ARTICLE

The Four Zoas: New Text for Pages 5, 6, & 7, Night the First

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Andrew Lincoln's demonstration that FZ 143 is not necessarily later than FZ 7 is fully persuasive. I have now looked once more at the manuscript and can see that my previous misconstruction of the sequence of revisions had prevented me from recognizing what constituted the proper final text. It had also given me misleading clues that distracted me from deciphering two of the heavily erased words. I can now see that "Serpent" is the original reading in 7:10 as well as in 143:4 and 143:8—and that the second reading in 143:8 is "female". The evidence is hence clear that the final variants in page 143 constitute a layer of revision intermediate between the first readings of that page and the final readings of page 7. And it is impressively evident that the second "half" of the creature that is half woman and half something else, in 7:23 and 143:4, begins as a serpent and ends as a spectre, with this sequence of metamorphoses:

Half Woman & half Serpent²,¹⁴³ / beast¹⁴³ / Spectre²

But what does this sequence establish in the other variants on these pages?

HYPOTHESIS 1: That the movement from serpent to beast to spectre is a spiral, the spectre evolving as a higher kind of serpent.

If this is true, then unchanged terms in page 7 should apply first to serpent and finally to spectre. The "scaly armour" of 7:25 and 143:6 (1st rdg) belongs to serpent and finally to spectre; the "rocky features" of 143:6 2nd rdg belong only to the beast. The "brightness" of 7:21 remains unchanged but shifts in 143:2 to "darkness" for the beast. The combination of woman and serpent or spectre is a "monster"; the combination of woman and beast is a "wonder"; it has "rocky features" and "darkly waving colours" rather than the "lovely changing colours" of the "monster". The somewhat anomalous shift from "Serpent voice" to "female voice" in 143:8 seems to make both halves female: that voice is given to "warbling"; but in page 7 the voice, whether of Serpent or of Spectre (first and final readings), keeps to "incessant wailing".

HYPOTHESIS 2: That the movement is from "Serpent" and/or "Spectre" to "beast".

In that case (assumed to be true by Bentley and Erdman) the changes introduced by the second readings of page 143, when treated as revisions to page 7 (as in the Doubleday text), produce final readings that are inconsistent with the context established in pages 5 and 6, where "Spectre" is the latest reading. (Keynes avoided such confusion by keeping page 143 separate as an "additional fragment"; but then neither Keynes nor Bentley unearthed the "beast," being lost in a misreading of that word as "desert"). (For a demonstration deducing hypothesis 2 from the fact that "brightness" and "scaly armour" et cetera are unchanged in page 7, see Bentley, "The Composition and Growth of Vala," in his 1963 facsimile edition, p. 160, fn. 4.)

The changes required in the Doubleday text and textual notes (pp. 299-300 and 740-42) and also in the Longmans text (pp. 298-99) can be spelled out in the Doubleday format as follows:

Doubleday page 299. PAGE 5. After line 43 add ten lines as follows:

What have I done! said Enion accursed wretch! What deed.
Is this a deed of Love I know what I have done. I know
Too late now to repent. Love is changed to deadly Hate
[All] life is blotted out & I alone remain possessed with Fears
I see the Shadow of the dead within my Soul wandering in darkness & solitude forming Seas of Doubt & rocks of Repentance
Already are my Eyes reverted, all that I behold
Within my Soul has lost its splendor & a brooding Fear
Shadows me o'er & drives me outward to a world of woe
So waild she trembling before her own Created Phantasm

PAGE 6. After line 8 add ten lines as follows:
(no extra space):
The Spectre thus spoke. Who art thou Diminutive husk & shell
If thou hast sinned & art polluted know that I am pure
And unpolluted & will bring to rigid strict account
All thy past deeds [So] hear what I tell thee! mark it well! remember!
This world is Thine in which thou dwellest that within thy soul
That dark & dismal infinite where Thought roams up & down
Is Mine & there thou goest when with one Sting of my tongue Envenomd thou rollst inwards to the place whence I emergd

She trembling answerd Wherefore was I born & what am I
I thought to weave a Covering for my Sins from wrath of Tharmas

PAGE 7. Without a space, insert the following seven lines at the beginning:
I thought Tharmas a Sinner & I murdered his Emanations
His secret loves & Graces Ah me wretched What have I done
For now I find that all those Emanations were my Childrens Souls
And I have murdered them with Cruelty above atonement
Those that remain have fled from my cruelty into the desarts
And thou the delusive tempter to these deeds sittest before me
In this thy world not mine tho dark I feel my world within

After a space, replace the 14 lines of text with the following six:
Mingling his horrible brightness with her tender limbs; then high she soar'd Above the ocean; a bright wonder [that] Nature [shudder'd at]
Half Woman & half Spectre, all his lovely changing colours mix

With her fair crystal clearness; in her lips & cheeks his poisons rose In blushes like the morning, and his scaly armour softening A monster lovely in the heavens or wandering on the earth.

PAGE 8 follows, with no extra space.

These changes in the text necessitate the following changes in the Textual Notes, pages 740-43:

740-41: delete everything from "Ten deleted lines follow" through "line it would replace"; insert the following:

Lines 44-53 were cancelled by three diagonal strokes but then circled in ink for restoration to the text. (For a convincing demonstration that such circling, on pages 5-7 and not found elsewhere, was intended to bring the circled lines back "in," see Andrew Lincoln in (this issue of) Blake.

46 Love is changed to . . . Hate? Alone

Possessed by . . . Fears 1st rdg del
47 All life] [All] <a> life my rdg; the erasure of "All" was evidently a slip; Blake never used the phrase "a life" in the meaning it would have here.
48 Shadow . . . Soul] remembrance . . . eyes 1st rdg del
49 Doubt . . . Repentance] Trouble . . . sorrow 1st rdg del
53 There follow a penciled insert and a deleted line it would replace:

Revise the central line on p. 741 to read: "After line 8 follow 17 lines deleted by diagonal strokes and a grey wash:" and then delete everything after the 17th line, ending "manifest," to the end of the note (i.e. from "The Spectre thus spoke" through "wrath of Tharmas"). Insert the following page 6 notes:

Lines 9-19 were deleted by diagonal strokes but then restored by a circling ink line.
9-10 Who art thou . . . shell] An insertion, with this continuation (later deleted) up the right margin:
Broke from thy bonds I scorn my prison I scorn & yet I love
The insertion before deletion was to replace this 1st rdg:

Art thou not my slave & shalt thou dare To smite me with thy tongue beware lest I sting also thee

10-12 If thou . . . past deeds] inserted over erasure.
12 So] conjectural reading of strokes imperfectly inked.
13 Thine] Mine 1st rdg del
15 Mine] mended from thine
The Spectre is crowding Enion into the outer world while he invades the infinite within.
16 whence I emergd] of death & hell 1st rdg del;
where 2nd rdg del
17 A deleted line follows:
A sorrow & a fear a living torment & naked Victim
18 for my] for his 1st rdg del
Replace all of the "PAGE 7 (7 143)" note, up through the fifth printed line at the top of p. 743, with the following:

PAGE 7
Page 7 is a thicket of erased and deleted original and additional lines. The top block of 9 added lines has been deleted, then restored by an ink circle, then heavily revised; the last of these (line 7 in the present text) is so crossed out and mended that to restore it Blake has written "This line to come in" alongside it. The lower half of the page consists of original copperplate writing, with some mending and some deletion of lines. The undeleted original lines appear also on p 143 (a

smaller leaf but neatly written as if begun as fair copy, perhaps of a draft preceding the large copperplate pages) and are there revised. Until recently it has been assumed that the revisions of p 143 were later than the final text of p 7, but Andrew Lincoln argues convincingly that the final revisions on p 7 are later than those on p 143.

1] Preceded by two lines, mended and then heavily cancelled after Blake's encircling:
Examining the sins of Tharmas I
[have] <soon>
found my own
0 slay me not thou art his Wrath embodied in
Deceit
2] An inserted line.
3 For] But 1st rdg del

Under lines 1-3 and the preceding cancelled lines are three erased lines in Blake's usual hand, the last

[Here retain the Doubleday textual note, from "word of the 1st line" through "globe self balanc'd"; replace the remainder of the note with the following:]

6] Among wild beasts to roam And thou the delusive tempter 1st rdg del, followed by two cancelled lines:

[But where is]<Thou art not>-<And art thou>Tharmas
all thy Soft delusive beauty cannot

Tempt me to murder [honest love]<my own soul> &
wipe my tears & smile

7 not mine tho] for ah! how 1st rdg del
Six cancelled lines follow, after a stanza break:
The Spectre said Thou sinful Woman. was it
that I should hide thee with my power & delight thee with my beauty
now my darkest in my presence, never from my sight
Tempt me to murder [honest love]<my own soul> &
wipe my tears & smile

That I should hide thee with my power & delight
thou with my beauty
And now thou darkest in my presence. never
from my sight
Shalt thou depart to weep in secret. In my
jealous wings
I evermore will hold thee when thou goest out
or comest in
After another stanza break, we return to the original copperplate text, beginning with three deleted lines:

Thus they contended all the day among the Caves of Tharmas
Twisting in fearful forms & howling <howling
harsh shrieking>
<howling>harsh shrieking, mingling their bodies
join in burning anguish
Page 143 begins with a variant of the last line:
<Opening his rifled rocks> mingling [their
bodies] together they join in burning anguish

(The rocks accord with the "rocky features" of the "beast" of the middle version; see below.)

8 horrible] 1st and 3rd rdg. del but not erased, p 7, only rdg p 143; terrible 2nd rdg erased p 7
brightness] p 7, 1st rdg del p 143; darkness 2nd rdg p 143
9 Above the ocean; p 7; Shrieking above the ocean: p 143; on p 7 "Shrieking" is inserted before the line but then deleted. Nature] 1st rdg del and 3rd rdg p 7; Beulah 2nd rdg del p 7; "that" and "shudder'd at" are cancelled but not replaced on p 7; p 143 reads "that nature shuddered at".
10 Spectre] 2nd rdg p 7; Serpent 1st rdg del p 7, 1st rdg p 143; beast 2nd rdg p 143 lovely changing] p 7 and 1st rdg del p 143; darkly waving 2nd rdg p 143
11 poisons] p 7 and 1st rdg del p 143; metals 2nd rdg p 143
12 scaly armour] p 7 and 1st rdg del p 143; rocky features 2nd rdg p 143 softening] softning p 143
13 monster] p 7 and 1st rdg del p 143; wonder 2nd rdg p 143 wandering] wandering p 143
Page 143 continues:
With [Serpent]-female> voice <warbling upon the [hills'] & hollow vales>
Beauty all blushing with desire a Self enjoying wonder
(The insertions are written on top of almost illegible erasures, but the p and s of "Serpent" have left traces in precisely the right places.) Page 7 continues with three deleted lines:
With [Serpent]-Spectre voice incessant wailing; in incessant thirst
Beauty all blushing with desire mocking her fell despair
[space]
Wandering desolate, a wonder abhorr'd by Gods & Men
The revision to "Spectre" suggests that p 143 was put aside before these lines on p 7 were deleted. Page 143 originally continued, after a stanza break:

Tis thou hast darkend all My World O Woman lovely bane
And thus her voice; <Glory, delight, & sweet enjoyment born>
To wander in <sweet>solitude-enrapturd-at every wind

(And thus her voice)