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# An Opposing Self

Christine M. Gamache

*Rhode Island College*, [cgamache\\_0230@ric.edu](mailto:cgamache_0230@ric.edu)

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“AN OPPOSING SELF”: *DOPPELGÄNGERS* IN  
*FRANKENSTEIN, JEKYLL AND HYDE,*  
*AND FIGHT CLUB*

By

Christine M. Gamache

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Introduction

“You have conquered, and I yield. Yet henceforward art thou also dead - dead to the World, to

Heaven, and to Hope! In me didst thou exist - and, in my death, see by this image, which is thine own, how utterly thou hast murdered thyself” (Edgar Allan Poe, “William Wilson”)

People have always been both frightened and fascinated by the unknown, and themes touching on the existence of things beyond human understanding have longevity in the literary arena as well as in popular culture. One such theme is that of the *doppelgänger*, or double, which has been around for centuries but was first made popular by Jean-Paul’s (Johann Paul Friedrich Richter) work *Hesperus* in 1795. Due to a resurgence in the nineteenth century in the popularity of Gothic literature, *doppelgängers*, or variations of this double motif, found their way into some of the most famous works of literature by the most notable writers of the century, including Edgar Allan Poe’s “William Wilson” (1839), Feodor Dostoevsky’s “The Double” (1846), Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Shadow” (1847), and Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). The theme has persisted through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, recent examples being the popular films *Secret Window* (2004) starring Johnny Depp, *Shutter Island* (2010) starring Leonardo DiCaprio, and *Black Swan* (2010) starring Natalie Portman.

Although the popularity of the double has remained constant over the past few centuries, the presentation and interpretation of doubles have not. Prior to the Romantic period, the appearance of a *doppelgänger* was almost always seen as an evil portent, often foretelling disaster and the death of the protagonist. The character of the double, in manifest form, was represented as something outside of the person plagued by it, part of the realm of the supernatural, and certainly something to be feared. But with the growing interest in the human mind, and especially the unconscious, in the Romantic Period, people started viewing the double as something that could possibly come from *within* an individual. This new way of looking at the theme of the double fit the interests and feelings of the times, especially the idea that there were parts of ourselves over which we had no conscious control. The evolution of the double as a literary motif thus reflected the changing attitudes of the times, its horror lying now not outside of the human psyche but secretly locked within it. As Rosemary Jackson observes, there was “an explicit shift from a presentation of a demonic ‘other’ as supernaturally evil, the devil in a

conventional iconography, toward something much more disturbing because equivocal, ambiguous in its nature and origins. . . . The double then comes to be seen as an aspect of the psyche, externalized in the shape of another in the world” (44).

Interest in the double as a psychological manifestation of repressed parts of the psyche was spurred by the best known psychoanalysts of the twentieth century, including Sigmund Freud and later, his pupil Carl Gustav Jung. Freud talks at length about the psychological reasons for the appearance of a double, and the complications it can cause:

They involve the idea of the ‘double’ (the *Doppelgänger*), in all its nuances and manifestations - that is to say, the appearance of persons who have to be regarded as identical because they look alike. This relationship is intensified by the spontaneous transmission of mental processes from one of these persons to the other - what we would call telepathy - so that the one becomes co-owner of the other’s knowledge, emotions and experience. Moreover, a person may identify himself with another and so become unsure of his true self; or he may substitute the other’s self for his own. This self may be duplicated, divided and interchanged. (*Uncanny* 141-142)

Although Freud poses the problem, he does not offer a solution; he merely labels the appearance of *doppelgängers* as “uncanny,” a term he “applies to everything that was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come into the open” (*Uncanny* 132).

Jung, Freud’s student, also picks up the subject of the double and furthers the psychological study of its appearances. He explains the double as an archetype of the psyche, which he henceforth refers to as the *shadow*: “The archetype is essentially an unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear” (*Archetypes* 5). Although the archetypes are innate in every human being, as Jung describes them, problems arise when one of these, in this case the shadow, becomes stronger than the individual consciousness: “In the realm of consciousness we are our own masters; we seem to be the ‘factors’ themselves. But if we step

through the door of the shadow we discover with terror that we are the objects of unseen factors. To know this is decidedly unpleasant, for nothing is more disillusioning than the discovery of our own inadequacy” (*Archetypes* 23). Unlike Freud, Jung not only diagnoses the psychic imbalance associated with the double, but offers a solution to the problem.

Jung proposes that one needs not only to confront the shadow, or double, consciously, but also to make an attempt to identify with it and to reintegrate it as part of a unified psyche:

This confrontation is the first test of courage on the inner way, a test sufficient to frighten off most people, for the meeting with ourselves belongs to the more unpleasant things that can be avoided so long as we can project everything negative into the environment. But if we are able to see our own shadow and can bear knowing about it, then a small part of the problem has already been solved: we have at least brought up the personal unconscious. The shadow is a living part of the personality and therefore wants to live with it in some form. It cannot be argued out of existence or rationalized into harmlessness. This problem is exceedingly difficult because it not only challenges the whole man, but reminds him at the same time of his helplessness and ineffectuality. (*Archetypes* 20-21)

For Jung, the best possible solution for a fragmented psyche is to mend it and make it whole once again. In other words, a person who is haunted by a double must first identify and confront that double, thereby taking responsibility for it, and then re-assimilate it in order to form a coherent psychic whole. From this point of view, as Jackson explains, “fantasies of dualism have more to do with a quest for wholeness and integration than with mere moral division” (45).

Viewed with these psychological explanations in mind, the double, as a recurring literary theme, can appear in various relations to the character who is being doubled. For instance, a double can be latent (only seen in the protagonist’s mind) or manifest (physically there in the real world), and can be either consciously or unconsciously created. Furthermore, a double can represent a division of the self, as in a separated fragment of the protagonist’s psyche, or a multiplication of the self, in which there is not a split but rather the appearance of another

character that is very similar in many ways to the initial character and oftentimes an autonomous being. Most importantly, the literary double makes an appearance because of something significant going on within the character being plagued by it. The psychological issue may be the attempted repression of thoughts which are finding their way into consciousness, the projection of resentment or internal conflict onto a being outside of the self, a dissatisfaction with one's personal sense of identity which therefore causes a split to occur, or even a search *for* an identity that is felt to be lacking. To show some of the varying ways that the double as a literary theme has been utilized in popular fiction, I have chosen three literary works from three different time periods that display different types of doubles for different reasons: a Romantic text, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), a Victorian text, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), and a postmodern text, Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club* (1996).

In Shelley's gothic novel, the main protagonist, Victor Frankenstein, creates a manifest double of himself in the form of his Creature. Although these two characters look nothing alike, they can be viewed as doubles due to their close psychological connections, including the feelings of resentment from Victor's childhood that he projects onto the Creature, and to the fact that Victor ultimately begins to act like and "resemble" the monster he has created. As evidenced by the history of his childhood that Victor provides Walton, Victor holds quite a bit of resentment, especially towards his father. Because the creation of the Creature is such an extreme psychological, emotional, and physical trauma for Victor, these repressed resentments become associated with the Creature itself: "Dynamically considered, the appearance of an alternating personality can be understood in terms of the drives which have been repressed and impulses which are defended against" (Rogers 92). Such projection may account for the almost immediate hatred that Victor feels towards his Creature.

When one considers the relation between Victor and the Creature psychologically, it becomes obvious that there is something deeper than aesthetic repulsion that drives Victor to reject his creation. In rejecting his "monster," Victor tries to defend against the sort of self-

criticism that Freud describes in his analysis of the uncanny:

Yet it is not only this content - which is objectionable to self-criticism - that can be embodied in the figure of the double: in addition there are all the possibilities which, had they been realized, might have shaped our destiny, and to which our imagination still clings, all the strivings of the ego that were frustrated by adverse circumstances, all the suppressed acts of volition that fostered the illusion of free will. (*Uncanny* 143)

The recognition of himself in the Creature causes Victor to harken back to the resentment he feels towards his father and his own thwarted ambitions in the sciences, which ultimately is what drives him to create the Creature in the first place, thus causing all of the subsequent events to happen.

What makes the relationship between Victor and his Creature unique is that the Creature is a manifest, autonomous being and therefore open to being doubled by Victor. This doubling of the double occurs after the Creature pushes Victor too far by killing many of his loved ones, and causes Victor to act out with a type of lunacy described by Jung: “The archetype corresponding to the situation is activated, and as a result those explosive and dangerous forces hidden in the archetype come into action, frequently with unpredictable consequences. There is no lunacy people under the dominion of an archetype will not fall a prey to” (*Concept* 47-48). Once Victor reaches his breaking point, he becomes guilty of the same horrors he accuses his Creature of, seeking revenge and viciously tearing to shreds the corpse of the Creature’s would-be mate. Although the relationship between protagonist and double is complicated in this story due to the fact that they are two autonomous, separate characters, the intrinsic psychological ties between Victor and the Creature are evident by the close of the story. Victor dies on his quest to destroy the Creature, and the Creature vows to kill himself once Victor is gone since it is not possible for him to live without him.

A different version of the double motif can be seen in Stevenson’s short story *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, in which the main protagonist, Jekyll, shares the same body

with his double, Hyde. Like Victor Frankenstein, Jekyll consciously creates his double, in his case through the use of a potion that transforms his appearance. Although he appears as a completely different person to those observing him, it is clear that Hyde is only a different side of Jekyll. Jekyll needs to create a double to express that side of himself because the society in which he lives, restrictive Victorian England, does not accept the “pleasures” that he once indulged as a youth and which he now has to repress in order to maintain his social status. Such doubling, as Jackson explains, is almost a textbook case: “This is particularly the case in fantasies of dualism, where the narrative center, often the protagonist himself, is divided into two sides, one subverting and one upholding the dominant social order” (43).

Jekyll’s greatest mistake, from a psychological point of view, is his refusal to reconcile these two selves. Although he contends that Hyde was always a part of him, he insists that he was never a part of Hyde, therefore denying any responsibility for Hyde’s actions. By so doing, Jekyll is avoiding what Jung describes as an inevitable confrontation with himself:

Whoever looks into the mirror of the water will see first of all his own face.

Whoever goes to himself risks a confrontation with himself. The mirror does not flatter, it faithfully shows whatever looks into it; namely, the face we never show to the world because we cover it with the *persona*, the mask of the actor. But the mirror lies behind the mask and shows the true face. (*Archetypes* 20)

Because Jekyll denies a part of himself, he makes an integrated sense of self impossible. Because he refuses to take responsibility for Hyde’s actions, he perpetuates a duality in his psyche that cannot be healed.

Jekyll’s loss of self, seen most obviously in the fact that he no longer remembers what he does when he is Hyde, is reminiscent of Freud’s diagnosis of multiple personalities, a pathological condition when two or more equally powerful parts of the self are struggling for consciousness:

If they obtain the upper hand and become too numerous, unduly powerful and incompatible with one another, a pathological outcome will not be far off. It may



come to a disruption of the ego in consequence of the different identifications becoming cut off from one another by resistances; perhaps the secret of the cases of what is described as 'multiple personality' is that the different identifications seize hold of consciousness in turn. (*Ego* 25)

Because Hyde "seize[s] hold of consciousness" more and more often, even without the aid of the potion, Jekyll's identity becomes blurred to the point where it is impossible to dissociate himself from his double. And because Jekyll seeks to oppose these two selves instead of trying to integrate them, he and Hyde ultimately destroy each other.

Finally, Palahniuk's popular novel *Fight Club* offers a postmodern, psychologically savvy approach to the double. It is evident from the very beginning of the story that the unnamed Narrator is having a major identity crisis, as he feels trapped in the mundane, corporate world in which he lives. Jackson describes such identity crises as a common cause of the appearance of a double: "At the heart . . . of all fantasies, is the problem of identity, a problem given particular prominence in tales of the double" (45). Because the Narrator feels trapped in his life with no means of escape, he unconsciously creates a double, Tyler Durden, who will help resurrect him. Tyler is a latent double, although he is manifest for the Narrator himself, who initially views Tyler as a separate human being altogether, unaware that Tyler is actually a part of his unconscious that is projected into his consciousness. What makes the relationship between the Narrator and Tyler more complicated than the similar coexistence of Jekyll and Hyde is that the Narrator *never* has control of Tyler. It is as if Tyler is a completely autonomous figure who just happens to share the Narrator's body.

Though Tyler is anarchic and destructive, destroying things in the Narrator's life to the Narrator's initial dismay, the Narrator comes to accept these losses as part of the process of becoming a new man. It is only when Tyler becomes too strong, and starts to totally take over the Narrator's life, that the latter feels the need to fight back. Because the Narrator already questions his own mental stability, the addition of such a psychological double, as Jung elaborates, is extremely risky: "If there is already a predisposition to psychosis, it may even happen that the

archetypal figures, which are endowed with a certain autonomy anyway, on account of their natural numinosity, will escape from conscious control altogether and become completely independent, thus producing the phenomenon of possession” (*Archetypes* 39). Tyler does indeed begin to possess the Narrator, as he totally takes over the Narrator’s consciousness every time the Narrator falls asleep, using the latter’s body as a vehicle for his own diabolical plans. The Narrator at first comes to accept the destruction that Tyler has brought to his life as a change for the better. Only when Tyler turns this destruction and anarchy on society itself does the Narrator decide to resist.

What makes this case of the double consuming the life of its creator different than that of Jekyll and Hyde is the fact that the Narrator *does* take responsibility for Tyler’s actions when he eventually figures out the connection between Tyler and himself. As Tyler hints to the Narrator many times throughout the story, Tyler is the offspring of thoughts and feelings that the Narrator once felt but repressed. Tyler, therefore, can be seen as having been born directly out of these repressions or, as Freud labels it, the Id: “Thus in the id, which is capable of being inherited, are harboured residues of the existences of countless egos; and, when the ego forms its superego out of the id, it may perhaps only be reviving shapes of former egos and be bringing them to resurrection” (*Ego* 35). As soon as the Narrator realizes that it should be he that controls Tyler, not the other way around, he begins to act like Tyler in order to gain the power back. In Jung’s terms, the Narrator starts to become his own double:

The unconscious no sooner touches us than we *are* it - we become unconscious of ourselves. That is the age-old danger, instinctively known and feared by primitive man, who himself stands so very close to this pleroma. His consciousness is still uncertain, wobbling on its feet. It is still childish, having just emerged from the primal waters. A wave of the unconscious may easily roll over it, and then he forgets who he was and does things that are strange to him. (*Archetypes* 22)

Though the Narrator becoming “Tyler” brings an end to the destruction, it is not a successful assimilation. The Narrator remains unnamed and without a clear sense of self-identity at the end

of the novel. Compared to the tragic endings of Victor Frankenstein and Henry Jekyll, however, the Narrator's end is slightly more hopeful. He does not perish, and he does take back (although perhaps only temporarily) at least some control over his life.

The three literary texts that I analyze in the next three chapters are very different in their narratives, characters, circumstances, and conclusions, but all three of them are variants of the *doppelgänger* tale. And although the three texts were written centuries apart, they all display the shift of the double from a supernatural to a psychological entity. Just as the appearance of a double in old folklore served as an omen of the protagonist's imminent death, these psychological doubles still portend a similar conclusion if the fragments of the psyche are not re-assimilated. As Rogers explains: "Still more indicative of the instability of these psychic components is the disaster the division between them precipitates in the more common case of the tragic or negative ending" (85). The protagonists themselves, not malevolent supernatural powers, are ultimately responsible for their own tragic endings due to their failure both to recognize and to take responsibility for their respective doubles.

“In the light of my own vampire”: Projection of Self in *Frankenstein*

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley’s gothic masterpiece, *Frankenstein*, is perhaps the most famous work to be produced during the British Romantic period. This novel has had a long and colorful history in the realm of literary criticism due to the highly complex characters that Shelley constructs, the ambiguity that the story presents to readers and, most importantly, the intriguing relationship that the main character, Victor Frankenstein, has with his infamous Creature. There is little dispute that *Frankenstein* fits the category of a *doppelgänger* tale due to the undeniable intrinsic ties between Victor and the Creature. As Rosemary Jackson points out, “it is no accident that the monster is anonymous or that in the popular imagination it has come to be confused with Frankenstein himself and frequently given his name” (44), because although the Creature is a separate, free-thinking being, he is the product of Victor’s labors and therefore can be seen as an extension of Victor himself.

The actual creation of the Creature is a crucial event for Victor, because it represents to him a victory over many of the things in his life with which he is struggling to come to terms. Due to feelings that Victor harbors from his childhood which drive him to feel the need to prove himself to his father, Victor may have seen the conception of the Creature as a means to spite his father and prove that he is capable of great things. In addition, because the creation of a living being from dead matter seems to be a defining event for Victor, it may be a product of his attempts to find his sense of self. Once the Creature is animated, it comes to represent all of these

feelings in a manifest way for Victor, which may account for Victor's feelings of disgust and loathing for it. Victor's neglect of the Creature also reflects the neglect that Victor himself feels from his family and society. In this way, Victor and the Creature can be viewed as pieces of one psyche, and it is Victor's inability and outright *refusal* to assimilate these pieces that causes the downfall of both characters.

Victor claims many times in his discussions with Walton that his childhood was a happy one, but he mentions several things which lead one to believe that he suffered some unintentional emotional neglect, especially from his father, and that this neglect has a major impact on the subsequent chain of events in the novel. When Victor tells Walton of his childhood, he begins by describing his father, Alphonse, and the ambition that Alphonse had for Victor to make something of himself: "He [Alphonse] passed his younger days perpetually occupied by the affairs of his country; and it was not until the decline of life that he thought of marrying, and bestowing on the state sons who might carry his virtues and his name down to posterity" (18). Victor also mentions that Alphonse "devoted himself to the education of his children" (19) and, in particular, to Victor, who "was the eldest, and the destined successor to all his labours and utility" (19). Because of the obvious hopes that Alphonse had for Victor to carry on his name and to have an interest in the same work that he had, Victor may have felt obligated to become the sort of person that Alphonse wished him to be, whether he was content with this or not. Although Victor contends that "no youth could have passed more happily than mine" (20), he admits that this childhood leads to the events which, in turn, lead "by insensible steps to my after tale of misery" (21).

The event that Victor points to as having the biggest impact on subsequent events occurs when he is still young and impressionable, when he develops an interest in the works of Cornelius Agrippa which Alphonse brusquely dismisses as "sad trash" (21). This incident has a lasting impact on Victor, not because his father does not share his interests, but because his father does not take the time to even explain to him why these ideas were not worth pursuing: "I cannot help remarking here the many opportunities instructors possess of directing the attention

of their pupils to useful knowledge, which they utterly neglect” (21). Victor harbors resentment over the way in which his father thoughtlessly dismisses these works, blaming him for not informing him about their outdated ideas and even going so far as to say that he would never have pursued them, and hence never have created the monstrous Creature, if his father had taken the time to explain:

If, instead of this remark, my father had taken the pains to explain to me that the principles of Agrippa had been entirely exploded . . . I should certainly have thrown Agrippa aside, and, with my imagination warmed as it was, should probably have applied myself to the more rational theory of chemistry which has resulted from modern discoveries. It is even possible, that the train of my ideas would never have received the fatal impulse that led to my ruin. But the cursory glance my father had taken of my volume by no means assured me that he was acquainted with its contents; and I continued to read with the greatest avidity. (21-22)

This incident serves as the catalyst for the creation of the Creature, not only because Victor continues to read Agrippa and the alchemists, but because it strengthens in Victor a resentment towards his father that will motivate his making of the Creature.

Victor concedes to Alphonse by attending Ingolstadt to study the modern sciences, setting him well on the way to becoming the person his father wants him to be. But because this life path that his father prescribes for him is not really what Victor wants to do with his life, he is forced to put up a façade for his father while still yearning to pursue his own interests. This duality that Victor must commit to creates for him a false sense of self, because he is forced to repress parts of himself to please his father. Victor’s lack of commitment to his father’s wishes can be seen in the fact that he continues to study Agrippa, and also searches for a new father-figure who will approve of his interests. It is obvious that Alphonse’s dismissal has caused Victor to hide his continued enthusiasm for the subject: “I often wished to communicate these secret stores of knowledge to my father, yet his indefinite censure of my favourite Agrippa

always withheld me” (22). At Ingolstadt, Victor seeks acceptance from his new professors, but receives a similar reaction as that of his father from Professor Krempe: “I mentioned, it is true, with fear and trembling, the only authors I had ever read upon those subjects. The professor stared: ‘Have you,’ he said, ‘really spent your time in studying such nonsense?’” (26). Although Krempe dismisses Victor’s alchemical studies, just as Alphonse did, he does have the sense to explain to Victor *why*: “in what desert land have you lived, where no one was kind enough to inform you that these fancies, which you have so greedily imbibed, are a thousand years old, and as musty as they are ancient?” (26). Although Krempe provides Victor with the explanation that Alphonse did not, he still does not succeed in totally eradicating Victor’s early enthusiasms, because Victor sees the sciences that Krempe teaches as limited in light of the power that he seeks.

Victor does encounter a positive father-figure at Ingolstadt, one who is more sympathetic toward his boyhood passions. Professor Waldman is much more understanding of Victor’s interests than Alphonse or Krempe, but he may have come too late. Victor cannot completely escape the fantasies of power, even omnipotence, that the old sciences promised:

I had a contempt for the uses of modern natural philosophy. It was very different, when the masters of the science sought immortality and power; such views, although futile, were grand: but now the scene was changed. The ambition of the inquirer seemed to limit itself to the annihilation of those visions on which my interest in science was chiefly founded. I was required to exchange chimeras of boundless grandeur for realities of little worth. (27)

Victor never entirely outgrows his childhood fantasies of omnipotence - - or his desire to rebel against his father - - as represented in his enthusiasm for the old sciences, but he also finds a new interest in the usefulness of modern sciences. As he explains, the old sciences have the grandeur that he finds appealing, but do not provide him with the power to make that grandeur a reality. But thanks to the speech made by Waldman in which he explains that modern science gives man the ability to “penetrate into the recesses of nature, and shew how she works in her hiding

places” (28), Victor undergoes a revelation. Still yearning for the power symbolized by the old sciences, he now sees a means to turn his omnipotent fantasies into physical reality. Once Victor realizes this, his attitude completely changes to one of renewed ambition: “Thus ended a day memorable to me; it decided my future destiny” (28). It is at this moment that Victor realizes that he can prove everyone, especially Alphonse, wrong; he commits himself to the task of performing a miracle of science by combining the ambitions of the old, which everyone has dismissed, with the potential of the new.

Although Victor renews his enthusiasm for science, his developing sense of self is complicated due to the fact that he has been forced to maintain a self-division, trying to maintain his interests and ambitions while simultaneously upholding and forming himself to the expectations of his father and mentors. As Lee Zimmerman explains, childhood impressions, such as Alphonse’s dismissal of Victor’s scientific interests, can lead to the repression of parts of the self: “much depends upon the child’s earliest relations with others who may respond either in a ‘good-enough’ way that allows his or her ‘true self’ to emerge or by imposing rigid structures that leave the child in a ‘false’ position, caught between an endangered inner world that can’t be made known and an unresponsive external world that refuses to know it” (137). The result of this “‘false’ position” for Victor “is that he unwittingly creates a double to express this other, neglected self” (Moore 73-74).

When Victor has the chance to usurp the role of the father, the creator, he selfishly fantasizes creating a being who will hail him as nothing less than a god. This ambition, as Victor himself seems to imply, stems from the relationship that he has with his own father: “A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs” (32). Although Victor looks up to and respects his father, he still harbors unconscious resentment towards him and positions himself, again unconsciously, in competition with him. Even as Victor is devising his miraculous creation, Alphonse continues to show a lack of support for his endeavors: “I know that while you [Victor] are pleased with yourself, you will



think of us with affection, and we shall hear regularly from you. You must pardon me, if I regard any interruption in your correspondence as a proof that your other duties are equally neglected” (33). Alphonse’s lack of faith not only in Victor’s interests, but also in Victor himself, are more than evident to Victor as he obsesses over the task of Creating his own progeny.

Victor goes about the grueling physical, emotional, mental, and psychological task of assembling the Creature from dead matter, a task that also manifests the resentment and competition that he unconsciously feels towards his own creator. As Zimmerman says, “Victor experiences the self he presents to others as largely fraudulent; his real need for the world to meet him half way, and his rage at its duty-bound refusal to do so, remains hidden and inexpressible, and is ultimately disowned by being projected into the monster” (146). Victor projects so many aspects of himself into his creation that it doubles him in more ways than he could ever admit to himself. But because he also projects all of his anger and resentment about his family situation onto the Creature, the connection between Victor and the Creature is troubled from the moment of its animation.

The relationship that Victor develops with his Creature reflects the relationship that Victor had with his own father. He is resentful towards his father and now that he, too, is a “father,” he unconsciously takes out this resentment on his own “son,” ironically reproducing the “sins of the father,” but on a much greater scale. Victor had carefully selected the pieces for his Creature as “beautiful” (34), but as soon as the Creature is animated, he exclaims that “the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart” (34). This disgust, which soon turns to hatred and loathing, is initially unprovoked; the Creature is not “born” evil, and just wants to be accepted by its creator. As Rosemary Jackson explains, it is Victor’s rejection of his creation, which mirrors Alphonse’s dismissal of Victor, that turns the Creature evil: “Initially, this body is not evil - it is outside moral issues, beyond good and evil - but it has evil thrust upon it and gradually comes to assume a more conventional role as an evil monster” (49). The Creature pleads with Victor for acceptance, but time and time again Victor stubbornly refuses, thereby refusing to take responsibility as a creator, which is all the Creature

asks of him: “Yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature, to whom thou art bound by ties only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us. You purpose to kill me. How dare you sport thus with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind” (65). Victor’s refusal of his fatherly “duty” is by no means trivial due to the fact that it is *he* who is to blame for the number of innocent people who die at the hands of his creation, deaths which he could have prevented.

Moore argues that “By not showing a sense of duty towards his creature, Victor also denies a part of himself” (75). Significantly, this denied or repressed part of himself, which Victor projects onto his creation, finds expression in the Creature’s aggressive, even lethal, tendencies. Victor, too, is capable of being heartless and selfish when it comes to human life, as evidenced by the fact that he does not stand up for Justine and lets her meet her death solely because he does not want people to think him mad. More obviously, Victor is hell-bent on killing his own creation, as the Creature points out to him frequently: “You accuse me of murder; and yet you would, with a satisfied conscience, destroy your own creature” (67). Victor projects his own aggressive and destructive instincts onto his creation, thus succumbing to a sort of divided self. His obsession with the monstrosity of the Creature allows him to blind himself to the monster in himself.

At a certain point in the story, the Creature realizes that he actually holds more power than Victor can control and forces Victor to the breaking point, while at the same time forcing Victor into realizing that he is capable of the same evil as the Creature. Much like the imbalance that Sigmund Freud describes when the Id grows too strong, the Creature, as a part of Victor that has been denied, cannot be repressed any longer and turns on Victor with malicious intent. As Moore explains: “Such energies cannot be ignored, however, for if they are subjugated and thus denied a place in consciousness, they will indeed become monstrous, turning on the individual who unleashes them” (73). When Victor, driven by the omnipotent fantasies of his youth, fantasized about creating a race of beings that would hail him as a god, he created a Creature that was not only abnormally large, but tenfold stronger and faster than Victor himself. Once the

Creature realizes Victor's limitations, the power shifts from creator to created, and the Creature threatens Victor: "Slave, I before reasoned with you, but you have proved yourself unworthy of my condescension. Remember that I have power; you believe yourself miserable, but I can make you so wretched that the light of day will be hateful to you. You are my creator, but I am your master; - obey" (116). Just as Victor wanted to create in order to deify himself, as well as to reclaim power from the father, the Creature also finds himself in the position to create, albeit a creation of "desolation," with the purpose of forcing Victor's submission: "I, too, can create desolation; my enemy is not impregnable; this death will carry despair to him, and a thousand other miseries shall torment and destroy him" (97). Although these actions do not result in Victor acquiescing to his Creature, they do force him to realize that he shares the blame for all of the horror that the Creature has unleashed.

As the story unfolds, Victor begins to recognize his Creature as an extension of himself, as his dark double. This can be seen in the fact that Victor feels so much guilt over crimes that he, literally, does not commit. Even though it can be argued that he is partly to blame for the deaths of his loved ones because he refuses to nurture the Creature after creating it in the first place, it is still the Creature who actually performs the murders. But instead of just accusing the latter of such heinous acts, Victor instead internalizes an overwhelming sense of guilt, as if it were actually *he* who killed these people: "But I, the true murderer, felt the never-dying worm alive in my bosom, which allowed of no hope or consolation" (57). And though Victor does not view himself as the perpetrator of these crimes, he at least begins to feel responsible: "I felt as if I had committed some great crime, the consciousness of which haunted me. I was guiltless, but I had indeed drawn down a horrible curse upon my head, as mortal as that of crime" (112). This guilt, in turn, causes Victor to hate the Creature and thus, in some sense, himself, even more. As Moores remarks, "This sense of culpability for crimes not committed suggests very clearly that Victor and his creature are inextricably tied. . . . His [Victor's] doppelgänger is a constant reminder that he is the ultimate source of his and his family's tragic demise" (74, 76). After the death of Justine, Victor actually verbalizes to himself that *he* is the culprit responsible: "I

murdered her. William, Justine, and Henry - they all died by my hands” (128).

Although Victor’s sense of guilt originates in feelings of responsibility for creating the Creature, as he (and the reader) comes to recognize himself in the Creature - - to see the latter as his double - - Victor starts to view himself as monstrous. Early on in the story, he seems to glimpse the dark aspects of his own spirit, as represented in the Creature: “I considered the being whom I had cast among mankind, and endowed with the will and power to effect purposes of horror, such as the deed which he had now done, nearly in the light of my own vampire, my own spirit let loose from the grave, and forced to destroy all that was dear to me” (49). As the novel progresses and murders take place, Victor refers to himself, as well as to the Creature, as an evil spirit: “I wandered like an evil spirit, for I had committed deeds of mischief beyond description horrible” (59). Interestingly, Victor thinks not only of killing the Creature but also himself, the death of one, psychologically speaking, implicating that of the other. Victor “often reflected that [he] had better seek death than remain miserably pent up only to be let loose in a world replete with wretchedness” (124).

After the sudden murder of his close friend, Henry Clerval, Victor seems to undergo a psychological change, and his sense of reality becomes somewhat blurred by the horror of the events that have consumed his life. He is constantly plagued by dreams and waking dream states. He refers to his waking reality at least a half-dozen times as like a “dream,” and even believes himself to be going insane: “All pleasures of earth and sky passed before me like a dream, and that thought only had to me the reality of life. Can you wonder, that sometimes a kind of insanity possessed me, or that I saw continually about me a multitude of filthy animals inflicting on me incessant torture, that often extorted screams and bitter groans?” (101). As Aija Ozolins explains, “dreams are associated with illusoriness or with ideals that turn into nightmares of horror and guilt” (103). Victor is haunted by his past, imagining that he is being tortured by filthy animals because that is something that he is guilty of himself, having “tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay” in his “workshop of filthy creation” (31-32) while making the Creature. This sense of guilt is also extended to the deaths of his family and friends, for which he now at

least feels responsible. The presence of these dreams and the guilt that they embody have a profound psychological effect on Victor because they, fueled by the Creature's murderous actions, cause him to recognize things in himself that he could never consciously admit.

One of the aspects of himself that Victor never consciously admits but which becomes manifest is his inherent aggression towards the female. Directly after the animation of the Creature and Victor's immediate hatred and horror in the face of his creation, Victor has a disturbing dream involving the two women in his life, his mother and Elizabeth:

I though I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her; but as I printed the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. (34)

And since Victor projects all of his resentment and aggression onto the Creature, it is no surprise that this object of his loathing should appear upon his awakening from the dream: "I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window-shutters, I beheld the wretch - the miserable monster whom I had created" (34-35). This aggression towards the female remains latent for some time until it finally appears in Victor's consciousness and, yet again spurred by the Creature's presence, becomes manifest when Victor later "murders" the Creature's would-be female companion.

Although Victor admits that the Creature is intrinsically tied to himself, he refuses to ever unite or assimilate with it. He makes it clear that he will never accept his creation, but he does agree to create a mate for the Creature after listening to its grievances about being alone. Until this point, the Creature has embodied the aggressiveness and destructiveness latent in Victor himself. Now, however, the sight of the Creature observing his work from the window triggers action. Victor viciously tears apart the Creature's mate that he was close to completing: "I

thought with a sensation of madness on my promise of creating another like to him, and, trembling with passion, tore to pieces the thing on which I was engaged” (115). This act brings a pain of loss to the Creature that is similar to the pain that Victor felt when the Creature killed his loved ones, which shows that Victor is acting out the same evil vengeance of which he accuses the Creature. This may be why Victor feels like he, too, is a murderer, even though his second creation never reached the point of animation: “The remains of the half-finished creature, whom I had destroyed, lay scattered on the floor, and I almost felt as if I had mangled the living flesh of a human being” (118).

It is after this “murder” by Victor that he and the Creature can most obviously be seen as doubles of each other, as both of them have been hurt by their “fathers” and lash out because of it. Both characters are vengeful, and this vengeance has led both of them to commit the act of murder. It is therefore no coincidence that the Creature’s reaction to Victor’s murder of its mate mirrors Victor’s crime, as the Creature proceeds to murder Victor’s mate, Elizabeth, on their wedding night. It is after this final act of violence that reality fades into the background for Victor. The sole obsession that now defines his existence is the unresolved conflict between his creation and himself.

Because both Victor and the Creature are autonomous doubles of each other, it is necessary for each of these characters to assimilate with the other in order for a coherent sense of self to resolve the situation. Whereas in the earlier parts of the story the Creature is presented as Victor’s double, pursuing Victor and trying helplessly to assimilate with him, the latter part of the story focuses on Victor, as the *Creature’s* double, pursuing it not to assimilate with it but to *destroy* it. This explains why both Victor *and* the Creature arm themselves with pistols to defend themselves against each other. It is evident that both Victor and the Creature try to define their respective senses of self, Victor by creating the Creature in the first place to prove a point to his family (especially his father) and society, and the Creature yearning to be accepted as a beloved child by its father / creator. It is Victor who hinders the self-integration for both characters, as he never consciously accepts, even while unconsciously recognizing, that the Creature and its

actions are part of himself. As Moores explains: “Victor yearns for wholeness, but he cannot own his other self and denies it with vehemence. This denial, which amounts to a kind of psychological repression, thus leads ‘into gloomy and narrow reflections upon self’” (76-77). The denial of the Creature, which represents a part of Victor that he has repressed, is, as Moore says, a denial of a part of himself, making Victor’s successful self-integration impossible.

The unification and assimilation of a person with his or her double, or “shadow” as Carl Jung refers to it, is essential for a successful development of the self. The fact that Victor seeks to *destroy* his double rather than assimilate with it guarantees that a successful formation of self will never happen. His actions will *not* get rid of the double that he has created, and instead of first running from it, and then pursuing it with the intention of destroying it, Victor should have, as Ozolins elaborates, confronted it and consciously accepted it: “The last and most important point regarding the double is the necessity to confront and recognize the dark aspect of one’s personality in order to transform it by an act of conscious choice. Ideally, the shadow diminishes as one’s awareness increases” (104). This failure to recognize and assimilate with his double is one of several reasons why the Creature, upon Victor’s death, cannot continue to live without him: “I shall collect my funeral pile, and consume to ashes this miserable frame, that its remains may afford no light to any curious and unhallowed wretch, who would create such another as I have been. I shall die” (155). The death of the main character, as well as the Creature’s promise to destroy himself so that no one else can ever create such a wretched being, produce a gloomy ending to this tale. They also create a strong feeling of anticlimax, since neither character is able to unite with its other, thus creating a unified self.

It is obvious that *Frankenstein*, although written in a time before psychoanalysis even had a name, touches on very complicated psychological issues that would have been viewed as frightening and disturbing by the Romantic audience for which it was written. Not only is this novel different from most other *doppelgänger* narratives in that the main character’s double is an actual, manifest being and that the main character is *himself* a double of his double, the novel also differs in that there really is no conclusion:

Part of the work's radical position lies in its refusal of closure. Unlike other tales of the double, where the shadow side is murdered, or reassimilated, or seen as illusory, *Frankenstein* insists on the creature's constant presence. There is no reconciliation of the two sides of the self, and their mutual haunting and obsession with each other in a complex symbiotic relationship never really ends. (Jackson 49)

In denying his Creature, and dying in the act of trying to destroy it, Victor never finds the unified self that he set out to find and which caused him to create the Creature in the first place.

Similarly, the Creature, who was trying to discover who he was from his creator, but who was never afforded that opportunity and was similarly rejected by the rest of society, never finds that he belongs anywhere and promises to destroy himself now that the one person who could have offered him redemption is dead. In this way, *Frankenstein* presents itself as not only a complex psychological thriller, but also as a cautionary tale on several levels: not only for Walton, who hears Victor's warnings and abandons his own radical endeavors, but also for the reader, who witnesses first-hand the dangers of running from oneself.



“Committed to a profound duplicity of life”: Dual Natures in *Jekyll and Hyde*

The shift from the Romantic Period to the Victorian Period ushered in a new social-consciousness. This concern for outward appearance and decorum is evident not only in straight-laced Victorian society and its conservative dress, but also in its literature. Although people may have had the same vices and were performing the same acts that they always had, it became increasingly unacceptable to expose these things to the public eye. Therefore, Victorian literature is absolutely riddled with tales that deal with what lies beneath the surface. And in a time of growing interest in the human psyche, it was only a matter of time before someone wrote a tale about what may be lurking beneath the surface of a human being. Robert Louis Stevenson’s chilling short story, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, outlines the horrors that can present themselves when people are forced to live a double life, repressing parts of themselves that may be seen as inappropriate by society in order to uphold a conservative façade, while at the same time giving in to the temptations of their repressed selves.

As Katherine Linehan explains, it is perhaps Stevenson’s disturbing consideration of human dualism that made his story scary and memorable not only to the Victorian audience to which he was writing, but to contemporary audiences as well: “As a horror thriller about human duality which shows the relentless supplanting of the most presentable side of self by the most unpresentable one, the tale exhibits a remarkable ability to hit a nerve and produce a shock of recognition for generation after generation of readers” (xii). The main character of the story, Dr. Henry Jekyll, alludes many times to the pleasures he used to indulge in his youth, and how he had to repress this wilder side of himself in order to function in society as the prestigious doctor that he has become. But thanks to an elixir that he develops, Jekyll can transform himself into a sort of counterpart, Mr. Edward Hyde, through whom he can do whatever he wants without

corrupting the image of Dr. Jekyll. The problem lies in the fact that there is not a clear-cut line between where one self ends and the other begins, as both of these personas are parts of the same person. The fatal mistake that Jekyll makes is that he tries to separate these two parts of himself into two components instead of trying to integrate them into one self, the result being that he loses all control and ends up killing both himself and his double.

From the beginning of the story until we hear Jekyll's first-person confession at the conclusion, there are many references to Jekyll's past as being secretive and wild, and therefore having to be hidden from society and somehow repressed. This past, and this wild part of himself, is not only vaguely alluded to by Jekyll in his confession, but is also insinuated by those who knew Jekyll back then. As Linehan points out, "the text turns out always to hover around, never to reveal, the specific pleasures that Jekyll is eager to pursue" (xii), therefore leaving the parts of himself that have been repressed shrouded in ambiguity. The references that Jekyll makes to his past can be read in many different ways; but he did not, at the very least, fit into societal expectations, and this is the main reason why this self had to be repressed: "And indeed the worst of my faults was a certain impatient gaiety of disposition, such as has made the happiness of many, but such as I found it hard to reconcile with my imperious desire to carry my head high, and wear a more commonly grave countenance before the public" (48).

Although gaiety is not a crime, it may have drawn unwanted attention to Jekyll and the fact that he was not quite fitting into Victorian society or the class expectations associated with his profession. This can be seen in the fact that when Jekyll's peers, including Lanyon, comment on his past, they refer to it negatively and with caution: "But it is more than ten years since Henry Jekyll became too fanciful to me. He began to go wrong, wrong in the mind" (14). Similarly, Utterson declares that Jekyll's recent absence may be due to the sins of his past finally catching up with him: "He was wild when he was young; a long while ago to be sure; but in the law of God, there is no statute of limitations. Ay, it must be that; the ghost of some old sin, the cancer of some concealed disgrace: punishment coming, *pede claudo*, years after memory has forgotten and self-love condoned the fault" (18-19). It is possible that Lanyon and Utterson are

exaggerating Jekyll's past due to the fact that they find his behaviors dangerous, and therefore do not want to be intimately associated with him. But more plausibly, Jekyll is not being completely honest in his confession and is being facetious about what made his past so "wild." It may be for this reason, therefore, that Jekyll separates himself from Hyde on every level, including social class, in that he situates Hyde's home in Soho, a part of London renowned for being squalid and seedy, far removed from his own home in West Central London, a predominantly upper-class neighborhood.

In his confession, Jekyll reveals just how much his past weighed on him, as the repression of this wilder side of himself made him feel like he was constantly living two lives. Jekyll explains that he feels like he is two people, the person he takes delight in being and the person whom he has to present to society: "Hence it came about that I concealed my pleasures; and that when I reached years of reflection, and began to look round me and take stock of my progress and position in the world, I stood already committed to a profound duplicity of life" (48). Jekyll goes into depth trying to explain this duplicity, his introspection creating a sort of case study that Anne Stiles refers to as an attempt to "explore the potentially heretical possibility that human beings are inherently double even in a healthy state" (885). According to Stiles, such duality is a common occurrence and not necessarily destructive, as long as a person strives toward integration. Jekyll, however, is not trying to live with his duality by fashioning an inclusive self, but is instead trying to formulate a way to *dissociate* his two selves.

The story, in typical Victorian fashion, tends to represent Jekyll's duality in conventional moral terms. Jekyll himself adopts such terms in describing his own divided nature: "It was thus rather the exacting nature of my aspirations than any particular degradation in my faults, that made me what I was and, with even a deeper trench than in the majority of men, severed in me those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man's dual nature" (48). And since he experiences these two halves as so deeply at odds with each other, instead of trying to reconcile them, Jekyll makes it his pursuit to separate them completely: "It was the curse of mankind that these incongruous faggots were thus bound together - that in the agonised womb of

consciousness, these polar twins should be continuously struggling. How, then, were they dissociated?" (49). As Robert Rogers suggests, Jekyll's *doppelgänger* represents not really a doubling but rather a split of his persona, linked to "the more dramatic phenomenon of dissociation, known better by its result, the dual or multiple personality" (15). Only after it is too late does Jekyll come to know that the double he creates, Mr. Hyde, has the capacity to become completely autonomous, eventually gaining control over his entire self.

Although Jekyll's past "pleasures" still remain mysterious even after the physical manifestation of Hyde, it becomes clear that these pleasures were more than just inappropriate fancies that Jekyll had to hide from society. Jekyll explains that "men have before hired bravos to transact their crimes, while their own person and reputation sat under shelter. I was the first that ever did so for his pleasures" (52). It is not impossible, therefore, that his pleasures were indeed criminal. Not only does he explain that he has hidden this part of himself away in order to conform to Victorian standards of respectability, he himself refers to it as *evil*. Although Barbara D'Amato contends that the antics of Hyde "embrace the notion of duality in man and the presence of unconscious impulses" (93), it is obvious that Jekyll is conscious of what Hyde does even if he is not in control of it. It should have shocked and frightened Jekyll that this new persona was evil and that it set out to engage in violent and murderous activities, but instead this feeling seems to exhilarate him: "I knew myself, at the first breath of this new life, to be more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to my original evil; and the thought, in that moment, braced and delighted me like wine" (50).

This delight may not only have to do with the fact that, as Hyde, he can do whatever he wants with no repercussions, but also that he can take revenge on a social system that has forced him to adopt a persona that he is not. This would explain why Jekyll finds his secret transformations from one man into another, right under the noses of his colleagues, to be not only exhilarating but humorous: "I had but to drink the cup, to doff at once the body of the noted professor, and to assume, like a thick cloak, that of Edward Hyde. I smiled at the notion; it seemed to me at the time to be humorous; and I made my preparations with the most studious

care” (52). It is hard to deny that Jekyll initially takes great pride and pleasure in the ability to transform himself into Hyde, in spite of the fact that the first time the reader catches a glimpse of Hyde, he is maliciously trampling a child in the street. It is only when Jekyll can no longer control this part of himself - - indeed, becomes the slave, rather than the master, of his double - - that he begins to think of the consequences of what he has done.

Hyde is the embodiment and physical manifestation of many of the things that Jekyll has worked to repress, and therefore he represents not only aspects of Jekyll that can be seen as unconscious, but also those that are primitive and thus uninhibited and unsublimated. There is no doubt that Hyde is physically different from Jekyll in appearance, as he is seen by others as smaller and younger than Jekyll. From a psychological point of view, Stiles attributes this shrinkage in appearance to the fact that Hyde is a part of Jekyll that is not regularly used: “the persona embodying Jekyll’s ‘evil side’ is smaller and less robust because it is under-used; Hyde represents the atrophied, stunted right hemisphere struggling to break free of the restraints imposed by the dominant left brain” (886). But perhaps more telling than Hyde’s small appearance is his primitive and barbaric behavior. He is repeatedly described as animalistic by the people who have observed him.

Interestingly, Hyde is referred to many times by several characters as being apelike, clearly reflecting the Victorian interest in Charles Darwin and his theories on the evolution of mankind. Utterson refers to Hyde as a sort of cave-dwelling creature: “God bless me, the man seems hardly human! Something troglodytic, shall we say?” (17). Similarly, Jekyll’s servant, Poole, exclaims that “when that masked thing like a monkey jumped from among the chemicals and whipped into the cabinet, it went down my spine like ice” (37). Hyde’s voice, which is described as unpleasant, is also described as “a dismal screech, as of mere animal terror” (38). Jekyll himself describes Hyde as “apelike,” as if the things he does are childish and regressive in nature, although his descriptions seem to suggest something deeper and more sinister: “Hence the apelike tricks that he would play me, scrawling in my own hand blasphemies on the pages of my books, burning the letters and destroying the portrait of my father; and indeed, had it not

been for his fear of death, he would long ago have ruined himself in order to involve me in the ruin” (61). It is obvious at this point that Jekyll dissociates himself from Hyde, taking no responsibility for Hyde’s destructive acts. But as a clerk explains earlier in the story, Jekyll’s and Hyde’s handwriting have “a rather singular resemblance” and “the two hands are in many points identical: only differently sloped” (28). It is interesting that Jekyll proclaims that Hyde scribbles these blasphemies “*in my own hand*” (61), instead of in the differently sloped handwriting of Hyde, thus hinting that Jekyll may not be as separate from the hostile Mr. Hyde - - and the evolutionary regression that he represents - - as he wants to believe he is.

The fact that Hyde, writing in *Jekyll’s* handwriting, destroys the letters and portrait of Jekyll’s father is significant. It suggests that Jekyll, through his double, acts out hostile feelings towards his father, and perhaps toward patriarchal authority in general, that he has repressed in the construction of his socially acceptable persona. Rogers sees in this an explanation for Hyde’s seemingly unmotivated murder of the venerable Dr. Carew:

Both Jekyll and Hyde exhibit a Faustian rebelliousness, Jekyll in his chemical experiments and Hyde in scrawling blasphemies in the margins of pious books and in destroying the letters and portrait of Jekyll’s father. The destruction of the portrait seems to tie in with what looks like a patricide motif in the otherwise unexplained murder of Carew by Hyde. (94)

Although there is no dialogue in the story to suggest that Jekyll is harboring repressed resentment toward his father, it is safe to say that his father may have imposed on Jekyll the same standards of conservatism and propriety as the Victorian society in which Jekyll lives. And although the reader is left to speculate whether or not Jekyll’s father was a catalyst in Jekyll’s decision to pursue a professional career and a position which he must now uphold in society, it is at least clear that this position is not the one that Jekyll now wants, as he has created a separate self for the sole purpose of indulging in the very behaviors that bring him pleasure but which society has deemed to be inappropriate or worse.

The interpretation of Hyde as a physical manifestation of Jekyll’s repressed unconscious,

the embodiment of what Freud would call the Id, may explain the fact that Hyde is so hard to describe. Jekyll accounts for people's bizarre reactions to Hyde as due to the fact that Hyde is purely evil: "I have observed that when I wore the semblance of Edward Hyde, none could come near me at first without a visible misgiving of the flesh. This, as I take it, was because all human beings, as we meet them, are commingled out of good and evil: and Edward Hyde, alone in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil" (51). But when characters confront Hyde in the flesh, they are not so much terrified by him as made uneasy. The most bizarre attribute upon which all of those who observe him concur is the very fact that Hyde is so hard to describe. Enfield's response is characteristic:

He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He's an extraordinary looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can make no hand of it; I can't describe him. And it's not want of memory; for I declare I can see him this moment. (11-12)

Poole, Jekyll's servant, has a similar response: "Then you must know as well as the rest of us that there was something queer about that gentleman - something that gave a man a turn - I don't know rightly how to say it, sir, beyond this: that you felt it in your marrow kind of cold and thin" (37).

The similar responses of these characters, as well as others, when they lay eyes on Hyde makes sense when one views Hyde as coming from Jekyll's unconscious. Freud contends that the things one has repressed and which now reside in the unconscious are meant to remain there, and that if they do force their way back into consciousness, they can cause what he labels "uncanny" manifestations, like doubles, to occur: "the term 'uncanny' (*unheimlich*) applies to everything that was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come into the open" (*Uncanny* 132). This may be the reason why Hyde makes other characters feel uncomfortable,

because he is part of a darkness that was never meant to see the light of day. Furthermore, it might be that other characters have such a hard time describing his features because, although they may have repressed drives lurking in their own unconscious, they, unlike Jekyll, have not allowed them into consciousness. Hyde only has a face for those who dare to recognize him and, therefore, is faceless to those who are looking from the outside in.

Once Hyde starts to commit heinous acts, Jekyll begins to have reservations about transforming into Hyde, but these are not enough to stop him from continuing to make the transformation. The temptation of the freedom which Hyde represents is too great for him. Jekyll continually reminds us that Hyde is a part of himself that he is only now letting loose, a sort of “familiar that I called out of my own soul, and sent forth alone to do his good pleasure” (53). It is obvious that this yearning for freedom leaves Jekyll in denial, because even though the Hyde persona becomes more frequent and powerful, Jekyll still tries to maintain the illusion of control: “I will tell you one thing: the moment I choose, I can be rid of Mr. Hyde” (20). Jekyll is locked in a hard decision, because he realizes that he cannot continue to live this dual lifestyle, and must choose one persona over the other. The choice seems obvious to readers, as the persona of Jekyll makes much more sense than that of Hyde, but the choice is not that easy for Jekyll to make: “To cast in my lot with Jekyll, was to die to those appetites which I had long secretly indulged and had of late begun to pamper” (55).

One thing that pushes Jekyll in the direction of remaining Jekyll and denying his double is the fact that people are becoming suspicious, thus negating the use of Hyde as a disguise to protect his reputation: “I cannot say that I care what becomes of Hyde; I am quite done with him. I was thinking of my own character, which this hateful business has rather exposed” (26). Despite such confident avowals, however, Jekyll comes to realize that his decision to be done with Hyde is not as secure as he would like to believe: “I made this choice perhaps with some unconscious reservation, for I neither gave up the house in Soho, nor destroyed the clothes of Edward Hyde, which still lay ready in my cabinet” (56). It becomes evident that Jekyll, despite his protestations, can no longer control Hyde at all. He now goes to bed as Jekyll and wakes up



as Hyde, with no recollection of what he (as Hyde) has done. The very integrity of Jekyll's waking self weakens as his double grows stronger.

Ultimately, it is not so much Hyde's violent and anti-social actions that change Jekyll's mind about making the transformation, but rather the fear that the Hyde persona is gaining total control and that he, Jekyll, will no longer be able to choose which self to be: "I began to reflect more seriously than ever before on the issues and possibilities of my double existence . . . and I began to spy a danger that, if this were much prolonged, the balance of my nature might be permanently overthrown, the power of voluntary change be forfeited, and the character of Edward Hyde become irrevocably mine" (55). Jekyll owns up to the fact that Hyde was always a part of himself; what he fears now is that the persona of Jekyll will no longer exist as a part of Hyde, and that Hyde will take over his consciousness completely.

Jekyll, not wanting to admit the violent and aggressive aspects of his own nature, rationalizes that it is Hyde, now projected as a completely separate entity from himself, who is turning Jekyll's unnamed but trivial pleasures into a bloody pleasure of Hyde's own: "The pleasures which I made haste to seek in my disguise were as I have said, undignified; I would scarce use a harder term. But in the hands of Edward Hyde, they soon began to turn towards the monstrous" (53). Although Jekyll seeks to blame Hyde for the violence that is performed by the body that they share, thus projecting his own "monstrousness" onto his double, he is unable to escape the fact that he has taken pleasure in Hyde's actions. This is nowhere more evident, or more chilling, than in his description of the murder of Carew: "Instantly the spirit of hell awoke in me and raged. With a transport of glee, I mauled the unresisting body, tasting delight from every blow; and it was not till weariness had begun to succeed, that I was suddenly, in the top fit of my delirium, struck through the heart by a cold thrill of terror" (56). As Rogers suggests, Jekyll may have been harboring repressed resentment against father/authority figures all along, but it is only with the emergence of Hyde that Jekyll is able simultaneously to indulge and to deny responsibility for his aggressive feelings.

When Jekyll finally realizes that things have gone too far and that his double is becoming

the dominant persona, he makes his final fatal mistake: instead of trying to assimilate these two halves of himself into one persona, he attempts to sever them completely. Jekyll no longer takes any responsibility for the things that Hyde does and refers to him as if he were now a completely autonomous being, rather than just a guise that Jekyll assumes in order to realize his own desires: “He, I say - I cannot say, I” (59). Jekyll initially creates Hyde because of the fear that the exposure of his “pleasures” would ruin him, therefore creating a need to cover his exploits from the critical eyes of society. But after the vicious murder of Carew, it is now *himself* that Jekyll fears, or at least the part of himself from which he is now trying desperately to separate: “A change had come over me. It was no longer the fear of the gallows, it was the horror of being Hyde that racked me” (59).

As D’Amato argues, the freedom that Jekyll enjoyed through the persona of Hyde is now what seems to be feeding Hyde’s power and making it impossible for Jekyll to control Hyde’s and his own actions any longer, because when “Hyde kills, he becomes stronger. Tasting murder, Dr. Jekyll finds it more difficult to contain Mr. Hyde. Multiple doses of the draught become necessary for Jekyll to resurface” (101). And because this body that they share has become so dangerous, Jekyll decides that the best way to rid the world of this menace is to kill Hyde. But because Hyde cannot exist without Jekyll and (now) vice versa, Jekyll’s killing of Hyde is essentially a suicide mission. As Jekyll concludes his confession, he exclaims that “here then, as I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end” (62). Because it is Hyde’s body that is found, many critics, including D’Amato, have interpreted the death at the end of the story as Hyde killing himself and Jekyll along with him. Jekyll’s final statement, however, seems to indicate that it is *he* who has decided to end the life of both personae, thus bringing the bloodshed to an end.

In this eerie tale, Henry Jekyll embodies a divided self, a state that, psychologically speaking, is not uncommon, even though his double, Hyde, is atypically extreme. According to both Freud and Jung, it is possible to heal, or at least to manage, such self-division. As Jung explains, the hardest part of the process of assimilating with one’s double is actually confronting

it, which can be a frightening thing to do: “The meeting with oneself is, at first, the meeting with one’s own shadow. The shadow is a tight passage, a narrow door, whose painful constriction no one is spared who goes down to the deep well” (*Archetypes* 21). Once one confronts the shadow, however, and thereby takes responsibility for it, it is possible to assimilate these darker parts of the self into a coherent psyche. Similarly, Freud views a resolution between a person and their double as possible, but he does not provide any straightforward solutions, labeling the appearance of doubles as part of the unknown, what he calls “uncanny.”

Henry Jekyll does not successfully integrate his divided self due to the fact that he does not take responsibility for the actions of his double, ultimately refusing to admit any connection to his alter-ego at all. Such denial seems to be both personal and social, motivated in part by Victorian anxieties about respectability, religion, morality, and the nature of the human. Projecting Hyde as purely evil and as evolutionarily regressive, Jekyll justifies cutting off this part of his psyche and subsequently trying to destroy it. Had he realized that Hyde, despite his deformities, was an integral part of himself and that the human psyche cannot be cleanly separated into “good” and “evil,” Jekyll might have discovered that an assimilation between the two parts of the self was possible and beneficial. Because he seeks, instead, to dissociate and destroy his double, thinking that he will thereby preserve the self that he presents to the world, he only succeeds in destroying himself.

### “I did this to myself”: The (De) Constructed Self in *Fight Club*

The last decade of the twentieth century showed a rebirth in popular culture's interest in the psychological thriller, and a good number of these books and films that have accumulated a cult following are also stories that play with the motif of the *doppelgänger* in modern and innovative ways. As Caroline Ruddell explains, many of these modern *doppelgängers* reflect an interest in and awareness of psychological theory not present in earlier eras: “Fantasy-based film and television texts seem currently saturated with images of split psyches, doubles, and characters that often must face a different, or darker, side of themselves” (493). The fact that many of these doubles are actually part of the person experiencing them makes for a frightening story, not only because the conclusions of these stories are unpredictable and complicated, but also because there is always the danger that the persons experiencing the doubling will destroy themselves in the attempt to escape their doubles.

One such story that stands out from the rest is Chuck Palahniuk's novel *Fight Club*, which subsequently became the wildly popular film of the same name directed by David Fincher. It is quite obvious that the unnamed Narrator of *Fight Club* is having a very difficult time figuring out his place in the world. He has no firm idea of who he is, and seems to struggle constantly over his own sense of self (or lack thereof). It is this gap in his psyche that calls forth his double, Tyler Durden, whom he unconsciously creates to fill in the missing pieces of himself. *Fight Club* is by no means a sentimental or optimistic work, as many innocent people are killed and many things are destroyed in the process of the Narrator's quest for self-identity, but it does at least show that the creation of a double does not have to end in the complete destruction of the

main protagonist. The Narrator may have lost everything in his life by the end of the story, including his belongings, his job, and many people who were close to him, but he does achieve a highly problematic sense of self. This ambiguous identity, however, is not the product of what Freud or Jung would consider a proper assimilation of different parts of the psyche into a coherent whole; rather, in this case, the Narrator creates a persona that represents everything he always wished he could be, and then he *becomes* that persona.

Palahniuk uses many of the unconventional devices of literary postmodernism in constructing the novel. The narrative has no defined chronology; it is told in hindsight, and the Narrator tends to skip around, forwards and backwards in time, as he relays the events of the story. Furthermore, because Tyler and the Narrator are in fact the same person from the very beginning, there are no grammatical indications as to whether it is the Narrator or Tyler speaking, making their discourse appear like one single stream of consciousness. The Narrator subtly informs the reader from the very first scene, in which Tyler holds a gun in the Narrator's mouth, that he and Tyler are one and the same through the use of repeated phrases such as "I know this because Tyler knows this" (12) and by oblique indications that Tyler only lives in and through the narration itself: "I tongue the gun barrel into my cheek and say, you want to be a legend, Tyler man, I'll make you a legend. I've been here from the beginning. I remember everything" (15). Before the Narrator even relays the events of the story, readers get the impression that they are about to hear something wild coming from the mouth of an emotionally and psychologically unstable individual.

From the very beginning of the Narrator's recollection of his life up until the moment that opens the novel, it is clear that the Narrator has absolutely no idea who he is, and that he is trapped in an internal struggle to find this out. The most obvious indication of the Narrator's lack of identity is the fact that his name is never given, making him appear identity-less to the reader as well as to himself. The Narrator regularly attends support groups for people with various illnesses that he does not have, as he finds comfort in seeing that there are people who suffer more than he does. Although he participates in these groups, he retains his anonymity: "I never

give my real name at support groups” (19). This attitude evolves and is applied more generally as time goes on: “I never give my real name” (23). The lack of a name, and in essence the lack of an identity, with which the Narrator deals may be due to the fact that his life is so monotonous and prescribed. He talks at length about his material possessions and the fact that they “define” him. He is aware that he has become trapped in a monotonous world of his own construction: “Then you’re trapped in your lovely nest, and the things you used to own, now they own you” (44).

All of this changes when the Narrator meets (creates) Tyler because, as Ruddell explains, the Narrator “create[s] a double that he believes to be stronger than him” (495), a persona capable of supplying what he finds lacking in himself. For the Narrator, then, Tyler ultimately represents the possibility of escaping his superficial obsession with self-definition at a material level: “May I never be complete. May I never be content. May I never be perfect. Deliver me, Tyler, from being perfect and complete” (46). It is this invitation that gives Tyler the power that he increasingly wields over the Narrator’s life.

As the Narrator comes to identify unconsciously with his self-created double, he ironically recognizes on a conscious level that he and Tyler have things in common. Most important from a psychological point of view, perhaps, is a common resentment of their fathers that seems to have affected who they became as adults. The Narrator reports that “Tyler never knew his father” (49). This is very similar to the relationship the Narrator recalls about his own father: “Me, I knew my dad for about six years, but I don’t remember anything” (50). It makes perfect sense that the Narrator wouldn’t remember anything about his childhood with his father because, as Tyler indicates about this same man, he never really knew him. The fact that the father figure was largely absent from the Narrator’s childhood clearly impacts his many insecurities, in particular his paranoia about not being a man but (as stated in the film version) a “thirty-year old boy.” The Narrator’s anxiety about his masculinity, while obviously related to the absent father, may also be tied to his obsession with the consumerist society that, in some sense, assumes a patriarchal force in his life. As Ruddell suggests, “Tyler in himself is a myth, a

fantastical representation of 'hyper-masculinity' born of the Narrator's invulnerability in a rather terrifying consumerist culture. . . . The Narrator, then, has created Tyler as everything that he is not, and in many ways all of Tyler's attributes are grounded in his masculinity" (502; 495).

It is this lack of a father-figure, plus the additional anxiety about his masculinity, that make the ultra-masculine Tyler so appealing to the Narrator. According to Paul Kennet, "The Narrator considers his crisis of identification to be a crisis of masculinity, and becomes swept up in alter-ego Tyler Durden's obsessive quest to achieve identification through the classic Oedipal complex" (48). When one considers the Narrator's quest for identity in relation to the development of the self that Freud describes in the Oedipal complex, it is easy to see why the Narrator first sees Tyler as a dangerous threat but then identifies with him, only feeling the need to actually "kill off" this father-figure at the end of the story once his own masculine identity has been established.

Once the Narrator identifies with Tyler, his sense of self starts to undergo a change, and he feels that he is becoming a different person even though he cannot define who that person is. The Narrator and Tyler devise their own support group of sorts, which they call Fight Club, as an outlet to exorcise their own and other men's personal demons. While participating in Fight Club, the Narrator becomes a completely different person, although this transformation does not yet carry over into other aspects of his life, like his job: "Who I am in fight club is not someone my boss knows" (49). This is perhaps why the rules of Fight Club, which the Narrator devises through Tyler, include a strict rule of secrecy that the Narrator follows: "The first rule of fight club is you don't talk about fight club. I tell Walter I fell. I did this to myself" (48). The irony of this statement is that the Narrator actually *did* do this to himself: he brought these wounds on himself by engaging willingly in Fight Club, but he also literally did this to himself because Tyler does not really exist in physical form, so the Narrator's injuries are self-inflicted. For some time, the Narrator continues to live a double life, not only the life he shares with his projected double, but also the life he splits between who he is in the "real world" and who he is in Fight Club. It is inevitable, however, that these two worlds would eventually begin to seep into one

another: “If I could wake up in a different place, at a different time, could I wake up as a different person?” (33).

The Narrator initially finds Tyler to be intriguing, wild, and reckless, in direct opposition to his own reserved and monotonous lifestyle; but after the Narrator begins to identify with Tyler, he actually begins to adopt his ideas, ideas, of course, which reflect the Narrator’s own repressed desires. Therefore, when Tyler confesses to blowing up the Narrator’s condo, the Narrator is shocked and angered at first but realizes that this act, which he actually did himself, fits both of their philosophies: “At the time, my life just seemed too complete, and maybe we have to break everything to make something better out of ourselves” (52). It is a sentiment echoed by Tyler: “It’s only after you’ve lost everything . . . that you’re free to do anything” (70). The destruction of both the Narrator’s beloved material possessions and of his psychic attachment to them cause him to feel hopeful and free for the first time in the story. The Fight Club is working as the Narrator’s therapy, because he can sleep and because he and the other members are metaphorically “fighting” the things that had blocked them, like the burden of their fathers: “I asked Tyler what he’d been fighting. Tyler said, his father. Maybe we didn’t need a father to complete ourselves” (53-54). What the Narrator does not yet realize, however, is that he is freeing himself from the shadow of the father only to make himself vulnerable to a much more dangerous shadow figure - - his double.

As the Narrator becomes more liberated, Tyler becomes stronger, and his influence over the Narrator begins to change from giving him advice to controlling him. Early on in the story, the Narrator confesses that he sometimes lets Tyler do the talking, not only to protect the secrecy of Fight Club but because he views Tyler as a stronger person than himself: “At the hospital, Tyler tells them I fell down. Sometimes, Tyler speaks for me. I did this to myself” (52). This quickly changes to Tyler not only speaking for the Narrator but through him: “Tyler’s words coming out of my mouth. I used to be such a nice person” (98). After a while, the Narrator just goes along with anything Tyler wants to do, even though he does not approve of many of Tyler’s actions: “Basically, I said the same stuff Tyler said” (115).



Because the Narrator lets this escalate for too long, a point is reached where Tyler is no longer controllable, and it is obvious that Tyler (and the Narrator) is engaging in activities of which the Narrator has no recollection and of which he may not approve. The Narrator is no longer calling the shots and comes to realize that he is now merely an instrument that Tyler is using for his own (and the Narrator's) destructive purposes: "This is what Tyler wants me to do. These are Tyler's words coming out of my mouth. I am Tyler's mouth. I am Tyler's hands" (155). The Narrator makes the same mistake as do many protagonists in *doppelgänger* stories: He gives his double too much freedom, resulting in a blurring of the sense of self and the double usurping the power of the protagonist.

For the Narrator, this usurpation occurs whenever he is sleeping, whenever, that is, he leaves his mind vulnerable to his unconscious, from which Tyler emerges. The Narrator acknowledges the fact that Tyler existed in his mind long before he was aware of him, as "Tyler had been around a long time before [they] met" (32), but interestingly, the Narrator contends that "The first time [he] met Tyler, [he] was asleep" (172). As evidenced by the Narrator's and Tyler's opposite work schedules, the Narrator not only loses control of his consciousness altogether when Tyler is in control, but he seems to have a completely separate life as Tyler: "Tyler worked part-time as a movie projectionist. Because of his nature, Tyler could only work night jobs. . . . Some people are night people. Some people are day people. I could only work a day job" (25). Although the Narrator is living both lives, the details of the life that Tyler lives are still unknown to him: "I don't know how long Tyler had been working on all these nights I couldn't sleep" (27).

It is obvious that Tyler's absence has a profound effect on the Narrator, as he is still not a coherent whole of a personality with this vital part of himself (Tyler) missing: "My wish right now is for me to die. I am nothing in the world compared to Tyler" (146). As Tyler himself boasts, the Narrator has no say whatsoever in what he (they) does while the Narrator is asleep: "Every time you fall asleep . . . I run off and do something wild, something crazy, something completely out of my mind" (163). Like the character of Dr. Henry Jekyll, the Narrator is now

afraid of sleep, because he fears that he will one day cease to exist and that he will wake up as his counterpart forever more:

The next night, I'd go to bed earlier. That next night, Tyler would be in charge a little longer. Every night that I go to bed earlier and earlier, Tyler will be in charge longer and longer. 'But you are Tyler' Marla says. No. No, I'm not. . . . And if I went to bed earlier every night and I slept later every morning, eventually I'd be gone altogether. I'd just go to sleep and never wake up. (174)

The Narrator realizes the danger of this situation, and finally confesses his concerns to his love interest, Marla Singer: "Tyler Durden is a separate personality I've created, and now he's threatening to take over my real life" (173).

The Narrator's actions when he is Tyler, of which he is still not completely conscious, emanate from the repressions of his own psyche, but in Tyler's hands are taken to extremes that endanger not only the Narrator himself but also people in his life and society as a whole. Tyler argues that the Narrator has always had an innate yearning for chaos, but that he would never, of himself, have acted on it: "You're in Ireland the summer after you left college, and maybe this is where you first wanted anarchy" (76). Once the Fight Club ceases to provide a sufficient outlet, Tyler creates a new vehicle for the Narrator's repressed anarchic and aggressive desires: "You can build up a tolerance to fighting, and maybe I needed to move on to something bigger. It was that morning, Tyler invented Project Mayhem. Tyler asked what I was really fighting" (123). Project Mayhem, a covert operation of which Tyler makes sure that the Narrator has only minimal knowledge, involves many of the men from the now numerous Fight Clubs who have now been stripped of their individuality and have collectively become Tyler's "space monkeys."

Project Mayhem is responsible for random acts of violence against corporations and businesses calculated, in Tyler's view, to add madness to the mundane world. The little bits and pieces that the Narrator finds out about the workings of Project Mayhem really shock and dismay him because, as Kennet explains, the Narrator knows that he is to blame for them: "At the moment where he realizes that Project Mayhem is not just a story of revolution, not just an ideal

masculine therapeutic space, but rather a physical organization that actually harms people, the Narrator becomes horrified and feels the weight of his personal responsibility” (59).

Not only are there now dozens of Tyler-inspired, maniacal space monkeys running around destroying and pillaging, but Tyler is also actively destroying things in the Narrator’s life that he feels are hindering his (their) development. What started out as the destruction of the Narrator’s personal belongings moves on to the killing of people that the Narrator dislikes, like his boss: “It’s my desk. I know my boss is dead. The three ways to make napalm. I knew Tyler was going to kill my boss. The second I smelled gasoline on my hands, when I said I wanted out of my job, I was giving him permission. Be my guest. Kill my boss. Oh, Tyler. I know a computer blew up. I know this because Tyler knows this” (185). In some convoluted way, Tyler seems to have the Narrator’s best interests at heart, and he tries to remove the obstacles that are holding the Narrator back. But instead of merely providing the push that the Narrator needs to sell his belongings, tell off his boss, and quit his job, Tyler, who is a much more impulsive and primal part of the Narrator, only knows how to destroy. The knowledge that all of these terrible things are happening because of the double over whom he has lost control weighs heavily on the Narrator’s conscience: “The world is going crazy. My boss is dead. My home is gone. My job is gone. And I’m responsible for it all” (193). These feelings are reminiscent of the guilt that Victor Frankenstein feels over the slaying of innocent people performed by his Creature and that Henry Jekyll feels for the acts of Hyde; but the guilt the Narrator feels is amplified due to the fact that it is the Narrator performing these acts.

Unlike in *Frankenstein*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, and most *doppelgänger* narratives, however, the Narrator in *Fight Club*, having lost control over his double, is able to get it back. As Tyler himself realizes, he is dependent on the Narrator’s unconscious desire for his very existence: “I wouldn’t be here in the first place if you didn’t want me” (168). The Narrator gradually becomes conscious of (in essence, “remembers”) what Tyler has thought and done - - “All the things that Tyler knows are all coming back to me” (198) - - and as he does so, he positions himself to reassume control over his split self. This can be seen in the last scene of the story, which is also

where the story begins, with Tyler holding a gun in the Narrator's mouth. Although Tyler is still there, seemingly in command, the Narrator knows that it is actually he who will determine the outcome: "To God, this looks like one man alone, holding a gun in his own mouth, but it's Tyler holding the gun, and it's my life" (204). Because the Narrator has learned what he can from Tyler and does not need his presence anymore, the scene suddenly changes from Tyler holding a gun in the Narrator's mouth to the Narrator holding a gun in his own mouth: "Marla's coming toward me, just me because Tyler's gone. Poof. Tyler's my hallucination, not hers. Fast as a magic trick, Tyler's disappeared. And now I'm just one man holding a gun in my mouth" (204). When the Narrator shoots the gun and merely pierces his cheek with the bullet, it symbolizes the death of his old, divided self: "Of course, when I pulled the trigger, I died. Liar. And Tyler died" (206). Because there is no need for Tyler anymore, the "Tyler" part of the Narrator's psyche is now just a voice in his head.

The film *Fight Club* offers a completely different ending to the dilemma of the double. In the film, Tyler has become so powerful that the Narrator must trick him into leaving, instead of, as in the book, just making him disappear. In the film, the Narrator, exclaiming "My eyes are open," shoots himself through the cheek, but Tyler, because he still thinks autonomously, believes that the Narrator has shot himself in the(ir) head and dies. According to Kennet, the Narrator in the film sees no alternative but to literally murder his double, the thought of assimilating with him not even crossing his mind: "The horrible violence that is unleashed by the Narrator's Oedipal fantasy leads him to confront Tyler at gunpoint, prepared to annihilate himself in order to banish his violent, patriarchal, fascist double" (48). Also unlike the book, in which the explosives that the Narrator and Tyler set fail to go off because of miscommunications between the two selves, the buildings in the film do blow up, and the Narrator explains to Marla that she "met him at a very strange time in [his] life," hinting that the horror is over, his destructive double is gone for good, and the Narrator is free to move on with his life.

Although the novel and the film are different in their conclusions, the Narrator in both is definitely a different person at the end than he was at the beginning of the story's action. As

Tyler at one point explains, the person that the Narrator was before Tyler's appearance is no longer important: "We're not two separate men. Long story short, when you're awake, you have the control, and you can call yourself anything you want, but the second you fall asleep, I take over, and you become Tyler Durden" (166). Even after the Narrator discovers that he and Tyler are one and the same, he continues to separate himself from his double for the bulk of the story: "I take out my wallet and show Marla my driver's license with my real name. Not Tyler Durden. 'But everyone knows you're Tyler Durden,' Marla says. Everyone but me. Nobody at work calls me Tyler Durden. My boss calls me by my real name. My parents know who I really am" (172).

When the Narrator and Tyler start the Fight Clubs, the identity-less Narrator, along with dozens of other men involved with the Fight Club, which later becomes Project Mayhem, are stripped of their individuality and become one faceless entity with the purpose of changing the world through anarchy and destruction. As Kennet points out, the members of this club, as a collective, become as identity-less as the Narrator: "The Narrator is careful to illustrate how the men standing in the bar basement in the dim pool of light are identically clothed without shirts and shoes, how they assume the same habits of grooming, with short hair and nails, all mirror-images of each other" (54). An exception is Bob, the Narrator's friend from the support groups. When Bob joins the Fight Club, he is just one of many nameless space monkeys. But once Bob dies serving Project Mayhem, he becomes Robert Paulson and will forever be remembered for his sacrifice. This is a concept that the Narrator fully understands: "Only in death will we have our own names since only in death are we no longer part of the effort. In death we become heroes" (178). When the Narrator himself "dies" at the end of the story, it might be argued that he too gains a heroic identity of some kind.

There is, however, a final irony. In the book's epilogue, when the Narrator is in a psychiatric hospital, the staff there, who are obviously members of Project Mayhem, refer to him exclusively as Tyler: "We miss you Mr. Durden. . . . Everything's going according to plan. . . . We're going to break up civilization so we can make something better out of the world. . . . We look forward to getting you back" (208). He has become - at least in the eyes of those around

him - the double he had both created and destroyed.

*Fight Club* can be said to offer an alternative outcome to its *doppelgänger* dilemma, since the main protagonist is not literally destroyed, as in the case of Frankenstein and Jekyll, but only metaphorically dies as an identity. But this outcome is also depicted as problematic. Although the Narrator succeeds at least provisionally in gaining back conscious psychic control from his double, this victory may be short-lived. Besides the fact that the Narrator now resides in a psychiatric ward, which in itself raises questions, Tyler is represented as still present in the Narrator's mind. Although the Narrator has pulled himself together enough to continue his existence, he does so with an alarmingly fractured sense of self. Furthermore, because of the ambiguous way in which dialogue is exchanged between the Narrator and Tyler, it is impossible to tell at the story's close who in fact is speaking. Although one would assume that it is the Narrator, as it is his body that sits before the doctor in the psychiatric ward, it could very well be Tyler doing the speaking. In this way, Palahniuk leaves his audience guessing and his postmodernist *doppelgänger* narrative intentionally open-ended.

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