

Abstract

The BA thesis is concerned with the topic of doubles and doppelgängers in anglophone literature of the 19th century in relation to physiognomy, i.e. science that examines the effects of human character on their appearance. The thesis focuses on the notion of “losing one’s face” in both literal and figurative meaning, and the relationship between the faces of the doubles and the originals. To make this analysis possible, it was necessary to establish guidelines of what functions should a literary face fulfil. Hence, the BA thesis works with Gilles Deleuze’s roles of the face: individuating, socializing, relational. These roles ensure uniqueness of one’s face, one’s social role and one’s ability to lead a dialogue – not only an external, but also an internal one (and as such, it ensures that individuals parts of character and appearance are in accordance with each other.) The objective of the thesis is to answer the question of what happens to the face and the identity of an individual if he must share them with a double.

To answer this question, the thesis analyzes three fundamental works dealing with duality: James Hogg’s *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and Oscar Wilde’s *Picture of Dorian Gray*. All three novels approach duality differently: Hogg introduces a devil face-snatcher, who helps him explore the ideas of Presbyterianism, Stevenson divides one person into two in order to comment on the dual life of high Victorian society, and Wilde provides his character with a doppelgänger painting that takes over the natural effects life has on a face, dealing with consequences of living one’s life as a piece of art.

The initial point of inquiry is set on determining whether a literary face even fulfils these functions before its doubling. This is proven to be the case thanks to the character descriptions usually located at the beginning of the novels. The following analysis disproves Deleuze’s roles in the context of doubling. The consequences of losing one’s face to a double proves fatal in all three cases: Hogg’s Gil-Martin haunts his victims, taking over their identity completely, Stevenson’s Hyde ends up being unable to communicate with Jekyll’s friend, which leads him to the desperate act of suicide, Wilde’s Dorian Gray stabs the painting that bears his true face and accidentally kills himself instead. The BA thesis maintains the importance of faces and, by extension, physiognomy in 19th century the literature of duality. Since losing one’s face in this context stands for fragmentation of identity, the double and the original become unable to represent their identity, hold a social role, communicate properly, and otherwise function in society. All this ultimately can only lead to one conclusion: death.

Keywords: double, doppelgänger, duality, physiognomy, Hogg, Stevenson, Wilde, nineteenth century