

Self and Predicament in William Golding's Fiction*

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I

The vision in William Golding's fiction is created where the "self" conflicts with the "law" of the outer world. The real world and its law are sometimes completely excluded from the character's self, and a series of symbols takes their place. Consequently, the characters cannot distinguish symbol from fact. Such symbolic disorder is related to their rebellious attitude toward God, and yet these same rebels have a tendency to submit to Him. Their vision and language reflect this contradiction. The plot is all the more complicated for the violence of conflict. The fierce struggle between "self" and "law," therefore, enhances the artistic value of the novel.

Some characters, on the other hand, finally realize in their vision the perfect harmony between "self" and "law." It seems to me, however, that what occupies Golding's mind most is not so much the final goal, as the process in which imperfect human beings, suffering from inner contradictions, produce various illusions, delusions, and hallucinations. It is this process that my argument tries to clarify mainly through Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis.

In terms of Lacan's theory, I will refer to the "Name-of-the-Father," the "signifying chain," and "metonymy." The "Name-of-the-Father" is the symbolic function of the father, which is not only the basis of the symbolic order but also the basis of every order and law ;

above all, the law of God. At a certain phase in the child's development, the father separates the child from the mother, disappointing the child's desire for her. This is, as it were, the symbolic castration by the father, the intervention of what Jacques Lacan calls *Nom-du-Père*; the "Name-of-the-Father."¹ Thanks to the "Name-of-the-Father"—the symbol of the father's function, the child is led to the world of symbolic order, the order of language, and furthermore to the world of law which includes prohibition and injunction. Thus, the child can acquire the symbolic order and accept law.² Many of Golding's heroes lack this "Name-of-the-Father." Hence symbolic confusion—the isolation of symbol from fact. Symbols, dissociated from reality, connect with one another to form a signifying chain, in which one component of the chain is a metonymy to another.³ Characters are pursued, trapped, and bound by this chain in the form of vision. This situation is sometimes tragic, sometimes comical. Golding's skill proves its worth when he portrays these predicaments into which his main characters are thrown.

II

Pincher Martin is a peculiar novel which vividly depicts the momentary vision of a drowning sailor named Christopher Hadley Martin, an officer in the Royal Navy. Attempting to throw overboard his friend and colleague Nathaniel Walterson out of pure jealousy, Martin himself falls by an inopportune torpedo attack. He is already drowned as early as in the third paragraph of the first chapter. The rest of this novel is all Martin's vision except the coda of a few pages. In his hallucination, he struggles to survive, waiting for rescue on a tiny island. The fact of his death is consistently excluded from his hallucination. But there is a more complicated fact. From fragmentary flashbacks showing Martin's past, he has a pathologically strong sexual desire for Mary Lovell, who has been engaged to Nathaniel. But Martin is alienated from the union of Nathaniel and Mary, as if he were

their child. It is this painful actuality, as well as his death, that Martin excludes from his mind. Into this space devoid of actuality, various symbols penetrate one after another, creating numerous hallucinations. Once the realities are excluded, the symbols take their place, and they themselves become realities for Martin. The rocks in the middle of the sea are actually his teeth which his tongue touches, but he persistently shuts this fact out of his mind. If he clearly realized that rocks symbolize his teeth, he would have to admit that he is dead. He, therefore, consciously destroys the symbolic order of rocks and teeth. Now that the symbolic order is broken, there is no distinguishing between symbol and reality. Lobsters and hands, the decaying rock and the old aching tooth, are entirely merged together in Martin's consciousness. Since there is no distinction between symbols and facts, Martin lives the symbols as though they were facts. Each time a symbol encroaches upon his mind, he mistakes it for reality, and tries his best to exclude or destroy it. Each time he excludes it, another symbol comes. Thus, symbols connect with one another to form the "signifying chain," in which one component is a "metonymy" to another.

To show an example of this metonymic function of vision, another repressed fact must be considered. As mentioned before, Martin is expelled from the sexual relationship that exists between Nathaniel and Mary :

Because you fathomed her mystery, you have a right to handle her transmuted cheap tweed ; because you both have made a place where I can't get ; because in your fool innocence you've got what I had to get or go mad.⁴

I will refer to this kind of experience as "castration" for convenience sake. Martin tries as hard as possible to repress this fact, but it floats up into his consciousness with extremely painful remembrances. He pictures the copulation in his mind, feeling an ever growing desire for Mary. Yet his lust is frustrated by her resolute attitude of refusal. Because it is Nathaniel himself who gets Mary to be so determined as

to refuse Martin, he is symbolically castrated by Nathaniel. Moreover, Nathaniel has a strong belief in God. Hence, in Martin's mind, Nathaniel overlaps with God, reminding Martin of his cruel master hidden in the dark room under the churchyard. Castration is, thus, identified with death sentence, as we could gather also from Nathaniel's straightforward words predicting Martin's fate: "... because in only a few years you will be dead" (72). In this way, once castration becomes closely bound up with death, both of them are excluded from Martin's mind, to be replaced by numerous symbols. A series of symbols—encrusted barnacles, sea-gulls, sea anemones, lobsters, medical treatment, thunderstorms, hurricanes, as well as God—is the substitution for Nathaniel. Furthermore, even Nathaniel might be a substitution for something else. It might be the master he met behind the coffin in the midnight cellar when he was a child, or his father who was "like a mountain with the thunder and lightning playing round its head" (144). In any case, what castrates him forms a metonymic relationship of a signifier to another signifier. He fights against every kind of bullying. These persecutors successively encroach upon his consciousness and try to eat him. Now he is bitten, now he bites. The repetition of "eat" and "eaten" continues to the end. Martin devours limpets, mussels, sea anemones, and watches for the meat of seals. But after eating his fill, he is poisoned by sea anemones. He is in the situation of being "eaten." The following illusion of medical treatment is supposed to turn a possible defeat into victory:

Smells. Formalin. Ether. Meth. Idioform. Sweet chloroform. Iodine. Sights. Chromium. White sheets. White bandages. High windows. Touches. Pain, Pain, Pain. (142)

But these very remedies involve the persecutor "Pain," which Martin *accepts* in order to *reject* the same persecutor of food poisoning.

Martin's last blasphemous words "I shit on your heaven," if literally interpreted, can be understood as his dauntless challenge to his persecutor. But, from the point of view of psychological repression, we could read quite another meaning. According to Freud, "shitting

on God" means giving Him a baby.⁵ Here is, on the one hand, a heroic figure of Martin bravely fighting against God, but on the other, his debased existence that has accepted castration. Martin's ambivalent attitude toward God—hatred and love—can be witnessed also in his feeling toward Nathaniel:

There was a desperate amazement that anyone so good as Nat, so unwillingly loved for the face that was always rearranged from within, for the serious attention, for love given without thought, should also be so quiveringly hated as though he were the only enemy. There was amazement that to love and to hate were now one thing and one emotion. (103)

Moreover, Martin is secretly anxious to be separated from his insatiable lust for Mary by submitting to God's punishment, as is partly gathered from his casual monologue: "I am chasing after—a kind of peace" (105). A pause in the middle of this sentence is of great significance. Here is clearly represented his ambivalent states of mind. He might be chasing after Mary, but Mary has disappeared for a moment from his mind, and "a kind of peace" occurs to him instead. This means that in Martin's mind there is an unconscious wish to restore symbolic order and law.

Thus, rejection and acceptance of God's law—the two antagonistic states of mind—interact with each other in weaving complicated plots in Christopher Martin's hallucination.⁶

III

Early in *Lord of the Flies*, "hunting a pig" is a symbol of the job of providing food, but Jack's selfish desire begins to violate this symbolic order. For Jack, "hunting" has ceased to be a symbol of anything else. It has become the hunting itself, since his role of providing food, as well as keeping the fire going, has already been shut out of his mind. It is Ralph who insists on the order, the symbolic order of "hunting" and

"the job of providing food." But, in the following scene, Ralph also excludes the reality of "providing food," and there remains in his mind only the symbol "hunting." This symbol, however, turns into a new reality for him. Ralph, who makes much of the order, contradicts himself here :

Ralph talked on, excitedly. "I hit him all right. The spear stuck in. I wounded him !" He sunned himself in their (the other boys') new respect and felt that hunting was good after all. "I walloped him properly. That was the beast, I think !"⁷

The "hunting" symbol gradually traps almost every member of the boys, creating a signifying chain of new realities. The hunting of the pig is replaced by that of the beast, which is further replaced by that of Simon, Piggy, and nearly of Ralph. Thus, the signifying chain spreads all over the island. Ralph furthermore contradicts himself when he still adheres to the order and speaks out after having "hunted" Simon : "Which is better, *law* and rescue, or *hunting* and breaking things up ?" (199 ; italics mine) Ralph deliberately represses the signifier "hunting" and persists in the "law" by means of holding the conch, which is "the fragile, shining beauty of the shell" (200)—the "shell" of democracy and social order, even of God.

Ralph, however, can no longer repress the signifier by dint of the law when Piggy is "hunted," the conch breaking to pieces. Finally, Ralph himself falls victim to "hunters." But the law once again appears when he is almost "hunted" by the other members. The signifier "hunting" is temporarily repressed by the law outside the island, the order of a naval officer. Nevertheless, the signifying chain continues to spread beyond the island. The following words casually uttered by the officer betray altogether his self-contradiction :

"I should have thought that a pack of British boys—you're all British aren't you?—would have been able to put up a better show than that—I mean—" (222)

The "hunting" signifier has already caught this officer.⁸ While admon-

ishing the boys against "hunting," he himself prepares for nuclear war. Thus, in this novel, the signifying chain burdens all the characters with "hunting" vision.

As I have already pointed out, although the character, who suffers from symbolic disorder, tends to possess his mother and exclude the "Name-of-the-Father"—the symbol of the father's function, he unconsciously wishes to call for the father's function to bring him the order, the injunction, and the law. The breakdown of the symbolic relationship between "hunting a pig" and "providing food" is occasioned by the boys' fulfilling their lust for the sow,⁹ the mother of many piglets:

... 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 sow collapsed under them and they were heavy and *fulfilled* upon her. (149 ; italics mine)

In other places, however, the boys heartily wish for a message, a sign, instructions, orders, or injunctions from the world of grown-ups. They ask for the "Name-of-the-Father :

The three boys stood in the darkness, striving unsuccessfully to convey the majesty of adult life....

"If only they could get a message to us," cried Ralph desperately. "If only they could send us something grown-up... a sign or something." (103)

In *Free Fall*, Sammy Mountjoy repeats the words : "'What was my dad, Ma?'" and "'Is this the point I am looking for? No. Not here.'" The first question is asked four times, the second question at least six times throughout the novel. The second question is later shortened to "'Here? Not here,'" or just "'Here?'". Sammy cannot identify his father, who has never been heard from. Sammy literally lacks the "name of the father." "'What was my dad?'" could be interpreted in two ways. Of course, it means the ingenuous question of a small boy who wants to know of his father's profession. But it is also the

question recollected by grown-up Sammy. In this case, "What was my dad?" could mean "My dad was nothing," which is suggested by Sammy's own remarks that his father was "a speck shaped like a tadpole invisible to the naked eye He was as specialized and soulless as a guided missile,"¹⁰ and that "Beyond her (Ma) there is nothing, nothing" (15). His mother cannot or will not tell him anything about his father, except the fact that he was once a parson. Sammy and his mother are, so to speak, confederates in excluding the "Name-of-the-Father." In Sammy's mind, his father is closely bound up with God simply because he was a parson, and so both his father and God are shut out of Sammy's mind. He spits on the high altar, outrages pious Christian Beatrice. Deprived of the "Name-of-the-Father," the symbolic order of Sammy's world is disturbed. A chain of symbols (the signifying chain), cut off from reality, forms a vision or hallucination, which becomes the very reality for Sammy especially when he is imprisoned by the Nazis. Like Christopher Martin, Sammy struggles with a series of symbols in his hallucination as though it were a real object. It appears as a snake, oil, acid, lye, a fragment of human flesh collapsed in its own cold blood (a severed phallus), the ceiling that comes down slowly with all the weight of the world. He is trapped by this vision rather than by the Nazis.

What Sammy is looking for throughout this novel is the breaking point of that symbolic order which establishes the relationship between the symbol and its significance. Should he find the rent and mend it, he might be liberated from illusion and acquire inner freedom. As it is, something in his heart prevents him from locating the point. Discovery is eternally deferred.¹¹ This inner contradiction is well expressed in the repeated monologue "'Here? Not here.'" "'Here?'" means Sammy's tentative location of the point, while "'Not here.'" suggests his unconscious wish to defer the restoration of the symbolic order, the "Name-of-the-Father." Much in the same way as the plot of *Pincher Martin* is produced, the endless struggle of the two contrary forces weaves the plot of *Free Fall*; one force trying to reach the final goal, the other trying to defer reaching it.

If Christopher Martin excludes or represses his death, Wilfred Barclay in *The Paper Men* does the same with his life. The details of his career as a man of letters are never brought to light. Wilfred obstinately keeps his personal history to himself. Rick L. Tucker, assistant professor, who is impatient to write Wilfred's biography, dogs his footsteps constantly to pry into his private affairs. Wilfred runs from place to place all over the world to escape from this pursuer. The comic search for the agreement concerning Barclay's biography continues to the very end of the novel, until both Wilfred and Rick are "destroyed." This novel partly resembles *Pincher Martin*, partly *Lord of the Flies*. The more Wilfred represses his secret self, the more he feels the violence of other people's pursuit. Once his secret is excluded or repressed, he is haunted by a series of its symbols. In other words, a chain of symbols for the repressed fact pursues him in the form of actual persons or objects; Rick Tucker, Halliday and others, the signed contract, manuscripts, the worms eating into Wilfred's flesh, the steel string cutting into his chest, a strap tightening all over him, and God who is supposed to give him a great pain in his hands and feet as if he were stigmatized. This signifying chain is very much like the one that has bound Christopher Martin in his hallucination. Wilfred is assaulted by the symbol of castration. Just as Christopher Martin's illegal desire for Nathaniel's fiancée Mary Lovell has to be suppressed by the law, so does Wilfred's desire for Mary Lou, Rick Tucker's wife. In Wilfred's vision, the same symbolic confusion as that of Christopher Martin can be recognized. There is no distinguishing the fact from the symbol. In the following passage, the fact entirely merges with vision :

Rick looked down at himself, pondering the little he could see of his own clothes beyond the thicket. Mary Lou had wept into that thicket—or had she? Was that a fact or an imagination? I found to my surprise that I couldn't distinguish between the two.¹²

Especially, Rick Tucker's abuse: "'You mother-fucking bastard!'" (153) implies that Wilfred needs castration.

The rest of the characters are also at the mercy of the symbol of

Wilfred's secret fact. Above all, Rick Tucker is obsessed with a contract appointing him Wilfred's official biographer, with his manuscripts, even with the rubbish in his dustbin. Like the boys in *Lord of the Flies*, characters are trapped by "pursuit" or "hunt." Wilfred Barclay and Rick Tucker are eternally repeating the primal scene of "hunting." The hunter often becomes the hunted and vice versa. Rick Tucker, the hunter for the rubbish in Wilfred's dustbin, is mistaken for a badger and shot by Wilfred. This problem of "hunt or be hunted" is quite similar to that of "eat or be eaten" in *Pincher Martin*. Both Wilfred and Rick, while escaping from being hunted (eaten), have a hidden wish to be hunted (eaten). This ambivalent feeling is also witnessed in Wilfred's attitude toward God. God bullies him in his daydream when he enters the north transept of a cathedral and faces a statue of Christ :

Fright entered the very marrow of my bones. Surrounded, swamped, confounded, all but destroyed, adrift in the universal intolerance, mouth open, screaming, bepissed and beshitten, I knew my maker and I fell down. (123)

But, later, when he suffers from the terrible pains of his hands and feet, he regards them as stigmata, of which he seems to be very proud :

"You will find this difficult to believe but I suffer with the *stigmata*. Yes. Four of the five wounds of Christ. Four down and one to go. No. You can't see the wounds, unlike with poor old Padre Pio. But I assure you my hands and feet hurt *like hell—or should I say heaven ?*" (187-88 ; italics mine)

Here, the word "stigmata" is used to express two contradictory feelings—pain and joy, hell and heaven.

Similarly, he contradicts himself when he becomes "quietly happy" and feels "perfect calmness" after he has set fire to all his manuscripts and papers (190). It is these manuscripts and papers that have been kept secret. By incinerating them, he tries to exclude them from this world for good. This exclusion, however, does not set Golding's heroes

free at all, but binds their mind with a series of symbols for the excluded facts. In other words, by excluding the facts forever, Wilfred is forever doomed to worry about their symbols. For Wilfred is about to destroy all the manuscripts and papers on a bonfire, when Tucker takes aim from the other side of the river and shoots him. This time Wilfred Barclay is "hunted" as a badger.

IV

Many of Golding's heroes are too conscious of that cruel image of God in the Bible which seems to judge and sentence them to death. The law is always outside them and binds them forever. Matthew Windrove in *Darkness Visible*, on the other hand, tries to internalize this law. For him, the law is not what binds him but what sets him free. In order to internalize the law, Matthew (Matty) undertakes a ritualistic experiment. After reading the Bible intensively, he plunges into half mud which gives off the stink of vegetable and animal decay. What has caused him to do this ritual is a horrible disaster he had suffered in the desert in Australia.¹³ One day, he is walking on the hot sand, thirsty and tired out. He takes a rest with his back against the trunk of a tree. An Abo with a wooden stick appears before him. Looking at Matty's Bible, the Abo crucifies him on the sand, and physically castrates him with the point of the spear. This Abo reminds us of a cruel master who, hidden in the dark cellar under the churchyard, tries to execute Christopher Martin. Both the cruel master and the Abo represent the most inhuman aspect of God's injunction that had His own son sacrificed to Himself. It is this aspect of God's injunction that implants the darkness in our selfish and sinful souls. Although Matty is penetrated by God in the desert, he does not stay penetrated. It is his turn to penetrate God. This interpenetration between God and man is not submission to God nor mutiny against Him. It is the preliminary step to the unity with Him.¹⁴ "An even darker darkness, a more secret secrecy" (73) of the bog is none other than the Godhead where God and

Matty interpenetrate each other. His body is at last completely submerged, but the lamp held over his head is not extinguished. By throwing his life away in the darkness, he gets his spiritual light.¹⁵ The deep shuddering he experiences after rising from the bog means something spiritual. After this experience, Matty becomes quite another man. The scales fall from his eyes :

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.¹⁶

His mind is no longer disturbed by the outward appearance. It is only in the Godhead, which is the desert, absolute nothingness, or complete darkness, that he is one with God.¹⁷ Thus, God's law no longer binds him from outside but is internalized. The law provides him with autonomy in his mind. This enables him to realize his true self. His spiritual awakening could be compared to the Great Death¹⁸ in Zen Buddhism. The self-centredness hitherto enveloping Matty is cut off, and he achieves inner freedom. He is liberated from the burden of self-consciousness.

Matty's experience leads to his series of mystical visions, which shows us the process of internalization of God's law. According to his diary, two spirits appear and show him that he is "near the centre of things" (91). The next time they come, they order him to throw away his Bible (92). At first, he suspects they are not angels but Satan. Although frightened and cold, he finally obeys them and throws his Bible as far out into the sea as possible. After a month or so, his fear gradually calms down :

Sometimes when the spirits do not appear and I remember my Bible floating away in its wooden covers or sinking down my hair prickles a bit still and I go cold but it is not the same cold. But then I remember I am at the centre of things and must be content to wait no matter how long. (93)

His throwing away his Bible could be interpreted as the removal of what Meister Eckhart calls "God's shells." According to Eckhart, so long as the shells of the soul and God remain unmoved, the soul cannot meet God.¹⁹ The pure unity of God and man bursts "the ecclesiastical shell," such as kneeling, bowing, or even priests.²⁰ When Eckhart says that the person is one in One, this means that man is one with the One that only God is.²¹ Thus, Eckhart observes, "One to one, one from One, one in One and the One in one, eternally."²² In my opinion, therefore, "ONE IS ONE," the title of the part three of *Darkness Visible*, means that man is one with God. This pure unity is achieved within the Godhead—the desert, absolute nothingness, complete darkness, or even the glare of the "kalpa fire."²³ It is in the midst of the flames of this fire that Matty is one with God; one (One) is One (one). The last time the quasi-religious vision visits his mind, the spirits predict that he is to be a burnt offering. This prediction may sound similar to Nathaniel's prediction to Christopher Martin: "... in only a few years you will be dead.'" Yet, the spirits' prediction leads Matty to the Godhead where he can be unified with God, while Nathaniel's is what Eckhart calls a "shell" hardened by ecclesiastical authority. Nathaniel has something of the nature of a man who acts arrogantly through the borrowed authority of God. This is why Christopher Martin revolts against Nathaniel and God.²⁴

Matty's communion with the spirits is therefore held not by the great book nor in any form of letters but by "a most wonderful opening," even by the sword:

Then I offered them spiritual food and drink which they accepted. When this was done I had a great desire to sacrifice and asked what I should do and what they now wanted. The red spirit showed: We want nothing but to visit with you and to rejoice with you since you are one of us. And since you are an elder we will share that wisdom with you which though still in the body you ought to have. *They did not do this by showing the great book but by a most wonderful opening which even if it was a thing I was able to do it*

would not be lawful to describe.

... Now, because of the glory of the opening and because they had called him their friend and mine I did raise my eyes to his face and *the sword proceeded out of his mouth and struck me through the heart with a terrible pain so that as I found out later, I fainted and fell forward across the table.* (239 ; italics mine)

The way Matty's soul is guided by the spirits could be associated with the way the Zen master realizes his spiritual awakening. For the Zen master, the conflagration or a terrible coldness in the universe is the sword which kills and at the same time brings life.²⁵ For Matty, the sword and the flames of a fire from the petrol tank are the field in which, by throwing his life away, he realizes his own great Self.

Matty is engulfed in the flames from an exploded petrol tank and killed after having rescued a kidnapped boy in bondage. In the background of the Godhead, which is absolute nothingness in the desert, "a darker darkness, a more secret secrecy" in the bog, or the conflagration in the petrol tank, he is one with God, realizes his great Self and true freedom.

Since vision is formed out of the conflict between "self" and "law," Matthew Windrove is, in his final stage, liberated from the vision itself. Liberation from illusion is one of the main themes of this novel. Toward the end of the story, Sim Goodchild, bookseller, says: "'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).

Golding's fiction, however, cannot be released from vision. For him, fiction dies when deprived of "illusions, delusions, confusions." The perfect freedom and serenity of Matthew Windrove's world is the final goal (*telos*) which Golding's fiction approaches ever closer, but cannot or will not reach. By repressing, excluding, or deferring *telos*, his fiction continues to create vision. Therefore, from the viewpoint of the formation of vision, the true freedom Matthew Windrove has attained in the end is not as important as the process of his reaching it. From this

very process arises his unique religious vision, which retains the vestiges of his inner struggle over a long period of time.

The fundamental difference between Matty and the other characters is that he has been castrated not symbolically but physically. He has no phallus to be severed. The symbol of castration or castration threat, therefore, does not make any sense to him. Thus, he is liberated from a series of symbols, the signifying chain that pursues the other characters. This fact makes it comparatively easier for him to get rid of the barriers that alienate his true self from God. The removal of the shells of both God and the soul enables him to be one with God and thus realize his great Selfhood.

In Golding's fiction, the castration problem has a considerable influence even upon the religious world. In the religious sense, castration is the killing of selfish desire, as Eckhart believes to be executed in the desert of the Godhead.²⁶ Castration is considered, from the psychological point of view, to be the intervention of the symbol of the father's function, which baffles the child's desire for the mother. As this primary law develops into the law of God, so does the meaning of castration become more and more refined and spiritual. Especially in Matty's case, physical castration is sublimated into the purest spirituality. This sublimation is, however, quite a rare case with Golding's heroes. They usually return or regress to the primal stage instead of making progress. In his novels following *Darkness Visible*, Golding seems to have given up depicting such a character as Matty. Golding seeks no easy solution to the problem of sin and redemption.

Golding might suggest the final goal, but he never tries to make his fiction conform to this purpose. It would be more probable that he has no definite answer to the possibility of living in the final goal of perfect harmony. In Golding's fictional world, the hero is dead when his inner struggle has come to an end and perfect harmony has been realized. So it is with Simon in *Lord of the Flies*, Lok in *The Inheritors*, and Matthew Windrove in *Darkness Visible*. They are convincing not only because of their splendid final quasi-religious vision but because of their imperfection which they have made desperate efforts to overcome.

Notes

* This is a revised and condensed version of chapters III-VI of my master thesis presented to California State University, Dominguez Hills in October, 1988.

¹ See Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. David Macey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982) 83-85.

² See Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977) 67. See also *Écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966) 278.

³ According to Jerry Aline Flieger's opinion on Lacan's theory, "metonymy, as the linking of one word to another, is associated with the excessive chain of desire which acts like the motor of language, driving the signifying chain forward into meaningful combinations." See Jerry Aline Flieger, "Purloined Punchline: Joke as Textual Paradigm," *Lacan and Narration: The Psychoanalytic Difference in Narrative Theory*, ed. Robert Con Davis (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1985) 951.

⁴ William Golding, *Pincher Martin* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969) 100-01. All subsequent page references to this novel are from this edition.

⁵ Freud observes: "'Shitting on God' ('auf Gott scheissen') or 'shitting something for God' ('Gott etwas scheissen') also means giving him a baby or getting him to give one a baby." See Sigmund Freud, "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol. XVII*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1981) 83.

⁶ For further details of complicated plots in Martin's hallucination, see Y. Sugimura, "Hallucination and Plotmaking Principle in *Pincher Martin* by William Golding," *Studies in English Literature: English Number* (1989): 21-36.

⁷ Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973) 125. All subsequent page references to this novel are from this edition.

⁸ C.B. Cox observes: "His trim cruiser, the submachine gun, his white drill, epaulettes, revolver and row of gilt buttons, are only more sophisticated substitutes for the warpaint and sticks of Jack and his followers." See C.B. Cox, "On *Lord of the Flies*," *William Golding: Novels, 1954-67*, ed. Norman Page (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1985) 121.

⁹ E.L. Epstein refers to this killing of the sow as a "parody of an Oedipal wedding night" and says, "The killing of the sow is accomplished in terms of sexual intercourse The entire incident is a horrid parody of an Oedipal wedding night and these emotions, the sensations aroused by murder and death, and the overpowering and unaccustomed emotions of sexual love experienced by the half-grown boys, release the forces of death and the devil on the island." See E.L. Epstein, "Notes on *Lord of the Flies*," Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (New York: Perigee Books, 1983) 280.

¹⁰ William Golding, *Free Fall* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974) 14. All subsequent page references to this novel are from this edition.

¹¹ B.S. Oldsey and S. Weintraub, admitting that Sammy achieves some religious victory, go on to say, "We leave him still searching for a way out, with the question of 'Here?' still receiving the almost inevitable answer—'Not here,' or at least 'Not

yet.'” See Oldsey and Weintraub, *The Art of William Golding* (Bloomington and London: Indiana UP, 1968) 118-20.

¹² Golding, *The Paper Men* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984) 140-41. All subsequent page references to this novel are from this edition.

¹³ This “desert” is meaningful. Meister Eckhart considers the desert to be the place where the “identity” of the soul is “destroyed,” but “the soul will be most perfect.” He calls this desert “the desert of the Godhead.” The Godhead conceived by Eckhart is where the soul is killed to the selfish desire, but it is alive to God. See Raymond Bernard Blakney, *Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970) 200-01.

¹⁴ Eckhart observes: “As God penetrates me I penetrate God in return. God leads the human spirit into the desert, into his own unity, in which he is pure One and self-creating.” See *Eckhart* 193.

¹⁵ Concerning this “light,” Eckhart says, “The light shines in the darkness and there man becomes aware of it It is when people are in the dark, or suffering, that they are to see the light.” See *Eckhart* 17.

¹⁶ Golding, *Darkness Visible* (London: Faber and Faber, 1980) 76. All subsequent page references to this novel are from this edition.

¹⁷ See, for example, *Eckhart* 225-26.

¹⁸ Keiji Nishitani defines the Great Death in Zen Buddhism as follows: “. . . the Great Death means to accept the universe as the field of the abandoning of oneself and the throwing away of one's life.” This field is that of “emptiness or absolute Non-being (*śūnyatā*) . . . which enables the manifold phenomena to attain their true Being and realize their real Truth.” See Keiji Nishitani, “Science and Zen,” *The Eastern Buddhist, I* (September 1965): 98-99.

¹⁹ As for “God's shells,” Eckhart says, “If there were nothing between God and the soul, the soul would see God at once, for God uses no media nor will he suffer any intervention. If all the shells were removed from the soul and *all God's shells* could be taken off too, he could give himself directly to the soul without reserve” (italics mine). See *Eckhart* 166.

²⁰ *Eckhart* xxiii.

²¹ Eckhart says, “. . . since God cannot be distracted by the number of things, neither can the person, for *he is one in One*, in which all divided things are gathered up to unity and there undifferentiated” (italics mine). See *Eckhart* 8.

²² *Eckhart* 81.

²³ The “kalpa fire” is also regarded by Zen Buddhists as the field for the Great Death. See Nishitani 90.

²⁴ According to Frank Kermode, “Nathaniel is anything but a respectable saint; his religion has a seedy quality and it contributes to Martin's agony as well as shadowing it with some ecstatic alternative.” See Frank Kermode, “Golding's Intellectual Economy,” *William Golding: Novels, 1954-67* 62

²⁵ See, for example, Nishitani 92-93.

²⁶ *Eckhart* 200-01.