

Difference versus Defilement in Golding's *To the Ends of the Earth*

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To the Ends of the Earth: A Sea Trilogy (1991), which comprises of *Rites of Passage* (1980), *Close Quarters* (1987) and *Fire Down Below* (1989), is a corpus of the main themes implied in Golding's hitherto published novels. For a formal resemblance, the fire on a ship is similar to that on the boat-shaped island in *Lord of the Flies*, the fall of an iceberg and the countercurrent around it are about the same as those in the last scene in *The Inheritors*, the degradation of Rev. Colley is like that of Dean Jocelin in *The Spire*, and a mutual monitoring system of a pyramidal structure resembles that of *The Pyramid*. More significantly, *A Sea Trilogy* fully develops Golding's traditional idea that any group intending to maintain its solidarity by means of sacrifice is necessarily broken up, be the group patriarchal, religious, or technocratic. The following argument will show that his key concept embodied in his other works is even more condensed and crystallized in this novel.

I

A single perusal shows that a warship, an arena for this adventure story, has the same kind of pyramidal structure as depicted in *The Pyramid*.¹ Captain Anderson has patriarchal control over the ship and supervises not only the officer and the crew but the passengers as well. This captain is, however, supervised by Edmund Talbot whose godfather

is the brother of the governor of Van Diemen's Land, a British colony in the South Pacific.² Talbot carefully takes notes of whatever incident happens in the ship and is expected to report them in detail to his godfather. But the ship is full of far more intermingled gazes of observation. A senior servant, Wheeler, who attends on nearly half the passengers as well as all the crew and officers, can obtain every possible information from the top echelons to the bottom. This Wheeler is also under the close guard of the crew, who are in turn pecuniarily controlled from below by Mr Jones the purser living all alone surrounded by the cargo in the bottom of the ship. The living areas of this ship are divided between the crew and passengers, the latter's living spaces being, like "a social microcosm" (Tiger 138), differentiated and rigidly stratified according to their status and class, but the border often becomes blurred owing to their close quarters. All the crew and passengers are confined in so narrow a space that the individual, irrespective of rank, observes each other, whether from above, from below or from all sides. Any information about the individual is momentarily imparted to everyone else on board. Such a mutual monitoring system of the pyramid is extremely sensitive to the loss of class divisions and order, which happens at the time of the crisis caused by the threat of shipwreck.³ Every move of those who tend to deprive the pyramidal structure of whatever slight differentiation there is is closely monitored and thoroughly ostracized.

Rev. Colley's conduct devoid of dignity as a clergyman, not least his open disregard of Captain Anderson's "Standing Order," implies the loss of division and difference. The imminent problem with this loss of difference is the motionlessness of the ship in the doldrums. The ceremony in honour of Neptune during the equatorial crossing is conducted not only as a rite of passage but also as a sacrificial ritual⁴ to ward off

ill luck and restore order based on differentiation. It is not for nothing that Rev. Colley is chosen as the first scapegoat. However, it is even more important that Colley himself is imbued with the sacrificial ambience of this community and eradicates his own undifferentiated sexuality, or homosexuality. He wills himself to be a scapegoat.

As René Girard argues, those who commit bestiality or incest often become the target for scapegoats owing to their undifferentiated sexuality.⁵ Other victims in this ship more or less suffer a lack of differentiation. Wheeler, who is thrown overboard because of his detailed information on the bullying of Colley, serves, by the nature of his office, almost all the officers and crew without making distinctions, thus obtaining willy-nilly almost every detail about them. This kind of behaviour is apt to threaten the hierarchy of the ship. He is miraculously saved by the frigate *Alcyone* which happens to sail near him, but, like Rev. Colley, he also punishes himself for the undifferentiated nature of his duty. Since he chooses Colley's cabin for the place of death, both of them presumably have the same reason for suicide. Wheeler also makes himself a scapegoat. The blunderbuss with which he kills himself is originally Mr Brocklebank's, which Mr Prettiman the rationalist philosopher borrows and carries with him so as to disprove the spell of the albatross shot with a cross-bow by a mariner of S. T. Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." The blunderbuss is a means by which Mr Prettiman demonstrates his scientific rationalism. This gun is a tool that imposes rigid difference and order. Lieutenant Summers discharges the weapon and makes a loud report to put down the riotous bullying of Colley, but the mob becomes all the more violent and ritualistically sacrifices him. Colley is killed by both sacrificial ritual and scientific rationalism. The same holds true for Wheeler, who is killed twice, first by collective

violence, second by the blunderbuss. The report of the blunderbuss rationally separates the high-ranking Talbot from the whore-like Zenobia in the midst of their lovemaking.

The undifferentiated nature wiped off by the sacrificial ritual and/or scientific rationalism is accompanied by the image of defilement. Colley, who gets seasick and vomits regardless of the place, is first introduced with a filthy image. He is then treated as downright filth, or rather it is smeared on him during the equatorial entertainment:

Yet as I opened my mouth to protest, it was at once filled with such nauseous stuff I gag and am like to vomit remembering it. For some time, I cannot tell how long, this operation was repeated; and when I would not open my mouth the stuff was smeared over my face....At last the leader of their revels deigned to address me. "You are a low, filthy fellow and must be shampoo'd." Here was more pain and nausea and hindrance to my breathing, so that I was in desperate fear all the time that I should die there and then, victim of their cruel sport. Just when I thought my end was come I was projected backwards with extreme violence into the paunch of filthy water.⁶

Meanwhile, Zenobia's indistinct status — Mr Brocklebank's daughter or his trollop — and her promiscuous relationships with men assume an air of defilement. Like Evie in *The Pyramid* who has affairs with Robert, Oliver, Dr Jones, and an incestuous one with her father, as well as a perverse one with Captain Wilmot, Zenobia does these with Talbot, Deverel, Billy Rogers and perhaps with Mr Brocklebank. Just as Sammy Mountjoy in *The Pyramid* fervently longs for Imogen Grantley

who is beyond his reach, and regards Evie as no more than "life's lavatory," Talbot feels Zenobia *soil* him (342), fascinated as he is with Miss Chumley who is on board the frigate *Alcyone* as a skilled musician for Captain Somerset's family. As Evie degrades herself in London after leaving Sammy, so also does Zenobia perish a few months after leaving Talbot. There is much similarity between Talbot and Sammy in that they have completely lost their interest in these trollops. With his mind intent upon Miss Chumley, the one disregards Zenobia's message, while the other turns his thoughts toward the hopeful Oxford life.⁷

II

Melanie Klein and Jacques Lacan point out that differentiation is the prerequisite for our symbolic order and that we instinctively avoid the undifferentiated. In terms of human development, both of them argue that the transition from the mother-child unity to their separation is the basis of our spiritual development into the symbolic. As Melanie Klein notes, the union between the infant and the mother is not necessarily full of bliss. The infant sometimes harbours brutal aggressiveness toward the mother, lost in wild fancies of mangling her body.⁸ Lacan refers to the same effect: the infant's identification with the mother, or their dual relationship comes to such a time that the infant fails to identify its own image in the mirror, and experiences its body as something dispersed, or "the fragmented body (*corps morcelé*)," which leads to the psychotic destruction of others as well as itself.⁹ An infant originally wishes to be its mother's phallus, but the desire is led to be fulfilled by a substitute equivalent for the womb; by a signifier taking its place. And yet, the desire is never fulfilled and "metonymically displaced from signifier to

signifier.”¹⁰

Thus the subject is not abruptly but in a piecemeal manner alienated from the womb. Any signifier is therefore differentiated by nature, and this signifying chain, or the chain of differentiation makes up the symbolic order. On the other hand, as Melanie Klein observes, the subject who has fancies of violently persecuting the mother's body suffers from a delusion of being persecuted by her (Klein 308–09). According to Julia Kristeva, the mother's body tends to be regarded as defilement and has been treated as such. Kristeva attributes any image of defilement to the maternal, and concludes: “Excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse, etc.) stem from the maternal and/or the feminine, of which the maternal is the real support”¹¹ on the ground that not only menstrual blood but excrement belongs to the “maternal authority” because the latter is under the mother's control when infants get sphincter training (*Powers of Horror* 71). As for sacrificial rituals, Kristeva argues that “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” (*Powers of Horror* 64), and that the violence that is confined within sacrificial rituals so as to ward off defilement and establish social order can “filter into the symbolic order and explode, transforming or shattering it.”¹² She argues that a sacrificial ritual, whether Christian or pagan, derives from patriarchy (*Powers of Horror* 56–112). “Defilement is,” Kristeva remarks, “what is jettisoned from the ‘symbolic system’ ” and “it [defilement] is what escapes that social rationality, that logical order on which a social aggregate is based” (*Powers of Horror* 65). Defilement eventually reaches “the technocratic ideologies” and “disturbs the logic” that dominates the social order (*Revolution in Poetic Language* 83).

From what is mentioned above, it follows that any action, which violently rids the ship of defilement, is a means of maintaining the order of the ship by warding off the fear of being swallowed up by the sea, or the fear of being unified with the womb, and that such an action, whether it be patriarchal or technological, eventually shatters the symbolic order. In this fiction, the ship is likened less to a woman than to a man or his phallus,¹³ as inferred from the bowsprit and the mast of the ship. Rev. Colley metaphorically describes the bowsprit: "You will have been accustomed, as I was, to thinking of a bowsprit...as a stick projecting from the front end of a ship. Nay then, I must now inform you that a bowsprit is a whole mast, only laid more nearly to the horizontal than the others" (163). The same metaphor is used to depict the scene where Oliver makes love with Evie in *The Pyramid*. If a boat is a metaphor of a phallus, then the sea is that of a womb in this novel. Oliver fancies that Evie's body is already "defiled" by various men. Oliver, or his phallus is a boat tossed about, drifted, and finally wrecked by Evie's inimical sea: "I was a small boat in a deep sea; and the sea itself was a moaning, private thing, full of contempt and disgust, a thing to which a partner was necessary but not welcome. I could no longer direct; and my boat was overwhelmed by waves, suddenly controlled by her, driven towards the rock, where a cry rose, loud and tortured, and I was among the breakers, ship-wrecked—" ¹⁴ Similarly in *The Inheritors*, after the new people exterminate a Neanderthal people as "a devil," a huge ice block worshipped as an earth goddess melts and falls down with a booming sound, causing inundation and counter-swirl in which the new people's boat is driven towards the dangerous area. This kind of metaphor appears near the end of *A Sea Trilogy*, where the ship is drawn to an ice cliff by "a contrary wave" (680) around it, and obliged to sail amidst the falling of

ship-size fragments of ice, one of which kills the purser and a young midshipman. Against the background of this metaphor is the action of wiping off the defilement. Colley and Wheeler are liquidated like dirt. Technology is especially quick in liquidation. Lieutenant Benét, having made some trouble in *Alcyone* for Captain Somerset and his wife Lady Somerset and is transferred to Captain Anderson's ship, insists that the ship should gain speed to get into port as early as possible in order not to sink amidst the continuous wild weather, and that for this purpose weed and dead coral should be removed from the keel by using a dragrope and a capstan. He argues vehemently with Lieutenant Summers who makes a counterproposal to tie the ship together so as to prevent her timbers from falling apart. If the coral is dragged off, Summers emphasizes, there is no guarantee that the bottom of the ship will not be taken with it. Summers' idea, contrary to Benét's technology of removing the dirt of the sea from the ship, seeks to mediate between the ship and the sea by the intervention of cables. He counsels Captain Anderson on the danger of Benét's technology, but Anderson eats "out of Mr Benét's hand" (453). After all, Benét and his men start removing weed and dead coral. The tie-up between Anderson and Benét suggests the combination of patriarchy and technocracy, which comes to be established as "the Anderson-Benét method" that hereafter predominates over the ship. But Summers' forecast proves right. An uncanny head or a fist of "Leviathan," which comes to the surface through the weed, turns out to be a baulk of timber of the keel pulled off together with the dead coral. There arises a confusion round the capstan that the crew desert "as if their work had been unlawful" (458). This confusion spreads through the whole ship. It is as if Colley's ghost had dogged the ship and suddenly risen to the surface even after his remains with cannon balls attached to his feet have

dropped deep into the seabed.¹⁵ Actually Talbot has had a mad feeling that “the unappeased ‘larva’ of Colley” creeps about the ship “like a filthy smell” (426). The ship has been disturbed by filth since the bullying of Colley and his suicide. The queer scene of a head of “Leviathan” lifting and sinking recalls that of a rotting paratrooper’s body lifting its head and bowing in *Lord of the Flies*. Just as the corrupting and stinking body, which was victimized by the humans waging World War III, brings about panic among the boys, both “dead Colley” and “dead coral,” which were deemed filth and removed, cause horror and confusion among the crew. Immediately after this happening, Wheeler technologically dislodges his undifferentiated nature as filth by the blunderbuss as the crew did with the dead coral with the dragrope and the capstan. However, the filth, which ought to have been eliminated, gradually increases in every place. This is clearly shown by the spectacle Talbot witnesses just after Wheeler’s suicide. Wheeler, who hoped to have eradicated his defilement, unexpectedly spreads it over a large area. His blood and brains scattered around after his suicide leaves indelible stains. The same is the case with the report made by Summers when he discharges the blunderbuss. This report may seem to rid Talbot of Zenobia’s defilement, but in fact Talbot’s plan of coitus interruptus fails, so that he begins to fear her pregnancy, which is for Talbot nothing more than the escalation of defilement.

III

As discussed, the escalation of defilement is that of the undifferentiated situation. Above all, a mirror image plays an important role in displaying ubiquitous nondifferentiation. Colley’s cabin is a mirror

image of Talbot's as if the latter suddenly turned left-handed when he entered it (113, 331). Colley's cabin is occupied with Talbot who has vacated his own to reserve it for Miss Chumley, and Talbot's cabin is occupied with the very sick Zenobia during his removal to the lieutenants' wardroom after Wheeler's suicide. Colley's cabin is reoccupied with Talbot after it is cleaned and repaired. Two cabins are thus shared by four persons — Colley, Wheeler, Talbot, Zenobia — and the interior of these cabins is identical. These four persons, then, give us the impression that they cannot distinguish themselves from the others. This is suggestive of what Lacan calls "the fragmented body," which is the condition even before "the mirror stage" where, according to Lacan, an infant of six months old begins to see "its own image as a whole" in the mirror (Evans 115). Physically, Colley and Wheeler have already fragmented their body, and Zenobia is "fearfully transformed" (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 308) or almost deformed by seasickness. Talbot himself suffers serious concussion. Moreover, Colley and Talbot cannot identify their own image in the mirror. Colley hardly approves his countenance in the small mirror when shaving (198). Talbot falls into the same situation as does Colley: "I climbed out of my bunk as cautiously as I could and inspected my face in the mirror. The sight appalled me. Not only was I heavily unshaven, my face was so thin as to be positively bony" (357). There are other examples that suggest the undifferentiated situation including gender inversion: Wheeler assuming an air of saintliness and obsequiousness as if Colley took possession of him (152), the transvestism of Miss Granham wearing slops, as well as of Mr Brocklebank securing his beaver with a lady's stocking, Talbot's "womanish state" with seasickness (10) and his role of "the lucky girl who gets the bouquet" (569) at the wedding of Mr Prettiman and Miss Granham, her ride "astride" and his

“side-saddle” (736) on the horse (Crawford 210), Benét’s plain imitation of Talbot’s idea for helping the Pikes’ little girls to recover from seasickness. Defilement, side by side with nondifferentiation, spreads over the ship. Benét’s break of the keel causes the foot of the mast to break the shoe and the ship’s bottom, allowing seawater to flow into the ship and the top of the mast to make an uneven circle. The “seawater” is, as aforementioned, a metaphor of the womb, and the “circle” a metaphor of anarchy, or the destructive force, which is recurrently implied in *Lord of the Flies*.¹⁶ Both the seawater and the circle suggest what Kristeva calls “the semiotic” that threatens to shatter the exclusive symbolic system, and is regarded as defilement. Benét, however, applies his “ingenious” technology to the repair of the mast by sticking the white-hot bolts of iron through wood, and sets the sails to urge the ship to leave the sea as fast as possible. Captain Anderson calls Summers, who fears that the hot ironwork will cause a fire, “an obstruction,” or “dull, superannuated,” and even hints at his dismissal. However, the Anderson-Benét method separates the ship violently from the sea, until it exposes the whole ship to danger. There exists a kind of incestuous complicity of the ship and the sea under their regime. The violent separation of the ship from the sea incurs the influx of seawater and escalates the disaster.

Summers, on the other hand, succeeds in subduing the rage of tempestuous waves by pouring a good deal of vegetable oil into waters. He protests against the Anderson-Benét method and becomes an obstruction to them, only to be “recommended” by them to be a harbour master and acting-captain of “a moored and superannuated vessel” (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 333). At last he is killed by the explosion of this ship perhaps caused by the white-hot ironwork that Benét sticks through the wood. In this sense, Simon in *Lord of the Flies* is a predecessor of

Summers. Simon is the only boy who casts a doubt on the sacrificial ritual to keep the solidarity and the order of the group, but he is an obstruction to the incestuous complicity between hunters armed with spears and a sow. The final explosion of the ship is due to the fact that too quick a separation from the womb (the sea) and too drastic a removal of defilement only lead to “the fragmented body” caused by sinking deeper into the womb, and to the extreme increase of defilement.

True, Benét should get credit for repairing the mast to set the sails, thus guiding the ship to Sydney Cove in safety. The explosion of the ship may not result from Benét’s technology but from the fireworks ascending above the water of the harbour (McCarron 128). However, even before the fire, the community of the ship has collapsed too quickly for the members to make even their farewells (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 333). Since it is implied that the disintegration of the ship culminates in the fire, the final explosion is not a mere casualty but has its remote causes. As a finishing touch to the self-destructive community, the fire on the warship is the equivalent of that on an island in the shape of a ship with a bastion depicted in *Lord of the Flies*. In this sense, the bursting and sinking of the ship in *A Sea Trilogy* consolidates the idea that a community pervaded with collective violence is liable to collapse from within. It also reinforces the implication in *Lord of the Flies* that a self-destructive community will make the war improbable, whether it be inner strifes or global warfare,¹⁷ because not only does the warship lose the ability to wage war but also the Napoleonic Wars raging hitherto come to a close.

Like Simon in *Lord of the Flies*, it is Summers, not Anderson or Benét, who bears the brunt of the defilement, as prefigured in the scene where the vegetable oil he pours into the sea comes aboard and extensive-

ly pollutes the ship. As an alternative to the Anderson-Benêt method, Summers' contrivance separates the sea not quickly but progressively from the ship by means of a film that intervenes between them. This same philosophy shows itself in his method of tying the ship together by the intervention of cables between the sea and the ship. The intervention of a film or cables is an obstruction to the incestuous complicity between the ship and the sea. The defilement all the more increases for its being violently removed, first and foremost attacking the partition between the ship and the sea. The explosion therefore first of all bursts the cables with which Summers has tied the ship, and then bursts Summers himself. This is the way Simon and Summers, who do not eradicate defilement from the subject but create a flexible partition in between, incur the first raid of the defilement. Especially, a semipermeable film of a vegetable oil expresses the double function—separating the symbolic order (the ship) from a threat (the sea) and at the same time linking them. This function is crucial for the ship to always progress to a new stage by cleaving the waters that threaten to swallow it.

If the ship could be compared to the symbolic, the sea the semiotic in Kristeva's terms. The symbolic is generated by articulating and ordering the semiotic that always disturbs the generated symbolic. The semiotic belongs to the pre-Oedipus phase in which the mother and the infant merge with each other. As formerly discussed, in this situation, the subject hardly identifies its own image in the mirror, and sees its body fragmented. The fusion of the mother and the child thus tends to disintegrate the symbolic order. In her opinion, "the semiotic" derives from *chora* which means in Plato's *Timaeus* the "receptacle...nourishing and maternal, not yet unified in an ordered whole because deity is absent from it" (*Revolution in Poetic Language* 26). The four basic constituents

[water, fire, earth and air], Timaeus observes, “were shaken by the receptacle” [*chora*] and “came to occupy different regions of space” even before the deity arranged them into an ordered universe.¹⁸ The *chora*, on which is based the semiotic, is the womb that shakes, vibrates, and sifts the four basic constituents to give it the right place. Rhythm, intonation, music and poetry are produced from the semiotic through the process of its shaking and vibration. In this sense the sea is provided with a metaphor of the semiotic, the ship being constituted later by the deity which orders the sea, thus entitled to be a metaphor of the symbolic. The boundary simultaneously separating and uniting the two different spheres — the semiotic and the symbolic — is termed “the thetic” by Kristeva. The two spheres relate to each other with this thetic in between. The semiotic is articulated and ordered by the symbolic and at the same time filters into the symbolic and transforms it. This dialectical process generates the eternally differentiated symbolic (*Revolution in Poetic Language* 48–51). As this process could be analogized with the progress of the ship which controls the water that filters into it, so could the thetic be compared to the semipermeable film of the vegetable oil Summers has poured into the sea.

On the other hand, any system that jettisons the semiotic as filth tends to collapse by the influx of the semiotic. Such a system itself increases defilement, which is the leaking of the ship. This incestuous complicity between the ship (the phallus) and the sea (the womb) is inherent in the mentality of the members who exert special influence over the crew and the passengers. The following argument will clarify from this point of view the mentality of Benét, Talbot, and Anderson.

IV

Benét is apt to display quite abrupt and illogical behaviour despite his status as a marine technocrat. Besides dedicating passionate love poems to Lady Somerset, he goes so far as to kneel down before her and kiss her right hand. What characterizes him is that he has an incestuous feeling toward Lady Somerset as if toward his mother:

“I knelt before the lady. She offered me her right hand. I took it in mine and dared to imprint a kiss on it. Then — and I beg you will understand what passionate chastity was implied in the gesture — remembering my childhood and dearest mama coming to say good night to me in the nursery, with an irresistible flood of emotion I turned the white hand over, dropped a kiss in the dewy palm and closed the slender fingers over it!” (627)

Moreover, he does much the same thing to Mrs Prettiman [Miss Granham], who sighs and says to Talbot: “That is the trouble, Mr Talbot. They [his verses] are not ridiculous except in the article of addressing me as ‘Egeria.’ He is a talented young man...I am not usually an unreasonable woman, but to be addressed in such terms, to have my hand seized in such a manner — and all from a man young enough to be — a younger brother...” (646). Benét’s absorption in poetry tells of his being captured by the semiotic, the womb that shakes and vibrates, thus nurturing the basic constituents of a universe.

Talbot shows the same temperament as does Benét in escorting Mrs Prettiman to her cabin. The sudden movement of the ship forces him to put his right arm around her waist and holds her up: “Between

thirty and forty years she might carry in her reticule but she was a woman!...Miss Granham was not wearing stays! There was no doubt about it. Good God, her waist, her bosom was that of a young woman!" (411) Talbot very aptly describes this mentality common to Benét: "We are in love with our mothers!" (628) Talbot, who supervises every detail of the ship by gathering information and taking notes, and Benét, who dominates over the ship as a technocrat, are both seized with an impulse to return to the mother's womb. To the extent that they harshly exclude the semiotic to gain control over the ship, they are invaded by the maternal. From the outset, Talbot is oversensitive to filth. On embarking, he questions Wheeler about what stink he smells: "'The *stink*,' said I, my hand over my nose and mouth as I gagged, 'the fetor, the stench, call it what you will!'" (4) Miss Chumley, his fiancée, is also characterized by this oversensitivity to filth. Miss Chumley on board *Alcyone*, who arrives in port some time after the explosion of the ship at Sydney Cove, has a romantic reunion with Talbot, but she is significantly annoyed with flies: "Miss Chumley fanned flies away from her face. Then, in a gesture which moved me inexpressibly, she leaned forward and fanned the flies away from mine" (732). Hereafter, her same manner is mentioned at least three times. The flies she irritably fans away are associated with those which swarm all over the sow's head in *Lord of the Flies*. The head is impaled on a stick by the hunters who, in order to exorcise spiritual filth caused by their incestuous assault of a sow, smear it on the scapegoat. The flies covering over her head should be looked upon as the filth of the hunters. Here the fly is so abominable as to be called Beelzebub, the prince of devils. By the same token, Markham, one of the entourage of the governors of Sydney Cove, says to Talbot: "The flies are the devil" (711). The hunters in *Lord of the Flies*, far from purging them

of their inner "devil," redouble it instead, and make the more scapegoats to ward it off, resulting in the rapid disintegration of the community.

It should be noticed that Talbot regards the aboriginal as the counterpart of the fly. He obeys Lady Somerset, the guardian of Miss Chumley, who advises him: "'And do not allow any of the natives, the aboriginals I believe they are called, to approach her [Miss Chumley]'" (730), and he accordingly warns Miss Chumley: "'We must go this way. There are savages down *there* and their appearance is not to be borne, the woman in particular'" (738). Furthermore, he constitutes a narrow justification for beating convicts or sending them off to an island, and actually drives an aboriginal away as if he were a fly: "An aboriginal was following us. He was stark naked and he carried a wicked-looking spear. I shouted at him repeatedly and at last he turned aside and vanished into the scrub" (744). However, his mentality is shaken by the sudden death of his godfather who had given him spiritual support and under whose authority he had given himself airs. Although he declares that he accepts election by the route of "Rotten Borough" so as to reform a wrong system, and implies that he will marry Miss Chumley, their plan does not seem to be so easily realized. For his dream at the end of this novel is not happy but rather ill-omened: "I was quite comfortably buried in the earth of Australia, all except my head" (752). Although Talbot feels quite comfortable, he might be sinking deep into the womb, since he rejects the aboriginal as filth, which may swallow him at any moment. This will portend his sinking deeper into the rotten borough.

Even though supervised by Talbot, Captain Anderson holds patriarchal control over the ship. Like the primal father of the horde, who supposedly appropriated all the females and expelled or victimized his sons for resisting him,¹⁹ Anderson expels or victimizes the crew who could

be a threat to the stability of the ship (the phallus). He severely punishes Lieutenant Deverel and a midshipman Willis for exposing the ship to near-disaster, the one dead drunk on duty and the other neglecting to turn the wheel of the capstan and breaking the foretopmast. Deverel is under arrest, and finally expelled to *Alcyone*, to be displaced by Lieutenant Benét. Willis is hung high on a masthead for many hours almost to death. What women are to the primal father of the horde, flowers are to the captain. He waters each plant in his stateroom from a small watering can “with a long spout” (138). They are collected from various parts of the world, and among them is “the Garland Plant” named after the garland that Eve wore on the first day of her creation. He thus dominates this private Paradise and gives a “Standing Order” that strictly prohibits any other person from entering this area without leave. Actually, almost all the crew are kept out. Suppose the captain is analogized with the father, the crew the sons, the father is a relentless one who never allows his sons to enter his private Paradise or to run the ship (the phallus) through the sea (the womb) of their own accord. They are commanded to cooperate with their father to realize the father’s wishes, not their own. They are expected to live the father’s joy. Patriarchy, upon which sacrificial rituals are based, thus violently alienates the subject’s desire for the womb and interposes the father’s phallus or its equivalent between them. The subject borrows the father’s phallus to satisfy the father’s desire, not its own. The subject’s desire is no longer guided to be fulfilled by a substitute equivalent for the womb; by a signifying chain. It ceases to be displaced from signifier to signifier. The subject fails to produce the differentiated signifying chain that constitutes the symbolic order. The patriarchal regime of the ship, as well as its mutual monitoring system, deprives the officers, crew, and

passengers of their fundamental difference. Consequently, undifferentiated ambience spreads over the ship, and it is ritualistically exorcized as filth. It is true that Captain Anderson, by nature, has strong antipathy to clergyman. He is obliged to be an illegitimate child of a lord simply because he was born to the lord's mistress and a minister who was then a family tutor. Anderson, who would otherwise have been a legitimate son of the lord, naturally bears an indelible grudge against clergyman in general. Anderson's hostility to Colley and his resulting connivance at bullying may be largely responsible for the parson's death. However, Colley's suicide cannot be attributed to any particular individual. It is due to the peculiar social system constituted in this ship by the captain, crew, and passengers, particularly due to the vicious circle of filth and exorcism.

Last but not least, Mr Prettiman makes frequent appearances throughout the novel. He is a bigoted rationalist, and yet exhibits quite irrational behaviour, as seen in Benét. Talbot comments upon Prettiman who is eager to shoot the albatross in order to disprove superstition: "He demonstrates to the thoughtful eye how really irrational a rationalist philosopher can be!" (64) Prettiman, with Thomas Paine's deism and revolutionary ideas, pursues the cause of the emancipation of subject peoples ruled and governed in the Southern Ocean. Talbot is told by his godfather to keep an eye on him, for he carries a printing press in the ship. Finally, however, he is crippled perhaps by Mr Bowles, a government spy masquerading as a solicitor's clerk, and is almost bedridden by the time he marries Miss Granham. Prettiman, under her care, becomes even more irrational as though he were trapped by her womb. Having undergone a mysterious happening in which Talbot falls on Prettiman's legs but it improves his health instead of fatally injuring him, Prettiman elabo-

rates Greek philosophy and the Enlightenment into his unique thought categorized as neither rational nor irrational. The most impressive image produced from his thought is that of his caravan whose “sparks of the Absolute” — “a fire down below here” — matches “the fire up there”:

“Imagine our caravan, we, a fire down below here — sparks of the Absolute — matching the fire up there — out there! Moving by cool night through the deserts of this new land towards Eldorado with nothing between our eyes and the Absolute, our ears and that music!” (669)

No doubt, *Fire Down Below*, the title of part three of *A Sea Trilogy*, derives from “a fire down below here.”²⁰ In this image could be seen “some philosophical highwayman with poetry in one hand and astronomy in the other” (670). While music and poetry belong to the semiotic, astronomy, the world of science, comes under the symbolic. Prettiman’s mental picture shows that there is eternal interaction between music or poetry on earth and the stars in heaven. Here is the vast expanse of a universe of symbolic order being spun out of the infinitely differentiated signifying chain. Prettiman’s caravan reappears in Talbot’s dream at the end of this novel. As pointed out earlier, he is seeing them riding past him to “some great festival of joy” (752) from ground level because he is buried in the earth of Australia except his head. Mr Prettiman’s or Mrs Prettiman’s voice saying “You could come too — ” (669) crosses his mind when he wakes from his dream. For the present, Talbot may not seem to accept the idea at all, but he finds in it a possibility²¹ that he will be rescued from sinking any deeper into the earth, or into the womb.

NOTES

- 1 Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor, *William Golding: A Critical Study of the Novel* (3rd ed. London, 2002) 256.
- 2 Virginia Tiger, "William Golding's 'Wooden World': Religious Rites in *Rites of Passage*," *Critical Essays on William Golding*, ed. James R. Baker (Boston, 1988) 138.
- 3 Paul Crawford, *Politics and History in William Golding: The World Turned Upside Down* (Columbia, 2002) 197.
- 4 Bernard F. Dick, *William Golding* (Boston, 1987) 122. See also Virginia Tiger, "William Golding's 'Wooden World': Religious Rites in *Rites of Passage*" 145.
- 5 René Girard, *The Scapegoat* trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore, 1989) 50.
- 6 William Golding, *To the Ends of the Earth: A Sea Trilogy* (London, 1991) 204. All further citations and references given in the text are to this edition.
- 7 Kevin McCarron, *The Coincidence of Opposites: William Golding's Later Fiction* (Sheffield, 1995) 125.
- 8 Melanie Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works 1921-1945* (London, 1991) 308-09.
- 9 Jacques Lacan, *Écrits* (Paris, 1966) 97. See also Joël Dor, *Introduction à la Lecture de Lacan* (Paris, 1985) 99-100.
- 10 Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. David Macey (London, 1982) 88.
- 11 Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York, 1982) 71.
- 12 Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York, 1984) 78-79.
- 13 When Talbot compares Charles Summers to a ship's husband, the ship is of course Summers' wife. See *A Sea Trilogy* 663.
- 14 William Golding, *The Pyramid* (1967; London, 1974) 79.
- 15 Nicola C. Dicken-Fuller, *William Golding's Use of Symbolism* (Sussex, 1990) 59.
- 16 In *Lord of the Flies*, the "circle" or "roundness" stands for anarchy or some destructive forces where the choir boys, once relieved of discipline, form a complete circle to close in on the pig. A triangular place of assembly gradually becomes circular as the assembly loses its rule. According to René Girard, various myths show that the configuration of the central scene of collective murder "is always the same — the murderers are in a circle around their victim." See *The Scapegoat* 66.
- 17 See my essay "Self-Destructive Community and the Improbability of War in *Lord of the Flies*," *Studies in English Literature English Number* (1989): 47-64.
- 18 Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*, trans. Desmond Lee (1965; rept. Harmondsworth, 1977) 72-73.

- 19 Sigmund Freud, "Moses and Monotheism," *The Origins of Religion*, trans. James Strachey (1985; rept. Harmondsworth, 1990) 379-82.
- 20 James Gindin argues that "the fire down below" is both physical and metaphysical. It means the constant risk of fire of the burning metal that would destroy the ship, and at the same time "a divine fire up there and down here." See James Gindin, "The Historical Imagination in William Golding's Later Fiction," *The British and Irish Novel Since 1960*, ed. James Acheson (New York, 1991) 121.
- 21 Jem Poster, "Beyond Definition: William Golding's *Sea Trilogy*," *Critical Survey* 5 (1993): 95-96.

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