C13 The Doppelgänger and Hitchcock
Instructor: Donald Gluck
$44/4 sessions of 3 hours
Wed, May 3-May 24, 2-5 pm
The Rio Grande

Three movies about doubles, plus a variant thereof, will be shown and discussed. Notes will be provided.

∞ This 1945 adaptation of the Oscar Wilde novel The Picture of Dorian Gray has the aesthetics of Baudelaire, Aubrey Beardsley and Wilde himself. Sophistication and poignancy are afforded by George Sanders and Angela Lansbury in this primal doppelgänger tale.

∞ The Double Life of Véronique (1991) is set in Kraków and Paris with Irène Jacob playing dual roles. Director Krzysztof Kieślowski—master of color, luminescence and textures, and artisan of music, puppets, and mystery—portrays life on a double scale.

∞ Alfred Hitchcock’s adaptation of Patricia Highsmith’s Strangers on a Train (1951) is a Dostoevskylike psychological thriller. A doppelgänger variant, it stars Farley Granger and Robert Walker.

∞ Of Hitchcock's Vertigo (1958) Dave Kehr writes, “one of the landmarks—not merely of the movies, but of 20th century art.... An isolated, inspired romantic (James Stewart) pursues the spirit of a woman (the powerfully carnal Kim Novak).”

Donald Gluck is a retired engineer with a PhD whose avocation is classic films. This will be his tenth year instructing for LLL.

Doppelgänger
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doppelgänger
In fiction and folklore, a doppelganger, doppelgaenger or doppelgänger is a look-alike or double of a living person, sometimes portrayed as a paranormal phenomenon, and is usually seen as a harbinger of bad luck. In other traditions and stories one's “double-goer” is cast as an evil twin. Doppelgaenger is a German word which also means double walker. At times the doppelgänger has a nuanced or even a benevolent role.

The word “doppelgänger” is often used in a more general sense to describe any person who physically or behaviorally resembles another person. In digital marketing area this has a specific meaning which is related to brand. When someone creates a negative portrait of a particular logo/brand of an entity, it is also known as doppelganger.[1]

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Spelling

The word doppelgänger is a loanword from the German Doppelgänger, consisting of the two substantives Doppel (double) Gänger (walker or goer). The singular and plural forms are the same in German, but English usually prefers the plural "doppelgängers." It was first used by Jean Paul in the novel Siebenkäs (1796), and his newly coined word is explained by a footnote.

As is true for all other common nouns in German, the word is written with an initial capital letter. In English, the word is conventionally uncapsulated (doppelgänger). It is also common to drop the diacritic umlaut, writing "doppelganger."

Mythology

The application by English-speakers of this German word to the paranormal concept is relatively recent; Francis Grose's Provincial Glossary of 1787 included the term fetch instead, defined as the "apparition of a person living." A best-selling book on paranormal phenomena, Catherine Crowe's The Night-Side of Nature (1848), helped make the German word well-known. However, the concept itself, of alter egos and double spirits, has appeared in the folklore, myths, religious concepts, and traditions of many cultures throughout human history.[4]

In Ancient Egyptian mythology, a ka was a tangible "spirit double" having the same memories and feelings as the person to whom the counterpart belongs. In one Egyptian myth entitiled, The Greek Princess, an Egyptian view of the Trojan War, a ka of Helen was used to mislead Paris of Troy, helping to stop the war.[5]

In Norse mythology, a vardøger is a ghostly double who precedes a living person and is seen performing their actions in advance. In Finnish mythology, this is called having an etiäinen, i.e., "a firstcomer".[6]

Fiction

Literature

In Prometheus Unbound by Percy Bysshe Shelley, the concept of a doppelgänger double was described as a counterpart to the self. Edgar Allan Poe's story William Wilson (1839) describes the double with the sinister, demonic qualities of a pursuer or challenger of the real self's psychological equilibrium. George Gordon Byron used doppelgänger imagery to explore the duality of human nature. Dostoyevsky's novel The Double, represents the doppelgänger as an opposite personality who exploits the character failings of the protagonist to take over his life. Charles Williams, Descent Into Hell (1939), has character Pauline Anstruther seeing her own doppelgänger all through her life. Clive Barker's story "Human Remains" in his Books of Blood is a doppelgänger tale. The doppelgänger motif is a staple of Gothic fiction.

Television

- The TV series Grimm features a doppelganger in the episode "Goodnight, Sweet Grimm".
- Fox's sci-fi series Fringe and The CW's The Flash both made extensive use of doppelganger story arcs when the existence of parallel universes, in which all the main characters had a counterpart, was introduced (The CW is The CW Network, LLC).
- Nina Dobrev played Elena Gilbert, Katherine Pierce's doppelganger, on The CW show The Vampire Diaries. A 500-plus-years-old evil Vampire Katherine Pierce meets an innocent teenager human Elena Gilbert, who turns her life to shambles. They are revealed to have another preceding doppelganger, Tatia, who would be 500 years older than Katherine and the true human that they are modeled after, Amara, who lived between 1st century B.C. and A.D. and fell in love with a man named Silas, who also has two known doppelgangers, Stefan, a Civil War era
vampire turned by Katherine and a human named Tom, around Elena's age. The doppelgangers are the result of the creation of immortality by a witch and the use of that magic by Silas and Amara and their purpose is to live and die mortal lives to balance their immortal counterparts.

- An episode of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents: The Case of Mr. Pelham* with Tom Ewell as the title character. Albert Pelham has a paranoid suspicion that he has a double who is slowly taking over his life.
- In series 6 of *Doctor Who*: The Rebel Flesh doppelgangers were referred to as "Gangers".
- In the 7th episode, first season of *Mr. Robot*, Mr. Elliot says to Krista Gordon, his psychiatrist, that one of her patients is her Doppelgänger.
- The anime series *Kurokami* also explores Doppelgängers.
- The character Willow, on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, has a doppelganger in more than one episode.
- *The Flash* second season has multiple Doppelgängers in different episodes.

**Comedies**

Even though doppelgangers are commonly found in *science fiction* and *fantasy*, some comedy shows have them too.

- In the CBS sitcom, *How I Met Your Mother*, all of the main characters have a doppelganger which they discover during the series.
- During the 2008-2009 season of the comedy show *Saturday Night Live*, while cast member Amy Poehler was playing Hillary Clinton, the real Hillary Clinton made an appearance on the show and faced off with Poehler as her doppelganger.[3]
- In some episodes, the critically acclaimed NBC sitcom *Community* also featured doppelgangers. In addition, the NBC mockumentary series, *Parks and Recreation*, had an episode titled *Doppelgangers* in which the main characters got to know people who had their same job in another town.
- *Two and a Half Men*, Evelyn Harper has a doppelganger of one of Charlie's girlfriends, Lydia.

**Movies**

The concept of doppelgänger is widely explored in movies. The list of such movies includes the following:

- *The Student of Prague* (1913, 1926, 1935)
- *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931)
- *The Mummy* (1932)
- *The Prince and the Pauper* (1937)
- *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1937)
- *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945)
- *Strangers on a Train* (1951)
- *Kasme Vaade* (1978)
- *Kagemusha* (1980)
- *Satte Pe Satta* (1982)
- *Agar Tum Na Hote* (1983)
- *Blue Velvet* (1986)
Video games
Doppelgängers are a common sight in various video games. Please see website for information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doppelgänger

Famous accounts
John Donne
Izaak Walton claimed that John Donne, the English metaphysical poet, saw his wife's doppelgänger in 1612 in Paris, on the same night as the stillbirth of their daughter.

Two days after their arrival there, Mr. Donne was left alone, in that room in which Sir Robert, and he, and some other friends had dined together. To this place Sir Robert returned within half an hour; and, as he left, so he found Mr. Donne alone; but, in such ecstasy, and so altered as to his looks, as amazed Sir Robert to behold him in so much that he earnestly desired Mr. Donne to declare befallen him in the short time of his absence? to which, Mr. Donne was not able to make a present answer: but, after a long and perplexed pause, did at last say, I have seen a dreadful Vision since I saw you: I have seen my dear wife pass twice by me through this room, with her hair hanging about her shoulders, and a dead child in her arms: this, I have seen since I saw you. To which, Sir Robert replied; Sure Sir, you have slept since I saw you; and, this is the result of some melancholy dream, which I desire you to forget, for you are now awake. To which Mr. Donne’s reply was: I cannot be surer that I now live, than that I have not slept since I saw you: and am, as sure, that at her second appearing, she stopped, looked me in the face, and vanished.[10]

This account first appears in the edition of Life of Dr. John Donne published in 1675, and is attributed to "a Person of Honour... told with such circumstances, and such asseveration, that... I verily believe he that told it me, did himself believe it to be true. "At the time Donne was indeed extremely worried about his pregnant wife, and was going through severe illness himself. However, R. C. Bald points out that Walton's account "is riddled with inaccuracies." He says that Donne crossed from London to Paris with the Drurys in twelve days, and that the vision occurred two days later; the servant sent to London to make inquiries found Mrs. Donne still confined to her bed in Drury House. Actually, of
course, Donne did not arrive in Paris until more than three months after he left England, and his wife was not in London but in the Isle of Wight. The still-born child was buried on 24 January. Yet as late as 14 April Donne in Paris was still ignorant of his wife's ordeal. In January, Donne was still at Amiens. His letters do not support the story as given.

Percy Bysshe Shelley
On July 8, 1822, the English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley drowned in the Bay of Spezia near Lerici in Italy. On August 15, while staying at Pisa, Percy's wife Mary Shelley, an author and editor, wrote a letter to Maria Gisborne in which she relayed Percy's claims to her that he had met his own doppelgänger. A week after Mary's nearly fatal miscarriage, in the early hours of June 23 Percy had had a nightmare about the house collapsing in a flood, and... talking it over the next morning he told me that he had had many visions lately — he had seen the figure of himself which met him as he walked on the terrace and said to him — "How long do you mean to be content" — No very terrific words & certainly not prophetic of what has occurred. But Shelley had often seen these figures when ill; but the strangest thing is that Mrs. Williams saw him. Now Jane, though a woman of sensibility, has not much imagination & is not in the slightest degree nervous — neither in dreams or otherwise. She was standing one day, the day before I was taken ill, [June 15] at a window that looked on the Terrace with Trelawny — it was day — she saw as she thought Shelley pass by the window, as he often was then, without a coat or jacket — he passed again — now as he passed both times the same way — and as from the side towards which he went each time there was no way to get back except past the window again (except over a wall twenty feet from the ground) she was struck at seeing him pass twice thus & looked out & seeing him no more she cried — "Good God can Shelley have leapt from the wall?.... Where can he be gone?" Shelley, said Trelawny — "No Shelley has past — What do you mean?" Trelawny says that she trembled exceedingly when she heard this & it proved indeed that Shelley had never been on the terrace & was far off at the time she saw him.

Percy Shelley's drama Prometheus Unbound (1820) contains the following passage in Act I: "Ere Babylon was dust, / The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child, / Met his own image walking in the garden. / That apparition, sole of men, he saw. / For know there are two worlds of life and death: / One that which thou beholdest; but the other / Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit / The shadows of all forms that think and live / Till death unite them and they part no more...."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
Near the end of Book XI of his autobiography, Dichtung und Wahrheit ("Poetry and Truth") (1811-1833), Goethe wrote, almost in passing:

Amid all this pressure and confusion I could not forego seeing Frederica once more. Those were painful days, the memory of which has not remained with me. When I reached her I took my hand from my horse, the tears stood in her eyes; and I felt very uneasy. I now rode along the foot-path toward Drusenheim, and here one of the most singular forebodings took possession of me. I saw, not with the eyes of the body, but with those of the mind, my own figure coming toward me, on horseback, and on the same road, attired in a dress which I had never worn, — it was pike-gray [hecht-grau], with somewhat of gold. As soon as I shook myself out of this dream, the figure had entirely disappeared. It is strange, however, that, eight years afterward, I found myself on the very road, to pay one more visit to Frederica, in the dress of which I had dreamed, and which I wore, not from choice, but by accident. However, it may be with matters of this kind generally, this strange illusion in some measure calmed me at the moment of parting. The pain of quitting for ever noble Alsace, with all I had gained in it, was softened; and, having at last escaped the excitement of a farewell, I, on a peaceful and quiet journey, pretty well regained my self-possession.

This is an example of a doppelgänger which was perceived by the observer to be both benign and reassuring.

George Tryon
A famous Victorian apparition was the supposed appearance of Vice-Admiral Sir George Tryon. He was said to have walked through the drawing room of his family home in Eaton Square, London, looking straight ahead, without exchanging a word to anyone, in front of several guests at a party being given by his wife on 22 June 1893 while he was supposed to be in a ship of the Mediterranean Squadron, manoeuvering off the coast of Syria. Subsequently it was reported that he had gone down with his ship, HMS Victoria, the very same night, after it had collided with HMS Camperdown following an unexplained and bizarre order to turn the ship in the direction of the other vessel.[16]

Psychiatry

Heautoscopy is a term used in psychiatry and neurology for the reduplicative hallucination of "seeing one's own body at a distance".[17] It can occur as a symptom in schizophrenia[18] and epilepsy. Heautoscopy is considered a possible explanation for doppelgänger phenomena.[19]

Studies

In December 2016, a TV documentary called "Finding My Twin Stranger" featured a study by the Department of Twin Research at St Thomas' Hospital in London in which seven pairs of similar looking people were examined. The tests included empirical measures of the similarities of their features, and a DNA analysis.

References

Further reading

- Grimm’s Saga No. 260 in which a Doppelgänger appears as Married Woman
- *Prometheus Unbound*: Text at Barbleby.com