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William Golding's Trinity: Humanity, Society, and Religion as  
the Building Blocks of Humankind's Self-delusion  
Master Thesis

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English Philology

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Olomouc 2020

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V Olomouci dne 19.2.2020

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Děkuji Mgr. Emě Jelínkové, Ph.D. za pomoc při vypracování této práce a za poskytnutí odborných materiálů a cenných rad.

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# 1. Introduction

If the First World War changed the way people thought about nations and the established world's order, the Second World War's aftermath was, for many, to leave this macrocosmic perception and focus on the microcosm of human nature. The event broke not only the twentieth century in half, but also the way people look at history in general – pre- and post-Second World War became as sensible a denomination of era as pre- and post-Christ. Many discarded any preconceptions of what it means to be human and what we as humans are capable of. It was, however, only in the post-war years when the greatest atrocities came to light – the Holocaust and the prison camps, the beastly and inhumane medical experiments, and the general and ever-present disregard for human life. Combined with the disillusionment with the Soviet Union and communism, many authors turned away from politics (contrary to the politically charged writings of the years after the Great War), choosing rather to be apolitical in their works and to focus on the individual as such – picking apart whatever they thought to be a human while trying to uncover how the individual, so insignificant in the greater scope, figures in the machinery of the world:

Increasingly, during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, a depthless, playful, and questioning mood invaded cultural, artistic, and social aspects of life from art, architecture, literature, and film to notions of subjective identity, the status of knowledge, and society's sense of itself.<sup>1</sup>

This inquisitiveness and scepticism as described by Paul Crawford, coupled with the sombre attitude of disbelief in the aftermath of the Second World War, lead to the establishment of the post-modernist style as the primary literary force of the second half of the twentieth century. A style that would come to be applicable to William Golding as well.

But while to many the individual was the victim and the civilisation the corrupting element imposing its evil, William Golding, a naval officer who was present during the D-Day invasion, saw the individual himself as corrupt and the society as an extension of

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Crawford, *Politics and History in William Golding* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 148.

this personal-level corruption. In his talk with Jack Biles, Golding comments on the disillusionment of the post-war generation:

The basic point my generation discovered about man was that there was more evil in him than could be accounted for simply by social pressures. We all say a hell of a lot in the war that can't be accounted for except on the basis of original evil. Man is born to sin. Set him free, and he will be a sinner, not Rousseau's "noble savage."<sup>2</sup>

In Golding's view, the individual is the source of the corruption and society, as 'the shape of society' is according to Golding 'the product of the human being', creates a system of 'sanctions' in order to keep those deviating too much in check and the human collective united as such: 'Take away these [societal] sanctions, and we fall into the dark side'.<sup>3</sup> It is, then, not surprising for Golding to claim that 'every single one of us could be Nazis'.<sup>4</sup> This philosophy was in fact the driving force behind his best-known work *Lord of the Flies*, which 'was an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of the individual'.<sup>5</sup>

In his unpublished personal memoir *Men, Women, & Now*, John Carey reports, Golding credits the War with causing within him 'a religious convulsion' and creating 'a kind of framework of principles'<sup>6</sup>, both of which can be traced throughout his literary career. His preoccupation with religion penetrates all of his works as he was trying to discover a 'unity' of things which a man is to uncover in order to 'bring the whole thing together'<sup>7</sup>, and possibly rid himself of the original sin. However, the religion in his stories is more often than not a tool people use in order to rid themselves of blame and to protect their psyche from the consequences of their actions and guilt, with a scapegoat devil or god at the centre of it all.

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<sup>2</sup> Jack Biles, *Talk: Conversations with William Golding* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1970), 105.

<sup>3</sup> Biles, 44.

<sup>4</sup> Biles, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Biles, 41.

<sup>6</sup> John Carey, *William Golding: The Man Who Wrote Lord of the Flies* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 82.

<sup>7</sup> Biles, 102.

This sinful human nature, society with its sanctions built from these corrupted elements, and religion which is incomplete and insufficient all work together in Golding's canon in order to highlight the mechanism of defensive self-delusion at work. Golding's experience in the War, when he had '[his] nose rubbed in the human condition'<sup>8</sup>, lead him to believe (and convey this in his books) that the idea of 'noble savage' is outdated and plain wrong. This work analyses a number of his novels – *Lord of the Flies*, *The Inheritors*, *Pincher Martin*, *The Pyramid*, *Darkness Visible*, and the sea-faring trilogy *To the Ends of the Earth* in an attempt to better understand and make sense of Golding's philosophy.

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<sup>8</sup> Biles, 33.

## 2. The life of William Golding

While the formalist would perhaps disagree, it is necessary to understand Golding before one can try to understand his work and even more so his philosophy. He projects himself into each of his stories and these autobiographical elements are closely tied to his ideas of religion, society, and the innate nature of evil in humans. Each of his novels contains something of Golding – in *Lord of the Flies* it is his understanding and acceptance of the possibility of everyone having the potential to become a Nazi, *The Spire* and *Pincher Martin* tackle his issues with religion and agnosticism, the irrational and the rational, the voyage trilogy *To the Ends of the Earth* speaks about his distaste for the stratified social system of Britain, and *The Pyramid* is as close as one can get to an autobiography from a man who was as seclusive as Golding himself.

### 2.1. The pre-war years

Born to a family of a pragmatic science teacher and an early suffragette, Golding would grow up to become a rebel, a black sheep of the family. While he understood and inherited his father's distaste for the class system – a system which brought him a great feeling of shame which never disappeared – he broke free from his father's agnosticism and searched for God, which he found in 'the thing we turn away from into life, and therefore we hate and fear him and make a darkness there'.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, if Mildred, his mother, was a feminist, he grew from a child who admired girls into an 'adolescent, cynically and brutally prepared to exploit any girl he could get a hold of for his own selfish and immediate pleasure'<sup>10</sup>, an outlook which would eventually lead him to an almost-rape scenario with one of these 'female things'.<sup>11</sup> This negative view of women may have been sparked by his relationship with his mother, which was a 'physical divorce'<sup>12</sup> as they never hugged or touched much. Furthermore, a few violent scenes from the side of his mother, which took place in his childhood, surely did not help his view of women. This would fortunately change in his adult life, definitely due to his wife Ann, whom he admired.

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<sup>9</sup> Biles, 75.

<sup>10</sup> Carey, 39.

<sup>11</sup> Carey, 40.

<sup>12</sup> Carey, 20.



Golding's father, Alec Golding, a science teacher at a Marlborough Grammar School, married Mildred in 1906. In the same year, William's older brother Jose was born, and they had William in 1911. As a child, William was very imaginative, 'to the point of hallucination'<sup>13</sup>, which rendered their family house, 29 the Green in Marlborough, 'a place of "numinous dread" with three filled wells and two cellars. He felt that the darkness of the graveyard flooded through into the cellars'.<sup>14</sup> The image of a dark cellar appears throughout many of Golding's stories, and probably originated here, in his childhood, when in his recurrent nightmare 'a hideous crone [would be] advancing on him'.<sup>15</sup> This image is repeated in *Pincher Martin* almost verbatim and the cellar figures in his works as a place where we often hide (away from) God and where our innate corruption lies.

Even earlier, when he was just a toddler, Golding's incredible imagination and sense of self provided him with rather unpleasant memories. He very early came to understand his difference from others, which led to the preference for secrecy and solitude later in his life, and also fuelled his sense of alienation from his peers. Coupled with the family's social standing and financial hardships, since childhood Golding felt a sense of inadequacy under the corruptive sense of snobbery of the hometown (Golding notes that they had to 'dispense with their cook-housekeeper, and make do with a maid-of-all work' when both William and his brother Jose entered university, which was a visible sign of 'a grammar-school master lowering his social standing' which the school governors 'disapproved of'<sup>16</sup>) Even as a child he already felt shame when comparing himself to the privileged boys of Marlborough College situated nearby their house. As Carey notes from Golding's personal memoir, '[t]he sight of its privileged young gentlemen filled him, as a boy, with "hatred and envy"'.<sup>17</sup> Ironically, this sense of inadequacy would follow him through his whole life and even as a laureate of the Nobel Prize in Literature and a world-known author he would feel inadequate, "[n]ot quite a

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<sup>13</sup> Carey, 29.

<sup>14</sup> Carey, 15.

<sup>15</sup> Carey, 15.

<sup>16</sup> Carey, 41.

<sup>17</sup> Carey, 17.

gentleman”<sup>18</sup>, as a member of the Appointment Committee at Oxford labelled him in his index card.

When he was at the university, William, who was since very young age interested in literature and even tried writing some early pieces, attempted a more serious work, which he, together with two works written before the War, however discarded as juvenile and immature. He even tried getting published, but it was fruitless and caused his interest in writing to dissipate. After the university, where he changed his major from natural sciences (to which he was pushed by his father) to English literature, he took the job of a schoolmaster at Bishop Wordsworth’s School in Salisbury after going through an ugly break-up with his fiancé and marrying Ann Brookfield in 1940. Their first child, David, was born the same year, and soon-after Golding, ‘[l]ike many other young, patriotic men and women of England’<sup>19</sup>, joined the army where he served in the Royal Navy. Golding loved his country, but at the same time he despised its rigid social system and class snobbery. After the War, a disdain for the ignorance of the human condition would join the list.

## 2.2. The War

The Second World War changed everyone and Golding was no exception. The horrors dwarfed everything that had happened before and after, and even decades after it had ended Golding was unable to return in his memories to what he had seen and heard:

I had discovered what one man could do to another. I am not talking of one man killing another with a gun, or dropping a bomb on him or blowing him up or torpedoing him. I am thinking of the vileness beyond all words that went on, year after year, in the totalitarian states [...] there were things done during that period from which I still have to avert my mind less I should be physically sick. They were not done by the headhunters of New Guinea, or by some primitive tribe in the Amazon. They were done, skilfully, coldly,

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<sup>18</sup> Carey, 57.

<sup>19</sup> Raychel Reiff, *William Golding: Lord of the Flies* (Tarrytown: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2010), 23.

by educated men, doctors, lawyers, by men with a tradition of civilization behind them, to beings of their own kind.<sup>20</sup>

Clearly, the experiences from the War were the primary catalyst behind Golding's life-long distrust in the human spirit and nature. As has been mentioned, he believed that anyone could become a Nazi and that it was just the human capacity for evil manifested in a certain way, as there were extremist right-wing and left-wing tendencies in many countries during the thirties and even after the War, as is true still today. Golding himself, like many others, for a while believed in the Russian communism before it had shown its true colours.

What is more noteworthy is Golding's notion about the background of the perpetrators: they were not a tribe of uncivilized, primitive, non-Christian natives practicing cannibalism (as would have been the general perception of 'the evil man' at the time, judging by the various romantic stories of adventure taking place in exotic locations, such as Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* which Golding reworked into *Lord of the Flies*); instead they were the civilised nations of Europe, those who until then considered themselves better than those primitive tribes whom they called 'barbaric'. Apparently, civilisation itself lends its hand freely to such mistreatment of a fellow man; civilisation which prides itself on achievements in the ways of humanism. And Golding saw through this charade of civilised society, saw that while it is an inhibiting factor, it cannot stomp the human corruption altogether and indefinitely:

[...] you have people of Jack's [*Lord of the Flies*] nature, who are by nature evil, but who can be so integrated into a larger society that their evil is canalized in a good direction [...]. In Nazi Germany, you remember, there was an anti-Plato; when they discovered a couple of pathological killers, they used them in the camps. They said, "These men are too good to waste." They integrated them into their kind of society.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> William Golding, *The Hot Gates and Other Occasional Pieces* (London: Faber and Faber, 2013), 77-78, Reader.

<sup>21</sup> Biles, 47.

That is not to say that Golding believed only the ‘exceptional man’ was sick; he considered everyone to be ‘morally diseased’.<sup>22</sup>

A point of positive influence that the War brought was, for the first time in his life, a sense of camaraderie and an ‘almost childlike wonder at nature and world’.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, in July 1945, his daughter, Judy, was born and after so many lives lost in the War, a new one appeared in his life – a fitting beginning of a new chapter in his life.

Unfortunately, his friends from the War all died during the conflict, and until his encounter with Charles Monteith, his future friend and editor at Faber and Faber, he would be rather friendless. The newly rediscovered awe at ‘the immediacy of real things’<sup>24</sup>, coupled with his experience and conclusions from the War, however, relit within him his desire for writing.

### 2.3. After the War

When he returned to his position as a schoolmaster, which he hated, Golding would soon seize a pen and begin writing what would become *Lord of the Flies*. The initial impulse itself, however, was not really the War itself, as much as his dissatisfaction with the literature he and Ann were reading to their children, such as *Treasure Island*, *The Swiss Family Robinson*, or the aforementioned *The Coral Island*. Those, too, often took place on an island, but William wanted to write a book about “‘children who behave in a way children really would behave’”.<sup>25</sup> After the success of his first book, the next few followed in a quick succession. However, after the release of *The Spire* in 1964 and *The Pyramid* in 1967, Golding fell into a writers’ block. This unfruitful period lasted for more than 10 years and led to a depression because of which he took to drinking and his wife Ann suffered a few scenes of borderline domestic abuse during his violent, alcohol-induced fits.

Fortunately, this dark period would see an end, and in 1979 William released *Darkness Visible*, which was quickly followed by 4 more novels within the next 10 years, including *The Rites of Passage* released only one year after *Darkness Visible*, and one posthumous publication released after his death in 1993, *The Double Tongue*.

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<sup>22</sup> Biles, 78.

<sup>23</sup> Carey, 96.

<sup>24</sup> Carey, 96.

<sup>25</sup> Carey, 149.

During this second period of his writing career, Golding finally received the recognition he deserved (and probably secretly yearned for due to his sense of inadequacy) when he received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1983 and was knighted in 1988. It is a shame, then, that even with such an estimation by not only the literary circles, but also by the Queen herself, he, as John Carey fittingly subtitled his biography on Golding, remains known as ‘The Man Who Wrote *Lord of the Flies*’.<sup>26</sup> On the morning of his death, on June 19, 1993, when Ann found out, she could only reply ‘But I’ve got so much to say to him,’<sup>27</sup> their daughter Judy reports. A testament to their strong love. She suffered stroke less than 5 days later, before his funeral could even take place, from which she never fully recovered, and died on January 1, 1995, not even two years after he died. She was his inspiration and it was her who pushed him into writing his first book. Without her, there would probably be no Golding, and no *Lord of the Flies*.

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<sup>26</sup> Carey, subtitle to his biography, cover page.

<sup>27</sup> Judy Carver, “Harbour and Voyage: The Marriage of Ann and Bill Golding”, in *Living with a Writer*, ed. Dale Salwak (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 55.

### 3. The human condition

The innate nature of evil was at the forefront of the first half of Golding's writing career and it remained an important centrepiece even in the later books, even though he focused more on the problems of the social structure and class distinction. As has been mentioned, he saw man as 'sick' and 'diseased' creature. Yet as evident from his interview with Jack Biles, Golding had not always been such a pessimist as in the years after the War:

Before the second world war I believed in the perfectibility of social man; that a correct structure of society would produce goodwill; and that therefore you could remove all social ills by a reorganization of society.<sup>28</sup>

After the War, however, he did not believe this 'because [he] was unable to'.<sup>29</sup> And while later still he could find more optimism for the human condition, the horrors of war, from which he had to 'avert [his] mind lest [he] should be physically sick'<sup>30</sup>, coupled with the following Vietnam War and the Cold War, made it difficult for him to really accept the idea of there ever being a 'Golden Age' when 'the individual conquers his defects'.<sup>31</sup>

The corrupting connection between the individual and the society is clear in Golding's work. As aforementioned, Golding saw society as an amalgam of corrupted individuals with 'sanctions' made by the very same people, which, if used in an ill manner, could also serve as a tool for the society itself to use these individuals, to 'integrate people into a black scheme the way Nazis did'.<sup>32</sup> In this way, the human corruption is kept alive, even abused, as has been shown in the twentieth century, during which, Golding notes, '[i]t has become a commonplace [...] that a random selection of people can inflict utter cruelty on one another'.<sup>33</sup> The key-word here is 'random',

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<sup>28</sup> Golding, *The Hot Gates*, 77-78.

<sup>29</sup> Biles, 77-78.

<sup>30</sup> Golding, *The Hot Gates*, 77-78.

<sup>31</sup> Biles, 41.

<sup>32</sup> Biles, 48.

<sup>33</sup> Golding, *The Hot Gates*, 22.

meaning Golding really did not consider the sickness to permeate from ‘exceptional’ individuals, but from the ‘average man’.

It is perhaps sensible to give the word evil and corruption in Golding’s terms a bit more specific denotation as both are very general and vague: they describe the human capacity for violence (in general as well as against each other), their selfishness, ignorance, and the imposition of one’s will. In the following sections, two Golding’s novels – *The Inheritors* and *Darkness Visible* – will be analysed in order to understand this problem better.

### 3.1. *The Inheritors*

As Golding often describes the human predicament as ‘the original sin’<sup>34</sup>, it is best to start looking for the basis of the sickness in the beginning of our species. Set at the time of the dawn of the Homo Sapiens, *The Inheritors* portrays their clash (purely by happenstance) with the contemporary Neanderthals. Golding’s second novel, too, like *Lord of the Flies*, is a reworking of another work, this time of H.G. Wells’ *The Outline of History* (1920) in which Wells portrays the primitive progenitors as cannibalistic ogres. For Golding, who meditated on the ‘equation of intelligence with evil’<sup>35</sup>, the Neanderthals were clear of the sin, as their mental capacity was well below the threshold required for wilful imposition of one’s self.

The story begins at the end of winter and follows the Neanderthals’ arrival to their summer place, which had however already been invaded by the New People – the Homo Sapiens. The story is quite straightforward and simple, and during the course of the novel the Homo Sapiens manage to exterminate the original inhabitants in a series of events in which Golding displays the difference between the innocence of the Neanderthals and the corruption of the New People. Paul Crawford considers this extermination parallel to the extermination of Jews by the Nazis during the Holocaust<sup>36</sup>, and while this event may have been a great inspiration to Golding, he was not concerned with the German nationalism only and limiting the scope so much would mean locking oneself into a political agenda of sorts. As aforementioned, Golding talked about the ‘average man’, not the ‘exceptional individual’, and about ‘random

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<sup>34</sup> Golding, *The Hot Gates*, 78.

<sup>35</sup> Biles, 109.

<sup>36</sup> Crawford, 12.

selection of people', and while the experience from the Second World War was definitely alive in Golding's consciousness while writing the book, enforcing such a rigid understanding would 'play down' the issue and do exactly what Golding talked against – inscribe the evil to Germans and Germans alone: 'As long as you have had Homo sapiens, you have had wickedness, because that's what he's about.'<sup>37</sup> Golding was clear in his dismissal of the whole western world's celebration of the defeat of the evil and 'thanking God they weren't Nazis'.<sup>38</sup>

The Neanderthals and their way of life are described in the first few chapters of the book. They are shown as innocent, selfless, incapable of evil thoughts or of causing harm. When they do have to kill, which they prefer not to and instead survive on a vegetarian diet, they pray to their goddess Oa, who embodies nature, and ask the dead animal for forgiveness. They cannot impose their will as that would mean going against Oa, and they cannot moralize. As such, they do not distinguish between good and evil, as all that is came from Oa and as Oa is good, all is good. They are incredibly communal – polygamy is a norm, cannibalism of the deceased is permitted as that means accepting them and becoming one, and, what is most striking, they possess an almost telepathical ability of communication. Their connection with others is described as 'not the ornament of life but its substance'.<sup>39</sup> Since Golding saw intelligence as the gateway to evil, he removed the Neanderthals' ability to think logically or abstractly and let them 'have pictures', which they sometimes almost instinctively share. When one of the protagonists, a female Neanderthal Fa, who seems to be a bit beyond the rest of her tribe in terms of thinking, conceives an idea of a very crude agriculture and tries to convey it to the matriarch of their little community, the woman's expression is that as when 'Liku [a little girl of the tribe] stray[s] too near the flaunting colours of the poison berry'.<sup>40</sup> The imagery is clear – imposition of one's will, whether on another or nature – is seen as a source of sickness.

In contrast to the old people, when the Homo Sapiens come, the first thing they do is kill one of the Neanderthals, who is said to have fallen to his death following 'the other'. When Lok, the male protagonist of the story, follows the trail of his dead friend

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<sup>37</sup> Biles, 40.

<sup>38</sup> Biles, 3.

<sup>39</sup> William Golding, *The Inheritors* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011), 68.

<sup>40</sup> Golding, *The Inheritors*, 53.



and comes upon the new people, their first instinct is to try and kill him with an arrow. Lok, unable to comprehend what an arrow is or that the New People would want to cause him harm (as he never connected the death of his friend with the invaders or could even think them able to kill someone for any reason), considers it a gift. In the meantime, Lok's cave is raided by the Homo Sapiens who kill the matriarch, steal Liku and a baby and kill Nil, another female Neanderthal. The only survivors at this point are Liku, who will get eaten by the New People, the baby, who the Homo Sapiens will claim as their own, Lok, and Fa, who will also die before the story reaches its end. Lok's demise serves as a reminder of the Neanderthals need for connection: each member of the tribe requires these 'strings' connecting them with others, they are too selfless to survive all alone and '[i]f they broke, a man would die.'<sup>41</sup> And so with Fa dead as well, Lok, left all alone at the end of the novel, dies of loneliness in their cave, embracing the bones of Liku.

The New People's nature is destructive, their imposition of will absolute, they project outward their fears and aggressiveness and invest the peaceful, innocuous Neanderthals with their flaws. Golding's notes in the manuscript are a testament to his belief in the violent nature of man: 'The new people must be forced by circumstances *and their own natures* to destroy the people [emphasis in the original]'.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, in his manuscript he imbues them with 'a higher level of energy'<sup>43</sup> than the Neanderthals possess. This allows them to break from the nature's passivity and desire more, achieve more. Their alienation from nature is emphasized by their need for clothes and shoes; their imposition of will on nature by them being able to cross the water, build their own fire, and create instruments and weapons, none of which progenitors are capable of. Ironically, this energy, which Lok senses from them and which they corrupt him with, is what allows him to break through his own mental limitations and move to a Fa's level of intelligence or even beyond.

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<sup>41</sup> Golding, *The Inheritors*, 68.

<sup>42</sup> Carey, 182.

<sup>43</sup> Carey, 182.

Intelligence, as Golding himself attests in his interview with Biles, is to him one of the arguments in the formula for evil:

[...] an equation of intelligence with evil, a fairly straightforward equation. Therefore, the quality of innocence in Neanderthal man is a very sad thing, inseparable from ignorance; whereas, perhaps, in boys [from *Lord of the Flies*] intelligence and evil are not inseparable, but parallel things, as a matter of genetics.<sup>44</sup>

While he came to have doubts about this idea at the time of the debate, he clearly believed in it twenty years before and it is reflected in *The Inheritors* as well as *Lord of the Flies* and *Darkness Visible*, actually.

When the Homo Sapiens finally appear as more than shadows in the forest and blobs on the horizon, their individuality is mirrored in their appearance as each looks different and has a different hairstyle. In contrast, the Neanderthals all look the same and have no need or desire to individualise themselves. That they symbolise death is seen in their faces being described as ‘white bone things’<sup>45</sup>. In their introduction a shaman, dressed in a stag’s mask, blows a horn describing the New People’s nature:

The noise was harsh and furious, full of pain and desire. . . . of the greatest of the stags and the world was not wide enough for him. . . . [the stag] was looking up, past the new people, past Fa and Lok . . .<sup>46</sup>

This roar, symbolizing the future of the Neanderthals as well as of the New People, is filled with desire, but also with pain. This ‘greatest of the stags’, human, is the new ruler of the animal kingdom and the world, he looks beyond the horizon and beyond the tomorrow, a feat of which the Neanderthals, locked in today and the day after, were not capable of. But his gaze is fiery and he sees all ablaze. That they don’t hurt only themselves is evident in them devouring the Neanderthal gild Liku, whom Tanakil got as a pet, and the resulting traumatising of Tanakil not only by this act of

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<sup>44</sup> Biles, 109.

<sup>45</sup> Golding, *The Inheritors*, 96.

<sup>46</sup> Golding, *The Inheritors*, 118.

semi-cannibalism, but also by Tanakil's clansmen offering her, their own child, as a sacrifice to the Neanderthals in an attempt to ward off their (non-existent) wrath.

But there is hope. When in the final chapter the points of view are reversed and the narrator becomes one of the New People, Tuami, his initial thoughts are destructive, selfish, and greedy, as he wants to kill the shaman of their tribe to claim his woman as his own. Yet when he sees 'the frightened, angry love of the woman, and the ridiculous, intimidating rump [of the Neanderthal baby]', the ivory dagger he's working on changes form into an ornament of hope 'and he [can] feel in his fingers how Vivani and her devil fitted [it].'<sup>47</sup> Golding's juxtaposition of violence and love is a clear indication of his answer to the human corruption. The selfish and violent nature of humans, however, can render even love-making 'sinful', when it changes into 'exploitation of one person by another'<sup>48</sup>, a theme so important to Golding that he keeps returning to it in his future works. If for the Neanderthals sex is an act of unification, for the New People it is a violent and exploitative 'quarrelling [...], [a fight] with an animal' complete with 'black blood running'<sup>49</sup>.

Golding's juxtaposition of two widely contrasting human species serves as his foundation and his most encompassing description of what humankind is and what it, perhaps, should strive to be. The New People choose individuality and selfishness over community and unity. If their progenitors are passive, peaceful and one with their goddess Oa, the invaders are active, violent, and alienated from the nature. Whereas the Neanderthals are selfless and loving, the Homo Sapiens are greedy, selfish, and lustful. But as Tuami shows in the epilogue, they, too, can learn to love and this love can even conquer their fear of the Neanderthal 'devil'. Golding once said: 'If there is one faith I have, it is that there is a unity. And it seems to me that man hasn't seen this.'<sup>50</sup> This unity permeated every aspect of the Neanderthals' life, but it was also absent from the Homo Sapiens' lives altogether – even their tribe was a fragment of a bigger one, from which they ran away after their shaman stole his wife. In this unity lies Golding's hope – that humanity will one day uncover it and 'bring the whole thing together.'<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Golding, *The Inheritors*, 223.

<sup>48</sup> Biles, 112.

<sup>49</sup> Golding, *The Inheritors*, 165.

<sup>50</sup> Biles, 102.

<sup>51</sup> Biles, 102.

### 3.2. *Darkness Visible*

*Darkness Visible* marked the beginning of the second half of Golding's career, as well as his return from the ten years long limbo of the unproductive years which spanned from 1967 to 1979. The idea of the book itself, however, had been preoccupying Golding's mind since at least 1955, and was a 'bitter struggle, often bringing Golding close to despair'<sup>52</sup>. Even though little remains untouched from the original manuscripts and drafts, a number of things resisted any change and were woven into the new story (or rather, the story was built around them) – paedophilia, spiritual martyrdom and vision of redemption, and clear and open political aspect (in the final version this means terrorism). It was, in fact, Golding's first openly political novel (although openly here should be understood only figuratively, as he himself refused to discuss the book<sup>53</sup>) – a novel about the condition of England of the seventies in which all that is and that happens had been set in motion by the events of the Second World War. Even though the story is set tens of thousands of years after *The Inheritors* and two decades after *Lord of the Flies* and *Pincher Martin*, the book still functions alongside the same themes as Golding's first two novels (and the first half of his career as a whole, in fact). The narrative, too, had crystallised into one that is much more mature and complex. It would not be completely irresponsible to claim *Darkness Visible* to be the climax of the first half of his career, with other works being 'stand-ins', or rather preparations, for this great novel. For more than ten years he could not write and his mind was fixated on this one novel, this one story. It is a crystallisation of his belief that 'as far back as we can go in history we find that the two signs of Man are a capacity to kill and a belief in God'.<sup>54</sup> And as late as 1978 he was still making great decisions about the overall narrative, even considering ditching Matty's story altogether and focusing on Sophy only, eventually creating two stand-alone novels. It was also only after *Darkness Visible* that his repertoire and style changed quite drastically, reaching all the way into the comic at times as well as becoming more optimistic.

The work is post-modern and very cryptic and only ever so slightly lends itself to certain and concrete interpretations in many aspects. It at once inhabits the dimensions

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<sup>52</sup> Carey, 367.

<sup>53</sup> Carey, 364.

<sup>54</sup> Biles, 105.

of the mundane and of the supernatural and it is with Golding's masterful literary stroke of genius that this tour de force does not collapse under its own weight or leans too much into one side of this dichotomy. Neither does this mid-dichotomous balance seem artificial or forced. Instead, the reader is invited to draw his or her own conclusions and either is fine and fitting (but this is the norm in most of Golding's works in which the marvellous mingles with the mundane).

The novel's political aspect of terrorism and kidnapping was born during the IRA's attacks in the seventies. In his notes, Golding openly comments, among others, on the events of January 30 1972 known as Bloody Sunday. One of the characters in the story is even explicitly connected with this event in Golding's notes in the manuscript as one of the terrorists (although this has not made it into the released book).<sup>55</sup> Golding harboured such a serious disdain for kidnapers and terrorists, in fact, that in his journal he 'passionately' wishes that 'somewhere some time, a kidnap victim will kill his or her kidnapers'.<sup>56</sup>

An openly political aspect is, however, not the only novelty for Golding. Sophy, one of the protagonists of the novel, is his first fully realised female character and heroine. Golding's novels and stories are notably, if not free of, then sparse in female characters and those that exist are often not much more than a plot device. Unlike those, Sophy is fully grown, complex, and rich character. It was, funnily enough, Golding's attempt to 'prove [he] could write about women as well as men'<sup>57</sup>, a sort of response to critics who had noted the lack or insufficiency of female characters in his works. That is not to say that it was the only reason. He was inspired by a real life female terrorists, but he also wanted to describe 'more of the ordinary pains and pleasures of being a girl'.<sup>58</sup> Even though he was a misogynist in his early adulthood, seeing females only as objects, Golding was also a man who admired women, yet had difficult relationships with them and was, possibly, a little bit afraid of them, or rather, intimidated by them.

What, however, remains the same as in the previous works is Golding's interest in and preoccupation with the corruption innate to people. The title of the book recalls

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<sup>55</sup> Carey, 369.

<sup>56</sup> Carey, 370.

<sup>57</sup> Carey, 372.

<sup>58</sup> Carey, 371-372.

Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) in which hell strongly resembles Golding's idea of human's innate sickness and the eponymous phrase appears:

A dungeon horrible, on all sides round  
As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames  
No light, but rather darkness visible  
Served only to discover sights of woe<sup>59</sup>

The imagery of a dungeon evokes the image of a cellar that appears in many Golding's works and in which, as has been mentioned before, Golding claims that we hide (from) God. The imagery in the section of the poem from which the aforementioned verses come also parallels the ending of *The Inheritors*, in which Tunami, the member of the New People who is carving the dagger and whose point of view the reader assumes, can only see the horizon as 'line of darkness'<sup>60</sup> that may not have an ending – Golding's foreshadowing of what is to come within his fictional universe (as well as ours), a premonition of a group of school boys stranded on an island, or a priest whose repressed sexual desire and ego will cause the death of many others.

*Darkness Visible* consists of three parts with the first two following different protagonists and uniting them in the last part – the spiritual and supernatural Matty, the egoistic and broken Sophy, and the metafictional duo of Sim Goodchild and Edwin. Matty's part will be analysed later on in the section on religion, while Sophy is the primary concern for this chapter. As the narrative is much more complex and difficult than in *The Inheritors*, a proper summary must precede the analysis itself.

The first part of the book, called 'Matty', opens during the bombing of London. The imagery of the city in ruins and ablaze resembles hell and from these fires which are 'melting lead and distorting iron'<sup>61</sup> and which cast 'a shameful, inhuman light'<sup>62</sup> Matty, inexplicably, emerges. The small child is hideously burnt by the fire and has to

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<sup>59</sup> "PARADISE LOST," The Project Gutenberg eBook of Paradise Lost, by John Milton, accessed March 7, 2020. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20/20-h/20-h.htm>.

<sup>60</sup> Golding, *The Inheritors*, 223.

<sup>61</sup> William Golding, *Darkness Visible* (London: Faber and Faber, 2013), 10.

<sup>62</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 6.

undergo several years of cosmetic surgeries and skin transplantations. Yet even after those he remains disfigured and unsightly. After he is released from the hospital, he joins a school in which the paedophiliac schoolmaster Pedigree teaches. When one of his pupils dies, most likely killed by Matty, Pedigree's last words of departure create a sense of guilt in Matty who then travels the world, becoming a martyr-like figure. At the end of his part, already in his thirties, he becomes a caretaker at a school for privileged children of oil shakes and royalty.

The time then turns back a few years and the second part, called 'Sophy', begins. The little girl Sophy is infatuated with her father, who, however, does not pay her or her sister Toni much attention, choosing to spend his time with various mistresses instead. As Sophy finds out later on, this infatuation is of sexual character and this revelation even more enhances her self-destructive tendencies. While her sister is in Afghanistan trafficking drugs, Sophy, now older, becomes sexually promiscuous, but only sees sex as something boring and bothersome, using it 'exploitatively' instead. She plots a kidnapping of a young boy from the private school at which Matty works and when her sister returns, now a terrorist, they join forces.

In the third part, titled 'One is One' (a title which recalls Golding's discussion with Biles about 'the unity' of things), Golding 'bring[s] the whole thing together'<sup>63</sup>, as he said a man is to do. During the unsuccessful kidnapping, Matty dies. In his last moments, or possibly posthumously, Matty, engulfed in flames, stops the kidnapper. In the meantime, Sophy, unaware that the plan was a failure, is having an orgasmic vision in which she stabs the to-be-captured boy to death. In the court, she plays an innocent victim of circumstances and is set free. Finally, Pedigree, the schoolmaster, dies on a park bench after having had a spiritual and supernatural vision of Matty as a God-like figure who forgives him his sins and releases him from his suffering.

All the parts of the novels are connected, and the characters are constantly interacting with each other, or at least affecting each other. By a mere coincidence or by a design, they often appear in the same place at the same time but may not even be aware of each other. One of the keywords of the book is 'entropy'. A concept that is rather hard to understand and with no notes by Golding (at least to the author's knowledge), let it be assumed that, given the nature of the story, entropy here shall refer to the theory of entropy of entanglement, which is concerned with the dependency of

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<sup>63</sup> Biles, 102.

particles in a system, as well as the classical statistical theory of entropy concerned with probability (in the book referred to as coincidences). The theory of entropy as a concept of thermodynamics which should account for the ‘death’ of the universe as well as the distribution of energy plays a significant role as well, giving some of the characters a rather nihilistic tendencies and feelings of power (this is referred to as ‘unwinding’). Sophy’s summary of the concept shall suffice for the book offers little actual explanation:

Everything’s running down. Unwinding. We’re just—tangles. Everything is just a tangle and it slides out of itself bit by bit towards something that’s simpler and simpler—and we can help it. Be a part.<sup>64</sup>

The concept will be more important for the discussion of Matty’s and Sophy’s roles with respect to religion.

### 3.2.1. Sophy

At the beginning of her story, Sophy seems to be an ordinary girl gifted with a high intellect and beauty. Her sister Toni, while even more beautiful and intelligent, behaves in an odd way. This aspect of theirs – the intellect and appearance – are what propels them throughout their lives. While it is clear that Golding already doubted his theory of evil and intelligence ten years prior to writing the book, it remains a fact that Sophy and her sister Toni both possess a far greater ability for evil than other characters in the book. Their evil is calculated and they impose their will on anyone and anything; they are selfish and greedy and, although twins, individualistic; they are violent and hurtful and, at the same time, hurting silently; their lives are the results of loveless struggle in which they keep searching for a substitute. They embody all the evil traits of the New People in *The Inheritors* except for their religious values. Instead, Sophy is a nihilist, talking about entropy because of which ‘[e]verything’s running down. Unwinding.’<sup>65</sup> And through depicting their lives, Golding offers a vaccine against such behaviour.

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<sup>64</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 249.

<sup>65</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 249.



Sophy's personality is divided into two – there is Sophy, the 'the little girl with her smiling face (little friend of all the world)'<sup>66</sup>, and there is the 'Sophy-thing'<sup>67</sup> inside her head in a 'dark tunnel'<sup>68</sup> which forces her to behave 'Weird and powerful'.<sup>69</sup> With regards to her behaviour, this desire to be weird and powerful manifests itself in a strictly evil way, purely New-People-ish, in terms of *The Inheritors*. To emphasise this sickness of the Sophy-thing, Golding lets her emerge in a dark, violent, and scatological scene. The event is started by Sophy listening to a radio programme about entropy, which talks 'directly to the Sophy-thing that sat inside at the mouth of its private tunnel.'<sup>70</sup> She frightens herself by her desire to be weird (a testament to the evil nature of this desire) and forces her way through a locked window in an effort to impose her will on the object as well as the people outside. In the dark, she can only see a canal and a 'filthy old stinky-poo urinal, whiff whiff' into which Mr Pedigree walks and 'she kept him there she did! She willed him to stay in the dirty place'<sup>71</sup>. This endeavour of her is also accompanied by violence, as she does 'a violence to her head' when opening the window, and 'bent her mind, frowning, teeth gritted' when forcing Pedigree to remain inside 'the dirty place'. It is this dark presence inside her, with 'eyes in the back of [Sophy's] head'<sup>72</sup> that forces her into evil behaviour.

And it is also this dark presence which grows at the expense of the good Sophy. Sophy herself, as has been mentioned, initially seems like a regular girl. On a special day, when she was very little and 'had Daddy to herself'<sup>73</sup>, he took her out for a walk during which 'he had wooed her'.<sup>74</sup> This fateful day becomes the starting point of the emptiness which she will forever try to fill, the day on which she became infatuated with her own father – a man so cold and hurt he cannot even bring himself to say the

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<sup>66</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 187.

<sup>67</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 195.

<sup>68</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 184.

<sup>69</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 187.

<sup>70</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 195.

<sup>71</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 196-197.

<sup>72</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 199.

<sup>73</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 154.

<sup>74</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 155.

word love. In her childish selfishness, she hopes her mother and Toni would not come home so she can keep her father to herself. As her father becomes bored after 10 minutes of walking around with her, they have to return home and the trip is cut short. Subconsciously aware of the wrongness of her desire, Sophy becomes emotionally numb. She gets rid of virginity when she is 16 and considers sex irrelevant and silly and uses it only as a way of controlling people and getting what she wants: the exploitative sex Golding discarded as purely sinful. Her subconscious knowledge of the despicability of her desire also makes her hate herself and her own body. After her first intercourse (which happened with a complete stranger in a forest after she hitchhiked him like a prostitute would) she begins exploring herself – her vulva and clitoris – and when she feels her faeces through the membrane between her intestines and the inside of her vagina, she becomes disgusted and screams ‘I hate! I hate! I hate!’ inside her head, in a ‘feeling [that] was pure’.<sup>75</sup> Another scatological image to emphasise the sickness and impurity of Sophy, or humans in general.

The externalisation and execution of violence (and the general wrongdoing and evil) is thus a substitution for the lack of love. Sophy herself calls this unachievable desire ‘outrage’.<sup>76</sup> Sophy’s ultimate outrage is to become her father’s lover. Already as a very little girl, less than ten years old, she wonders ‘what an auntie [as she calls her father’s many mistresses] was and what they had in common’.<sup>77</sup> This thirst for knowledge is purely incestual and ‘with a shiver of a kind of dirty excitement and also disgust she knew that she wanted to find out what there was about them that made Daddy summon them to his bed.’<sup>78</sup> One night, when she is arguing with her father about how he never cared for her or Antonia, and trying to calm him down, she becomes visibly aroused, which they both become aware of, while telling him he too needs someone, not only emotionally, but also sexually: ‘You’ll need, I mean you can say sex is trivial but what do you do about it, I mean—’<sup>79</sup> Both aware of the inappropriateness of the situation, their willpowers clash – her father’s unloving admittance of masturbating and her hurting dismissal of the topic. When she leaves, she has a vision

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<sup>75</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 206.

<sup>76</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 249.

<sup>77</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 193.

<sup>78</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 193.

<sup>79</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 280.

of herself, first as a little girl and then as a grown woman, offering her body to her father:

It was in the middle of this rage [...] she looked among her hot tears, her rage and hatred for the outrage that would go with the unravelling, and there it was right in the front of her mind so that she stared at it. There was a girl [...] with her girl's body, her scent and her breasts, laughing she went, back to the hall, the door, flung it open and there laughing offered what she had to him; and now a real, solid girl's body staggered down the stairs and along the path after the phantom girl, up the steps, got open the glass door; [...] she could not, could not, her body would not, would not, and she came away, tears streaming and she [...] failed in outrage, and seething with the hatred [...]'<sup>80</sup>

After the full realisation of its impossibility, the outrage of love is immediately substituted by another outrage, this time of violence. It is important to note that the Sophy-thing was unable to manifest herself during the conversation with her father and the realisation of her subconscious desire. In that moment, Sophy turned into the girl Sophy who only desires to be loved. Nevertheless, the fact that her father only seemed to show any affection whatsoever to his mistresses remains equally important. It is most likely that Sophy in that saw the only way how to become closer to him and thus developed her incestual desires.

However, as the desire for love is not to be fulfilled, a desire for violence takes its place. When she was ten, Sophy and Toni were sent to their grandmother, where Sophy, watching dabchicks with her younglings, throws a stone at them killing one in the process. This incident is also Sophy's first realisation of entropy – of the principle of coincidences, or what she at the time calls “Of Course”.<sup>81</sup> When this ‘of course’ is operating, things happen as if preordained: ‘[...] as soon as the future was comprehended it was inescapable.’<sup>82</sup> Considering Sophy's high intelligence, beauty, and social standing, much of her life happens to her as if ‘of course’. Thus, she comes to

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<sup>80</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 283.

<sup>81</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 158.

<sup>82</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 158.

understand life and world as being her to grasp, further strengthening her need for the imposition of own will. Sophy's interest in violence is even more emphasised in her conversation with Bill, a friend of her boyfriend. Bill is '[t]he natural man [...] he likes killing.'<sup>83</sup> Golding's call back to *The Inheritors* and the New People. During the interview, she draws a similarity between pebbles (such as the one she had killed a dabchick with) and bullets. She seems to consider no distinction between the lives of a dabchick and a human being. At the end of her story, as has been mentioned in the summary of her arc, she has a vision in which she kills a little boy they had decided to kidnap, him covered in his own urine and her touching his genitals before stabbing him multiple times to death. The vision ends with her achieving orgasm. Her outrage of violence is the full realisation of her darkness.

Her sadistic, and possibly paedophilic, tendency is not, however, surprising at this point. Previously, her first (and only ever) orgasm came when she stabbed one of her boyfriends in a shoulder, and when she saw a group of schoolboys, she described them as 'desirable, edible, even [...], infinitely precious objects'.<sup>84</sup> Given her corrupted experience of love and its substitution by violence, the picture Golding draws of Sophy is that of a sadistic, self-hating and self-abusive, incestuous paedophile, a nihilistic terrorist wishing only to violate.

But it is also a picture of a person who was hurt and lost infinitely too much. And from this tapestry of misfortune a clear message can be construed. Like in *The Inheritors*, Golding sees lack of love and breakdown of communication as the primary reasons for the human sickness to reign unbridled and run free. Had her father showed her affection and love, she would not become the selfish violent person she became. Had she communicated with her sister she would have known they are the same and they could have created a bond. Instead, they became too separate, too individualistic, seeing the imposition of will as establishing their rule and territory. The lack of love creates in both sisters extremist tendencies. The inability to locate a source of affection leads Toni to religion and then to terrorism, while Sophy's eventual realisation of the impossibility of her love manifests in a complete reversal of the dichotomous cline and her outrage becomes that of violence.

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<sup>83</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 232.

<sup>84</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 265.

## 4. Of religions and saints

Religion (and the spiritual in the wider sense) has always been an important part not only of Golding's work, but his life as well. On the one hand, it was because of his imagination which allowed him to think beyond the scope of the natural world and see more than there possibly is or could be. On the other hand, he was also heavily influenced by his father, Alec Golding. Golding himself claimed he was 'a religious man, but possibly an incompletely religious man' and that he was 'standing on [his] father's shoulders'<sup>85</sup> with regards to faith and religion. In his interview with Biles, Golding describes his father's outlook on religion: his father, who was an agnostic rather than an atheist, and a pragmatic 'wasn't a man who scoffed at God. He was a man who regretted God so profoundly that he almost believed in Him.'<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, his mother's Cornish horror stories filled with the supernatural, coupled with William's imagination, enhanced his spiritual side even more.

The mother's influence strengthened his imagination and rendered his family house inhabitably terrifying. He imagined 'that spirits permeated the walls of his house'<sup>87</sup> and in the cellar saw only darkness and fear. As has been mentioned, this imagery is repeated in his work, the cellar being the place where we hide from God, or where we hid God (either way, it is the source of darkness and fear in humans). In his books, religion is not to be understood as much in terms of general theology as in terms of blame-assignment and evil-externalization. In many of his novels, the God figure is rendered either a devil or terrible by the characters and the religion transforms into a paganism with violent sacrificial rituals

He also talked about 'unity' which should bind the whole cosmos together. Instead, as he saw, people have create different unities, smaller parts of the whole, thinking their own unity as the absolute one: 'If I, for example, had been born a Roman Catholic, that is one sort of unity; if I had been born, as it were, a Marxist, that is one sort of unity'.<sup>88</sup> Whether religious or not, those doctrines were a part of the almost cosmic whole, which humans first are to understand before we can move beyond our

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<sup>85</sup> Biles, 83.

<sup>86</sup> Biles, 83.

<sup>87</sup> Golding, *The Hot Gates*, 167.

<sup>88</sup> Biles, 102.

limitations as we face them today, '[f]or if humanity has a future on this planet of a hundred million years, it is unthinkable that it should spend those aeons in a ferment of national self-satisfaction and chauvinistic idiocies.'<sup>89</sup>

Of even more importance was to Golding the spiritual in general. His preoccupation with "'spiritual" people'<sup>90</sup> is palpable in almost every single one of his works. These spiritual people, who Golding saw as the "'good" people' are valuable to society and human race in general, but whose 'value [...], without having any possibility of assessing the results of their value or of saying in statistical terms how valuable they are' one can only 'sense'.<sup>91</sup> These spiritual people can be referred to as saints (and were so by Golding as well). According to Golding, these 'miraculous, levitating saints' were the 'most interesting thing to talk about.'<sup>92</sup> He saw them as capable of understanding and conquering the human sickness and thus being able to bring about 'the Golden Age'.<sup>93</sup> Even though Golding saw this as possible, he considered it 'complicated' given how 'the saint is so often wrong, so often limited, so often *tied to a theology* which he expresses in *words which alter their meanings* [emphasis added].'<sup>94</sup> This tying to a theology and the emerging limitation is connected with Golding's philosophy about unity: '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.'<sup>95</sup> His philosophy is that the whole population is sick and each individually believes in his own false unity. For most, however, the true understanding is impossible, and thus must be relegated to saints.

#### 4.1. Religion in *The Inheritors* and *Lord of the Flies*

Oa, the Neanderthals' goddess of nature, of the natural order and balance, of one's assimilation with and in the circle of life, stands in a violent contrast with the savage paganism of the New People. Whereas Lok's tribe accepts death as part of the system

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<sup>89</sup> Biles, 84.

<sup>90</sup> Biles, 42.

<sup>91</sup> Biles, 42.

<sup>92</sup> Carey, 141.

<sup>93</sup> Biles, 41.

<sup>94</sup> Biles, 41.

<sup>95</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 393.

and believes in Oa's goodness, the Homo Sapiens introduced a religion built upon and from fear, a religion utilising blood and life sacrifices. The New People resist death and try to ward it off by violent rituals and live offerings.

When the New People are observed by Lok and Fa for the first time and hear the 'harsh and furious'<sup>96</sup> roar of the shaman wearing the fur and antlers of a stag (in itself a desanctification of life), what Lok and Fa are seeing is a religious ritual. Unfortunately, Lok and Fa frighten the New People and have to flee, and when they see them again, they witness another of their rituals, during which one of the hunters has his finger cut off for a good luck as a sacrifice to their Stag-god. The hunting is to be, of course, of the Neanderthals. When the hunt fails, another ritual takes place, this time with mead and the devouring of Liku, which traumatises Tanakil, the girl who was keeping her, and who is now 'flat on her back as if she were dead.'<sup>97</sup> The ritual cannibalistic feast (for are they not of one species?) is a proof of the savageness of their religion.

What is even more staggering is that the New People consider the Neanderthals devils, yet do not stop themselves from eating their offspring. During their rush from the Neanderthals in the later part of the book, they offer Tanakil, their own child, as a sacrifice for the 'tree-darkness' or 'the devil[s]'<sup>98</sup>, as they named Lok's people. Next to Tanakil is a drawing of a devilish figure with 'hair standing out' as if it was 'enraged or frightened.'<sup>99</sup> Their own emotions transcribed onto Lok and Fa. What confirms Lok's innocence and the externalisation of the New People's own evil is Lok's absolute ignorance of the nature of the drawing. He is unable to draw any connection between the icon and himself. The Homo Sapiens' own violence, greed, and bloodlust remains a mystery to them and instead of understanding it, they create a mock-icon and a devil out of the peaceful Neanderthals.

*Lord of the Flies* presents a corrupted religion in very similar way. The group of boys stranded on an island during the Second World War quickly descends into savagery, leaving behind any western or Christian values of their civilisation they may have brought with themselves. The savage boys, led by Jack, create a religion not unlike

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<sup>96</sup> Golding, *The Inheritors*, 118.

<sup>97</sup> Golding, *The Inheritors*, 162.

<sup>98</sup> Golding, *The Inheritors*, 221.

<sup>99</sup> Golding, *The Inheritors*, 205.

that of the Homo Sapiens' in *The Inheritors* and the circumstances of its origin are very similar as well. Furthermore, its use – the externalisation of inner fear and darkness onto a devil (this time literally, as *Lord of the Flies* is the English translation of Jewish Beelzebub) parallels the usage in *The Inheritors*.

The initiation of the religion is, too, accompanied by a ritualistic hunt, after which Jack decides to leave the pig's head as an offering for the Beast, the demon of the island the boys had created for themselves and of whom they are foolishly afraid: 'This head is for the beast. It's a gift.'<sup>100</sup> What the boys did not know is that they set the offering into a place which Simon, the saint of the story, uses as a place of meditation with the nature and the cosmos. The symbolic corruption of the natural sanctity with the offering of death and savagery is emphasised by the pig's head 'grinning faintly'.<sup>101</sup> The grin is faint for now, as the more the boys turn savage, the wider it will become – Golding's open acknowledgment of the connection between savagery and the religion of blood, between the growth of darkness and the need for boys to create a demon outside in their inability to understand and accept their condition. The only person who comes to understand this is Simon.

## 4.2. Golding's saints and Antichrists

Two saints and two Antichrists from three novels – *Lord of the Flies*, *Pincher Martin*, and *Darkness Visible* will be used to showcase Golding's ideas behind the spiritual with regards to an individual and his or her sickness. It is necessary to keep in mind that Golding talked about the individual as a single gear within the clockwork of society. To him, the 'Golden Age' is an age when the perfect society has been created, but for that the individual must understand the darkness within as 'society is what men are'.<sup>102</sup> And not many are capable of this. Golding saw much of the society as 'the great unwashed three billions'<sup>103</sup> with a potential for both evil or good. And on both extremes of the cline, special people exist. On the good end, those who understand the nature of man and seek redemption for the whole of mankind, are the saints. On the other delimitation of the spectrum reside those who may not be as ignorant as the rest of the

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<sup>100</sup> William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (London: Faber and Faber, 1958), 151.

<sup>101</sup> Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, 151.

<sup>102</sup> Biles, 45.

<sup>103</sup> Biles, 43.



human race, but still utilise their condition in a way that puts the rest of the humanity in jeopardy.

#### 4.2.1. Simon the saint

The first obvious saint is Simon from *Lord of the Flies*. As aforementioned, Simon is the ‘holy man’ of the novel, the spiritual boy whose sanctity is further emphasised by his martyrdom. Simon is ritually killed by the boys at the heights of their fear as they are trying to ward off evil. Yet all they did was kill Simon, the ‘good’ person, and let the evil take hold. Labelling Simon as martyr is not inappropriate, too, as he died on his quest to tell the boys about the nature of the Beast, the devil, the man. In the original manuscript, Carey notes, Simon was even supposed to sacrifice himself so that the beast would leave and meet a spiritual being, not unlike the spirits that visit Matty in *Darkness Visible*.<sup>104</sup> It is clear, then, that Simon was supposed to be a much more spiritual character.

During the boys’ stay on the island, a corpse of a soldier falls from the sky and lands on a mountain where the boys try to make fire. The boys’ mistaking the corpse for the Beast is ironically correct, as he symbolises the savage and violent nature of man, as well as the humankind’s pitiful future if the understanding does not take place. The boys’ comprehension, however, is limited, and they do not see further than the surface level. The only one who will understand and see the corpse for what it is will be Simon. As mentioned in the previous section, the boys impaled a pig’s head on a spear as an offering for the Beast and did so in Simon’s shrine. Unaware to them, however, Simon was present and saw the whole act. During the dialogue between Simon and the Lord of the Flies, Golding shows the pig’s real nature, letting the head locate itself (and thus the darkness) ‘down there’<sup>105</sup>, thus establishing the dark cellar image. The head warns Simon not to go into the cellar as it is the only thing there and is inescapable. Yet at the same time, it is warding Simon off, sending him back to the boys and threatening him with death should he not listen: “—Or else,” said the Lord of the Flies, “we shall do you. See?”<sup>106</sup> What Golding is showing here is the Beast’s fear of Simon, the saint, actually being able to understand the human sickness, thus moving beyond it.

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<sup>104</sup> Carey, 156-157.

<sup>105</sup> Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, 158.

<sup>106</sup> Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, 159.

Unfortunately for Simon, the Beast is stronger and the boys kill him. His body is then washed away by the ocean and accepted by the nature, which holds what seems to be almost a funeral for him. Simon, by understanding and accepting the sickness, has understood the unity of all, and was accepted in return.

The same cannot be said for Piggy, the ‘scientist’ of the group, whose end was violent and Golding offered no such romantic vision of his death. Golding harboured a certain distaste for Piggy and the rational scientist he represents, as he made known in his interview with Biles.<sup>107</sup> That is in contrast to many others who believe that the advance of mankind and science holds the key to better tomorrow. To Golding, however, who in the interview describes society as ‘riddled with ghosts’, a look to the past and inwards is the only way of improving our situation. Only the spiritual people, the good people, the saints and martyrs, are able to help.

#### 4.2.2. Christopher the Antichrist

Following the release of *The Inheritors*, *Pincher Martin*’s protagonist embodies all that Golding had shown to plague mankind, but this time with a focus on an individual rather than a collective. Furthermore, Christopher Martin, the eponymous Pincher, is not only an accumulation of all the dark in men but rather a pure crystallisation. In his notes, Golding ascribes his being ‘wronger than most’ to a pre-natal condition, rather than a society- and life-induced antagonism (as was Sophy’s case).

The irony behind his name is not a coincidence either. Christopher, resembling Christ, and Martin, resembling the word martyr, both come into play during the story. The characters around Christopher describe him as ‘born with his mouth and his flies open and both hands out to grab’<sup>108</sup>, hence his moniker Pincher, and give him the role of Greed of the seven deadly sins in their production. Golding decided to discard any sort of subtlety and Christopher’s wickedness is always clearly visible and obvious, nothing is being hidden or simply implied with regards to his character.

Christopher’s story is a simple one – a man becomes stranded on a rocky island in the ocean during the War and has to survive while slowly losing sanity and waiting for rescue, only for the reader to find out that he died on page two of the novel.

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<sup>107</sup> Biles, 12-13.

<sup>108</sup> William Golding, *Pincher Martin* (London: Faber and Faber, 2013), 127.

Christopher's life goal is to be the 'bigge[st] maggot'<sup>109</sup> in a Chinese box by eating all the other maggots. By calling himself and others maggots, Martin seems to be aware of the despicableness of humans. Even though understanding the condition, like Simon, he nevertheless chooses to become not a saint, but a literal anti-Christ. That this is not a stretch is clear from his decision to kill his friend Nathaniel, the saint of the story, but, more importantly, in his decision to kill God himself (albeit self-created) and in his refusal of heaven, on which he 'shit[s]'.<sup>110</sup> In his critical work, L.L. Dickson called Sophy from *Darkness Visible* a 'female Christopher Martin'<sup>111</sup>, and while Christopher embodies much of the quality of Sophy's character, including her individuality, nihilism, atheism, and self-centeredness (he literally calls himself the centre throughout the book), Martin nevertheless refuses compassion (even God's)<sup>112</sup>, unlike Sophy who desires love and connection.

Even though Golding in his notes claimed the reason for Martin's corruption to be pre-natal, the book offers a different understanding. On the one hand, it is true that Christopher's condition is the result of him being invested with more evil than a normal person would possess as Golding wanted to portray an utterly despicable person. However, as has been mentioned, Martin was aware of the nature of man, yet did nothing. The picture of Martin that is drawn towards the end of the book renders him a pathetic and scared person, not strong, selfish, and individual. It is all a pretence originating from fear. His self-appointed greatest moment in the story is inarguably one during which he gives himself an enema while hearing a heroic orchestra in his mind which thus resonates within the self-created purgatory as if he were a hero of an epic story. What he is afraid of is his own mortality and the fragility of human beings, which Christopher understands purely in the terms of ego – a testament of his corruption. His understanding is too limited and too tainted by his fear, thus forbidding him from becoming a saintly figure. When Nathaniel converses with Christopher about death and heaven, he mentions that unless one is prepared to die and accept God's compassion, that is to, understand the unity and the sickness, one invents a heaven for himself. For

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<sup>109</sup> Golding, *Pincher Martin*, 163.

<sup>110</sup> Golding, *Pincher Martin*, 214.

<sup>111</sup> L.L. Dickson, *The Modern Allegories of William Golding* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1990), 114.

<sup>112</sup> Golding, *Pincher Martin*, 213.

Christopher, this heaven, or rather purgatory, is not really a rocky island in the middle of the ocean, but the inside of his own mouth, as the reader finds out. His ego is too strong and Christopher's only idea of survival, or rather preservation, is by withdrawing inside himself. A complete opposite of the unity the Neanderthals were an image of. Yet the survival is possible only under the condition that he never allows his subconsciousness to put forward the realisation that he is already dead. Nevertheless, the defence slowly crumbles away and the self-delusion-predicated existence can ward off the knowledge of death only so many times before the illusion succumbs to reality and Christopher's heaven – 'a sheer negation [...] A sort of black lightning, destroying everything that we call life', destroys his purgatory and tears his existence apart. Martin is terrified of death, of meeting God, which he had created in his own image, an image of a despicable man. His final stand in the purgatory, a mere nanoseconds of brain activity which to him seem like weeks of hell, is a testament to this fear. Like the New People in *The Inheritors*, he rages against dying.

The picture of a cellar filled with 'coffin ends [...] crushed in the walls'<sup>113</sup> together with the crone that haunted little Golding appears again. This time it is where Christopher hides his God. With regards to Golding's talk about unity, it seems clear from this imagery, that God is man to Golding, and what he fears is, a has been put forward, his own evil, thus he hides it within himself and externalises it outside onto a foreign agent. Yet what the God in man can offer is not only evil but also compassion, for without accepting and understanding the human condition, one cannot learn to love and be a part of the unity. The corruption in humans is natural and so unless it is accepted, man will forever be alienated from the unity of things as he himself is divided. It is no coincidence that as God is tearing Christopher apart, battling him for acceptance, he does so in 'a compassion that was timeless and without mercy.' As will be seen, this scene is repeated in *Darkness Visible* nearly verbatim and in basically the same context. Considering *Darkness Visible* is a climax of Golding's 'man-evil-religion' philosophy, this image is at the centre of understanding of his idea of God as put forward in his novels.

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<sup>113</sup> Golding, *Pincher Martin*, 147.

### 4.2.3. Matty the God and Sophy the Devil

A proper clash of a saint and an Antichrist within one work, however, came only with *Darkness Visible*. As aforementioned, the novel is a climax of Golding's post-war meditation on the nature of man and religion. The saint of the novel, Matty, who 'might have been born from the sheer agony of a burning city'<sup>114</sup>, is another reminder of the connection between Golding's philosophy and the Second World War: The light of the fires is 'shameful' and 'inhuman'<sup>115</sup> and when, later at school, Matty is tricked into showing a girl his shame, it is his burnt half of his face that he shows, the physical mark of war and the human corruption, rather than his penis as the reader would assume. The metaphor is not without its resemblance to the fallen soldier in *Lord of the Flies*.

Matty emerges straight from the fires of the London blitz, walking down 'the geometrical centre of the road [...] the very middle of the street with a kind of ritual gait that in an adult would have been called solemn.'<sup>116</sup> Matty is a central character not only of the novel, but also of his own life as he constantly examines his purpose and believes himself to be a part of some higher plan. However weird it may seem to claim something so ordinary and seemingly irrelevant, it is a contradiction of Golding's idea of the Neanderthals as the perfect beings. Matty is a human and with that comes selfishness, individuality, lust, and other vices. It is clear that Golding is aware of that, thus rendering his saint a human, not an idealised version of a Neanderthal in the body of Homo Sapiens (which Simon in *Lord of the Flies* almost was). And unlike Simon, Matty does possess all those negative traits that come with being human, although he uses a deeply ingrained self-deception in his quest for understanding himself to block these, creating for himself a persona and a life of a martyr (at one point he is even called 'ecce Homo'<sup>117</sup>, a term applied to the depiction of crucified Jesus) and a self-fulfilling prophecy.

This need to understand himself, the constantly evolving question of self-knowledge, is what renders him a saint. Like with Simon, the desire to comprehend one's nature is the way forward. Throughout the novel, Matty keeps questioning God

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<sup>114</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 20.

<sup>115</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 6.

<sup>116</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 10-11.

<sup>117</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 295.

about the reason for his existence, and as he moves through life, the question evolves: ‘Who am I? What am I? What am I for? [...] What am I? Am I human?’<sup>118</sup> The last question may seem pathetic, nevertheless, considering his origins, his name, his death, and his (possible) godhood, it is not to be discarded lightly. He was born from the fire, his name inexplicably came to the doctor as if by providence and is not fully disclosed to the reader until Matty fulfils his destiny, he dies in a fire, or rather turns into a fire elemental while protecting a child from being kidnapped by Sophy’s terrorist group, and appears at the end as a God-like figure whose ‘smile round the lips was loving and terrible’<sup>119</sup> as he gives absolution to the paedophiliac teacher Pedigree.

He believes that he is ‘at the centre of things’<sup>120</sup>, which has been reaffirmed by a duo of spirits that he sees, spirits of celestial origin, but what things he is to be at the centre of is always being kept vague and feels rather like Matty is deriving some meaning to his empty, lonely, sad existence. That is, until the spirits tell him that he is to be ‘a burnt offering’<sup>121</sup>, which comes true and what until then seemed like schizophrenic hallucinations receives a spiritual, supernatural level. Whether due to entropy or actual divine intervention, Matty’s quest turns him into an actual martyr, including castration and self-harm, who gives away everything, even his life. That his supernatural ‘rendezvous’ with the spirits and the eventual orders are self-created is supported by the fact that often the spirits tell him something he had already convinced himself of (such as his idea of protecting children when he sees the Stanhope’s twins Sophy and Toni). The importance of his religious escapism, however, lies in the nature of his faith. Unlike the Homo Sapiens or the boys on the island, or even Christopher Martin, his religion is one that is not of evil. The saint, even one as limited as Matty, who does not understand the human condition, is much more valuable than a corrupted man who does, like Christopher Martin. For Matty, deeper meditations are ‘things moving about under the surface’<sup>122</sup> and their true nature escapes him with only an intuition remaining, whereas Sophy created the Sophy-thing and left it at the reigns. Unlike Christopher, he does not understand the condition. He is limited, like Sophy.

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<sup>118</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 147.

<sup>119</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 398.

<sup>120</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 144.

<sup>121</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 360.

<sup>122</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 77.

And like Sophy's outrages, his religious fanaticism is a coping mechanism born from the lack of compassion, communication, and love.

That Sophy is an anti-Christ should not come as a surprise at this point, considering her role in opposition to the god(like) Matty, as well as her vision in which she kills the young boy. According to Matty's spirits, the child was born 'with an I.Q. of a hundred and twenty' which, as Matty attests, was 'the I.Q. of Jesus of Nazareth'.<sup>123</sup> Sophy's antagonistic role is further strengthened by Matty's vision of 'a woman in Apocalypse [...] allowed to torment [Matty] [...] and caused [him] to defile [himself] with much pain'.<sup>124</sup> The woman has Sophy's face and the vision comes to him after he sees her behave oddly – she had lost a ring, then during the search she dropped it in front of Matty and claimed Matty to have found it. This was a part of her plan to kidnap the little boy, which Matty, due to his sensitivity for signs, interpreted correctly. Furthermore, whenever a direct light shines on Sophy, her face turns 'white and ugly'<sup>125</sup> and Golding even goes as far as to give her 'Hitlerian moustache of shadow'.<sup>126</sup>

Sophy is highly intelligent which leads to other vices not because it would be an equation (although Golding did claim such a thing possible one point) but because she can understand the world better and see through the pretence and the simplicity of society. When she is mere ten years old, she realises the power of her status as well as her being a little girl and being able to 'do anything she liked with Mr Goodchild, that large, old, fat man'<sup>127</sup> (who is also a paedophile, albeit closeted, and desires Sophy and Toni). She has never experienced love or compassion from anyone, every interest in her was sexual. Her subscription to the nihilistic entropy leads to her revolting through violence as she never knew love. Mr Goodchild, who was infatuated with the sisters since they were little, words their condition as 'Grief. Neglect. "Nothing."'<sup>128</sup> The prerequisites for the perfect terrorist, as Sophy herself says. A comparison with Matty may seem odd here, as he has also been described as loveless, yet one instance separates

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<sup>123</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 147-147.

<sup>124</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 356-357.

<sup>125</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 374.

<sup>126</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 365.

<sup>127</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 178.

<sup>128</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 345.

them and may have been the sole reason for Sophy not becoming a saint as well. When the firemen saved Matty from the fires of London, they ‘formed a tight and unprofessional knot round the child [...] as if to be close was to give him something [...] [t]he captain was a bit breathless but full of compassion and happiness.’<sup>129</sup> Even though Matty nor the narrator ever comment on this scene, this loving embrace could not have left Matty unaffected. Considering that Toni, too, first reached to religion and yet became ‘the perfect terrorist’, given that both sisters were identical, it is a question whether Sophy, with better background, could not have been a saint. Golding’s implication here seems to be that had we had built a society with compassionate people, because ‘society is what men are,’<sup>130</sup> we could have had many more saints. Instead, we are turning them into Antichrists. As Matty himself says: ‘What good is not directly breathed into the world by the holy spirit must come down by and through the nature of men.’<sup>131</sup>

#### 4.2.4. One is One – the unity in *Darkness Visible*

The final aspect of Golding’s philosophy of religion is unity. In *The Inheritors* this was the unity with Oa. In *Lord of the Flies* and *Pincher Martin*, unity is the acceptance of the good and bad inside. In *Darkness Visible*, Golding tackles unity in terms of metalinguistics as all the characters have trouble expressing themselves through their language and even actively comment on that. Matty, with his ‘mouth not for speaking [...] an eye, perhaps, not for seeing,’<sup>132</sup> discards all religious dogmas as insufficient when he finds a Bible in Australia and realises that it is different. He sees the various doctrines as disjointed: ‘I have been among the Baptists and Methodists and Quakers and the Plymouth Brethren but there is no dread anywhere and no light. There is no understanding’.<sup>133</sup> When Goodchild asks his friend Edwin about Matty’s name before meeting him, Edwin replies:

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<sup>129</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 12.

<sup>130</sup> Biles, 45.

<sup>131</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 358.

<sup>132</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 311.

<sup>133</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 126.



No names. Rub them off. Ignore them. Think of the mess, the ruckus, the tumultuous, ridiculous, savage complications that language has made for us and we have made for language.<sup>134</sup>

The futility of communication, due to its inefficiency and impreciseness, is the main theme of the third part of the book, with Sim Goodchild's monologues feeling like Golding's own essays in a fictional form. It is important to remember that Golding claimed saints to be limited and one of the reasons is the language. The different religious dogmas and philosophical, political, and social beliefs, are according to Goodchild 'all reasonable [...] all, equally unreasonable'.<sup>135</sup> Matty's name - Matthew Septimus Windrove – is consciously written correctly as well as misspelled throughout the whole book by Golding as Windrave, Windrove, Windgrove and so on, and, as aforementioned, his name is not fully revealed to the reader until he is about to fulfil his destiny. This can be seen as a metaphor for the unity of all religions and their Gods, with only the prophets being different. Because the language is so limiting, Sophy and Toni suffered as much as they did. Matty's message was left unheeded, except for Goodchild and his friend Edwin. Mr Pedigree, Matty's former teacher, realises the futility of language and is himself affected by it:

High walls, less penetrable than brick, than steel, walls of adamant lay everywhere between everything and everything. Mouths opened and spoke and nothing came back but an echo from the wall. It was a fact so profound and agonizing, the wonder is there was no concert of screaming from the people who lived with the fact and did not know that they endured it.<sup>136</sup>

This description of language does not stray far off from the absurdist view of communication. His whole life Pedigree was persecuted for his paedophilic behaviour, even though he never hurt anyone. On the other hand, Sophy and Toni, due to their looks, status, and ability to sway people with words, were treated as good and great people, yet they both became terrorists. Matty's message was not only ignored, but also

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<sup>134</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 299.

<sup>135</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 300.

<sup>136</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 118.

misunderstood by many. And when Goodchild and Edwin reminisce about a spiritual séance with Matty, they talk about breaking down ‘a barrier, [breaking] down a partition,’<sup>137</sup> as they came closer to Matty’s truth not through language but feeling. Language is limiting and inaccurate and translations, as apparent from Matty’s wonder at the Australian Bible being different from the English one, make the whole issue even more complicated, as they can never capture the original meaning in precisely. It is, thus, not through language, but through something else, more universal, that man can understand the unity. What that is, however, Golding does not answer. The only hint is Matty’s ““I feel!””<sup>138</sup> after an official in Australia completely misunderstands his message and asks him if he has some spiritual vision.

There is the aspect of god, human, and unity in *Darkness Visible* as well. During the séance with Matty, when Goodchild touches his hand, it was ‘a tough and elastic substance he touched, no universe, but warm, astonishingly warm, hot.’<sup>139</sup> Matty’s transformation at the end when he absolutes Pedigree is also accompanied by him burning up and his skin turning ‘gold as the fire and stern.’<sup>140</sup> During this last vision of Matty, Golding speaks through Pedigree about the need and desire for love:

They call it so many things, don’t they, sex, money, power, knowledge – and all the time it lies right on their skin! The thing they all want without knowing it – yet that it should be you, ugly little Matty, who really loved me!<sup>141</sup>

Matty became Pedigree’s God. And unlike Christopher Martin’s, this God released Matty from the hell, as he himself described it, of existence as paedophile. By Matty accepting Pedigree and vice versa, and Pedigree fully understanding his own condition, as well as the human condition, he could accept his compassion, albeit with fear from what lies beyond. Interestingly enough, Pedigree’s monologues in the final part of the book bring him close to being a saint as well, if not completely sanctifying

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<sup>137</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 353.

<sup>138</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 100.

<sup>139</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 349.

<sup>140</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 398.

<sup>141</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 398.

him. Considering Pedigree's sexuality, it is an intriguing idea, which, however, lies beyond the scope of this work, as the implications and discussion could prove to be an overwhelming one.

One more hint at Golding's philosophy of religion, godhood, and the human condition, lies in Sim Goodchild. Sim is one of the unwashed masses Golding described, the average man, not a saint nor an Antichrist. When Matty meets him for the first time, he does not shake Sim's hand but instead reads from it. This attracts Sim's attention to the hand and '[i]n a convulsion unlike anything he had ever known,' Goodchild 'stared into the gigantic world of his palm and saw that it was holy.'<sup>142</sup> The metaphor with the cellar, unity, understanding, and compassion, all of it comes together in this image. Golding's God is of cosmic proportion and it is all. Golding had religion, as he himself said, and he subscribed to no doctrine. Instead, his mythology tells of unity beyond a single dogma or language. As long as man refuses to accept his own nature, rather than conjuring up demons and devils, he will not be able to move beyond his condition and open to the God in him. No gods, no devils, only man is responsible for his fate.

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<sup>142</sup> Golding, *Darkness Visible*, 348.

## 5. The social clockwork

Unlike many who saw society as the primary corruptive agent, Golding understood that the individuals themselves are responsible for the state of their community and that the resulting social structure is an immediate result of the members' endeavour and behaviour: 'I was writing *Lord of the Flies* because of my feeling that people had been looking at systems rather than at people.'<sup>143</sup> This vicious cycle is thus unbreakable unless the individuals bring about a change. Yet as has been argued in the previous two sections, primarily with respect to the saints, it is not possible for one to overcome the problems if the society (meaning the system, not individual persons) is, although possibly subconsciously, preventing this by deluding his or her worldview or setting up limits and hindering them.

There are, of course, also 'sanctions'<sup>144</sup> which prevent those on the opposite side of the spectrum, such as Sophy or Christopher, to deviate too much. Society's solution for these, as Golding saw it, is to 'integrate them into an off-white scheme' (contrary to integrating them into 'a black scheme the way Nazis did') and fulfil '[t]heir desire [...] to dominate other people. If they can be got to do this legally, that is a triumph for everybody.'<sup>145</sup> Without these sanctions, the society would fall into the 'dark side', and as Golding sees 'the ordered society' keeping people in what he calls a 'viable shape, this social shape and which enables us to show our bright side'.<sup>146</sup> How much he actually believed that is, however, questionable, given the stories he wrote. On the other hand, more often than not, he wrote about exceptional individuals, rather than the 'unwashed masses', as he called the rest of the population with potential for good and evil. And as most of the population consists of these, and as good behaviour is preferable to the 'dark side', 'the bright side is there all right.'<sup>147</sup> Yet the potency of the bright side is being heavily undermined by the social system itself.

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<sup>143</sup> Biles, 50.

<sup>144</sup> Biles, 44.

<sup>145</sup> Biles, 48.

<sup>146</sup> Biles, 44.

<sup>147</sup> Biles, 44.

L.L. Dickson weighs in on the issue in his critical analysis of *The Pyramid*, pointing out that in the first half of his career, Golding looked more at the individual, while the second one is focused on the social structure instead:

From *Lord of the Flies* to *The Spire*, Golding has implied that a corrupt individual can eventually corrupt his society. In *The Pyramid*, however, a corrupt society impedes individual moral choice.<sup>148</sup>

Not only *The Pyramid*, but also *To the Ends of the Earth*, both of which are analysed in this section, present Golding's ideas of how one is affected by the society. Both works deviate from his canon not only by their focus on the social system but also by the level of comic they contain. While the rest of his works is sombre and Golding refuses to let in any trace of humour, *The Pyramid* and *To the Ends of the Earth* both overflow with comic moments and language due to the satirical stance Golding assumed while writing those. This mocking tone is not surprising given his sensitivity and distaste for the social stratification of England. In his essay "A Touch of Insomnia", Golding likened the hierarchy to that of a ship, pointing out the rigidity of it:

You could not invade a plusher bar simply by readiness to pay more. Nor could you descend to a comfortable pub if you wanted to pay less. Where you were born, there you stayed.<sup>149</sup>

Golding saw the hierarchy not just as a question of money or wealth, but rather as a conditioning one was put through since birth which was tied to one's birthplace (within the hierarchy). He compared this position on the social ladder to a suit, 'a structure not much more becoming than a concrete wall, and about as comfortable' wishing for a day when 'man is free of this drab convention and can dress as he likes, and habitually does so dress from one end of life to the other'.<sup>150</sup> This sensitivity to the social hierarchy followed him through his whole life and, as has been mentioned in the introduction, not even being presented with a Nobel Prize or knighthood changed the

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<sup>148</sup> Dickson, 97-98.

<sup>149</sup> Golding, *The Hot Gates*, 125.

<sup>150</sup> Golding, *The Hot Gates*, 18-19.

deeply ingrained feeling of inadequacy he obtained as a child. And as will be shown, it is this social hierarchy that presents people with the greatest self-delusion. As society has to be transformed by the individual, if the individual is kept believing himself to be better than others due to his position on the ladder, thus ignoring own faults, the change is improbable, if not impossible.

### 5.1. The social pyramid

Golding's first departure to the topic of society's effect on an individual rather than vice versa was with *The Pyramid*, a bildungsroman in which the protagonist never matures. The eponymous "Pyramid," as confirmed by Golding, refers to "the English social Pyramid, a particularly crippling and terrible structure"<sup>151</sup> and Golding chose the name for its "overtones of weight and deadness and suffocation."<sup>152</sup> This 'crippling and terrible structure' weighs down on young Oliver, the protagonist of the novel, who, in three rather separate episodes, fails to establish a proper human relationship – whether with a lover, a friend, or a mentor – due to the ever-present social awareness as dictated by the 'dreadful ladder.'<sup>153</sup> The fictional small town Stilbourne (the name does not resemble the word 'stillborn' by accident) is 'an utterly stratified society'<sup>154</sup> in which everyone has a place and everyone's worth is decided based on where their station is within the social hierarchy. Mingling of the 'castes' is almost forbidden and when it happens, it is with a great offence to the town which, however, watches the affair unfold with great interest. A prime example of this is Oliver's mother, who watches an unfolding drama of Oliver's music teacher with 'exhilaration'<sup>155</sup>, mocking her at every occasion and laughing at her misfortune with 'Stilbourne's excitement and appetite at the news of someone else's misfortune'<sup>156</sup> while claiming Oliver to be 'so

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<sup>151</sup> Carey, 296.

<sup>152</sup> Carey, 298.

<sup>153</sup> William Golding, *The Pyramid* (London: Faber and Faber, 1983), 103.

<sup>154</sup> Howard S. Babb, *The Novels of William Golding* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1970), 173.

<sup>155</sup> Golding, *The Pyramid*, 185.

<sup>156</sup> Golding, *The Pyramid*, 63.

devoted to her [the teacher]<sup>157</sup> so that he can keep going to the lessons and spy for his mother.

The small-town middle-class snobbery and pretence condition Oliver since childhood, forming him into an adult who is unable to meaningfully connect with people because he sees them only in terms of the hierarchy. His limitation by this conditioning makes it literally impossible for him to consider Evie, the daughter of the town crier and thus inferior to Oliver on the social ladder, as more than ‘slave’ and ‘an object [...] life’s lavatory’<sup>158</sup>. He only sees her as a ‘hot bit of stuff’<sup>159</sup> through which he satisfies his sexual needs. He believes himself to be completely above her and feels secure and superior in social standing, wisdom, and intellect. Yet when she hints at being sexually abused by her father, not only does he misunderstand and think the culprit is her teacher, his socially conditioned emotional numbness and entrapment within the ‘properness’ of life, in which no such thing could even be conceived of, leave him speechless and his only defensive mechanism is to laugh ‘out of incompetence’ as he finds himself in ‘a gap, a nothingness where it was not just that the rules were unknown but that they were non-existent. A slice of life.’<sup>160</sup> The conditioning of the town leaves little room for actual life, love, and relationships. Throughout the ‘relationship’ with Evie, she proves herself to be much wiser than Oliver on multiple occasions, understanding much more, yet his limited perception of her leaves her remarks ignored. When, at a fair, she wonders if there was anyone alive in the town, Oliver considers the remark silly given the number of people present, unaware of Evie’s implication of the corpse-like rigidity and stiffness of the actual ‘life’ in Stilbourne.

Had Oliver not been so numbed by the social conditioning, he could have had a meaningful relationship with her, as he himself is dissatisfied with the town and the way it works. However, due to his ingrained sense of what is proper he is only left regretting when he finally realises they may ‘have made something, music, perhaps.’<sup>161</sup> It is not that he does not feel anything for Evie. The problem is that the feelings are repressed by the way he was brought up. When, at one point, he is not sure whether Evie got into a

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<sup>157</sup> Golding, *The Pyramid*, 188.

<sup>158</sup> Golding, *The Pyramid*, 91.

<sup>159</sup> Golding, *The Pyramid*, 75.

<sup>160</sup> Golding, *The Pyramid*, 90.

<sup>161</sup> Golding, *The Pyramid*, 111.

motorbike accident or not, his feelings of worry and affection leave him confused as they are incompatible with the conditioning. Evie herself probably liked Oliver and hinted at him accompanying her singing, which he had praised before, on piano. The possibility of such a relationship, however, never even crosses his mind, as he instead wonders where she could find someone with a piano in her social vicinity. His social awareness makes it impossible for him to see himself as an option. This avoidance goes as far as Oliver not wanting to be seen with her in the street, even in the middle of the day, as that could mean he is ‘mingling’ with someone of a lower position. Instead, he is himself locked in the dogma of social superiority and looks up to Imogen, a girl his senior and socially higher, whom he considers ‘part of high fantasy and worship and hopeless jealousy’ whereas Evie is simply ‘the accessible thing’.<sup>162</sup> However, as Oliver himself finds out later, Imogen is a ‘vain, stupid, insensitive woman without any talent at all’.<sup>163</sup> His infatuation and her life prospects are all a product of the social privilege that surround her position. Nevertheless, his sense of social hierarchy is not shaken, and he remains unable to see Evie outside the structure of the social pyramid, as a person.

Oliver himself is nowhere near the top of the social hierarchy himself. His father is ‘just’ a pill maker, whereas the neighbour’s head of the family is a doctor. The doctor’s son, Bobby Ewan, who shows a ‘conscious superiority’<sup>164</sup>, is adored by Oliver’s mother and Evie simply for his social standing, while Oliver claims he only ‘envie[s] him his boarding school, his prospective promotion to Cranwell, and most of all, his red motor bike’<sup>165</sup>, again failing to see him as anything more than a handful of class privileges. This ‘conscious superiority’ is so ingrained in Bobby that even as a very young child he called Oliver his slave. Evie’s relationship with Bobby is only sexual, as ‘the son of Dr. Ewan couldn’t take the daughter of Sergeant Babbacombe to a dance’ for reasons about which you ‘[d]idn’t have to think. Understood as by nature.’<sup>166</sup> Evie, although infatuated with Bobby and his upper-class mannerism, cannot even hope to have a serious relationship with him. But as Oliver’s standing is not that high, she can hope to win him over, a prospect that ‘would kill’ his parents and cause ‘their social

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<sup>162</sup> Golding, *The Pyramid*, 88.

<sup>163</sup> James Gindin, *William Golding* (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1988), 59.

<sup>164</sup> Golding, *The Pyramid*, 16.

<sup>165</sup> Golding, *The Pyramid*, 13-14.

<sup>166</sup> Golding, *The Pyramid*, 18.



world, so delicately poised and carefully maintained, so fiercely defended, crash into the gutter'.<sup>167</sup> Another example of the hierarchical perception of life in Stilbourne comes when Oliver's mother tries to force him into the town's Stilbourne Operatic Society. This artistic group is a posh party of socially-conscious people 'round whom an invisible line was drawn', for which 'at least half of Stilbourne's population was ineligible' because of their standing, into which Evie 'would never have been invited to appear, not even as a member of the chorus'<sup>168</sup> due to her working-class origins. The whole operation is nothing but a snobbish farce to which people are invited only on behalf of their position in the hierarchy, no matter their talents (one such example being Imogen). The pyramid stomps down anyone who would dare to stand above their level. The pretentiousness of the whole club is also highly comical, given how self-important the small-town 'royalty' feels, oblivious of the insignificance and amateurism of their production.

On the other hand, Evie, who likes rides on Bobby's bike, pays for the rides with her body, and so the prejudice against the lower classes could seem justifiable, rendering her a non-Christian prostitute and seducer worthy of the town's contempt. However, it is the town's conditioning that leaves her no other means than the most vulgar available to her and as she has to obey the town's order, her only possibility is to escape the town. She is very sexual and attractive and many of the men in town would like to have, or have, an affair with her, even though she is younger than Oliver. This exploitative sex with no love is one of the sins Golding mentioned in his interview with Biles. Sex, which should be the height of an emotional connection between two lovers, is thus transformed into a tool for the fulfilment of greedy, lustful, and selfish desires. In a community where '[c]lass differentiation is placed at the core of social relationships, interactions, and conflicts'<sup>169</sup>, the poor Evie lost any worth as a human being and became a sexual object, nothing more. Her desire 'to be loved [...] [for] somebody to be kind to [her]' is pushed to the background and instead she is used and abused. This disregard for human worth creates a society of isolated individuals with artificial connections and a false sense of superiority. The snobbish life of the town suffocates any possibility of a real relationship and people are instead locked into an illusion of

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<sup>167</sup> Golding, *The Pyramid*, 82.

<sup>168</sup> Golding, *The Pyramid*, 114.

<sup>169</sup> Crawford, 131.

‘community’ which crushes anyone who dares to move beyond the rigid social scheme, if they even get a chance to in the first place. Even though Evie was basically still a child, she was sexually used by half of the men in town, and only when a doctor was found with her lipstick on his lips did the town evict her as her presence suddenly threatened the stability of the ladder, as her previous affairs were no secret.

Even though, as has been mentioned, Oliver feels dissatisfied with the way the town and its people are, it feels more like a teenage angst rather than a genuine disgust that Evie feels. Whenever Oliver is presented with anything that could shake the belief in the social system, he laughs incompetently (like when he discovered Evie is being abused by her father, or when he is presented with the existence of homosexuality) and refuses to leave the firmly conditioned preconceptions of reality. While Oliver realises this when he returns to Stilbourne decades later, he is still aware of the impossibility to break free. The town’s snobbery, so obvious and comical to an outsider, impinges on the persons inside and creates a loveless situation with broken communication which strangles the individual and forever holds him prisoner within the crypt of small-town mentality, emotionally and morally stunted.

## 5.2. To the ends of the privilege

While *The Pyramid* established the society as a suffocating system with stratification that locks an individual and limits moral and emotional capacities, it could not sufficiently clearly explore the cognition of one conditioned by such a system, given Oliver’s limitation stemming not only from Stilbourne’s way of life but also from him being an adolescent. Golding clearly wanted to tackle the issue more, and more openly (and with more humour). He chose for this a form of a personal journal and set the story at an appropriate time for such a kind of narration – the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, near the end of the Napoleonic wars, when the social stratification was still openly natural and tyrannical. His protagonist, too, is no longer an adolescent boy, but rather a young man, Edmund Talbot, who boards a ship to Australia where he is to work for the Australian Governor, a position arranged by his grandfather. As obvious, Edmund’s background is that of nobility, his grandfather being a person of great importance in his home Britain. Thus, while Oliver felt a sense of inadequacy and inferiority with regards to his neighbours and Imogen, Edmund is at the top of the social pyramid, and by no means due to his abilities but clearly due to his birthright.

The vessel herself is a metaphor for the English social system, but Golding does not force this theme in the spotlight and instead lets it sit in the background, nevertheless ever-present in the readers subconsciousness. It is an ancient man-of-war where one ‘wouldn’t want to go stirring about down there’<sup>170</sup>, with a white line that separates the peasantry, or migrants as Edmund likes to call them, from ‘their betters’<sup>171</sup>, an open critique of the British military history, archaic system, and social division.

Edmund, a man ‘educated and snobbish, full of Greek quotations and judgements about the manners of his travelling companions’<sup>172</sup>, immediately shows his nature when commenting on the cabin he is to live in for the next six months: ‘Imagine me, asked to live in such a coop, such a sty! However, I shall put up with it good-humouredly enough until I can see the captain.’<sup>173</sup> Irrespective of himself being in the better part of the ship where the cabins of other passengers are the same, he considers himself above them and immediately decides to see the captain in order to be accommodated in a place more suitable to his position. Edmund never really realises his insignificance on the ship, constantly acting superior as if he was at the king’s court, ignorant of the fact that the one being ‘humoured’ is he, not the other way around. His snobbish behaviour grants him the moniker ‘Lord Talbor’, which he in the second part of the story comments on, while praising himself for having ‘cured [himself] of a certain lofty demeanour, a consciousness of [his] own worth which had perhaps been too carelessly displayed in the earlier days of the voyage’ and says that the titles “‘mister” or “esquire”” are all he is ‘entitled to.’<sup>174</sup> When, in the early stages of the voyage, he hears two people badmouthing someone as would-be witty and comical and with archaic opinions, he fails to imagine himself as the target of the accusations (which the reader immediately does) and considers the officers it could apply to instead, in (to the reader comical) an internal monologue.

Such situations, to the reader comical and by Edmund ignored in their meaning, are abundant in the story, rendering Edmund, who thinks himself intellectual, witty,

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<sup>170</sup> William Golding, *To the Ends of the Earth* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004), 4.

<sup>171</sup> Golding, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 98.

<sup>172</sup> Gindin, 74.

<sup>173</sup> Golding, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 5-6.

<sup>174</sup> Golding, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 247.

humorous, and noble, a silly self-important person confused by his privilege. Only at the end, when his grandfather passes away and his position in the ‘antipodes’ is unclear, meaning he will have to fend for himself, he realises his previous privileged passing through life and no longer sees his journey in terms of a Greek epos, and calls his journal ‘the ridiculous sorrows of Edmund Talbot, whom life no longer spoiled as if he were its favoured child’<sup>175</sup> instead (which, however, still sounds of pathos and self-pityingly tragic, akin to Christopher’s heroic enema).

Edmund’s decision to talk to the captain, while ignoring the need to read the standing orders which strictly prohibit this, as well as him ‘borrowing’ sailors as if they had nothing better to do, which too is prohibited, is also seen by him as a right he has given his position on land. When an officer politely reprimanded him for not reading the orders, he ‘laughed heartily at this sally though Willis [the officer] did not seem to be amused by it.’<sup>176</sup> One of his first encounters with a crewman of the ship results in Edmund wanting ‘to teach the man a lesson in manners at the first opportunity’<sup>177</sup> and expects the young sailor he had borrowed before to know Greek, and even goes as far as to arrogantly contest the way the crew calculates their position on the sea. When a first lieutenant invites him for a dinner, he is offended by the invitation including other members of the upper-class passengers as well, again expecting himself to be treated differently. The ‘customs of our society or indeed, the laws of nature’<sup>178</sup> are simply at the forefront of Edmund’s perception of the world, himself looking down on everyone on the ship, including the captain, although ironically the captain, as well as other crewmen, made their name for themselves rather than taking advantage of someone’s patronage.

Like Oliver in *The Pyramid*, Edmund too is incapable of seeing people as more than social types, but unlike Oliver’s, Edmund’s behaviour results in a number of deaths, all of which he could have prevented, as he himself realises: ‘I might have saved him had I thought less of my own consequence and less of the danger of being bored!’<sup>179</sup> Ironically, even though he realises this after the death of the first person, he

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<sup>175</sup> Golding, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 729.

<sup>176</sup> Golding, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 30.

<sup>177</sup> Golding, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 8.

<sup>178</sup> Golding, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 113.

<sup>179</sup> Golding, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 162.

ignores this epiphany and lets another man die due to his low-class position and his friend because of his incompetence, disregard for the consequences of his actions, and carelessness. Furthermore, when he befriends one of the lieutenants, he sheepishly adheres to the social hierarchy and is blinded by his gentlemanship and noble background, only to discover later on that the officer was, while born a gentleman, a selfish, evil, arrogant, and despicable man – traits Edmund ascribes to the lower classes.

The most important characters on his journey are Mr. Prettiman and Ms Granham, an opinionated duo which Edmund considers outrageous as their ideas go against the established order, something Edmund is not yet ready to accept. That will slightly change, however, when he acquaintances them near the end of the voyage and wishes ‘with a spontaneous passion not unlike his that I might be their friend’, although realising ‘the price was impossibly high.’<sup>180</sup> Like Oliver’s relationship with Bobby and Evie, Edmund’s relationship with the two never becomes real as he is confined in the conditioned perception of world and its social order. His desire is actually so strong, that in one of his dreams, months after the voyage, he sees them from ground level because he is ‘quite comfortably buried in the earth of Australia, all except [his] head’.<sup>181</sup> They are happy and excited and when he wakes up, he has tears in his face. The procession is headed to Eldorado, a mythical city of gold, a journey onto which Mr Prettiman and Ms Granham actually invited Edmund as it is their goal in Australia – a new city for new people, with new order and democracy. Edmund’s condition, his body buried in the archaic system like a corpse, and only his head, which has managed to see some of the new truths thanks to the discussions with the couple, forbids him from making friends, however. When he wakes up, he realises this, but it is a sombre realisation to the reader and one not understood by Edmund:

[...] we could not all do that sort of thing. The world must be served, must it not?’ Only it did cross my mind before I had properly dealt with myself that she had said, or he had said, that I could come too, although I never countenanced the idea. Still, there it is.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Golding, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 678.

<sup>181</sup> Golding, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 760.

<sup>182</sup> Golding, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 760-761.

Edmund's heavy conditioning forces him to accept the order unquestionably for even their conversations could not sway him. He spent countless hours listening to the 'nonsense Mr Prettiman talked—and [Edmund has] never entirely convinced [himself] that it was nonsense' which imbued the listener with 'a sense of well-being, of enlightenment, of feeling that yes it was true, the universe was great and glorious and that these adventures of the mind and body were the crown of things' which, however, 'drifted away naturally enough, of course, as other considerations supervened and hid them.'<sup>183</sup> His refusal to move beyond the delimitations of the social system and accept a responsibility for and agenthood in his own moral, emotional, and ethical judgements, cripples him and binds him just like it did Oliver in *The Pyramid*.

Both Oliver and Edmund were conditioned by their social system and adhered to the hierarchy blindly and unquestionably. Their privilege blinds them to the truths of the outside world, to the reality of the human condition and their perception of people is tied to their position in the social scheme. Even though they both, and people of their standing in general, hold considerable power, their privilege makes it impossible for them to do anything and they keep perpetuating the dysfunctional system, thus keeping the biased self-righteous and self-important perception of the world interfering with the understanding of the human condition. They both fail to see the bad in others as long as their upbringing can be considered good enough, and instead invest the working and lower classes with negative traits and/or dismiss their humanity altogether.

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<sup>183</sup> Golding, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 667.

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to understand Golding's philosophy of the nature of man. William Golding decided to change the perspective after the Second World War showed the human potential for violence and terrified the whole world. Instead of looking at people as inherently good and their surroundings as the corrupting force, his work draws an image of a corrupted individual grasped by vices natural to him, which he however refuses to accept and in fear chooses destruction over compassion. This refusal and fear manifest in the externalisation of the evil outwards and in the resulting creation of religions with gods and devils as tyrannical and violent as the humans who created them. Among the unwashed masses with a potential for good or evil, two extremes coexist – the saints and the Antichrist. Whereas the saints, or the good people, as Golding called them, are able to understand and accept the human condition, the Antichrists embody all the dark aspects of human character – selfishness, violence, greed, lust, and the need to impose own will and control. All of this is then perpetuated by an oppressive social system which imbues individuals with a perception-altering privilege.

*The Inheritors* was Golding's first all-encompassing venture into the nature of humans and his foundation of the dichotomy of what a man is and what a man ought to be. As the peaceful, loving Neanderthals were being annihilated by the Homo Sapiens, Golding put into contrast the passivity of Lok's tribe and the selfishness, greed, and the need to control of the New People, as well as their ignorance and fear. A closer look at an individual so corrupted was Sophy in *Darkness Visible* who embodied all those vices and more, but as Golding showed, it was due to the lack of love and compassion from her surroundings that her 'outrage' of love changed into a desire for violence, a mirror image of the epilogue of *The Inheritors*, in which hate and fear changed into love.

In the second part, first the religion in *The Inheritors* and *Lord of the Flies* were described as a tool for self-delusion of the New People and the boys. Instead of accepting their flaws, they projected them outwards in fear that led to the suffering and deaths of many. Then, the saints Matty from *Darkness Visible* and Simon from *Lord of the Flies* were contrasted with the Antichrists Christopher from *Pincher Martin* and Sophy – the saints striving for a higher goal and the betterment of the world, and the Antichrists utilising their corrupted condition and forcing their way through their lives

with no regards for anyone or anything. Both Sophy and Christopher, the ‘fallen saints’ whose limited perception does not allow them to properly grasp the nature of the human condition, are gripped by fear and they both turn away from God. The saints, Matty and Simon, and arguably Pedigree, on the other hand, found God among people, an idea which Golding presented first in *The Spire* (1964), or rather to be more precise, in people. God, which to Golding symbolises acceptance, mercy, and compassion, is a gateway to the cosmic unity which can only come with the acceptance of the condition.

In the final part, the social system and its effect on the individual, whom it bounds into conformity and limits the worldview with a privilege, whether owned as in the case of Edmund in *To the Ends of the Earth*, or owned as well as desired, as embodied by Oliver and Evie in *The Pyramid*, was analysed. All the vices of the human character are transformed onto the society in which he or she lives, and the same vices are then perpetuated by the same social system and its hierarchy. Golding’s idea of a Golden age, which can only come with the introduction of a perfect society and hence the perfect people, is thus dependent on the acceptance and understanding of the condition. Yet the progress is being blocked by the same people and the same society.

This vicious cycle of self-delusion is on the one hand enforced by the society, which does not lend the individual enough moral and emotional agency, and on the other by the individual and his apparent refusal of acceptance and understanding and the resulting externalisation. The social system helps create within the individual a self-delusion that all is well and that it is others who are at fault. The same self-delusion thus prevents him from searching within and all that would or could impinge on his sense of self-understanding and worth is projected outwards in the form of religions, dogmas, and doctrines which further condition the individual’s self-delusion by exposing the evil as outside. Golding knew this and tried to bring the attention of the world, which at the time was happy that the evil Nazi Germany was defeated as if all the evil was gone and as if the only people, who could become Nazis, were Germans.



## 7. Resumé

Cílem této práce bylo porozumět Goldingově filozofii povahy člověka. William Golding se rozhodl změnit pohled na člověka po druhé světové válce, která celému světu odhalila, jakého násilí je člověk schopný. Místo toho, aby se díval na lidi jakožto na negativně formované společnosti, Golding viděl člověka samotného jako zkaženého, jako článek, který ovlivňuje společnost, jejíž stavebním prvkem je. Ze strachu z podstaty své existence si lidé vytvářejí náboženství s d'ábly a bohy tak zkaženými, jako jsou oni sami. Většinu obyvatelstva viděl jako potenciálně dobré či zlé a na okrajích společnosti se potom podle něj nachází světci a antikristi. Zatímco světci, jak Golding říkal dobrým lidem, rozumí a přijímají člověka takového, jaký je, antikristi naopak ztělesňují všechny špatné lidské vlastnosti – sobeckost, násilnost, chamtivost, chtíč a potřebu kontroly. Toto vše je poté udržováno v chodu utlačujícím společenským systémem, který omezuje vnímání reality privilegii pocházejícími z podstaty umístění v hierarchii společnosti.

V knize *Dědicové* Golding shrnul, jaký člověk je, a jaký by měl být. Toto ukázal na vyhlazení neandrtálců našimi předky. V *Darkness Visible* se poté Golding zaměřil na jedince, raději než na kmen jako v *Dědicové*. Sophy, která byla ztělesněním všeho zlého v člověku, nakonec Golding ukázal jako dívku toužící po lásce a soucitu, která ovšem tuto nenaplnitelnou touhu vymění za potřebu ničit.

V další části byly rozebrány knihy *Dědicové* a *Pán Much* s ohledem na náboženství, pomocí kterého se lidé vzdávají zodpovědnosti za svou povahu. Následně byli porovnání světci Matty a Simon s antikristy Christopherem a Sophy a nakonec ustanovena existence kosmické jednoty. Člověk je podle Goldinga sám sobě bohem a pokud se nepřijme, jaký je, nikdy nebude schopný se posunout.

V poslední části byl pohled zaostřen na společenský systém v dílech *The Pyramid* a *Až na konec světa*. V obou dílech Golding ukázal systém, který morálně a emocionálně svazuje člověka a nedovolí mu vymanit se z iluze privilegovanosti, která mu zamezuje vidět situaci takovou, jaká je. Jen pokud člověk porozumí sám sobě bude schopný vytvořit dokonalou společnost. Nicméně, jelikož jedinec tvoří společnost a zároveň na něj ta samá společnost, jedná se o uzavřený kruh.

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## 9. Annotation

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Title of thesis: William Golding's Trinity: Humanity, Society, and Religion as the Building Blocks of Humankind's Self-delusion

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Number of pages: 61

Year of presentation: 2020

Key words: William Golding, post-war literature, English literature, novel, evil, self-delusion, religion

Abstract: This thesis is concerned with the work of William Golding, namely *Darkness Visible*, *Pincher Martin*, *Lord of the Flies*, *The Inheritors*, *The Pyramid*, and *To the Ends of the Earth*, and his philosophy of self-delusion as predicated by the human nature, religion, and social structure. In his view, all these elements are connected and self-perpetuating each other in order to keep the individual blind to the vices inherent to humans.

## 10. Anotace

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Katedra: Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Název práce: Trojice Williama Goldinga: Lidství, společnost a náboženství jako stavební prvky lidského sebeklamu

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Ema Jelínková, Ph.D.

Počet stran: 61

Rok obhajoby: 2020

Klíčová slova: William Golding, poválečná literatura, anglická literatura, román, zlo, sebeklam, náboženství

Abstrakt: Tato práce se zabývá díly Williama Goldinga, přesněji díly *Darkness Visible*, *Ztroskotání Christophera Martina*, *Pán Much*, *Dědicové*, *The Pyramid*, a *To the Ends of the Earth* a jeho filozofií sebeklamu, který je založen na lidské povaze, náboženství a společenském systému. Podle Goldinga jsou tyto elementy propojeny a navzájem se udržují v chodu a ponechávají jedince nevidomého vůči lidské přirozenosti.