

MIMESIS, ILLUSION, AND  
ILLUMINATION IN *DARKNESS VISIBLE*  
BY WILLIAM GOLDING

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The characters depicted by William Golding are more or less trapped by extreme "illusions, delusions, confusions" from which they have considerable difficulty extricating themselves. In such predicaments, they lose their identity and become absorbed with infantile fantasies. This regressive situation confines them to a world of mimesis, violence and nondifferentiation — a world devoid of beauty, individuality, or difference. In order to regain the world of beauty, individuality, or difference, they often turn to victimization, a strategy that only makes things worse.

In this essay on *Darkness Visible*, I will discuss the various characters hurled into such a world, with special reference to Matthew Windrove, the Stanhope twins, Sim Goodchild, and Sebastian Pedigree, and attempt to show how their predicaments can be attributed to an inadequacy of the symbolic function installed in their mind.

I

The hallucinatory world into which characters fall is one deprived of difference and closely linked to violence. Once there, many feel ill at ease, and thus aspire to live in a peaceful world rich in difference and individuality. One of the ways to achieve this goal is to make a sacrifice — to unanimously attribute anything disagreeable that pervades the

community to a specific person or thing, and then obliterate or ostracize that scapegoat. This specific person or thing, i.e., the sacrificed, is in some way extraneous to the unanimous, undifferentiating, mimetic force. The extraneousness varies in outward appearance, character, behaviour, way of thinking, etc<sup>1</sup>. Most important, a community replete with mimetic forces has a keen sense of desecrating what little difference there exists among its members. It is not surprising, therefore, that all members of the community seem equally likely to become a sacrificial offering.<sup>2</sup>

Matthew Windrove (Matty) appears from the outset of this novel as a typical scapegoat. Half of his body is covered with horrible scars left by burns suffered during the war. As if his identity broke into fragments amidst the spiritual collapse peculiar to the postwar period, Matty's surname is unstable and referred to in at least thirteen different ways (Windrave, Windrow, Windgraff, Windy, Wildwave, Winsome, Woodrave, Wildwort, Wheelwright, Windgrave, Windrap, Windwood, and Windgrove) by those who meet him, although he is formally named Matthew Septimus Windrove at the hospital where he has undergone surgery after miraculously surviving the aforementioned burns. An orphan by nature and experiencing a tightening union with a nurse, a mother substitute, he is cut off from any access to a father, and therefore to his identity. He encounters Sebastian Pedigree, a father substitute and his homeroom teacher at Foundlings School. Regrettably, however, Pedigree is a notorious pederast, retains the vestige of infantile sexual

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1 René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1989) 18-19.

2 *The Scapegoat* 86.

desire, and lives a perverted hallucination, and is thus unable to function as a father. He fastens on a boy as the object of his desire and goes so far as to give private lessons to Henderson, the handsomest pupil in his class. Naturally, Matty, with half his body scarred by keloid, is abhorred from the very first by Pedigree. Matty then defines the perverted hallucination shared by Pedigree and Henderson as "evil," casting a curse upon Henderson. The result is that Henderson commits suicide, Pedigree is purged from the teaching profession, and Matty is abominated for life by Pedigree. Yet, before long, Matty finds himself deprived of his identity, liable to be trapped in hallucinations, as evidenced by his persistent and gradually deepening queries about personal identity: "Who am I?" "What am I?" and "What am I for?"

His lack of identity is originally caused by his inability to look squarely at his own ruined image. When an infant first stares at his/her own reflected image and discovers his/her self, it marks "the mirror stage," which is a turning point in the developmental stage of an infant's mentality. "The mirror stage" (*le stade du miroir*) is the period in which an infant aged from six to eighteen months puts an end to the fusion with the mother and becomes able to identify the image reflected in the mirror.<sup>3</sup> Before this stage, the infant, fused with the mother and immersed in a world of mimesis and nondifferentiation, cannot distinguish between the self and the mother.

This situation is what Jacques Lacan calls "the imaginary," the essence of which he defines 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

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3 Jacques Lacan, *Écrits I* (Paris: Seuil, 1966) 89-97.

reflections.”<sup>4</sup> This world produces not only relief but also suffocation, which makes the infant feel tempted to mutilate and destroy the mother.<sup>5</sup> Mutilating the mother is none other than mutilating the reflected image of the infant, so that the infant shatters the mirror or else evades it. Matty’s fragmented names suggest this shattered self-image, “the fragmented body (*corps morcelé*).”<sup>6</sup>

The end of “the mirror stage” coincides with “the Oedipus phase” (*le stade de l’Œdipe*), where the father intervenes between the infant and the mother. This intervention could be understood as a symbolic castration. The father breaks their unity, disappointing the child’s desire for the mother. However, the problem with “the Oedipus phase” arises when the infant lapses into a “bisexual identification,” which means, according to Marcia Ian, that the infant, male or female, identifies with both parents: “... a boy in the oedipal phase would not only wish to make love to his mother like his father, but would imagine as well being his mother in order to be loved by his father. We must assume that a girl child would experience an analogously double sexual identification. She would not only wish to be possessed by her father, but to be her father in order to make love to her mother.”<sup>7</sup>

Sergei Pankeiev, psychoanalyzed by Sigmund Freud in “From the History of an Infantile Neurosis,” having witnessed his parents’ coitus in his infancy, identifies with his mother, feels excitement in the anal zone,

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4 Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. David Macey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982) 60.

5 Melanie Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works 1921-1945* (London: Virago, 1991) 308-09.

6 Lacan 93-94. See also Joël Dor, *Introduction à la Lecture de Lacan* (Paris: Denoël, 1985) 99-100.

7 Marcia Ian, *Remembering the Phallic Mother: Psychoanalysis, Modernism,*

and passes a stool.<sup>8</sup> Later, he identifies with his father and urinates when he watches a nursery-maid kneeling on the floor and scrubbing it “with her buttocks projecting and her back horizontal.”<sup>9</sup> In any case, since Sergei mimics his parents’ desire, his desire is a duplicate of the others’ and not his own.

This primal mimetic desire is caused by the difficulty the infant has in passing through the Oedipus phase.<sup>10</sup> For if the father succeeded in separating the infant from its mother (in the case of a female infant, this process is usually natural), the infant would acquire the power to substitute other objects for the desired mother. The child in this way participates in the world of symbols. Since none of the specific symbol can fully satisfy this desire, which has already been suppressed by the father, the symbolic eternally produces different signifiers to fulfill the desire. Hence begins a signifying chain, a chain of differentiation,<sup>11</sup> and the subject thus participates in a differentiated world. On the other hand, if the father uses force to wean the child from the mother, the desire to be unified with her becomes all the stronger, restoring the subject to an imaginary realm where mimesis, hallucination, and violence are prevalent.

The Stanhope twins, central characters along with Matty in this novel, were originally deprived of their mother by their father’s infatua-

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*and the Fetish* (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. P, 1993) 115-16.

8 Sigmund Freud, “From the History of an Infantile Neurosis,” *Case Histories II*, trans. James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979) 318.

9 Freud 332.

10 See, for example, William A. Johnsen, “Myth, Ritual, and Literature after Girard,” *Literary Theory’s Future(s)*, ed. Joseph Natoli (Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1989) 120-22.

11 Lemaire 88.

tion with his mistresses. Normally, a girl will first identify with her mother, then gradually leave her and start to identify with the father. In due course, this identification is also left off as she grows up.<sup>12</sup> Yet, in the case of the Stanhope twins, they leave their father from the start in spite of living with him in the same house, and their unconscious wish to identify with their deprived mother tempts them into the realm of the imaginary. The fact that they are twins symbolically suggests mimesis. In this novel, mimetic symbols are often represented by means of “doublings” and “pairings,” such as “two streets,” “two pubs,” “two shops,” “two trade unions,” “two historical foundations,” etc.<sup>13</sup> Especially Sophy, the younger of the twins, never having stopped identifying with the deprived mother, shows incestuous desires toward her father. It is impossible for Sophy to participate in the symbolic where the signifying chain of differentiation is eternally produced to fulfill her desire, but at most uses the specific symbol, a fixed substitute for the deprived. She identifies with her father’s mistress, mimics her actions, and fetishizes her transistor radio. Sophy’s love affair is not based on her own passion toward her partner, but is characteristic of the type of flirtation carried out by her father’s mistresses.

Toni, the elder sister, with her subjectivity lost in an abstract idealism, involves herself in an international terrorist group, which, bound by its common, mimetic desire, retains neither difference nor individuality. Toni’s action, like Sophy’s, is based on the mimesis of the others’

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12 Melanie Klein 192-93.

13 Virginia Tiger, “William Golding’s *Darkness Visible*: One Mega [Myth] Lith of Modern Fiction,” *William Golding Revisited: A Collection of Original Essays*, ed. B.L. Chakoo (New Delhi: Arnold Publishers, 1989) 74.

desire. Finally, Sophy also becomes a member of this band of terrorists. In contrast with Matty, who, by contemplating the situation in which his mind is entrapped, gradually overcomes the darkness of hallucination, these twin sisters try in vain to break through it by dint of violence and sacrifice. Participating in a criminal act of the terrorists who are planning to raise funds by kidnapping a rich Arab boy as a hostage, Sophy imagines herself cruelly tormenting the boy as a sacrifice in her ever-redoubled darkness of hallucination.

Among those who apparently lead quite a normal life, however, can be witnessed suppressed, shameful fantasies. Besides Sebastian Pedigree, Sim Goodchild the bookseller, and Edwin Bell the successor of Pedigree more or less suffer from innermost dark passions. Sim, a would-be philosopher, furtively keeps lascivious books in his desk, while Edwina and Edwin Bell share a latent inclination for costume perversion. Matty tries to rid these people of their illusions, not because he looks down from a high vantage point but because he himself has lived through the same darkness as theirs. The difference between Matty and the others lies in his objectification of darkness after a thorough investigation of its very nature.

Matty, who in his school days condemned the relations between Pedigree and Henderson and ruined both of them, now comes to the full realization that the condemnation itself was his greatest sin in life. To suppress or exclude the inner darkness is nothing less than to dismiss the heterogeneous element as a sacrifice and inflict unanimous violence upon it. Moreover, this kind of violence will eventually return to the sacrificer, with its power redoubled.<sup>14</sup> Matty's condemnatory violence has

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14 This phenomenon is what René Girard refers to as "the sacrificial crisis." See

caused Henderson's death and Pedigree's imprisonment, but this very violence toward the victims returns to him as an aggrandized dark force. From a microscopic point of view, Matty has violently excluded his inner darkness, which, far from extinct, gains force and engulfs him. Just as in the case of Simon in *Lord of the Flies*, Matty is able to perceive that it is his own excluded darkness (weirdness) that attacks him. He therefore decides not to suppress or ignore this darkness, but to allow himself to be engulfed by it. By so doing, he illuminates its true nature and tries to symbolize it through objectification. This process represents a successful break between child and mother, the shift from the imaginary to the symbolic, whereas the suppression of darkness (weirdness), the father's coercive alienation of the mother from the child, as mentioned above, represents a redoubled darkness.

A pack of boys in *Lord of the Flies*, evacuated from their motherland and marooned on an uninhabited island, and Christopher Martin in *Pincher Martin*, with his passionate desire for Mary intercepted by Nathaniel who condemns him to death, are both augmenting more than ever their inner darkness. So are Sammy in *Free Fall* and Jocelin in *The Spire*, both of whom are completely alienated from those that they love.

## II

From what I have discussed above, the core problem lies in whether the inner darkness can be excluded or not. This darkness characterizes the pre-mirror stage, i.e., the imaginary stage where the subject merges with the mother, resulting in a state of mind such as mimesis, hallucina-

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René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1989) 49.

tion, or violence. The strength of mimetic desire depends upon the degree to which the subject mimics the parents' desires. By "hallucination," I mean a state of mind in which symbol and metaphor are taken literally by the subject. In other words, the subject regards them as reality. Fallen into the imaginary, Anika Lemaire observes, the signifier is "taken in the literal sense, outside of any operation referring it to its symbolic dimension.... The cause of this incapacity to distinguish between signifier and signified is ... due to an unfavourable outcome of the Oedipus."<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, violence is, as mentioned before, derived from the impulse to mutilate and destroy the suffocating mother.

Matty, who avoids looking straight at his own image by covering his face with long hair and a broadbrim hat, takes violent action and gets into trouble with the police when he "takes biblical passages out of context and applies them literally,"<sup>16</sup> imitating Christ, John, and Ezekiel. As early as his school days, when he curses Henderson and throws his gym shoe from the window in a literal enactment of the Old Testament curse: "Over Edom have I cast out my shoe" (60: 8; 108: 9), he unconsciously inflicts lethal violence upon Henderson, who falls to his death on the very spot where the gym shoe was flung. Thus, hallucination produces mimesis and violence in Matty's mind.

As is characteristic of those who suffer from hallucination, Matty's thinking lacks symbolic function and he is inclined to take every symbol and metaphor literally, as expressed in the following passage: "...his *literal-mindedness*, high-mindedness and *ignorance of the code* ensured

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15 Lemaire 86.

16 Bernard F. Dick, *William Golding* (Boston: Twayne, 1987) 104.

that he became an outcast”(my italics).<sup>17</sup> Matty’s symbolic disorder originates in his failure to grasp his own reflected image in the mirror because of his abominated keloid. He tries to avert his eyes from the scar, only to be recaptured and transfixed by its disagreeable phase. Such disagreeableness is equivalent to what Julia Kristeva names as “the abjection” (“*l’abjection*”)—defilement which is “jettisoned from the ‘symbolic system.’”<sup>18</sup> His keloid causes Matty to regress from the mirror stage into the imaginary, where he mutilates his image reflected in the mirror, and falls into a state of “the fragmented body” (“*corps morcelé*”).<sup>19</sup> Clearly, his physiognomic flaw goes beyond the physical level, as has already been pointed out to him by the holy spirits in his dream: “[The spirits] showed: Know that we see your spiritual face and it so badly scarred by a sin that we have to summon up great courage to look at you” (93).

Most of the female characters of this novel avert their eyes from his keloid, feeling horrified and disgusted. They loathe Matty’s weirdness and try to eradicate him, but like Matty himself, they are also captured and entrapped by the very weirdness they have harshly rejected: “...the desire to be weird was like a taste in the mouth, a hunger and thirst after weirdness” (132). In this sense, Mr. Hanrahan’s efforts are meaningful in that he is prepared to accept and objectify his own ugly reflection in the mirror, neither ignoring nor mutilating it. Mr. Hanrahan, owner of a sweets factory where Matty works, is “about half Matty’s

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17 William Golding, *Darkness Visible* (London: Faber and Faber, 1983) 29. All further citations and references are indicated parenthetically in the text.

18 Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1982) 65.

19 Lacan 94.

height and four times his width" (58), as much a bad-looking man as Matty. But, the fundamental difference between Hanrahan and Matty is that the former constantly trains himself to contemplate his whole body in a peculiar mirror which is designed to emphasize his extraordinary ugliness. This is how Hanrahan manages to symbolize his most detestable aspects that would otherwise be kept hidden and alienated from the symbolic system. This effort of symbolization keeps him from falling into the imaginary — the state of "*corps morcelé*." He thus acquires peace of mind:

But by the time he had said that, Matty was rapt, gazing at the glass on the three other walls. It was all mirror, even the backs of the doors, and it was not just plain mirrors, it distorted so that Matty saw himself half a dozen times, pulled out sideways and squashed down from above; and Mr. Hanrahan was the shape of a sofa. "Ha," said Mr Hanrahan. "You're admiring my bits of glass I see. Isn't that a good idea for a daily mortification of sinful pride?..." (59)

It is this "sinful pride" that causes Matty to suppress or eliminate his weirdness. Matty has not yet reached the stage of objectifying his weirdness when he dashes out of Hanrahan's house after his face has elicited screams from Hanrahan's daughters. His behaviour subsequent to this flight also evinces his symbolic disorder. After jumping into his car and shutting the door on their screams, his literal-mindedness drives him to recite the whole of the Revelation of St. John word for word, and as if to put into practice the biblical quotation: "Some have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of God," he is nearly castrated

by the aborigine Harry Bummer during his stay in the outback of Australia. Needless to say, this wish to be a eunuch originates in his unconscious desire to be liberated from Oedipal unity, which is normally effected by the father's intervention, i.e., the symbolic castration. Yet, his experience in Australia shows us that, here too, castration is "taken in the literal sense."<sup>20</sup> The very fact that symbol and reality remain indistinguishable in his mind demonstrates the underdevelopment of his symbolic order. Not that he resigns himself to this impasse for ever. He no longer holds on to the literal faithfulness to the Scripture, but adds to it his unique mysticism, or throws the Old Testament far out into the sea. By so doing, he tries to create as much difference as possible out of his mimetic behaviour.

Concerning the biblical passage: "But if a man is a cause of stumbling to one of these little ones who have faith in me, it would be better for him to have a millstone hung round his neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18: 6), although Matty identifies "one of these little ones" with Henderson and walks into a slimy bog, completely submerging himself with clanking wheels around his waist and a lamp lifted above his head, it is evident that his behaviour deviates somewhat from the Scripture. This deviation includes the substitution of the wheels for a millstone, a stinking bog for the sea, a lighted lamp above his head all through the submergence, and the peculiar ritual of heaving the lamp "four times at four points of the compass" (76). Here lies a different sort of world from a biblical one. This kind of ritual might be the equivalent of "the painful wheel of rebirth in Buddhism,"<sup>21</sup> or, an-

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20 Lemaire 86.

21 Dick 104.

thropologically, a "rite of passage,"<sup>22</sup> but it is more crucial to examine the components of the bog than to identify the origin of this paganish secret. This bog is filled with a sense of "abjection" or "weirdness": fetid, warm, and replete with both vegetable and animal decay, numerous frogs, phosphorescent fungi, flames from marsh gas, plants living on insects, a huge lizard, leeches attaching themselves to feed on flesh, and the like. Amidst such weirdness, Matty will not suppress or eliminate, but will instead clarify, each detestable component that could otherwise be discarded from the symbolic system. In this sense, Matty partly shares his experience with Mr. Hanrahan. For after this experience, he becomes able to regard his keloid as just another detestable element and therefore can shed a luminous light upon it, as upon a fetid bog. Thus, Matty achieves the same kind of equanimity as Mr. Hanrahan: "For certainly he now moved easily among women as among men, looked and was struck no more by the one than the other, and would not have avoided the Wanton with her cup of abominations in fear for his peace of mind or virtue" (76). For Matty and Hanrahan symbolize the weirdness as much as possible, even though it always threatens to destroy the symbolic system. The symbolic must therefore be comprehensively differentiated in order not to be persecuted by the weirdness. The more exclusive the symbolic, the more destructive the weirdness. The exclusive differentiation of the symbolic is a mere counterpart to the nondifferentiation of the weirdness.<sup>23</sup> This is tantamount to saying that only through the compre-

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22 Don Crompton, *A View from the Spire: William Golding's Later Novels* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985) 110.

23 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, et al. (London: Athlone, 1990) 311.

hensive symbolic function can the infant successfully extricate itself from the mother, since “excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse, etc.),” as Julia Kristeva notes, “stem from the maternal and/or the feminine, of which the maternal is the real support.”<sup>24</sup> According to Kristeva, not only menstrual blood but also excrement is attributed to maternal authority, under which infants receive sphincteral training.<sup>25</sup> She refers to the symbolic system as “the symbolic,” the symbol-destroying elements (the weirdness) as “the semiotic.” The symbolic, she observes, gradually degenerates into a mere “code”—the exclusive differentiation of the symbolic. The semiotic, she says, has to fight against such a code.<sup>26</sup>

One step closer to symbolization, Matty is now secure from his once destructive action toward citizens by taking the metaphoric expression of the Scripture in the literal sense. When he as a surrogate victim rescues the kidnapped Arab boy from the international terrorists, his self-sacrifice of burning himself with gasoline flames is not so much a mere imitation of the sacrificial offering in *The Revelation of St. John*, but rather a voluntary activity. As discussed before, the group, whose members are obsessed with the mother and unable to free themselves from the imaginary, has a common trait of mimesis (nondifferentiation), hallucination, and violence. This violence shows itself in annihilating the suffocating mother, and with it a series of the disagreeable over which she has special authority. For this purpose, with their mimetic and unani-

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24 *Powers of Horror* 71.

25 *Powers of Horror* 71.

26 Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia UP, 1984) 83-84.

mous force, the group arbitrarily chooses from amongst itself a specific member or a component as a scapegoat if it is, even in a minor way, distinct from the others, and imposes upon it every possible disagreeableness pertaining to the group, then violently excludes it in a ritualistic fashion. If there is originally something abject about the member or the component, it becomes especially easy prey to the group. After this ritual of dismissal, the group temporarily restores an exclusive symbolic order. But, the more exclusive the differentiation of the symbolic order, the stronger the undifferentiating force of the abjection. On account of what Girard terms "the sacrificial crisis," the abjection forced upon the victim might return at any moment to the sacrificer, so that the group incurs more than ever the symbolic disorder and nondifferentiation of the imaginary until the foundation of the group breaks down. This means that if the victim itself were not forced to be a victim but were instead self-sacrificial, the victim would play a positive rôle in confounding the sacrificial purpose. It is none other than Matty who takes this rôle upon himself. As for Matty, any abjection inflicted upon him can be woven into a symbolic texture, illuminated by his inner light. The more abjection, therefore, the more illumination. In the following scene, Matty, already burnt to death as a surrogate victim in the ball of gasoline flames, is revived clad in a golden luminosity:

It was at this point that Sebastian Pedigree found he was not dreaming. For the golden immediacy of the wind altered at its heart and began first to drift upwards, then swirl upwards then rush upwards round Matty. The gold grew fierce and burned. Sebastian watched in terror as the man before him was consumed, melted, vanished like a guy in a bonfire; and the face was no longer

two-tone but gold as the fire and stern and everywhere there was a scene of the peacock eyes of great feathers and the smile round the lips was loving and terrible. This being drew Sebastian towards him so that the terror of the golden lips jerked a cry out of him.... (265)

Golding pictures this kind of transformation from abjection to luminosity in other works as well. In *The Inheritors*, Lok the Neanderthal man, deprived of his wife and daughter by the new people, sheds silvery, glistening tears. In *Lord of the Flies*, Simon, slaughtered by a demented pack of boys, lies derelict on the midnight beach, his whole body surrounded by eerie animalcula, which are nevertheless transformed into brilliance.

### III

Sebastian Pedigree, no less deeply than Matty, sinks into the darkness. But, unlike Matty, he continues to hang about the heart of darkness as the basest of pederasts. Matty, who caused Henderson's suicide, is largely responsible for Pedigree's present situation. Now, a revived Matty expiates his crime by illuminating Pedigree's darkness as well as his own. As Bernard F. Dick observes, the fact that Matty advances toward Pedigree in the shape of a golden peacock means Pedigree will presently be transformed into gold and leave this world for eternity. Dick explains as follows: "In Christian iconography, the peacock symbolizes the resurrection because its plumage renews itself annually. The 'eyes' that Pedigree sees are the iridescent spots in the peacock's tail that have been variously interpreted as symbolic of eternity and Christ's wounds. They also suggest the *cauda pavonis* ("tail of the

peacock”), an important concept in medieval alchemy. The *cauda pavonis* expressed the rainbow colors that appeared near the end of the alchemic process....” Gold is thus “the goal at which alchemy aimed.”<sup>27</sup>

Pedigree’s idiosyncrasy derives from the first experience of Sergei Pankeiev in “From the History of an Infantile Neurosis.” This failure in Oedipal separation also accounts for the behaviour of the Stanhope twins, Sim Goodchild, the Bells, as well as Matty in his early period, since they all share the first or the second experience of Sergei. The bookseller Sim Goodchild cherished the Stanhope twins in their childhood as if they were his own daughters. He might have seen the innocent light in them: “...and Sophy was so pretty and so friendly — good morning Mr Goodchild, how is Mrs Goodchild? Yes it is isn’t it? There was no doubt about it, the Stanhope twins shone in Greenfield like a light” (213). As they grew up, they gradually separated from Sim, and several years later Sophy was revealed as a typical decadent: “She was wearing the white sweatshirt with BUY ME stencilled on the front and really, thought Sim, nothing else under it, nothing else whatever....” (243) while Tony participates in organized violence on a worldwide scale. Even more shocking to Sim was the proof positive of obscenity hidden in their vacant room when he chanced to visit it. He learned of the existence of others who were breaking up the old unity that existed between himself and Sophy. Their father-daughter relationship suddenly vanished and was immediately replaced by a new system in which Sim was repelled from the unity between Sophy and the others as though he were forced to leave the mother in the Oedipal phase. This forced alienation inspires all the more his longing for her. In order to unify with her, he furtively mimes her

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27 Dick 112.

partners' desire. Since the partners' desire is of the meanest kind, so is Sim's. The Bells and the Stanhope twins are typical examples of this mimetic desire. Edwina and Edwin Bell duplicate each other's desire in every aspect, to say nothing of the exchange of their costume. The Stanhope twins, on the other hand, appeal to violence to break up the original mimesis with which they were born. According to Girard, it is the very absence of difference that causes the conflict between the twins.<sup>28</sup> In her childhood, Sophy for the first time finds herself different from Tony when a stone hurled by Sophy hits by chance one of the dabchicks swimming behind their mother, killing it on the spot. By the same token, Tony leaves Sophy's world once she joins the international terrorists. Thus, the Stanhope twins have a keen awareness of mimesis and its disagreeable phases, and violently reject them, aspiring instead toward an exclusive cleanliness, beauty, and difference — corporeal in Sophy's case, spiritual in Tony's. In actuality, however, differentiation forced by violence results in the disappearance of difference, as Sophy herself remarks that "the way towards simplicity is through outrage" (167). For Sophy, the dabchick's death does not alter the world in the least. A few days later when she returns to the same place, the dabchicks "*were the same as ever*" (108; my italics). "The mother was swimming away down the brook with the string of chicks behind her.... She was not frightened or anything — just a bit wary" (108). Tony's world also loses its difference from Sophy's when she finally recruits Sophy into the terrorist group. However, this absence of difference produces a new conflict between them. Sophy again feels indignant toward Tony as the latter elopes with Sophy's lover immediately after

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28 *The Scapegoat* 92.

their failure to kidnap an Arab boy. The conflict between Sophy and Tony therefore remains unresolved. Exclusive differences (binary opposites, for example) exist side by side in a sheer absence of difference. As has been pointed out, “doublings” and “pairings” often appear in this novel, but binary opposites are no less prevalent. These opposed doubles are shown not only in Matty’s half-damaged face, Sophy’s darkness inside and light outside, the Stanhope twins “as different as day and night,” etc., but also in the very structure of this novel, such as the opposition between Part I and Part II. In Part III, however, these binary opposites gradually transform into comprehensive differentiation.<sup>29</sup>

It is their use of violence in creating difference that keeps them within a vicious circle. The more victims, the less efficacious their strategy. Just as in *Lord of the Flies* the mob violence inflicted upon sacrificial offerings returns to the group of sacrificers and disorganizes it, so will the terrorist group become increasingly self-destructive, which can be gathered from the unsuccessful outcome of their scheme.

It matters most, therefore, how to create difference and symbolic order, as Matty does, without recourse to violence. It is inconceivable that Sim Goodchild should exactly follow Matty’s example, but his predicaments are no less serious than those of Matty or Pedigree, his crime no less grave than that of the Stanhope twins. What drags him into the darkness of the imaginary is his seeking after ideal beauty to the utter exclusion of ugliness. He has neglected his invalid, old wife as one of the disagreeable, while thirsting after the beauty of metaphysical thought, as well as after that of the Stanhope twins. Exclusive beauty at the expense of ugliness never liberates Sim from ugliness itself. Sudden-

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29 Tiger 74.

ly overcome by an itch at the tip of his nose during a mystical séance presided over by Matty, Sim's ugliness attains its peak when, unable to move his hands because they were being held firm, he screws up his face, vainly trying to reach the tip of his nose with his cheeks, lips, and tongue, until at last he bends down and rubs his nose on the wooden surface. Should Sim be delivered out of abjection into illumination, he would need to devote himself to what he deems abject — his invalid wife — by taking the greatest possible care of her, just as Matty willingly traversed the dirtiest bog, or himself became a ball of gasoline flames. If Sim had ever enjoyed the crystalline light emanating from a scrying glass which has been displayed in Sim's shopwindow since his father's time, he might have realized much earlier the same luminosity in his mind. As it is, this glass is in due course displaced by children's books "as a bait for the Stanhope twins" (195), and his furtive motivations take effect. The illumination of the glass disappears once for all from his sight. Matty's deep emotion when he first notices the brilliance of this glass ball in Sim's shop is described in the following passage:

Matty looked at the glass ball with a touch of 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. It moved as he moved but soon he did not move, could not move. It dominated without effort, a torch shone straight into his eyes, and he felt queer, not necessarily unpleasantly so but queer all the same — unusual. He was aware too of a sense of rightness and truth and silence. But

this was what he later described to himself as a feeling of waters rising; and still later was described to him and for him by Edwin Bell as entering *a still dimension of otherness* in which things appeared or were shown to him. (47-48)

The reason this scrying glass so powerfully appeals to his soul is “simply because it does not *say* anything, is not made up of a whole store of frozen speech as books or churches seem to be, but simply *is* — glowing, illuminating, transforming.”<sup>30</sup> It is not the univocal code (“fetish” in Kristeva’s terms),<sup>31</sup> but the infinitely multivocal symbol, which is equivalent to the conch with its beautiful gleam and multivocal pattern in *Lord of the Flies*. The conch gradually loses its brightness as the pack of boys gets bewitched by a sow, until it is brutally broken into fragments. Similarly, the glass ball, with its brilliant light shining out from its infinitely multilateral surfaces, vanishes simultaneously as Sim gets enamoured of the Stanhope twins, with the result that the symbolic world recedes from him.

Matty was still clouded in an imaginary darkness when he first saw this glass ball in Sim’s shop. In those days, Matty took the signifier “in the literal sense, outside of any operation referring it to its symbolic dimension.”<sup>32</sup> His literal-mindedness was, as Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor put it, “anti-symbolic.”<sup>33</sup> It is only natural that the illumination of the glass ball should have been “a still dimension of otherness” for

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30 Crompton 106.

31 *Revolution in Poetic Language* 83.

32 Lemaire 86.

33 Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor, *William Golding: A Critical Study* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985) 281.

him. This illumination from the world of another dimension, i.e., from the symbolic world, belongs to the lamplight over Matty's head while traversing the bog, or to the fierce, golden light in which he was enshrouded when resurrected.

Illusion prevents many people from seeing this illumination. They are more or less obsessed with the darkness of the imaginary, which is succinctly described by Sim toward the end of this novel: "We're all mad, the whole damned race. We're wrapped in illusions, delusions, confusions about the penetrability of partitions, we're all mad and in solitary confinement" (261). Some of them might employ more and more violence as a means of breaking down the partitions. Yet, since this novel implies that any group maintained by sacrificial offerings will eventually self-destruct, we could not share such an eschatological view that the acts of sacrificial violence will unboundedly spread throughout the world, any more than *Lord of the Flies* could be interpreted as utterly pessimistic.<sup>34</sup> The community of sacrificers is all the more disorganized for its successive use of scapegoats. So far as Golding's works are concerned, a sacrifice is not so much a system for maintaining the community, but rather a self-sacrifice to nullify the demands of a community that requires such victims. Moreover, in his works, the scapegoat refuses to be sacralized, because "to sacralize the victim is to sacralize violence."<sup>35</sup> Matty may at first be obedient to the injunctions of the Testament, and later, to that of the holy spirits, but in due course becomes independent of these

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34 See Y. Sugimura, "Self-Destructive Community and the Improbability of War in *Lord of the Flies*," *Studies in English Literature: English Number* (1994): 47-64.

35 Andrew J. Mckenna, *Violence and Difference* (Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1992) 203.

sacred imperatives, voluntarily making a sacrifice of himself, for he knows exactly how susceptible he is to victimization — not because of his sacredness but because of his abject scar. No doubt, the kidnapped Arab boy and Matty share a certain purity that conforms to the criteria of the sacred scapegoat declared in The Revelation of St. John: “These are men who did not defile themselves with women, for they have kept themselves chaste, and they follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been ransomed as the firstfruits of humanity for God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their lips; they are faultless” (14: 4). Yet, in fact, both Matty and the Arab boy are abject characters with respect to their baffled sexual desire, which should not be sacralized by any biblical subject. Matty, whose sexuality is “in direct proportion to his unattractiveness,” is totally despised by women, until he defiles himself in a wet dream about Sophy. As for the Arab princeling abducted by terrorists, Sophy imagines that he is tied to the stinking toilet, and castrated by her with a knife thrust into his erect cock. No less miserable is a climactic scene in which Matty wallows in a mass of flames in order to rescue the kidnapped boy.

#### IV

As we have seen so far, a triad of mimesis, hallucination, and violence threads through this novel. Some characters nervously exclude this trinity in search of difference, beauty, and illumination, only to be trapped by the very weirdness they have excluded, unable to extricate themselves from it. Her unrivaled beauty and glamour makes Sophy abominate the weirdness and at the same time become obsessed with it. After making love with a passing motorist, she has a queer, mixed feeling of extreme hatred and extreme fascination toward what Kristeva refers

to as "excrement and its equivalents." Henceforth, she becomes more and more interested in sexual perversion. Similarly, Sebastian Pedigree has a peculiar predilection for young Adonises, and is disgusted with an ugly boy like Matty. Nonetheless, the excluded ugliness haunts him in the form of the stinking public laboratory that strangely fascinates him.

Both Tony and Sim Goodchild aspire after the ideal of abstract beauty, the former realizing it as a political extremist, the latter as an amateur philosopher. But Tony's idealism deteriorates into abject terrorism, Sim's into pornographic voyeurism. Those who eradicate disagreeable reality are haunted by the very disagreeable.

The process of eradicating the disagreeable is executed by means of victimization. Pedigree and the class in his charge are the first victimizers of Matty, who in turn victimizes Pedigree and Henderson. Sim victimizes his invalid wife by longing for the beauty of the Stanhope twins, who, as terrorists, victimize an Arab princeling as well as the people at large, and these people at large, particularly women, seem to secure their peace and welfare by eradicating Matty and Pedigree. When Matty works in a sweets factory, the women demand his dismissal simply because his appearance causes the cream to go sour, and the ladies are eager to scratch out the eyes of Pedigree because of his perversion. In the end, Tony victimizes Sophy in eloping with Sophy's lover. All characters in this novel, therefore, have the possibility of both victimizing the others and being victimized by them. The victimizing action bears witness to the inadequacy of the symbolic function, which ought to be as comprehensive as possible.

The more comprehensive the symbolic system, the less frequent the victimizing behaviour. Matty, with his superior symbolizing capability, renders the victimization meaningless when he takes upon himself the

rôle of the most abject existence ever victimized. Thanks to Matty, Pedigree and an Arab princeling are liberated from their humiliating persecution, and Matty the surrogate victim can transform abject persecution into luminosity. Therefore, self-sacrifice, so far as the subject is endowed with an inclusive symbolic function like Matty, is important for its ability to nullify the victimization. Otherwise, the self-sacrifice would simply deteriorate into masochism.

Sophy, mortified and humiliated more than ever by Tony's elopement with Sophy's hoodlum lover, whose abduction scheme is broken down by Matty, is for the first time victimized and thrust into the sheer darkness that Matty once experienced:

She turned away from the boat and the fire and began to pick her way back along the towpath, where there was now nothing visible but darkness. "I shall tell. I was used. They'll have nothing on me.... I've been very foolish my lord I'm sorry I can't help crying...." (253-54)

Should any redemption be in store for Sophy, it would be crucial for her to develop a much more inclusive symbolic system to illuminate the darkness.