adding to this, it is often very difficult for humans—and thereby, audiences and protagonists—to tell the difference between a Doppelganger and a normal human, unless the Doppelganger has made a mistake in some fashion, generally by either under- or over-shooting its attempt to craft itself perfectly to what the targeted human looks like. Beyond this, the creature is translatable to various forms of technology, from novels to Internet videos; in this same vein, the Doppelganger is able to tease

out and present the struggle between humanity and what they do not understand, whether that be religious, supernatural, or technological.

In understanding how Hume's concepts of imagination and the mind work, horror is made more accessible through the scheme of rhetoric and psychology, forming a connection between each concept that helps create and thereby solidify the identity of what humans consider to be the Doppelganger. Even further, the Doppelganger forces humans to come face to face with the fact that they cannot possibly understand everything—and in fact may understand even less than they believe. The Doppelganger interacts equally well with both supernatural concepts and technological ones, rendering neither extreme hospitable for humanity—and, therefore, rendering both ideas inherently threatening. These concepts work in tandem to produce a creature that preys on the things that humans consider the most precious and at the same time the most uncertain: their life and their identity.

## CHAPTER II

### RHETORIC AND PSYCHOLOGY – THE DOPPELGANGER

The essence of a Doppelganger is rooted in the being's ability to copy an existing creature, most often a human; or, at the least, an ability to attempt to copy an existing human. In many cases, especially in modern depictions, the Doppelganger is unable to fully encapsulate the creature that it becomes, whether due to an inability to understand how or perhaps an inability to understand the limitations of its target's appearance or structure. This difficulty mimicking a creature perfectly tends to be what gives the Doppelganger away, especially when the creature it attempts to mimic is a human; this is, after all, their most common target, and what Doppelgangers have become most heavily associated with. For the purposes of this examination, this is the incarnation of the Doppelganger that will be referenced and scrutinized, to avoid confusion and to narrow the scope of interest; additionally, an addendum to this definition of the Doppelganger is that there must be an intent to *replace* the original in some way, be it by the creature or by an outside force, or at the least an intention to completely disrupt the identity of a protagonist. This addendum is meant to rule out accidental Doubles or Doubles that function more as foil than foe.

### HISTORY OF THE DOPPELGANGER

The Doppelganger's ability to shapeshift and mimic another creature is well-documented throughout folklore, fairy tales, and modern writings, and it has many roots in cultures around the world—which only seems to lend itself to the uncertainty and discomfort that Doppelgangers present to humans. Many cultures find fear in the concept of the shadow and in reflections, such as in mirrors; in many cases, there is an intrinsic discomfort in the “us” that is not us, the identity that humans perceive in mirrors and in our own shadow (Rank, 1971; McNamara, 1994). As

those who have worked with the Doppelgänger—such as Otto Rank (1971) and Sigmund Freud (1919/2003)—have suspected, there is a deep fear tied tightly to the concept of identity and losing it; this is where the Doppelgänger easily falls, representing an uncertainty of mortality and the death of the self. The Doppelgänger frequently serves more than one purpose psychologically, as Kautsky (2011) notes: “they personified memory, they joined extreme personality types in one individual, they imparted an aura of the supernatural to the otherwise ordinary and they allowed a cautious flirtation with madness” (p. 31). These multiple purposes turn the Doppelgänger into a multifaceted creature, allowing for various versions of the creature to exist within literature and other media; predominantly, however, they are used to reflect the darkness back at humanity, functioning as a mirror to the self—assuming the mirror has intent to replace the human that it is reflecting.

The Doppelgänger is represented in many fairy tales and folk legends, some more lighthearted than others in the usage of romance or mysteries—and others still quickly rooting the Doppelgänger into its place in horror and the uncanny (Rosenfield, 1963). There are a vast variety of examples to sift through throughout the ages, including the changeling of Fae myth, the Skinwalkers of Navajo belief, and so on. These Doppelgängers are, while not explicitly Doppelgängers in name, in many ways the base for other, more commonly well-known versions, particularly those that do operate more as a mirror than one who might completely take over an identity and replace the original target. Far from being concretely one or the other, the Doppelgänger over time has zigzagged between neutral and evil, more heavily erring on the latter side; some Doppelgängers, interestingly, can be found being played for comedy in some aspects, and frequently are meant not to replace the original person or creature but instead to be used as either a conscience or the “devil on one’s shoulder,” so to speak. This tends to be



particularly true at the beginning of its usage within literature. Despite its comedic potential and possibility to be displayed as a less than evil construct, however, Doppelgangers quickly became associated with demonic forces and entities and became in turn a concept riddled with evil intentions and cruelty towards their intended targets (Vardoulakis, 2006). This tends to be where they rest as creatures present in media and pop culture today, functioning externally while still heavily representing the psychology of a species that is both afraid of and fascinated by them (Kautsky, 2011).

### PSYCHOLOGY OF THE DOPPELGANGER

Psychologically, it is difficult—if not impossible—to extract the Doppelganger from the self; as many have noted, the existence of the Doppelganger is a direct threat to the existence of the original creature. That is, the Doppelganger identity threatens the original identity. In many cases, the Doppelganger exists specifically to replace the original identity, a trope that is increasingly common in modern depictions and examples of the Doppelganger; Hume (1740/2016), as someone particularly interested in the concept of identity and how the mind connects one identity to another, notes that when presented with two objects that contain a striking amount of similarities—or even those that seem to change only subtly and over time—the mind will intrinsically link the two objects together (T 1.4.2). The psychology of the Doppelganger is similar, as the Doppelganger attempts to replicate the original human as closely as possible; in the terms of text, other characters frequently are unable to tell the difference—if they are able to do so, it is only because the Doppelganger itself has done poorly in its attempt to replicate the original identity. This poor attempt generally involves making drastic changes to the initial human's appearance, making it clear that the human and the Doppelganger are distinct. In this way, Doppelgangers and humans are strongly connected to one another, with each idea

linked together through how humans process identity. Even more strongly, identity itself is an integral piece of the puzzle as to why Doppelgangers have maintained their impact on culture throughout time.

Freud (1919/2003) and Rank (1971) both agree that one half of the Doppelganger origin is from human nature—particularly the nature that fixates humanity on themselves. Rank (1971) likens this to the tale of Narcissus, who fell so strongly in love with his own reflection that in the end he fell to his death, drowning in the very water that once gave him such happiness.

Humanity is at heart narcissistic, fascinated with the concept of retaining our youth and livelihood; even more so, humans are fascinated with maintaining the concept of the self, particularly in individualistic cultures and societies. The Doppelganger is a threat to the self-concept, marking itself as the same as another as well as outlining the coming mortality of the original identity; the Doppelganger, whether supernatural or psychological, will inherently live on beyond the original identity that it seeks to replace—and often succeeds in doing. This is the dark side of the human need for immortality and the personification of the Doppelganger as a form of the immortal soul; while the Doppelganger will live on past the human in the human's own form, the original identity is forfeited to a creature that often neither knows nor cares to understand or learn how to act and operate as a human being among other humans (McNamara, 1994; Rank, 1971)

#### THE DOPPELGANGER, NARRATIVE MECHANICS, AND SOCIETY

When examined more closely in terms of a literary or rhetorical device, the Doppelganger is frequently used to portray both the supernatural and the psychological—in some cases at the same time. In some examples, it is meant to evoke a sense of discomfort within the self, forcing the narrator or the protagonist to face themselves when they would rather turn away from the

mirror reflecting their true nature back to them; in others, the focus is on the fear of losing the self to an outside force that the protagonist cannot control, a fear rooted in the helplessness of watching what belongs to them (or what they believe belongs to them) slip from their grasp because of an entity that they can neither defeat nor understand. Even in these terms, there is a duality to the Doppelganger that can hardly be separated, and it becomes difficult to ascertain what came first—the fear of the unknown or the fear of the self. Rank (1971) posits that it is the former, with the Doppelganger unlocking a primal fear based long ago in the horror of humanity's own shadows; in many ways, this seems to be accurate—a primal fear that took on a life of its own, much like a shadow becoming something that it once was not.

The mechanics of the Doppelganger are multiple, as different and complex as the humans that they intend to replace; their main purpose is to act as a shadow of the targeted human, leading them down a slippery slope of madness or despair. In some cases, the Doppelganger does not actively physically harm the human; in others, this is precisely its intent, especially in more modern versions of the creature. Doppelgangers often function as both mirror to the true self and an outward threat, serving both as “wish-fulfillment” and “nightmare-fantasy,” allowing a doubling of even their true motives (Kautsky, 2011, p. 31). Which of these motives belongs to the Doppelganger in question is highly dependent on the motive of the narrative; in most cases, nightmare fantasy is the predominant application of the Doppelganger. Still, in some cases, the concept of wish fulfillment is painfully accurate, with the Doppelganger offering some type of monkey's paw-esque deal that the protagonist is compelled to take—and quickly comes to regret. While this is particularly the case in Victorian era Doppelgangers, this trend has continued onward into modern versions in various ways, thus cementing it as an important facet of the Doppelganger and how it functions narratively.

The inherently psychological root of the Doppelgänger lends it well to multiple genres of literature, cinema, and other forms of media and entertainment. Like the creature itself, the Doppelgänger-concept can conform to many ideas, from the amusement brought by its usage in comedy to the sheer horror found within the depths of psychological torment; this flexibility has found it rooted strongly in pop culture, and allows for many examples to be explored and picked apart in search of a greater understanding of what compels creators to use the Doppelgänger as a literary and rhetorical trope—and what compels audiences to continue to seek this trope out and enjoy it for what it examines and forces them to confront about their own humanity. The Doppelgänger, then, represents not only a monster but a strikingly unnerving version of humanity, varying from guilty consciences to outright mental illness and madness; in some cases, the Doppelgänger functions as both, making a mockery of the human need to understand itself and the horrors within the mind (Rank, 1971; Macías & Núñez, 2011; McNamara, 1994).

While it has established a strong presence in pop culture and media and remains a trope that audiences—and society in general—remain interested in understanding and examining, the horror genre is, by far, the Doppelgänger's natural home, folk tale beginnings aside. The Doppelgänger easily taps into what Freud (1919/2003) describes as the *uncanny*, preying on the innate fear that humans tend to have regarding the darkness hidden underneath what they consider to be familiar; that is, the hidden that becomes unhidden over time and invades a space that once was considered safe—in this case, the Doppelgänger's invasion is that of the abstract space of identity. It fosters a deep-set sense of unease within the audience and the characters alike, straddling the line between human and inhuman in a way that quickly calls to mind the “uncanny valley” trope and walking the line of ambiguity that Vardoulakis (2006) describes as an integral part of what the uncanny is. Freud (1919/2003) himself touts the uncanny as being

something that twists the familiar into the unfamiliar, a concept that Hume (1740/2016) would likely agree with simply on the basis of how he has detailed the workings of the human imagination—especially when the Doppelgänger is part of the equation. Hume notes that to imagine something, humans must have some form of familiarity with the concepts that are formed; after all, the imagination is quite frequently an attempt to form and strengthen an idea from existing memory, giving life to—ideally—an impression (T 1.1.2). The Doppelgänger as a concept, then, has basis in what humanity knows and can conceptualize through memory and understanding. This connection to the uncanny is what situates the Doppelgänger most firmly in the structure of horror, twisting the perception of what humans perceive as “human,” often at humanity’s own expense.

Indeed, this goes hand in hand with Hume (1740/2016) noting that the imagination relies on experience; humans cannot imagine or conceive what they do not know (T 1.1.3). Doppelgängers, like other creatures found within the confines of horror media, are inherently based in the psychology of humanity; in order to have created them, humanity must have at some point experienced something similar in some form, or at the least have experienced something similar enough that the ideas could translate into what would become the Doppelgänger over time. Many of the fears that humanity experiences today, whether in real life or in fiction, seem to be hardwired into the brain, allowing for the brain to make quick judgments and form immediate impressions regarding what might be dangerous; this ability to recognize dangers couples with the imagination that humans possess, allowing for the creation of various monsters and creatures (Asma, 2014; Clasen, 2012). This feeds into the concept of the uncanny, rendering the Doppelgänger as, at least in parts, something that the brain recognizes as encountering before; there is a double recognition within the Doppelgänger, with the brain recognizing both

something that may have been seen generations previously and something that reflects the body that the brain resides within. An idea from a memory is much stronger, and thereby more effective in terms of horror, than an idea from imagination, which tends to be duller in comparison (Hume, T 1.1.3, 1740/2016).

This tether that the Doppelganger occupies between humanity's collective fears, the uncanny, and Hume's (1740/2016) concept of the imagination and memory works to its advantage in terms of effectiveness. Without this trifecta, the Doppelganger would fall flat more often than not; as it is, it varies in effectiveness depending on the audience. Freud (1919/2003) is quick to point out that this is the very nature of the uncanny; in some situations, it works brilliantly, while in others it flounders. He compares the fairy tale to the realistic story, noting that the more realistically that the story is set, the more likely that the uncanny will be effective as a device; if the uncanny is something situated in, for example, a world of fairies and talking animals, it loses its effect of unsettling the audience. In contrast, if the uncanny aspect is surrounded by otherwise realistic situations and environments, it becomes much more unsettling. The Doppelganger is no stranger to this, and creators using this trope have quickly understood this important aspect of the Doppelganger; many usages of the creature focus on building a strongly realistic setting in which they can place a creature that stands out among the humans it is surrounded by.

Another important aspect to note regarding the Doppelganger's effectiveness is the execution of the creature and the storyline. If the execution fails, the effectiveness of the creature fails in turn. In many cases, some form of world building and narrative description and set-up is required, particularly to construct the world that the creature will come to menace. Without this appropriate narrative set up, the Doppelganger may fall flat; this is easily understood as a failure

to situate the uncanny completely within the scope of reality and what the audience perceives as reality. The narrative and situation of the narrative is inherently circular in nature, with the failure of the Doppelganger pointing immediately to the failure of the narrative overall and the failure of the narrative pointing to the failure of the Doppelganger as a monster; in this way, the horror of the narrative falls flat, leaving the audience unimpressed and the monster unable to capture their attention, interest, and most importantly, fear. This is something that often needs to be taken into account by authors particularly, as the Doppelganger may struggle when on paper versus a story told orally or through audiovisual means; the Victorian era that solidified the tropes, mechanics, and common concept of the Doppelganger in the realm of the Gothic novel featured quite a few of these Doubles within the literature of the time, forming the Doppelganger and the effectiveness that is known today.

## CHAPTER III

### THE DOPPELGANGER IN THE VICTORIAN NOVEL

Within the Victorian social consciousness, a rapidly growing interest in the Gothic and in the occult was beginning to take form during the late eighteenth century; this is the beginning of the Gothic as it is known today, with many early works crafting what would become the established identity of the Gothic and the themes present within, including the concept of the Doppelganger and the uncanny double (Hoeveler, 2012; Smith & Hughes, 2012). Though the Doppelganger and the uncanny are most commonly associated with mid- to late-nineteenth-century Gothic works, they existed and were used by authors far earlier in the Gothic's lifespan, often allowing for the instability that the Gothic provides and relies upon as a cornerstone of the genre (Smith & Hughes, 2012). This instability allows for a playground for the Doppelganger, particularly when the creature is able to exert a certain fluidity of form and appearance; this poses a challenge to the human mind, which at first encounter with a Doppelganger may believe it to be the being that it currently resembles, given the human mind's inclination to connect like objects (Hume, T 1.2.4, 1740/2016). The Doppelganger was, of course, only one part of the concept of the uncanny that Victorian Gothic is permeated with; nonetheless, it remains a large part of the Gothic, and often is considered a strong hallmark of the Gothic.

#### EXAMINATION OF CULTURAL CONTEXT

The Doppelganger, prior to the Victorian Gothic, was nonetheless a strong example of the darkness within a human as well as the concept of immortality and prolonged identity versus mortality; the inclusion of the creature within Gothic novels, however, only cemented this version of the Doppelganger, beginning to perpetuate a concept of the Doppelganger operating as a shadow of a human—that is, the “evil” half of a protagonist (McNamara, 1994). This was



perpetuated by psychologists and theorists like Freud, who focused on the hidden depths of humanity's psyche, and the creature quickly took on a psychological counterpart to the fantastical version of it that existed within Germanic fairytales and folklore (Daffron, 2001; Macías & Núñez, 2011). In many instances, the true fear of the double manifested in the fear of mortality as well as the fear of losing identity to a creature much stronger than a human could be (Macías & Núñez, 2011). This fear combined with the instability depicted within the Gothic novel, allowing the Doppelgänger a vantage point to solidify itself in popular culture as both human and not-human, toeing the line of the uncanny and the abomination. This translation to psychological from fantastical solidified how the Doppelgänger was often perceived, and how it still is in modern depictions; because of this connection to the psyche and to the concept of death and replacement, for Victorian era readers, the Doppelgänger could be particularly effective when used properly. In many cases within Victorian Gothic novels that featured Doppelgängers, the concept of fear intertwined with that of belief, particularly in Christian theology; this belief in the Doppelgänger—often presented as a devil-figure—is rooted in fear of the unknown and of the damnation of the soul, as Norton (2009) notes about Hume's commentary on fanatical religion and religious beliefs overall.

The inclusion of true human fears of the time and grounding the Doppelgänger in reality allowed for a strong effectiveness within Gothic literature; much of the horror of the uncanny, after all, comes from the creator situating the supernatural or tropes of horror within what the audience can see and discern as predominantly realistic interpretations of the world. This is compounded by a growing interest in psychology and psychiatry, and a growing need to explain the intricacies of the human mind. In many ways, the Doppelgänger's new existence as a psychological construct was meant to do just that, allowing authors to explore the duality of self

and the potential death of identity—as well as depict the hopelessness that the protagonists often find themselves in when confronted with creatures like the Doppelganger (Macías & Núñez, 2011). In the usage of the duality of the self, the Doppelganger begins to strip away the identity that the protagonist or other characters assumes that they possess; this creates a tumultuous instability of the self, rendering the self and identity split through duplication (Harries, 1979). The Doppelganger works as this duplication of the self to form a shadow of the characters in question, working to disrupt the life of the human that they have targeted.

In the Victorian era of the Gothic, Doppelgangers function dominantly as both the mirror to the self and the Devil opposite the hero, guiding them to make decisions that impact their lives in ways that destroy any sense of morality that they may once have had; they frequently place characters in a liminal position, forcing them to straddle the line “between two extremes, real versus unreal, good versus bad, happy versus sad, and so on” (Stone, 2015, p. 399). In some cases, they often lead the characters astray or ruin their relationships with others, rendering them alone and often on the verge of madness, a fear that, while not as strongly rooted as death or loss of self, nonetheless is one that the Doppelganger preys on, particularly in this era (Hauke, 2015). Aside from preying on these kind of fears, the Doppelganger’s effectiveness tends to lie in how they are presented within the novel in question, and how the world is constructed around them. In creating a world that aligns with reality, the Doppelganger is allowed to thrive in the uncanny, making it all the more impactful during moments of horror; without this impact, the Doppelganger falls flat, and the sense of uncanny becomes more ridiculous than a feeling of unease.

CASE STUDY: *THE PRIVATE MEMOIRS AND CONFESSIONS OF A JUSTIFIED SINNER*

In some cases, no matter how effectively a Doppelganger might be used, it may not be particularly effective depending on the audience in question. This was the case for James Hogg's novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, which attained few reviews and fewer still positive ones during its original publication, ultimately failing to turn any kind of profit at the time of its publication (Benedict, 1983). This poor reception would not last forever, as many modern critics find Hogg's novel to be a well-documented example both of the early Victorian Gothic and of the usage of a Doppelganger. Multiple reviews noted that, were it not for Hogg's style of writing, the novel might have been more of a success; this lends to a possibility of a style that did not quite mesh well with the expectations and audiences of the time (Benedict, 1983).

Despite this strong dismissal by the general readers of his time, one of the best examples of a Doppelganger in Victorian Gothic literature can be found in Hogg's novel (hereafter referred to as *Justified Sinner*), originally written in 1824. The novel is split into three parts, two being written by an omniscient narrator and the other by the titular "justified sinner," Robert Wringhim Colwan. In the first section, the narrator explains the circumstances of Robert's birth as the second son of the Laird Colwan and his wife, though Robert is quickly rejected by his birth father and grows up with the Reverend Wringhim as his father figure; George Colwan, his older brother, is accepted wholeheartedly, and grows into being someone with a multitude of friends. Throughout the first part narrative, Robert and George keep meeting one another, with Robert often going out of his way to irritate or otherwise frustrate George, with this interest in displacing his brother eventually culminating in his death during a duel with a figure resembling a friend of George's. Over time, the narrator reveals, Robert's part in his brother's death is found

out by George's surrogate mother, Mrs. Logan, and her new-found friend, Mrs. Arabella Calvert, and he is persecuted because of this and suspicions of his murdering his own mother. In the second part of the novel, Robert tells his own story of the events—with some changes here and there. Robert, despite being raised in a strongly Calvinist home, is particularly inclined to sin; eventually he meets a man named Gil-Martin, who has the ability to assume another's form and identity. Gil-Martin leads him down a path of murder, and Robert's memoir outlines each that he was part of—and notes several that he has no memory of doing or participating in. In the end, Robert is left destitute and on the run from his crimes, and, at the behest of Gil-Martin, eventually ends his own life. The final section details the finding of these memoirs, including an appearance by a fictitious version of Hogg himself; this section notes the strange way Robert's body was found, with no decomposition until the coffin was opened.

The omniscient narrative at first most strongly involves the Colwan family, most specifically focusing on George Colwan's untimely death at the hands of his own brother and the Doppelganger and devil figure that accompanies Robert almost everywhere he goes—or takes his place where he cannot. From a third-person perspective, the reader is able to catch glimpses of the Doppelganger working alongside Robert, and the reader is presented with multiple attempts at George's life by Robert, once at the precipice of a cliff and then the second and final attempt at the green in town after a night of George's drinking before leaving the town. It is in this second, successful attempt that the Doppelganger's abilities are truly seen first; he takes the form of Thomas Drummond, using his appearance to lure George into a duel on the green (Hogg, 1824/2016). Later in the narrative, Mrs. Arabella Calvert notes in her testimony to Mrs. Logan that she believed him at first to be Drummond, though she knew better; even the man she had been with for the night, “never mistook one man for another in his life, which makes the mystery

of the likeness between this incendiary and Drummond the more extraordinary” (Hogg, 1824/2016, p. 89). The Doppelganger has taken over Drummond’s form so thoroughly that even someone with expert skill at determining people that he has seen prior can be fooled by him. Thus, the Doppelganger, named Gil-Martin, is able to mimic others perfectly, allowing him to absolve Robert of multiple crimes at the expense of someone else; his truly favored form, however, is not cemented until Robert’s own account of the events, during which Gil-Martin takes on the form of the deceased George Colwan almost exclusively. The novel is particularly interesting regarding the concept of the Double, functioning as one even structurally and mechanically.

The structure of the novel itself can be viewed as a Double, with the objective views by a narrator/editor bookending the unreliable account written by a psychologically disturbed Wringhim—in this case, the Double that cannot quite achieve what might be considered a “normal account” (Rosenfield, 1963). Much like a physical Doppelganger, Wringhim’s account of events until his suicide manifests as an account that is strange and not altogether believable—the narrative that is not quite “right” or “normal.” Though this “Doppelganger” is far from one in a traditional sense, the narrative presents a moderately contrasting, yet repetitive version of the primary editorial narrative, a version that, though recounting the same events, does its best to disrupt the more normal version presented by the omniscient editor—much like a Doppelganger would disrupt the normal life of its intended target (Harries, 1979). This doubling of structure allows for “the intersecting of two conflicting desires”; as Redekop (1985) further notes, “the reader’s desire for consonance, completion and revelation goes with a contrasting desire for mystery” (p. 164). Just as Robert struggles with the dichotomy of who he is and who he thinks he is, the reader struggles with the concept of wanting to unravel the mystery but yet wanting the

mystery to still remain; this is a Doubling concept that cannot be wholly reconciled within the audience, and thus functions as a disruption to how the audience perceives the text overall. The mystery is never fully solved or illuminated, and it is uncertain to the audience which perspective is the one that holds more truth (Harries, 1979).

Still further is the existence of Gil-Martin, equal parts Devil-figure and Doppelganger; in *Justified Sinner*, the Doppelganger is much more than a single Double, as the reader sees Gil-Martin take on multiple forms throughout the omniscient narration. It is not until Wringhim's personal account of events that the reader discovers Gil-Martin's preferred and most used form: that of the deceased George Colwen. Something interesting of note is that McNamara (1994) comments that usually, "doubling occurs in the midst of an emotionally aroused state with specific characteristics" (p. 238). This is something that the audience does witness, as Gil-Martin's first appearance is the very day that Robert is celebrating his position among the Elect, presented to him by Reverend Wringhim, which finds Robert in a decidedly excited state; even more clear is Gil-Martin taking on the appearance and qualities of Mr. Blanchard when Robert explains the unfavorable things that the Reverend said about Gil-Martin and Robert's relationship with him, something that upsets the Doppelganger greatly (Hogg, 1824/2016). Even with these frequent changes in appearance and loose identity, his personality, suave yet malicious, seems to remain unchanged throughout the novel no matter what form he takes, setting him apart even more so from other Doppelgangers, who strive to match the original person as closely as possible. Still, his actions, meant to disrupt and destroy Wringhim's relationships, status, and, ultimately, his life, retain his position as a Doppelganger, albeit much closer to a traditional Doppelganger rather than the later examples found within *i am sophie* and *The Mandela Catalogue*. As opposed to those cases, Gil-Martin functions as a mirror to

Wringhim's terrible deeds, functioning as the devil on his shoulder that helps him justify the darkness within his soul and fulfilling the Doppelganger concept of the shadow figure bound to a human; at the same time, he takes his identity and his sense of time away from him and, in the end, damns him to suicide in order to escape Gil-Martin's torment (Rosenfield, 1963).

Early in the novel, Gil-Martin uses multiple forms, often depending on what crime might warrant an escape route or scapegoat and frequently using these different forms to gain a greater understanding of how people think and operate. He notes to Robert that his appearance changes according to his "studies and sensations," and by carefully and seriously contemplating the features of another, his own "gradually assume the very same appearance and character," lending him not only their appearance, but also their ideas and secret thoughts (Hogg, 1824/2016, p. 136). By gaining the person's memories, Gil-Martin assumes their identity almost completely, aligning with Hume's (1740/2016) connection of the memory to identity, with a person's memory's construction directly relating to the person's sense of self; memory is, additionally, used heavily during the later stages of *Justified Sinner* to note a struggle with the self, with Robert losing large swathes of memory and thereby forgetting what he has done, allegedly or not (Harries, 1979). This loss in memory impacts his identity heavily, causing him to question who he is and what he has done, and he openly explains to Mrs. Keeler that he must either have a second self or "some other being who appears in [his] likeness" (Hogg, 1824/2016, p. 193). He cannot reconcile what Mrs. Keeler and Gil-Martin tell him with who he is, predominantly because he lacks the memories to do so; this part of his identity is lost to him, and the reader is never fully certain whether these things did occur at Robert's own hand, or by Gil-Martin's.

With the concept of identity in mind, Gil-Martin's preferred form—that of the deceased George Colwan—is particularly important for the discussion of the Doppelganger, as it is the

most consecutive and concrete form that Gil-Martin takes on throughout the novel; beyond this, it can also be described as the form that might be the most hurtful toward Robert in terms of his mental state and therefor may disrupt his life and mental stability the most, leaving him open and vulnerable to Gil-Martin's machinations. Though Robert had no real connection to his brother other than a growing urge and need to murder him, George Colwan's appearance is intrinsically linked to the guilt that Robert repeatedly covers up by clinging to the concept of predestination and his allegedly safe place among the Elect, functioning as a mirror by which to show Robert the shadow that his deeds have cast on him (McNamara, 1994). By maintaining the form of George, Gil-Martin can more easily pressure Robert towards his ultimate end, using George's worn and haggard face to instill a deep sense of dread within the only remaining Colwan (Hogg, 1824/2016). In this way, the identity of George becomes conflated with Gil-Martin, with multiple characters, such as Lawyer Linkum and Mrs. Logan, claiming for him to either be or unsettlingly resemble George Colwan due to how uncanny the resemblance is—an uncanniness that permeates the very nature of Gil-Martin in how he easily replicates those around him.

Robert himself is startled multiple times by Gil-Martin's sudden change in appearance, such as when Gil-Martin assumes the appearances of Mr. Blanchard and Thomas Drummond (Hogg, 1824/2016). While initially he finds himself drawn to Gil-Martin, feeling a kindred spirit within him along the lines of Hume's (T 2.1.11, 1740/2016) discussion of humanity's tendency toward sympathizing with those that resemble themselves, he quickly becomes uncomfortable upon looking at the Doppelganger in these different forms—a discomfort that only grows as his memoir slowly comes to a grisly end. Indeed, in one of the final confrontations between Robert and Gil-Martin, he describes his form in detail—still that of his brother, but far more grotesque:

It came slowly onward, and I advanced as slowly to meet it; yet, when we came within speech, I still knew not who it was. It bore the figure, air, and features of my late brother,



I thought, exactly; yet in all these there were traits so forbidding, so mixed with an appearance of misery, chagrin and despair, that I still shrunk from the view, not knowing in whose face I looked. But, when the being spoke, both my mental and bodily frame received another shock more terrible than the first, for it was the voice of the great personage I had so long denominated my friend, of whom I had deemed myself for ever freed, and whose presence and counsels I now dreaded more than Hell. It was his voice, but so altered—I shall never forget it till my dying day. Nay, I can scarce conceive it possible that any earthly sounds could be so discordant, so repulsive to every feeling of a human soul, as the tones of the voice that grated on my ear at that moment. They were the sounds of the pit, wheezed through a grated cranny, or seemed so to my distempered imagination. (Hogg, 1824/2016, pp. 205-206)

This version of Gil-Martin, still in his form of George Colwan, is a moment of horror, intended to disturb the reader through its grotesque imagery; while the Doppelgänger remains a Doppelgänger, his hold on his preferred form is beginning to slip, giving him a feeling of the uncanny further beyond what it was upon his first assumption of Colwan's identity. Further still, over the course of Robert's personal memoir, it becomes increasingly obvious that, though there is a distinction between Robert and Gil-Martin, the line grows more fuzzy as the novel marches onward; multiple characters within the text gossip about Robert after he becomes laird and sole heir of the Colwan estate, claiming that he is a Devil, or at the least possesses one (Hogg, 1824/2016, p. 214). Even Gil-Martin alludes multiple times to their conjoined nature, telling Robert repeatedly that he will never be entirely rid of him; he follows this later in the novel by claiming that he has become "wedded to [Robert] so closely" that he sees himself and feels himself to be Robert (Hogg, 2016, p. 250). Much like a shadow or a reflection in the mirror, Gil-Martin is both the Doppelgänger of George Colwan and Robert Wringhim, usurping both of their forms—and lives—over the course of the novel; this connects him intrinsically to them both, wherein when one is thought of, the thought of the other will quickly follow, a concept that Hume (1740/2016) underlines regarding human thought (T 1.4.2).

The Doppelganger within *Justified Sinner* is used most predominantly to satirize the excesses of religion, a satirization that never quite leaves the concept of the Doppelganger as a literary and rhetorical trope. The intention of Gil-Martin is to provide a commentary on society and the religious doctrine of the time, which predominantly included Calvinists and Cameronians (Benedict, 1983). This is seen more and more as the novel goes on, with Gil-Martin becoming more obviously a Devil-figure on a mission to lead Robert astray—and succeeding in doing so. Hume (1740/2016) notes the inclination of religious beliefs to spring from fear or ignorance, and it is clear within the novel that this is in some ways the case, at least for Robert, whose beliefs are fueled by pride and a desire for power. At the end of the novel, Robert is cast out from his castle, left to wander the Earth while hiding from those who would punish him for crimes he does not remember committing; despondent and desperate, he relies heavily on others for shelter, and he frequently considers and at times longs for his own existence to end (Hogg, 1824/2016).

The message, presented through the scope of the Devil on Robert's shoulder, can easily be summarized by Mr. Blanchard, who firmly chastises Robert for spending so much time with someone like Gil-Martin:

“It is incalculable what evil such a person as he may do, if so disposed. There is a sublimity in his ideas, with which there is to me a mixture of terror; and, when he talks of religion, he does it as one that rather dreads its truths than reverences them. He, indeed, pretends great strictness of orthodoxy regarding some of the points of doctrine embraced by the reformed church; but you do not seem to perceive that both you and he are carrying these points to a dangerous extremity. Religion is a sublime and glorious thing, the bonds of society on earth, and the connector of humanity with the Divine nature; but there is nothing so dangerous to man as the wresting of any of its principles, or forcing them beyond their due bounds: this is of all others the readiest way to destruction. Neither is there anything so easily done. There is not an error into which a man can fall which he may not press Scripture into his service as proof of the probity of, and though your boasted theologian shunned the full discussion of the subject before me, while you pressed it, I can easily see that both you and he are carrying your ideas of absolute predestination, and its concomitant appendages, to an extent that overthrows all religion and revelation together; or, at least, jumbles them into a chaos, out of which human capacity can never select what is good.” (Hogg, 1824/2016, pp. 143-144)

This kind of religious extremism is pushed to its limit through Gil-Martin and Robert, with Gil-Martin pressuring and pushing Robert into agreement when any disagreement might arise between their beliefs, which Mr. Blanchard seems to hint at and warn against in his lecture to Robert, who at first finds himself sympathetic to Gil-Martin due to their relatively matching beliefs, a sympathy that leads further into an even stronger religious passion—in essence, Robert’s original tendency toward relating to Gil-Martin sets in motion a change from a simple idea (killing to get rid of those who feel differently) to a kind of belief (that Robert is chosen and even commanded to do so) (Owen, 2009). Even Gil-Martin’s deal that he presents to Robert—albeit in differing words—is rooted in religious extremism, with Gil-Martin playing to Robert’s ego and gradually convincing him to act on his need to be a warrior of God, pressing for him to work toward the goal of “purging the Christian world,” one murder at a time (Hogg, 1824/2016, p. 154). Robert accepts this deal with a good deal of anxiety, though in the end he tends to follow through with Gil-Martin’s plans of murder in the name of ridding the world of sinners and false prophets—at least, those according to Gil-Martin. Hogg’s skepticism regarding religious extremism is palpable throughout the novel, and this message permeates every layer of Gil-Martin and Robert’s grimly intertwined lives, with Gil-Martin fulfilling the Doppelgänger trait of being intrinsically tied to a human and their soul or conscience while making Robert “a stranger to oneself, an object, a thing possessed by an unknown self,” in some cases arguably literally, as Robert frequently loses himself, especially in the later years of his adult life (Macías & Núñez, 2011, p. 261).

Aside from—or perhaps in addition to—his connection to religion, Gil-Martin’s existence as a Doppelgänger and, in turn, his shapeshifting power is dominantly based around the concept of memory, as mentioned previously; he makes it clear to Robert early on that his ability

to change form relies on his thoughts and who he thinks most heavily about (Hogg, 1824/2016). In doing this, identity is directly connected to memory and how the memory of a person impacts the identity of this mysterious figure; this is most clearly seen through Gil-Martin's approximation of George Colwan, but it rings true for others as well, such as Mr. Blanchard and Thomas Drummond. By examining this connection, the ties to Hume's theory of memory can be quickly ascertained; the memories of the people that Gil-Martin approximates allow him to understand who they are and what their intentions are—which is how he decided upon Robert as his ultimate target, having understood his character through assuming his form (Hogg, 1824/2016). Gil-Martin is able to take the “perceptions that collectively constitute a mind or self” and use them to recreate the identity of that person, down to their most core beliefs and core identities, striking a chord of fear in those questioning their own identities (Biro, 2009, p. 59).

In some ways, the effectiveness of Hogg's carefully crafted Doppelgänger can be called into question, at least in the modern era. Though in previous forms the Doppelgänger possessed the ability to create a sense of horror through a page or an oral story, modern society has rendered this ability somewhat questionable. It is still possible, granted; however, Hogg's narrative at times can be distanced from the reader by time and space, leaving a lack of urgency or immediacy despite how well the narrative is worded and crafted. Modern horror is more visual and interactive than in the era of *Justified Sinner*, and though it maintains a place as a well-crafted example of a Doppelgänger, time has caused it to lose its bite for the majority of current audiences. This may harken back to the dichotomy of the idea versus the impression. Modern audiences have been accustomed to quick scares, such as the “jumpscare,” a form of using the fight-or-flight response to gain a reaction to a monster jumping out to frighten the audience, often accompanied auditorily by a large scare chord; beyond that, horror as a whole has become

more visual, letting audiences see the reactions from the characters through image rather than text—although this is not to say that horror novels have fallen off the map, either. Hogg's Doppelganger, while a strong version of one, could potentially fall flat with modern audiences due to changing expectations of horror, but most importantly due to the aforementioned distance from the reader to the characters and setting within the novel. Because of this distance, there is a disconnect; it is difficult, if not impossible, after all, to imagine what humans have not experienced before, and many modern audiences may find this to be the case—though even today, modern audiences may understand the fear present within a loss of identity and a loss of control over one's own life.

In either case, the concept of Hogg's Doppelganger is one that cannot be ignored or pushed away. Effectiveness for modern audiences aside, Gil-Martin presents an important opportunity to examine the psychological effects of religious extremism, guilt, and the trauma that a Doppelganger can cause a human to live with when their own worst traits or experiences are constantly poised opposite them, as if in a dark mirror. The ending of Robert's memoir is a dark one, featuring his ultimate suicide alongside Gil-Martin, who had pressured him repeatedly to go down this path since his original one was all but in shambles—due to the aforementioned Doppelganger, of course.

While the Doppelganger has, appropriately, morphed into different forms of itself over time, the creature as society currently knows it has clear and definite roots in the depiction given to it during the Victorian era. In fact, this is the Doppelganger that many are most familiar with, particularly the intrinsic connection between the human psyche and the Doppelganger itself. With this in mind, its usage within the horror genre has only expanded as society has, allowing the creature to maintain its effectiveness in terms of being not only a psychological construct but

also one that continues to make similar social commentary that a Doppelganger trope made during the Victorian era. Despite this retention of social commentary and effectiveness, the Doppelganger marches on as a slightly different creature as society changes and grows, turning to an era filled with technology, video, and Instagram pages.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE DOPPELGANGER IN INTERNET HORROR

In today's media, Doppelgangers are still present, just as they were in previous eras of time. Many online horror projects such as Alternate Reality Games (ARGs) and Unfiction projects use Doppelgangers to push a narrative—whatever that narrative may be for the project. Both ARGs and Unfiction projects are set in real life, or at the least a version of it that is similar enough to our own to allow for both suspension of disbelief and a much greater chance of influencing the audience through the usage of the uncanny. ARGs often feature multiple puzzles and codes for the audience to crack in order to progress the mystery and unlock further clues; Unfiction projects, on the other hand, often lack these more interactive features to some degree, focusing more on the narrative set in real life and displaying it without much interaction from the audience. Many of the modern iterations of Doppelgangers are heavily psychologically based, just as they were in Victorian Gothic novels; however, some newer versions also focus strongly on outside forces taking over or assuming the form of a person—though whether the force succeeds completely or fails is often dependent on the source in question. Some projects prefer to show the cruelty of the Doppelganger through its success and others prefer to allow the protagonists to gain the upper hand needed to survive. Both can be effective for an audience, depending on the narrative set-up, and it is clear that while some concepts of the Doppelganger have shifted, it still retains the roots that bore it through the Victorian era and into modern day.

#### EXAMINATION OF CULTURAL CONTEXT

In today's culture, Doppelgangers do maintain a large number of tropes that were cemented into existence during the Victorian era, including acting as a mirror for humanity's darkest ideals, wants, and thought processes (Rosenfield, 1963). In the name of change, however,

depictions of Doppelgangers have shifted to give them a wider range of horror potential, one of which being to return to the earlier concept of replacement. While Victorian Doppelgangers often only had intent to disrupt life or act as a conscience in some form, modern Doppelgangers take some inspiration from older depictions, such as the changeling; in many recent depictions of Doppelgangers, there is a strong focus on the idea of killing one's double and taking their place, assuming their identity to the best of the Doppelganger's ability—though often not quite managing to form itself into an exact copy. In doing so, the Doppelganger fulfills an important step in creating the true horror of the creature lodged firmly in the human psyche: causing the death of the physical body as well as the death of the identity or the self.

Because of this intrinsic tie to the horror of mortality, present-day Doppelgangers can still be just as effective as narrative and rhetorical devices as they are in terms of horror devices. As mentioned, however, the effect does seem to have shifted in some ways, particularly when examining why the Doppelganger remains effective and useful as a horror device; in contrast to novels such as Hogg's, the fear has translated from the concept of doing horrible things because of a Doppelganger or double to the concept of horrible things being done to oneself *by* the double. In both *i am sophie* and *The Mandela Catalogue*, two YouTube projects, the doubles themselves are the pervasive threat to the humans in question, rather than being a simple "Devil on one's shoulder;" in both cases, the doubles seek to actively replace or destroy the original human, either through mystical or scientific means—though both still contain an element of a "bargain" presented by a Doppelganger, however small it might be. This dissonance between the human and the monster breaks any sympathy or connection that one might have for the Doppelganger and creates an underlying fear not only of the Other within the self, but also the Other outside of it—that is, the Other that appears to be human: the not-human.



This fear of the Other within the self, or the becoming the Other, still quite easily hearkens back to Hume's concepts of what forms the identity—in particular, how memory works to connect the identity as a whole. Hume (1740/2016) notes the following:

As a memory alone acquaints us with the continuance and extent of this succession of perceptions, it is to be considered, upon that account chiefly, as the source of personal identity. Had we no memory, we never should have any notion of causation, nor consequently of that chain of causes and effects, which constitute our self or person. (T 1.4.6/229)

This connection thus raises questions regarding the Doppelgangers—modern ones, in particular—and how they approach identity; because the Doppelgangers do not have all of the memories required to truly become the person that they are attempting to impersonate or become, it is almost impossible for them to be seen as fully conforming to the identity of the original target. Nonetheless, this does not mean that they cannot get close enough to be passable, and passability is all that is needed for the human mind to quickly note the Doppelganger as the person that they are mirroring, with the brain quickly making causal connections to maintain the concept that the Doppelganger is in the same category as a human; in some cases, this is exactly what happens for the modern Doppelganger, and they work to retain that ability to pass as the original identity (McIntyre, 2009).

In some cases of media that features the Doppelganger, the identity is presented coupled with a source of longing, with at least one of the characters imagining a life different from their own. This imagination of becoming a different person with a different life and lifestyle invites the Doppelganger into the narrative, offering the original person a chance to forge a new identity—though rarely mentioning that this identity will no longer be their own. This Doppelganger tends to be a “perfect” one, in the sense that it takes over the identity of the original person *almost* perfectly; in many cases, there are still some aspects that the

Doppelganger cannot change, such as an inclination toward violence of some kind, something expected considering their strong propensity toward being a negative aspect of a person (McNamara, 1994). Beyond this, some Doppelgangers find it difficult to appropriately mimic human socialization and contact, likely due to the lack of memories that prevent them from identifying as human and providing them with an understanding of human social cues; based on this, they remain incomplete in terms of repossessing the identity of the human in question (McIntyre, 2009; Biro, 2009).

#### CASE STUDY: *I AM SOPHIE*

One example of this type of Doppelganger can be easily found in the context of social media and social media influencers, satirizing this social community much as Hogg used his Doppelganger to satirize religion taken too far. The YouTube series *i am sophie* is an Unfiction project revolving around the concept of social media and the urge to be or become someone or something else, particularly when this desire gives way to a desperate form of envy. The project ran from February to July of 2020, although it lacks a true finale due to the creator's concern with financial limitations; this lack of true finale, however, does not detract from the message that *i am sophie* is able to put out into the world, nor does it detract from the uncanniness of the Doppelgangers present within the confines of the video files presented to the audience. The series is well-known in the online ARG and Unfiction project community, with large name horror YouTubers like Night Mind, Loey Lane, Nexpo, and Inside a Mind focusing multiple explanation and dissection videos on the work and what can be taken from it. Like many traditional ARGs, *i am sophie* is full of hidden cyphers and puzzles for the viewer to discover and unravel, which leads them to the full plot of the project. Binary code, subliminal messages, and objects hidden in the background of visual shots all work together to create and further the

message of the series and allow the audience to participate more fully in an immersive story involving cloning, social media, and mysterious technological companies doing things that veer heavily on the side of unethical. Additionally, the project included outside resources as well, such as an Instagram page, Twitter page, and a website dedicated to Sophie's clothing brand, Young, Rich & Powerful (YRP), that held clues as to the true meaning of the narrative hidden behind pink suits and audiovisual glitches.

*i am sophie* features multiple characters and a convoluted plotline that involves some form of time travel, though this is never entirely explained to the audience. It originally features Sophie, her cameraman Ben, and her best friend Plum, along with her manager, Chloe; over time, the audience is introduced to other characters such as Mark, Lara, and Simon, each of which have their own roles to play—often displaying double sides that the audience is not yet aware of upon first meeting. Sophie meets Lara, whose images have been somehow put into Sophie's vlogs without her or Ben's knowledge; Lara acts strangely on meeting Sophie and Plum, and this meeting opens the door for Sophie's kidnapping and murder at Lara's hands. Here, the narrative shifts, and the audience is presented with videos posted by Lara a year prior, showing a different kind of person than the Lara the audience originally meets; these videos show her slow descent into desperation as she plays a video game version of Sophie's life, and it is through these videos that the audience learns that the "Lara" that Sophie meets is not the original Lara. The series has a focus on a type of cloning, which the audience sees as Simon contacts Chloe, the woman that is Sophie's manager, and places an order for someone that looks and acts like Sophie; this leads the audience to understanding how Sophie might have come to be, though nothing is answered completely within the series—much like nothing was fully answered in Hogg's *Justified Sinner* over a century prior.

From the beginning, the audience follows the titular Sophie as we learn about her high-class, extremely rich life; much of the first episode (or “vlog”) is meant to elicit a sense of jealousy and envy for the way Sophie lives, with her able to travel where and when she wants and assistants ready at her beck and call. She even states early on that her main reason for uploading vlogs like “THE GUIDE to being YOUNG, RICH & POWERFUL” (*i am sophie*, 2020) is to show people what it is like to live like her and be her “living this hectic lifestyle as a Millennial” (2:24-2:28). Over the course of the first five videos, glitches begin to take place and gradually get worse, with some acknowledged by Sophie herself and others going ignored. In the sixth video, “my #1 super CRAZY fan!!” (*i am sophie*, 2020), the audience meets Lara, a girl whose webcam video was mysteriously spliced into the end of Sophie’s vlog titled “responding to leon lush...” (*i am sophie*, 2020); she emails Sophie about the splice, and Sophie, her friend Plum, her manager Chloe, and her cameraman Ben all visit Lara’s home in search of clues to understand what happened and how, with a friend of Sophie’s (Mark) appearing to assist with technological aspects (*i am sophie*, “my #1 super CRAZY fan!!”, 2020). They come out of the experience knowing no less than they did before—and missing one member of the party, Plum, which Sophie barely seems to notice. Plum’s absence is only given a cursory question as to her whereabouts, with Sophie’s lack of memory regarding her supposed best friend all but erasing her identity—and allowing the audience to question where she is.

From here, the true ARG begins, with the next video (*i am sophie*, “11271518920813.mp4”, 2020) including Sophie and Ben being taken hostage by a bloody Mark and Plum, Lara dressed as Sophie from her channel trailer, and a mysterious man in a suit. The inclusion of Plum is interesting, tying back to Hume’s (1740/2016) discussion of object identity; Plum’s absence from Sophie’s channel until her next appearance as a torture victim is only

heightened at the inclusion of Lara, acting as a copy of Sophie. The audience is allowed again to question Plum, as well as Mark, who also hadn't been included since their time spent at Lara's home; the question is an important one, paralleling the questions the audience will soon have regarding Lara: are these still the real Plum and Mark? The audience, with the information thus far provided, remains uncertain. As if to hammer this point home, the next video, "reliarT lennahC – EBUTUOY fO NEEUQ WEN ehT" (*i am sophie*, 2020), is a mirrored remake of Sophie's original channel trailer, "The NEW QUEEN Of YOUTUBE – Channel Trailer" (*i am sophie*, 2020), with Lara in Sophie's place instead, fulfilling her new role as Sophie's double though they do not resemble each other physically. The new trailer is full of glitches and spliced video from the dirty room where Sophie was held captive in the previous video, and in the preview image for the video, Sophie's eyes are marked out, signaling a full replacement by Lara; the eyes are the windows to the soul in many traditions and superstitions, and by scratching out Sophie's, it is made clear to the audience that her soul and her identity are gone and replaced, with Lara usurping her memories and thus identity (McIntyre, 2009). Following in the pattern of uncanny, repeated videos, the next two videos are replications of Sophie's next two videos, each replacement bearing the same titles as the originals: "THE GUIDE to being YOUNG, RICH & POWERFUL" (*i am sophie*, 2020) and "YRP COLLECTION – AVAILABLE NOW" (*i am sophie*, 2020); each replication bears its own glitches, clearly demonstrating that something is amiss and that there may be something missing, enough to prevent a full replacement.

Following this, beginning with the video "lara.mp4" (*i am sophie*, 2020) the audience is shown uploads that Lara posted to her original channel, almost a year before Sophie uploaded her first video to YouTube; through these videos of Lara, the audience begins to understand her as a person—which happens to be someone very different from the version of Lara presented in

Sophie's video at Lara's house. It quickly becomes apparent that the Lara seen in these videos is what can be described as the "real" Lara; the one that the audience meets in "my #1 super CRAZY fan!!" (*i am sophie*, 2020) is in fact the Doppelganger, with one scene in "are you being you?" (*i am sophie*, 2020) demonstrating that the real Lara is the one in the locked room—despite Sophie and Plum not arriving at her house until the next year, with that video's upload date being March 5, 2020. This is demonstrated in the posting date on Lara's video within the one that the audience sees, showing that Lara posted her video on July 11, 2019 (*i am sophie*, "thegame1.mp4", 2020). The real Lara is presented as someone genuine and kind, the opposite of how Sophie is initially presented to the audience, driving home a key concept of the project: a theme of who someone is versus who they want to be and the identity of that person (Night Mind, 2020). Over the span of her videos, the audience can only watch as Lara's life becomes consumed by a video game version of Sophie, who addresses her directly, in real time, and gradually escalates her demands on Lara—culminating in animal sacrifice in order for Lara to become the person that she wants to be instead of the person that she is (Night Mind, 2020).

Alongside this look at Lara's downfall into accepting the deal offered to her by what is termed "The Hand of Hate," a tall man with an upside down hand attached to his face, the audience is given hints and careful implications here and there, including one of Lara's friends, Simon, being the one to show the videos and battle against the Hand of Hate through Sophie's official Twitter account—a battle that he ultimately loses. It is largely implied that Simon is posting her videos in an attempt to clear her name as well as redeem himself; it is revealed in "i can see you too" (*i am sophie*, 2020) that he is the one who anonymously sent the Young, Rich & Powerful video game to Lara, starting her on her journey downwards into what can only be described as a hell that she cannot recover from. Through this journey, she loses herself in

multiple ways, and is ultimately replaced anachronistically by a clone of her—the “Lara” that the audience first meets; this Doppelganger, like other versions, does not fully retain Lara’s memories, nor does she try to learn about her surroundings, something the audience picks up on when the Doppelganger is asked about her cat—which she denies having, despite the cat food and toys around the home (*i am sophie*, “my #1 super CRAZY fan!!”, 2020).

As mentioned previously, the Doppelganger in this case is a clone, something that Daffron (2001) argues is the post-modern version of a Doppelganger. Sophie possesses more than one Doppelganger within the series, including Lara and the video game version of her that Lara becomes first acquainted with; these Doppelgangers function to weave a tight web, chronologically ensnaring first Lara, then Sophie—and replacing them both. The glitches present within Lara’s versions of Sophie’s early videos indicate that something is missing or has gone wrong in the replacement process, whether because of a glitch in the code or a lack of appropriate memory, thus preventing a cohesive identity that fully ties Lara into Sophie’s place. The Doppelganger Lara cannot fulfill Sophie’s role completely and entirely, causing the audience to be entirely aware of her status as a failed Doppelganger in that sense. In contrast, she does replace Lara almost completely; as mentioned above, the only true errors are found within the memory, preventing her from acting entirely cohesively as a human due to the strong connections between memory, perception, and identity (McIntyre, 2009; Hume, T 1.4.6, 1740/2006). Despite her best efforts, Lara (and, by virtue, Sophie) are trapped by their own destinies, fated to be replaced; in Lara’s case, she is unable “to resist the power of evil that takes over the identity of protagonists,” leaving her helpless at the hands of her Doppelganger and a larger scheme that cares little for her actual happiness despite the Hand of Hate’s promises to her (Macías & Núñez, 2011, p. 262).

Identity is a key factor in *i am sophie*'s Doppelgangers, especially in terms of how people are perceived through social media; what is real versus what is fake is integral to the narrative within the project, and this dichotomy is revisited multiple times throughout the project in various ways (Night Mind, 2020). The versions of Doppelgangers featured in *i am sophie* are varying and complex, with some being anachronistic in their inclusion in the narrative and others functioning as nontraditional Doppelgangers, replicating the identity of someone through coding and pixels rather than through flesh and blood. The Hand of Hate preys on Lara and Sophie, visiting Lara in dreams meant to assuage her fears and comfort her as she begins leaning into the desperation for a better, different life; for Sophie, his actions are much more sinister, as he is present at the time of her capture and assumed death at the hands of the brainwashed Mark and Doppelganger Lara ("lara3.mp4", 2020; "11271518920813.mp4", 2020). While not a Doppelganger in his own right, the Hand of Hate functions as another instance of the Other, a creature that thrives on the uncanniness of his appearance to create unease within the audience; he seems to operate as a handler of sorts, as he is often seen with the Doppelganger in question. It is difficult, if not impossible, to feel the same kind of sympathy for the Hand of Hate as for Sophie and Lara, as his monstrous appearance marks him as strongly different from the audience—though in Lara's case he presents himself as much more caring. This is an interesting note, as his role in the narrative fluctuates depending on the point of view at the time; in one case, he remains a monster, while in the other he acts as a parental figure of sorts.

In terms of message, *i am sophie*'s commentary on social media, social media influencers, and the concept of envy is one that is plainly obvious to the audience; it functions to question the concept of identity and how identity is presented to an audience, as well as how the identity that social media influencers impact how people perceive and recognize them through



their works (Macías & Núñez, 2011). Many of Lara's encounters with Doppelgangers come directly from her growing desperation to become like Sophie, to the degree that she eventually is replaced by a Doppelganger of her own that circles back, taking Sophie's place—in that way, Lara becomes Sophie, garnering her the life that she came to want, at the expense of disrupting her own identity and how the audience understands both characters (Hauke, 2015). In this way, Lara's imagination has become a reality, albeit not one that is ideal for her; Lara imagines herself in the position of Sophie, who she originally meets through the video game that follows the trajectory of the YouTuber Sophie's vlog posts. She creates what she knows and expects from a different lifestyle, and, in a cyclical way, creates her own Doppelganger to take Sophie's place, which she does. Because of this, the Doppelganger Lara in existence means that the original is no longer needed, and neither is Sophie; both are destroyed or erased, along with Lara's original identity due to the destruction of her own memories and how she perceives the world, something that the Doppelganger cannot fully replicate. Though a "Lara" exists for the audience to see and connect to the original, and vice versa for Sophie with her digital Doppelganger, the connection to the original identity is lost, rendering the Doppelgangers clearly different objects to the audience; the Doppelgangers have effectively destroyed large parts of both characters, rendering them completely different from the original (Hume, T 1.4.2, 1740/2016). By noting this, the connections between Lara's imagination and longing for Sophie's life and the disruption of identity caused from this imagination become apparent; the comingling of the two forces a connection between them that may not otherwise have existed, allowing for the Doppelganger of Lara to create a new identity: one that forces the audience to consider the Doppelganger now both Sophie and Lara. Hume (1740/2016) notes that this is entirely common for the human mind to do:

An object, whose different co-existent parts are bound together by a close relation, operates upon the imagination after much the same manner as one perfectly simple and indivisible and requires not a much greater stretch of thought in order to its conception. From this similarity of operation we attribute a simplicity to it, and feign a principle of union as the support of this simplicity, and the center of all the different parts and qualities of the object. (T 1.4.6/236)

The connection of Lara and Sophie is complete through the actions of Lara's Doppelganger, calling for the audience to question their own interactions with social media and its influencers; just as importantly, however, Lara and Sophie are entirely intertwined within the minds of the audience, connecting them both through causality.

Due to social media's continued relevance to society, *i am sophie*'s Doppelgangers tend to be relatively effective in terms of a narrative device. Though these Doppelgangers are separated somewhat from the reality that viewers are aware of and therefore do not often produce strong impressions on the audience, their horror lies in the fact that they in their own way work as a mirror toward the audience, putting their own shadow on display through Lara's descent into envy and desperation for anything different than what she has currently. In this way, despite being more technologically advanced, these Doppelgangers hearken back to Victorian era Doppelgangers, making social commentary and functioning as mirrors to the dark parts of society; perhaps it is because they are technologically advanced that this works effectively, allowing them to have a stronger grip on societal concerns and hold up the project itself as a Doppelganger-esque mirror toward the audience, who are forced to examine their own parasocial relationships with social media influencers—for better or worse.

#### CASE STUDY: *THE MANDELA CATALOGUE*

While *i am sophie* focuses on social media influencers and parasocial relationships, other Unfiction projects including the Doppelganger turn their attention to other ways to feature the monster within their narrative. *The Mandela Catalogue* is an Unfiction project by Alex Kister,

set in the fictional Mandela County. It is often described as “analog horror”, a subgenre of horror with a heavy emphasis on stylistic choices such as using VHS tapes, older technology, and, in some cases, fake training videos. These are all stylistic choices to help the project feel more realistic to an audience, as well as to evoke a sense of nostalgia that seats itself in the realm of the uncanny. Many of the attempts to scare the audience come from video feedback, distorted images and video, and damaged audio quality; many of these kinds of scares involve some form of influence by the Doppelgangers, which are termed “Alternates” by the Mandela County Police Department (MCPD) and the United States Department of Temporal Phenomena (USDTP), both of which release multiple training videos and public service announcements regarding the alternates. For the purposes of this examination, “alternates” will be used as the term for this version of the Doppelganger.

The plot of *The Mandela Catalogue* is complex and tightly woven, and uploads often are not in a chronological order, so it is left for the audience to decipher what happens when through dates found within the videos; in some ways, the videos tend to be more snapshots of events that occur rather than narratively seamless. An early upload gives a strong hint to how this deluge of alternates began, with an alternate replacing the angel Gabriel in a Biblical cartoon; from there, the uploads vary from 1997 to 2009, featuring a large cast of characters that often do not last very long throughout the course of the series. Early on, the audience is introduced to Cesar Torres and Mark Heathcliff, both of whom are tormented and subsequently destroyed by alternates that managed to get into their homes in some way; Mark is referred to repeatedly throughout the series, often through childhood drawings or evidence from his suicide that Lieutenant Thatcher Davis goes through in a later video. In one of the multiple training and evidence videos, the suicide of the as-yet unnamed Lynn Murphy is presented, instigated by the

kidnapping of her child by an alternate that emerged from a television in the child's room, thus introducing the danger of technology such as televisions alongside the danger of strong belief in religion and superstition. The audience is also introduced to Adam Murray and Jonah Marshall, two young adults that are members of the Bythorne Paranormal Society and are investigating the home of a woman who claims to hear a ghost cat; while Jonah escapes their encounter with the alternate haunting what the audience learns to be Cesar Torres's former home, Adam does not, finding himself prey to the alternate hiding within the basement. After this upload, the audience learns more details about nameless characters from earlier in the series, where they were mentioned only regarding the circumstances of their death; the audience also formally meets Lieutenant Thatcher Davis and his partner, Sergeant Ruth Weaver. Thatcher was the original investigator of Mark's suicide, and he and Ruth are called on to investigate the scene of Lynn's suicide; here, Ruth is killed by an alternate, and Thatcher is hunted by it or another alternate within the Mandela County police station, showing the audience that at least some alternates have the ability to mimic multiple targets at once.

It is made very clear early on that no one entirely understands what these alternates are, nor where they came from or why, both in-universe and the audience, though the audience does know some extra information. After all, some of the videos provided on the YouTube channel do give the audience a bit more lore than the lore that in-universe citizens or even police officers are privy to. Like *i am sophie*, *The Mandela Catalogue* provides certain clues and puzzles for audiences to pick apart and understand, though the series focuses more on relating the narrative via the videos themselves, rather than using additional, outside resources like *i am sophie* does. The entire series, clues and all, are found on *The Mandela Catalogue*'s YouTube channel, though they are not always in chronological order; as mentioned previously, in some cases, dates

and timelines must be inferred from commentary on-screen or years presented in images within the videos, rather than told to the audience outright. Most of the horror of *The Mandela Catalogue* does stem from this lack of true understanding or clear-cut narrative structure, making the hints that the audience does receive all the more concerning, such as understanding the magnitude of the alternate situation through the Mandela County population report, which shows a sharp decline in population from 1997 to 2009.

Despite not being in a clear chronological order, *The Mandela Catalogue* does follow a narrative storyline, though the uploads often present it out of order and the audience is expected to connect the dots over time. The majority of the series is spent within the titular Mandela County, following the strange and dangerous events happening to its residents. MCPD releases multiple emergency broadcasts to the citizens of Mandela County, imploring them to keep their doors and windows locked at all times; it also introduces the “T.H.I.N.K.” principle to residents, reminding them of the various steps of the process: “Tell an authority figure about your encounter. Hinder the alternate’s movement. Identify the class type. Neutralize the alternate (if safe to do so). Know your place in reality.” (Kister, “The Mandela Catalogue Vol. 1”, 2021). During this broadcast, the “K” is replaced originally by a much crueler direction, likely included by an alternate, until it is replaced: “Kill yourself. There’s not enough room for the two of us” (Kister, “The Mandela Catalogue Vol. 1”, 2021). While not yet established to the audience, this is a clear indication that technology is not safe from an alternate’s tampering, adding a layer of unease when it comes to how this kind of data is presented; if this can be tampered with, it is clear that any kind of transmission can be. From the first upload, these alternates are seen as a clear threat to humanity, and they possess a clear intent to both kill and replace the humans that

they mark as their targets, including Cesar Torres, Mark Heathcliff, Adam Murray, and Sergeant Ruth Weaver.

Because the series is ongoing, there is only so much information available regarding the alternates and what they may want as an end goal, if there is one, which only adds to the unsettling nature of the alternates (Bantinaki, 2012). Like in Hogg's *Justified Sinner*, the Doppelganger of *The Mandela Catalogue* is one birthed from religion and superstition, as "overthroned" (Kister, 2021), the first video present on the channel, includes an alternate of the archangel Gabriel that speaks to Mary in a cartoon version of the birth of Jesus. Further still, a verse from Corinthians is hidden in the closed captioning of the video "exhibition" (Kister, 2021), stating that Lucifer disguises himself as an angel and confirming the existence of an archangel Gabriel alternate. Here again, religion is based in or twisted by fear, eventually leading to a blanket ban on religion and faith overall; this aligns with Hogg's *Justified Sinner* and its commentary on warped religious intentions, continuing the thread of Hume's own commentary on the pitfalls of religion and belief (ESY 2.14). This beginning steeped in religion and long-standing, primal fears continues throughout the series, twisting the Doppelganger into a creature that preys on humanity's basest fear: mortality. Unlike *i am sophie*, *The Mandela Catalogue* does not see humans wanting power or fame; instead, the humans in Mandela County simply want to either survive or die on their own terms, as Mark Heathfield and Lynn Murphy did after being tormented by alternates. This does not, however, mean that these alternates do not offer deals similar to ones that Wringhim or Lara might have taken; "The Mandela Catalogue Vol. 2" (Kister, 2021) sees the protagonist of the upload, Adam Murray, presented with a deal from the alternate stalking around Cesar Torres' former home: "You followed the shepherd. You are a fool. Follow my voice instead. You will find great happiness. Wake up, Adam. Do not make me

wake the others” (12:05-12:20). Adam, much like Wringhim and Lara, in time accepts the offer from the alternate, making his way down the stairs behind a door that was locked upon his arrival; there, he finds himself alone with the alternate wandering the halls of the house—and no one, the alternate reminds him, will be coming to save him, not even his investigation partner, Jonah. This concept of hopelessness permeates the Unfiction project, punctuated by Mark’s suicide after his attempts to resist the alternate begging him to open the door fail, Lynn’s suicide after her baby is taken by an alternate, Lieutenant Thatcher Davis’s desperate attempt to stop the alternate in the police station, and the rapidly depleting population numbers shown in “interlude” (Kister, 2022; Kister, “The Mandela Catalogue Vol. 1”, 2021; Kister, “exposition”, 2021; Kister, “every day gets brighter”, 2022). Most importantly is the note that is repeated over and over: no one will be coming to save anyone from the alternates.

The multitude alternate or Doppelganger present within Kister’s work comes in various forms and types, as indicated by police broadcasts early in the channel’s history and later uploads that give a more specific depiction of the different kinds of alternates and how they appear (Kister, “The Mandela Catalogue Vol. 1”, 2021; Kister, “interlude”, 2022). They range from missing parts to true Doubles to overexaggerated features, with the Doppelgangers lacking any kind of limit that might prevent the over exaggeration of humanoid features (Vardoulakis, 2006); “interlude” (Kister, 2022) includes a scale that gives audiences a greater understanding of the different types of alternates featured within the series and what the levels of “assimilation” are: flawed assimilation, complete assimilation, and overdriven assimilation, respectively. This scale indicates multiple alternates and a possible full species of them that are gradually growing more powerful and more numerous; some uploads, however, seem to suggest the opposite. “The Mandela Catalogue Vol. 333” (Kister, 2022) suggests one core alternate, not unlike Gil-Martin,

presenting the entity as one that is able to replicate multiple humans; upon interaction with Thatcher, the alternate echoes his questions back at him before echoing the voices of multiple victims. It is unclear as yet what the truth regarding the number of alternates is, though it is likely that the alternate featured in the third volume is an exception rather than the rule, at least based on the other evidence given throughout the series so far.

Much like Gil-Martin, the alternate within *The Mandela Catalogue* does not yet have a true reason in-universe for existing, at least not one that is as clear-cut as *i am sophie*'s Doppelgangers' reason is. This lack of reasoning tends to give it an edge in terms of horror, allowing for a stronger fear of the unknown that defies attempts to understand where the alternates came from and why; this lack of understanding prevents the audience from being able to build a psychological defense against them as a creature, letting them remain a threat that the audience cannot quite rid themselves of (Tozzi, 2020). This makes segments such as "Stanley"'s all the more concerning, wherein Stanley, a simply drawn face on a black background, teaches the audience how to create a friend of their own; after helping the viewer create the friend, Stanley simply says, "I think it worked. Your new friend is somewhere in your house" (Kister, "The Mandela Catalogue: Vol. 333, 2022, 14:55-15:06). Stanley's segment creates a quick impression within the viewer that *Justified Sinner* and *i am sophie* are not quite able to replicate, and preys on the concept of imagination becoming reality, and therefore a direct threat to the person (Hume, 1740/2016). Stanley's direct connection to the audience allows for an impression of fear to transcend the medium of the project; upon reflection, the audience is able to separate themselves from the impression Stanley plants within their psyche, using an idea versus impression concept in order to soothe the emotions immediately brought up by Stanley's commentary (Hume, 1740/2016). The audience does not live in Mandela County or a



neighboring county and is therefore unaffected by the manifestation that Stanley has coached them into—as far as they know. Still, the concept that creatures and visuals such as Stanley provide create a strong impression within the audience, causing a quick burst of fear that *Justified Sinner* and *i am sophie* struggle to replicate exactly; this impression translates easily into an idea as the fear of something invading their own home passes into a memory, giving the audience a lingering concern over any suspicious noises that they might otherwise attribute to something normal rather than supernatural, even if the initial fear subsides.

In this way, the alternates of *The Mandela Catalogue* have the potential to be the most effective of the three versions of the Doppelganger that have been examined. *Justified Sinner* is separated by time and distance, and *i am sophie*, while also connecting with the audience in certain ways, is separated by the constraints of the real world versus the world in which Sophie and Lara reside; in contrast, the alternates of Mandela County seem just as likely to exist in reality, particularly due to the interactions between certain parts of the narrative with the viewer. This grounds *The Mandela Catalogue* much more effectively in reality, allowing for a deeper sense both of the uncanny and of the fear that a Doppelganger is able to produce; this makes the uncanny effect even more effective, and it allows for a greater usage of the imagination to build upon a reality that the audience is already hyperaware of (Freud, 1919/2003). Their status as completely alien to humanity fixes them strongly as the Other, just as their liminal forms of human-yet-not continues to keep them there (Macías & Núñez, 2011; Asma, 2014). The alternates are the culmination of imagination gone awry, a compilation of traits that are both terrifying and fascinating to the human mind; their identities remain unstable from viewing to viewing, forcing humans that encounter them to question what or who they are at every turn.

The alternates within *The Mandela Catalogue* are, like Gil-Martin and the Doppelgangers from *i am sophie*, first and foremost meant to usurp humanity by duplication and destruction; in many ways, they are a blend of the other two forms of the Doppelganger, providing a mixture of entities preying on human downfall and copies replacing humanity one victim at a time. They work less as mirrors, unless they are acting to torment their newest target, and more as uncertain, unknowable horrors that straddle the line of human and non-human—both, yet neither, situating them on the line of what humans might consider “normal” and understandable. By not occupying a position as an exact mirror but instead an “alternate” to humanity, it becomes more difficult to ascertain the message hidden within *The Mandela Catalogue*. The series has a strong focus on religion, particularly Christianity; it examines an alternate world in which a demon functions as a holy figure and uses alternates to slowly establish dominion over humanity. While the alternates do not typically fulfill the traditional role of devils seen in Victorian era Doppelganger narratives, their status as potential demons does agree with the concept of the Double equaling the Devil in some way; Doppelgangers as a whole are particularly connected to this concept, and *The Mandela Catalogue* is no exception to this rule (Rosenfield, 1963).

The imagination, identity, and memory are a core concept within *The Mandela Catalogue*'s alternates, as many of the alternates quickly fail in maintaining a false humanity; while they are able to create the illusion of a human, with some more capably doing so than others, the identity of the target is not translated to them through assumption of their form, unlike in the case of Gil-Martin. Alternates can be deduced and picked up on by the audience because of this inability to fully recreate what a human is, though they often do not try to maintain the illusion of being human for very long; in-universe, however, they often are able to get away with fooling other characters long enough to get them into a position where the alternates have the

upper hand. This was the case with Adam and Jonah, who were lured into Cesar Torres' old home by a mysterious woman, a woman that the audience can assume is in some way an alternate; she is likely the one that Adam meets in the locked room, having never left the house at all (Kister, "The Mandela Catalogue Vol. 2", 2021).

The visuals and pseudo-interactive parts of *The Mandela Catalogue*, though in some ways less interactive than *i am sophie*, make the alternates particularly effective Doppelgangers, with the fear that they instill in the audience continuing to replicate as the memory of the series sticks within the human brain—a prime example of Hume's (1740/2016) comment regarding the cyclical nature of impressions and ideas: "Our impressions give rise to their correspondent ideas; said these ideas in their turn produce other impressions" (T 1.4.6/228). The horror created by the alternates of Mandela County and the surrounding counties lingers within the mind, allowing the idea of the alternates to create new impressions when viewers later on see a person or shadow that seems just a bit off—or worse, if those viewers accidentally meet a person that looks just a little too similar to themselves.

The Doppelgangers found within Mandela County are among the most recent and strongest examples of the Doppelganger and how it has grown and shifted over time, and how understanding imagination helps the audience understand the creature more effectively; this holds true for other modern versions of Doppelgangers, such as the ones found within *i am sophie*. Just like previous versions, these kinds of Doppelgangers have their own messages hidden within them, whether overtly or not; by connecting these creatures to how identity is affected by the imagination and how the uncanny works to create impressions of fear, the audience is able to understand these messages all the more clearly.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

The genre of horror is one of many facets and depictions, as varied as the monsters that haunt the literature, films, and other media created under the genre's large umbrella. Humans have long used monsters to understand and process the fears intrinsic to their survival, particularly ones that they find themselves unable to explain—at least in their entirety. This allows humans to maintain the fear that has kept them alive for centuries, and it allows for humans to find a sense of comfort within things that may terrify them; many horror fans have specific horror movies or novels that they tend to turn to when looking for a way to relax, a concept that seems to intrinsically go against what horror as a genre is meant to do. The Doppelganger as a monster is no different from the other monsters found within the genre as a whole, presenting ample opportunities for directors, writers, and content creators to tap into a piece of the human psyche that inherently fears the Other—particularly the Other that appears to look human, or at the least human enough to initially pass. It is on the double take, the hesitation needed to process what the eyes see, that humans both within and without the media realize that the Doppelganger is not at all who they thought.

This is particularly apparent in psychological horror, wherein the Doppelganger is able to tap into primal fears that humans possess—namely the fear of death and replacement. Doppelgangers work as a mirror through which humans must perceive either their own cruelty and darkness or their concept of things that are as yet unknowable; this depends largely on the media's depiction of Doppelgangers and how they are applied within the constraints of the medium in question. The Doppelganger is ever evolving and shifting within media, appropriate for the type of monster that it is. While used in comedy at times, it is predominantly used to

inspire horror within the audience—a goal that it has the ability to complete quite well when executed properly; in fact, much of the Doppelganger’s effectiveness comes from its execution rather than its status as a monster, since it so easily connects itself to humanity’s fears.

Hume’s (1740/2016; 1748/2016) concepts allow for a thorough understanding of which fears the Doppelganger is not only intended to appeal to but is most effective at doing so. The concept of the imagination being rooted so heavily in what humans have seen, whether in the current lifetime or somewhere along the chain of evolution, allows for the Doppelganger to have a much stronger presence—and a much more horrifying one. The creature is specifically formulated to encapsulate features and specifications that foster a strong sense of unease within humans, exposing their own darkness and horror back at them as they look into their own reflections; it functions as a concept that spawns from and feeds off of the primal fear that it both inspires and is born from. The Doppelganger exists, Hume might posit, because humans have experienced either something similar or something similar enough that they cannot more easily explain; in creating the Doppelganger, humans are forced to give life to the darkness within or without—and in either case, they must face the human that is not human, and likely never was.

Just as importantly, examining the Doppelganger allows for the ability to understand how humans interact with both the supernatural and technology as well as the ability to understand the need for humans to be believed and to understand—in all three examples, the protagonists attempt to record their slide into madness brought on by their Doubles or by Doppelganger-types, from Wringhim’s memoirs to recordings and vlogs made by citizens of Mandela County and Lara and Sophie. These documentations are, of course, in different formats and different mediums, but nonetheless they still display an urge that seems inherent among humanity: the need to decipher and track the things that happen to them, whether good or bad. By doing so,

creatures like the Doppelganger are passed onward through generations, growing and changing to fit the needs of those creating novels or media about them. In some cases, these needs are fixated on technological advancements and their repercussions that humanity has yet to understand; in others, they are focused on religion and the supernatural, areas that humanity likely will never understand. In both cases, they are an attempt to make connections and function as ways to explain what may be unexplainable.

In Hogg's novel, the struggle between Wringhim and Gil-Martin is, at its core, a struggle against the concept of the devil and supernatural forces invading the concept and sanctity of the self. Under Gil-Martin's influence, Wringhim over time loses everything that made him who he was: religion, family, home, even his time and his sense of who he was and what he would do in situations. He loses large swathes of his life, with hardly any memories of those months—and even less so of what he did to others during them, whether on his own volition or with Gil-Martin acting as him; the reader is never explicitly told which is the case, blurring the lines between Robert Wringhim and the devil that haunts his every footstep throughout his adult life. Wringhim attempts desperately to make sense of what his life has become, with little success; in the end, the Double wins, driving him to a suicide that appears to be aided by supernatural means. The reader has no more answers than Wringhim does, and Gil-Martin appears to be as interchangeable with Wringhim at some points as he is with George Colwan—in appearance, at the least. Gil-Martin assumes their identities multiple times, accessing their memories and thoughts, and thus becomes them, leading to an effective death of the individuality that humans treasure so carefully.

In the case of *i am sophie*, Sophie too loses her self—though in her case, it is clearly through murder at Lara's hands; so too, however, does Lara lose who she is in her growing

desperation to become someone—and, arguably, *something*—that she is not and has never been. *i am sophie* is at heart a struggle against technology and what technology can do to a person, particularly in how humans seek to replicate that which they long to be. Sophie tracks her life through vlogs—and indeed, even her death, though the upload of her death was not by her own hand. Lara’s own journey is documented through vlogs as well, particularly in the beginning of her downward slide into becoming the next Sophie; over time, however, the vlogs turn into recordings through webcams and phone cameras, often seeming to be without her knowledge at all. Unlike Wringhim’s deliberate attempts to track his life, Sophie and Lara seem to have no choice in the matter, with their own recordings taken over by the Doppelgangers that become them. The Doppelganger creature in *i am sophie* forces itself to be known by others, likely looking for new and fresh victims to lure into the cycle that it has created.

*The Mandela Catalogue* is similar in this case, with the Doppelganger chiefly interacting and luring victims through technology. The basis of this Doppelganger, like in *Justified Sinner*, is steeped in religion, with the alternate replacing an angel early on and convincing Biblical figures to listen to it; the series is a mixture of religion, the supernatural, and technology, and how these three concepts interconnect with each other. Within the series, religious thinking is discouraged due to the alternates’ attraction to highly religious individuals, and eventually, most technology is outlawed because of the alternates using television and telephones to make their way into homes and claim other victims. *The Mandela Catalogue* meshes the horror of the supernatural and religion gone too far from *Justified Sinner* with the horror of technology and envy within *i am sophie*; in doing so, it follows Hume’s concept of causality, linking the two together and forming a connection that proves important to understanding how the Doppelganger as a creature continues to exist within cultures.

The Doppelganger is a look into the darkness of humanity—and, additionally, a look into the darkness that humanity cannot yet understand, or maybe never will. It encompasses both the fear of the self and the fear of death—and, through linking the two, the death of the self. Within the myriad of stories told through time of creatures that look just human enough to pass, but just wrong enough to incite suspicion, there lies a core of truth in the creature humans dread to see in the darkness: the Doppelganger is undeniably tied to humanity and the human imagination, feeding on the human psyche in order to continue to exist among narrative tales and campfire stories. It functions as a mirror, one that can be ignored or forgotten, but never destroyed or removed entirely; like the darkness it represents, the Doppelganger serves as a reminder to humanity—there will always be things that humanity will not understand, including themselves, their identities, and their own mortality.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Asma, S. T. (2014). Monsters on the brain: An evolutionary epistemology of horror. *Social Research*, 81(4), 941-968.
- Bantinaki, K. (2012). The paradox of horror: Fear as a positive emotion. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 70(4), 383-392.
- Bell, M. (2009). Hume on causation. In D. F. Norton, & J. Taylor (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Hume* (pp. 147-176). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Benedict, W. R. (1983). A story replete with horror. *The Princeton University Library Chronicle*, 44(3), 246-251.
- Biro, J. (2009). Hume's new science of the mind. In D. F. Norton, & J. Taylor (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Hume* (pp. 40-70). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Brewster, S. (2005). Borderline experience: Madness, mimicry and Scottish Gothic. *Gothic Studies*, 7(1), 79-86.
- Clasen, M. (2012). Monsters evolve: A biocultural approach to horror stories. *Review of General Psychology*, 16(2), 222-229.
- Daffron, E. (2001). Double trouble: The self, the social order and the trouble with sympathy in the Romantic and Post-Modern Gothic. *Gothic Studies*, 3(1), 75-83.
- Dorsch, F. (2018). Hume on the imagination. *Disputatio. Philosophical Research Bulletin*, 7(8), 1-21.
- Freud, S. (1919/2003). *The Uncanny*. (D. McLintock, Ed., & D. McLintock, Trans.) London: Penguin Books.
- Harries, E. W. (1979). Duplication and duplicity: James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. *The Wordsworth Circle*, 10(2), 187-196.

- Hauke, C. (2015). Horror films and the attack on rationality. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 60(5), 736-740.
- Hoeveler, D. L. (2012). Victorian Gothic Drama. In A. Smith, *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburg Companion* (pp. 57-71). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Hogg, J. (1824/2016). *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. New York: Open Road Integrated Media, Inc.
- Hume, D. (1740/2016). A Treatise of Human Nature. In *Complete Works of David Hume* (pp. 10-519). Hastings: Delphi Classics.
- Hume, D. (1748/2016). An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding. In *Complete Works of David Hume* (pp. 543-666). Hastings: Delphi Classics.
- Hume, D. (1748/2016). Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary. In *Complete Works of David Hume* (pp. 777-1307). Hastings: Delphi Classics.
- i am sophie*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 5, 2022, from YouTube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/c/iamsophie>
- Kautsky, C. (2011). Eusebius, Florestan and friends: Schumann and the Doppelgänger tradition in German literature. *American Music Teacher*, 61(2), 31-34.
- Kister, A. (n.d.). *Home [YouTube Channel]*. Retrieved October 5, 2022, from YouTube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/c/MandelaCatalogue/featured>
- Macías, J., & Núñez, R. (2011). The other self: Psychopathology and literature. *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 32(4), 257-267.
- McIntyre, J. L. (2009). Hume and the problem of personal identity. In D. F. Norton, & J. Taylor (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Hume* (pp. 177-209). New York: Cambridge University Press.

- McNamara, P. (1994). Memory, double, shadow, and evil. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 39(2), 233-251.
- Norton, D. F. (2009). An introduction to Hume's thought. In D. F. Norton, & J. Taylor (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Hume* (pp. 1-39). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Owen, D. (2009). Hume and the mechanics of mind impressions, ideas, and association. In D. F. Norton, & J. Taylor (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Hume* (pp. 70-104). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Prohászková, V. (2012). The genre of horror. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 2(4), 132-142.
- Rank, O. (1971). *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*. (J. H. Tucker, Ed., & J. H. Tucker, Trans.) Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Redekop, M. (1985). Beyond closure: Buried alive with Hogg's *Justified Sinner*. *ELH*, 52(1), 159-184.
- Rosenfield, C. (1963). The shadow within: The conscious and unconscious use of the double. *Daedalus*, 92(2), 326-344.
- Smith, A., & Hughes, W. (2012). Introduction: Locating the Victorian Gothic. In A. Smith, *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion* (pp. 1-14). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Stone, M. H. (2015). The double: Manifestations of pathology and a deluded self. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 55(4), 387-403.
- Strohl, M. (2012). Horror and hedonic ambivalence. *Journal of Aesthetics & Art Criticism*, 70(2), 203-212.

Tozzi, C. (2020). From horror to ethical responsibility: Carl Gustav Jung and Stephen King encounter the dark half within us, between us and in the world. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 65(1), 219-234.

Tucker, J. H. (1971). Introduction. In O. Rank, & J. H. Tucker (Ed.), *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study* (J. H. Tucker, Trans., pp. xiii-xxii). Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Vardoulakis, D. (2006). The return of negation: The Doppelgänger in Freud's "The Uncanny". *Substance: A Review of Theory & Literary Criticism*, 35(2), 100-116.

## VITA

Brittnea Anne Holland  
Old Dominion University  
English Department  
5000 Batten Arts & Letters  
Norfolk, VA 23529

Brittnea Holland was born in Americus, Georgia, on March 30, 1995. She attended Macon County schools until middle school, and she graduated from Fullington Academy with honors in May 2013. She enrolled in Georgia Southwestern State University the following August, and she received the degree Bachelor of Arts in English in December 2018. She entered Old Dominion University in August 2020 and received a Master of Arts degree in English in May 2023.