

POST-DOC  
RESEARCH PROPOSAL

**In Search of a Mediterranean Cinema:**  
**Aspects of Doppelgänger and their Contribution to a Cathartic Cinema**  
**therapy.**

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## 1. Research Question

Although the idea of the *double* (doppelgänger) was employed consistently in literature throughout the nineteenth century, and had also been viewed philosophically by the beginning of the twentieth, it was not until Otto Rank, the first lay analyst from the “circle around Freud”, presented his psychoanalytic study, *The Double*, that a relationship was established between the theme as used in literature and the psychic factors that produced it. Since then, Ralph Tymms has written his *Doubles in Literary Psychology* (1949), more from the point of view of a literary historian, quite naturally incorporating the later sources available to him.

The word *double* has not always meant the same thing during the last two centuries. For Otto Rank, it is either “a physical double, which takes a more distantly related form in the comedies of mistaken identity or...a likeness which has been detached from the ego and become an individual being ( shadow, reflection, portrait).” Bypassing the first manifestation as the earlier, fairly uncomplicated treatment of the subject, we realize that the terms themselves indicate two things: the double is a “photographic reprint” of the original, physically immaterial, and wholly dependent on the “positive” for its “negative” existence. And Tucker, the translator of *The Double*, interprets the use of the double-theme as springing “not so much from the author’s conscious fondness for describing preternatural situations, or separate parts of their personalities *as from their unconscious impulse to lend imagery to a universal human problem- that of the relation of the self to the self*”.

Rank, drawing on his vast knowledge of Western literature, offers us a large number of examples from German, French, British, Scandinavian and American writers, from both the beginning and end of the nineteenth century. In novels, films, plays, short stories, and poems, the double appears as a mirror reflection, an uncanny apparition, a spirit, a beggar, a portrait, an army of egos, and predominantly as a shadow. It functions as an objectified duplication of the self, as an action of one’s thoughts, a personalized figure independent of its prototype, a terpsichorean element of an otherwise cheerful personality.

Nevertheless, the *double-theme* has undergone various changes in post-World War II Western societies, ranging from its nomenclature to its basic functions. The *double* is now more commonly called the alter-ego, the surrogate self, the usurper and principally the intruder. No matter what form it assumes nor what function it performs, the creation of the *double* in literary works, Rank claims, can be attributed to two principle causes. If the artist's *amour-propre* is so excessive that it results in thanatophobia, then the writer-out of fear for the loss of self or its image-will create a double but he will also endow it with malevolent, persecuting faculties.

In this particular research, we will focus on varieties of Double in cinema and more precisely on polarities of identity concerning gender issues, race issues, social issues, contributing at the same time to the construction of cultural identity or "Mediterranean Identity". Furthermore, we will also focus on issues of autoscopy and on the fragmentation of identity in Mediterranean Cinema as well as on the role of double as a cathartic therapeutic technique. It is known that cinema is broadly used as a therapeutic tool during psychotherapy, as a process that can help people deal with any kind of trauma...the so-called cinema therapy.

## 2. Objectives-Research Techniques.

The main objectives/ deliverables are the following:

- a) present the different aspects of double projection in Mediterranean Cinema.
- b) find a deeper connection among double projection and psychoanalysis, moving towards a kind of "cinematherapy".
- c) reflect on the role of Doppelgänger in defining the Mediterranean Cinema.

In order to achieve the main objectives of the project as stated, first it will be necessary to carry out a literature review and see what has been written regarding the *double theme*. Of course, this will also involve a deep research on the connection between literature, cinema and psychoanalysis as well as on the definition of a Mediterranean Cinema. Moreover, we will study the role of cinema as a double projection of the cultural reality since films spring from reality, sometimes they copy reality and sometimes they affect reality. We will focus on films from Greek, Italian, French and Spanish Cinema.

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