

***The Double Tongue,* the Double Vision, and the Double Doubles**

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Abstract

William Golding's unfinished swan song, *The Double Tongue*, recapitulates his life-long obsession with the double vision: the rational and the spiritual reconciled with each other. The heroine Arieka's double tongue speaks in the same breath the mortal language and the divine language, the natural truth and the spiritual truth. She is expected to live on two levels at once, mediating between the physical universe and the spiritual cosmos.

And Arieka is not the only character whose consciousness spans two worlds. The hero Ionides, who commands her to straddle the boundary while choosing to remain on the rational level himself, is forced to share part of her vision. Since both characters are double-visioned, together they become doubly-doubled and resemble the doubly-doubled key to the double doors in the Delphic adytum. The double visions thus multiply into a fourfold vision like that of William Blake in the poem quoted by Northrop Frye in his posthumous *Double Vision*.

Though Ionides fails to complete his rite of passage, while Arieka crosses the boundary into the province of the

initiated, the hero still serves as the heroine's double, like many other characters in Golding's earlier novels who help complete the protagonist's spiritual journey. Whereas the ancient heroes are preponderantly male and generally require the Jungian "anima" for an integrated self, in Golding's last story it is the heroine who penetrates the world of the "other" and comes out the fuller grown of the two. On the other hand, Arieka survives Ionides almost supernaturally as his immortal double. And unlike most modern doubles, such as those in Golding's other stories, Arieka's "other" is more supportive than sinister, hence closer in kin to the ancient second selves like Gilgamesh's Enkidu and Achilles' Patroclus. It is a central argument of this paper that Golding derives inspiration for doubling mostly from mythology and Greek drama rather than from Freud's interpretation of the suppressed self.

Key Words: William Golding, *The Double Tongue*, Double vision, the Double, the Second self