

English abstract

To understand why the doppelgänger, or the phenomenon of double personality, developed such literary presence in the fin-de-siècle Victorian Britain we must look to the dramatic social changes which had taken place since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, as well as to the nascent science of psychology and its preoccupation with the subconscious in relation to consciousness.

The doppelgänger typically emerges where one component of personality is suppressed due to supra-individual requirements and expectations. The doppelgänger is, therefore, closely linked to its environment. It is not so much a literary figure as an intense dialectical relationship between two sides of personality.

The doppelgänger frequently constitutes a flight from the conscience, which in itself is a social construct. Both Dr Jekyll and Dorian Gray are fully conscious of the possibilities open to them through their alter egos – they may ignore the dictates of the public opinion as well as other institutions whose goal is effect a certain degree of conformity in society. The doppelgänger enables the subject to realise its unconscious ambitions.

The doppelgänger may also be analysed in the context of the artist and their creation. Dorian Gray, Lord Henry Wotton, Basil Hallward and Dorian's portrait, leaving aside Wilde himself, are woven into an intricate web of relationships, from inspiration, through creation and re-creation of personalities. Similarly, Mr Hyde is Jekyll's creation, a masterpiece of 'science'.

An important aspect of the doppelgänger is an often enforced exile. This motif is particularly prominent in Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae*; however, it is also present in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

The fin-de-siècle doppelgänger is informed by the Romantic concept of individuality as a realisation of one's potential in defiance of the requirements of the environment (society). However, Stevenson and Wilde problematise this notion, emphasising the failure of separating the authentic from the imposed. Avoiding a violent split between 'vices' and 'virtues', they argue for harmony between all components of personality.