

A RECONSIDERATION OF OA THE EARTH GODDESS IN WILLIAM GOLDING'S *THE INHERITORS*

There has been no persuasive discussion of the nature and function of Oa the earth goddess in *The Inheritors*. Underplaying the role of Oa in this novel leads to neglect of the key concept elaborated by the author. Although this work is one of Golding's less well-known novels and the depiction of a Neanderthal people is based mainly upon the author's imagination, thus anthropologically untenable, his treatment of Oa the earth goddess is of unique value.

Oa appears as a huge ice block, the object of worship and awe by Lok's tribe. It happens to be of a maternal shape, and alternates between freezing and melting as the temperature fluctuates. Another representation of Oa is 'little Oa', a small mother-shaped doll that Lok's daughter Liku always carries with her as a talisman and a toy. The maternal figure projected both on the earth goddess and on the wooden talisman implies that Oa is regarded as the universal womb from which all things in nature are born. The distinction of the two phonemes 'O' and 'A' in the appellation of Oa, and the fact that they occasionally lose distinction and become the sound 'Aaaa', suggest not only that human language develops through the process of articulating the maternal by means of a signifying system of 'O' and 'A', but also that the maternal holds the power of repudiating the very articulation achieved by the signifying system.

In the following discussion, the dominant role of Oa is investigated from multilateral points of view, and it is suggested that the reciprocity between the two powers inherent in Oa is of great significance with regard to cultural, religious, and psychological aspects when we consider the human beings in this novel.

When Lok, accompanied by Fa, first visits the caverns of the ice women, Oa's sanctuary, to offer the goddess a parcel of meat as tribute with a view to curing his father Mal of disease, Fa's whisper 'Oa Oa Oa' bounds back from the ice walls and reverberates like 'A' or 'Aaaa' without articulation. At this, Lok suddenly feels sick and deserts the place, with Fa leading him out.¹ This fact does not simply show much the same kind of articulation employed by the signifying system as that observed by Sigmund Freud in a child playing with a wooden reel, it also refers to the resistant power against the articulation itself. Freud deals with a child who expresses his mother's departure and return by alternately throwing away and pulling back a wooden reel with a piece of string tied round it. In addition, the child cries 'o-o-o-o' ('fort') when the reel disappears and 'da' when it reappears.² While Freud interprets this compulsion to repeat as a reproduction of the mother's absence, and as the reproduction of pain, thus attributing it to 'the death instincts' (pp. 43–50) that override 'the pleasure principle' (p. 17), Anika Lemaire observes that this sequence of the child's behaviour is the incipience of acquiring the symbols and the language. 'The two phonemes O and A (*ooh* and *da*)', Lemaire explains, 'symbolize the disappearance and reappearance of the reel [. . .]. The child moves from the mother to the reel and finally to language. Such an experience may be

¹ William Golding, *The Inheritors* (London: Faber, 1955), p. 84. All further citations and references given in the text are to this edition.

² Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. by James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961), pp. 8–11.

considered the inaugural moment of [. . .] all metaphors and all language.³ On the other hand, Julia Kristeva reinterprets Freud's term 'the death instinct' as '*le rejet*',⁴ or the drive of rejection. Not until the mother is rejected does the reel become a symbol, and not until the reel is repeatedly rejected does the incipient language present itself. 'Little Oa', which Liku always carries with her, is also a sign equivalent of the reel. Because it has the appellation of 'little Oa', the incipient language has already been acquired through this doll, although Liku is old enough not to show the obvious act of repeatedly hurling and pulling it back.

Yet the mother as flesh and blood, already rejected from the signifying system, may return at any moment to disrupt and take the place of the sign. If the articulation of 'O' and 'A' disappears and turns into the sound 'Aaaa', it means that the mother has returned to dissolve a sign, a symbol, or a code. She looms large as flesh and blood before Lok's eyes. Lok is frightened of being swallowed up in her womb. The sound 'Aaaa', in fact, reverberates when the mother-shaped ice block (a sign for the maternal body) threatens to melt. It also forebodes flood. Kristeva defines the sign/code system as 'the symbolic (order)', the sign/code-dissolving elements 'the semiotic'. She holds that the semiotic and the symbolic are inseparable and make for dialectic within the signifying process of 'natural' language. No signifying system of 'natural' language therefore can be exclusively semiotic or exclusively symbolic (*Revolution in Poetic Language*, p. 24). Lok's tribes may articulate 'O' and 'A', but are always affected by 'A' or 'Aaaa' the sign/code-dissolving, or semiotic, sound.

In contrast, the new people put undue importance on the articulation itself, and harshly reject the sign/code-dissolving force. Lok feels keenly the 'mechanical' trait of the articulation of their speech. From the fact that their usual shouting 'A-ho A-ho' begins with the murder of Lok's mother or the incarnation of Oa, the hyphen separating 'A' from 'ho', we could infer, makes a strong safeguard against the counterattack of 'A' or 'Aaaa' by making a deep cut in the midst of Oa. The new people inflict serious damage upon Oa, whereby they cause their language to degenerate into a mere tool of superficial communication devoid of the ever-abundant images, symbols, and living metaphors indispensable to any human expression. For where the semiotic and the symbolic interact, plentiful meaning is infinitely procreated. The crucial difference between Lok's tribe and the new people is that in the former we perceive the semiotic and the symbolic making dynamic interaction, whereas in the latter we see the fixed power system guaranteed only by means of repressing and rejecting violently the semiotic element. According to Kristeva, this over-violent rejection incurs the attack from the semiotic side which not merely disrupts the symbolic order, but undermines the power structure established upon it (*Revolution in Poetic Language*, p. 83). It is this course the new people will take.

Oa contains both the semiotic and the symbolic, which interact and generate ever-renewed symbols under the law that makes mother and child simultaneously unite and separate. Contrarily, there exists in the new people's religion a law that will separate the mother from the child by means of matricide or infanticide. To

³ Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. by David Macey (London: Routledge, 1977), p. 52.

⁴ Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. by Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 147-64. See also Julia Kristeva, *Polylogue* (Paris: Seuil, 1977), pp. 66-67.

begin with, the old woman, who is not so much Lok's mother as Oa's incarnation, thus qualified as the mother of Nature, is brutally murdered. Then, Lok's daughter Liku is burned and devoured as a sacrifice right under her mother's eyes. Finally, Tanakil, a little girl of the new people, is about to be sacrificed by the comrades despite her mother's terrified attempts to stop them. The new people's rule of separating the mother from the child reflects the common function of sacrificial rituals 'to ward off the subject's fear of his very own identity sinking irretrievably into the mother'.⁵

On the other hand, the whole landscape surrounding Lok's tribe converges in Oa, and at the same time each develops from Oa individually and differentially. A typical example is the following scene in which various smells of both nature and humans, from the distant past to the present, are indistinctly fused in an autumn mist or in a muddy path, and yet each smell is asserting its individuality and differentiation:

He [Lok] flared his nostrils and immediately was rewarded with a whole mixture of smells, for the mist from the fall magnified any smell incredibly, as rain will deepen and distinguish the colours of a field of flowers. There were the smells of the people too, individual but each engaged to the smell of the muddy path where they had been. (pp. 25–26)

In the metaphor that Lok has unconsciously used hitherto, in such an expression as 'Fungi on a tree were ears', fungi and ears are undifferentiated because they equally belong to Oa, and yet they are differentiated in that they develop in their own way. In this sense, the metaphorical 'is' — fungi are ears — is created where nondifferentiation and differentiation keep subtle tension with each other. According to Paul Ricoeur, the metaphorical 'is' preserves 'is not' within 'is'. This tension between 'is' and 'is not' creates dynamism, by means of which metaphor represents things as 'in a state of activity', as 'blossoming forth'.⁶ Such metaphorical expression often creates excellent poetry: 'The arms of the clouds turned to gold and the rim of the moon nearly at the full pushed up among them' (p. 43); 'The water was full of tinsel loops and circles and eddies of liquid cold fire' (p. 43); 'The sun will drink up the mist' (p. 47); 'The sky was a narrow strip above him, a freezing sky, that was pricked all over with stars and dashed with strokes of cloud that trapped the moonlight' (p. 82).⁷ This dynamic tension, however, has slackened since the new people's appearance and the murder of the old woman (Oa's incarnation). Since then, the new people's cry of 'A-ho' with its incision amidst Oa has become conspicuous, the use of comparative terms 'like' and 'as though' ('as if') has increased in the narrative, until Lok himself starts to make a frequent use of 'like'.

The dissociation within Oa or Oa's products is vividly depicted through the eyes of Lok and Fa who go towards the trail:

The trail had changed like everything else that the people had touched. The earth was gouged and scattered, the rollers had depressed and smoothed a way broad enough for Lok and Fa and another to walk abreast. [. . .] Fa looked mournfully at his face. She pointed to a smear on the smoothed earth that had been a slug. (p. 198)

⁵ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 64.

⁶ Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. by Robert Czerny (London: Routledge, 1978), pp. 248–49, 307–08.

⁷ 'Artistry exists in the tension between sameness and difference', Janet Burroway, 'Resurrected Metaphor in *The Inheritors* by William Golding', *Critical Quarterly*, 23 (1981), 53–70 (p. 64).

Almost at the same time, Lok begins to use 'like' analytically, 'as a tool as surely as ever' he has 'used a stone to hack at sticks or meat' (p. 194), though he and his tribe have long before used emotively several similes.⁸ Lok has thought thus far that even hacking at meat with a stone is ignoring Oa's dignity, which we can guess from Lok's repeated warning: 'This is very bad. Oa brought the doe out of her belly' (p. 54) at the scene where all his family rend and dismember the doe to get its meat for the sick and senile Mal. But 'outside-Lok' abates the feeling of deference to Oa, until at last he gets inebriated and imitates the new people's cry 'A-ho! A-ho! A-ho!' (p. 202) or says 'I am one of the new people' (p. 204) after drinking up the new people's honey-drink in the pot placed beside the stag's head with a carved devil-like figure lying across it, which the new people have built to propitiate and fend off Lok's tribe. In the simile, Ricoeur argues, the metaphorical 'is' is reduced to 'like' or 'as-if', namely that the metaphorical 'is' — the tension between 'is' and 'is not' — gets lost under the pressure of 'is not' (pp. 248–49). In this sense, the comparative terms, such as 'like' or 'as-if', according to Ricoeur, dissipate the dynamism of comparison (p. 26). So long as Lok uses 'like' in the way he hacks at Oa or Oa's products, the dissociation within Oa or Oa's products weakens Oa's law that keeps mother and child at once united and separated. The dynamism created by the tension between nondifferentiation and differentiation is therefore lost, with the resulting simile less poetic than prosaic both in Lok's words and in the narrative.

Lok's tribe, who have a strong faith in Oa, traditionally identify with one another in their behaviour. When Mal, after having fallen into a river, totters up the slope, all the family parody him (p. 77). At Mal's burial service, the family one by one trickle water on his face, each saying the same words: 'Drink when you are thirsty' (p. 90), following the old woman's lead. We could infer from Nil's words 'Ha lay with me and with Fa. Lok lay with Fa and with me' (p. 95) that Ha and Lok sexually share both Nil and Fa.⁹ However, such an apparently undifferentiated and promiscuous community enjoys harmonious, highly individual lives under the leadership of Mal and the old woman. Jean Baudrillard refers to primitive societies and observes:

Opposed to the Oedipus principle, which corresponds to the *negative* aspect of incest prohibition (prohibited with the mother and imposed by the father) is, in the *positive* sense, a principle of the exchange of sisters by brothers. It is the sister, and not the mother, who is at the centre of this apparatus, and it is at the level of brothers that the whole social act of exchange is organised. Therefore, no desocialised Oedipal triangle, no closed familial structure sanctioned by prohibition and the dominant Word of the Father.¹⁰

In contrast, the new people's authority that forcibly weans the child from its mother has the Oedipal structure of repression characteristic of paternalism. According to Bruce Fink, a Lacanian psychoanalyst, this repressive structure sometimes makes the subject feel extraordinarily obsessed and fascinated with any woman who makes

⁸ Elizabeth Black, 'Metaphor, Simile and Cognition in Golding's *The Inheritors*', *Language and Literature*, 2 (1993), 37–48 (p. 45).

⁹ In this respect, Jeanne Murray Walker notes: 'But the People's [Lok's People's] sexuality transcends rather than violates the kinship and taboo systems of human society because it is based on agreement so essential that it does not require laws to enforce it', 'Reciprocity and Exchange in William Golding's *The Inheritors*', *Science-Fiction Studies*, 8 (1981), 297–310 (p. 301).

¹⁰ *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1993; repr. London: Sage, 1995), pp. 135–36.

love with another man he considers to be strong.¹¹ He imagines that the other man (Father) uses tremendous force to make the woman (Mother) inaccessible to him in the very act of this lovemaking, whereby he is adversely fixated on her in a sexual fantasy. Lok, unwittingly influenced by the new people's Oedipal structure, is excited at the scene of fierce, sado-masochistic lovemaking in which Tuami and Vivani are engaged. Similarly, Tuami is excited and even harbours the intent of killing Marlan who, having finished making love with Vivani his mistress, appears to be exhausted, sleeping in the dug-out. The excitement both Lok and Tuami feel towards Vivani is not derived from a mere voyeuristic interest but from the prohibitive Oedipal structure in which a paternal figure uses violence to separate a maternal figure from a child figure. In such a case, the child figure sometimes cannot be independent of the maternal figure for life.

Golding himself is presumably obsessed with the scene of adult lovemaking he witnessed from a tree in his childhood, to which he makes reference in his essay titled 'The Ladder and the Tree'.¹² The impact the scene made upon him finds some characteristic forms of expression in his novels. In *Pincher Martin*, Christopher Martin in delirium attempts to murder his friend Nathaniel after having witnessed the consummation of love between Nathaniel and Mary, for whom Martin feels insatiable lust. Similarly in *The Spire*, Dean Jocelin's accidental witnessing of the liaison between Roger Mason the master builder and Goody Pangall, Jocelin's beloved follower, results in Jocelin's ecstatic 'self-erection for self-fulfilment' in the construction of a spire.¹³ Oliver in *The Pyramid*, at Evie's earnest request, happens to help pull out of the pond the two-seater, which reveals to him evidence of a spot of 'slap and tickle' between Evie and Robert. This experience leads to his hitting Robert and his deep entanglement with Evie. Matthew Windrove in *Darkness Visible* makes painful efforts to abnegate his lust for Sophy who is often seen to make love with casual partners.

These protagonists are influenced by the prohibitive society of paternalism in which they live. In such circumstances, a male protagonist tends to regard as paternal equivalent the other man, his rival, who he thinks is stronger than himself in the love triangle. He is forced to identify the usual love triangle with the Oedipal one. This stimulates the protagonist's desire for the maternal equivalent, so that he intends to destroy the man in power. For Christopher Martin in *Pincher Martin*, the man in power is Nathaniel Walteson, and the maternal figure Mary Lovell. For Jocelin in *The Spire*, the man in power is Roger Mason, and the maternal figure is Goody Pangall, for Oliver in *The Pyramid*, the man in power is Robert, the maternal figure Evie, and for Matty in *Darkness Visible*, the maternal figure is Sophy and the men in power are her casual partners. The necessary outcome is that the protagonists drown themselves in the maternal equivalent, only to feel extreme sexual desire amidst the agony of separation. This is what both Lok and Tuami feel toward Vivani and what constitutes the new people's mentality. To the extent that

¹¹ *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 135–45.

¹² William Golding, 'The Ladder and the Tree', *The Hot Gates and Other Occasional Pieces* (London: Faber, 1965) p. 171. See also Jeanne Delbaere, 'Lok-Like-Log: Structure and Imagery in *The Inheritors*', *Revue des Langues Vivantes*, 44 (1978), 179–92 (p. 183n).

¹³ Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor, *William Golding: A Critical Study* (1967; repr. London: Faber, 1985), p. 230.

the prohibitive law alienates the maternal from the people, their society becomes obsessed with the rejected womb and, as a result, devoid of symbolic order. Lok's tribe, whose law is not prohibitive in general, maintains the harmonious community, while the new people's society, despite its strict law, is characterized by jealousy, conflict, rebellion, and neurotic rituals, as well as licentious sexuality.

As Jacques Lacan points out, the father's *imago* has not only the function of repression ('the superego, *le surmoi*') but also that of sublimation ('the ego-ideal, *l'idéal du moi*'), the latter realizing the virile ideal in a man, the virginal one in a woman.¹⁴ In a matriarchal culture, Lacan argues, there is to be found no definite neurosis because the father's function is that of sublimation, whereas in a patriarchal society, the father's function of sublimation is hampered by the Oedipal myth, an effective prompter of his function of repression, which causes a great many neuroses (p. 73). It is only within the neurotic Oedipus Complex that the subject is strictly prohibited from access to the mother.¹⁵ Desire has nothing to do with such a neurotic Oedipal myth but is caused by Lacan's *objet a*, which is 'the object of the radical lack lived by the child who is separated at birth from the mother' (Lemaire, p. 174). A mother or a maternal equivalent is this *objet a*. However, the *objet a* is by no means fixed to the mother or maternal equivalent but 'is substituted for the object of lack' and 'the first image to fill in the crack of separation' (Lemaire, p. 174). It is 'the instinct's part object', which has much the same idea as Winnicott's 'transitional object' later discussed.¹⁶ The Oedipal code that prohibits the subject from reaching for the mother does not make any sense, for the mother has already become *objet a*, the object of the radical lack.

Lok's successful escape from the new people's repressive Oedipal structure when he has sobered up from their 'honey drink' is attributable to his father Mal, who guides him not by the superego but by the ego-ideal.¹⁷ Mal, in fact, never intends to alienate the mother from the child, or the maternal from the people, as we infer from the very posture of his body at his burial service: it is lowered into the hole with the knees folded like a foetus. There are many references to the matriarchal culture of Lok's tribe: 'There was the great Oa. She brought forth the earth. [. . .] The earth brought forth woman and the woman brought forth the first man out of her belly' (p. 35). 'Can a man come out of a man's belly? Perhaps there was a woman and then a woman and then a woman. By herself' (p. 85). 'Oa has taken Mal into her belly' (p. 91) is the old woman's very apt expression. However, this does not mean that the foetus will dissolve and vanish in the womb but presupposes that it will be reborn and detached from there. It is also possible here to find the pattern of uniting mother and child and at the same time separating them. Moreover, the whole burial process is in the hands of the old woman. Kristeva suggests that it is the mother who acts the 'Imaginary Father' as distinct from the Oedipal father with the function of repression. According to Kristeva, the 'Imaginary Father' fulfills an archaic paternal function in the infant's mind,

¹⁴ *Les Complexes familiaux dans la formation de l'individu* (Paris: Navarin Éditeur, 1984), pp. 65–66.

¹⁵ Alain Juranville, *Lacan et la philosophie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), p. 107.

¹⁶ Karl Abraham's 'partial object' and D. W. Winnicott's 'transitional object' influenced Lacan in the early 1950s. Both these notions underlie his *objet a*. See Bruce Fink, p. 52; D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (1971; repr. London: Routledge, 1990), p. 40.

¹⁷ After sobering up from the new people's drink, the analytic 'like' disappears from Lok's words, and a poetic quality partially revives in the narrative: 'The sheets of falling water shook out into milky skeins, unspun into a creamy substance that was hard to distinguish from the leaping spray and mist that rose to meet it' (p. 207).

preceding chronologically the Oedipal phase and even the ‘mirror stage’.¹⁸ This ‘Imaginary Father’ has the function of the ego-ideal which progressively sublimates the semiotic and the symbolic into the ever-renewed symbolic by alternating mother–child unity with their separation (pp. 26–29). According to Winnicott, the fetish object employed by babies or children for playing is simultaneously a sign for the union with their mother and one for separateness (p. 43). Winnicott names this object ‘a transitional object’, and the playing space for a baby a ‘potential space’, which is postulated between the baby and the mother who start shifting from the union toward separation (pp. 40–41). A ‘potential space’ is therefore the faintest but repetitive distancing of the baby from the mother by the ‘Imaginary Father’. As Winnicott argues, a bit of cloth, a teddy bear, a doll or a toy, a talisman are ‘transitional objects’. So, then, are the aforementioned wooden reel and Liku’s little Oa. As long as ‘Oa Oa Oa’ is repeatedly uttered by Lok’s tribespeople who visit her, Oa the object of worship could also be among these ‘transitional objects’. A ‘potential space’ is where the primal differentiation is effected by the ‘Imaginary Father’. Lacan asserts that it is ‘the Name-of-the-Father’, or ‘*le Nom-du-Père*’ that liberates from the mother the subject still undifferentiated from her, and guides the subject to the symbolic order at the Oedipal phase.¹⁹ However, ‘the Name-of-the-Father’ is not the function of the actual father but that of the metaphorical one who appears only through the mother’s intermediary, whether through her words or desire for him. ‘The subject will have access to the “Name-of-the-Father”’ only if ‘the father is recognized by the mother both as a man and as the representative of the Law’ (Lemaire, p. 83). Thus, the ‘Imaginary Father’ is essentially the same as Lacan’s ‘the Name-of-the-Father’, though the one is chronologically older than the other. Especially when Mal is old and falls ill, ‘the Name-of-the-Father’ is by no means the decrepit, meagre, and debilitated Mal, but the metaphorical Mal casually shown in the words and tones of the old woman who affectionately and trustfully speaks of Mal.

The ‘Imaginary Father’ has influence upon the burial service of Lok’s tribe. Following the fashion of Mal’s burial service, Lok buries himself after having his whole family killed by the new people:

It [Lok] pulled its legs up, knees against the chest. It folded its hands under its cheek and lay still. The twisted and smoothed root [the Oa doll] lay before its face. It made no noise, but seemed to be growing into the earth, drawing the soft flesh of its body into a contact so close that the movements of pulse and breathing were inhibited. (p. 221)

This traditional burial service implies being swallowed back into the womb and at the same time being reborn and detached from it. The Oa doll lying before Lok’s face gives full play to its role as a ‘transitional object’, which is a sign of mother–child unity and of separateness. This reciprocity between unity and separateness

¹⁸ Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 22. ‘The mirror stage’ (*le stade du miroir*) is the period to which infants aged about six to eighteen months belong. In this stage, the infants have a narcissistic interest in their mirror image, but are unable to differentiate between their own image and that of their mother. At the end of this period they grow out of the fusion with the mother and finally become able to identify the self image reflected in the mirror. The end of this stage actually coincides with the opening of ‘the Oedipus’ (*l’Œdipe*) or the Oedipal phase, where both the mother and the infant break themselves away from a hitherto inseparable unity by the function of ‘the Name-of-the-Father’ (*le Nom-du-Père*). See Jacques Lacan, *Écrits I* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), pp. 89–97, 156–58.

¹⁹ *Écrits I*, pp. 156–58. See also Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 119.

signifies the reciprocity between the semiotic and the symbolic, or even that between death and life. Just as the reciprocity between the semiotic and the symbolic can produce ever-renewed meanings, so that between death and life can produce ever-renewed lives. When Lok's tribespeople dig a hole in which to lay Mal's body, they go on working without paying any heed to the innumerable bones of the ancestors' legs, rib-bones, or crushed skulls. Liku goes so far as to play with the skulls. There is not a shred of anxious, exorcistic ambience in their burial service. The new people, as well as the moderns, are characterized by this exorcism. Modern people tend to segregate or repress death as a social abjection. As Baudrillard remarks, we separate the 'dead' from the 'living', and by excluding the dead and death as obscene and awkward, shatter the reciprocity between life and death. (pp. 181–82)

In the new people's ritual, Pine-tree is chosen as a scapegoat and his severed finger is dedicated to the stag-god, which is instantly shot through with arrows and dedicated later to Lok's tribe. Both a sacrifice and an object to which the sacrifice is dedicated are equally to be warded off as devils. Thus the stag-god, to which is attached the meat of a stag and a pot of honey-drink offered to Lok's tribe, assumes a devil-like figure with enormous arms and legs spreading, and eyes composed of white pebbles glaring up. Lok's tribe, regarded as the ultimate devil, is to be warded off by the devil-like stag-god, and then exterminated by the new people. However, what the new people cannot or will not understand is that the 'devil' is internal. Since the devil to be warded off and exterminated is in fact not outside themselves but inside their mind, every scapegoat is no more than a disposable absorber of the new people's inner 'devil'. This is why the scapegoat takes on the devil's image. The sow's head that the boys hang on the point of a stick to propitiate and ward off the Beast in *Lord of the Flies* shows itself as Beelzebub, the prince of devils. The strong exorcistic tendency inherent in the new people's society has its root in the fact that they are all the more trapped and doomed by the semiotic (the disrupter of the sign or code in their mind) because of their violent law destroying maternalism. In order to restore symbolic order and the solidarity of the community, the new people dare to concoct a devil, an externalized form of the semiotic violence in their mind, and undertake its downright expulsion. 'The sacrifice serves', according to René Girard, 'to protect the entire community from *its own* violence; it prompts the entire community to choose victims outside itself. The elements of dissension scattered throughout the community are drawn to the person of the sacrificial victim and eliminated, at least temporarily, by its sacrifice.'²⁰ However, it is because of this outright elimination that the community is counterattacked by the semiotic, its symbolic order all the more troubled. Hence the more vehement the rejection, the more damage to symbolic order. This vicious circle undermines the very basis of the power structure of the community established upon symbolic order. In their ritual of exorcism, the object chosen for the scapegoat is not necessarily a being that harms the community. It is often arbitrarily and gratuitously chosen,²¹ made into a devil surrogate and then liquidated. The arbitrary selection of the scapegoat is revealed in the way Pine-tree is chosen by

²⁰ René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. by Patrick Gregory (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 8.

²¹ 'The blind instinct for reprisals', René Girard argues, 'is not based on anything specific; thus everything can converge at almost any time, on almost anyone, but preferably at the moment of greatest hysteria', *The Scapegoat*, trans. by Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 86.

drawing lots. However skilfully modified by the ritualistic banquet, violence inflicted upon the scapegoat gathers its strength and rebounds against the sacrificers, since the scapegoat is an externalized form of the semiotic inherent in them. Thus, the sacrificers incur the counterattack of the semiotic, which ruins their symbolic order and deprives their community of its harmony and equilibrium. The roasting of Liku leads to the tiny revolt of Tanakil, a little girl of the new people and Liku's true friend, which accidentally kills Chestnut-head. This turmoil results in some more comrades' deaths. Far from restoring the symbolic order and solidarity, the new people's society falls into more and more inextricable confusion as the number of victims increases, until Tanakil is chosen among the comrades as a scapegoat and comes near to being roasted in the same way as Liku. She suffers serious mental disorder due to a succession of traumatic experiences. The new people's community thus begins to collapse from within. Girard refers to this adverse effect concomitant with the ritual of sacrifice as 'sacrificial crisis', and argues: 'In short, it seems that anything that adversely affects the institution of sacrifice will ultimately pose a threat to the very basis of the community, to the principles on which its social harmony and equilibrium depend' (*Violence and the Sacred*, p. 49). Kristeva remarks almost to the same effect:

Sacred murder [sacrifice] merely points to the violence that was *confined* within sacrifice so as to found social order [...]. Nevertheless [...] a certain practice accompanies sacrifice. Through, with, and despite the positing of sacrifice, this practice deploys the expenditure [*dépense*] of semiotic violence, breaks through the symbolic border, and tends to dissolve the logical order, which is, in short, the outer limit founding the human and the social.

(*Revolution in Poetic Language*, p. 78–79)

The final onslaught of the semiotic violence in this novel is made upon the boat in which are the few remnants of the new people who have exterminated Lok's tribe. The colossal ice block composing the figure of Oa and the snow wall melt and fall down with a booming sound suggestive of the reverberation 'Aaaa', the sign/code-dissolving element, the semiotic. Oa brings about inundation and counter-swirl, which impede the progress of the new people's boat and almost engulf it as if in Oa's amniotic fluid. This is a magnificent metaphor of the complete loss of the new people's symbolic order.

In the new people's patriarchy, Marlan as headman dominates the community not as the ego-ideal but as the superego, whose strict prohibition against mother-child unity derives, according to Freud's hypothesis on the primitive family conceived as a horde in his 'Totem and Taboo', from the sons' remorse for their deed after the elimination of the primal father who monopolized the women.²² Lacan, on the other hand, calls Freud's 'Totem and Taboo', as well as his idea of Oedipus complex, no more than a myth that, because of its inhibitive superego, brings about neurosis (Juranville, p. 206); the neurosis is the loss of symbolic order caused by the attack from the semiotic side. Freud himself understands that the superego is a neurotic formation and symptom (Juranville, p. 203). In contrast with Lok, who is guided by the ego-ideal and the 'Imaginary Father' without being forcibly separated from the mother by the intervention of the father, Tuami, controlled by Marlan's prohibitive patriarchy and trapped in the Oedipal triangle,

²² *Les complexes familiaux*, p. 54. See also Sigmund Freud, 'Totem and Taboo', *The Origins of Religion*, trans. by James Strachey (1985; repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), pp. 217–24.

feels a morbidly urgent desire for Vivani and an abrupt murderous intent towards Marlan the moment he witnesses the clear evidence of their lovemaking. However, unlike the sons of the horde peoples in 'Totem and Taboo' who, after the patricide, feel remorse for their deed, Tuami, instead of stabbing Marlan with his dagger, comes to disclose Marlan's fake dignity and religion. When his criticism directed toward Marlan soon becomes his self-criticism for having been subjected to Marlan for so long, there comes into his mind a great change, which is triggered by this circumstance:

They shrieked at the struggling lump. Vivani's back was arched and she was writhing as though a spider had got inside her furs. Then the devil appeared, arse-upward, his little rump pushing against the nape of her neck. Even the sombre Marlan twisted his weary face into a grin. Vakiti could not straighten course for his wild laughing and Tuami let the ivory drop from his hands. (pp. 232–33)

Among those who have survived the inundation in the boat is this 'devil', as the new people name the little baby of Lok's tribe (the child of Ha and Nil), whom they have abducted. With unprecedentedly favourable eyes the whole crew watch Vivani fondle a suckling, and Tuami unwittingly drops a dagger he has sharpened to kill Marlan. Those who have hitherto eradicated Lok's tribe as the 'devil' now accept and welcome the 'devil' itself. Furthermore, the scene where Vivani cherishes the 'devil' suffices to make one feel the mother-child tie which the new people have hitherto consistently excluded. Tuami's sudden wish to carve the living image of Vivani and the 'devil' out of the ivory of the knife-haft, and the shift of his focus from the blade to the haft suggest that Tuami as a sculptor recovers his intrinsic talent for producing abundant symbols one after another. Relieved of Marlan's patriarchal control, which has turned out to be a fake dignity, Tuami breaks the spell of the Oedipal triangle, as implied by the dagger dropped from his hands, and begins to appreciate the matriarchal Oa that contains both the semiotic and the symbolic, nondifferentiation and differentiation whose reciprocity generates the ever-renewed symbols and living metaphors. At first, however, 'the world with the boat moving so slowly at the centre' was for him 'dark amid the light [. . .] untidy, hopeless, dirty' (p. 225), which means he is still seized with the new people's law that repudiates the 'devil'. However, the gradual change in the landscape hereafter reflects that of Tuami's consciousness. The above scene is instantly replaced by the following: 'The sail glowed red-brown. Tuami glanced back at the gap through the mountain and saw that it was full of golden light and the sun was sitting in it' (p. 228). The story ends with this passage: 'Tuami looked at the line of darkness. It was far away and there was plenty of water in between. He peered forward past the sail to see what lay at the other end of the lake, but it was so long, and there was such a flashing from the water that he could not see if the line of darkness had an ending' (p. 233). The living metaphor in the second scene is especially reminiscent of Lok's sensitivity.

In the last scene, the line of darkness has no end, nor does the flashing. Here is to be observed the reciprocity between endlessly undifferentiated darkness and endlessly differentiated light. In Tuami's mind, darkness is no longer 'dirty', and the 'devil' no longer the object of repudiation, although Marlan still believes 'they [devils] keep to the mountains or the darkness under the trees' (p. 231). Tuami's mental picture now gains much the same quality as Lok's and his tribe's. He is the

first to 'inherit' the sensitivity of Lok's tribe, or rather rediscover the human potentialities that have been repressed and buried under Marlan's power structure.

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