

Illusional Reflection and Quasi-Religious Authority in Golding's Novels

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Some of the novels William Golding has written comprise the scene in which a mirror plays a trick on the characters who are at odds with reality or molested by some predicaments. More concretely, the characters whose symbolic order is somehow troubled cannot identify their self images in the mirror. The self image is often supplanted by some other strangers or strange scenery. By "symbolic order" is meant the signifying system in which a sign or code and their dissolving element make a kind of dialectic in producing ever-renewed meanings, values, images, metaphors, and symbols. Those who suffer the loss of symbolic order in Golding's fiction have this dialectic impaired by too rigid a code imposed upon them either from within or from without.

In the following discussion, we will look into Golding's main works and find out how the rigid and repressive cord ruins the characters' symbolic order and causes them to see the illusion of mirror reflection. Furthermore, it will be suggested that this repressive cord bears upon some religious or quasi-religious authority that keeps harassing the people concerned.

Jack Merridew in *Lord of the Flies* shows himself at first as chapter chorister and head boy. He is a leader of a choir whose members wear a square black cap and a black cloak bearing a silver cross. Obviously he assumes religious authority which impresses not only the

choir boys but also others who happen to meet him on an uninhabited island where an airplane manned by evacuated boys makes an emergency landing due to the attack from the firefighter of the enemy in the imaginary World War III. All the adults, including the pilot, are dead and only the boys stay alive. In due course, the chief is elected but it is not Jack but Ralph with a beautiful conch in his hands. This conch has the pattern of a spiral in which roundness and angularity interact with each other. The same pattern is found in the surrounding nature of the island. A close reading reveals that the angularity stands for a fixed sign or code, the roundness for their dissolution. These two elements keep extremely delicate balance and make dialectical reciprocity in creating ever-differentiated worlds of both nature and the human. Ralph, however, does not appreciate the meaningful pattern of the conch but invents unfeasible and trivial rules of fixed codes, partly influenced by Piggy's scientific rationalism. Jack, who also suggests making many rules, is gradually antipathetic to Ralph's order, until he overtly breaks one rule after another. Jack and his choir, who now take on a task of hunting, often make a round circle with which to beleaguer the games they have tracked down. This "roundness" gradually pervades the community. The place of assembly, which is made of logs, originally forms a triangular pattern, but now becomes irregular and sketchy, almost circular. Simon is mistaken for a beast, trapped by an encircling net of hunters and brutally murdered. Finally, Roger releases a gigantic, round rock down the cliff and sends Piggy crashing to death, with the conch broken to pieces. The delicate balance of roundness and angularity is thus completely lost. To the extent that "roundness" dominates the island, to that extent "angularity" sharpens its edge. It first takes the form of Jack's knife, then the hunter's spear, and at last a stick sharpened on which to

transfix a sow's head and almost Ralph's. Jack and his hunters revolt against Ralph's and Piggy's fixed cord, but they now turn to a far more rigid code for the repressive control of the whole group. Piggy's scientific rationalism is utterly destroyed by the quasi-religious power of Jack and his hunters. The former may originally represent an angular shape, the latter a circular one, but it is to be remembered that Jack and his hunters wear a *square* black cap, bearing a silver *cross* when they first show themselves as choir boys. Angularity therefore does not appertain to any specific person or party, but represents the fixed and rigid code. Similarly, roundness is not inherent in any individual or group, but stands for the sign/code-dissolving element. Moreover, roundness and angularity in the pattern of the conch and that of the surrounding nature are not exclusive in any sense, but inseparable and interactive. Julia Kristeva defines the sign or code system as "the symbolic (order)," their dissolving elements "the semiotic." She holds that the semiotic and the symbolic are inseparable and make dialectic within the signifying process. No signifying system therefore can be exclusively semiotic or exclusively symbolic.¹ Thus, the symbolic order (signifying system) is always restructured by the dialectic of the symbolic and the semiotic.

The spiral pattern of the conch actually represents this symbolic order or the signifying chain because of its exquisite balance and eternal interplay between roundness and angularity. The signification, a Lacanian psychologist Anika Lemaire remarks, is apprehended by way of a spiral or spiral loops.² As the story develops, however, the conflict

1 Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia UP, 1984) 24.

2 Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. David Macey (London: Routledge &

between roundness and angularity gets more and more conspicuous, until the conch and its spiral pattern are lost for ever. With it is lost the whole of the symbolic order and signification on the island. Another symptom of the loss of symbolic order is the illusion of mirror reflection. The metaphor of a mirror reflection is used as early as in chapter four, where a mirage plays a trick on the nature surrounding the island: "...the coral reef and the few, stunted palms that clung to the more elevated parts would float up into the sky, would quiver, be plucked apart, run like rain-drops on a wire or be repeated as in an odd succession of mirrors."³ The same kind of metaphor is applied to another mirror in the same chapter: "He [Jack] knelt, holding the shell of water. A rounded patch of sunlight fell on his face and a brightness appeared in the depths of the water. He looked in astonishment, no longer at himself but at an awesome stranger. He spilt the water and leapt to his feet, laughing excitedly."⁴ Both metaphors represent the illusion reflected on the mirror. The first mysterious illusion is discounted as a mirage by Piggy, who firmly believes in scientific rationalism. The second illusion is the reflection of Jack's painted face, which is accepted by him with wild excitement. Jack, who repudiates Piggy's rationalism, feels fascinated with irrational phenomena and power. But there is much more to this illusionary reflection than mere irrationality. This phenomenon appears where the conflict between a code and a code-dissolving element begins. By the time the illusion of a mirage is depicted, the rule of the meeting — such as holding the conch during speech — has already been broken. The

Kegan Paul, 1977) 15.

3 William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (London: Faber, 1954) 63.

4 *Lord of the Flies* 69

depiction of the illusion of Jack's mirror reflection coincides with his preparation for hunting a pig, which conduct leads to the total neglect of the fundamental rule of keeping smoke as a signal for a ship to rescue the boys. Furthermore, their next hunting of a pig has a connotation of at once an Oedipal incest and of matricide when Jack and his hunters slaughter a sow, a mother of several piglets. They are infinitely absorbed in a mother-child unity, and at the same time wish to prohibit this unity by killing a mother. The stronger the impulses toward the mother-child unity, the more rigid the code of prohibition. These two conflicting drives coexist in their mind:

The afternoon wore on, hazy and dreadful with damp heat; the sow staggered her way ahead of them, bleeding and mad, and the hunters followed, wedded to her in lust, excited by the long chase and the dropped blood... The spear moved forward inch by inch and the terrified squealing became a high-pitched scream. Then Jack found the throat and the hot blood spouted over his hands. The sow collapsed under them and they were heavy and fulfilled upon her.⁵

The strict prohibition against the mother-child unity culminates in a sacrificial offering, namely a sow's head spiked on a sharpened stick to ward off a beast or Beast, an equivalent of the unconscious drive for going back to a mother's womb. As Kristeva remarks, "The function of these religious rituals [sacrificial rituals] is to ward off the subject's fear of his very own identity sinking irretrievably into the mother."⁶ This fear

5 *Lord of the Flies* 149

6 Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S.

is vividly depicted in the scene where Simon confronts the sow's head on a stick: "Simon found he was looking into a vast mouth. There was blackness within, a blackness that spread... Simon was inside the mouth. He fell down and lost consciousness."⁷ However hard the boys may try, they cannot repress or efface this drive by any means. On the contrary, it multiplies its force all the more for being repressed or effaced. The boys therefore breed more and more of its force in their mind as they make one sacrifice after another, which extends from the animal to the human being. This ritualistic code of making a sacrifice is far more rigid than the rational one which Ralph and Piggy have once established. And yet, the sacrificers are more than ever trapped by the impulse toward mother-child unity, which is responsible for the illusional reflection in the mirror. The most convincing theory which accounts for the relationship between this impulse and the illusional reflection is that of the "mirror stage" propounded by Jacques Lacan. This "mirror stage" is one of the child's developmental phases, where the infants aged about six to eighteen months have a narcissistic interest in their mirror image, but are unable to differentiate between their own image and that of their mother. Anika Lemaire refers to the essence of this "mirror stage" as "a dual relationship, a reduplication in the mirror, an immediate opposition between consciousness and its other in which each term becomes its opposite and is lost in the play of the reflections."⁸ At the end of this period, however, the child grows out of the fusion with the mother and finally becomes able to identify the self image reflected in the mirror.

Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1982) 64.

⁷ *Lord of the Flies* 159

⁸ Lemaire 60

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. As Lacan observes, "this moment in which the mirror-stage comes to an end inaugurates...the dialectic that will henceforth link the *I* to socially elaborated situations."⁹ The end of the "mirror stage" is therefore a turning point at which the infants step into the world of law or codes.

Jack and his hunters regress into the mirror stage, while their code against this regression gets extremely rigid and cruel. Lacan postulates "the Name-of-the-Father" which separates the mother from the child at the Oedipal phase. But it is not the function of an actual father or a sort of rigid code, but that of the metaphorical father who appears only through the mother's intermediary. A child could not have access to the world of the law if a father were not recognized by a mother as the representative of the law.¹⁰ In this sense, the code which prohibits the mother-child unity by killing a mother will never guide a child to the world of law, but bring the child back to the mother's womb, the world of darkness. It is this darkness which haunts almost all the boys on the island and disrupts the symbolic order after their having killed a sow. This power of darkness, which destroys the code of rationalism, is closely bound up with a far more rigid code which severs the mother-child unity at one stroke. Furthermore, from the fact that Jack and his hunters were once the choir boys, and that they finally resort to the ritualistic

9 Jacques Lacan, *Œcrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977) 5.

10 Lemaire 83.

scapegoating, their rigid code entails religious and ritualistic elements.

In *Pincher Martin*, a usual love triangle suddenly turns into an Oedipal one when a quasi-religious code affects the party concerned. Nathaniel Walteson has a sort of charismatic power to dominate his fiancée Mary Lovell as well as his friend and comrade of the Royal Navy, Christopher Martin who has also tried to win Mary's love. The Oedipal connotation in this love triangle is that Martin has keenly felt an insatiable lust for Mary since he happened to witness their consummation of love, and that when Mary flatly rejected his courtship and baffled his lust Martin entertained murderous intention toward Nathaniel. If we rewrite this triangle into an Oedipal schema, Nathaniel (Father) uses tremendous force to intercept Mary (Mother) from Martin (a child), who is thereby adversely fixated to Mary (Mother) all the more for her rejection. Nathaniel's religious code of prohibiting the mother-child unity is such that he predicts Martin's early death: "—because in only a few years you will be dead."¹¹ And this prediction falls on him. Martin's monologue "How can I have a complete identity without a mirror?"¹² is followed by this passage:

He climbed down to the water-hole and peered into the pool. . . But his reflection was inscrutable.... He leaned over the pool, looked through the displayed works of the fish and saw blue sky far down. But no matter how he turned his head he could see nothing but a patch of darkness with wild outline of hair round the edge.... He turned back to inquire of his full face but his breathing ruffled the water. He

11 William Golding, *Pincher Martin* (London: Faber, 1956) 72.

12 *Pincher Martin* 132

puffed down and the dark head wavered and burst.¹³

Martin experiences the "mirror stage" in his hallucination as he is being drowned in the sea by the fortuitous hit of a torpedo which is launched from a U-boat almost at the same time as when he tries to hurl Nathaniel overboard. Mary Lovell is, however, depicted as a vulgar woman. It is Nathaniel's extraordinarily rigid code of severing abruptly Martin from Mary that causes Martin to take her for the maternal, which immediately turns into the devilish. In short, her metamorphosis is only within Martin's consciousness under the pressure of Nathaniel's code. He is gradually swallowed into the abyss of the sea as though into the darkness of Mary's belly. Martin is stillborn in the depths of the sea. Eventually, he encounters no maternal.

In the case of *Free Fall*, Sammy Mountjoy appears at the beginning of the story as an infant closely unified with his mother. His mirror reflection in those days, as far as he remembers, does not show the least of his image, but some surrounding objects other than himself. His image, together with his mother's, is a gap, or a hole amidst the reflection of those objects:

What was there in a mirror for Ma to linger over? I remember blown washing on wire lines, soap suds, I remember the erratic patterns that must have been dirt on the wall, but like Ma I am a neutral point of observation, a gap in the middle.¹⁴

13 *Pincher Martin* 133-34.

14 William Golding, *Free Fall* (London: Faber, 1959) 17.

Sammy's endeavour to extricate from this "mirror stage" is the main theme of this novel. Whether or not he has succeeded in this extrication, I do not know. I suspect he has not yet. The reason for his failure is traced back to the influence of two teachers, Nick Shales and Rowena Pringle, in his schooldays. Nick Shales, a science teacher, introduces Sammy to scientific rationalism which would play the role of the Name-of-the-Father to have Sammy mentally independent of his mother, but fails to do it because it incurs obstinate resistance from Rowena Pringle — his teacher of religion and mother-surrogate. Sammy is, however, antipathetic toward Rowena and believes in Nick's scientific rationalism. Not only Miss Pringle but Beatrice Ifor also firmly believes in religion, which conflicts with Sammy's rationalism even when he makes love with her. This leads to his abrupt leaving Beatrice for Taffy, which probably drives Beatrice demented. In short, Sammy's rationalistic code overrides religion and the irrational aspects of the universe. Yet, these irrational aspects always haunt Sammy to the point of making an organised attack on his rationalism. As early as in his grammar school days, Miss Pringle ill-treats Sammy for his devotion to Nick and his scientific rationalism. Her religious code, linked with the fact that the demented Beatrice pisses over his shoes at a mental hospital, cruelly disrupts Nick's and Sammy's rationalism, making the latter panic-stricken to the extent of losing consciousness. In fact, it is not scientific rationalism but the religious code that has turned both Miss Pringle and Beatrice into the devilish. They develop quasi-religious ideology which appears to emancipate their womanhood, but actually prohibits the mother-child unity, and thus degenerates the nurturing maternal into the suffocating one.

Sammy's present state of mind correctly represents the aftereffects

of the aforementioned process. He appears to be a devout Christian but, in effect, the more he devotes himself to its religious code, the more remorse he feels for his dealings with Beatrice. Here is perceived a shadow Miss Pringle casts over him—a shadow of the devilish, the suffocating maternal. Sammy's infinite regress to the "mirror stage" and his loss of free will resemble the case of Christopher Martin in *Pincher Martin*, but the one has an edge over the other, which is the music played in his mind when Sammy is let out of the darkness of the Nazi camp:

They [mountains] sang and were jubilant. They were not all that sang. Everything is related to everything else and all relationship is either discord or harmony. The power of gravity, dimension and space, the movement of the earth and sun and unseen stars, these made what might be called music and I heard it.¹⁵

Kristeva defines her term "semiotic" as the essence of music.¹⁶ As aforementioned, the semiotic is the code-dissolving element, which dialectically interacts with the symbolic (the code system) within the signifying process. Sammy's inner music works as the semiotic and acts upon the codes with which his two teachers have controlled his mind. In Sammy's mind, the music has achieved magnificent dialectic and sublimation of the universe. The rigid code, whether scientific or religious, is briefly dissolved by the semiotic, the essence of music. Another effect of the semiotic upon his congealed mind is a peculiar time structure of his

¹⁵ *Free Fall* 186-87.

¹⁶ *Revolution in Poetic Language* 24.

narrative, as is also observed in *Pincher Martin*. The cyclical and reversible time in Sammy's narrative is reminiscent of Christopher Martin's extraordinarily long hallucination which occupies almost all the narrative in *Pincher Martin*. With no sublimational music in his mind, Martin devises other means instead to dissolve Nathaniel's code; by means of modifying the linear time. This linear time, according to Kristeva, appertains to the teleological view of the world.¹⁷ Illogical and irrational as religion may appear, it can easily turn into a religious code which establishes in its very illogicality and irrationality an even more teleological view than a scientific code. The semiotic phase of mind warps this linear time which would be called obsessional time by a psychoanalyst because of its mastery over the human being as over the slave.¹⁸ The cyclical and reversible time thus reflects Sammy's inner struggle to extricate himself from subservience to teleology inherent in his two teachers' codes. Georges Bataille interprets teleology as social homogeneity which is best expressed in science and technology.¹⁹ He argues that there are two kinds of heterogeneity which destroys the code of this social homogeneity. One brings about a profound subversion which continues to pursue the emancipation of human lives, while the other, although it may appear to follow the same process, develops a religious power and realizes in its heterogeneity a far more homogeneous code than the one it aims to destroy. According to Bataille, the latter

17 Julia Kristeva, *New Maladies of the Soul*, trans. Ross Guberman (New York: Columbia UP, 1995) 205-06.

18 *New Maladies of the Soul* 206.

19 Georges Bataille, *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970) 340n.

shows the psychological structure of fascism.²⁰ Following this reasoning, Nick's scientific code represents social homogeneity; whereas Miss Pringle's religious code, which always fights against Nick's scientific one, may appear to be heterogeneous and to emancipate the human from their subservience to teleology, but actually develops in its very heterogeneity a far more homogeneity than that of Nick's code. On account of Miss Pringle's vitiated love toward Father Watts-Watt who has an homoerotic tendency, she develops matricidal and infanticidal barrenness resulting in devilish maternal. Miss Pringle's cruel treatment of Sammy therefore forebodes the mental torture by the Nazis upon Sammy during World War II. He suffers from terrible hallucination in the dark cell where Sammy is detained by Dr. Halde. In contrast, Sammy in early boyhood experiences different kind of darkness. When he is left alone in the darkness and frightened of a sudden stop of a tick-tuck of a clock in the bedroom, he has only to hurry across the gutter to the back door of the pub where his mother is working even at midnight. Even when his mother dies and he is adopted by Father Watts-Watt, he is immersed in the bath as in the womb, and takes up a foetal shape in the bed at night. He is still one with his mother, and in the midst of the "mirror stage." In short, Sammy in his infancy and boyhood is not frightened of the dark. Now the dark closet in which he is trapped is far from the womb he was once immersed in. For Sammy, darkness has turned into hell. What has made him frightened of darkness is its suffocating and dissolving force — the devilish maternal:

20 Bataille 348-59, 366-71.

They [the Nazis] had laid there this fragment of human flesh, collapsed in its own cold blood.... I felt upwards for the ceiling and in that moment the fourth step revealed itself. There was a whirlpool which had once been my mind but which now was slipping round, faster and faster; and a story leapt into the centre of it, a story completely remembered, vividly visualized — story of the small cell and the ceiling that came down slowly with all the weight of the world. I was scrabbling at the high wall, but the ceiling was still out of reach and I could not tell. But I knew that there were crushed things hanging from it that stank as the cold scrap in the centre was stinking; and presently I should hear the sound of its descent as it made unbearably small what was too small already, and came merciless down.²¹

That's why he cries out for help, although what appears to be a fragment of human flesh is a damp floorcloth, the dark cell with a fancied descending ceiling an ordinary cupboard. Whether it be Sammy's or Martin's, the hallucination itself is the proof that they cannot distinguish between symbol (the signifier) and reality (the signified). The signified is the suffocating and dissolving force of the vitiated maternal, whereas the signifiers are, in Sammy's case, a fragment of human flesh and the ceiling that is coming down slowly upon him. Sammy temporarily forgets the relationship between the signifier and the signified. Thus, he takes the symbol for reality. In other words, he temporarily loses the symbolic order. The loss of symbolic order is caused by the malfunction of that

21 *Free Fall* 182-83.

Name-of-the-Father which, through the intermediary of the maternal, would help the child to extricate from the mother and to acquire the symbolic order at the Oedipal phase. As it is, Sammy regresses to the "mirror stage," although it no longer gives him peace but horror. Were it not for the sublimational music played in his mind when he is let out of the dark cupboard, Sammy might follow in Christopher Martin's steps.

Dean Jocelin in *The Spire*, who has also suffered from a religious code and never extricated himself from the "mirror stage," finally perceives the same sublimated images as does Sammy. Jocelin's ambition of building a spire apparently reflects his genuine faith in God, but actually reveals his "self-erection and self-fulfilment, a distortion and degradation of God-given creativity."²² It is to be noted that his "self-erection" is traced back to his surreptitious and insatiable lust for Goody, his follower and Pangall's wife. Jocelin deliberately offers Goody as a gift to Roger Mason the master builder to urge him to carry out the impracticable work of erecting the spire, but unwittingly he erects "himself," not the spire. In other words, Jocelin, under God's authority, utilizes the liaison of Goody and Roger to facilitate the building of the spire, with the result that he feels all the more keenly his carnal desire for Goody since he is obliged to alienate himself from her by God's injunction. However, if it is the case that Jocelin is strictly prohibited from marriage or from any sort of consummation of love, such injunction is delivered not so much by God as by the man-made, irrational, religious code whereby he has been trained to be a priest. Father Anselm, who is Jocelin's

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

confessor, disparages him harshly for his inexperienced and unqualified priesthood. Anselm's manner "discourages Jocelin from going to confession."²³ Even when his days are numbered and he sincerely begs Anselm's forgiveness for his sins, Anselm still ignores him. This evil ambience of religious authority has dominated the Cathedral. Like other religious codes Golding has treated in his works, the code of the Cathedral transforms a usual love triangle into an Oedipal one. Jocelin, severed from Goody and all the more deeply sinking into her, spiritually degenerates to the "mirror stage." He has much difficulty in discerning his own image reflected in a metal sheet when he climbs the ladders to the top of the Cathedral on which a spire is to be built:

Someone else was facing him. This creature was framed by the metal sheet that stood against the sky opposite him. For a moment he thought of exorcism, but when he lifted his hand, the figure raised one too. So he crawled across the boards on hands and knees and the figure crawled towards him. He knelt and peered in at the wild halo of hair, the skinny arms and legs that stuck out of a girt and dirty robe. He peered in closer and closer until his breath dimmed his own image and he had to smear it off with his sleeve.²⁴

From the fact that he tries to exorcise the mirror reflection, what exists here is the devilish tormenting Jocelin, not the maternal nurturing him. Fighting against the Oedipal code, Goody as a witch terribly fasci-

23 Margaret Hallissy, "'No Innocent Work': Theology and Psychology in William Golding's *The Spire*," *Christianity and Literature* 47 (1997): 42.

24 William Golding, *The Spire* (London: Faber, 1964) 154-55.

nates Jocelin during her liaison with Roger and much more so after she dies from the abortion of Roger's child. In his daydream, Jocelin feels choking sweetness, and a little later extreme emptiness:

She came towards him naked in her red hair. She was smiling and humming from an empty mouth. He knew the sound explained everything, removed all hurt and all concealment, for this was the nature of the uncountryside. He could not see the devil's face for this was the nature of the uncountryside too; but he knew she was there, and moving towards him totally as he was moving towards her. Then there was a wave of ineffable good sweetness, wave after wave, and an atonement. And then there was nothing.²⁵

Goody's figure moving towards him as he is moving towards her is the equivalent of a mirror reflection of his own figure crawling towards him as he crawls on hands and knees towards the metal sheet. His mirror reflection and Goody's figure are indistinguishable in Jocelin's mind.

The authority of Church, which degenerates Jocelin's spirit to the "mirror stage," commits both matricide and infanticide, as seen in the behaviour of Jack and his hunters in *Lord of the Flies*. Goody is constantly threatened with Jocelin's tacit censure based upon his borrowed authority of Church, which leads to the death of Goody and her child from miscarriage. Over and beyond this, his borrowed authority demands scapegoating, which is supposed to allay the devilish maternal

²⁵ *The Spire* 178.

and to ensure the solidarity of workers. This human sacrifice is Goody's husband Pangall, who is bullied by a band of workers and finally thrown into a pit probably to stabilize the pillar. But the pillars sway and sing, the workers being much more riotous. Roger Mason thoroughly gives up control over them and fears the construction itself. Eventually, Jocelin is assaulted and injured by a group of workers and citizens in revolt against the building of the spire, develops critical symptoms of spinal tuberculosis he has suffered. The authority of Church thus brings about matricidal and infanticidal barrenness, and the resulting devilish maternal.

In his deathbed after such an extreme predicament, Jocelin happens to see a sublimated vision which suddenly sets him free from the devilish maternal; from the "mirror stage." Religious code borrowed by Jocelin disappears and so does the devilish maternal. Here Jocelin is not forbidden from consummation of love, nor does Goody terribly bewitch him. No Oedipal code or Oedipal triangle is to be found. Even though this vision has a connotation of sexual love, the spire and Goody are infinitely sublimated into another dimension:

It was the window, bright and open. Something divided it. Round the division was the blue of the sky. The division was still and silent, but rushing upward to some point at the sky's end, and with a silent cry. It was slim as a girl, translucent. It had grown from some seed of rosecoloured substance that glittered like a waterfall, an upward waterfall. The substance was one thing, that broke all the way to infinity in cascades of exultation that nothing could trammel.²⁶

26 *The Spire* 223.

This dimension of love Jocelin has never attained, for only a short while ago did he still perceive a crude image of the spire and Goody: "He looked up experimentally to see if at this late hour the witchcraft had left him; and there was a tangle of hair, blazing among the stars; and the great club of his spire lifted towards it."²⁷ Jocelin, however, finally understands that the sexual motivation is not incompatible with a genuine religious impulse.²⁸ As for a vision of the appletree, his former one has "a single green shoot at first, then clinging tendrils, then branches, then at last a riotous confusion,"²⁹ or has "a riot of foliage and flowers and overripe, bursting fruit."³⁰ But his final vision is different in quality. Presumably it comes from what he witnessed on one sunny day when he got up from his sickbed and secretly went out by the back way. To his eyes, "there was more to the appletree than one branch," and it was "beyond the wall, bursting up with cloud and scatter, laying hold of the earth and the air, a fountain, a marvel, an appletree."³¹ Thus, his final vision of the appletree just before his death acquires an insight of sublimation that may lead to theological redemption,³² not controlled by any authority of Church.

No other novels by Golding show more effectively the metaphor of a mirror than *Darkness Visible*. The uniqueness of the mirror in this work is its two different types of reflection. One is the illusional reflection of a kind we have discussed so far, but the other is a real image reflected in a glassball: "Matty looked at the glass ball with a touch of

27 *The Spire* 221.

28 Harold Davies, "Moral Choice in the Novels of William Golding," *Moderne Sprachen* 11, 5 (1969): 45.

29 *The Spire* 168.

30 *The Spire* 194.

31 *The Spire* 205.

32 Hallissy 54.

approval since it did not try to say anything and was not, like the huge books, a whole store of frozen speech. It contained nothing but the sun which shone in it, far away. He approved of the sun which said nothing but lay there, brighter and brighter and purer and purer. It began to blaze as when clouds move aside.... He was aware too of a sense of rightness and truth and silence.”³³ Matty the protagonist appreciates the rightness, truth and stillness of this image, but he fails to retain it. When he sees the girl who has been attracting him, the condensation of his breath on the window dims the reflection of the sun in the glass ball.³⁴ This failure derives from his aphrodisia induced by his physically handicapped appearance which necessarily alienates him from women and by the resulting strict abstinence he imposes upon himself under religious authority. After this momentary experience of a real image reflection, he aimlessly walks up the High Street and finds himself in Greenfield Parish Church. But it seems to him “empty of the qualities that lay in the glass ball.”³⁵ The real image is obliterated not only by the alluring sexual love but by its antithesis; the dying tradition and institution of religious authority.³⁶ Matty’s literal-mindedness, which interprets scriptures as real facts in a fundamentalist way, denotes his ignorance of the distinction between the signifier and the signified. He takes symbol for reality, thus losing symbolic order. His loss of symbolic order is attributed to his regress to the “mirror stage.” This regress is metaphorically expressed in a mirror reflection in Mr. Hanrahan’s house. In Hanrahan’s

33 William Golding, *Darkness Visible* (London: Faber, 1979) 47-48.

34 John Coates, “Religious Quest in *Darkness Visible*,” *Renascence: Essays on Value in Literature* 39 (1986): 285.

35 *Darkness Visible* 49.

36 Coates 285.

mirror, Matty sees himself pulled out sideways, squashed down from above. What makes him leave for the outback by himself is his longing for restoring his real image by regaining symbolic order. As aforementioned, symbolic order requires the role of the Name-of-the-Father to have the subject mentally independent of his mother or a mother equivalent, who is in Matty's case any woman he meets with. This mental independence of one's mother or mother equivalent is symbolically called "castration," but even here Matty's ignorance of the distinction between symbol and reality stands in the way. Even when he happens to be nearly or actually castrated by an aborigine Harry Bummer in the desert of the outback, he still takes scriptures saying "Some have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of God" for real facts, and heroically likens himself to this eunuch. His literal-mindedness is not cured but deteriorated by this means. Indeed, after Australian incidents, he continues to put scriptures into a series of practice, until he harms several citizens in the process of his curious rituals. It is not until he throws the Bible away and sets himself free from religious authority that he regains his symbolic order and gets over his literal-mindedness. It is not the authority but two friendly spirits who guide him to genuine religious belief. In his school days, his religious rigorism sent his schoolmate Henderson to suicide, as well as his teacher Pedigree to prison who abhorred Matty for his ugliness and had a paedophiliac liaison with Henderson. In his youth, Matty's oversexed propensity is accelerated by his strict abstinence from the licentious Sophy who, like Miss Aylen, becomes for him a mother equivalent and the devilish as well. She actually develops her devil-like phase, and almost commits infanticide. Matty's mission, as the two spirits suggest, is to prevent this infanticide at the cost of his life. He succeeds in carrying it out and dies in the fire

from which he was “born.” The kidnapped boy is rescued, and so is Sophy from further crime. Matty is not what he was when he condemned the devilish. Now he seeks to sublimate it. Even after his death, his spirit keeps Pedigree from further degradation when it appears as a vision full of sublimated imagery in the reverie of the dying Pedigree.