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Blake and the Double: The Spectre as Doppelganger

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The idea of the double or mirror image appears frequently in the work of William Blake. His training and occupation as a printer, taken together with his insights into human psychology, makes him keenly aware of doubleness and the relation of that doubleness to the idea of the other self. Furthermore, the process by which the image on the copper plate is reversed as it is transferred to the paper is never far removed from his consciousness. Every image has its inverted counterpart, every world a shadow world, every man his spectre. On plate 89 of *Jerusalem,* for example, Blake describes the Human Dragon, who is the Selfhood, that which is the Antichrist of the New Testament and the Covering Cherub of the Old, as having a head whose brain "incloses a reflexion / of Eden all perverted." The Selfhood is, therefore, that essential and ultimate double that E. T. A. Hoffmann says "is the phantom of our own Self, whose intimate relationship with, and deep effect upon, our spirit casts us into hell or transports us into Heaven." Because the double is so much in evidence in Blake’s poetry and designs, it has seemed odd that it has received little attention in the critical literature devoted to his work. Other features of his poetry and designs broadly representative of the concerns of Romantic writers have been discussed frequently, sometimes in great detail and often at great length. Blake’s eclectic symbology, for example, has been examined from many perspectives and his repeated extrapolations of the rebellious and anti-establishment dimensions of the Christ figure have been remarked on almost without ceasing. His experimentation with the form of the epic poem, his exploitation of the woman figure, his development of the autobiographical poem, his political radicalism, and his devotion to the artist-as-hero theme have been examined in one way or another by a number of critics. In addition, several attempts have been made to sort out the eighteenth-century, Romantic, and Modernistic elements in Blake’s work. Many books and articles have been devoted in whole or part to psychological and mythic themes. Much attention has been paid to Blake’s dedication to arcane sources and the deepest well-springs of man’s mental life and his commentators have been inspired by his own interest to set his work against the background of various ancient traditions; nevertheless, almost
nothing has been said about the double, either as a motif or a device. Despite the widespread recognition of Blake’s anticipation of modern psychological themes and ideas, the pervasive and important presence of the double is yet to get the attention it deserves.

Jean Paul (1763-1825), almost an exact contemporary of Blake, coined the German word and began the passion the Phantasieromantiker had for the Doppelgänger as an allegorical and quasi-psychological portrait of man’s spiritual or inner turmoil. Interest in the double as a theme or a device was encouraged by the steadily growing and ever-widening investigations being made in the nineteenth century in the psychological sciences. As a consequence modern literature, whether popular or serious, has also been drawn to the theme of the double. In the work of Jean Paul and other Romantics, such as Hoffmann, Poe, and Maupassant, and that of later writers, like Dostoevsky or Conrad, the double appears in contexts both phantastical and pathological.1 The relation that Ivan bears to Smerdyakov in The Brothers Karamazov, for example, is a celebrated case in point. Dostoevsky’s psychological realism, already apparent in his early work, The Double, has perhaps been more influential than that of any other nineteenth century writer and has discouraged the creation of simple-minded allegorical or phantastical doubles, except, perhaps, in science fiction.

In anticipation of Romantic and post-Romantic literary concerns, Blake employed the Doppelgänger in his work both allegorically and psychologically. It is not easy to separate the “double-by-division” and the “double-by-duplication,”2 since a double created by division, generally internal, can seem to be a separate being and thus appear to have been the product of duplication rather than division. In fact, the double-by-division and the double-by-duplication “constantly mingle.” In Blake’s work it is the double-by-division rather than the double-by-duplication that predominates, for, as in the work of other writers, the double-by-division creates the spiritual double. Claire Rosenfield has observed that “To the sophisticated audiences of the Classical World, the Middle Ages,

1. See Otto Rank, The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study, tr. and ed. Harry Tucker, Jr. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press [1971]), p. 35. “The chief trait shared by those writers in whom we are interested is apparent enough: they, like some others of similar nature, were decidedly pathological personalities who, in more than one direction, went beyond even that limit of neurotic conduct otherwise allowed to the artist. They suffered—and obviously so—from psychic disturbances or neurological and mental illnesses, and during their lifetimes they demonstrated a marked eccentricity in behavior, whether in the use of alcohol, of narcotics, or in sexual relations—with a particular emphasis in the latter case upon the abnormal.” Rank refers to Villiers de l’Isle Adam, Baudelaire, Strindberg, Kleist, Günther, Lenz, Grabbe, Hölderlin, Poe, Hoffmann, Dostoevsky, Maupassant, and even Stevenson whose physical illness at the time of the composition of his Jekyll and Hyde story is made relevant in “The Double as Immortal Self” (see below, note 3). Pierre Berger (William Blake, New York: Haskell House, 1968, pp. 111–112) is the first of all-too-few critics of Blake (when the book was first published in 1914) to have made some kind of observation on the Spectre as double. He says the Spectre plays a Mr. Hyde role.

and the Renaissance, Doubles were either facsimiles, bodily duplicates manipulated to divert us, or allegorized opposites to instruct us.

In tracing the history and origins of the phenomenon of the double prior to its codification and literary development by Jean Paul and his successors, Ralph Tyman rightly calls attention to John Locke’s theory of the sleeping soul as outlined in, as Blake called it, an “Easy of Huming Understanding.” If, Locke theorizes, “the soul could, while the body was sleeping, have its ‘thinking, enjoyments and concerns, its pleasure of pain’ apart, which the man is not conscious of, then such a sleeping soul would have an identity entirely distinct from that of the waking man. In such an event, Socrates asleep and Socrates awake would not be the same person.” Locke considered his hypothesis to be untenable, but Blake, running counter to the master empiricist as always, seized upon its mythic possibilities and applied the hypothesis to Albion who is, indeed, a different person awake than asleep. Of course, the sleeping Albion who lives despairingly in his dream reflects the condition of every fallen man. “Not until Freud revealed the importance of the irrational in man have we been willing to admit the possibility that each of us has within us a second or a shadow self dwelling beside the eminently civilized, eminently rational self, a Double who may at any time assert its anti-social tendencies.” Any kind of doubleness, as Thoreau writes, “may easily make us poor neighbors and friends sometimes.” We are often “conscious of the presence and criticism,” he says, of a part of ourselves that seems to be separate from ourselves—a “spectator.” Unlike Poe or Hoffmann or Dostoevsky, we may be, according to Thoreau, “beside ourselves in a sane sense.” Of course, there are many ways in which to be beside oneself, and in Blake’s work we see what it means to be beside ourselves in a sane as well as an insane sense. Most students of the double would agree, therefore, with Harry Tucker, Jr., who says that the “double-theme derived not so much from the authors’ conscious fondness for describing preternatural situations (Hoffmann), or separate parts of their personalities (Jean Paul), as from their unconscious impulse to lend imagery to a universal human problem—that of the relation of the self to the self.”

It is characteristic of Romantic writers and equally characteristic of Blake to develop and re-direct quasi-mystical insights into the nature of man. Unlike Jean Paul and Hoffmann, however, it is not so much the psychology of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as the drift of Blake’s interest that makes it possible for him to proceed on assumptions that “John Lookye” had postulated but rejected. Also it is

7. Harry Tucker, Jr., Introduction to The Double, p. xiv.
doubtful that Blake knew much about the Mesmerists and their theories despite their influence on the Continent. Essentially, his anticipation of later psychological theorizing has its basis in the confluence of inherited myth, his eclectic reading, and his own imagination. Blake’s object is to chart the configuration of man’s internal geography. Having subtitled his first major work “Shewing the Contrary States of the Human Soul,” Blake was led by his consciousness of contrariety to develop the theme of the double in terms of his own monomyth.

The psychological dualism examined first in the Songs and then in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell is eventually invested in the concept of the Spectre which, except for several earlier references in The French Revolution (twice), Europe (once), and America (once), is not fully developed until The Four Zoas. The concept of the Spectre permitted Blake to make extensive and varied use of the Doppelgänger theme. The poem left in manuscript, “My Spectre around me night & day,” is clearly a by-product of his first exploration of the Spectre imagery in The Four Zoas and gives us in its opening stanzas a concentrated description of the typical Doppelgänger-like characteristics of the Spectre:

My Spectre around me night & day
Like a Wild beast guards my way
My Emanation far within
Weeps incessantly for my Sin

A Fathomless & boundless deep
There we wander there we weep
On the hungry craving wind
My Spectre follows thee behind

He scents thy footsteps in the snow
Wheresoever thou dost go
Thro the wintry hail & rain
When wilt thou return again

The Spectre-emanation relationship is part of the Spectre-double theme, since the emanation, Shelley’s epipsyche, is necessary to man if he is to be complete. In the three stanzas just quoted, the Spectre-double is compared to a wild opposing beast because it has divided itself and hinders the progress of the man. It is the selfish, brooding, and violent half that usurps and perverts the life of the whole man. Like the sinister and ominous double that has become familiar to the readers of Poe, Hawthorne, Dickens, Maupassant, Dostoevsky, Stevenson, Henry James, Conrad, and a host of writers who have created grey and mysteriously sombre worlds, the Spectre in Blake’s work is a threatening form. The Spectre is the dark half of the soul divided into a seemingly separate and independent being. Each Zoa (the plural Greek noun is traditionally translated as “beasts”—see line two of “My Spectre”), has a double, as do Milton, Albion, and every human being. The fallen Zoas and fallen man are divided beings and the Spectre is in each case the other self.
Thus, the appearance of the Spectre in Blake’s work coincides with his first attempt to develop *at length* man’s fall from unity. This theme is introduced elaborately at the beginning of *The Four Zoas* where Blake writes, “His fall into Division & his Resurrection to Unity.” It is hardly accidental, therefore, that the Spectre should appear so frequently thereafter, having been rarely mentioned in earlier works.

Since he is not only a poet but also a pictorial artist, Blake employs the Spectre-double not only with great effect in his verse, but eventually portrays it in his illustrations. Striking but not exclusive examples are *Jerusalem* 6 and 44 [30]. In fact, more interesting than plates 6 and 44 where the Spectre takes on a humanoid bat form are *Jerusalem* 33 [37] and 100. Plate 33 shows us the bat-Spectre hovering over the butterfly winging emanation, while plate 100 portrays simultaneously the two selves of Los. Although Los, like all the Zoas, is divided, he is also a double for Jesus, and Albion when he struggles to awake (T 96) recognizes that Los is indeed Jesus’ double, an insight that opens his eyes inward so that he becomes all vision and is able to cast his Spectre-Selfhood into the fiery lake. Until that time Albion had always believed that Los was unreal and that what he reasoned was real was the dream world in which he as Spectre roamed. For much of *Jerusalem* we see a haunted Albion, a man in his Spectre-double’s power. Like the double of the dark Romantics and post-Romantics, Albion’s Spectre is, as Blake writes, “in every man insane & most Deformd.” He overcomes Albion’s imagination and thus becomes Albion. He rises out of Albion’s imagination and thus becomes Albion. He rises out of Albion’s sub-conscious and blurs the bounding line between rectitude and knavery, between reality and unreality, raising the act of phantasizing to such a degree of intensity that he invests the unreal with a seemingly greater reality than the real. Although Albion is conscious of the dualism of his own identity, he rarely senses the character of his dilemma. His other or demonic self rarely permits him to glimpse his original face, but instead bars his way to wholeness. Albion remains a cold, constrictive Spectre until awakened from his dream of life. The Albion who lives in Albion’s dream is his double. This is why he cannot recognize his friend Los as Jesus until Jesus appears before him at his awakening. And, of course, Jesus is his true brother-self.

Since “Man divided from his Emanation is a dark Spectre” (T 53, E 201), that is, a *Doppelgänger*, Albion becomes “punisher & judge” as well as victim. The Spectre-double performs these roles at the unconscious and sometimes conscious direction of the Self. “Man is born a Spectre or Satan & is altogether an Evil, & requires a New Selfhood continually & must continually be changed into his direct Contrary” (T 52, E 198). Accordingly, Milton, Albion, and every man must live in imitation of Los and define his darkness so as to employ it creatively. Job, too, must learn that the Divine Vision is not something wholly other. The Spectre, therefore, is not simply an *unalterable* Negation; for although the
Negation is often manifested as the reasoning power in man (see M 40), Blake does not conceive of the Spectre mythologically (that is, para­
bolically), but instead as the dark half of the Self which must be con­
fronted, altered, and recreated continually in an internal mental war:

Negations are not Contraries: Contraries mutually Exist:
But Negations Exist Not: Exceptions & Objections & Unbeliefs
Exist not: nor shall they ever be Organized for ever & ever:
If thou separate from me, thou art a Negation: a meer
Reasoning & Derogation from me, an Objecting & cruel Spite
And Malice & Envie: but my Emanation, Alas! will become
My Contrary: O thou Negation, I will continually compell
Thee to be invisible to any but whom I please, & when
And where & how I please, and never! never! shalt thou be Organized
But as a distorted & reversed Reflexion in the Darkness . . . (T 17, E 160)

The relation of man to his emanation or, in Shelley’s terms, of the psyche
to the epipsyche, depends upon man’s relation to his Spectre-double. The
first forty-seven lines of plate 17 of Jerusalem is Blake’s most incisive
elaboration of this threefold psychological warfare.

Los is somewhat like Shelley’s Zarathustra. He meets himself one
morning, as Albion does, walking in the garden, the green and pleasant
Eden within Albion. Unlike giant Man, however, he is able to control his
Spectre and make it labor to recreate Jerusalem in Albion, that is, pre­
pare Albion for Jesus. Just as Jerusalem leaves her butterfly life (J 2) and
its attendant metamorphic cycle of existence behind, so Los entering his
creation on plate 1, is seen on plate 97, now one with Albion, as a streaker
through Eternity who has left his pilgrim husk behind in the poem.8 The
golden sun (son), representative of Jesus, forged in the furnaces of Los,
passes from the pilgrim Los to the risen Albion-Los to the regenerated
Spectre (J 100).

The character of Los’ debate with the Spectre in the first part or
chapter of Jerusalem reveals that there is another dimension to Blake’s
use of the double theme. Whereas Albion becomes his demonic half in his
dream of life, a thoroughgoing Mr. Hyde whose Dr. Jekyll character is
rarely visible, Los not only keeps his demonic half at bay while employing
it at the same time in regenerative labor, he also restores it to a human
form, as plates 6 (humanoid bat), 33 (total bat), and 100 (human form)
show pictorially. Of course, the Spectre is not an ordinary bat but actually
a vampire bat: Blake writes that a “Spectre has no Emanation but what
he imbibes from deceiving / A Victim!” The Spectre’s bloody and priestly
rituals in the Oak Grove are not un-vampire-like. The Spectre Sons of
Albion are described “Drinking [Luvah’s] Emanation in intoxicating

8. See my article, “Blake’s Human Insect: Symbol, Theory, and Design,” Texas Studies in Literature
and Language, X, 2 (Summer 1968), 215–232. All the quotations in the text of the present essay are from
indicated by “E” with the page number. Poems are abbreviated thus: J: Jerusalem; M: Milton; FZ:
The Four Zoas; BU: The Book of Urizen; VJL: A Vision of the Last Judgment; GP: The Gates of
Paradise.
bliss . . . (J 65, E 215). Because the Spectre, like the vampire-double, has divided itself from its humanity, it remains forever dependent on its human origin for sustenance or existence.

One of the most characteristic manifestations of the double is that of the shadow. There are many tales, including those of Chamisso’s Peter Schlemihls Wundersame Geschichte, Andersen’s Shadow, and legends that portray man’s shadow as his double. Rank observes that “from this shadow-superstition, some scholars believe, developed the belief in the guardian spirit, which in its turn is closely related to the double-motif.” He quotes E. L. Rochholz, “So an individual’s shadow, which in his lifetime had been a helpful attendant spirit, must shrivel into a terrifying and persecuting specter that torments its protegé and chases him unto death.”

The spectres in Blake’s work act in this fashion and in Albion’s nightmare death-sleep become tormenting persecutors who drive him toward the non-entity of eternal death. The shadow-self can assure such power that it can affect the mind of man by creating, according to Tymms, a “disharmony” that “is exaggerated to the point of madness, which takes the form (first known in the nineteenth century as dementia praecox, and later called schizophrenia, or the splitting madness, by the psychologist Bleuler) in which the patient imagines he is actually divided into two separate personalities.” Maupassant in Le Horla describes the relation of the second self to man as that of vampire who, while man sleeps, forces upon his dreaming mind its desires.

By putting his Spectre off, that is, by not permitting it to imbibe his creative energy, Los is able to continue to build his palace of art. Unlike Albion and the other Zoas he is not drained of his power because he has not permitted his creations to be devoured by the Spectre’s fury, resentment, and indignation, which is, of course, his own objectified in the “person” of the Spectre. Los remains unperverted by his own anger and frustration. This healthy and prophetic schizophrenia is in contrast with the pathological condition to which Albion is subject, since he succumbs to despair, the despair from which Milton, with Los’ and Blake’s help, recovers in Milton when he recognizes clearly who his Spectre is:

I in my Selfhood am that Satan: I am that Evil One!
He is my Spectre! in my obedience to loose him from my Hells (M 14, E 107)

It is important to remember that in the aggregate Satan is everybody’s Spectre. He is certainly “the Spectre of Orc” (M 29, E 126). (Hoffmann and later Dostoevsky, for example, also identify the double with Satan or Lucifer.)

Milton’s Spectre, after being explicitly defined as Satan, is not only

10. The Double, pp. 50–51.
11. Doubles in Literary Psychology, p. 28.
described as a devil but also as a beast, and acts in the manner of the Spectre of “My Spectre around me night & day.” The imagery in the verse in Milton even echoes that of the manuscript poem:

I have turned my back upon these Heavens builded on cruelty  
My Spectre still wandering thro' them follows my Emanation  
He hunts her footsteps thro' the snow & the wintry hail & rain (M 32, E 130)

The Spectre-double tracks and hunts or, as Rochholz says, “chases,” its quarry “unto death.” As a divided half it is restless because it is incomplete. Unconsciously and without a true sense of purpose, it seeks some kind of resolution that will cure its unhappiness.

Milton’s relation to his Spectre in Blake’s poem is of great importance, not only because the Spectre is the Selfhood and Satan, but because Milton is continually seen in relation to what Blake calls his “shadow” (see especially M 14 and 15). When Milton recognizes he in his “Selfhood is that Satan” and that that Satan is his Spectre, he resolves to “go to Eternal Death.” Once he makes the decision to descend, he beholds “his own Shadow; / A mournful form double; hermaphroditic: male & female / In one wonderful body” and enters into it (M 14, E 108). Damon sees the Shadow as “the residue of one’s repressed desires” and as “one of a quaternary,” but this latter description is not exactly the case. When Blake writes on plate 15 (E 157) of Jerusalem that he beholds “Four-fold Man, The Humanity in deadly sleep / And its fallen Emanation. The Spectre & its cruel Shadow,” he is really describing a threefold division in Humanity. When Milton on plate 15 of Milton enters his shadow, “His real and immortal Self” appears sub specie aeternitatis “as One sleeping” (M 15, E 108). The Shadow is essentially as Damon describes it. As the residue of repressed desires it is the Spectre’s reflection. Of Satan, Blake writes, “His Spectre slept, his Shadow woke; when one sleeps th’other wakes” (M 21, E 114). So it is with all who are divided in their humanity. Milton’s Shadow, identified with the Covering Cherub (M 37, E 136), eventually incorporates the demonic totality of history.

Before Blake began to rely upon the word “Spectre,” he had already exploited the Shadow, and it is possible to observe in The Book of Urizen how successful and instructive that exploitation was. Urizen, the priest-King of fallen reason, who represents that quarter of man’s mental life that establishes dominion over the whole of it and when it dreams has nightmares, is the archetypal symbol of the self-enclosed ego. Hence, he is described as a “shadow of horror” and a “self-contemplating shadow” (BU 3, E 69), for anything fallen from eternity falls like shadow. All things in the fallen world live a reflected life, like shadows in a glass—the vegetable glass of nature (VLJ 69–70, E 545) or Enitharmon’s

looking-glass (J 63, E 212). The life of the shadow, therefore, is associated by Blake, as it is later by Otto Rank, with the myth of Narcissus. In *The Four Zoas* this motif is explicit when we see Vala standing in the river viewing “herself within the watry glass” (*FZ* IX, 129; E 383). “The Narcissus meaning by its nature is not alien to the motif of the double...” and “Tied in with this narcissistic attitude is... imposing egoism.”14 Rank associates self-love with the idea of death. The infatuation with our own image and self is intimately related to the theme of the double because the double reflects the self’s conscious and/or unconscious idea of itself. “What we really have in common with our remote ancestors is a spiritual, not a primitive self, and this we cannot afford to admit because we pride ourselves on living on a purely rational plane,” that is, on Urizen’s plane. “In consequence,” Rank continues, “we reject those irrational life forces as belonging to our primitive past instead of recognizing them in our present spiritual needs.”15 Typically Blake inverts the accepted relation of the body-soul to death and immortality: he might agree with Claire Rosenfield that “Frightened by the possible destruction of his ego and the loss of his individuality in death, primitive man created a body-soul which he located in his shadow or his reflection,”16 but only by reversing the impulses she cites. Unable to give up selfhood in eternity, Urizen, that is man’s ego-defining reason, creates a body, not a soul, because he (it) cannot bear a universal selfless life. When the Shadows can give up self-love, they will be able to “return & see,” as Blake writes in “My Spectre around me night & day,” “The worlds of happy Eternity.” Milton enters his Shadow, therefore, in order to redeem his humanity from his Spectre.

In *The Four Zoas* (Night Seven) the Spectre’s *Doppelgänger* characteristics are reinforced in three passages that emphasize those activities that underlie the activities of Milton’s Shadow and Spectre and that reappear in *Jerusalem*:

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thou knowest that the Spectre is an Every Man insane brutish Deformd that I am thus a ravening devouring lust continually Craving & devouring ... (*FZ* VIIa, 84; E 352)

... Los embracd the Spectre first as a brother Then as another Self; astonishd humanizing & in tears.... (*FZ* VIIa, 85; E 353)
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The Spectre of Urthona wept before Los Saying I am the cause That this dire state commences I began the dreadful state Of Separation & on my dark head the curse & punishment Must fall unless a way be found to Ransom & Redeem (*FZ* VIIa, 87; E 355)
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The desperate acceptance of punishment and the feelings of guilt are in keeping with the psychology of the double.

The "two aspects of the self," Otto Rank writes, "which in modern man are opposing and fighting each other provide, to be sure, the original raw material for his personality makeup. Yet it makes all the difference whether they are united in the expression of a total personality or driven by conflicting strivings between the two selves, manifested as the antinomy of acting or 'thinking and feeling.'" 17 Although the double is in negative terms a symbol of death or extinction, Los labors to create from it a positive symbol of the personality of the self that will ensure that self's immortality, that is, redeem eternity. In The Four Zoas, he proclaims, "I know I was Urthona keeper of the gates of heaven / But now I am all powerful Los & Urthona is but my shadow" (FZ IV, 48; E 325). Urthona is Los' eternal form, who in fallen Albion rules as the eternal prophet of time. In coming to terms with the Spectre of Urthona so that his original form, now simply his "shadow," will remain immortal and not be driven into non-entity, Los must recreate a "total personality" for Albion, that is, reintegrate the Zoas. Once his personality is recreated, man will be able to annihilate the selfhood and cast his Spectre into the lake. Blake turns Los into man's guardian angel, the watchman of the Old Testament. This mythic pattern conforms to Rank's observation: "Originally conceived of as a guardian angel, assuring immortal survival of the self, the double eventually appears as precisely the opposite, a reminder of the individual's mortality, indeed, the announcer of death itself." 18 Not until his re-awakening does Albion recognize Los as his guardian angel. In Jerusalem, therefore, the fate of the universal man depends upon Los' abilities to maintain the Divine Vision, to make the double a reflection of man's immortality and not a twin who seeks to displace man's true self.19

In Jerusalem more than anywhere else in Blake's work the Spectre is associated with the Reasoning or Rational Power. This association emphasizes Los' recognition of the Spectre as "another Self," that is, his Doppelgänger. On Jerusalem 10 Blake equates the Abstract made from good and evil, which he calls a Negation, with the Reasoning Power. "This," he writes, "is the Spectre of Man" (J 10). It is this power that hurls Albion into the abyss of despair (J 54). The Spectre is also "Indefinite" (J 64), the "Great Selfhood" (J 26), and a "Ratio Of The Things of Memory" (J 74). On plate 32 [36] the Spectre is associated with Hand, who is a "reasoning spectre" between Reuben and Merlin (vegetative man and his immortal imagination). On plate 26, he is seen in flames with his arms and hands stretched out like the webbed wings of the Spectre bat on plates 6 and 33.20

Of course, the task confronting Los is that of hammering the Spectre

18. Ibid., p. 76.
19. For a discussion of the twin as double, see "The Double as Immortal Self," pp. 84 ff.
into human form on his anvil. And that task is completed on plate 91 when their poem-long debate is climaxed in a competitive show of Power:

The Spectre building stupendous Works, taking the Starry Heavens
Like to a curtain & folding them according to his will
Repeating the Smaragdine Table of Hermes to draw Los down
Into the Indefinite, . . .
Los reads the Stars of Albion! the Spectre reads the Voids (U 91, E 249)

Los pulverizes the Spectre’s spectrous accomplishments and reduces them to grains of sand, “Smiting the Spectre on his Anvil . . . Thus Los altered his Spectre & every Ratio of his Reason . . . Till he had completely divided him into a separate space” (U 91, E 249). Their relation is, nevertheless, not always altogether hostile and is sometimes marked by tenderness and solicitude, for when on plate 10 of Jerusalem we are told that “dark tears” are running down the “shadowy” Spectre’s face, Los is described wiping them off.

Los’ redemption of his other self is accomplished in a creative labor of definition. No Swedenborgian marriage is performed. Essentially a contrary the Spectre is always in danger of being swallowed by the negative power because it is indefinite. So long as the power of imagination can keep altering and defining it, the Spectre can be prevented from becoming a state cut off from human existence (M 32). Definition is an act of imagination, that is, Los; by isolating the Spectre, Los keeps the Divine Vision from becoming something wholly other like an abstraction.

Rank observes that “the true artist type may be thought of as the hero’s spiritual double.”21 For this reason Los, who we are told is of the “likeness” and “similitude” of Jesus, acts to redeem the universal man, who when the Savior tries to wake him at the beginning of Jerusalem, replies that “Jerusalem is not!”

But perturbed Man away turns down the valleys dark;
[Saying. We are not One: we are Many, thou most simulative]
Phantom of the over heated brain! shadow of immortality! (U 4, E 145)

Blake, of course, sees the “artist type” as a prophet whose demonic double in social terms is the priest. Hence, Albion-hero’s immortal self or “spiritual double” is the prophet who labors to ween him away from natural religion. At his worst the Spectre of Albion, like that of Los, is a “distorted & reversed Reflexion in the Darkness” of this world. The mirror reversal is never to be ignored in any of the relations between contrary forces in Blake’s work.

The familiar and interesting confrontation between Orc and Urizen can also be examined profitably in terms of the double motif because Orc and Urizen represent contrary perspectives in the mental life of man. In a sense they are mirror inversions of one another because they are defined

essentially in terms of their opposition to one another. Even the metaphors associated with them and various related symbols reinforce this mirror relation and thereby enhance the impact of the conflict between the two. This conflict is echoed in the relation between Jerusalem and Vala, the City of God and Nature or, in socio-political terms, liberty and empire. The verse on J 19, which is pictorialized on J 28, and the fact that Vala produces bodies and Jerusalem souls are reinforced by the striking design on J 32 that shows Vala veiled in black (explicit in the colored copy of Jerusalem) and Jerusalem nude. Black like the bat Spectre on J 6 and elsewhere, Vala is the dark half or other self of Jerusalem.

Blake's place in the Romantic tradition of the double becomes most obvious when we recognize that like most, if not all, Romantics he was grappling with the means at his command to portray the dualism inherent in modern man's mental life. In his long illuminated poems, he tried to create a psychodrama that would portray the original wholeness that imaginative men seek to recover. In the designs for L'Allegro and Il Penseroso, he made still another attempt to portray in his picture biography of Milton the contrary states of the soul of an individual poet. And at the very end of his life he deliberately made Job and the God who punishes Job look exactly alike. As there are two Miltons, the Cavalier piper and the Puritan bard, so there are two Jobs, the victim and the punisher. In Jerusalem Albion also plays these two roles. Already a victim Albion becomes a punisher and judge (J 28) in much the same way as Job because Job can conceive of no other God than his reason can design—a self-created tormenter.

Blake's Spectre reveals many, if not all, the fundamental features of the double of Jean Paul and subsequent writers. The Spectre-double is brutish, beastly, sinister, dark (often black) frequently bat-like, the other self, satanic. It is without doubt a Doppelgänger. Man is, in fact, "By double Spectres Self Accurst" (GP 8, E 266).

Blake's anticipation of Romanticism's interest in the double is traceable in part to the Neoplatonic strains that are equally pervasive in his work and that of Continental and English Romantics. The Romantics' strong sense that there were two worlds—the real and the unreal, the unfallen and the fallen—and their equally strong desires not so much to fuse them as to have a single perspective on them both are reflected in their preoccupation with the theme of the double. Goethe's Faust identifies the problem as an internal one—two souls reside in the breasts of all men. Their habit of crossing over from the everyday world of matter to the realm of the spirit and their fascination with the unseen or invisible that is, sometimes perceivable in all visible objects if one is a true seer, influence the approach of the Romantics to the physical world and to the psycho-

logical dilemmas of modern man. Given certain differences in degree, such predilections are common to almost every writer in the Romantic Tradition and Blake is no exception. The importance of this theme and its implications for the psychological and mythic patterns in Blake’s work cannot be overestimated. Much of the intellectual thrust and dramatic action to be found in his poetry and designs from the *Songs* and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* to *Jerusalem* and theJob illustrations are traceable to his exploration of the theme of the double.

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