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The paper is based on an analysis of two iconic British doppelgänger novels from the early nineteenth century. The paper explores the use of isolation and alienation as literary devices in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* from 1818 and James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* from 1824. I claim that Hogg and Shelley's use of isolation and alienation evoke sympathy for otherwise unsympathetic protagonists. Both Victor Frankenstein and Robert Wringhim have since childhood struggled to connect with both parents and peers and thus fail to develop appreciable social skills. This alienation from society leads to the protagonists focusing their energies on isolating endeavours. This isolation does in turn facilitate the emergence of the doppelgängers. The doppelgängers Gil-Martin and the "Creature" initially emerge to compensate for the lack of social stimulation, and fulfil the role of a companion. Their presence, however, only intensifies the isolation and, eventually, leads to the demise of the protagonists. By illustrating how the protagonists are victims of their own failure to connect with others, as well as society's failure to acknowledge them, the reader develops some sympathy for these naïve and narcissistic protagonists who perish in loneliness and defeat.

Norwegian/Norsk

Oppgaven baserer seg på en analyse av to ikoniske britiske dobbeltgjengerromaner fra tidlig attenhundretall. Oppgaven tar for seg bruken av isolasjon som litterært virkemiddel i Mary Shelleys *Frankenstein* fra 1818 og James Hoggs *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* fra 1824. I oppgaven heveder jeg at Hogg og Shelleys bruk av isolasjon og fremmedgjøring, fremkaller sympati for en ellers usympatisk protagonist. Både Victor Frankenstein og Robert Wringhim har fra barndommen av slitt med å relatere til både foreldre og jevn gamle, og dermed har de heller ikke utviklet særlige sosiale evner. Den sosiale fremmedgjøringen fører til at protagonistene heller fokuserer på isolerende bestrebelser. Denne isolasjonen legger videre til rette for at dobbeltgjengerne oppstår. Dobbeltgjengerne Gil-Martin og the «Creature» oppstår for å kompensere for mangelen på sosial stimuli, og for å oppfylle en rolle som følgesvenn. Deres nærver, intensiverer forøvrig bare isolasjonen, og til slutt blir de kilden til hovedpersonenes undergang. Ved å illustrere hvordan hovedpersonene er offer for egen mangel på evne til å sosialisere, samt samfunnets manglende evne til å fange opp dette, utvikler leseren sympati for disse naive og narissistiske protagonistene som møter døden i ensomhet og nederlag.

Alienated Anti-Heroes and Diabolic Doppelgängers

Sympathy for the isolated protagonists in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and James Hogg's
The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner

The two gothic horror novels *Frankenstein* (1818) by Mary Shelley and *The Private memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) by James Hogg are both often read as typical doppelgänger novels. The doppelgänger motif gained its popularity in the western world towards the end of the eighteenth century, and the vast number of such novels has led to a series of literary devices being identified as typical for the genre. One such device, is that of isolation. In fact, Barbara Bloede writes in her treatment of Hogg and his *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (from now *Confessions*) that “It is isolation that gives birth to the idea of the double” (Bloede 175), and Vardoulakis also claims that the double is given life due to the threat of isolation, and that it is “instrumental to the Doppelgänger” (Fonseca 189). Gothic isolation is often associated with physical isolation in terms of stormy Castles lonely moors. Although physical isolation is an element found in both novels, what is more striking, is the social and psychological isolation the two protagonists experience. Barbara Bloede describes the protagonist of a doppelgänger novel as “a young man, and always of the same narcissistic type completely egocentric and incapable of forming a deep relationship with anyone” (Bloede 179). For both protagonists, Victor Frankenstein, and Robert Wringhim this description is also accurate. The narcissism and egocentricity are some of the reasons for the isolation.

When the doppelgängers Gil-Martin and the “Creature” come to “dominate, control and usurp the functions of the subject” (Herdman 14), one cannot help but feel that the protagonists deserve it, at least to some extent. Still, even if it gives some pleasure to witness karma in action, the tragic ending of both Wringhim and Frankenstein are not fully satisfying. I would argue that this is partly the intention of Hogg and Shelley.

These two novels are often read as warnings towards the unchecked scientific advances of the enlightenment era, and the development of the Antinomian community in Scotland, respectively, but they also serve a purpose to warn against the alienation that follow such advances. In order for a reader to appreciate such a warning, it is crucial she agrees with the morality of the book. David Hume and Adam Smith see our capability of moral judgement as a consequence of what they call sympathy, or what today often is called empathy. They define sympathy as “when one person feels as another does, because the other feels that way.

Sympathy is, in these cases, fellow-feeling with a specific etiology” (Sayre-McCord 4). In order to succeed as warnings, sympathy for the protagonist is often very useful. If the reader does not follow or recognize the actions of a character, it is harder to identify with any moral lesson they learn as well. However, this is not an obvious reaction to a narrator of a doppelgänger motif. Both Victor and Robert perish due to their narcissistically driven endeavours towards a superhuman goal. Barbara Poważa-Kurko puts it elegantly when she suggests that Victor assumes the role of God the Creator, while Robert plays that of God the Judge (Poważa-Kurko 262). The common reading, especially of Frankenstein is that his personal flaws of overambition, self-centeredness and lack of moral or critical imagination, leads to his tragic ending. For Wringhim, his sanctimonious arrogance and ruthless self-serving attitude is commonly seen as the culprit for his demise.

By making clever use of isolation and the doppelgänger, Hogg and Shelley achieve sympathy with the protagonists who suffer from loneliness and alienation and portraying them as partly victims of their societies. The first-person narrative gives Frankenstein and Wringhim a private audience with the reader where they are able to portray the story how they experienced it, or how they imagine it to have been. This way they attempt to gain sympathy. Often though, they are unsuccessful in getting the reader to appreciate them and their self-centred worldview, as they appear oblivious to what is right and what is wrong to the common man. In such cases our sympathy is not evoked only by observing the feeling and imagining it. The narrative technique alone is not sufficient. Some passions evoke sympathy only when we understand why the agents act and feel as they do. Smith claims that “There are some passions, of which the expressions excite no sort of sympathy, but before we are acquainted with what gave occasion to them, serve rather to disgust and provoke us against them (Smith 6)”. Therefore, even if the reader does not directly like the characters, sympathy can be evoked if she understands why they act the way they do. This is at the core of what Hogg and Shelley do with the literary device of isolation: They evoke sympathy by illustrating how the characters are alienated and isolated from society, and thus partly exonerates them for their flaws, which lead to the release of the doppelgängers and the havoc they create.

Childhood alienation

Isolation, as a literary gothic device, has several functions: to create fear, despair, and loneliness, to contribute to the awesome and sublime imagery, and by extension as a pathetic fallacy for loneliness and alienation. The sentiment of isolation also contributes to evoke sympathy. The need for human contact is innate in most people both for support, confirmation, guidance and to learn social code. As already established above, narcissistic behaviour and isolation are traits found in both protagonists, and these conditions are common when a doppelgänger appears. The narcissistic behaviour of the protagonists can in many cases be used as an explanation for their isolation, both physical and psychological. However, the childhood experience of both Victor and Wringhim might suggest that the initial isolation is not a result of their narcissistic behaviour, rather the other way around. By illustrating the struggles both characters have in their early years when it comes to development of social skills, Hogg and Shelley invite the reader to sympathise with their alienation, and better understand the protagonists.

Next to isolation, Andrew Webber contributes with some additional criteria for a doppelgänger to appear. One of the six items on his list, is that it is “usually the product of a broken home” (Fonseca 189). Neither Victor nor Robert have been directly neglected in childhood, although Robert had a tougher starting point than Victor. Still, Hogg and Shelley both reveal that the protagonists never truly connect with neither parents nor friends in childhood years. This complicated relationship with immediate family and peers, explain the isolation that initially leads to the doppelgänger’s appearances. The doppelgängers are in some ways substitutes for the personal relationships they fail to find elsewhere. By portraying them as victims of childhood alienation, they appeal to sympathy.

Victor and Robert had very different family situations growing up, yet both seem to have had a somewhat complicated relationship with parents and peers. Victor seemingly grew up in a very nourishing and comforting environment: “No human being could have passed a happier childhood than myself.” (Shelley 29). He is surrounded by loving parents, siblings, and his closest companion, Henry Clerval. Still, as Paul Cantor points out, in “The Nightmare of Romantic Idealism”: “he was spoiled as a child, and as he grows older he does not want to relinquish the situation of having everything go his way, without his having to make any concessions to the needs of others” (Cantor 244). Cantor argues that this is clearly evident in the following quote:

My mother's tender caresses and my father's smile of benevolent pleasure while regarding me are my first recollections. I was their plaything and their idol, and something better -- their child, the innocent and helpless creature bestowed on them by heaven, whom to bring up to good, and whose future lot it was in their hands to direct to happiness or misery, according as they fulfilled their duties towards me. (Shelley 25)

Frankenstein admits that he had violent tendencies as a child, but in the eyes of his parents he was “their plaything”. The excessive admiration seems to have prevented them from correcting him when he acted out, and from really seeing him as he was, and by extension did in fact not “fulfil their duties” towards him.

For Wringhim, the situation seems to have been the opposite. Robert informs us early on that “[his] father according to the flesh disclaimed all relation or connection with [him], and all interest in [him], save what the law compelled him to take” (Hogg 75). Wringhim likes and admires his adoptive (and perhaps biological) father: “I had so few who cared for me, or for whom I cared, that I felt rather gratified at seeing him” (Hogg 138). For his mother, he seems to have little affection: As for my mother, [...] I confess that I always despised her motley instructions, nor had I any great regard for her person (Hogg 87-88). Wringhim is rejected by his father, and left at the mercy of a strictly religious adoptive father and a God-fearing mother he does not connect with. I would argue that the paternal rejection and strict family environment certainly are plausible reasons for Wringhim’s anti-social person, which again leads to his further isolation.

Friendships in early years also contribute to shaping the two narrators’ social competence (or lack thereof) and alienation. Frankenstein only has two close playmates in his childhood: Elizabeth, his “more than sister” (Shelley 27) and Henry Clerval, his “friend, [and] benefactor” (Shelley 182). Elizabeth is Frankenstein’s adoptive sister and implicit future wife, while Clerval is his closest friend. Frankenstein praises their childhood together and seems to see himself as the centre of the trio. Even so, there are suggestions that Victor is not the link between the two at all. There are hints that Elizabeth and Clerval have a strong bond on their own, and that this causes jealousy in Frankenstein:

And Clerval—could aught ill entrench on the noble spirit- of Clerval?—Yet he might not have been so perfectly humane, so thoughtful in his generosity— so full of kindness and tenderness amidst his passion for adventurous exploit, had she [Elizabeth] not unfolded to him the real loveliness of beneficence, and made the doing good the end and aim of his soaring ambition. (Shelley 30)

Where Frankenstein might have had a strained relationship with Clerval, Clerval seems to admire Frankenstein, and he supports and dotes on him. For Wringhim the situation is different. He has never been allowed to meet his biological brother, and he has no close friends. The only person his own age that he ever mentions, is poor M’Gill, whom he gets kicked out from school. He has an intense need to be or feel better than his peers as first illustrated on p. 83:

There was only one boy at Mr Wilson’s class who kept always the upper hand at me in every part of education. [...] I determined, (as I knew him for a wicked person and one of the devil’s hand-fast children), to be revenged on him, and to humble him by some means or other. (Hogg 82-83)

What Wringhim fails to realize is that they share both intellect and competitiveness, and this could perhaps be grounds for a friendship.

Sexual alienation

The doppelgänger posing as an ‘imaginary friend’, is not only restricted to the platonic. There is compelling evidence to suggest that also sexual anxiety is a contributing factor to the protagonist’s alienation. The doppelgänger can further be read as a substitute for absent romantic connections. Webber points out that the person who “imagines his double is almost always a bachelor”. This, according to Fonseca, gives a social context to the aforementioned isolation theory of Vardoulakis. Bloede additionally sees a connection between the person who has a doppelgänger and his incapability to form any real relationship (Fonseca 189).

Issues with female companionship is clearly illustrated in the relationship Frankenstein has to Elizabeth. Frankenstein is “given” Elizabeth as a present when they are young: “I have a pretty present for my Victor- tomorrow he shall have it” (Shelley 27). This suggest that Frankenstein is taught that people can be possessed, at least women. It is already implied from early age that Elizabeth and Frankenstein will end up marrying each other. Frankenstein therefore never really has to learn how to communicate with women in a natural way: “[I] looked upon Elizabeth as mine—mine to protect, love, and cherish” (Shelley 27). Yet he never seems to get emotionally close to her. Plans about their romantic and sexual “future” are being made before they even reach puberty, which makes for a somewhat unnatural order of the stages in the development of a relationship.

Like Frankenstein, Wringhim also struggles with female relationships. As already mentioned, he detests his own mother, and partly blames her for his situation. In *Confessions*, Wringhim goes to extensive lengths to deny any desire for female intimacy:

The mention of such a thing as *amour* with any woman existing to me is really so absurd, so far from my principles, so far from purity of nature, and frame to which I was born and consecrated, that I hold it as an insult and regard it with contempt. (Hogg 133)

Sexual suppression is doubtlessly something that can be ascribed to his religious and pious beliefs. Like Eve and the apple, or Pandora with the box on the world, Wringhim believes all women to be a source of evil and misery. However, unless Wringhim is asexual, he must have some purely physical sexual desire. This becomes evident when Wringhim is accused of having had a sexual relationship with a young woman. He denies the very idea of such an event, and has no recollection of ever having even met Miss Keeler. Perhaps he never did, as Gil-Martin possesses the ability to pose as him and might as well have acted in his place. Nevertheless, as Wringhim gains knowledge that the young girl is at his mercy, like Frankenstein, he reveals a tendency for possessiveness towards women: “Highly as I disapproved of the love of women, and all intimacies and connections with the sex, I felt a sort of indefinite pleasure, an ungracious delight in having a beautiful woman solely at my disposal” (Hogg 136). The lack of romantic feeling may well be ascribed to the narcissistic personality traits of both characters, and one could assume that the two are only capable of loving themselves. Even so, it is another element contributing to alienation.

The protagonists’ issues with romantic female relations may be explained by Bloede’s claim that “The friendships he does form usually have an element of homosexuality” (Bloede 179). Frankenstein is a man in his prime, engaged to a beautiful woman and obsessed with creating life. Despite possessing all things necessary to create life, he seems to go out of his way to avoid doing so in the easiest way. The theory of sexual tension between the Creature and Victor is certainly not novice. On a plot level Frankenstein is the Creature’s creator, and perhaps by extension his father and/or mother. As a parent however, one would expect him to love his creation despite the flaws, and care for him regardless. Still, Frankenstein takes one look at the creature and is disgusted. It is strange how the vulgar looks are only apparent to Frankenstein when the Creature comes to life, and not while he was fully assembled on the slab. If the Creature represents some part of Victor that he is suppressing, the horror he feels when seeing the creature may be reflecting his disgust with parts of himself – his sexual desires. Further, as the creature asks Frankenstein to create a woman for him, he obeys at first, then later destroys her. His reflections while making the woman might reveal some inner wish from Frankenstein:

They might even hate each other; the creature who already lived loathed his own deformity, and might he not conceive a greater abhorrence for it when it came before his eyes in the female form? She also might turn with disgust from him to the superior beauty of man; she

might quit him, and he be again alone, exasperated by the fresh provocation of being deserted by one of his own species. (Shelley 170)

Does this reveal Frankenstein's fear that the Creature might find someone to love, and abandon Frankenstein? He decides to destroy the woman in front of the creature, knowing that this might enrage him further. His excuse is that he suddenly feels some responsibility towards humankind – a rare occurrence of ethical reflection on Frankenstein's part. In addition to this, one can mention Victor's half-efforts at ending the Creature's life, which he has had many attempts to do. Whether this is due to his parental instincts or a romantic sentiment, his efforts are less than feeble, and it is obvious he wants him around for longer. The brief relationship with Walton also implies homosexuality. As Walton is beyond the scope of the thesis, he will not be examined further.

As for Wringhim, the closest we ever get to any signs of sexual attraction is when he describes how he feels after his first meeting with Gil-Martin. This passage resembles the description of infatuation at first sight:

I felt a sort of invisible power that drew me towards him, something like the force of enchantment, which I could not resist. As we approached each other, our eyes met and I can never describe the strange sensations that thrilled through my whole frame at that impressive moment; a moment to me fraught with the most tremendous consequences. (Hogg 89)

Incidentally, at this point Gil-Martin looks just like Robert Wringhim himself. Like Narcissus, Wringhim is obsessed with Gil-Martin who looks like himself. Unlike Gil-Martin and Wringhim, Frankenstein's Creature does not resemble Victor. Still, even though the Creature's looks become distorted and vulgar, the size and strength as well as the hair "of a lustrous black" and "teeth of pearly whiteness" (Shelley, p 50), suggests that Victor attempted to create a man of traits that are classically attractive. The fact that both doppelgängers are male also indicate that if there is any attraction, this is same-sex attraction. It is however never explicitly stated that any of them have any sexual or romantic ideas about their doubles. As homosexual relations were not commonly accepted at the time of these novels, the social pressure would have compelled the protagonists to suppress their sexuality. This can naturally also be a reason for self-isolation as Victor and Wringhim are not able to express themselves fully in the contemporary society. Furthermore, if the doppelgängers are objects of sexual desire, the rejection of the doppelgängers as they become more intertwined with each other, can indicate homophobia and self-loathing as well as fear of their own sexual desires. This again makes them not only reject parts of themselves, but also, the society in order to prevent society to reject them.

How alienation leads to Fanaticism

Victor and Wringhim's social alienation make them retract into developing their 'interests'. This again, makes them even more isolated and they are at some point caught in an evil circle. Cantor argues that Frankenstein in his childhood "is a classic case of sublimation; he uses the energy he derives from repressing his normal feelings, especially his sexual desires, to fuel his intellectual and scientific pursuits. Victor's loneliness and isolation is thus not accidental to his creativity" (Cantor 241-242). For Victor, the science is a way to tame his anger and violence which arises from this suppression.

Wringhim has had his religion more or less imposed upon him, yet it has become something in which he can assert himself. Robert and Victor both were, or at least believe they were, above average intelligent as children, and this again contributed to their narcissism; Wringhim "astonished [his] teachers, and made them gaze at one another" (Hogg 76). Frankenstein is less direct when he recounts his childhood advances. Yet he explains in detail how he was taken by advanced literature and the secrets of natural science: "but while I followed the routine of education in the schools of Geneva, I was, to a great degree, self-taught with regard to my favourite studies" (Shelley 32). Both devote themselves fully to their respective disciplines, and this further contributes to their isolation. Self-isolation further leads to them advancing without any guidance or correction. This allows for them to make wrongful assumptions and advance with gross misconduct.

Frankenstein himself claims that his father's failure to guide him is a contributing factor to his hubris:

My father looked carelessly at the title page of my book, and said, 'Ah! Cornelius Agrippa! My dear Victor, do not waste your time upon this; it is sad trash.' 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 [...]. It is even possible that the train of my ideas would never have received the fatal impulse that led to my ruin. (Shelley 31)

Frankenstein himself clearly sees a link between his father's lack of involvement in his scientific endeavours, and partly blames him for the tragic events that followed. This passage further strengthens the idea that Frankenstein's childhood was not all that he claims.

Wringhim is more closely guided in his endeavours than Frankenstein. Wringhim's adoptive father is very tentative to his education within the Calvinist church. Still, even though there are examples of Wringhim discussing his faith with his parents, he seems to

spend a lot of time on his own, contemplating his sins and interpreting what his faith really means. What is more significant, is how the Calvinist religion in itself is very individualistic and isolating. Antinomian Calvinism is largely based on a personal relationship with God. The consequential danger of misinterpreting religion through such individual worship, is an issue Hogg points to in his novel.

Calvinism was often linked to insanity and described as “enthusiasm”. Faubert looks at Johnson’s definition of “enthusiasm” or religious insanity, which was described in *A dictionary of the English language* as “vain belief of private revelation; a vain confidence of divine favour or communication” (Faubert 80). She concludes that “Johnsonian enthusiasm is the individual’s private conviction that he or she fully understands God’s word. Thus, the word enthusiasm [sic] represents a crisis of reading: it denotes unchecked interpretative hubris” (Faubert 80). This is illustrated for example when the elder Mr. Wringhim claims to have argued with God in order to have Wringhim accepted (Hogg 88). This more private practice means that the need for a community to discuss ideas and spend time together, is not required in the same way as other Christian branches, where community and social gatherings are very important. One could argue that this lack of communication in turn, is the reason for the doppelgänger turning up and misguiding Robert’s understanding of his faith. There are several examples on how he, like Victor, misunderstands. The lack of proper guidance eventually takes him onto the wrong path. Here, sympathy can be evoked as the two come across as eager to learn, but misunderstand

How Fanaticism leads to Further Alienation

By immersing themselves in their eccentric undertakings, both protagonists are further removed from social contact. As Frankenstein leaves for university his personal baggage consists of limited social skills, a strange attitude towards women, and an upbringing with little to no criticism and moral guidance. These conditions make it difficult for him to make new friends, and he retracts into his studies even more intensely than before. One might argue that the ambitious scientist becomes isolated because he is driven by his narcissistic ambitions, which overshadow his need for socialisation and not the other way around. However, there are compelling evidence that Frankenstein has some anxiety towards new acquaintances. It seems he intended to make friends, but failed to do so:

I, who had ever been surrounded by amiable companions, continually engaged in endeavouring to bestow mutual pleasure, I was now alone. In the university, whither I was going, I must form my own friends, and be my own protector. My life had hitherto been remarkably secluded and domestic; and this had given me invincible repugnance to new countenances [...] I believed myself totally unfitted for strangers. (Shelley 37)

Still, the only people he introduces to Henry Clerval when he comes visiting, are his two professors. Whether voluntary or not, Frankenstein seems to fail at making friends, both in the figurative *and*, one might argue, in the literal way.

Wringhim also submerges himself in the church and is obsessed with the idea of becoming one of the “just made perfect”. Although Wringhim seems very devoted to his religious faith, one might argue whether or not this is voluntary. He is brought up into this community from birth and knows of little other. His adoptive father is the leader of the parish, and thus it seems he is expected to comply and “succeed” in becoming one of the selected. It is made rather clear by Hogg that religion is the cause for his isolation. Whether it is the grand community that pushes Wringhim away, and thus further towards his religious devotion, or if it is his religious devotion that makes people retract, is however less obvious. The Antinomian branch of the Calvinist movement believed that people from birth were either destined to end up in Heaven or in Hell, and as long as you did belong to the former group, all you did on earth was part of God’s will (Faubert 80). The Antinomians believed that if you could justify your actions in faith, the regular legal system was of no importance. The religion is rather antisocial in this way.

The mystery that surrounds a closed community might lead to rumours and labels being attached to it. As mentioned before, one of the labels the Calvinists, and certainly the Antinomians, attracted, was that of insanity. The notion that Calvinist Antinomianism was written off as madness is also confirmed in *Confessions*: when Wringhim first encounters his brother, George remarks: "Mercy be about us, Sir! is this the crazy minister's son from Glasgow?" (Hogg 21). It is made clear that both his brother George Colwan, and George’s friends are very much aware that Wringhim is different for belonging to the religious community. The religious society and belief-system that Robert Wringhim is brought up in. is thus isolating in three ways. The first is by ignoring the laws, and shutting itself away from the larger community. The second is due to the internally isolating society that bases the divine relationship on individualistic ideas rather than discussion. For the third, it is rejected

by the larger community for the cult-like untransparent ways in which they operate.

When the doppelgänger eventually shows up, this is to a great extent, like Bloede says, due to his isolation. Wringhim in his isolation, is both a vulnerable prey for a charming Devil, as well as a very lonely person in need of a companion. When Wringhim is told that he is one of the chosen few, he has no one to share this ‘accomplishment’ with. The knowledge that he is now saved, certainly feeds to his narcissism. He is on top of the world, but there is no one there to recognize it. To be praised by someone who looks like himself would then perhaps be the most esteemed recognition. If Gil-Martin is an “imaginary friend”, one could imagine that the ultimate narcissism of Wringhim would envision the perfect friend as someone being like himself. However, it is perhaps worth pointing out that the names M’Gill, his aforementioned schoolmate, and Gil-Martin are strikingly similar, and strengthens the idea of the doppelgänger as an imaginary friend.

A conclusion along the same lines can be drawn when it comes to Victor. When creating the Creature, Frankenstein dreams that “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” (Shelley 47). The need for admiration is a clear narcissistic trait, and is often ascribed as such. However, Frankenstein’s idea of parental affection and love, is described as him being “their plaything and their idol, and something better -- their child, the innocent and helpless creature” (Shelley 25). This might signal that the creature is intended to supply him with what Frankenstein believes to be love and affection. By portraying the isolation of the two protagonists as something they are not entirely to blame for themselves, entices the reader to sympathise with the two. Further, this explains the appearance of the doppelgängers, as already pointed out by Bloede and Vardoulakis. Instead of supplying the protagonists with the social company they desire, the doppelgängers turn on them and become the source for even greater problems. This calls for an investigation into the role and function of the doppelgängers and how, or whether, they serve the purpose of sympathy through isolation.

The Doppelgänger, Isolation, and Sympathy

The term doppelgänger was coined by the German romantic author Jean Paul in his novel *Siebenkas* from 1796 (Fonseca 187), although the notion of doubles and doppelgängers have been around from much earlier. However, the use of doppelgängers especially in English literature, appears far more frequently in the early nineteenth-century gothic fiction and horror literature. To define the term within strict boundaries, is an almost impossible task. The term has been applied to so many different types of doubles throughout the history of literary fiction from both Russia, Germany, the Britain and America to mention some (Cardin 66). Some of these again, build on the doubles from older scripts like The Bible and older folklore from different cultures. The term has been applied to such a vast number of doubles that the line of separation between foils, alter-egos, the fictional double, and doppelgänger seems to blur into the invisible, and collect them all under the same umbrella term - doppelgänger. Gry Faurholt includes the alter ego, and creates a dual definition of the doppelgänger. The first being “the alter ego or identical double of a protagonist who seems to be either a victim of an identity theft perpetrated by a mimicking supernatural presence or subject to a paranoid hallucination” and the second being “the split personality or dark half of the protagonist, an unleashed monster that acts as a physical manifestation of a dissociated part of the self” (Faurholt).

In *Frankenstein*, none of Faurholt’s definitions are spot on in determining what type of doppelgänger the Creature is. The Creature is not a typical doppelgänger who appears with the innate function as a force of destruction and evil. He comes to life involuntarily, and the suffering he endures is what makes him turn on Victor and the human race. Still, the second of Faurholt’s definitions is close to what the Creature turns out to be in the end. However, It does not seem like the Creature is an all “dark half” of Victor, rather that the two make up a whole which consists of both good and bad together, and their interactions with each other have them approach one another somewhere in the middle for their mutual destruction. The Creature and the relationship with Victor can be interpreted in a number of ways, something that has been done. For the purpose of this paper there are two main effects I wish to point to. If the Creature, like Faurholt suggests, does “portray an unleashed monster that acts as a physical manifestation of a dissociated part of the self” one can find Frankenstein’s violent tendencies also in the Creature. This is pointed out by Cantor: “Frankenstein thinks that his violent side has been harmlessly sublimated into his scientific pursuits. But the result of his experiments is to set free the aggressive emotions his conscious mind refuses to

acknowledge” (Cantor 249). Cantor further argues that “Frankenstein knows the monster's intentions because deep down they are his own. Something in Frankenstein wants to kill anyone who comes close to him so that he can maintain his willful [sic] isolation” (Cantor 251). Even if Frankenstein at this point wants to be isolated, I would argue that in this case it is due to the already established alienation. By following the method of looking to the Creature, one can see that, like Frankenstein, the violent tendencies are not acted on before the creature is desperate in his isolation. Thus, the theory that isolation is the cause for Victor acting out, can be reinforced by looking to the creature.

Like Frankenstein’s mother dying in his early childhood, the creature is left to fend for himself when his parent and creator abandons him. He has no biological family, lacks a community, and a species who looks like him. The Creature is eventually forced to escape to isolating landscapes in order to live in peace. By interpreting the alienating looks of the Creature as the physical manifestation of the alienating personality of Frankenstein, the Creature illustrates the pains of isolation that Frankenstein experiences as well.

Sympathy for the Creature is often helped by seeing how his creator rejects him and how he is maltreated by Victor. The opposite effect is in terms evoked towards Victor, who is the cause for a lot of the Creature’s suffering. However, if Victor and the Creature are really two sides of the same person, we can see the Creature as a part of Frankenstein. Cantor also supports this view:

Frankenstein and the monster are mirror images of each other. As many readers have sensed, they are the same being, viewed in different aspects, as creator and as creature. As creator this being feels an exhilarating sense of power, an ability to transgress all the limits traditionally set to man and realize his desires and dreams. But as creature, this being feels his impotence, feels himself alone in a world that fails to care for him, a world in which he is doomed to wander without companions to a solitary death. It is important to realize that both Frankenstein and the monster experience both these sets of feelings. (Cantor 235)

If Frankenstein experiences the same isolation and alienation as the Creature, sympathy the Creature evokes in the reader, might also contribute to increasing the sympathy for Frankenstein. Sympathy for the Creature is often more easily felt than sympathy for Victor. The Creature is much more level-headed and reflected than Victor. He is able to convey his feelings more eloquently and interpret what they mean. Unlike Frankenstein, the creature understands the emotional consequences of isolation as illustrated when they meet for the first

time after the creation: “I am malicious because I am miserable. Am I not shunned and hated by all mankind?” (Shelley 145). The Creature realizes that he needs a companion and compels Frankenstein to make him a woman. Frankenstein does however destruct the ‘project’ halfway. This might, as already mentioned, reveal Frankenstein’s fear that the Creature will find someone to love, and abandon him, like he did the Creature. He hurts the Creature because, in their isolation, at least the two of them are together. When the Creature therefore promises to destroy everyone in Frankenstein’s life, he, like Frankenstein makes sure they are isolated together.

Although not a perfect fit, Gil-Martin is easier to place within Faurholt’s definitions as an alter-ego who steals his identity. When Gil-Martin first appears, he looks like Robert Wringhim; the physical resemblance is accounted for. Further, there is the confusion of identity both when Wringhim is locked up due to illness and George still sees Wringhim haunting him, and when Wringhim lives in Dalcastle and is accused of committing crimes his own memory cannot account for. There has been a debate on whether Gil-Martin actually appears physically or if Wringhim, like Edith Birkhead argues, is “a man afflicted with religious mania who believes himself urged into crime by a mysterious being” (Lee 231). Both religious mania and schizophrenia have been argued as explanations for Gil-Martin. The ambiguity of the novel is designed in a way that one is never sure what to make of Gil-Martin’s existence. I am more inclined to argue, like the fictional Editor, that Gil-Martin does appear in physical form, as he was observed by “hundreds of living witnesses to attest the truth of it” (Hogg 178). Regardless, I will conclude that we are dealing with a devil. The Gil-Martin figure in *Confessions* has many similarities to both the biblical Devil and other devil figures from later fiction. First, there is the physical appearance of Gil-Martin. Even though he changes his looks, the clothes provide evidence. Gil-Martin is described as “Rather a gentlemanly personage—Green Circassian hunting coat and turban” (Hogg 166). Both the turban and the green coat are used as signifiers of the Devil in other literary works. In another one of Hogg’s novels, *The Three Perils of Man*, the Devil is described wearing a “crimson turban” on his head (MacLachlan, p.12). The green coat can be found in e.g. *Bearskin*, one of the Brothers Grimm’s folktales. Here, the Devil is described as such: “who wore a green coat and looked right stately, but had a hideous cloven foot” (Grimm 366). The cloven foot is also a matter of interest in Hogg’s novel. Still, it is neither confirmed nor refuted whether his feet are beastlike or not. Other than the ability to shapeshift, Gil-Martin’s personal properties like cunningness and a way with words, also coincide with some typical traits of the Devil in literature. The significance of Gil-Martin appearing as the Devil, are many. One is of course

for satirical purposes. By having The Devil so easily sway Wringhim to believe he is acting on God's will, Hogg exposes what he believes to be a major flaw in the Calvinist Antinomian religion: if an act could be justified, it would not be a sin, even when it's the Devil's act.

Wringhim believes himself to be one of God's devoted followers, but is very easily attracted to the Devil when he appears. Bligh also suggests that "there is a natural kinship between the devil and the Antinomian, since both believe that their eternal is already fixed and cannot be altered conduct good or bad" (Bligh 155). The Devil's eternal condemnation adds an extra layer to the two, as doppelgängers of each other, and further serves to refute the notion that Wringhim is unconditionally salvaged.

It is however more interesting to see what role Gil-Martin plays as Wringhim's double. Bloede argues that Gil-Martin has several functions throughout the novel:

In his first form as Robert's double he reflects the hero's narcissism, his complete obsession with himself and his promised salvation; after the murder of Blanchard, his appearance changes so that he is 'everyday a new man', and in this he reflects the wavering's of Robert's own feelings torn between his attachment to his parents and his narcissistic isolation, and in his final appearance as the murdered George he serves as a constant reminder of Roberts crime and is the voice of Robert's conscience. (Bloede 177)

In other words, the shifting shape of Gil-Martin reflects what occupies and worries Wringhim at any time; he mirrors Wringhim's inner person. Paulson writes: "'The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner' (1824) demonizes sin by introducing the devil himself as the double of the so-called 'justified sinner'; he is hardly an evil double, since Robert Wringhim was from the start evil, or at least nasty" (Paulson 193). Paulson rejects the idea that Gil-Martin is the evil opposite of Wringhim, or the devil on his shoulder because Wringhim seems to have acted on evil impulses from the start. Still, if he functions as an enabler that helps Wringhim to complete the deeds he secretly wishes to perform, this does not explain his doubts and hesitations. It is hardly with initial eagerness and longing that Wringhim kills, and it is the constant encouragement from Gil-Martin that tips him over the edge:

I did consider it, and that right seriously as well as frequently; and there was scarcely an hour in the day on which my resolves were not animated by my great friend, till at length I began to have a longing desire to kill my brother, in particular. Should any man ever read this scroll, he will wonder at this confession, and deem it savage and

unnatural. So it appeared to me at first, but a constant thinking of an event changes every one of its features. (Hogg 111)

One explanation might however be that Gil-Martin is a part of Wringhim that he attempts to suppress or expel. After all Wringhim admits that he struggles to stifle his urge to sin: “I prayed three times every day, and seven times on the Sabbath; but the more frequently and fervently that I prayed, I sinned still the more” (Hogg 77). When he finally is accepted as one of the “just made perfect”, Gil-Martin appears. He might represent the sinful part of Wringhim, suppressed by the sanctimonious sentiments, which finally surfaces and eventually takes control. Whether Gil-Martin is physically present, only a disturbance of the mind, or simply an element of the fantastic is not critical to determine for the sake of the argument. The presence of the doppelgänger, physical or not, is nevertheless experienced as real to Wringhim, and the effect of isolation remains the same.

In relation to the doppelgänger, sympathy is less straight forward in *Confessions*. One could argue that Wringhim’s alienation from society is like the Devil’s expulsion from Heaven. Sympathy for the Devil is not a novice idea, and can be found in works like Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Blake’s *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Robin McLachlan points to how Percy Shelley looks at the Devil as a heroic figure, far superior to his God (McLachlan 12). In this case one might sympathise with Wringhim as a victim who has been expelled from a life with his peers, just like the Devil. Still, I don’t believe this is the intention of Hogg. Gil-Martin’s function is more symbolic. We never get to know him as we do the Creature. Sympathy for Wringhim in relation to Gil-Martin, is more clearly encouraged by the consequences their relationship has for Robert. Bligh proposes that Hogg uses the narrative of the Editor to give an initially unfavourable impression of Wringhim. Then he later reverses this in Robert’s own memoir: “the reader will revise his harsh judgment: he will understand the workings of Robert’s mind and see him as an object of pity rather than of hatred— because he is the victim of his education and of the devil” (Bligh 161).

How the Doppelgängers Intensify Isolation

Where isolation is instrumental for the appearance of the doppelgänger, it is evident that the doppelgänger is also an effective means to increase the isolation and alienation of the protagonists. James Carson writes that:

[T]he melancholy or anxious loneliness of the heroine pales in comparison to the utter isolation of the conscience-ridden villain, who flees from society only to find that nature provides no consolation for him. The villain creates his monsters alone, and he sells his soul in the presence of no human being. The voices he hears and the figures he sees are, likely as not, projections of his own tormented conscience. (Carson 25)

Like Carson suggests, both Victor and Robert become even more isolated with the secret of the doppelgängers as they realize the danger they pose. Victor immediately regrets having created the Creature and expresses real guilt for the death of William and Justine:

This state of mind preyed upon my health, which had perhaps never entirely recovered from the first shock it had sustained. I shunned the face of man; all sound of joy or complacency was torture to me; solitude was my only consolation -- deep, dark, deathlike solitude. (Shelley 87)

Frankenstein's reaction to being alone with his awful secret, is to retract even further: "I often refused to accompany him, alleging another engagement, that I might remain alone" (Shelley 162). As the novel concludes, the Creature has also killed all the people that were ever close to Victor, just like he promised. Thus, also Victor's isolation is now complete. He is alone both physically, socially, and mentally. The ultimate result, however, is that the Creature does indeed become his only "companion". The Creature's involuntary isolation and his imposed isolation on Frankenstein keep them locked in a solitary, mutual relationship.

For Wringhim, the isolation that comes with the doppelgänger, is not ultimately due to guilt. He only expresses regret for his own suffering. If there is any guilt for having killed his family, this is only subconsciously. Wringhim is thrilled to have a companion who admires him, as much as he does himself. The people of the village, however, sceptically keep their distance. This pushes Wringhim even closer to Gil-Martin. At first Wringhim revels in the company he has acquired, and he accepts the murders as long as he sees the doppelgänger as his "guardian angel". The killing of his family does however lead to him moving into Dalcastle where they are alone, save from his servant, and Gil-Martin is given full control over Wringhim. It is only when faced with the fact that his doppelgänger does not have his best interest at heart, he realises what he has done. In his solitude, Wringhim is unable to escape from his doppelgänger:

Sooner shall you make the mother abandon the child of her bosom; nay, sooner cause the shadow to relinquish the substance, than separate me from your side. Our beings are amalgamated, as it were, and consociated in one, and never shall I depart from this country until I can carry you in triumph with me. (Hogg 142)

Unlike Frankenstein, who has Walton and to some extent the Creature, Wringhim has no one left to confide in. In addition, as Wringhim is the one who carried out the murders, not Gil-Martin, he cannot seek help without incriminating himself. In his loneliness, he is easy prey for Gil-Martin, something he realizes himself:

I liked this; having found from experience, that the great personage who had attached himself to me, and was now become my greatest terror among many surrounding evils, generally haunted me when I was alone, keeping aloof from all other society. (Hogg 177)

Wringhim realizes he is safer from the doppelgänger when in company, and he attempts to stay close to people: “If I am driven from the family sanctuary by night, I know I shall be torn in pieces before morning;” (Hogg 177) . Fox claims that Wringhim begins to approach society as a reaction to his distrust and fear of Gil-Martin:

That his own mind is evolving in some way is most apparent in his growing doubt and distrust of Gil-Martin, whom he initially sees as his "guardian angel" [...], but later bluntly refers to as his "enemy" [...]. Significantly, this shift in attitude towards Gil-Martin is accompanied by an increasing variety and even warmth in his dealings with other human beings, suggesting that Robert's "progress" is not that of the isolated Christian finding the path of righteousness, but that of the isolated sinner finding a way into the world of human relations and human contact.” (Fox 176)

Fox suggests that Wringhim has undergone some personal changes towards the end of the book. He might not realize that his actions were wrong, but he now sees the value of human contact and attempts to reach out.

Frankenstein also finally seeks back to society when he can no longer control his doppelgänger: “I feared to wander from the sight of my fellow-creatures, lest when alone he should come to claim his companion” (Shelley 169). Frankenstein’s decision to reach out to people and cease his isolation, is however not due to any personal change or desire for human contact, rather a means of self-preservation. Unfortunately for both protagonists, their attempt to reach out to society comes too late. They meet their ending the same way they have spent

most of their lives – alienated and alone. Only this time, they are also faced with their own short-comings and have no one left to blame.

A Lonely Ending to a Lonely Life

Sympathy for the protagonist is perhaps best evoked in the end. Ibsen said it well in *The Wild Duck*: “If you take the life lie from a man, you take away his happiness as well” (Ibsen 93). Wringhim’s entire world has revolved around his religious belief and the hope of being one of the “just made perfect”. As Wringhim realises he has not acted in accordance with his religion, he also begins to doubt his status as untouchable. Just before he takes his own life, he doubts that Heaven is where he is headed and longs to trade his hell on earth with what he believes to be actual Hell: “My last hour is arrived: I see my tormentor once more approaching me in this wild. Oh, that the earth would swallow me up, or the hill fall and cover me! Farewell for ever!” (Hogg 177). The only way he can escape his nightmare enemy, he believes, is by taking his own life. By doing this, Hogg illustrates that Wringhim is a victim of his faith. Suicide has been linked to Calvinism and religious mania since the beginning, and even though there is little evidence to show that this is correct – Hogg illustrates that being part of this society this is a very likely outcome. Faubert points out John Calvin himself, [...] abhorred suicide”, that he saw it as “abominable before God” and furthermore that it was like disobeying God’s will and intention of placing us on earth. (Faubert 86) Thus, Wringhim commits one last crime, this time against his own beliefs and his God. This desperate ending clearly appeals to feelings of sympathy.

Frankenstein is not chased, like Wringhim. He is the one chasing the Creature. Having lost all his family and friends, he follows the Creature to the north pole, and the physical isolation is re-enforcing the emotional isolation of the two. Throughout the novel the scientist has blamed himself for the death of his family, yet only for the sake of being the creator of the Creature. Frankenstein regrets ever creating the Creature, but never sees the fault in his mistreatment of the doppelgänger. Still, he sees the error in his blinding ambition, and attempts to warn Walton from making the same mistakes: “You seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been” (Shelley 21). Like Wringhim, neither he manages to fully grasp the extent of his foolishness. Common for both is that the endeavour they undertook, turns out to be what kills them in the end. The paths of the protagonists and what they have become at end of the road, is well expressed by the Creature’s last sentiment: “But

it is even so; the fallen angel becomes a malignant devil. Yet even that enemy of God and man had friends and associates in his desolation; I am alone” (Shelley 228).

Conclusion

As their ends are drawing nearer, all the elements examined in this paper come together. Both Frankenstein and Wringhim are physically isolated in desolate areas. They are socially isolated as all their friends and family are dead, partly due to their own folly, and what was supposed to be their great achievement in life, their close companions and marks of success, have become their greatest enemies, and indirectly the causes for their deaths. After having followed the protagonists from their beginning, being witness to their maltreatment of other people, and their narcissistic behaviour, one should perhaps appreciate their demise and feel that there is some sort of justice in this. To some extent, there is. They have acted selfishly and foolishly; the argument is not that they are completely blameless victims in their stories. As we see in the end, Hogg and Shelley do punish the protagonists, but at the same time they show that they are partly products of their own societies. The early alienation, which leads to further poor judgement and social dysfunction, began in childhood and was out of their control. Eventually, the protagonists do suffer gravely as they are forced to come face to face with themselves as well and their doppelgängers – or perhaps this is the same thing? For both protagonists, their last hours become a time for self-reflection and humility. They finally see the errors of their ways, and in their lonely and helpless state, they show real fear, despair, and regret. Isolation seems to be the root of all evil for the two protagonists. Wringhim’s alienation and loneliness, his fear of facing his own monstrosity as well as his inability to escape it, makes him take his own life. Victor’s monstrous side becomes more than he can handle and the guilt of living with his family’s blood on his hands is worse than death. The punishment by giving them a lonely death, where they face their own life lie, makes it almost inevitable not to feel some sort of sympathy with the protagonists and what they have become.

Even if wrapped in a supernatural frame, the situations that lead to isolation and alienation for the protagonists are highly recognizable. Fear of rejection, sexual confusion, and the wish to retract and distract oneself from the outside world are common for most people from time to time. Hume and Smith stress in their respective works that sympathy is created by imagining the feelings of someone else. It was written in the article “The World of London” in the *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 1841 that “There is no place where

isolation is more complete than in London” (485). The time of industrialization and urbanization led to a number of changes in the British society and alienation in a changing world, anxiety about scientific advances and religious doubt, was not uncommon for the contemporary British. To use isolation and alienation to evoke sympathy with the protagonists is especially fitting in the early nineteenth-century society, and the authors tap into this.

Even today the themes brought up in Hogg and Shelley’s novels, are relevant. London is still the loneliest city in the world, but other things have changed. Advances in psychological science has contributed with accepted diagnoses and terminology like ‘bipolar depression’, and ‘social anxiety’ to describe the monsters that haunt the alienated ‘protagonists’ of the real world. The interest we still show for these two-hundred-year-old stories indicate that, even today, the alienation of Victor and Robert is something we can recognise, sympathise with, and learn from.

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