

**Retrofitting *Blade Runner*:
Issues in Ridley Scott's
Blade Runner and Philip K. Dick's
*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?***

2nd edition

edited by

Judith B. Kerman

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The Android as *Doppelgänger*

Joseph Francavilla

The story and main themes of *Blade Runner* center on its use of androids as artificial life forms. The android in science fiction is, in fact, a modern variation on one of the oldest literary motifs: the double or *Doppelgänger*. But what exactly is this figure of the *Doppelgänger*? And how do the androids or replicants in *Blade Runner* function as doubles? To answer this last question, I would like to outline a psychoanalytic view of doubles that will help explain the android figures in science fiction.

Twins, shadows, sibling empathy and rivalry, reflections in water or other shiny surfaces—these are some of the natural phenomena which early literature mythologized into figures of the double. Other figures of the double also evolved: ghosts; living portraits, statues, dolls, and automatons; vampires and werewolves; the homunculi and the golem; guardian angels and devils; and possession of humans by gods, spirits, or demons. All these figures of the double, invested with the magical and the supernatural, were perhaps, as Claude Lévi-Strauss has suggested in *Structural Anthropology* (202-28), involved in myths which attempted to mediate unfathomable oppositions in the world: life and death, day and night, male and female, self and other, human and nonhuman, animate and inanimate. These myths grappled with the undecidability of mutually exclusive categories: is something alive or dead, human or nonhuman? Perhaps another way of expressing this mediation is to say that myths including double figures also tried to deal with the intellectual uncertainty concerning the contradictory nature and behavior of what is considered essentially the *same* thing or person, say, the weather or climate, or a parent in his or her treatment of a child. The problem the myths addressed in this case is how a single thing (or person) can be split into two or perceived in two paradoxical ways.

In any event, as Sir James Frazer has shown in his study *The Golden Bough*, magical and religious beliefs were attached to the images of the double, notably the ideas that souls were portable and transferable and seen as shadows, reflections, or ghosts after a person dies, that the soul would separate from the body in sleep or at death and perhaps would be reincarnated in another body, and that voodoo icons could affect the person whom they resembled. The double, then, can be seen as an early belief in a “spirit” or “soul” of the individual which frees itself from the body and yet continues to influence the original host because it was once in contact with that body (12-52; 220-25).

Although a number of psychologists and psychoanalytic critics have wrestled with the problem of the double and its uncanniness,¹ I will concentrate only upon the discussions of Sigmund Freud and his disciple, Otto Rank. Because

of the impossibility of always distinguishing the self from its alter ego, I will have to let context determine to which self the term “double” refers. The plural term “doubles” will refer to the “pair,” and the term “double” will refer to one of the pair.

According to Freud, the double or *Doppelgänger* in literature is a manifestation of that class of phenomena known as “the uncanny.” Early in his essay, “The Uncanny,” Freud quotes E. Jentsch, who “ascribes the essential factor in the production of the feeling of uncanniness to intellectual uncertainty” (236). But, dissatisfied, Freud quickly embarks upon a lexical odyssey to discover (or recover) that the meaning of the German word *heimlich* (canny, homely, intimate, familiar) becomes ambivalent until it finally comes to mean its opposite, *unheimlich* (uncanny, strange, eerie, unfamiliar). By analogy, Freud argues that the psychological notion of the uncanny itself is also the “once-canny.” The double, then, is a species of the uncanny, that class of phenomena which is “in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression,” and also “a secretly, familiar thing, which has undergone repression and then returned from it” (241, 245). Uncanny experiences happen when once-repressed infantile complexes are somehow revived or when once-discarded primitive beliefs seem suddenly to be in operation. These beliefs include the conviction that thoughts are omnipotent, that telepathy exists, the dread of the evil eye, ghosts, animism, the compulsion to repeat actions or events, and other varieties of superstitious and magical thinking.

Relying on Otto Rank’s psychological discussion of the double, Freud supports Rank’s hypothesis that the double originated as a defense against death in the form of guardian spirits or as an immortal soul represented by a shadow or mirror reflection. According to Rank, early man, who believed in a soul that outlasted the body as a shadow or reflection and was transferable, saw these images as a confirmation of immortality, guardian spirits of the individual’s existence. But as time passed and man lost his belief in a transferable soul and guardian spirits, these same images reminded man instead of his dreaded mortality, as signs recalling those earlier superstitious beliefs which had been superseded. Consequently, by this “recalling” of the “once-familiar,” the double comes to signify exactly the opposite of what it did originally (analogous to the movement of *heimlich* to *unheimlich*): the double metamorphoses into the harbinger of death (Freud 234-35; Rank 82-6).

With its seemingly supernatural knowledge of the other self, and its shared emotions and experiences with the other self, the double becomes, by definition, uncanny in its remarkable shrewdness, acuteness, and its almost magical wisdom, intuition, and power (e.g., Roy Batty in *Blade Runner* vis-a-vis Rick Deckard). The intimate, unbreakable bond between doubles indicates an empathic, love-hate relationship whose development goes well beyond mere coincidence or chance. Significantly, the death of one self almost always implies the death of some important aspect of the other self.

Often the doubles which have split apart display contrast and are antithetical, yet they are similar in that they constitute halves or parts of a whole personality. Each half appears antithetical yet complementary, strange yet familiar, and antagonistic yet sympathetic. An eerie, almost supernatural sympathetic resonance

between the self and its alter ego forces each to be inseparable from its counterpart, to affect the other self directly by its actions, and to have intimate, inexplicable knowledge of the other self. The ego has split as a defense mechanism to escape psychic conflict arising from independent, contradictory and incompatible reactions or attitudes. The psychic conflict of incompatible attitudes or irrepressible impulses forces part of the ego to become exteriorized, thrown outward, in order to allow the self to survive. Projected outward, this variety of double then represents the return of the repressed part of the personality torn apart by its irreconcilable elements.

Otto Rank finds that often the self becomes consumed by guilt over its flaws so that the self no longer accepts responsibility for its actions, and therefore it places the blame upon the double, who may be personified by the devil or by conscience (76-7). Freud also described the double in terms of self-punishment by what he termed "conscience." A special faculty develops from the ego, according to Freud, which observes, criticizes, censures, and opposes the rest of the ego in order to attain the ego-ideal (235). This self-criticism by one's guilty conscience can be transformed into a hostile, even deadly force seemingly from outside.

Two key notions from Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* will further explain the uncanny nature of doubles. Frazer claims that sympathetic magic involves two principles: the law of imitative magic (similarity), and the law of contagious magic (contact or contiguity). In the first, it is believed that "like produces like" or that things which resemble each other affect each other. For instance, the voodoo icon is designed to resemble the person whom it is meant to affect. In the second law, it is believed that things which have been in contact with each other continue to affect each other after they have been separated (like the spread of a contagious disease). Thus, the tribesman believes that possession of the hair or nails of a person allows one to affect that person (12-52). The first law can also be termed *metaphoricity* and the second, *metonymy*. All doubles operate by metaphor and metonymy: the doubles must be in some respect similar, and they must have a bond of contiguity (originally have been in contact with each other) in order for each to keep affecting the other. The self and its double complement each other, invoking the original whole of which both were once part. By their very nature, then, doubles are constituted by magical laws invoked whenever they appear, and hence create an uncanny effect.

Whereas doubles by multiplication are alike in nearly every respect (identical twins, clones, etc.), doubles by division utilize two further distinguishing principles which can also be given rhetorical labels: complementary and antithesis. Each self implies what the other lacks and is the opposite of its alter ego. Fitted together, the divided selves complete each other, produce a composite, larger whole.

With their lethal power and precision, the replicants in *Blade Runner* certainly evoke fear in both the human characters in the story and in the viewers of the film. But why in general are doubles feared? Clearly there is always the fear that one's essence or soul will be stolen, captured, and transferred into the double, draining or eliminating the original being. For example, tribesmen are afraid of having their photographs taken or their shadows stepped on because they fear either their souls may be snatched and transferred to the photograph

or shadow, or that damage to the photograph or shadow will mean damage to their souls.

Initially, there is often competition or rivalry between doubles for the same space or location, the same position or rank, the same right to existence. (To prevent this competition, the humans in *Blade Runner* have forbidden the replicants, under penalty of death, to return to Earth.) This competition further implies the threat of displacement: the original self may lose its uniqueness and its identity to the other self which replaces the original.

Certainly this fear of substitution is at the heart of many science fiction stories in which the apparent humans are eventually unmasked as androids or robots. (By "android" I mean any construction of organic artificial life resembling humans, such as products of biological engineering. By "robot" I mean any inorganic artificial life resembling humans which is fundamentally a machine or mechanical being, such as automatons.) An example of this fear of substitution is the motivating incident in *Blade Runner*, where one of the key assignments for the human bounty hunter Deckard is to search for, unmask, and kill the infiltrating, undercover replicants on Earth.

Finally, there is a sense of loss of control in the original self. The original self loses independence and self-determination since it becomes servant to the once slave self. Loss of control is also evident directly since the double may influence or dominate the original self through the magical principles of similarity and contiguity.

How can android and robot doubles, representing the return of the repressed, symbolize both guardian spirits of immortality and demonic harbingers of death? Androids and robots in science fiction surely reflect our ambivalence about science and technology. On the one hand, we view the android or robot with awe and wonder: they are the ultimate toys, pets, playmates, servants, best friends, lovers. They are the ideal children or parents or mates we wish we had. They are the perfect creations we hope for, replications of ourselves. We envy their perfection, their flawless, strong, tireless bodies. They satisfy our wish for immortality, for housing our soul and mind in a precisely engineered body, free from injury or disease.

On the other hand, androids and robots are projections of our fears concerning dehumanizing technology run rampant and scientific creations out of control. In fact, these artificial forms of life mainly have been seen in fiction as dangerous and demonic. Even early legends concerning the creation of artificial life, such as the golem created by Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague, express the strong fear that the artificial life will turn demonic, will run amok, and will very likely threaten its human creators. Such legends suggest it is "blasphemous" for humans to create life—and such artificial creations are therefore the products of "blasphemy"—because humans then show their hubris in usurping the role "reserved" for God alone. Such fears of "blasphemy" and "hubris" based upon religious beliefs blend with the more ancient fears of the shaman or witch doctor, who may perform "black magic" and "religious rituals" that affect and manipulate the individual, the group, and the land.

But if Arthur Clarke's third law is correct that "any sufficiently developed technology is indistinguishable from magic," then perhaps the fear of the scientist-inventor and his innovations is the modern equivalent of the fear of shamans

and their creations. Thus, for example, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* presents a monster symbolizing the fearful result of alchemical black magic (creation of life through reanimating the dead), blasphemous hubris (creation of an "Adam" of a new race of beings), and "dangerous" scientific discoveries (late 18th century experiments in galvanism, electricity, chemistry, etc.). And many other examples in literature repeat this pattern of the feared Faustian scientist and his terrifying creation of artificial life: E.T.A. Hoffmann's "The Sandman," Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter," Herman Melville's "The Bell-Tower," Ambrose Bierce's "Moxon's Master," and so on. Perhaps, such life forms as robots, androids, sentient computers, clones, and mutants also reflect our current concerns and fears about technology—the advent of nuclear bombs, biochemical warfare, genetic engineering, orbiting weapon systems, industrial pollution, automation, the increased mechanization of society, and so forth.

In addition, it would seem that our *guilt* about the abuses of our scientific creations and our employment of technology, when it returns from repression, is collectively projected upon the android or robot double appearing as censoring conscience, the double becoming a symbol of our guilt and fear concerning technology being misused, becoming uncontrolled, going awry. It is no wonder, then, that we are afraid of these shadow figures in technological guise. We are guilty about forcing them into slavery and colonization and technological subservience. We fear these perfect artificial life forms will replace us perfectly, reverse our roles as master and slave, take us over *en masse*, destroy us all.

The metaphoricality of androids can be seen in their resemblance to human beings; at a certain point, as in *Blade Runner*, they are, or soon could be, virtually indistinguishable from humans. This allows the android to substitute for humans and to infiltrate human society. Eventually all the boundaries are blurred between master and slave, hunter and hunted, hero and villain, the inanimate and the animate, the human and the nonhuman.

The metonymic bond between androids and humans usually is an extension of the bond between the creator and the created, pseudo-parents and pseudo-children (e.g., Tyrell and Batty). Like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, *Blade Runner* suggests that when God's power of creation of life is usurped by the hubris of scientific man, the result is perceived as evil and produces fear and guilt in man, the imperfect creator, about his creation. Roy Batty, like Frankenstein's monster, is a Promethean rebel struggling against the tyrannical ruling authority who created him and who rejects his plea for "more life" with his Eve-like mate and his own kind. Again, the above-mentioned boundaries are blurred.

The bond of complementarity between the divided selves (android and human) is related directly to the bond of antithesis. By "complementarity" I mean that the android and human beings may be seen as two halves of the (ideally) "perfect being." Each half lacks what the other has. The antithesis between androids and humans is touched on in a speech by Philip Dick entitled, "The Android and the Human." Near the beginning, Dick gives an anecdote about a future confrontation between these two life forms:

Someday a human being . . . may shoot a robot . . . which has come out of a General Electric's factory, and to his surprise see it weep and bleed. And the dying robot may shoot back

and, to its surprise, see a wisp of grey smoke arise from the electric pump that it supposed was . . . [a] heart. (55)

Dick's view here, and in his *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, the source novel of *Blade Runner*, is that not only will the contrast and oppositions between the human and the android become blurred, but that also the contrasting characteristics of each life form will switch sides. The human will become more inanimate; the nonhuman, more animate, and the resulting intellectual uncertainty concerning how beings fit into the oppositions will help create the uneasy feeling of the uncanny.

Dick summarizes some of the initial differences before they are gradually erased. Androids are mechanical, predictable, precise, rigid, obedient, unemotional, fast, and usually long-lived or virtually immortal. They could no more sacrifice themselves for someone than they could laugh with genuine understanding and feeling at a joke because they lack empathy and a sense of the incongruous. They fail to change their personality or behavior as they acquire experience.

In contrast, humans can sacrifice, laugh, and cry; they are flexible, adaptable, spontaneous, inexact, unpredictable, rebellious, defiant, emotional, instinctive, relatively slow, and have a short life span. Dick concludes that humans, through suffering, change as their memories, history, and experiences develop (55-68).

II

In *Blade Runner* the androids or replicants are man-made doubles, rather than naturally appearing ones such as shadows, twins, or reflections. The replicants are organic beings with the unique feature of a four-year life span. Since they are artificial, the replicants created by science and technology are *new* kinds of doubles. Instead of natural phenomena or creations of art which, through the influence of magic and the supernatural, have been mythologized to explain the world, the replicants are *unnatural* phenomena which, through science and technology, have been realized, brought *into* the world. Unlike most earlier forms of the double, the replicants are virtually identical to human beings, which may reflect our need or desire to replicate ourselves perfectly, and our secret wish to breed with them or store our minds in their superior bodies duplicating our own. Yet every replicant in *Blade Runner* is denied precisely that basic human right and need to replicate oneself (as with Frankenstein's monster) or even the right to an extended life.

Indeed, as artificial life, the replicants pose serious moral problems concerning the rights such beings should possess. As often happens to androids in science fiction, the replicants in *Blade Runner* have virtually no right to life, liberty, or the pursuit of happiness. Contemporary science fiction's view of the android or replicant as a persecuted being deprived of human rights may reflect our culture's projected guilt over the exploitation, conquest, enslavement, and extermination of other races and nationalities in history: the Aztec Indian, the American Indian, the African slaves, the Jews in World War II, and many more. Furthermore, as in *Frankenstein*, *Blade Runner's* artificial form of the double presents a moral question about the creator's responsibilities toward his living creations (and their rights) that remains a vexed one.

Consider, for instance, the plight of the replicants in *Blade Runner*. With the aid of his "Igor"-like helper J.F. Sebastian, a deformed victim of premature aging, Dr. Tyrell, a master geneticist with the usual Faustian hubris, has created a new variety of replicants whose striking resemblance to humans is in accordance with the Tyrell Corporation motto: "More human than human." But the human creator reserves for himself the rights not given to the rebel replicants. They are beginning to have human emotions and to accept implanted memories but are denied their full development because of a fixed, four-year life span. They are like children, arrested at the threshold of maturity, and quickly doomed to die. Thus, the replicants are purposely denied autonomy and the chance to fulfill their destinies. They are unable to replicate themselves (in Dick's novel intercourse with humans is, in fact, forbidden by law), they are kept working as slaves and explorers on Off-World projects that involve too much danger or drudgery for humans, and they are not allowed to return to Earth, under penalty of death. (The reason for this strict banishment no doubt reflects the human fear of competition, replacement, and being overthrown by the replicants.) Indeed, they have fewer rights than children or pet animals do, and have no one to represent them or to defend their rights for them.

In Dick's novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, nearly all animals have become extinct because of lingering radiation caused by nuclear war. *Blade Runner* suggests there have been major climate shifts. In both, artificial animals are consequently prized possessions (even more so, scarce *real* animals), yet the artificial humans are suppressed, exploited, killed, and programmed for death by man. Because of this "monster manunkind," the victim replicants will become as extinct as the real animals. No one in either version of the story, including bounty hunter Rick Deckard, his superiors, and his co-workers, shows any compunction or remorse for the victims who are slaughtered. This issue is underlined in the film by the ironic casting of Roy Batty, the leader of the mutinous replicants, as a blonde, blue-eyed *Übermensch*. (His surname, too, connotes "hell," "demons," and "black magic," as well as "crazy.") It is also ironic that Deckard begins to develop a strong conscience about his profession only after he is ordered to kill Tyrell's newest female replicant Rachael, whom he loves, and after he confronts Batty.

The uncanniness of the replicants can be seen best by examining the relationships between Deckard and Batty and between Tyrell and Batty. Batty exhibits intimate, inexplicable knowledge of his creator when he instinctively knows that he can penetrate Tyrell's security to see him by winning the chess game for Sebastian. It is very easy for Batty to engage Tyrell in disarming conversation about the biogenetics of replicants, which allows Tyrell to let his guard down before he discovers the terror of his ways. Batty somehow intuits that it is possible for replicants to be made with longer lives, though Tyrell never admits to having created Rachael, and, in fact, lies to Batty when he claims that replicants are being made as well as they can, and that longer life spans are not possible. Batty also seems to have intuitional wisdom and power in consistently anticipating Deckard's strategies in the final chase scene, knowing where and when Deckard will shoot. (He even inexplicably knows Deckard's name.)

In addition, Batty, in some sense, identifies with Tyrell, when he passionately gives him the kiss of death before crushing his head, and with Deckard, when he shows a mocking fascination with, and sympathy toward, the bounty hunter in the final rooftop scene. For in killing his creator Tyrell, Batty realizes he is killing himself. And in saving Deckard, he understands he is saving until the last minute that part of himself which is truly human.

Among other things, Batty represents the return of the repressed insofar as he symbolizes the collective fear of technology used for evil or destructive purposes, in particular, the spectre of biogenetics and gene manipulation used to produce slaves for profit. He also evokes the repressed guilt collectively felt by humans about their exploitation and annihilation of both animals and races or nationalities of people. The humans have, after all, created a race of slaves with a built-in death sentence—four-years-to-life. The replicant's short life must indeed be a reminder of human mortality, and so, as doubles, the replicants are symbols of man's inhumanity and "harbingers of death" to the humans. "Quite an experience to live in fear," Batty tells Deckard, who dangles helplessly from the rooftop. "That's what it is to be a slave."

Though Deckard's involvement with Rachael perhaps brings about the turning point in his development of conscience, Batty functions also as a mirror for Deckard's self-examination and self-questioning. Deckard's doubts concerning the ethics of his "profession" (which Deckard earlier has acknowledged as "killing") come to fruition through Batty's presence: it is Batty who becomes, instead of Deckard, the killer and hunter of some two dozen humans, and so he mirrors what Deckard has been doing blindly and blithely all along.

Even though Deckard had quit his job because he had had "a bellyful of killing" (like some jaded, gunslinging sheriff), he returns without much fuss because of his ex-boss's veiled threat and because Deckard would "rather be a killer than a victim." Deckard despises Inspector Bryant's "racist" attitude toward the replicants (whom the Inspector calls "skin jobs"), and so the bounty hunter neither loves his job or his co-workers. Yet he returns to his killing with a plan to leave suddenly if he can't "take it" anymore. Evidently he feels he can quit his assignment at any time. But he *doesn't* leave right after the first, the second, or the third murder because he seems to have fallen back into easy habits of his former "business." It is only when he expresses deep empathy and love for Rachael, and when he is forced by Batty during the chase to "live in fear" like a "slave" and "victim," that Deckard decides to flee with Rachael.

The two paradoxical aspects of the double, feared harbinger of death and guardian savior, both are manifest in Batty. He is feared by the oriental maker of replicant eyes and by all the policemen involved. Batty is indeed a demonically menacing figure throughout the film, often appearing from shadows suddenly. At the same time, he is no villain, but actually a Promethean hero with a noble, tragic fate. He is a nobler and better "man," in many ways, than most of the humans in the film. His hamartia, the tragic character flaw causing his inevitable downfall, is the imposed four-year life span. Yet despite his knowledge of his impending destruction, he literally becomes Deckard's savior when Batty catches Deckard as he falls off the roof and pulls Deckard up to safety. Murdered by mankind, the dying Batty's ultimate gesture of compassion is to save the enemy who has repeatedly tried to shoot him and has already killed his lover and friends.

In addition to the obvious metaphoric links between the replicants and humans, there are metonymic ones. The doubles are kept in contact and continue affecting each other by the strong motivation of Batty and his group to steal the knowledge of fashioning beings from the creator (like Prometheus stealing fire from the gods) and to force him to increase their life span. Confrontation is inevitable. Deckard, as a blade runner, is under orders to find and kill the replicants. This necessary hunt forces Deckard, also, to confront each replicant and thus remain in close contact. His bond of love for Rachael, Deckard's anima, is what keeps them inseparable.

But it is the antithetical and complementary traits which are most important in the film. The distinctions between the human and the replicant, as suggested by Philip Dick in the above quotation, become totally blurred by the end of the film. There is not only a confusion of identities and roles, but also a *reversal* of identities or roles. The characteristics of human life become attributed more and more to artificial life, and the replicants become, as the Tyrell slogan boasts, more human than human. The polarities of hunter/hunted, pursuer/pursued, hero/villain, master/slave, and human life/artificial life, already quite blurred, now change places.

Although the replicants are pursued by the police and by Deckard, Batty and his group begin to pursue their creator through the oriental eye-maker and Sebastian. Batty also turns the tables on Deckard and hunts *him* in the final scene. With the creation of Rachael, the distinction between the short life of the replicant and the relatively long life of the humans breaks down and, one expects, will eventually be reversed.

Other distinctions collapse and become reversed. Deckard, who begins the movie like a typical *film noir* hero, plays the role of a cold-blooded killer, part of the villainous humanity exterminating artificial humans, while Batty, the ostensible criminal and hunted villain, metamorphoses into a tragic hero. The essence of humanity in human life becomes transferred to the replicants, while the inhumanity of the artificial (as Dick has defined it) becomes characteristic of the humans in the film. Or, to put it in other terms, the human essence or "soul," portable and transferable, has separated from the human body and been projected into the android, and vice versa.

This last reversal is the crux of *Blade Runner's* dilemma. One of the reasons audiences may have found it hard to identify with the character of Deckard is first, that he is a cold-blooded killer and second, that he is initially and throughout most of the film a dull, dreary, mechanical, unemotional man. His ex-wife calls him "sushi...cold fish," and we begin to understand why when we perceive his apathy, alienation, lack of empathy, and lack of sensitivity toward injustice, suffering, and killing. He is figuratively, if not literally, a sophisticated replicant. The film even suggests that Deckard may be a replicant himself without knowing it, secretly created by Tyrell or by someone else. The viewer is encouraged to speculate about Deckard's identity because of Rachael's questions and because of the fact that Deckard never takes the Voight-Kampff test. In fact, director Ridley Scott originally considered having Dr. Tyrell exposed as a replicant.

In any case, it is Batty, not Deckard, who displays those emotions and characteristics we think of as most human: rage, love, sorrow, revenge, suffering, empathy, humor, irony, intelligence, and awareness of mortality. He is forced

to rebel against the immense and unjust system that conspires against him, in order to extend the replicants' lives. Significantly, he unselfishly tells Sebastian that *Pris* (not himself) hasn't long to live. Deckard, on the other hand, remains in complicity with the system for selfish gain and cannot say "no" to it until the very end when he escapes from it. Batty is the one who perceives beauty, speaks poetry, makes apt metaphors ("All these moments will be lost like tears in the rain"), suffers, and sacrifices from a sense of purpose stemming from his empathy with his own kind, and eventually, from his love of *any* life form.

Empathy, "love of life," and emotional responses are the key human traits which the Voight-Kampff tests measure, traits which Batty develops well before Deckard. Deckard, in fact, appears unable to empathize fully with the victims he kills until he *can* not kill Batty and *will* not kill Rachael. Batty's memory and experiences, which in his last scene he appears to cherish more than Deckard does his, allow him to develop a conscience before Deckard does. Batty is able to confess to the proud father figure Tyrell, "I've done questionable things." In contrast, Deckard's misgivings about his killing are pushed away, so that he can dismiss his feelings about the killing as all "part of the business" with the typical blasé and jaded attitude of a *film noir* detective. Batty's display of emotional pain and tenderness toward *Pris* after Deckard shoots her is one of the most moving scenes in the film. He mimics Deckard's cry of pain as the blade runner tries to straighten his broken fingers, but the replicant's wolf cry is also a personal one of anguish and loss. The mirror nature of Deckard's suffering and Batty's self-induced hand injury is underscored by successive quick cuts of each of them.

Each replicant uniquely displays several human traits. Leon, for example, is nervous, afraid, and hesitant when he is being interrogated, triumphant and self-confident when he is about to kill Deckard. Zhora is at first worldly and cunning. But she panics and runs when others discover her attempt to strangle Deckard. *Pris* exhibits that gracefulness and beauty of movement one would expect in a trained dancer. Both Zhora's death and *Pris'* are bloody, violent, and shocking. Each death demonstrates the tenacity and will with which these replicants cling to life—another human trait. Their struggle to live may in fact be hinted at in the German word for "struggle" or "fight" in the name "Voight-Kampff" test.

Rachael is the female component or anima (in Carl Jung's terms) of Deckard's psyche, and his salvation. Endowed with the implanted memories of Tyrell's niece, she has an indefinite life span. She is the one who cries when Deckard callously tells her she is a replicant with implanted memories. Rachael, like the other main replicants, changes through suffering as her memory, history, and experience grow. Out of love for Deckard, she kills Leon, one of her own kind. She is more outwardly upset, and more physically and emotionally shaken about it than Deckard, who, though he admits to having "the shakes," calmly takes a drink and is resigned to it being "part of the business." She is sensitive, affectionate, and artistic, playing beautifully on Deckard's piano in his apartment. Deckard's aesthetic sense and appreciation of beauty begin to reawaken when he compliments her playing. Rachael asks Deckard if he has ever "retired" a human by mistake, and he answers "no." She also asks him if he has taken the Voight-Kampff test himself, as if to ask him to examine his identity. Rachael's

questions strengthen his doubts about what he is doing. Through her influence, Deckard increasingly questions his actions and priorities, and develops emotionally and empathically. He observes a parallel between himself and the replicants indicating this process of change: "Replicants weren't supposed to have feelings. Neither were blade runners. What the hell was happening to me?"

Just as Batty is the double of Tyrell and of Deckard, Batty and the replicants are also doubles of J.F. Sebastian. Both Sebastian and the replicants will die early, and both are lonely outcasts. Sebastian's mechanical toys are as small, frail, and imperfect as he is. The toys also symbolize Tyrell and *his* replicant "toys," and the mechanical dolls represent a step between synthetic animals and synthetic humans. (In this regard, it is significant that Gaff makes *animals* such as chickens and unicorns out of his wrappers and foil, since real animals are nearly extinct and, in a sense, have become "mythical beasts.") J.F. Sebastian actually tells Batty in the toymaker's apartment: "There's some of me in you."

Deckard and Rachael also form a pair which in some ways mirror Batty and his lover Pris. Pris, as a "standard pleasure model," holds all the beauty, allure, and sexual attractiveness for Batty (and Sebastian) that Rachael holds for Deckard. (In fact, in Dick's novel, Rachael looks identical to Pris, making it harder for Deckard to kill Pris.) Both replicants are loving, loyal, artistic, intelligent, graceful, curious, and sensitive.

The replicants in *Blade Runner* exhibit many of the same qualities that earlier doubles in literature have. Evoking magical principles by their very nature as doubles, the replicants are metaphorically and metonymically bound together with the humans, and represent the return of the repressed in man, or "the uncanny." They are uncanny also by virtue of the intellectual uncertainty they create about whether they are alive or dead, inanimate or animate, human or nonhuman. They can appear as a guardian-savior, conscience, or the devilish harbinger of death. But the replicants in *Blade Runner* are unique since they are scientifically manufactured doubles of humanity, neither natural phenomena nor ancient superstitions. These replicants function as mirrors for people, by allowing examination and moral scrutiny of ourselves, our technology, and our treatment of other beings, and by defining in their tragic struggle what is truly human.

Note

¹For a sampling of psychological theories of the double see Robert Rogers, *A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ., 1970); C.F. Keppler, *The Literature of the Second Self* (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona, 1972); Ralph Tymms, *Doubles in Literary Psychology* (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1949); Carl Jung, *The Portable Jung*, ed. Joseph Campbell (New York: Viking Press, 1971); Otto Rank, "The Double as Immortal Self." *Beyond Psychology* (New York: Dover, 1941).

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