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William Blake's German Connection

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Although German and English literature between about 1790 and 1830 show remarkable parallels and similarities, literary historians have found little evidence of actual contact between writers of the two countries at the time. René Wellek, while maintaining his thesis that there is "a common core of Romantic thought and art throughout Europe," stated that "neither Blake nor Shelley nor Keats nor Lamb nor Hazlitt nor De Quincey had any German contacts," and "Blake, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and Keats knew nothing of German Romantic writing in our narrow sense." In Natural Supernaturalism M. H. Abrams points out striking parallels between the English Romantics and their German contemporaries, but does not trace influences one way or the other. Eudo C. Mason reaches similar conclusions in Deutsche und englische Romantik; the best he can come up with as a link between the two literatures is Henry Crabb Robinson, who indeed knew a remarkable number of writers in both languages, but who cannot be shown to have had much effect on their writings. Part of the explanation lies in parallel evolution from the same influences. There is no doubt that Shakespeare, Milton, Jacob Boehme, Shaftesbury, Edward Young, and Rousseau, for example, powerfully shaped the taste and thinking of young writers in both Germany and England toward the end of the eighteenth century. And, while significant dialogues between major writers of the two literatures were rare, there was a steady exchange of visitors on the fringes of the world of letters, and sufficient communication through translations and reports to provide mutual stimulation where similar inclinations already existed. Even though we can never unravel every thread of the intricate skein of influence in a literary movement, once we acknowledge its complexity, we can begin to see how the main strands run.

William Blake is a case in point. Usually considered the most intellectually isolated of the major Romantics, and ignorant of the German lan-

language, nevertheless he fits, as Eudo Mason has said, "into the German literature of his time as if he had been specially designed for it." This affinity has long been recognized: one of the earliest critical notices of Blake, in the *London University Magazine* in 1830, compares him with Novalis. Helene Richter outlined many resemblances between Hamann and Blake, while precluding any personal contact. Some of Roy Pascal's description of *Sturm und Drang* could apply equally to Blake: "The Stürmer and Dränger link up with the most subjective belief of their times, the belief that God is known only through personal experience. But, at the other end of the scale, they link up with the Spinozistic doctrine . . . the Divine co-extensive with nature"; and he quotes Herder: "There is no space outside the world; space comes into being for us, as the abstraction of a phenomenon . . . What is a God, if he is not in you and you do not feel and taste his Being in an infinitely inward fashion . . . ?" Such resemblances become a little less surprising when we recognize that Blake was actually quite well read in the philosophical and literary works that interested his contemporaries. He was especially attracted—like Tieck, Schelling, Novalis and others of the Jena circle—to the writings of Jacob Boehme. Further, Blake grew up in the tradition of radical religious dissent: his parents attended a Baptist chapel, and his own ideas resemble in some respects the beliefs and attitudes of the Methodists, Quakers, and such sects as the Ranters. In Germany the corresponding wing of religion, Pietism, which itself had many interconnections with English dissenting sects, was influential both on the Frühromantiker and on their *Sturm und Drang* predecessors. Thus we have the ends of several strings connecting Blake with German writers of his time through earlier parallel influences. Rather than trace any of these, however, the present essay will concentrate on two German-Swiss contemporaries, Henry Fuseli and Johann Caspar Lavater, whose connections with Blake are of course well known, but I think worth further scrutiny because they link Blake with the main currents of German literature of his time and confirm the lines of parallel development from earlier sources.

Fuseli and Lavater grew up in Zurich, where they were close friends, and students of Johann Bodmer. In Bodmer, who has been called the

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5. The best discussion of Blake and Fuseli is still that of Mason in *MHF* (see note 1). J. H. MacPhail, "Blake and Switzerland," *MLR* XXXVIII (1943), 80–87, suggests some influences from both Fuseli and Lavater.
"spiritual father" of *Sturm und Drang*, we can see some of the interplay between English and German letters that lies behind Romanticism: he was the first German translator of *Paradise Lost*, and an admirer of Shakespeare, Shaftesbury and Edward Young, as well as of Rousseau. He more or less rediscovered the *Niebelungenlied*, and was one of the pioneers of the new interest in folklore. In the 1750's Bodmer invited Klopstock and Wieland to Zurich, which had become, largely through his own activity, one of the most important literary centers of the time. Salomon Gessner, Fuseli's godfather, wrote his popular *Tod Abels* under Bodmer's influence.

In 1762, scarcely out of their teens, Fuseli and Lavater, needing to escape Zurich for a while because of their role in exposing a corrupt official, toured northern Germany, visiting a number of intellectual figures including the Pietist theologian Spalding. Back in Zurich, Lavater soon entered his life's vocation as a minister in the reformed church, but continued to interest himself in the political, social, and literary concerns of Germany until his death in 1801. He studied Swedenborg, corresponded with Herder, Hamann, and Moses Mendelssohn, and travelled with Goethe. And he kept in touch with Fuseli after Fuseli's emigration to England. Lavater was most famous for his writings on physiognomy, which aroused the enthusiasm of Goethe, at least for a while, and of Balzac and many others.

Fuseli was a Zwinglian minister for a brief time in Zurich, but in 1763 he travelled to England to set up as a sort of middle man between the German and English literary worlds. In 1765 he published his own English translation of Winkelmann's *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks*; two years later appeared, anonymously, his generally laudatory *Remarks on the Writings and Conduct of J. J. Rousseau*. About 1770 Fuseli abandoned his career in literature for his first love, painting, and on the advice of Sir Joshua Reynolds travelled to Rome to study. There he confirmed his lifelong admiration for Michelangelo, apparently to the extent of imitating not only his idol's style but his personal appearance. In Rome he received from Lavater copies of Goethe's *Götz* and *Werther*, Klopstock's *Odes*, and works by Herder. In the years following his return to England in 1779, he earned a reputation as a historical painter, specializing in scenes from Shakespeare and


Milton, and showing a penchant for the sensational, the erotic, and the grotesque, exemplified in his most famous painting, "The Nightmare" (exhibited in 1782). He also contributed dozens of articles to the Analytical Review. He was elected to the Royal Academy in 1790, where he became Professor of Painting in 1799 and Keeper in 1804.

Blake seems to have known Fuseli slightly in the early 1780's when they lived in the same neighborhood (Broad Street and Poland Street) and were both doing work for Joseph Johnson, the radical publisher; and about 1787 ("when Flaxman was taken to Italy") their friendship became closer. In 1788 Blake engraved the frontispiece for Lavater's Aphorisms on Man, freely translated by Fuseli from the Vermischte unphysiognomische Regeln zur Menschenkenntnis, and published by Joseph Johnson in 1789. Fuseli also oversaw the publication of Henry Hunter's translation of Lavater's massive Essays on Physiognomy (3 vols. in 5, quarto; London: John Murray, 1789–98), contributing many illustrations to it. Blake engraved at least four plates for this book.

Fuseli and Blake remained close friends during the 1790's, and on good terms for the rest of their lives. A contemporary, Frederick Tatham, said that Blake was "more fond of Fuseli than of any other man on Earth" (BR 531). In 1805 Fuseli lent his name and favorable words to a prospectus for Blake's designs for Blair's Grave, and Blake's notebook and marginalia are full of reciprocal praise. It was probably in the late 1790's that Blake wrote in his notebook his well-known tribute to Fuseli,

The only Man that e'er I knew  
Who did not make me almost spew. (E 498)

Fuseli's personality could be described as a lifelong arrested case of Sturm und Drang. His fundamental premise was his own genius. Contrary, irascible, profane, he was, as Eudo Mason says, "always to be found in the opposition." It is hard to see how Blake accepted some of Fuseli's views. His aesthetics were based on a Lockean psychology that was anathema to Blake. A statement in his first Academy lecture (1801) sounds like "There Is No Natural Religion" turned upside down: "Our ideas are the offspring of our senses; we are not more able to create the form of a being we have not seen, without retrospect to one we know, than we are able to create a new sense." Fuseli wished to limit education and...
the arts to an elite, whereas Blake begins his epic Milton with the motto "Would to God that all the Lords people were Prophets." Even worse is Fuseli's cynical view of the arts: "like water for the dropsy, palliatives for the diseases they engender," he wrote in 1767; and, in 1793, "It is their greatest praise to furnish the most innocent amusement for those nations to whom luxury is become as necessary as existence." What must Blake have thought of this?—Blake, who said, "The whole business of Man is the Arts . . . Christianity is Art" (Laocoon, E 271).

Actually Fuseli had a good many qualities that would have been attractive to Blake, who could himself be impulsive and contrary. Fuseli's direct, cantankerous manner is, after all, a kind of energetic openness that would have appealed to the poet who wrote "Damn braces" and "Always be ready to speak your mind, and a base man will avoid you" (The Marriage of Heaven and Hell 9, 8; E 37, 36). Blake seems to have taken Fuseli's notorious rough language in his stride. When the squeamish Flaxman asked what he did when Fuseli swore at him, Blake is reported to have answered, "What do I do? Why—I swear again! and he says astonished, 'vy, Blake, you are.swearing!' but he leaves off himself" (BR 53). A close bond between Blake and Fuseli must have been the admiration they shared for Raphael, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, and Milton. And, though he was in some ways an elitist, Fuseli was no lover of conservative institutions. "Earth's kings are the worms of earth," he wrote to Lavater in 1763 (MHF 117).

More specific influences of Fuseli on Blake may be seen in their aesthetic theory, in their painting styles, and in matters of literary form and content. One of the first books Blake is known to have owned is Fuseli's translation of Winkelmann's Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks, which Blake bought while an apprentice in about 1772 (BR 12). Blake later disparaged Greek art as "mathematic" rather than truly imaginative, but in the 1790's he was an enthusiastic Heilenist (in an 1800 letter to George Cumberland, for example, he welcomes "the immense flood of Grecian light & glory which is coming on Europe"—E 678). Winkelmann's book, which did much to revive an appreciation of classical art both in England and in Germany, must have affected the young engraver's tastes. Winkelmann's praise of the naked beauty of Greek figures may have influenced Blake's practice of putting as little drapery as possible on the "human form divine." Blake must have approved of Winkelmann's idealism in a passage like this one: "It is not only Nature which the votaries of the Greeks find in their works, but still more, something superior to nature; ideal beauties, brain-born

images, as Proclus says."¹⁵ Blake himself almost never drew from nature, and noted "Natural objects always did & now do Weaken deaden & obliterate Imagination in Me" (Ann. Wordsworth, E 655). And like Blake, Fuseli seldom drew from life and is often quoted as saying "Nature puts me out."¹⁶ Mason seems to be correct in attributing many of Blake's later extreme pronouncements on art, such as his attacks on Titian, Correggio, Rubens, and Rembrandt in the Public Address, to Fuseli (MHF 258–9).

Even their contemporaries noted a similarity in the actual painting styles of the two artists, such as their preference for superhuman figures in postures of extreme stress, with muscles so sharply delineated that they give a "flayed" appearance. Fuseli is quoted as having said that Blake is "damned good to steal from" (BR 39), but most critics think the influence went both ways. Gert Schiff notes several specific illuminations in Milton and Jerusalem that seem indebted to Fuseli.¹⁷ Fuseli was painting his titanic forms and floating figures years before Blake; and in any case the characteristic style of both of them clearly goes back to Raphael and Michelangelo.

I think a direct influence of Fuseli can be seen in the rambunctious tone of Blake's writings during the early 1790's, especially The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. Other revolutionary and apocalyptic rhetoric was abroad at that time. but Blake's particular note of defiant rebelliousness, and his emphasis on genius and energy and the body, all have the ring of Fuseliean Sturm und Drang. For example, Fuseli wrote in his Remarks on . . . Rousseau: "If truth is called error, and argument a dream; if Vice mobs Virtue, and Quackery pins her mantle to the back of Simplicity—indignation is merit" (p. 2). The riddling "Argument" to The Marriage of Heaven and Hell makes the same point:

Now the sneaking serpent walks
In mild humility.
And the just man rages in the wilds
Where lions roam. (E 33)

And Isaiah tells Blake, "The voice of honest indignation is the voice of God" (E 38). One of Fuseli's Aphorisms on Art, which Blake may have


¹⁶. Schiff notes references to this phrase of Fuseli's in Knowles and Cunningham, and points out that Reynolds makes a dig at Fuseli in his Twelfth Discourse when he laments the state of painters who complain that "Nature always puts them out" (Schiff, I, 121 and note, 660). To this list Mason adds similar references by Hazlitt and B. R. Hayden (MHF 72, 75).

¹⁷. The most notable of these are the following: Milton, pl. 15 seems indebted to fig. 1055 in Schiff (II, 311); Jerusalem 25 to fig. 441 (II, 104); Jerusalem 32 to fig. 491 (II, 116); Jerusalem 51 to fig. 408 (II, 257); in addition to these which are noted by Schiff, a moon boat by Fuseli (fig. 801; II, 207) recalls Jerusalem 24 and 39. All the Fuseli drawings are dated before 1800, and some were done in the 70's.
seen in 1788 (though they were not published until after their deaths), says, "It is the lot of genius to be opposed, and to be invigorated by opposition" (Knowles, III, 65); Blake in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* says, "Opposition is true friendship" (20, E 41).

In his youth Fuseli was a great admirer of Klopstock, and it may have been from him that Blake heard whatever he heard about the "German Milton" that made him write his comic verses "When Klopstock England Defied" in his Notebook around 1798. David Erdman suggests that Blake read "in some letter or magazine he took to his outhouse" of Klopstock's "blaming Swift for the coarseness of English diction"; he cites a 1797 letter of Klopstock to Herder containing comments to this effect. Actually Klopstock defied England a number of times. He mentioned the superiority of German over English in his conversation with Coleridge and Wordsworth in 1798. Mason points out that Fuseli, in a letter to Lavater in March, 1775, refers to another instance, the ode *Wir und sie* (1766), in which Klopstock, comparing English with German poetry, asks, "When did their bard fully touch the heart? / It is only in images that he weeps. . . ." But Mason believes that Blake’s verses respond to two other poems of Klopstock that he heard about from Fuseli, *Die beiden Musen* (1752) and *Unsere Sprache* (1767). He cites two further anti-British odes by Klopstock, *Mein Vaterland* and *Vaterlandslied* (MHF 92). Yet another epigram against the English poets, *An die Engländer*, was sent by Klopstock to his friend Gleim in 1752. In an *Analytical Review* article Fuseli (anonymously) referred to Klopstock as second to Milton—which Blake might have taken as a challenge if not a defiance. Considering Fuseli’s closeness to Blake at this time and his familiarity with Klopstock, it would be surprising if he were not the channel through which Blake became incensed.

Although Blake would not have needed any special influence to connect Voltaire with Rousseau in his verses "Mock on Mock on" (E 468–9), the link might have been reinforced in his mind by the striking frontispiece Fuseli designed for his *Remarks on . . . Rousseau*—if Blake saw it. Fuseli himself describes the plate in an anonymous review of his own book in the *Critical Review*, May 1767: "Voltaire is introduced . . . bestriding a monster [Humanity] which he has bridled, saddled, and brought to the ground. Over his head, pendant by their necks upon a gibbet, are Justice and Liberty. . . . On the right side of the piece [actually the left] . . . stands an arch, shrugging figure, representing Rousseau . . . pointing with his right hand to the beast and his burthen, and with the plummet of Truth in his left, sounding, as we may suppose, the sincerity and real

estimation of the rider” (MHF, p. 136). Both figures have mocking
expressions, and the “plummet of Truth” makes Rousseau one of the
doubters and questioners whom Blake often condemns (as in “Auguries
of Innocence,” which dates from approximately the same time).

Perhaps the greatest contribution Fuseli made to Blake’s development
was introducing him to the two works by Lavater already mentioned—his
Aphorisms on Man and Essays on Physiognomy. Both books were quite
popular in England and on the continent, and they went through numer­
ous editions. Even Goethe was for a while much taken with Lavater,
travelled with him, and contributed both prose and verse to the Physi­
ognomy book. Blake ought to have been repelled by the apparently
rational and utilitarian tendency of the two books and by their reliance on
external appearances, but instead he wrote his name next to Lavater’s on
the title page of the Aphorisms and enclosed the two names in a heart.
And he liberally sprinkled the margins with revealing notes. He rightly
saw behind the Dale Carnegie surface of the Aphorisms a mind that
shared some of his own idealism, his belief in the divine immanence in
man, and his trust in intuition and impulse rather than rules and
dogmas.

In his marginalia to the Aphorisms Blake typically picks up on a rather
bland maxim and pushes its metaphysical implications further. For
example, Lavater offers a rather specious, rhetorical argument for toler­
ance: “A god, an animal, a plant, are not companions of man; nor is the
faultless—then judge with lenity of all . . .”; Blake corrects Lavater’s
premise, and makes his correction the basis for a theological comment:
“It is the God in all that is our companion & friend, for our God himself
says, you are my brother my sister & my mother. . . . For let it be remem­
bered that creation is God descending according to the weakness of man”
(E 588–9). Another aphorism begins: “Whatever is visible is the vessel or
veil of the invisible past, present, future . . . .” Blake’s comment—“A
vision of the Eternal Now”—gives the aphorism a sharply more Neo­
platonic cast (E 581).

In his last aphorism Lavater says, “If you mean to know yourself, inter­
line such of these aphorisms as affected you agreeably in reading, and set
a mark to such as left a sense of uneasiness with you; and then shew your
copy to whom you please.”22 Blake did so; it is recorded that he showed
his marks and comments “to Fuseli; who said one could assuredly read
their writer’s character in them” (BR 39). The modern reader can also
read Blake’s character in them; they provide a remarkably full picture of
Blake’s ideas and beliefs at this important point of his life, just on the
brink of his creative career. And perhaps the aphorisms did help Blake to
“know himself,” by helping him formulate his thoughts in harmony with
Lavater, or in the true friendship of opposition.

Although there is no direct evidence that Blake read Lavater’s *Essays on Physiognomy*, his admiration for the *Aphorisms*, his close association with Fuseli, and his work on some of the engravings make it very likely that he knew it too. Blake’s later paintings and drawings recall some of the *Physiognomy*’s illustrations, and there are some verbal echoes in his poems. But even the general outlook and manner of proceeding show an affinity with Blake. Far from being an orderly, scientific explanation of how to read a person’s character in his face, Lavater’s *Physiognomy* is a potpourri of short, impressionistic analyses, personal asides, bits of verse, maxims, open letters to patrons and friends, and quotations from authorities past and present, pro and con. The whole book is literally divided into sections called “Fragments” and “Additions.” Lavater analyzes indiscriminately actual portraits, and faces invented by painters; and he throws in a few horses, dogs, and insects for good measure. *Essays on Physiognomy* is in fact a model for the form of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, with its mixture of verse, proverbs, and sections of prose argument and “Memorable Fancies,” all interspersed with pictures. Both works show the kind of intentionally fragmentary, idiosyncratic, anti-rational organization frequently to be found in German writing of the time—in Jean-Paul, in Wackenroder’s *Herzensergiessungen*, and in Hoffmann’s *Kater Murr*.

Lavater describes his own method of analysis in a section of advice to a beginning physiognomist: “Always give yourself up to first impressions, and trust to them more than even to observations. Are your perceptions the result of involuntary feeling, excited by a sudden emotion?—Be assured the source of it is pure, and that you may spare yourself the trouble of having recourse to induction” (II, 418). Here is a method that Blake himself could approve of.

The metaphysical assumptions behind the *Physiognomy* are likewise close to Blake’s. In the tradition of Boehme, the Kabbala, and the *philosophia perennis*, Lavater assumes that man, like Blake’s Albion, has fallen from a god-like state, and that the external variations that the physiognomist reads reflect the “degeneration,” and “mutilation” of the originally perfect “Image of God” (I, 5). But he also believes that some divinity remains in even the worst of men, and for this reason urges universal love and forgiveness of sins in the manner of Blake’s “Divine Image” and *For the Sexes*. Because God is in everything, Lavater urges love and charity toward all creatures: “Rejoice, O Man, in the existence of every thing that rejoices to exist, and learn to bear with all that enjoys the forbearance of God” (II, 42). This sounds like *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*:

The pride of the peacock is the glory of God.
The lust of the goat is the bounty of God.
The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of God.

..............
For every thing that lives is Holy. (E 36, 44)
Fig. 1. Blake, “Cancer”

Fig. 2. From Lavater’s Physiognomy, I. facing p. 254
Fig. 3. Blake, “The Man Who Built the Pyramids”

Fig. 4. From Lavater’s Physiognomy. I. facing p. 254
Fig. 5. Degenerate lips, from Lavater’s *Physiognomy*, V (III), facing p. 404

Fig. 6. Fuseli, crouched figure (on the same page with a picture of “The Death of Abel”), from Lavater’s *Physiognomy*, II, 286
In "Auguries of Innocence" Blake reflects an idea of divine immanence reminiscent of various Neoplatonic writers, Spinoza, Herder, and other German contemporaries: "a World in a Grain of Sand / And a Heaven in a Wild Flower" (E 481). Lavater’s *Physiognomy* expresses the same idea: "Every grain of sand is an immensity, every leaf a world, every insect an assemblage of incomprehensible effects, in which reflection is lost" (1, 13).

Blake’s "The Tyger" may contain a verbal echo of a passage by Herder which Lavater quotes:

> What hand can seize that substance laid up in the head and contained in the skull of Man? What organ of flesh and blood is able to sound that abyss of the faculties, of internal powers, which there ferment or repose? The Deity himself has taken care to cover that sacred summit... with a forest, emblem of those hallowed groves in which the sacred mysteries were celebrated in ancient times. The mind is struck with religious horror at the idea of that shaded mountain, where the Lightning resides, a single flash of which bursting from the chaos is sufficient to illuminate, to embellish—or to waste and destroy a World. (1, 58)

The visual pun elaborated here is also of course one repeatedly used by Blake.

Two of Blake’s "visionary heads" drawn about 1819 or 1820 bear strong resemblances to plates in the *Physiognomy*. The head that John Varley inscribed "Cancer" (fig. 1), which Keynes conjectures is a self-caricature, is remarkably like Lavater’s illustration of the “Phlegmatick” temperament (fig. 2): both faces have the same round forehead, turned up nose, thick lips, prominent round chin, large ear, and long stringy hair. The neck-cloth of "Phlegmatick" becomes wrinkles under "Cancer’s" chin.

Similarly, Blake’s vision of “The Man Who Built the Pyramids” (fig. 3) looks in some features like a reversed version of Lavater’s illustration for the “Sanguine” temperament (fig. 4). Both have long, somewhat heavy-lidded eyes; the foreheads of both recede and form a plane with the bridge of the nose; and the lips, weak chin, and muscular necks are similar. The lips of “The Man Who Built the Pyramids” may also be influenced by a plate of lips which Lavater selects as being particularly bestial (fig. 5). No. 1, for example, he says "in all respects is repugnant to nature and truth" (V [III], 404). The pyramids of course exemplified for Blake both reductive, mathematical thought, and its political reflection, human slavery. The builder of these monuments of the degenerate human mind appropriately looks both smugly sanguine and sub-human. Another of Lavater’s plates which a little suggests “The Man Who Built the Pyramids,” as well as, perhaps, “The Ghost of a Flea” and other of Blake’s half-animal figures, is one depicting an Ox-man (fig. 7). This is

Fig. 9. Blake, from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*; Library of Congress, Rosenwald Collection

Fig. 10. From Lavater's *Physiognomy*, I, 242
actually an exact copy of a plate from Giovanni Battista della Porta’s *De humana physiognomia* (1593), which Blake may have known independently. Porta’s book contains a number of similar plates of lion-men, greyhound-men, sheep-men, rooster-men, eagle-men, etc., several more of which were reproduced in the original German edition of the *Physiognomy*, and also in the second edition of another English translation, published in 1804.24

Still another Blake figure that may show an influence from Lavater’s book in his Nebuchadnezzar, who appears on Plate 24 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (fig. 9), and also as a color print (1795; in the Tate Gallery). This monarch reduced to a beast looks a little like the *Physiognomy’s* representation of Attila (fig. 10), of whom Lavater says, “The first head, does it not announce from the tip of the nose to below the lip, a want of understanding; and the second, in the same parts, a rudeness of feature bordering on the brute?” (I. 242). Perhaps it is more than chance or physiognomical law that Nebuchadnezzar’s nose, forehead, and drooping eyes resemble those of this other tyrant, and that his crown seems a metamorphosis of Attila’s horns.25 Finally, the winged demon hovering in the upper-righthand corner of Blake’s well-known color print of “The Triple Hecate” (also 1795; in the Tate) may be descended from one of two grotesque heads at the end of a section of Lavater’s book (fig. 8).

I am not suggesting that Blake actually copied or even that he consciously recalled these images (though he himself says a good artist “Really Does Copy a Great Deal”—Ann. Reynolds, E 634). He seems to have stored them in his unconscious, whence they arose years later, distorted and perhaps mingled with other memories. The examples I have noted, except perhaps Nebuchadnezzar, seem to have come to him at moments when his invention was relatively free from demands of literary characterization (unlike the figures, say, in *Milton* or *Job*), and hence open to unforeseen images from the spirit world or his unconscious mind. A clear instance of this sort of influence from memory occurs in the 1820 Visionary Head of Queen Eleanor, Wife of Edward I, which Keynes points out “bears considerable resemblance to the pencil drawing . . . made by Blake in 1774 from the Queen’s monument in Westminster Abbey.”26 The flowing hair is quite similar in both drawings, but, interestingly, the fleurs-de-lys and trefoils in the crown of the earlier drawing have

metamorphosed into round-lobed leaves, as Attila's horns may have turned into Nebuchadnezzar's crown.

A number of the plates that Fuseli himself contributed to the *Physiognomy* are in the style he shared with Blake: figures with exaggerated musculature, crouched or seated in rather strained positions (see fig. 6, and front and back covers).27

In sum, it may be said that Blake's similarity to his German contemporaries is more than coincidence, and if part may be attributed to temperamental affinity, and part to parallel development from the same sources, still another part is due to the direct confirming influence of Fuseli and Lavater. In Fuseli Blake found reinforcement for a *Sturm und Drang* tendency that shows up especially in the 1790's, but also in a late work like "The Everlasting Gospel." And in Lavater he found reinforcement for his more optimistic, transcendental, idealistic tendencies, his trust in intuition, his belief that external appearances reflect internal realities. Such complex reinforcement of influences probably underlies many of the "genial coincidences" that abound so tantalizingly in European Romanticism.

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27. The hooded figure (front cover) is based on a woodcut by Altdorfer, according to Tomory.