

## The Soul as Second Self before Plato<sup>\*</sup>

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### Abstract

Erwin Rhode believes that ancient Greeks regarded the soul as an “image” (ειδωλον) that constitutes a second Self by reflecting the visible Self. When Otto Rank borrows the idea of the soul as Second Self and contrasts primitive soul-belief with modern literature of the Double, he simplifies (and probably idealizes) the primitive Double as “a guardian angel, assuring immortal survival to the self,” which later degenerated into “a reminder of the individual’s mortality” in modern civilization. Rank attributes this decisive change of emphasis to “the Christian doctrine of immortality as interpreted by the church.” Since then the Double has assumed the grim visage of the Devil, who threatens to divest men of their immortal soul.

A problem with this choice of watershed between the positive and negative aspects of the Double is that, even before Plato, the continuity of human existence beyond physical death was not necessarily seen as idyllic, and the soul was not

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automatically linked with the conception of immortality. The immortal soul striving to detach itself from the prison of the body is a moralistic interpretation of Plato's, probably developed from Pythagoreanism, which was influenced by shamanistic and Orphic beliefs. This puritanical strain is more directly connected to Gnosticism and Manicheism than to New Testament theology.

Following an overview of the mercurial primitive soul, this paper will study the eligibility of the soul as man's second self, and go on to examine the ambiguous character of two second-self figures present in literature before Plato, from the Gilgamesh Cycle and Euripides' *Bacchae* respectively. The study shows that depicting the ancient soul as the immortal self may prove to be a projection of the modern imagination.

**Key Words:** the soul, the Second Self (the Double), the Homeric Epics, the Gilgamesh Cycle, *The Bacchae*

It is true that we find a belief in immortality in very early times, and that the part of a man which survives death is then called the psyche. But it is as well to remember that in Homer life after death is but a shadowy counterpart of full-blooded life on earth. . . . There is no suggestion that the psyche is in any way man's highest or noblest part. There is nothing spiritual about Homer's souls and his dead would gladly come back to life, however painful.

Grube (1958: 120-121)

## I. Introduction

The human soul, when it does suggest itself to the human consciousness, refuses to settle for a permanent shape, which is evidenced by the gamut of names it assumes in each culture. For Homer alone there is *ψυχη* (*psyche*), roughly understood as the free soul, and there are the body souls: *νοῦς*, *μενός*, and *θυμός*. In Plato's *Phaedrus*, *νοῦς* is Reason, or mind, often considered to be the equivalent of the transcendental soul by modern scholars. And *θυμός*, literally meaning "anger" and often translated by "spirit," becomes the middle part of Plato's tripartite soul in *Republic* 4. Also translated by "spirit" are *πνεῦμα* and *δαίμων*, the latter regarded as the higher part of the soul in *Timaeus*. From the much earlier *Apology* we learn of Socrates arousing suspicions, resentment, even fear by hearkening to the voice of what appears to be his personal *daimon* for admonitions against waywardness. But in Philip Pullman's 1995 best-selling fantasy, *The Golden Compass*, every human in the heroine's world has a *dæmon* which keeps him/her company for life. A child's *dæmon* could change into the shape of any animal any time it likes until the individual reaches adulthood, when the *dæmon* assumes one permanent shape. Certain personal *dæmons* can be repressive *superegos*, others plain mirror selves or "secret sharers" acting in perfect synchronism with the human.

Were an alien to unearth nothing but Pullman from the ruins

that our Earth will probably be reduced to five millennia from now, (s)he will be entitled to infer that this is the state of the human soul in our era. But even Lyra, the heroine of Pullman's story, realizes there are worlds other than the one she normally inhabits. Similarly, since we have more than one culture to study from the ancient world, however fragmentary the sources may be, oversimplification by imposing one single (idealized) pattern on the face of our ancestors' soul should be avoided.

In his recently translated *Psychology and the Soul*, Otto Rank complains that the modern child's world is too often presented as parents see it (1998: 15), but he too may be guilty of idealizing the ancient world when he extols the primitive Double as "a guardian angel, assuring immortal survival to the self," which unfortunately degenerated into "a reminder of the individual's mortality" in modern civilization. Rank attributes this decisive change of emphasis to "the Christian doctrine of immortality as interpreted by the church, which presumed the right to bestow its immortality on the good ones and exclude the bad ones." Since then the Double has assumed the grim visage of the Devil, who threatens to divest men of their immortal soul by personifying the hostile forces of materialism and intellectualism (1958: 76; 1998: 22).<sup>1</sup>

Rank divides his history of the soul-concept into four major phases: 1) the primitive era, marked by animism, when the body

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<sup>1</sup> Rank first became interested in the primitive soul as double in his 1914 article titled "Der Doppelgänger," which was translated by Harry Tucker and published in book form under the title of *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study* (Rank, 1971). Rank recapitulates some of the arguments of the article in "The Double as Immortal Self," Chapter Two of his first book in English, *Beyond Psychology* (1958).

It should be noted that intellectualism may be regarded as distracting from Christian devotion just like materialism, while the intellect is all but equated to the highest part of the soul by Plato. G. M. A. Grube stresses this contrast right at the beginning of his chapter named "The Nature of the Soul" in *Plato's Thought*: "This emphasis on the intelligence as the most divine thing in man . . . is one of the most important differences between the Platonic and the Christian doctrines of the soul and should be kept in mind throughout" (1958: 121).

was held to be immortal; 2) antiquity, characterized by sexual ideology; 3) the Middle Ages, with the preeminence of Christian ideology, and 4) our time, with psychology as its dominant ideology. The Christian cult of Mary marked the peak of belief in soul and immortality, from which Rank notes a slide to devil-belief and witch-belief, which are equated with the rise of the church. Rank also holds the church responsible for women being “transformed from soul representative to the symbol of sex-without-soul” (1998: 124-126, 32, 48). A problem with choosing the rise of the church for demarcating the line between the angelic and devilish faces of the double is that, even according to Rank, the projection of one’s own evil will onto others—“sorcerers, demons, gods, and the like”—occurred in early human history or prehistory. The Sumerian hero Gilgamesh, situated between the animistic and the sexual eras by Rank, is even killed by an apparition of his double, Enkidu, and left with no hope of gaining immortality (1998: 117, 74).

Before Plato, the continuity of human existence beyond physical death was already darkened by apprehension, and the soul was not automatically linked with the conception of immortality. Even in Plato’s *Symposium*, “[i]mmortality of the soul is not only not mentioned; it is all but denied” (Grube, 1958: 130). His immortal soul striving to detach itself from the prison constituted by the body is a moralistic interpretation, probably developed from shamanistic beliefs if E. R. Dodds’ argument proves to be valid, and has already been well formulated in the Pythagorean and Orphic systems. But there are still, in Plato’s thinking, opposite evaluations of the status of man. In Dodds’ words, “[t]here is the faith and pride in human reason,” which is equated with “the occult self of the shamanistic tradition,” and there is the “recognition of human worthlessness” from the observation of his contemporaries. These two views may not be strictly opposite, Dodds comments, but in a relationship of compensation—even overcompensation: “the less Plato cared for actual humanity, the more nobly he thought of the soul” (1957:

215-216). This puritanical strain can be traced more directly to Gnosticism and Manicheism than to New Testament theology. The following section of this paper will present the many faces of the ancient Soul along with a review of the dismal scenes of afterlife from Mesopotamian and Homeric tales.

Erwin Rhode, the first modern scholar to conduct research on the early Greek idea of the soul, believes that ancient Greeks regarded the soul as an “image” (*ειδωλον*) that constitutes a second Self by reflecting the visible Self. Rank extends this argument by contrasting primitive soul belief with modern literature of the Double:

The primitive and modern material concerning the Double . . . will show how a positive evaluation of the Double as the immortal soul leads to the building up of the prototype of personality from the self; whereas the negative interpretation of the Double as a symbol of death is symptomatic of the disintegration of the modern personality type. (1958: 66)

C. F. Keppler, however, judges the distrust of the Double to be pervasive among primitive groups, which explains what Rendel Harris calls the “Great Fear” of the twins. According to Robert Rogers, Rank is just being “Rousseauesque” in attempting to rediscover “the natural self of man” among the primitives (1970: 13-14). Of course it would be unreasonable to presume that a popular belief should axiomatically exclude the prevalence of another in the same area and the same epoch, as any casual survey of contemporary culture(s) would show. Judging by Taoist folk beliefs past and present, for example, physical death seems to guarantee entrance to a supernatural world and therefore the spirit of the deceased is promoted to the position of a cult deity. On the other hand, however, the spirits rely heavily on the living for sustenance. The issue is further complicated by the Taoist theory of “three spirits and seven (body) souls” for each individual. At the individual’s death the spirits soar into the air while the souls descend into the earth only to return to the body’s abode soon after

(“Return of the Souls,” 2004).<sup>2</sup>

In *Psychology and the Soul*, Rank himself brings up the idea that a confirmed belief “does not exclude the possibility of [the primitives’] knowing something else.” It may be denial, and not ignorance, of that something else that formed the belief, “just as it was denial of death, not ignorance, that formed primitive belief in the bodily soul” in the first place. Rank also detects a similar phenomenon among his contemporaries: “[i]n our psyche, too, belief and knowledge often co-exist, irreconcilable and unreconciled” (1998: 16). The chapter on “Soul and Will” decides that soul-belief stems from death fear, “but there is another, positive side of the soul construct that was understood by primitives as life-force, vital energy.” Rank cites the example of a New Guinea word for soul, *tanuá*, which means “life-force” and “shadow” at the same time and therefore relates to both life and death. Two tribes in New Hebrides name the embodied soul “life spirit” and the departed soul “death spirit.” Similar distinctions exist among Polynesians, Micronesians, and North American Indians. (Even in the *Laws*, generally considered to be Plato’s last work, there are at least two souls: one that does good and one that does evil.) The idea of soul is so adamantly dualistic that Rank seems unable to make up his mind as to whence arises man’s belief in immortality. He opens the chapter by asserting that “belief in immortality stems from the will to live, *not from fear of death*” (italics mine). Only a few pages later he makes a complete turn-about, contending that the concept of God develops from the life-wish, “[u]nlike belief in immortality, which comes from death-fear.” This

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<sup>2</sup> How deep the souls go in the earth varies with the year of death but they come back up to the body’s abode in a few weeks’ time. It is significant that weekly funeral ceremonies are strictly observed, one for each of the seven souls, to keep them away from the human abode. As to the three spirits, a Taoist theory says one of them resides in the household altar, another remains in the grave, while the third returns to the underworld for reincarnation (二魚 · 2004: 10). Rank cites Goethe’s *Faust* speaking of a simpler opposition: two souls contending in his breast, one cleaving to bodily pleasures and the other soaring to join the ancestral souls (Part 1, quoted in Rank, 1998: 50).

self-contradiction shows the issue is more complicated than Rank makes it out to be, though I am sure Rank is quite aware of the complexity of the issue, one indication of this being his remark cited above on the unreconciled belief and knowledge in the modern psyche. He finally decides that it is Christianity that joined the idea of God and belief in immortality in a magnificent synthesis (1998: 95-99).

The third section of this paper will first consider the eligibility of the soul as Second Self, especially in the vast world of Homer's. Following this is a study of two second-self figures in the mythoi/literae before Plato, from the Gilgamesh Cycle and Euripides' *Bacchae*, respectively. Both Enkidu and Dionysus, known far and wide through folklore in ancient times, play the role of the hidden or suppressed self to the hero of the story. As Double, neither assures immortal survival to the Self. Their stories should reveal the continuity between the ancient soul-as-Double, which Rank presumes to be unqualifiedly gracious and supportive before the spread of the Christian church, and the preponderantly hostile doubles in and after Romantic fiction.

## II. The Soul with Many Faces for Myriad Afterlives

Following the example of Rhode, Rank maintains that the ancient Greek soul constitutes a second Self to the visible Self:

According to Homer, man has a dualistic existence, the one in his visible appearance, the other in his invisible image which becomes free only after death—this, and no other, is his soul. In animate man there dwells as a strange guest a more feeble double—his other Self in the form of his Psyche—whose kingdom is the world of dreams. When the conscious Self sleeps, the Double works and watches. (Rhode, *Psyche*, 1894, quoted by Rank, 1958: 75)

The soul which becomes free only after death is in fact just one of the multiple souls in the makeup of the primitive Self according to,

among others, the Swedish Sanskritist Ernst Arbman, who distinguishes between the body souls, identifiable with those called *vovs*, *μενος*, and *θυμος* in Homer; and the free soul, which roughly corresponds to Homer's *psyche*.<sup>3</sup> Jan N. Bremmer observes that neither the free soul nor Homer's *psyche* has physical or psychological connections, though the former represents a person's individuality in dreams or in states of unconsciousness while the latter does not seem to assume this function until after Homer (1983: 18-21). Dodds also remarks on the limited function of Homer's *psyche*: "It is well known [after Bruno Snell] that Homer appears to credit man with a *psyche* only after death, or when he is in the act of fainting or dying or is threatened with death: the only recorded function of the *psyche* in relation to the living man is to leave him. Nor has Homer any other word for the living personality" (1957: 16).<sup>4</sup> Bremmer, moreover, notices that Rhode is unable to find any instance of the soul-as-double in Homer and has to turn to a fragment of the fifth-century Pindar. While the *psyche*, like the free soul, represented the individual after death, it did not develop completely into a unitary soul until after the Archaic Age (1983: 7-11, 66). Rank is aware that the soul for the multiplicity of living functions only came to be united with the soul of the dead later, and he calls the spirit of the dead the "duplicate soul" of that of the living.

When Rank contrasts primitive soul belief with the modern literature of the Double, however, he simplifies the ancient soul as a

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<sup>3</sup> The correspondences are a result of Jan N. Bremmer's efforts at harmonizing the primitive soul beliefs with those seen in Homer.

For the arguments of E. Arbman's "Untersuchungen zur primitiven Seelenvorstellung mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Indien," pts. 1-2, *le Monde Oriental* 20 (1926) 85-222 and 21 (1927) 1-185, I rely on Bremmer's translation and interpretation in *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul*.

<sup>4</sup> R. W. Sharples believes he has proved that, though there is indeed no *term* for the "self" in Homer, the first personal pronoun serves to indicate a unified personality. And yet "the boundaries of the self are not fixed, but fluctuate, even within the course of a single decision-making process" (1983: 4). This does not contradict Dodds' argument that the idea of a unitary soul only emerged after the Archaic Age.

single being and idealizes this primitive Double of man as his immortal self. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's study in *The "Soul" of the Primitive* proves that our simple mind has overestimated the primitive belief in eternal life. She cites J. H. Hutton as saying that the views of what happens to the "soul" when it leaves our world are not very consistent even in the same tribe. Among peoples who know nothing of purely spiritual souls, "we do not find any belief in immortality." The dead may "live" on in one form or another, but after "dying" three or seven times themselves, according to Ling Roth's interviews with the Dyaks of Sarawak, "they become practically annihilated by absorption into air and fog, or by a final dissolution into various jungle plants not recognized by any name" (1928: 302, 313).

Rank maintains that the change in the role of the soul from angel to devil amounts to a moralistic interpretation of the old soul belief by the Christian church. However, a moralized soul appeared long before Christ, with Plato at the very latest. In the *Phaedo*, the philosopher transforms the soul of the dead, that used to fly to Homer's underworld shrieking like a bat, into a transcendental rational principle of life, while assigning emotion and physical appetite to the body. It is true that this soul, whose unity guarantees its immortality, admits conflict within itself since the *Republic*, and in the *Phaedrus* comprises the metaphoric charioteer (reason), the noble horse (passion) as well as the baser horse (physical appetites). But it is also true that, thanks to Plato's reworking of this element of popular belief, we now need to be reminded by scholar after scholar, Grube included, that even in the fifth century "the word 'psyche' was not automatically linked with the conception of immortality" (1958: 120).<sup>5</sup> And Plato's system was geared toward the ethical, not the

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<sup>5</sup> A reading of the *Phaedo* shows us that on the day of Socrates' death, in the first year of the fourth century BC, the self-possessed martyr had the thorny task of proving the continuity, if not the existence, of the soul to a couple "Pythagorean" friends, who were no longer mystics but mathematicians (Gadamer, 1980: 21-38). It is no wonder that Socrates' defense of otherworldly values in the *Apology* should have fallen flat in the Athenian court. It is also said that later, when Plato elaborated on the theory of immortality recorded in the

religious:

That the soul is immortal appears from the myth of the day of judgement at the end of *Gorgias*, but it should be clearly understood that Socrates' arguments for the good life are in no way based upon it in the first place and that, here as elsewhere, his ethical system stands even if this immortality is denied. The myth is an addendum, not an argument. At least until in his later dialogues immortality followed from premises he had by then worked into his philosophy, Plato was inclined not to treat the belief in it as a main argument for, but only as an added inducement to, the good life. (Grube, 1958: 123-124)

Rank is right to lament the lot of the immortal soul being reduced to "a mere subject of philosophic speculation" in a sophisticated Hellas (1958: 101). It should not surprise us that the Platonic soul as a whole definitely does not attain immortality either, "since part of it is unequivocally stated to be mortal: neither physical desire nor ambition survives" (Grube, 1958: 148).

In sixth-century Greek poems and epitaphs, the *psyche* could be the appetitive principle of the soul as opposed to the rational or spiritual principle, schematically equivalent to Freud's id or the evil horse as part of the soul of the lover in Plato's *Phaedrus*.<sup>6</sup> In this sense there was no fundamental antagonism between *psyche* and *soma*. According to Dodds, "*psyche* was just the mental correlate of *soma*;" in Attic Greek both terms can mean "life," and in suitable contexts each can mean "person" (1957: 138). This usage is kept in Paul's Epistles, where *psyche* can mean the soul, the heart, "life" (Romans 11:3; Philippians 2: 30), or just "person" (Romans 2: 9) as can *soma* (1 Corinthians 9: 27; 13: 3). Another way of referring to the person is to use "spirit (*pneuma*) and soul (*psyche*) and body (*soma*)" (1

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<sup>6</sup> *Phaedo*, Aristotle was the only Academy scholar who listened to the end.  
 For the schemes of the soul see Robert Rogers' table correlating "the system of psychology (and its analogs) which Plato discusses in *The Republic* with Freud's later formulation of the makeup of the psyche" (1970: 9).

Thessalonians 5: 23). When *pneuma* signifies the soul that survives the body, somewhat like Rhode's psyche, its opposite is the flesh (*sarks*), not the body (*soma*), which has been redeemed like the spirit (Romans 8: 23) and will be changed to a form like Jesus' glorious body (Philippians 3: 21). The human body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, not to be sinned against; thus, the believer is exhorted to glorify God *in the body* (1 Corinthians 6: 19-20). Even *sarks*, generally associated with carnal desires or worldly values, means no more than the mortal body in many places (I Corinthians 15:50; 2 Corinthians 4:11). For the puritanical soul-body antimony, we need to go to a different source.

Rank begins his demonstration of the double as immortal self by asserting that the most primitive people known to us "show strange and complicated modes of living which become intelligible only from their supernatural meaning." He believes "the earliest magical world-view" was for the primitive man "an assurance of *eternal* survival for his self" (1958: 62, 64). I suspect this "magical world-view" to be mainly that of shamanism, whose belief in the soul as guardian spirit could have inspired Rank's "soul-god" (1958: 104). Dodds points out that a belief of this kind—he calls this psyche the "occult" self—is essential to the shamanistic culture which still exists in Russia, and the traces of its past existence extend in a "huge arc from Scandinavia across the Eurasian land-mass as far as Indonesia." Pythagoras (ca. 569—ca. 475) was one of the greatest Greek shamans, and early Pythagoreanism introduced a "puritanical" interpretation of human existence into Europe by "crediting man with an occult self of divine origin, and thus setting soul and body at odds" (1957: 139-144). That this interpretation went down to Plato's time can be corroborated by the urge in Socrates to free his soul from the entanglement of his body, which he calls "this mass of evil." Death is welcome because only when separated from the body can the soul attain pure knowledge (*Phaedo* 66b, in Plato, 1992: 63). Dodds is confident that the fifth-century Empedocles, the last magician-philosopher in the line of the shaman-Pythagoreans who diffused the belief in a "detachable soul or self which by suitable

technique can be withdrawn from the body even during life,” took the final step of the Manichean asceticism. In all likelihood, “puritanism not only originated in Greece, but was carried by a Greek mind to its theoretical limit” (1957: 146-155).

But how did the body come to embody evil? An answer may be found in late Orphic poems about man’s creation. The human race rose from the ashes of the Titans who were burned up by a thunderbolt from Zeus, as punishment for their wicked deed of tearing up and devouring baby Dionysus. Humans are thus tainted from the very beginning of their existence, or else are simply fully evil, “tempered by a tiny portion of divine soul-stuff, which is the substance of the god Dionysus still working in them as an occult self” (1957: 155). Though scholars from Wilamowitz to Festugière have refused to date the story of the Titans’ blood to any time before the third century BC, and Marcel Detienne even attributes it to no one earlier than Dio Chrysostom of the first century AD (1979: 83), we have a passage in Plato’s *Laws* referring to certain people who “show off the old Titan nature” (701c).<sup>7</sup>

Long before Plato, Hesiod’s *Theogony* also traces patricide to one of the boldest Titans, Cronus. The close relationship of this work to the mid-second-millennium BC Babylonian creation myth, *Enūma eliš*, is believed to be well established (Koester, 1982: 160). Stephanie Dalley even surmises that Hesiod’s work is a Hellenized version of the Near Eastern myth which had probably reached Greece via Crete. In the Babylonian account of creation, man was formed from the blood of the wicked god Kingu and was therefore born evil. Dalley compares this account with that in *Atrahasis*, where the mother goddess Mami created man out of “clay mixed with the blood of a

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<sup>7</sup> W. K. C. Guthrie, writing a few years after Dodds, finds the name of Orphism discredited, and since no classical authority specifies a guilt inherited from the Titans, Guthrie follows Pindar’s caution in opting for an expression as vague as “ancient grief.” But whatever the name, a system did go down to Plato teaching that “essentially the soul is divine, but has been compelled to undergo a series of incarnations as punishment for some not very clearly defined original sin or impurity” (1978: 236).

slain god called Geshtu-e,” complete with his intelligence (*tēmu*; also preserved is his “ghost,” *eṭemmu*). In both accounts the purpose of man’s creation was to relieve the gods of arduous labor: the Old Babylonian version of *Atrahasis* opens with the gods groaning under excessive workload and clamoring for relief. Since they were thought to be dependent on men for sustenance, when Enlil wiped out mankind—leaving only Atrahasis and his family—with a flood, even the gods were stricken with horror and thirst. The scene that followed must have been etched in the mind of any casual reader or hearer of this story: “the gods smelt the fragrance [of Atrahasis’ burnt sacrifice], /Gathered like flies over the offering” (III, v, 4-5, trans. by Dalley, 1991: 33)<sup>8</sup> We do not hear of them actually dying in a famine, but they could die a violent death, like Apsû and Mummu who were killed by Ea, and Ti’âmat who lost her life in combat with Marduk. The hero of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* refused goddess Ishtar’s love partly because she had somehow caused the death of one of her ex-husbands—the vegetation god Tammuz, who doubled as an underground deity by going down there each autumn and returning with spring.

The Orphic theogony on man’s Titanic descent, cited briefly above, brings us to another line of spiritual development rarely explored up to now. Dodds is aware that most historians assume Pythagoreanism to be descended from the Orphic tradition, while he alone traces Pythagorean soul belief to a culture based on shamanism, perhaps combined with some remnants of the Minoan tradition surviving on the island of Crete. Yet I believe that a merging of the Pythagorean doctrines and the Orphic mythology is highly probable, and that both influences are present in Platonism. The most profound influence of Orphism, besides its doctrine of the transmigration of the souls, was its conceptions of the underworld and of punishment after death. Despite their astrological world view, Helmut Koester argues,

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<sup>8</sup> Parenthetical references to Mesopotamian poems will, when applicable, indicate the text by noting tablet in Roman capitals, followed by column in Roman lowercase, and the line in Arabic numerals.

“the Orphics kept to their old conceptions of a place of punishment in the depths of the earth (Tartarus) and of the fields of bliss in the far west.” He judges from numerous vase paintings and wall paintings that this belief lived on among most common people. Its presence in poetic and religious literature is no less remarkable:

This doctrine is the foundation of the descriptions of hell which were perhaps widespread already in the Hellenistic period and are abundantly attested in the Roman period among pagans (Virgil, Plutarch, Lucian), Jews (*1 Enoch*), and Christians (*Apocalypse of Peter, Acts of Thomas*). Plato had been the first to use the Orphic doctrine of punishment in the afterlife in the context of a discussion of justice and retribution. It is thus a thoroughly Greek phenomenon when in II CE the pagan mocker Lucian competes with Christian preachers in highly gruesome descriptions of punishment in hell. (1982: 162)

This picture is confirmed by Dodds’ description of an earlier age, the Archaic Age in Greece, which ends politically with the Persian Wars and culturally with the rise of the Sophistic Movement. Dodds deems it a misfortune that the predominant function of the “moralised Supernatural” of this time was to punish and not to pity. “We hear much about . . . the sufferings of the sinner in Hell or Purgatory, relatively little about the deferred rewards of virtue” (1957: 35, 50).

Koester detects the appropriation of large amounts of oriental mythical traditions in the sixth-century BC Orphic poems, especially the theogonies, such as was done in Hesiod (1982: 159-160).<sup>9</sup> This confirms N. K. Sandars’ suspicion that the Greek bards and the Assyrian scribes of the eighth and seventh centuries BC lived close

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<sup>9</sup> In the *Theogony of Dunnu*, also from the second millennium BC like *Enūma eliš*, patricidal, matricidal, and incestuous behavior on the part of the gods is even more prevalent than in Greek mythology. In contradistinction to Hesiod’s Chaos or Gap at the origin of all things, Detienne points out that Orphism, as a reaction against the Olympic worship, posits at the origin of everything the egg of plenitude, “image of perfect being,” which only slowly crumbles into the “nonbeing of individual existence”(1979: 71).

enough to each other to have some contact. She is not surprised to see that the outsized heroes and monsters of the Gilgamesh Cycle should appear to inhabit the same universe as the gods and men of the *Homeric Hymns*, Hesiod's *Theogony*, and the *Odyssey*. Though she thinks it is "less a case of prototypes and parentage than of similar atmosphere," Sandars does not exclude the possibility of influence. "It would have been historically possible for the poet of the *Odyssey* to hear the story of Gilgamesh, not garbled but direct." On the other hand, "It is unlikely, but not impossible, that Assurbanipal heard a Greek story-teller reciting the *Iliad* in Neneveh" (1972: 42-46). Dalley is also impressed enough, especially by the underworld scenes, to think it possible that "the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the *Iliad*, and the *Odyssey* shared in part a common background" (1991: 47).

Sandars finds persistent throughout the Gilgamesh Cycle a profoundly pessimistic attitude to human life and to the world, be it the Sumerian, the Old Babylonian, or the Assyrian version. She attributes this pervasive attitude to the precariousness of life in the city-states on the one hand and the ruthlessness of the gods on the other, which, in my calculation, may boil down to the same thing. Comparing the Babylonian story of the Deluge with the Biblical story of the flood, Sandars concludes that the Mesopotamian people lived in insecurity mainly due to a lack of covenant as granted by the God of Noah. She also senses a similar atmosphere in early Greek mythology and legend, for which Dodds finds a possible explanation in the extreme personal insecurity of the Archaic Age (1957: 44). Koester, on the other hand, insists that the lack of political order in the Hellenistic Age and the early Christian centuries has necessitated the theory of individual reward and punishment in the afterlife (1982: 162).

As far as the Gilgamesh Cycle is concerned, man is created mortal in the first place; his death does not come as a punishment for sin like Adam's, who is granted access to the tree of life from the beginning. The sibyl-like ale-wife Siduri in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* warns the immortality-seeking hero that all man can look forward to is eternal death:

Gilgamesh, whither rovest thou?  
 The life thou pursuest thou shalt not find.  
 When the gods created mankind,  
 Death for mankind they set aside,  
 Life in their own hands retaining.  
 (Old Babylonian Version, X, iii, 3-5, trans. by E. A. Speiser,  
 1958: 64)<sup>10</sup>

The undifferentiated shades as portrayed in the seventh-century BC Standard Version, with their morose ornithic images, seem strangely linked to the image of the bat-like souls in Book XXIV of the *Odyssey*. The dying Enkidu, the *alter ego* of Gilgamesh, dreams of the house of dust “from which none who enters ever returns” (VII, iv, 35, trans. by Sandars, 1972: 92).<sup>11</sup> The dead, formerly noble or

<sup>10</sup> This passage is translated from the Old Babylonian Version (henceforth referred to as OBV) because it is missing from the Standard Babylonian Version (SBV), a 7th-century BC recension of copies that dated from 1600 BC onward. The OBV, inscribed on tablets around 2000 BC or slightly earlier, was discovered later than the SBV in a much more fragmentary state, but the quality of its language seems to be favored by most readers of the originals (Van Nortwick, 1992: 10).

Since I do not read Sumerian or Akkadian, I try to make up by comparing as many original translations as are within my reach, such as Alexander Heidel's rendering from the tablets in his *Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (1946; 1949), E. A. Speiser's in *The Ancient Near East* (1958) and Stephanie Dalley's in her *Myths from Mesopotamia* (1991). Andrew George's 2003 edition is not yet available to me. Sandars' version is occasionally quoted because of its readability. Hers is not a fresh translation from the cuneiform, but a prose rendering of original verse translations with their commentaries. The gaps and doubtful words in the originals are smoothed over, and instead of following the division of the original tablets, Sandars divides her story into seven parts, leaving out “Enkidu's Descent to the Netherworld” in the twelfth tablet.

<sup>11</sup> One of Heidel's conclusions to his comparison of the *Gilgamesh Epic* with the Old Testament is the absence of any argument for a Babylonian belief in the physical resurrection of the dead. This is in contradistinction to definite proof of a Hebrew belief in the revivification and renovation of the dead, both as individuals and as a mass. The “best-beloved passage,” sung by Handel into the hearts of millions is Job 19: 25-27: “But *I* know: My Redeemer lives, and as [sic] the last will He arise on the dust. And behind my skin, (now) thus struck to pieces, and that from out of my flesh, I shall behold God, whom I shall

low-born, feed on dust and clay in the dark, clothed in draggled feathers and wailing like birds. The image fills the hero with horror and drives him to a desperate but unsuccessful search for immortal life. Dalley suggests that Enkidu's account is almost identical to the opening passage of *The Descent of Ishtar to the Underworld and Nergal and Ereshkigal*. Depressive enough for Alexander Heidel to call this kind of continuity of existence "a curse rather than a blessing": "total annihilation would have been an incomparably better lot" (1949: 193). Though the twelfth tablet of the Standard Version, which was appended to the story only later, includes another report from Enkidu that accommodates some kind of retribution, the shades there still look so faceless and dim-witted that Grube's comment on the *Nekya* of Homer will apply equally well: "in Homer life after death is but a shadowy counterpart of full-blooded life on earth . . . . There is no suggestion that the psyche is in any way man's highest or noblest part. There is nothing spiritual about Homer's souls and his dead would gladly come back to life, however painful" (1958: 120-121).

Rank delineates the development of the soul from a personal

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behold for my good, and mine own eyes shall see Him and that not as another. My reins fail with longing in my bosom"(1949: 211). The seemingly contradictory lamentation in 14:10-12 over the lot of the dead being unable to rise again is usually attributed to common observations on the impossibility of returning to the mundane life from the grave.

About the Mesopotamian eschatology, Heidel affirms: "Even the latest Babylonian and Assyrian records reveal nothing of a resurrection of the flesh, a doctrine so clearly set forth in Daniel and Isaiah. A deity [such as Ishtar] descending to the underworld may be released from the realm of darkness, but the dead among men are condemned to an eternal sojourn in the great below, cut off from all hope of entering the body again and of rising from the grave"(1949: 223).

Another important contrast is that the Mesopotamian literature consigns all men, good and bad alike, to the same dark and gloomy subterranean hollow after death, while "[i]n the Old Testament, there is not one line which *proves* that at least in the early days of Hebrew history the souls or spirits of all men were believed to go to the nether world; but there are passages which clearly and unmistakably hold out to the righteous the hope of a future life of bliss and happiness in heaven"(1949: 222-223).

double who assured the immortality of the physical self, to the semi-divine heroic figure as a means of perpetuation of the social self. This later phase collectively replaced the more primitive individual double in Greek culture, until the heroic ideology in turn perished under philosophical inquiry (1958: 101-104). I suppose Bremmer is attempting to trace this second turning point when he identifies an individuation that occurred in the eighth century BC and after. Bremmer concludes his study of the early Greek concept of the soul by noting the shades' lack of individuality. He believes this is because the communities of the Dark Ages before Homer were small and closely knit, "where the life of the community was more important than the survival of the individual." In these communities an individual's death may have meant merely the end of an episode in the life circle rather than the end of one person's life. The individuation that occurred later did create concern for individual death and survival, but even this development did not entirely wipe out the image of the dead being faceless, witless shades (1983: 124).

Before Plato, then, afterlife was not necessarily idyllic. Even in the *Iliad*, which minimizes traditional belief to suit its aristocratic audience, we hear Patroclus' shade (*psyche*) complaining of rejection by other shades who are mere "images (*ειδωλα*) of used-up men" (Homer, XXIII, 72, trans. by Fitzgerald, 1974: 398). What a contrast to Rhode's soul as an "image" (*ειδωλον*) of the visible self, and a particularly distinct contrast to Rank's ancient soul as the immortal self. Whether as a corollary of personal insecurity (brought forth by Dalley and Dodds above) or as a means for the establishment of justice and order in a more or less permanent world (endorsed by Koester, also above), the menace of evil was never absent. A state of pure innocence, when postulated, goes back to "once upon a time," when there was no fear, no terror. In what S. N. Kramer calls a "'Golden Age' passage" in Sumerian mythology, there is a glimpse of Eden before it is disrupted by the vindictive jealousy of a god:

Once upon a time, there was no snake, there was no scorpion,

There was no hyena, there was no lion,  
 There was no wild dog, no wolf,  
 There was no fear, no terror,  
 Man had no rival. . . .  
 The whole universe, the people well cared for,  
 To Enlil in one tongue gave speech.  
 (But) then, . . .  
 Enki, the lord of abundance, whose commands are  
 trustworthy, . . .  
 Changed the speech in their mouths, put contention into it,  
 Into the speech of man that (until then) had been one.  
 (Kramer, 1972: xiv)

This Golden Age theme is familiar to people of all cultures. The Chinese hanker back to the peaceful reign of the proverbially divine Yellow Emperor, one of whose most glorious deeds was to defeat a demi-god with his army of copper-faced demons. It was only by summoning sundry deities to his camp and by skinning two of them for weaponry that he was able to subdue the rebel—without subduing his heart.

In the ages before Plato there was a wealth of speculation on the nature and power of the soul, which is repeated in our own time. It is naïve, however, to presume that a primitive-sounding theory always precedes a sophisticated one. We saw that in the Standard Version of *Gilgamesh* alone are two slightly different pictures of the afterlife. In Enkidu's dream, related in Tablet VII, where he is to hunker down among the bird-like souls, Death is seen as a Leveler who reduces human intelligence to gibberish, and former kings and princes to slavery. Internal evidence shows this episode to have come from a later period than the underworld trip, also recounted by Enkidu, in Tablet XII. He is there to retrieve some belongings of Gilgamesh's, but fails to get back alive, only managing to talk to his first self by rising in the form of a spirit through a hole in the ground. He assures Gilgamesh of some kind of differentiated retribution in this somber world: the more sons one rears in life, the better he fares in death. Sort of a judgment, though hardly a moral one, and we would assume this version to be more "civilized." Yet the story apparently originated

earlier, from the same period—around 2000 BC—as the Sumerian version of *The Descent of Ishtar* (her name is Inanna in this version), where post-mortem judgment can be inferred from the presence of the Annunaki, or, the seven judges.

As acute a scholar as Rank is, he could not fail to notice “the primitive’s ambiguous attitude toward his double,” which manifests itself in “two groups of ideas regarding the belief in an immortal soul.” The first is the notion of an afterlife resembling that of the living, and the second that of a return to life on earth in a new form. In time the second idea has overshadowed the more primitive first one, and Rank gives the evidence of the “totemistic belief that the soul of the father or grandfather lives again in the new-born child” as proof. I suppose this explains the custom of naming a child after its forebears, but Rank observes that the more primitive belief lives on “in the father’s fear that if the child bears too great resemblance to him he is doomed to die; the idea being that it has taken from him his image or shadow, that is to say, his soul.”

Though the soul retains its function as immortal guardian, it turns out, if this reading of Rank’s proves to be correct, that the fear of the Double goes back farther into our hoary past than the belief in its benevolence. Rank notes that this fear is “often carried into a phobia of ho[m]onymy, as depicted in Poe’s ‘William Wilson’” (1958: 99). In fact the Chinese still follow a time-honored tradition of avoiding homonyms in the family. Royal personages refrained from uttering or penning their progenitors’ given names, especially after the death of a name-bearer (孔子, 2001: 100-103).<sup>12</sup> Thirteen centuries after Confucius (ca. 500 BC), a gifted poet named Li He was dissuaded from promoting himself in the bureaucratic system just because a stage in the testing program bore a near homophone of his

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<sup>12</sup> Second century AD scholar Zheng Xuan’s annotations to the *Book of Rites* (li ji) point out that the taboo only came into effect after the funerals, when the spirits had been deified. But Chen Yuan’s *Cases of Name Taboos* (陳垣, 2004) records cases of taboos in the name bearers’ lifetime, which practice must have come later.

father's praenomen (歐陽修、宋祁，1985: 5787-5788；韓愈，1979)！

Sourvinou-Inwood, having teased out two strands in the Greek afterlife beliefs, notices that the very minor strand of the Elysion-type increased in importance after Homer, while the dominant shadow-like afterlife in Hades significantly decreased in importance and even came to accommodate a happier version. She argues that this push and pull shows the Elysion-type may very well have been generated within the Greek system. Had it been taken over from another system, it would have been in order to fulfill a need (1995: 38-39). This means the possibility of immortality arose later than the gloomy view of mortality, roughly in agreement with the Mesopotamian epic of creation, *Enūma eliš*. To see the primitive soul as an angelic double that assures immortality to the self, whatever picture the “self” conjured up in the heart or mind of our remote ancestors, is probably a projection of the modern imagination.

### III. The Soul as Second Self

It has not been possible, at least not up to now, to sketch a biography for the Second Self. The general impression is that (s)he emerged in the person (or imperson) of the Doppelgänger in late eighteenth, early nineteenth century German Romantic fiction. Ralph Tymms explains the development of the Romantic Double by the occultists' doctrines of spiritual affinity between “like souls” and of the astral body, but more directly by late eighteenth-century psychology: Mesmer's theory of the “magnetic union of souls,” which Tymms believes to have formed a basis for modern psychotherapy; and the notion of “animal magnetism” furthered by G. H. Schubert, himself a prototype of romantic scientists (1949: 25-27). Tymms does trace the origins of the Double to primitive beliefs, legend and folklore, yet like most students of the Double literature, he directs his attention to Romantic and Post-Romantic literatures.

Critics concur almost unanimously that the Double has proliferated in the modern imagination due to the preoccupation of

the age with psychology, which was spurred on by Freud's anatomy of the Self. Rogers, for one, credits Freud with the first significant psychoanalytic observations about the process of doubling (1970: 11). And several scholars believe the stories of the Double either predict or reflect Freud's unveiling of the unconscious, though Freud himself insists that poets and philosophers before him already discovered it, and that the psychologist merely contributes to the scientific approach to this domain. Keppler chooses to account for the resurgence of literary doubles by the common awareness of the vast complexity of the human mind among both writers and psychologists of the last two centuries, yet he also concedes that the second self "seems to have no history whatever." He is "the product not of tradition but of individual experience, and a new experience on the part of each writer who has made use of him" (1972: xii-xiii).<sup>13</sup>

And hence the overall lack of agreement on how to define this experience of the double, let alone tracing its genealogy. Even the name itself is a cause for contention and confusion. Keppler chooses "the second self" over "double," the latter being more familiar but less precise, having begun its career in Jean Paul Richter's 1792 novel *Siebenkäs* by the name of *Doppelgänger* ("double-goer"), denoting people who see themselves ("So heissen Leute, die sich selbst sehen"). So it is the first self, and not the second self, which fulfills Richter's definition of the Double. Clifford Hallam finds it interesting that "the two have exchanged roles—remaining true to [the double's] own pattern—and now the word is used exclusively to identify the ghostly Double and never to label the person who has had the uncanny experience of discovering his mirror self walking about in the world" (1981: 25). The aptness with which the Double changes its role may

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<sup>13</sup> Almost all Second Self figures are men, especially in the case of twins. This may have to do with what Rank calls the "thoroughly masculine" primitive world view: "it valued only the male and its immortality" (1998: 31). John Herdman's study of the Double in nineteenth-century fiction also notices that "sisters are a rarity in this literature" (1991: 14). The critics' use of "he" in place of "they" or "she" is therefore a description of the facts, not the prescription of a rule, nor, of course, the betrayal of a bias on their part.

inconvenience Kepler's discussions, but it is precisely this mercurial nature that describes the relationship between numerous first and second selves, man and his soul included. The term is also useful for situations where several characters become doubles to one another, such as the brothers Karamazov.

Still, so many types and subtypes of the second-self or double figure present themselves that neither term can be used without careful definition and differentiation, though for comprehensive studies inclusion may prove to be necessary. There is doubling by splitting what appears to be a unitary Self into two or more components, such as in the case of Sophocles' Oedipus, in whom we witness Oedipus the patricide (supposedly of the past) at war with Oedipus the self-appointed prosecutor (of the present). The tragic hero splits up in so many different ways—Corinthian/ Theban, husband/son, father/brother, sower/seed, hunter/prey—that coming to terms with himself consumes all his energy and spirit. There is also doubling by duplicating, which is conceptualized in two opposite ways. The doubles can mirror each other so precisely they lose independent identity. Oedipus' twin sons, Eteocles and Polyneices, even cancel out each other by harboring the same ambition for their father's throne and the same ingratitude for his nurture. The doubles can also appear to be as different as night and day but complement each other to make a complete Self. An interesting example is the city of Thebes seen as a projected double of Athens in Attic tragedy. Thebes represents everything that Athens is *not*, the suppressed self that is denied acknowledgement by the Athenian consciousness. Froma I. Zeitlin calls it an "Anti-Athens," "radically contraposed" to the city in which the Theban plays are staged (1990: 132).<sup>14</sup>

Zeitlin includes all three types of doubling above under the same umbrella in her discussion of the Theban plays. In *The Bacchae*, Euripides' last staged play, the Theban king Pentheus has a demonic

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<sup>14</sup> Zeitlin includes Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* and Euripides' *Bacchae*, *The Phoenician Women*, and *The Suppliant Women* besides the Sophoclean "Theban plays": *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Antigone*, and *Oedipus at Colonus*.

double in his cousin Dionysus, who are thus complementary duplicates. But when Zeitlin sees through Dionysus' strategy "to transform Pentheus into a double of himself," she understands that Pentheus is made one with the god and his worshipers, thus truning them into identical twins. Moreover, decked out as a female bacchantic follower, Pentheus himself is "doubled (or divided) with his masculine self," creating a split double (1990: 138-39). The puritanical soul striving to free itself from the self is also doubled (or divided) with the self and therefore may be considered a split double. Opposed to each other, however, they may be considered separate entities.

The lowest common denominator, of course, is that the double should be both Self and Other at the same time. The Athenian tragedians try to make Thebes represent everything that Athens is NOT, but it turns out to be everything that it IS. Thebes thus becomes Other and Self at the same time. It takes acknowledgement of Thebes to complete Athens' self-knowledge. On the other hand, the soul as principle of life is Self, but by denying the body it becomes Other. The soul and the body appear to comprise a whole if we count the body souls as part of the physical self. For critics of the double literature, though, mere opposition or even complementarity does not make a double relationship; without a "special affinity" two or more characters are merely foils for one another. The double relationship is characterized by "inexplicable emotional reactions to each other, usually antagonism but often attraction (perhaps always, at some level, both)" (Keppler, 1972: 11). The problem with the free soul, generally equated with Homer's psyche, is that it "never has any physical or psychological attributes; it only represents the individual." Since Homer's explanations of human conduct are generally biological, his psyche does not even represent a person's individuality in dreams or in forms of unconsciousness (Bremmer, 1983: 18; Robinson, 1995: 16). Yet Bremmer warns against concluding from this absence alone that such a role for the *psyche* did not exist in Homer's time, for in Homer we only find a very special kind of dream and dream description, the "literary dream" used to further the story. I take this

as a very sensible caution, because Homer's dreams, named "message dreams" elsewhere, "cannot be taken as informing about the whole real dream- experience of the early Greeks" (1983: 19), nor of other ancient cultures.

The free soul also fails another criterion set by Keppler, who aims at a scientific definition of the "true" second self by stipulating its independent existence, that is, demonstrating its objective reality in the literary work at the very least. A split personality or alternating personality, in which there is never more than one mind or more than one body, does not yield a true second self. So the most famous of all "supposed" second-self stories, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, merely describes the internal contention of the split-personality halves (1972: 8-9). For the subjective state of the soul/self, however, "objective reality" is out of the question. I can only say that the puritanical strain I've traced from Pythagoreanism/Orphism through Platonism to Gnosticism/Manicheism emphasizes the urgency of the soul to free itself from the self. This may qualify as doubling by splitting, but when the soul displays a will of its own, the phenomenon shades into doubling by duplicating.

To approximate the soul-self drama, I find two literary figures of the ancient world particularly useful. Both characters enjoy indisputable "objective reality" in the literary work, Mesopotamian and Hellenic respectively, but both are more supernatural than natural. They play the role of an otherworldly double to a mortal subject, and both could be interpreted as the unconscious of the self. Neither, however, assures immortal survival to the self as its "guardian angel." The former, Enkidu in the Gilgamesh Cycle, restores "the natural self of man," but drives home the mortality of man instead of assuring immortality. The latter, none other than the god Dionysus in Euripides' *Bacchae*, wreaks havoc by asserting his principle of life; no signs of resurrection or restoration of Pentheus' Self flicker in view at the end of this tragedy.

## A. Gilgamesh/Enkidu

The historical Gilgamesh probably ruled in Uruk—modern Warka in central Iraq—around 2700 BC, since then stories about his heroic deeds (and some not as heroic) were told and retold for at least two millennia. The first written versions date from the turn of the second millennium, if not earlier, and fragments of these tablets are now collected in a version called the Old Babylonian, to be distinguished from the Standard Version of Ashurbanipal's time (seventh century BC), a recension of the work of a poet named Sin-leqe-unninni, who lived any time between 1600 and 1100 BC. The Standard Version was the first to be rediscovered, inscribed on twelve stone tablets with three columns on each side. Tablet XII, however, turns out to be an Akkadian rendering of the latter half of the Sumerian poem *Bilgames and the Netherworld*. The first eleven tablets tell a connected tale complete with a prologue and an epilogue that suggest the narrative to be memoirs set down by Gilgamesh himself. The Old Babylonian Version is in a fragmentary state and considerably different from the Standard Version, but will be cited when it helps fill a gap or clarify a passage in the later version.

Though two-thirds god and one-third man, Gilgamesh does not start out as a benevolent king. In fact this mixed blood may just be the source of his problems. Thomas Van Nortwick, who studies Gilgamesh, Achilles, and Aeneas as First Self figures, says of the Babylonian hero what I think may conveniently be applied to the Hellenic warrior as well: “Too powerful to have real peers among mortals, not strong enough to mix with the gods, the hero may be an isolated, lonely man” (1992: 12). Gilgamesh is one of these superhuman heroes who do not know what to do with their overwhelming energy. His subjects plead with the gods for relief from his overbearing behavior, and the divines decide to subdue him with an equal. So Enkidu is created to mirror Gilgamesh as his reflection, “his second self, stormy heart for stormy heart” (SBV, I, ii, 32-33, trans. by Sandars, 1972: 62). Speiser's verse translation from Akkadian has the gods asking for Gilgamesh's “double,” and the

goddess Aruru, said to have brought forth Gilgamesh, conceives within her a double of Anu, the father of gods. Of course the latter use of “double” only means Enkidu is made of the stuff of the supreme god. (Gilgamesh is also “[l]ike the essence of Anu.”). But there is no doubt of the physical duplication: when Enkidu enters the city of Uruk, the people marvel at him as “the spit of Gilgamesh” (Sandars, 1972: 68). In Speiser’s version:

He is like Gilgamesh *to a hair!*  
 Though shorter in stature,  
 He is stronger of bone.

The nobles rejoice as well: “For Gilgamesh, the godlike, / His equal has come forth” (OBV, II, v, 15-17; 26-27).

Though the second self as a literary figure boasts no historical development since it has not been possible to trace definite lines of influence, Enkidu is beyond doubt the earliest second self that we know of. There is no need to fit him to any definition of the Doppelgänger or the second self; on the contrary, a definition could be modeled on his relationship with his first self. The purpose of his creation could not be made clearer. He is arranged to enter Gilgamesh’s life at the moment of the latter’s “greatest vulnerability to such coming,” to rescue him from the infuriating sense of isolation that comes from feeling different from everyone else, very much like Achilles’ unquenchable rage even after killing Hector and burying Patroclus. Gilgamesh’s goddess mother Ninsun prophesies that he will love Enkidu “as a wife.” But Enkidu sails into the city not merely as a potential lover of the king’s; the man from the steppe confronts Gilgamesh as an opponent, substantiating Keppler’s characterization of the two halves of the self as sharing “a certain strange and special affinity” while at the same time harboring antagonism (1972: 11-12).

Determined to stop Gilgamesh from maltreating his subjects, Enkidu bars him from entrance to the community house where the king is to enjoy one of his nocturnal orgies, and the two grapple at their first meeting. But instead of reinforcing their enmity, this encounter commences their bonding. Like two boys who try each

other out on the first day of school, they seal their friendship at the conclusion of this match, from which Gilgamesh seems to emerge the winner, when, with his fury abated, he turns away.<sup>15</sup> By subduing Enkidu, Gilgamesh begins subduing himself. In spite of Enkidu's acknowledgment of Gilgamesh as the superior, they admire each other's strength and prowess to such an extent that after their subsequent adventures, the two invariably call each other "dear brother."

The enviable fraternity between these two hemispheres of the soul comes from both their affinity and dissimilitude, a relationship several students of the Double literature stress as "complementarity." Only a strange and special affinity could explain their embrace right after the match, a match between two apparently opposing principles of life. Gilgamesh is the fifth ruler of the first post-diluvian dynasty of Uruk on the Sumerian King-List, a decadent aristocrat of royal descent, who finds civilized life dire of challenge. Enkidu is born in the wild and lives in perfect harmony with nature, even serving as its protector, before his contact with culture. The shaggy hair all over his body brings to mind the hairy Esau of the field as opposed to the plain Jacob of the tents in Genesis. Enkidu even has long wavy hair like a woman's, but it does not turn off Gilgamesh the way Dionysus' effeminate appearance offends the "square" Pentheus. When Gilgamesh dreams of a meteor descended from heaven and then of an axe, they attract him as if with the love of woman. On the other hand, the harlot who directs Enkidu to the city predicts that he will love Gilgamesh like himself. The first and the second selves are drawn to each other like two of the opposite sex.

One additional role of Enkidu's, as interpreter of dreams for

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<sup>15</sup> Sandars has Enkidu thrown over with a turn (1972: 69). Speiser leaves the score in doubt: "As Gilgamesh bent the knee— / His foot on the ground— / His fury abated / And he turned away"(OBV, II, vi, 24-27). But Enkidu seems to acknowledge defeat in his subsequent praise of Gilgamesh. Heidel infers from the fact that Gilgamesh has his foot planted on the ground that he's won the match (1949: 32; see also 1949: 6).

Gilgamesh on the eve of fighting Humbaba—the monster of the Cedar Forest—seems to place him in the role of the unconscious, contraposed to Gilgamesh as the conscious. Enkidu favors all three of the king's dreams with positive interpretation, claiming that the Sun god Shamash will grant them victory, even though his initial response to Gilgamesh's suggestion of killing Humbaba has been negative. Having been fashioned by a goddess from supremely divine essence, gifted with a power to interpret divine will, and entering Gilgamesh's life in a supernatural manner, Enkidu plays an advisory role in his relationship with the hero. This is hardly compatible with the role assigned him by Rank—in which he serves as Gilgamesh's mortal part—especially when Rank's Gilgamesh proves to be equally mortal. Rank trusts Gilgamesh to have created Enkidu “the way that God created mankind (awakening him from the dead),” but cites an episode from Peter Jensen's *Der Gilgamesh-Epos in der Weltliteratur* about an apparition of the dead Enkidu announcing Gilgamesh's death and killing him (1998: 72-73).

The versions within my access only tell of Enkidu's death as a punishment for the murder of the Bull of Heaven. His deathbed speech is anything but uplifting. In his role as destined surrogate for Gilgamesh, Enkidu does not hold out a positive prospect for the afterlife. And cradling Enkidu's head in his arm for days on end, until a worm drops out of his nose, Gilgamesh realizes to his horror, “Am I not like him? Must I lie down too, / Never to rise, ever again?” (SBV, X, ii, 15-16, trans. by Dalley, 1991: 101).

Though the only reason given by the god Enlil for the choice of Enkidu for death is that “Gilgamesh . . . shall not die [for the murder],” the motif of sacrificing one twin for the founding of a city is present. The inglorious, painful death of his companion drives Gilgamesh on a search for an escape, and when the reality of his mortal nature is forced on him, he comes back to Uruk to have its wall built, and to engrave all his toils “on a memorial monument of stone” (SBV, I, i, 9-10, trans. by Dalley, 1991: 50). This may be the only sense in which Gilgamesh gains immortality, for even when the goddess Ishtar offers him her hand and thus grants him a degree of

immortality, the hero envisions nothing but humiliation and destruction at the hands of the divine. It may not be entirely insignificant to learn that in Mesopotamian poems the “hand of god” means disease. Sin-leqe-unninni has left us a memorable sketch of the Second Self as soul mate, and his function of assuring immortality to the self, though not necessarily automatic, can be confirmed with a certain amount of oblique interpretation. Granting the toils and deeds recorded by Gilgamesh on the stone do aim to remind his people of the hollowness of mortal fame and the certainty of death, he may still qualify as Rank’s hero who works for his immortality by creating lasting achievements. Yet not all Second Selves before Plato play as supportive a role as Enkidu, as we shall see in the case of Dionysus.

## B. Pentheus/Dionysus

As a literary character of Euripides’ creation (in *The Bacchae*, staged posthumously in 405 BC), Dionysus is almost contemporaneous with Plato, but the god owes his origin to ancient oriental myths. Formidable brows may be raised at the idea of reducing the god to a second self of his mortal cousin, Pentheus the young king of Thebes. Yet Dionysus is too enigmatic and powerful to act as a simple foil figure. Besides, though Dionysus “tends to be in the foreground of the reader’s attention” like most first-self figures, it is Pentheus’ viewpoint that is more accessible to the reader. Pentheus is undoubtedly “the relatively naïve self, naïve at least in tending to suppose that he is the whole self, for he seldom has any conscious knowledge, until it is forced upon him, of any other self involved in his make-up.” Dionysus, on the other hand, “is the intruder from the background of shadows, and however prominent he may become he always tends to remain half-shadowed; he is much more likely to have knowledge of his foreground counterpart than the latter of him, but the exact extent and source of his knowledge, like the exact nature of his motivation, are always left in comparative obscurity.” He is indeed “the self that has been left behind, or overlooked, or unrealized, or otherwise excluded from the first self’s self-conception” (Keppler,

1972: 3, 11). But this inscrutably divine, or rather dæmonic, second self vindicates himself by vanquishing the first self with such a vengeance that he has been compared to the id standing for libidinal release reacting against the repressive superego that is Pentheus. Together, the two comprise “the mind of man” (Rogers, 1970: 64-67).

Dionysus has been noted for his elusive characteristics—as the Other, the outsider, sexually ambivalent, transformative (Easterling, 1997: 37). He is also known as the god who dies from dismemberment by the Titans and then returns to life because his heart was left undevoured by the murderers. This Orphic Dionysus is seen on a vase as assisting at the initiation of one follower who looks exactly like the god himself. Detienne describes this rite as Dionysus’ initiation of himself into his own mysteries, and thus a division of his own otherness in two. His most ferocious defenders trust that the initiated become Dionysus himself by shedding their humanity. For his detractors, “the so-called passion of Dionysus is reduced to a late legend plagiarized from the pitiful death of Osiris, and the mysteries of the god could only offer his poor initiates a few hours’ respite from the tedium of their daily existence” (1979: 68-69).

Pentheus can very well be an initiate of Dionysus’, resistant at first but submissive, or rather possessed, before long. The sinewy youth who champions order and ironhanded rule succumbs to the wavy-haired suave god disguised as a votary of himself but wearing that perpetual smiling “mask of Dionysus.” Before Pentheus is led away to Citharon for sacrifice, he allows Dionysus to dress him like one of the Bacchantes and looks in the mirror to see if he resembles his aunt Ino or his own mother Agave, both of whom have joined “the dance on the hill.” (“So much alike / I almost might be seeing one of them,” Dionysus assures him.) Guiding Pentheus to his own destruction by distracting his wits, Dionysus seems to assume the role of the Titans who divert the attention of baby Dionysus with sundry toys, and who strike while the child is marveling at its own probably distorted image in a shining metal mirror. The primary difference is that while Dionysus is resurrected from death, Pentheus seems to go

the way of the Titans, with no hope of physical, spiritual, or metaphysical revivification. Like his other cousin Labdacus, whose famous son Laius marries Pentheus' equally well-known granddaughter Jocasta, eventually having the celebrated tragic hero Oedipus as their son, the Theban family is headed for annihilation according to Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*, a pronouncement confirmed by the mutual fratricide of Oedipus' twin sons. Zeitlin describes the fortune of this autochthonic dynasty as following a regressive mode she names the "eternal return"—a return to zero (1990: 150-167).

Detienne, along with H. Jeanmaire, objects to a confusion of the ancient Dionysiac ritual, in which the god acts as the sacrificer unleashing the violence of his Bacchantes in the *diasparagmós*, with the mythic tale in which he becomes the sacrificed victim of a raging band of Titans (1979: 72). This confusion—if indeed it is one—hardly surprises the god's biographers because he is apt to change roles, and he usually does so dialectically. Ready to clothe Pentheus in the bacchantic outfit the youthful king is to die in, Dionysus predicts to his Maenads that the man shall come to know the ambivalent nature of the god's character.

Dionysus, son of Zeus, consummate god,  
most terrible, and yet most gentle, to mankind. (Euripides,  
1959: II, 860-861)<sup>16</sup>

An Orphic hymn sings of the "two-formed, two-horned" god, with various names and attributes. As to his ever-present mask, Jean-Pierre Vernant decides that it disguises the god as much as it proclaims his identity (qtd. by Su, 2003: 2). When the god mocks Pentheus for not knowing who he himself is, we recognize the lesson of self-knowledge like the one taught to Oedipus in Sophocles' play, but what does Dionysus' self-knowledge teach us?

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<sup>16</sup> All subsequent quotations from *The Bacchae* will be from Arrowsmith's translation.

*Dionysus*

I give you sober warning, fools:  
place no chain on *me*.

*Pentheus*

But I say: chain him.  
And *I* am the stronger here.

*Dionysus*

You do not know  
the limits of your strength. You do not know  
what you do. You do not know who you are.

*Pentheus*

I am Pentheus, the son of Echion and Agave.

*Dionysus*

Pentheus: you shall repent that name.(ll. 503-08)

D. M. Epstein, following Dodds' commentary, points out the pun on Pentheus' name *Pentheus* and the word for sorrow, *pénthos* (1998: 224). And Dionysus is not the first one to recognize this connection. Teiresias already warns the king's grandfather, Cadmus, that his house may someday "repent of Pentheus / in its sufferings" and prays to the god that "no awful vengeance strike from heaven" (ll. 367; 360-63). Dodds finds this scene pathetic, for the old man might as well be praying to unpitying natural forces (1960: 116). Like Enkidu, Dionysus appears to be patently natural as well as supernatural, but while the former educates by selfless companionship, the latter mocks with his ruthless power. Psychologically speaking, both represent the instinctual drives of the man, yet one is the restorative and the other the diabolic double. Granting that Pentheus lacks the *sophia* that imparts a "firm awareness of one's own nature and therefore of one's place in the scheme of things," Arrowsmith asks what is Dionysus' *sophia* in this play but a "knowing animal cunning of the practiced hunter, the cool eye and feline skill of . . . stalking his intended victim"? The Asian Bacchantes may see Pentheus' *sophia* as "that of (mere) cleverness: the quick, articulate, argumentative, shallow cleverness of the trained sophist (1959: 533)," but does Dionysus win

us over with his derisive smile?

The Chorus ostensibly bow to this power; in Stasimon Three they engage Pentheus in an imaginary interrogation, resenting his persecution of the bacchantic celebrants:

What is wisdom? What gift of the gods  
is held in honor like this:  
to hold your hand victorious  
over the heads of those you hate?  
Honor is precious forever. (ll. 877-81)<sup>17</sup>

If the Chorus question Pentheus' wisdom in keeping a strong hand over his enemy's head and thus determine that his triumph will not be permanent, can't this charge be brought against the gods who claim to be the source of wisdom? In fact Dodds notes that the Chorus approves the wisdom of Dionysus in entrapping Pentheus because to punish an enemy is a privilege to which one is honorably entitled. Dodds senses a hint of uneasiness in this position, which the Chorus attempt to sustain in the latter part of the play. And "how far the poet himself sympathized, or expected his audience to sympathize, with the sentiments of the Chorus, we are on difficult and disputed ground" (1960: 182-188). René Girard's deduction in his chapter on Dionysus helps elucidate the precarious balance (or imbalance?) the Chorus strives to maintain: "Violence will come to an end only after it has had the last word and that word has been accepted as divine" (1977: 135). Otherwise, unanimous violence against the sacrificial victim chosen by the god will veer back to reciprocal violence, where everyone becomes his opponent's double, and a sacrificial crisis ensues.

The prophet Teiresias, who points out Oedipus' lack of self-knowledge in the Sophoclean play, here justifies the Dionysiac

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<sup>17</sup> My reading of this passage as an imagined query for Pentheus is endorsed by W. E. Blake in *Mnemosyne*, 361ff, gracefully acknowledged by Dodds to be ingenious but not entirely unproblematic.

worship by explaining that we actually pour out the god of wine himself when we pour libations, “that through his intercession man may win / the favor of heaven” (ll. 283-86). On the other hand, however, Euripides makes it clear that what Dionysus does is to quench his own rage by targeting Pentheus as the surrogate victim. Having changed into the costume prepared by Dionysus, and touched ritualistically on the head, waist, and feet by the god, Pentheus turns into a sacrificial beast, destined to play out his role as scapegoat, as Dionysus’ decree makes clear:

You and you alone will suffer for your city.  
A great ordeal awaits you. But you are worthy  
of your fate. I shall lead you safely there;  
someone else shall bring you back. (ll. 963-66)

Since Pentheus is carried back to Thebes by his mother and grandfather, a wreck beyond recognition, it is hard to imagine an *anagnorisis* on his part. His only epiphany is the strange vision granted by Dionysus: once prepared as a sacrifice, he immediately sees double, and the god appears to be a bull to him. Girard calls this vision the monstrous double, for “doubles are always monstrous, and duality is always an attribute of monsters” (1977: 162).

I seem to see two suns blazing in the heavens.  
and now two Thebes, two cities, and each  
with seven gates. And you—you are a bull  
who walks before me there. Horns have sprouted  
from your head. Have you always been a beast?  
But now I see a bull. (ll. 918-22)

Dionysus commends the youth for seeing the god as he really is, now that the young man is no longer blinded with hostility. And this means the god is a beast just like the man. Two bulls locking horns at one of the seven gates of Thebes like the twin sons of Oedipus who kill off each other? If Pentheus’ line dies out without issue, what happens to Dionysus’? After all these two are in the same family.

#### IV. Conclusion

Rank has admitted that even in the Greek tradition, a new religion of immortality had come into being—the deification of the hero.

This idea of a self-creative power attributed to certain individuals signified a decisive step beyond the naïve belief in an automatic survival of one's own double, in that it impressed upon man the conviction that he has to work for his immortality by creating lasting achievements. (1958: 98-99)

That is, to achieve immortality, one has to prove himself exceptional, like Gilgamesh, Achilles, Odysseus, Oedipus, or even the Biblical Jacob. At the same time, however, all these heroes stand out for their capacity, and nobility, in accepting their status as mere mortals. Which brings us back to Rank's insight into "man's eternal conflict with himself and others, the struggle between his need for likeness and his desire for difference."

Thus the dual nature of the double proves to be eternal. It is never possible to pin down an individual psyche or its projection as either angelic or devilish, not to mention the collective soul. One of C. G. Jung's major archetypal symbols, the shadow, is described by himself as "that hidden, repressed, for the most part inferior and guilt-ridden personality." On closer investigation, however, Jung decides that "the unconscious man, that is, his shadow, does not consist only of morally reprehensible tendencies, but also displays a number of good qualities, such as normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, creative impulses, etc" (1968: 266). It is a mythological name for all that's within us of which we cannot directly know. Hallam infers from this that the personal shadow is not necessarily repulsive; it may appear in a more or less neutral aspect, representing the "unlived portion of the personality." His conclusion is that "the form of the shadow and his relative wickedness depends on the nature and on the intensity of the individual's repressions: that

is, the more repressed the more 'alien' the shadow will appear when projected into the world" (1981: 17).

This argument agrees in main with John Herdman's theory of moral reversals. Herdman, while exploring the psychological and theological background of the Double motif, attributes the generally gloomy aspect of Romantic and twentieth-century Doubles to the departure from orthodox Christian theology on the part of the occultists that flourished in the centuries after Christ. Most prominent among these are the Gnostic "Spirituals," who, with their claim to the possession of a saving knowledge (*gnosis*), denied and suppressed all natural impulses and the darker sides of the personality. Deriving solely from individual revelation, the Gnostic faith turned self-centered rather than God-centered. Such groups continued into the Middle Ages, and, Herdman ventures to argue, lived on in the extremes of Reformation theology. "Persons given to just such a view of themselves, we will find, are subject in the fiction of the Romantic period to astonishing moral reversals, and it is precisely in this kind of soil that the double pre-eminently flourishes" (1991: 5-7).

Herdman thinks it likely that the Gnostic sects, emerging towards the end of the first century AD on the fringes of Christianity, had their origins in pre-Christian ways of thought. They saw the divisions between good and evil, God and the Devil more starkly than did orthodox Catholic theology. All systems of Gnostic belief reject the material world because it cannot be the creation of the supreme hidden God, "but of an evil or ignorant demiurge, or of a series of intermediate creators." In order to explain the existence of evil, "the Gnostics postulated the existence of a system of spiritual beings, or 'aeons', through whose sin or shortcomings the world came into being." This pantheon owes its origin, according to Sandars, to none other than the Babylonian gods (1972: 46).

One of the two major sources of influence on Plato via the Pythagorean school, briefly traced in Section II, was the Orphic myths, which are suspected to have directly influenced Gnostic mythology. Koester thinks it equally possible for the latter to have derived from the "analogous appropriation of oriental myths" (1982: 161).

Whichever holds true, the descent of Gnostic dualism from the Babylonian pantheon seems highly probable. Parallel to the Greek Olympus, in the oriental Heaven were to be found the sky gods; and earth, the other major component of the universe, was a flat disk consisting of the surface of the earth and the space below “where dwelt the dead and the chthonic deities” (Kramer, 1972: xiv). Unlike the Old Testament, in which “the realm of the dead is controlled by the same God who rules over heaven and earth,” the Mesopotamian underworld had its own pantheon (Heidel, 1949: 222). Rank notes that in sexual-era cultures other than the one revealed by the Elohist of Genesis, what he calls the will-god “splits into its original components, gods of the upper world and the underworld, in whom paternal and maternal principles are again sundered as are immortal and mortal souls” (1998: 104). In Mesopotamian mythology, even the sky gods were dualistic, both benign and dangerous at the same time. The kindly and just Sun god Shamash could be terrible; Ishtar the goddess of Love was beautiful and possibly gracious, but to the Babylonians her aspect as “lady of sorrows and of battles” was more familiar. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh* she is simply willful, spiteful, and altogether destructive (Sandars, 1972: 24-26).

The underworld was ruled over by a monstrous creature named Kur, who carried off the sky goddess Ereshkigal presumably for his bride, a counterpart of the Greek Persephone. Ereshkigal was a terrifying being, sometimes called the elder sister of Ishtar, and for her there was no spring-time return to earth (Sandars, 1972: 26-27).<sup>18</sup> Her attendants included monster-shaped demons, some of whom guarded the gates on the seven walls of *Urugal*, “the great city” of the underworld, and others spread disease and suffering among mankind like the plague-god Namtar, Ereshkigal’s vizier. Both Sandars and Heidel are fairly impressed by the appearance of the demons in the mid-seventh-century BC story named “A Prince’s Vision of the

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<sup>18</sup> It is Tammuz the vegetation god, ex-husband of Ishtar, who descends to the underworld each autumn and returns in the spring (see p.238 above). His worship is referred to in Ezekiel (8: 14).

Underworld” (Heidel, 1949: 132-136). Their composite anatomy reminds Heidel of Egyptian demonology, though Egyptians obviously entertained a much rosier view of the afterlife. Sandars decides these monsters of the dark apocalypse must have haunted men’s minds then and long after, for “they reappear continually on sealstones and ivories and carved rock-faces; and they have survived through the medium of medieval religious iconography and in heraldry into the modern world” (1972: 27).

Our contemporaries are often surprised to hear that Socrates was accompanied and prompted by a “dæmon,” and even more surprised to hear that the form “*daimonion*,” in the sense of “something divine,” was used by Plato and Xenophon alike, its root *daio* (to “divide” or “apportion”) originally denoting a divine being. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia* entry on “Demons,” W. H. Kent observes that the word was occasionally applied to the higher gods and goddesses, but more often to spiritual beings of a lower order, who were mostly beneficent and rarely malignant (2003: 1). The fact, however, that there was *eudaimonia* (“happiness”) as well as *kakodaimonia* (“misfortune,” or “being possessed by an evil demon”) in the Greek language shows the word was more or less neutral, akin perhaps to something like “luck.” This can be confirmed by Dodds, who judges from the high antiquity of the adjective *daemōnios* that the use of the word daemon among Greeks is very old, and its primitive sense had faded by the time of Homer. Originally a personal “Apportioner,” it evolved into an impersonal “luck.” When the fighter Teucer cries out that a daemon is thwarting him (*Iliad* XV, 461ff), he merely means that some unidentifiable power has made something happen. Dodds cites E. Ehnmark as stating that “similar vague language in reference to the supernatural was commonly used by Greeks at all periods, not out of skepticism, but simply because they could not identify the particular god concerned.” Dodds also draws material from Lévy-Bruhl’s *Primitives and the Supernatural* to prove this word is also commonly used by the primitive peoples, whether for the same reason or because they lack the idea of personal gods (1957: 11-13, 23).

Kent thinks it was only natural for the New Testament writers and the early church fathers to restrict the word to its sinister sense, “now that even the higher gods of the Greeks had come to be regarded as devils.” The point is, even the higher gods could have been viewed with foreboding by pre-Christian, even pre-Platonic Greeks. The Iliadic Zeus, whose will moves toward its end against all odds, makes certain that not only the Trojan but also the Achaean soldiers fight to the end irrespective of their own desires. He can even send Agamemnon a deceptive dream that costs “grief / and wounds from shock of combat in the field, / alike for Trojans and Achaeans” (II, 38-40, trans. by Fitzgerald, 1974). No wonder the commander-in-chief blames Zeus—and a few other deities—for visiting him with the divine temptation or infatuation (*atē*) that has led him to seize Achilles’ mistress for himself:

Not I, not I was the cause of this act, but Zeus and my portion and the Erinys who walks in darkness: they it was who in the assembly put wild *atē* in my understanding, on that day when I arbitrarily took Achilles’ prize from him. So what could I do? Deity will always have its way. (XIX, 86 ff., trans. By Dodds, 1957: 3)

Deity in general, as we see, is here responsible for the temporary clouding or bewildering of man’s normal consciousness—a partial and temporary insanity, in fact. Zeus and Moira and Erinys take the blame just like the common external, “dæmonic” agency to whose intervention the Greeks could ascribe all sorts of mental as well as physical events.

What’s note worthy is that the daemon is often used as a monition whose presence signals harm. Dodds notes that when a supernatural being intervenes in a harmful way, “he is usually called *δαίμων*, not *θεός*” (1957: 23). After the *Odyssey*, and before even the *Oresteia*, the dæmon grew more and more insidious. In *Agamemnon*, Cassandra sees the Erinyes as a troupe of dæmons. The haunted atmosphere in Aeschylus’ plays strikes many as infinitely older than that of Homer. Thus the playwright was called “ce revenant de

Mycènes” by G. Glotz and credited with reviving “the world of the demons, and especially the evil demons” by K. Deichgraber. Dodds, who quotes both authors, argues that Aeschylus did not have to revive the world of the dæmons; he was born into such a world and aimed to bring his fellow-country-men out of it. Theognis of the sixth century BC already looked upon the dæmon as no less than an evil spirit who deliberately tempted man to his damnation. The word retained its sinister connotation up to as late as 330 BC (1957: 40-41).

Contrary to Rank’s impression, the historical view entertained by Glotz and Deichgraber, cited above, looks on the age before Homer as the darker, more oppressive one—as the age of evil dæmons. Keppler seems to see this hostile atmosphere as reaching even further back in time, and even more universal in scope. He affirms that “to the primitive mind a spirit is seldom benignant but just the reverse. (1972: 16)” And since a human would not have the numinous power to produce something as strange as twins, the father of one twin must be a spirit, who chooses to spread its evil influence into the community by way of the twin. This explains what Harris calls the Great Fear of the twins. Only when men’s attitude toward the spirit world becomes more complex does the possibility enter that there are good spirits as well as bad, and twins begin to be looked on with favor, as symbols of fertility for instance. Yet such favor is still mixed with fear: twins are almost always viewed as uncanny in ancient civilizations (Keppler, 1972: 16-17).

I know of no infallible means of verifying Keppler’s argument that the primitive spirit was mostly malicious. In the concluding chapter of *Psychology and the Soul*, Rank reiterates his doubt, expressed as early as 1929, about Freud’s determinism. The master’s causal principle, “applied in a naïve ‘physical’ way to the psychic,” led to extreme inflexibility when quantum mechanics was already recognizing an “indeterminacy” in atomic process through consideration of the influence of the observer. I would like to borrow Rank’s discreet statements here to conclude my study of the ancient soul-belief:

Thus it seems that in physics as in psychology, freedom increases as one goes from groups to elements, and increases all the more as we minutely examine those components. Psychologically speaking, this means that the further we go toward the individual and the more we analyze his or her components, the less tenable is strict causal determinism and *the more freedom we must grant to decisive personal elements*. (1998: 115, italics mine)

Rank makes it clear that he did not consider the causal principle “false”; he merely saw its inadequacy for our consciousness, “because psychological understanding has undermined its heuristic value” (1998: 111-13). Similarly, this paper does not reverse Rank’s view of history to insist on a generally negative role of the ancient double. What it does is to acknowledge our inability to draw a line between an entirely positive and an entirely negative aspect of the same entity. When the appearance of the Romantic Second Self seals death for the First Self, it could point to the Christian emphasis on the holistic personality. A split of the soul from the body means death because they are inseparable in the first place. The development of the human soul and its role as a second self is multi-faceted and should not be oversimplified. If a multiplicity of beliefs coexist in contemporary cultures, why should ancient cultures be otherwise, when their communication could not have been as free as ours today? If a basically beneficent, immortal Christian God could assign souls to damnation for the sake of justice, why was there no fear of punishment or sense of insecurity under an often turbulent reign of capricious and possibly mortal deities? Isn’t it more likely that a more than tenuous continuity extends from the earliest pantheon we know in the Mesopotamia through the Orphic, Pythagorean, even Platonic modifications to Gnostic dualism? Isn’t a suggestion of evil always around and within us—and isn’t there a commensurate faith in its opposite? Were the primitives simple enough to consistently trust their immortality to the elusive soul? What was this immortality like, did they ever wonder like us?

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## 以靈魂為第二我——由遠古至柏拉圖

鄭秀瑕

### 摘要

第一位研究早期希臘靈魂觀的現代學者羅德 (Erwin Rhode) 認為古希臘人常將靈魂當作個人的第二我。德國心理學家藍克 (Otto Rank) 回溯世紀前的靈魂觀，更進一步簡化第二我所扮演的角色。藍克認為基督教會出現之前的第二我全是主體的護衛天使，確保自我之永存不朽。教會對來世的詮釋強調地獄天堂之分，使第二我淪為不祥的使者，甚至成為魔鬼的分身，功能在於提醒主體生命之必朽，且經常帶來死亡。

以教會的來世觀作為「第二我」正負兩面的分水嶺其實問題重重。一來「第二我」由遠古至現代都極多變，這個角色在古代文學中絕非全然友善；二來世紀前的來世觀並不比教會所呈現的更加樂觀。蘇美與荷馬史詩所呈現的來世幾乎毫無盼望，柏拉圖之前的靈魂也並非不朽。許多資料顯示古代人對靈界懼多於信。

本文前半討論古代靈魂觀與來世觀的多面性。後半則深入探討古代文化中靈魂作為第二我的可能性；為了更深刻呈現靈魂與主體之間的互動，並選取柏拉圖之前兩個趨近靈魂角色的文學人物，來印證古代的第二我往往兼含正負面功能。這兩個角色分別來自蘇美史詩《吉爾梅遜》和希臘悲劇《戴神女祭司》，都是遠在柏拉圖之前即廣為流傳的神話人物。

**關鍵詞：**靈魂、第二我、荷馬史詩、蘇美史詩《吉爾梅遜》、《戴神女祭司》