GOLDING'S METAPHYSICS:

WILLIAM GOLDING'S NOVELS IN THE

LIGHT OF ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER'S

PHILOSOPHY

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For my parents and sister,
and for Helena

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INTRODUCTION

As William Golding (1911–1993) recognised on several occasions, his whole life was dominated, from his early childhood, by a deep sense of wonder at the inexhaustible spectacle of the world. According to John Carey's biography, one of the novelist's earliest memories was of seeing, as a baby, a white cockerel strutting along a curtain's pole only to vanish before reaching the other end (Carey 2009: 1).[1] Nor was this the only experience of this kind that Golding had in those years. One winter evening, when he was three or four, he spotted a spectral stag's head over the brackens of the forest near Marlborough, where the family lived (24). Golding went on to spend his whole life in astonishment. Several decades later, having become a highly respected writer, he remarked that he would like his epitaph to read: '"He wondered"' (Golding 1984a: 199).

The lasting sense of wonder pervaded, in one way or another, not only Golding's life but also his writings. In part, Golding inherited this astonishment from his parents, Alec and Mildred. When Alec, an atheistic rationalist, was once looking at the stars in the garden, young Billy heard him murmur, 'I wonder'. Being asked why, Golding's father merely replied: 'I just wonder, it's all I can do', with the addition: 'I shall go on wondering for the rest of my life' (cited in Carey 2009: 29). The incident, it seems, taught Billy what a person ought to be — 'a watcher and a wonderer', in Carey's words (29). Yet the similarities cannot obscure the differences between Golding's and his parents' sense of awe. When confronted with such 'appallingly beautiful' phenomena as a starry sky, his parents 'could not but wonder, examine, speculate' (Golding 1965: 34). Golding saw their curiosity as limited, because it was merely scientific; by contrast, he could never be satisfied with scientific explanations alone, and this dissatisfaction, he

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1   For a summary and assessment of Carey's book, see Saavedra-Carballido (2010).

thought, opened the door to a more thorough comprehension of the world. The distance between the two approaches — which, to borrow a pair of terms used by some of Golding's commentators, can be termed physical and metaphysical, respectively — can be measured by the contrasting reactions to the ghost stories that his mother used to tell him: while his parents could not hide their amusement at the inexplicable elements in the narratives, Golding found their truculence not only threatening but revelatory of aspects of the world that the physical sciences could not account for (see Carey 2009: 16). Their reactions to darkness both inside and outside fiction were different too: for his parents darkness 'was just … the absence of light' (Golding 1965: 172), but their explanation could not dispel the terror that he felt when left alone in the gloomy cellar of the family house, nor could it cure the morbid 'fascination' with darkness and other 'obsessions' that his reading of Edgar Allan Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* only made worse (170). Commenting on the role of wonder in Golding's writings, Philip Redpath says: 'To believe in a realm beyond the physical universe is a sign of man's capacity to wonder and confront mysteries which science and technology do not begin to explain' (Redpath 1986: 120). It is the encounter with this metaphysical realm, and the wonder that ensues, 'that makes Golding write' (33).

In Golding, metaphysical awe is closely bound with the conviction that 'man suffers from an appalling ignorance of his own nature' (Golding 1957: 817). As a rule, people only see the physical side of the world, therefore they remain blind to the metaphysical dimension of their lives. Golding's overriding aspiration is precisely to draw attention to that dimension, the one in which his concern with human destructiveness (on both the individual and the collective levels) and, more generally, with suffering makes more sense. This is the reason why Golding puts the focus on human nature in order to examine it '*sub specie aeternitatis*', that is, from the standpoint of eternity (817).[2] The conclusions to which this enquiry leads him are usually regarded to be pessimistic.

The sense of wonder, the addition of metaphysical concerns to the interest in the physical realm, the emphasis on violence and suffering, and the alleged pessimism that ensues are also among the most salient characteristics of the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860). He declared more than once that since the dawn of history

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2   Italics are extremely abundant in both Golding's and Schopenhauer's writings. Unless otherwise noted, all italics that appear in quotations throughout this work are from the original sources.

all search for adequate explanations for life had been triggered by astonishment, adding that at its purest this astonishment is necessarily metaphysical. According to his account of the opposition between physics and metaphysics, followed in this study, this means that some people do not wonder only at the physical working of the world but rather at its ontological, moral and aesthetic features. For Schopenhauer, every single person is 'an *animal metaphysicum*', one in which '*wonder or astonishment* about the world and our own existence' become 'the mother of metaphysics' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 170, 160). Moreover, he maintained that the main reason for such wonder is the generalised suffering and death which make the world a horrible place. The '*need for metaphysics*', he says, appears whenever a person 'stands consciously face to face with *death*, … the finiteness of all existence, the vanity and fruitlessness of all effort', in other words, with 'the consideration of the suffering and misery of life' (160, 161).

The issues that Schopenhauer's philosophy addresses include — to follow the sequence in which they appear in his main work, *The World as Will and Representation* — epistemology, ontology and aesthetics, morality, law and politics. These coincide with the main concerns that, according to most critics, make up Golding's world view. Schopenhauer is famous for having posited an all-powerful will operating in the dark as the essence of humankind and of the rest of the world; remarkably, the will also features prominently in Golding's novels, often as an uncontrollable force round which the characters' lives turn. Like Schopenhauer's, Golding's handling of this issue is geared to show the primacy of metaphysics. Moreover, both authors coincide in highlighting the moral characteristics of their respective projects. Schopenhauer is confident that his philosophy is 'the only one that grants to morality its complete and entire rights' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 589). For his part, Golding believes that, being 'fully engaged to the human dilemma' (Golding 1957: 817), he cannot 'make a story without a human lesson tucked away in it'; consequently, he describes himself as 'a moralist' (1965: 85). Another feature in common is that both authors couch their metaphysical concerns in religious terms. Their references to saintliness and to original sin, for instance, are recurrent.

Golding's critics have been able to give a generally accurate interpretation of many of the main metaphysical aspects of his works, but they have treated them in isolation. If we compare Golding's oeuvre to a mosaic, it becomes clear that previous critics have

not been able to discover the positions that the pieces occupy vis-à-vis each other, let alone to find out the global meaning that they convey.

This thesis is based on the assumption that Schopenhauer's philosophical model may help us to clear out and bring together the apparently disconnected components of Golding's novels. The use of Schopenhauer's model should thus make possible a critical reconstruction of Golding's basic world view. Related to this one there is another assumption: that Golding's attempts to correct that world view — which are increasingly evident as his novels succeed one another — can be best understood in comparison with the stance that he aspires to leave behind. My analysis does not presuppose that Schopenhauer's and Golding's world views are totally self-consistent or entirely of a piece with each other. It does presuppose that it is easier to understand some of the most important metaphysical issues tackled by Golding if we are aware of the issues that Schopenhauer had tackled two centuries earlier. Further, it presupposes that the connections among those issues in Golding's writings are easier to appreciate if we are aware of the way in which Schopenhauer connects them.

Surprisingly, the relationship between Golding's and Schopenhauer's concerns has only been mentioned by two critics, and just in passing. Leon Surette highlights Golding's and Schopenhauer's common criticism of the limitations of physical knowledge (Surette 1994: 215, 219). Eduardo Sánchez-Fernández focuses on Golding's and Schopenhauer's shared conviction that without legal repression humankind would slide into violent anomie (Sánchez-Fernández 2002: 152 n. 23). Sánchez-Fernández does not even mention the key idea of Schopenhauer's philosophy, the belief that the essential will is the metaphysical urge or force at work inside every body. While Surette does refer to the will, noting that for Schopenhauer human knowledge is usually at its service, he does not make much of its recurrent presence in Golding's books. This study argues that the essential will does play an important role in a number of Golding's novels, and that so does the more general conception of the world as comprising not only the realm of appearances but also the hidden essence of which they are a manifestation.

The points of contact between the outlooks of both authors are so numerous that it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that Golding was familiar with Schopenhauer's works. However, Carey, the only researcher who has been granted access to Golding's private papers and library, does not provide any conclusive evidence in this respect. Carey's

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biography mentions the most important books that Golding read, yet the list includes none by Schopenhauer; nor did Golding own, as it seems, any of the German philosopher's works. The similarities between the novelist and the philosopher may or may not be a coincidence. Despite not owning any of his books, Golding could have got acquainted with such a well-known and influential author elsewhere.[3] The arguments put forward in the present study do not depend on Golding's having read Schopenhauer's books; they simply seek to prove that Schopenhauer's thought provides a fruitful standpoint from which to account for many basic aspects of Golding's writings. This attitude should make it easier to avoid the temptation of taking Golding's novels to be literary illustrations of Schopenhauer's ideas.

The first part of this study offers a general survey of the main thematic lines of Golding criticism so far. Though many other elements in Golding's fiction have been touched on by critics, the main focus has generally remained on its presentation of metaphysical issues. On the whole, what characterises such analyses is their fragmentary, ad hoc character. The aim here is to evaluate the most widespread critical

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3   Professor Carey himself confirms this possibility. As he has pointed out to me, none of Golding's works, published or unpublished, contains any reference to Schopenhauer. However, it must be borne in mind that virtually no manuscript material survives from Golding's formative years. According to Carey, in the schools were he taught before becoming a famous novelist 'Golding had a reputation among his colleagues for having read widely in philosophy'; good evidence of this is provided by his 'philosophical conversations with his close friend Tony Brown while they were both schoolmasters in Salisbury', in the course of which Schopenhauer's ideas may have been discussed (personal communication, 1 June 2012). Carey's biography says that Brown and Golding became friends in 1940, if not a bit earlier; that is over a decade before the latter wrote *Lord of the Flies* (see Carey 2009: 78). Among the authors with whose ideas Golding was acquainted there are two that knew Schopenhauer's philosophy well: one was the Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung, whom Golding did certainly discuss, along with other philosophical, religious and scientific figures, with Brown (see Carey 2009: 122); the other was the founder of anthroposophy, the Austrian thinker Rudolf Steiner, whose influence could be felt at Michael Hall, the first school where Golding taught after graduating in English from Oxford in 1934 (see Carey 2009: 64–5). Another possible point of contact between Golding and Schopenhauer is the influence that the latter exerted over such novelists as Thomas Hardy, Joseph Conrad and D.H. Lawrence, whose works must have been known to him at least from his English studies.

views of Golding's metaphysical concerns, and thus to contextualise my own discussion in relation to these readings. The opening chapter deals with the way in which the novels have been interpreted as illustrating the destructive tendencies with which humankind is born, and as presenting the repressive use of force as the only possible remedy. It also considers how those works convey, according to previous critics, a confrontation between characters that are dominated by those destructive tendencies and characters that are not. The second chapter deals with the related oppositions between the rational and the non-rational, the physical and the metaphysical. In addition to recapitulating a number of critical analyses that link rational experience to physical objects and non-rational experience to metaphysical objects, it examines how, following Golding's own habit, a number of critics associate physics and metaphysics with two different worlds: of the body and of the soul, respectively. Though this might be taken to suggest some kind of ontological dualism, its details are far from clear; likewise, when these critics regard metaphysics as incompatible with rationality, they fail to explain why this is the case. This chapter also discusses the scholarly treatment given to sight and the metaphysical revelations that a number of Golding's characters have. Finally, it summarises the arguments according to which Golding's novels make different uses of language, some of which serve to convey experiences that are non-rational and metaphysical.

The second part consists in an overview of those aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophy which seem to be particularly relevant in relation to Golding's works. This overview aspires to be as uncontroversial as possible, though occasionally it will necessary to choose between remaining faithful to the philosopher's literal words, even at the risk of some logical incoherence, and adopting the solutions put forward by his commentators.

To begin with, Schopenhauer's model is placed in its philosophical context, paying particular attention to the philosophical traditions that culminate in the assertion of the limits of valid knowledge and in the questioning of the goodness of our world. As will be seen, when he insists on the limits of human knowledge, Schopenhauer presents himself as the true heir of Immanuel Kant's thinking. When he refuses to justify suffering, he positions himself against Gottfried Leibniz's optimistic theodicy.

Moving on to Schopenhauer's philosophy itself, the focus is on his theory of consciousness — i.e. of *representation*, as he calls it. Here Schopenhauer introduces a

distinction between the world and the region to which refers, following Kant, as the thing-in-itself. For Schopenhauer, the world is the sum of all that can be legitimately known, while the thing-in-itself is what lies outside the purview of valid knowledge. Though not all of Schopenhauer's commentators recognise this distinction, it may be important to understand Golding's thematics.

The introduction of Schopenhauer's separation of what can be known from what cannot is followed by a discussion of the way in which he distinguishes — as most of Golding's commentators do not — the opposition between rational and non-rational consciousness from the opposition between being aware of the physical side of the world and being aware of its metaphysical side. For Schopenhauer, humans are the only animals that can build rational concepts out of non-rational feelings, the latter being the first way in which they enter into contact with the world; humans are also the only animals that can grasp the metaphysical side of the world. Schopenhauer distinguishes more kinds of metaphysical insight than Golding's interpreters: the contemplation of the objects' aesthetic dimension, the self-conscious apprehension of one's willing through inner observation (a possibility that, in his view, allows the subject of consciousness to become an individual *I*), and the saint's visionary apprehension of the essence shared by the whole world. Relying on these distinctions may improve our understanding of the varieties of metaphysical experience that Golding's characters have. It must be borne in mind, however, that, despite his detailed account of conscious representation, Schopenhauer makes frequent reference but fails to characterise in a precise way some of its modalities: the saint's visions (leading either to compassion and altruistic intervention or to a resigned withdrawal) and imaginative representation. Given their importance within his model, and their possible relevance to Golding's works, they are discussed nevertheless.

In Schopenhauer's view, physical perception — the feeling that the conscious subject has of material objects as located within cause-and-effect chains — constitutes the default mode of consciousness. However, it is inner observation that gives access to the ceaseless urge that he calls the essential *will* and that he posits as the inner essence of the world. For Schopenhauer, the hypothesis of ontological dualism with its two separate substances, the body and the soul, is untenable: what the subject discovers through inner observation is neither the soul nor the rational mind, but the metaphysical side of the same body that is also perceived from the outside. While the

subject of physical consciousness is fully individualised and establishes a strict separation among the things and beings that make up the world, the subject of metaphysical consciousness moves away from individuality and towards increasing universality, doing away with that distinction.

Being endowed with reason, humans can offer conceptual descriptions of the world, a few of which have been institutionalised in the course of history. On the one hand, there are science and history, which can only offer physical, i.e. causal, explanations of events. On the other hand, there are art, religion and philosophy, which deal with the metaphysical side of the world. According to Schopenhauer, both religion and philosophy cover the outside as well as the metaphysical inside of objects; therefore, they compete to offer a complete description of the world. As regards the linguistic embodiment of these descriptions, Schopenhauer argues that the uses of language on which science, history and religion rely elicit rational concepts from the audience, while the uses on which art and religion rely arouse the audience's non-rational feelings.

After dealing with Schopenhauer's analysis of the varieties of consciousness, the focus shifts to his conceptualisation of essential will, not only as the metaphysical activity that stirs the entire world, but also as a yearning for organic existence and, at the lowest level of generality, as the way of being of the individual. At the highest level of generality, the essential will underlies the entire world; it is what Julian Young calls the 'world-will' (2005: 76). At a lower level, Schopenhauer posits an amoral will to life from the instincts of reproduction and self-preservation arise. At the lowest level of generality, the essential will acts simply as the inborn and unchangeable character of the individual.

The innate character determines one's needs and desires from the very moment of birth; this means that the individual is not free to chose what to will. This is the basis of Schopenhauer's account of suffering. Many readers of Golding's novels have referred to the destructive tendencies in humankind as *evil*; following Golding, they have described the characters that display those tendencies as *egoistic*. By doing so, they confuse two issues that Golding tends to keep separated and that Schopenhauer may help to distinguish: a person's desires and the actions that result from them. Schopenhauer identifies three ways of desiring: egoism (defined by him as desire for one's own weal) and malice (the desire for the others' woe) are the most common, but he also speaks of compassion (the desire for the others' well-being). He then proceeds

to describe as evil not a certain kind of desire, but the infliction of pain by a conscious being on another (see Cartwright 2005: 48). Schopenhauer claims that, though egoism and malice are important sources of suffering, they are not the only ones. As a rule, all individuals (whether egoistic, malignant or compassionate) spend their lives in suffering. This is because, apart from the pain that they may inflict on other conscious beings, there is the anxiety that arises from viewing all physical objects as potential sources of dissatisfaction. This is another reason why, according to Schopenhauer, suffering is so widespread, and why he describes our world as the worst possible world. At this point, of course, we come against a fundamental difficulty in his philosophy, because, even after he has introduced compassion — an impulse rooted in a metaphysical perspective which neither distinguishes among individuals nor shows them as engaged in any conflict, and which prevents suffering instead of causing it — side by side with egoism and malice, he continues to describe the world as a whole as if it were necessarily characterised by discord and suffering. This is also a problem that can be identified in Golding's basic stance. Both Schopenhauer and Golding agree in characterising the world as hellish, but they can only do so because they forget that in their works the state of consciousness that leads to this hellish situation is only the most frequent not the only possible.

Though he believes that putting an end to all suffering is not in our hands, Schopenhauer acknowledges that there are a number of ways in which we can limit pain in the individual and the collective spheres. Among the former, he mentions the aesthetic contemplation of objects, the altruistic urge to help the other to which saintly visions sometimes lead, the resigned withdrawal from worldly affairs in which saintly visions otherwise result, and the permanent cessation of all kinds of consciousness brought about by death. Remarkably, then, Schopenhauer reaches a point where he realises that dying, which at first seemed to him part of the problem of human existence, might be its most effective solution. As regards the collective remedies for suffering, he begins by mentioning moral sanctions, but after dismissing them as largely ineffective he recommends the lawful use of force. The insistence on the need for repressive laws is part and parcel of Schopenhauer's dismissal of social utopia, which closes this second part.

The third and most important part of this study consists in an interpretation of Golding's metaphysical views through the prism of Schopenhauer's philosophy. For the

sake of convenience, the order in which Schopenhauer sets out his ideas is generally followed. The discussion does not linger on those aspects of Golding's novels that seem to be accessory in a discussion of his metaphysical concerns or on those that Schopenhauer's philosophy cannot help us to understand. In contrast to previous critics, who have only related his fiction to a small number of his essays, extensive use is made of both essays and interviews in order to support the interpretation of his fiction given here. At the same time, an attempt is made to show the possible discrepancies between the views that Golding expresses outside his novels and the views that his novels convey, and to elucidate Golding's treatment of topics that do not appear directly in his fiction.

The reading of Golding's fiction begins by applying Schopenhauer's theorisation and classification of conscious representation to the kinds of awareness that Golding's characters deploy. Schopenhauer's distinction between feelings and concepts may be relevant to better understand the role that Golding's novels assign to non-rational and rational kinds of consciousness. Moreover, Schopenhauer's separation between physical perception and the different kinds metaphysical consciousness should help to offer a more nuanced account of the kinds of metaphysical awareness that Golding's novels include; it may even help to elucidate whether or not they endorse ontological dualism. Relying on Schopenhauer's distinctions may also allow us to elucidate whether Golding conflates non-rational and metaphysical consciousness, as Golding's critics suggest, or not. It may also prove useful in characterising the different uses of language that Golding employs in his novels. Likewise, Schopenhauer's account of the descriptions of the knowable world that have been institutionalised in the course of history may help to specify the place that discourses like science, literature and religion occupy in Golding's writings.

Golding's treatment of the modalities of consciousness is followed by an examination of his treatment of the will. This is an aspect of Golding's fiction that has not been analysed in detail yet, let alone from the perspective of Schopenhauer's philosophy. The will merits careful study, however, because of its conspicuous presence in some of Golding's novels, and because of its possible links to the characters' obsession with sex and survival. Some of Golding's most famous novels are designed to bring human violence and suffering to the fore. The bleak tone of much of his fiction and its concern with the metaphysical side of the world suggest that Schopenhauer's

belief that suffering is rooted in the essential will may also throw light on the reasons why Golding's character experience and cause so much suffering.

Apart from bringing to our attention the metaphysical sources of suffering, Schopenhauer's philosophy identifies the available remedies. At an individual level, some of them consist or are rooted in special kinds of metaphysical consciousness. Others involve going beyond all possible kinds of consciousness, for example through death. Given the importance that critics have given to metaphysical consciousness in Golding, it seems reasonable to expect that the characters that are capable of it will enjoy some respite from suffering. Also, Schopenhauer's discussion of the reasons for dying may be of great help to understand not only the sheer number of characters that die in Golding's novels but also the possible functions that death may have in his fiction. As far as the collective response to suffering, Schopenhauer argues that society can only survive if it resorts to repression, more specifically, in view that the effects of moral repression cannot be guaranteed, to the legal use of force. Golding's critics have not hesitated to present the endorsement of repression as one of the defining features of his works. It is necessary to determine whether this is indeed the case, and, should the answer be positive, what forms repression can adopt in his fiction.

The analysis of the themes that Golding shares with Schopenhauer finishes with a discussion of whether or not the distinction between the knowable world and the unknowable thing-in-itself can be applied to the essays in which Golding speaks about the existence of worlds other than ours. Golding suggests that all those worlds are beyond the bounds of legitimate knowledge, and presents the belief in their possible existence as a question of faith. Though so far overlooked by the critics, this is a topic that deserves being pursued.

Reading Golding's works in chronological order, it becomes evident that new elements are gradually added which run counter to the usual interpretation of Golding's oeuvre, and which, despite being so conspicuous in Golding's later writings, have been overlooked by many critics. These elements include, in order of appearance, the possibility of free choice, understood as the freedom to choose what to will; the later refusal to identify the inner essence of the world with the will; the eventual reassessment of the chance of utopia. It is clear that these new elements are extraneous to the essentialist and pessimistic world view so far presented as common to both Schopenhauer and Golding. As regards free choice, Sylvère Monod states, for example,

that in some of his novels 'Golding does not espouse the Schopenhauerian form of pessimism' (Monod 1982: 258); it is difficult to disagree with this statement. Relying on Schopenhauer's philosophy to elucidate Golding's most easily recognisable can serve to analyse the new elements as departures from that stance (and thus from Schopenhauer's philosophy). This will make it easier to appreciate both the family resemblances among all of Golding works and the differences that exist between his first novels and the last.

There is yet another important element that recurs in Golding's novels and essays, and which can be linked to his metaphysical views: the divinity. Though Golding never failed to assert his belief in some kind of divinity, he assured Jack I. Biles that he did not 'subscribe to any religion' (in Biles 1970: 85). Since Schopenhauer leaves the divinity out of his model, it cannot be included among the aspects of Golding's world view that coincide with the aspects of the philosopher's thought. And since it appears in Golding's earlier and later texts alike, it cannot be treated as a later modification of that world view. For these reasons, the divinity independently is dealt with independently. This does not mean that the topic can be analysed without any reference to the other aspects of Golding's oeuvre. Given the emphasis on God's will in some of the novels, it is necessary to analyse whether the divinity has any relationship with the essential force that, according to Schopenhauer, acts as the amoral kernel of the world, and whether Golding's references to the divinity can be understood in the light of his metaphysical positions.

Though the overall reading of Golding's fiction offered here relies mainly on Schopenhauer's philosophy, the theoretical support for many specific details of my argument often comes from other philosophical models like Kant's, Friedrich W. Nietzsche's and Jürgen Habermas's, from psychoanalysis, from the Marxist theory of ideology and from sociology. One reason why these additions are necessary is that, when brought to bear on Golding's novels, Schopenhauer's model is revealed to have a number of significant lacks. Thus, for example, in the chapter dealing with Golding's basic metaphysical stance, Golding's attitude towards the project of modernity, in particular towards the ambition to secure the autonomy of the scientific project, cannot be understood with the help of Schopenhauer alone, but can be approached through the characterisation, common to Habermas and to some sociologists, of modernity as a process of increasing differentiation both among social spheres and among the

discourses associated with them, and of postmodernity as reversing this process. Likewise, the notion of repression, taken from Freudian psychoanalysis, helps to understand the mechanisms whereby some of Golding's earlier characters suppress the desires that arise from the essential will, and Freud's comments about the origin of moral conscience are used to fill an important gap in Schopenhauer's account of moral prescriptions. The other reason for the inclusion of theoretical additions by authors other than Schopenhauer is the dual perspective from which the examination of Golding's oeuvre is carried — as a coherent structure whose main thematic lines generally coincide with those of Schopenhauer's philosophy, and as a proposal that is gradually modified through the addition of new elements. In the chapter dealing with the additions gradually incorporated into Golding's novels and that are at odds with the kind of world view embodied in Schopenhauer's philosophy, Freud's theory serves to explain why all descriptions of the essence of the world are denounced as instances of psychological projection. Likewise, Marxist theory is used to determine in what respects the universalising and naturalising effect of those projections can be said to be an ideological reification of attitudes rooted in a specific cultural situation, in this case, in a capitalist society. As regards Kant's theory of moral autonomy, it serves to explain the kind of free choice that Golding's earlier characters are denied — a position that effectively closes the door to utopia — but which Golding's later characters are conceded — thus reinstating the possibility of utopia. In the last chapter of this thesis, Nietzsche's theory of the similarities and differences between the Apollonian and the Dionysian impulses is employed to throw light on the image that Golding's novels give of the divinity. Finally, Max Weber's account of the modern disenchantment of the world as consisting in the use of instrumental reason to exploit its physical resources clarifies how Golding's subordination of science to such metaphysical approaches as the religious and the artistic, which do not describe the world in terms of its possible usefulness to human beings, is linked to his environmental concerns.

1. MAIN METAPHYSICAL THEMES IN GOLDING CRITICISM

At first sight, Golding's fiction exhibits what Carey has described as a 'protean variety and inventiveness' that casual readers may find overwhelming and that makes it difficult to categorise (2009: 516). In general, Golding's narratives seem designed to mock such common labels as realism and fantasy, theism (broadly defined as the belief in the existence of a divinity or divinities) and atheism, conservatism and radicalism. His fiction is characterised by the diversity of settings (from the lush forests inhabited by the first human beings and their primitive enemies, through an ancient Greek temple under the Roman conqueror's rule, or an old British ship on its way to Australia during the Napoleonic wars, to contemporary London and a tropical island set on fire by a bunch of schoolboys), of narratorial stances (third-person and, with increasing frequency, first-person; male and eventually female), of narrative forms (confessions and autobiographies; journals; long letters, one of which turns into a private diary and then into a retrospective travelogue intended for publication) and of tones (now tragic, now scatological and eschatological, then farcical and occasionally light-hearted). Equally hard to pin down is the dense, exuberant and frequently puzzling imagery from which the narrative fabric of these works is woven. So bewildering is the variety with which Golding's readers are confronted that many critics have got lost in a labyrinth of intertexts and elusive symbols. As a consequence, the family resemblance among his works has often been neglected. Generalising from the verdict of a recent commentator, it could be concluded that the standard Golding critic 'provides a multitude of symbolic readings' but seems to be 'unable' to draw their interpretations together (Clements 2012: 94). According to the same commentator, such readings, 'rather than clarifying the text's meaning', leave us even more perplexed (94). I agree that the parallel and

image hunt hardly adds to our understanding of the meaning of the particular work under consideration, let alone of Golding's writings considered collectively. In the process, the bigger picture of his overall concerns receives little or no attention, as if they were trivial or as if the expression they are given in his novels was uninteresting.

Needless to say, there are laudable exceptions to this tendency to concentrate on the small picture. Some of Golding's most prominent interpreters have not rested satisfied with the inconclusiveness that would ensue from limiting their focus to specific textual details, and try to offer broader readings of Golding's works. The image of the novelist's metaphysical concerns that emerges from these interpretations is lacking in some regards, yet basically correct. Because of their value as a preliminary presentation of Golding's major themes, in the first part of this study I shall be focusing on some of these readings. The first chapter of this part will present the treatment given by previous critics to the novelist's view of human nature and its impact on social organisation. The second chapter will deal with the varieties of experience that critics have found in Golding's fiction, and with the problems that his characters and narrators encounter when trying to speak about them.

My purpose here will not be so much to assess the accuracy or coherence of the arguments, or to point at their possible conceptual mistakes, though some of these will be pointed out, as to introduce a few themes that recur in Golding scholarship, and that can be subsequently clarified with the assistance of Schopenhauer's philosophy. In my own discussion of the novelist's works I shall bring into line with Schopenhauer's usage the labels that critics have so far applied to the most conspicuous components of Golding's novels, modifying, redefining and supplementing them whenever necessary. For the time being, however, I shall keep many of the terms used by previous Golding commentators; I shall make an attempt to specify in what sense they are used, though it must be said in advance that such specification will not always be possible owing to the critics' failure to provide clear definitions.

1.1. Human Nature and Its Impact on Society

A good way of approaching the critical explorations of Golding's metaphysical interests so far conducted by critics is to divide them into two general categories. One includes

the scholarly discussions of the destructive tendencies that characterise human nature, of the constant use of repressive force required — even within democratic societies — to control them, and of the opposition between two kinds of characters: those, the majority, that display those tendencies, and those, a small minority, that seem to be free from them. The other category pertains to the varieties of experience and of verbal communication available to Golding's characters. In the rest of this chapter I shall deal with those analysis belonging to the first category. In the following chapter I shall address those that belong to the second.

1.1.1. Humankind's Destructive Tendencies

Even a cursory perusal of Golding criticism reveals that, despite their different approaches and emphases, most responses to his works are based on the assumption that he conceives of human beings as prone to violence. Regardless of the critical perspective adopted, the initial focus when discussing Golding's novels has usually been on the vicious and rapacious impulses that supposedly dominate many of his characters. The ideas that humankind tends to be evil, and that this tendency is innate, clearly prevail over the consideration of the effect that social factors may have on human behaviour.

From the very beginning of his novelistic career, Golding has been judged to occupy an important yet somewhat eccentric position in the British literary scene. One of the reasons adduced for this isolation from most of his contemporaries is his purported emphasis on the unchangeability of human nature to the detriment of social factors. Like the Angry Young Men — a group of novelists and dramatists which included Kingsley Amis, John Wain, John Braine and Stan Barstow (with other names such as Alan Sillitoe's sometimes being added to the list) — Golding published his first novels in the Britain of the 1950s. However, as James Ginding points out, Golding differed from those authors in that he 'was not primarily interested in issues of society or class' (Gindin 1988: 14). Though Golding's concerns certainly included social and class issues, he subordinated them to the exploration of the metaphysical sources of violence. Kevin McCarron states that the Angry novelists seemed happy to espouse the notion that a person's attitudes and conduct are 'culturally determined, created by social

circumstances' (McCarron 2005: 289). By contrast, critics have normally seen Golding's texts as unashamedly conveying the idea that 'what is important about human beings goes beyond any social system or construction' (Gindin 1988: 74). Instead of portraying the routines and aspirations of the post-war working-class, as the Angry Young Men did, Golding preferred, in his earliest published novels at least, to write 'aggressively bold fables which claimed for themselves a universal applicability' and which 'strove to depict what lay beneath, or above, the observable surface of life' (McCarron 2007: 185).

Golding's writing during the fifties has recently been described as 'an art of essences' (McCarron 2007: 185). While the works of other writers may make it difficult to extract some absolute statement about human nature, Golding's aspiration was precisely to represent humankind in its essential dimension. Though they have failed to characterise that common essence in any detail, and even to explain how we can know what it consists in, critics have have had little doubt human nature includes an innate disposition to violence and mutual aggression; not only is it impossible to root out, it has proven extremely hard to keep in check. Gindin sums up the opinion of the critics that have dealt with this issue when he says that Golding's narratives characterise people as 'inherently wicked' (Gindin 1988: 15). He adds that, though in his works the novelist also tackled 'issues of society and class', he never abandoned the ambition to reveal the 'inexpungeable evil or darkness in man' (15). Though neither Gindin nor any of the critics that use the term say is what this *evil* consists in, this does not prevent them from adding that, in Golding's first novels, the prevalence of our dark side is sometimes expressed in terms of a congenital 'disease' (see, for example, Baker 1965: 92). According to Anthony Storr, Golding drives this point home by putting at the centre of his fiction a type of character that is 'irredeemably flawed, and ... only too likely to bring about its own destruction' (Storr 1987: 138).

Taking their cue from Golding's use of Christian terminology to speak about his novels, many readers have seen in his portrayals of humankind's disease an exploration of the consequences of original sin. Thomas M. Coskren assures us that, if nothing else, Golding 'has reminded modern man of the fact of original sin', this being 'a reminder that we all need every so often' (Coskren 1988: 280). E.M. Forster likewise asserts that Golding 'believes in the Fall of Man', and that 'his attitude approaches the Christian' (Forster 1988: 230). As usual, neither Coskren nor Forster offer any clues as to the way

in which Golding understands this original sin and this Fall. Leaving religious speculation aside, other critics maintain that Golding's portrayals of evil exceed the field of human existence. When Golding received the Nobel prize for literature, the Swedish Academy described his works as 'sombre moralities and dark myths about evil and treacherous destructive forces' in a world that is simultaneously 'tragic and pathetic' (cited in Doering 2002: 288). Judging from this description, it is clear that part of Golding's audience is willing to extend the grim view of human viciousness to other living beings and even to inanimate forces, thus raising the spectacle of constant conflict to cosmic proportions.

Even a critic like Paul Crawford — who gives, rather exceptionally, a full-length analysis of the social and political factors at work in Golding's novels — acknowledges that inborn factors play a major role in the novelist's works. Crawford opens his study on *Politics and History in William Golding* with the acknowledgement that literary critics have usually focused on 'Golding's preoccupation with humankind's perennial battle between good and evil, its fallen nature and experience of pain, grief, and guilt' (2002: 1–2). This is a perspective with which he personally disagrees, aspiring instead to offer 'A properly historicized and politicized reading of William Golding's major novels' (1). Despite his goal, Crawford cannot fail to mention, like those critics from whom he tries to keep a distance, 'Golding's own reluctance to view himself as a politically engaged novelist' (2); as a consequence, this critic adds, his 'politics are often implicit rather than explicit' (2). For Crawford, this reticence is linked to Golding's concern with the unavoidable constraints that human nature puts on people's attitudes and behaviour rather than with the contingent social circumstances that may bear upon their lives. Though Golding, according to Crawford, lacks any clear political commitment, his emphasis on a timeless essence shared by all humans is itself revelatory of certain political positions: 'The reassurance generated by ways of understanding human nature that are adequate and intelligible not just in our time but across time as well is ultimately conservative' (234).

The opinion that the whole of Golding's oeuvre amounts to a grim depiction of humankind's servitude to essential forces that cannot be controlled is quite widespread. As a result, Golding is 'often seen as a dark and pessimistic writer' (Doering 2002: 286). In treating his novels as if they all embodied one single idea, namely that that our essence is impossible to alter and predisposes us to evil, some readers have attributed

to Golding the intention to trump his readers' optimism about 'humanity's ability to progress' (Crawford 2002: 237). This explains, the argument goes, why he insists on underscoring our flaws to the exclusion of whatever virtues we may have. Although Golding found it necessary, especially in the last decade of his life, to correct this view of him, stating that he was in fact an optimist, as late as the mid-1980s Storr wrote: 'Although Golding calls himself an optimist, there is little evidence in his novels to support that claim' (1987: 138).

Without denying that Golding's works may be an exploration of the human potential for aggression, some critics have suggested that Golding does not always present violence as inevitably triumphant. Even if the novels are both a demonstration and a reminder of what human beings can do to each other, these critics suggest, we should not forget Golding's additional belief that the undeniable reality of evil can neither reduce us to inactivity nor keep us immersed in defeatism. According to Philip Redpath, all of Golding's novels are designed to have far-reaching effects. 'To ignore the reality of what man is', this critic writes, 'is to ignore the reality of what man is capable of doing' (1986: 69–70). In Redpath's opinion, if we turn a blind eye to the harmful impulses in us, they are certain to destroy all chances of living together in peace. He considers Golding's art to have 'a therapeutic value', for 'it can reveal man to himself and enable him to see where his being is in need of some sort of cure or healing' (161). For this critic, the cure entails some kind of modification of the individual's 'relationship to the universe' (161). Golding's art, he argues, 'not only involves an examination and diagnosis of man's condition, it also constitutes within itself an act of healing, awakening man to sources of experience that he has neglected or forgotten but without which his existence is partial' (162). Redpath does not give any additional details concerning the nature of this regenerative experience. Though his comments clearly allude to the beneficial influence that Golding's works may have on their audience, they do not clear out whether the readers are led to acknowledge and come to terms with the essence that they share with the rest of humankind — and perhaps with other beings and things too — or if they are expected to give some other kind of response. Neither does Redpath's discussion make it clear whether the encounter with Golding's fiction can have any effects beyond the individual reader's private sphere.

1.1.2. Socio-Political Consequences of Humankind's Destructive Tendencies

While Redpath fails to explain whether the effects of Golding's fiction can be felt outside the individual sphere, other critics have not hesitated to assert that an important lesson about social organisation can be drawn from the novels' presentation of collective life. In their opinion, Golding not only claims that evil is rooted in humankind's essence; they add that Golding's solution to indiscriminate violence involves the implementation of suitable means of social repression.

In an early article devoted to *Lord of the Flies*, Robert J. White argues that the novel is an exploration of the relationship between social law and human nature, more specifically, of the dependence of the former on the latter. Golding, he states,

> attempts to explore the interaction of society and man: the traditional dichotomy of *nomos* and *physis*. The development of society ... depends upon the nature of man ... The defects of society, therefore, can be traced back to the defects of human nature (White 1964: 163).

White goes on to explain that for Golding man, 'of whom society is a reflection, is never wholly in conscious control of himself' (White 1964: 170). *Lord of the Flies* makes it clear that behind the veneer of civilisation man's 'passions are endowed with a vitality and energy of their own, so that they can force him, as if from the outside, into conduct almost alien to himself' (170). The core of human nature is actually non-human, and it is from this source beyond human control that violence and exploitation spring.

After discussing human nature, White focuses on society. His analysis relies on the Platonic distinction between the different aspects of the soul — reason, appetite and spirit, with the associated virtues of justice, temperance and courage — and the claim that it is wise to organise collective life as a balanced hierarchy in which the philosophers (in *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph and Piggy) are located at the top, the artisans (the majority of children) are at the bottom, and in between them stand the warriors (Jack and his hunters). According to this reading, the boys' downfall takes place because 'the rational structure of this society is sabotaged, partly because of the sensuality of the artisans, but mainly by the aggressive character of the warriors' (164). In White's view, the point of the novel is that just as individuals suffer if they are unable

to keep their inner balance, so society collapses as soon as if the delicate hierarchical relationships between the three social groups are altered.

A similar approach to White's is adopted by David Spitz, whose discussion of Golding's first novel relies on the notion of political legitimacy. Spitz begins by identifying four possible bases of political power. First, there are democratic rulers, whose authority rests on consent; secondly, there are leaders that present themselves as 'the voice of reason'; thirdly, there are authoritarian rulers that combine force with the manipulation of their subordinates' passions; fourthly, there are leaders who act as 'the voice of revelation' (1970: 25–6). According to Spitz, in Golding's novel the four roles are performed by four different characters: Ralph, Piggy, Jack and Simon. What Spitz does not explain is the exact relationship between these four sources of power. (It is reasonable to suppose that democratic consent is opposed to authoritarian force, and that reason goes against revelation. As it turns out, in *Lord of the Flies* it is not clear whether democracy can be dissociated from reason, or whether revelation opposes everything else. In the novel, the focus is on the conflict between Ralph and Jack, whereas Piggy's and Simon's political roles are secondary; though Spitz is not explicit in this respect, there is little doubt where the latter's sympathies and antipathies lie: Piggy's rationalism lends ideological support to Ralph, while Simon is pitted against Jack.) The plot of the novel goes from democracy to totalitarianism, whose rise the elected leader, the rational thinker and the seer cannot prevent. According to Spitz, the triumph of violence is to some extent foreseeable, given Golding's emphasis on the children' destructive tendencies and his understanding of society as dependent on human nature. Just as important as the boys' inclinations is the fact that Ralph's democratic rule is not protected by a suitable repressive force. (This emphasis on the leaders' lack of prevision is a necessary addition to White's description of the other children's faults.) Spitz suggests that laws are necessary for democracy to work, but not sufficient: legality must be upheld and enforced in some way. Not realising that 'Every society does indeed, in some measure at least, rest on force' (32), Ralph and his followers open the door to Jack's reign of terror. In cases like this, Spitz claims, the only realistic response is to create an efficient repressive apparatus. This is what adults do in the real world:

> We ... maintain an army and police force. Without them ... the state cannot survive, or do the job it purports to do. Without them, or so it is believed, we cannot resist the will of greater powers or impress our will on those with lesser force (Spitz 1970: 32).

In Spitz's opinion, democratic societies must always try to steer a middle course between excessive permissiveness and unjustified repression. On the one hand, irresponsible leniency opens the door to gratuitous aggression. On the other, while it is evident that 'in our social and political arrangements and practices we are far from realizing our avowed democratic ideals', we should not confuse the legitimate use of force in democratic societies 'with the worst practices of totalitarian or repressive systems' (Spitz 1970: 33): the fact that all forms of government depend on the use of repression does not mean that they are all equal. In democratic systems, the repressive force of the state must be redressed by a sense of justice (by which Spitz seems to mean a sense of proportionality):

> we cannot seem to do without force, and in this respect every society runs the risk of being oppressive; but we cannot do without justice, and in this respect force becomes not an end but a means, an instrument in the service of right (Spitz 1970: 32).

For Spitz, therefore, Golding's aspiration is to demonstrate that too little violence (in the form of a lack of adequate legal repression) can be just as bad as — and indeed result in — too much violence.

James Gindin and Kathleen Woodward also read Golding's works as advocating a a repressive use of force. The former holds that, despite depicting humans as 'evil and ... not socially perfectible ... by any of the measures taken by or the illusions of the conscious and rational society', Golding tries 'to use his fiction to suggest possible counterweights to the human condition' (Gindin 1988: 15). In the latter's opinion, if there is as lesson to be learned from *Lord of the Flies*, it can only be 'that the sweet persuasions of democracy must be sharpened by force' (Woodward 1997: 93). Ralph's democracy is 'naive and innocent', for real-world experience has repeatedly taught us that 'democracy in its "pure" form is not hardy enough to contain aggression' (93). When the democratic consensus breaks down or is under attack from outside, the recourse to dialogue can be useful, but only to a certain extent; once a certain limit has

been reached, a stricter policy of controlled violence must be adopted: 'One must fight back. Aggression requires aggression. ... Institutions of discipline and punishment must be erected' (94). Thus Golding's book can be read as 'an argument for strict law and order within the democratic system' (93). In the summary of her interpretation, Woodward connects Golding's defence of repression with a certain political attitude:

> Realism and maturity might help one to see clearly, diplomacy might work. And we add, if they don't, institutions of punishment exist to repress undesirable behaviour. It is in this sense that the political implications of *Lord of the Flies* are conservative (Woodward 1997: 95).

With this conclusion, Woodward lends support to the view, which other critics such as Crawford have also expressed, that Golding is a conservative writer.

1.1.3. Types of Characters according to Their Nature

So far the impression may have been given that in Golding's novels the innate tendency to evil that allegedly characterises the human species knows neither degrees nor exceptions. Actually, critics have regularly pointed out that the contrary is the case. It is true that humankind is fatally flawed — so much so that it can be described as diseased. Yet it is no less true that some humans are — as if by miracle — immune to this disease. Following Golding's usage, critics have usually referred to these two types of people in terms of their *egoism* and *saintliness*.

One of the most striking aspects of Golding's novels is the presence of a series of characters in whom evil tendencies come hand in hand with what Redpath has called 'extreme self-centredness' (1986: 132). What this means is that they manifest an almost pathological overvaluation of what separates them from others, combined with an exclusive preoccupation with their personal needs and desires. The combination of these two features often results in the objectification of others, who are then seen as obstacles that must be removed or used as instruments that one can use to attain one's goals. When one is dominated by egoism, other 'people become things, objects of use' (102). According to Redpath, egoists 'build solipsistic walls around themselves' (138).

They are capable, in Gindin's words, not only 'of setting self against community', but also 'of trying to gain power … at the expense of a fellow being' (1988: 34).

Most critics have realised that, if we want to put the issue into proper perspective, we must admit that the extreme depravity of many of Golding's characters is but the hyperbolic illustration of a tendency shared by most humans. Some commentators have added that the effects that one's selfishness has upon one's neighbour need to be analysed in conjunction with its impact upon social life in general. Since it is so widespread, what Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor call 'loveless egotism' will necessarily have extensive consequences (2002: 106–7). The social dimension is implicit in Larry L. Dickson's statement that 'Golding's novels deal with the evils of selfishness and the exploitation of others' (1991: 130): a society made up of individuals who are convinced of their self-sufficiency and incapable of love is likely to make selfish exploitation of one's neighbour the accepted rule of conduct (unless, we may add, the search for one's private benefit is transformed into a means to a collective end, as it would happen in an ideal bourgeois society).

While most scholars have put the emphasis on Golding's hints that 'the self exerted against others is destructive' (Redpath 1986: 140), some have also pointed to the occasions, in the novels, on which the assertion of 'the autonomy of the selfish ego' meets with opposition (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 107). In a sense, Golding's works can be read as so many attacks on the 'self-enclosed ego' (367). According to Redpath, they highlight 'the necessity of breaking down the wall of the self and selflessly extending oneself to others' (Redpath 1986: 124). In doing so, they 'reveal the destructive nature of that "I" and demonstrate the efficacy of selflessness' (141). Thus, though the most usual interpretation of Golding's novels states that most humans are loveless egoists, and that this is an important source of suffering, it is also recognised that the amount of pain that humans inflict on each other is somewhat reduced by the existence of a minority of people who apart from being, in Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor's words, 'humble, unselfish, loving', are in 'communion with nature' as a whole (2002: 106, 14). They are what critics, taking their cue from Golding himself, call *saints*. According to Redpath, the most salient feature of saintliness is the 'appeal to others outside the self' (1986: 138). Furthermore, it has been stated, again following Golding, that in the novels the saint acts as a 'Christ figure' (Spangler 1988: 232). The expression serves to highlight the fact that these characters, whose 'compassion' is

exemplary (233), risk their lives to increase the others' self-knowledge — 'to turn their sights inward upon their own behavior' (235) — and well-being. For many commentators, the existence of saints is the only palliative to the egoism that dominates human relationships.

1.2. Varieties of Experience and Uses of Language

In addition to suggesting that the main goal of Golding's fiction is to draw attention to humankind's evil nature, the dangers of legal leniency and totalitarianism, and the clash between a mass of selfish individuals and the odd loving saint, critics have identified a recurrent pattern in his novels whereby different varieties of experience, different planes of existence, and different uses of language enter into conflict with each other. It is to these issues that I turn now. The first section of this chapter will focus on the scholarly treatment given to the antagonistic perspectives — basically, rational and non-rational — that Golding's characters allegedly have on the world, and to the two related planes — physical and metaphysical — in which many of Golding's characters live their lives. The emphasis will be on the way in which Golding's critics associate the rational with the physical and the non-rational with the metaphysical. The second section will present Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor's joint exploration of the way in which, in their opinion, Golding's characters pass from the perception of physical objects to a visionary grasp of their metaphysical unity. Insofar as it confuses the opposition between rational and non-rational experiences with the focus on the physical and metaphysical dimensions, Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor's account of the progression from physical perception to visionary awareness is exemplary of a mistake that appears with certain frequency in analyses of Golding's novels. For this reason, the model that they propose cannot be adopted without extensive revision. Nevertheless, their discussion of the visionary trajectory is still one of the most comprehensive examinations of Golding's concern with epistemology and ontology, and for this reason it is worth reviewing. The closing section of this chapter will examine the two uses which, according to some critics, Golding makes of language in order to convey the kinds of experience that his characters have.

1.2.1. Varieties of Experience

One of the most recurrent concerns in Golding criticism is with the coexistence, in the novels, of different ways of being in the world. Gindin assures us that Golding likes to portray 'two sides of experience as identifiably separate, as pressures that pull the human being in different directions' (1988: 12–3). The terms that Redpath uses for these two pressures are either 'reason' and 'unreason' or, alternatively, 'rationalism' and 'feelings' (1986: 81, 68); these are all expressions that Redpath, like all the other critics whose views I am going to review, fails to define in any way. For his part, Storr adds that Golding does not only present both kinds of experience side by side, but privileges one over the other: the novelist, he writes, has 'a profoundly irrational ... view of reality' (1987: 144). Howard S. Babb presents 'man's rationality as the enemy that Golding takes under attack' (1970: 94 n. 8). In general, critics have noted that Golding's attitude towards the absence or suspension of rationality is ambivalent. Dickson argues that 'The neat "answers" the rationalists provide are ultimately not satisfying' to either Golding or many of his characters (1991: 135). In his novels, rationality is often unmasked as mere rationalisation. It is presented as having a limited reach and, in the most extreme cases, as being useless to achieve lasting happiness or even to secure one's health and survival. In the end, the suspicion prevails that reason can be a sort of blindfold that prevents us from truly understanding ourselves and the world: as McCarron observes, 'the "real" world is ... inexplicable in pure rational terms' (1995: 52). However, rationality may also have its advantages. Crawford writes that Golding's attempt to counter 'inflexible rationality' (and the order that it attempts to impose on life) may lead to 'chaos and irrationality' (Crawford 2002: 192). Thus, though Crawford's discussion puts the accent on 'the limitations of rationality' (192), the unexpected reference to chaos suggests that, in Golding's fiction, reason may also be presented as an asset which ought to be acknowledged and exploited.

Clements has linked Golding's concern with non-rational experience to the fact that in the second half of the twentieth-century 'confidence in rational forms of knowing had been eroded by recent historical events' (2012: 7). Paramount among these events was, of course, the Second World War, in which Golding took part, and whose 'absurd horrors' had proved that 'the cult of rational thinking was no longer beyond reproach', because it led 'not to enlightenment but to moral ... confusion' (10, 8). Clements

concludes that 'The technological advances made during the Second World War, in particular, felt like not advancement but regression' (8), an opinion that in his view informs not only Golding's novels but the works of other mid-twentieth-century English-language authors: Iris Murdoch, Patrick White and Saul Bellow.

In addition, it has been suggested that the reliance on one perspective, be it rational or non-rational, at the expense of the other results in the opposition between science and the arts (particularly religion). Stephen J. Boyd notes that virtually all of Golding's works are organised round the tension between these 'warring ways of looking at the world' or 'contrasting world-views' (1988: 15). Virginia Tiger is of the same opinion. According to her, Golding's favourite narrative strategies include 'offering two contrary views' held by antagonistic characters (2003: 186). Dickson explains that 'the conflicts between the humanistic and the scientific' stances are always central to Golding's narratives (1991: 135). Finally, Boyd adds that this tension usually adopts the shape of a debate 'between a rational or scientific view of the world and a more intuitive and generally religious attitude' (1988: 72–3).

Boyd's reference to intuition takes us back to the figure of the saint. According to James R. Baker, saints are separated from the rest of humans not only by their resistance to egoism, but also by their 'unique intuitions', presumably of a non-rational kind, by virtue of which they are both 'blessed and cursed' (1965: 14). Actually, there seems to be some kind of relationship between the saints' lack of egoism and their non-rational discernment. Kinkead-Weekes declares, without giving further details, that the saint's peculiar views remain 'undistorted by our fallen nature' and are 'non-egotistic' (1987: 67). The tragedy of saints is that their ability to see what others cannot (whatever it is — no critic seems able to provide a clear answer) has catastrophic consequences. Though saints are free from the lures of the egoistic self, and thus they are deemed to have an incomparable redeeming power, their enhanced awareness poses a threat to held beliefs, and brings them into conflict with society. In many cases, the saint meets — like Jesus Christ — a violent death at the hands of those who they are trying to save.

In addition to separating rational from non-rational experience, Golding's critics usually connect this dichotomy with his supposed ontological dualism. In Golding's writings, they suggest, the rational perspective is tied to the physical plane of existence, whereas the non-rational perspective is tied to the metaphysical plane. Thus, McCarron's position is unusual insofar as he is content to acknowledge that most of

Golding's novels concern themselves 'with the ... numinous force that Golding perceives at the centre of existence' (2007: 192). More typically, Gindin identifies that centre with a plane beyond the physical: 'Golding thinks we live in "two worlds", one physical and the other spiritual' (1988: 13). For this critic, in Golding's works 'the "physical" is equated with the rational', while the other dimension is identified with 'the irrational, the mysterious' (13). Other authors have couched this ontological opposition in slightly different terms, and as a rule they have also linked it to the distinction between the rational and the non-rational. On the one hand, Redpath refers to 'the spirit world' as 'the metaphysical realm', a sphere 'of experience and being' that 'cannot ... be conceptualized by the rational intelligence' (1986: 12). On the other hand, Crawford states that in Golding's novels there exists an irresolvable tension between 'the body' and 'the soul', which are respectively linked to the 'natural and supernatural' realms (2002: 99, 28). As with the dichotomy between rational and non-rational experience, none of these critics makes any effort to give these terms — physical, metaphysical, spiritual; body, soul; natural, supernatural — a precise definition.

What Crawford calls the supernatural realm reappears in Carey as 'a reality beyond the rational' which can only be grasped thanks to 'the visionary ... revelations' that are rooted in 'the miraculous' (2009: 45, 347, 2). In Carey's opinion, the two kinds of experience are associated with the approaches of science, on the one hand, and of religion and art, on the other (see 272, 278, 412, 420). While Clements explains Golding's promotion of non-rational modes of awareness as typical of the post-war climate, Carey prefers to offer a biographical explanation. Being just a baby, Carey informs us, Golding saw 'something ... like a small cockerel' that strutted along the curtain pole and that flaunted 'an indistinct and indescribable white' before vanishing (1). Though Golding remained forever uncertain whether the episode had really been 'an exercise of clairvoyance before growing up into a rationalist world stifled it', he nevertheless hoarded this memory as a refuge from 'the bloody cold daylight I've spent my life in, except when drunk' (cited in Carey 2009: 2). A few years after the cockerel episode, during a walk through the woods with his parents, young Golding saw a mysterious stag's head, with antlers, appearing behind the bracken. In Carey's words, Golding had the impression that the stag was a creature 'from another world' (25). The encounters with these mysterious animals were only the first of a series of events that, in Golding's opinion, put him into contact with a dimension beyond the physical.

In the light of the preceding, I see no reason to reject Redpath's assertion that Golding's novels 'are unquestionably concerned with ways of seeing' (1986: 214), as long as we add that this is part and parcel of a general concern with the varieties of human experience. This concern finds its embodiment in Golding's presentation of the process whereby several of his characters come to understand themselves and the world in which they live:

> Much of the genius of Golding's fiction lies in the power of his language to render the immediate experience of the perceiving mind as it moves through the various phases of its struggle to impose one pattern or another on a cosmos that cannot be reduced to human proportions (Baker 1965: 89).

Two of the critics that have thrown greater light on this trajectory are Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor. The account that they put forward, both together and separately, aspires to elucidate the process that, going from physical perception to metaphysical vision, informs Golding's novels. In their view, among the most distinctive traits of any Golding novel stands out the fact that 'from the singular it keeps opening out into greater and greater multiplicity and suggestiveness and growth, yet keeps us no less contracting back triumphantly into one' (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 273). What this means, as we are about to see, is that the attention of Golding's characters shifts from the physical perception of particular objects (*sight*), through their grasp from several perspectives at one and the same time (*insight*), and finally to the apprehension of the common metaphysical realm in which those objects are rooted (*vision*). Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor calls this a 'threefold process of focusing' by means of sight, insight and vision (241), which they describe as follows:

> first … concrete perception; then through perception to insight, fusing darkness and brightness; then through insight to revelation of 'the nature of things', the existence of a terrifying field of force … to which our normal experience is a concealing screen (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 241).

In these critics' view, Golding's novels include a presentation of concrete perceptions in their irreducible singularity, in other words, a presentation of the characters' *sight*.

When we begin to read Golding's novels it is often 'the accuracy of the seeing' that strikes us most (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 362). In this respect, Kinkead-Weekes states that Golding conceives of 'no true seeing that is not primarily and simply visual' (Kinkead-Weekes 1987: 67). However, it soon becomes clear that physical perception is not the most accurate way of looking at the world. Due to 'the falsifying power of the human ego', when one concentrates on the physical features of things one is able 'to see only what one wants to see' (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 371, 173). This is 'an evil kind of seeing', anchored in humankind's diseased nature (Kinkead-Weekes 1987: 73). Apart from the fact that it is normally conditioned by egoism, physical perception has another shortcoming. If it is not abandoned in favour of other types of awareness, it runs the risk of turning into a physical dead end: 'concrete seeing in itself is always blind at a deeper level, because unaware of the nature of things' (67).

Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor's description of physical *sight* does not explain why it is connected with egoism. The account of the second mode of awareness, which they usually call *insight*, is even more problematic. Though Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor say that it emerges from sight, they do not explain if it arises as an overcoming of egoistic perception or for some other reason. Apparently, insight thrives on the 'contradictions' created by the 'multiplicity' of existing world views — scientific, religious, artistic, etc. (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 273). Thus insight 'fuses opposites into inclusive acceptance' (372). As regards this second stage, there is considerable critical agreement that Golding's method consists in 'setting up a tension between two contradictory ... patterns' (Tiger 2003: 119). Without calling the outcome *insight*, Gindin explains that Golding likes to bring together competing stances because he 'never allows a falsifying and abstract consistency to distort the complexity of experience' (Gindin 1988: 14). Even if the novelist cannot hide his sympathy for the non-rational perspectives, he 'is at pains to be fair to and make a strong case for the scientific ... side' (15). For Tiger, one of the most interesting things about Golding is that 'he expects readers to ... reconcile apparently opposite points of view' (Tiger 1988: 304). McCarron also speaks of a 'reconciliation of ostensibly antithetical positions' that results in what he calls a coincidence of opposites, 'a denial of distinctions' or, alternatively, 'a state of synthesis' (1995: 10). Though they do not explain what this reconciliation or synthesis consists in, both Tiger's and McCarron's comments seem to point, tentatively, to an essential feature of Golding's narratives: the eventual questioning of the validity of whatever

descriptions one may make of the world. After positioning themselves as the representatives of one of those clashing patterns or world views, insightful characters realise that all the perspectives 'are true' to a certain extent, and that 'a thorough conviction of the truth of one to the exclusion of the other yields a distorted and narrow view of the world' (Boyd 1988: 73). It is probably for this reason that, in Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor's opinion, achieving insight brings about 'the overturning of certainties' (2002: 173). As a result, one's understanding of the world becomes incomparably richer.

The third and, for Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor, last stage in this process of enhanced awareness corresponds to what they usually call *vision*. Their discussion of this kind of experience is the most problematic of all. A number of other critics, Redpath among them, have stated that Golding tries to 'make us aware ... of the need to achieve wholeness' through a kind of experience that takes us beyond all oppositions (1986: 178). This the novelist does by showing that all attempts to impose meaning on the world are 'inadequate' (119). Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor believe that if 'Golding sets a whole series of patterns at war', and then shows us that all of them are equally valid (as he does with the incorporation of insight), it is only 'to convince us that none will do', and that behind the plurality of world views we can find unity (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 201). Introducing the notion of *vision* suggests that none of the clashing descriptions of the world that can be made, either separately or in combination, will give us an accurate idea of the whole. Accordingly, Kinkead-Weekes argues that, at the same time as Golding's novels emphasise multiplicity, they illustrate how 'the many not only come out of, but must be drawn back into, the one' (Kinkead-Weekes 1987: 73). Gregor adds that they do so by 'remorselessly' disclosing 'the shape of life beneath its surfaces, paring everything away to reveal a significant continuity' among discrete things (Gregor 1987: 99). The moment 'when all things come together', i.e. the moment of vision, is 'a moment of truth' (98). According to Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor, it is also a moment of 'love and compassion'; actually, these feelings 'matter quite as much as seeing, and much more than words' (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 377). As usual, the reasons why love and compassion arise from vision, and why these feelings are so important, are not given.

1.2.2. Uses of Language

After describing young Golding's encounter with a mysterious white cockerel, Carey mentions the child's inability to share what he has seen: 'Struggling to tell his parents about it brings him for the first time up against "the brute impossibility of communicating"' (2009: 2). For Carey, Golding's frustration clearly lies at the origin of his persistent interest in the capabilities of language, particularly in the possibility of putting non-rational experiences into words.

In the course of his discussion of Golding's metaphysical concerns, Redpath holds that Golding's works can be regarded as 'attempts to qualify our perception of the universe, to make us see a dimension which exists beyond our rational consciousness and our faith in the empirical world' (1986: 153). Regardless of their immediate subject matter, Golding's novels always try to warn us against limiting human experience to 'rationalism' — which for Readpath consists in 'cause and effect explanations' — and therefore to 'physical life' (176). At the same time, Redpath continues, Golding uses language in such a way that it will make his readers aware of 'areas of being beneath our rationally ordered and comfortably reductionist lives' (178).

Redpath is not alone in drawing attention to Golding's peculiar use of language. Several other commentators have seen in Golding's exuberant prose the proof that language can have a metaphysical orientation. On the whole, what all these critics do is link the aspiration to communicate the rational grasp of the physical realm to a certain use of language, and the aspiration to communicate the non-rational grasp of the metaphysical realm to another. Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor, for example, point out that the conflict between two competing world views — one non-rational and metaphysical, the other rational and physical — finds expression in 'the languages ... appropriate to each' (2002: 278). In their opinion, metaphysical experience 'can never be fully or satisfactorily expounded, defined, or conceptualized' (presumably because it involves a suspension of rationality), and therefore it must be communicated 'on the level of suggestion rather than "explanation"' (200). How can language do without concepts, Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor do not say.

Redpath begins his discussion of Golding's style by stating that an important part of the meaning of the latter's texts is that 'man's inner nature' lies hidden in a metaphysical realm that remains 'beyond the limits of language' (1986: 12). Though this

statement would amount to an a priori dismissal of Golding's oeuvre as a failure, in other parts of his discussion Redpath acknowledges, like Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor, that language can be employed metaphysically. Thus, while he attempts to characterise the metaphysical sphere, Redpath states that it 'cannot be described or explained … except in indirect terms' (32). From Golding's novels, he surmises that the only recourse we have to express our metaphysical experiences is using a *poetic* instead of an *ordinary* style. Redpath refers to ordinary language as 'a veil of conventional meanings spread over and concealing what is … mysterious' (37); by contrast, poetic language can 'make us aware of areas of existence which are beyond the limits of [ordinary] language' (14). If Golding is obscure, it is 'because words [used in an ordinary way] fail to render for him what the truth is' (35). The problem, as Redpath admits, is that using poetic language for metaphysical purposes may backfire: as soon as 'language ceases to perform its customary rôle' of referring to physical things rationally grasped, it begins to be regarded as 'obscure' (37). This is exactly the way in which it is seen by Laurence Lerner, who condemns the 'obliqueness' of Golding's narrative method and style as designed 'to conceal a confusion or a clumsiness rather than an insight or even a mystery' (1982: 12, 14). However, if we are to believe Redpath, the obscurity that characterises many passages of Golding's is in fact a deliberate effect. Its purpose is to confront us, through language, with regions of experience that are alien to language:

> Golding's art is an art of discovery, but not an art that seeks to explain. The discovery it makes is that the universe … cannot be wholly described in words, and yet words are all the novelist has with which to describe the universe (Redpath 1986: 13).

In Redpath's opinion, Golding is conscious of these difficulties: 'The problem of language and its relationship to the physical and metaphysical world is a theme Golding continually returns to. In fact, we could say that it is what his art is about' (1986: 13–4). Indeed, this critic attempts to defend the novelist against the charge of purposeless obscurity and even meaninglessness, and he does so by assuring that '*the* issue of Golding's art' is that some dimensions of experience are inaccessible to reason and that, as a consequence, when we come into contact with them and try to communicate them, the conceptual quality of language is likely to become an obstacle: 'there are things

which cannot be understood in rational and conceptual terms, and language, as a medium of conceptual understanding, is a very inadequate tool with which to capture these areas of experience and being' (Redpath 1986: 215). If sometimes 'obscurity appears to be the ultimate aim of the exercise', this should not come as a surprise (179). When giving linguistic shape to his materials, Golding has to struggle 'against the constraints of language so that he can make a profound but only intuitively glimpsed truth clear to us' (36). For Redpath it is evident that the novelist's only way to surmount these difficulties is to embrace obscurity and to use it to his own advantage: 'Golding makes us experience mystery in the universe by making us experience mystery in his work of art' (53). Thus 'the fact that Golding's novels so frequently puzzle us is surely an indication that he intends us to be puzzled; he wants us to see that certain areas of experience cannot be reduced to rational formulae' (25). Far from being an obstacle, therefore, Golding's elusive style must be seen as the only way in which the audience's comprehension of reality can be increased.

Despite pointing to crucial characteristics of Golding's style, Redpath's discussion is obviously marred by the equation between poetic and metaphysical language. When establishing the distinction between ordinary and poetic language, Redpath mentions his indebtedness to the theories of the Russian formalists, in particular to Viktor Shklovsky. According to his description of Shklovsky's theory, the chief function of poetic language consists in showing the world anew: it 'has the power to make strange, ... to "defamiliarise" the world with which we have grown overly familiar'; in doing so 'It forces us to see the world again in a new way and so restores areas of existence to which we may have grown oblivious. Our perceptions are refreshed and renewed' (Redpath 1986: 213–4). So far so good. The problem is that Redpath confuses poetic defamiliarisation (which, according to Russian formalism, does break through the veil of familiarity and custom) with metaphysical reference. Even if we said that the latter cannot appear without the former, the reverse would not be the case: far from being tied to metaphysical objects, poetic uses of language can well be limited to the presentation of habitual physical realities in an unusual way.[1]

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1   In this respect, it is interesting to recall Andrew Crozier's objections to 'Martian' poetics, whose name comes from Craig Raine's 1979 poem 'A Martian Sends a Postcard Home'. In this composition, the poetic voice is that of an uncomprehending Martian who must come to terms with a world — the Earth — and with a species — human beings — which only figurative language

So far we have seen that, apart from equating rationality with the physical, on the one hand, and non-rationality with the metaphysical, on the other, most commentators have linked physics to a certain verbal style and metaphysics to another. To finish this section, I would like to examine a slightly different account of Golding's style. In his recent *Mysticism and the Mid-Century Novel*, Clements establishes an implicit distinction between physical awareness and rationality: physical objects can be grasped in non-rational as well as rational ways (whether metaphysical objects can be grasped rationally as well as non-rationally is not so clear). If Clements refers to Iris Murdoch, William Golding, Patrick White and Saul Bellow as 'mystical' novelists, it is not because they focus on the metaphysical but because they focus on how things can be seen if rationality is left aside. Admittedly, Clements's focus is for the most part on metaphysics, but in the chapter devoted to Bellow it becomes clear that his 'mysticism' encompasses all kinds of non-rational awareness.[2] This allows him to differentiate *denotative* uses of language, which serve to convey a rational view of things, from *evocative* uses, which serve to convey non-rational views. According to Clements's argument, there are fundamental dimensions of human experience to which denotative language cannot do justice, and which therefore run the risk of being silenced. Our awareness of these dimensions — which are not only metaphysical but also physical — is non-rational and can only be shared in a roundabout way. That is why it is necessary to resort to alternative varieties of linguistic communication that 'can deal implicitly with the ineffable without being a description of the ineffable' (Clements 2012: 17). This type of communication works by 'using language … evocatively … in order to challenge the reader's reliance on … rational knowledge' (181). Though this analysis, unlike Redpath's, encompasses not only the object but also the effect of the verbal utterance, in the end both the object and the effect are of the same kind: whereas denotation

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can describe. Despite recognising that Martian style is 'wonderfully periphrastic', and that it does indeed make us look at things in a fresh way, Crozier's final verdict is that it lacks metaphysical depth (2000: 200). Drawing a comparison between the Martians' metaphoric style and Golding's, Boyd likewise concludes that the latter's power 'is in marked contrast to the mannered insignificance' of the former (1988: 32).

2   For this reason, Clements's use of the term *mysticism* is somewhat misleading (see Saavedra-Carballido 2015).

refers to and reproduces in the audience a rational view of things, evocation refers to and reproduces non-rational views.

2. THE RELEVANCE OF SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY FOR GOLDING'S NOVELS

The second part of this thesis deals with Schopenhauer's philosophy as a framework for the analysis of Golding's novels. As pointed out in the previous part, the novelist and the German thinker seem to share a number of major concerns. This coincidence is evident, in the first place, in their common foregrounding of the different ways of looking at the world. Both authors are likewise united by their paramount concern with human aggression, and with the ways in which violence can be prevented. From a social perspective, both authors pay attention to the varieties of social organisation and the limits of political action. Unless we overcome the piecemeal manner in which Golding's critics have discussed these themes until now, we may lose sight of their interrelations. Locating these themes within the architecture of Schopenhauer's thought may bring out the connection between them. Having made them explicit, it may be easier to identify similar links in Golding's works.

Provisionally supposing that Schopenhauer's philosophy is pertinent to the analysis of Golding's fiction, the first chapter of this part contextualises the latter's work in relation to some of the most contentious intellectual issues in Western modernity. The opening section will trace some of the main philosophical theories of cognition leading up to and including Kant's momentous separation, from which Schopenhauer takes his cue, of what can be known and what remains beyond the limits of legitimate knowledge. The second section will outline the philosophical treatment of suffering, from Leibniz's vindication of divine justice in the face of suffering, to Voltaire's scepticism about the goodness of our world.

The second and longer chapter deals with Schopenhauer's philosophy, concentrating on those aspects of it that throw light on Golding's views. Despite my

narrow focus, it will sometimes be seen that Schopenhauer's philosophy is not without inconsistencies.[1] When necessary, I shall draw attention to the most conspicuous of these incoherences, and sometimes I shall attempt, with the help of contemporary scholarship, to offer solutions that are plausible in Schopenhauer's terms. As a general rule, I shall choose those interpretations of his theory that I consider more useful for the analysis of Golding's works.

In the first section of the second chapter I shall introduce a number of basic distinctions that Schopenhauer's readers must bear in mind from the beginning, such as the one between the *world* and the *thing-in-itself*, between the *essential will* and the realm of *appearances*, and between *representation*, *knowledge* and *explanation*. The first distinction is between the world and the thing-in-itself: the former can be legitimately known, the latter cannot. This opposition must not be confused with the contrast, which Schopenhauer presents as equally important, between the essential will — the world's essence — and the world's appearances, both of which can be known. Moreover, the field of knowledge cannot be confused with that of conscious representation: for Schopenhauer, the things that can be represented are more numerous than the things that can be legitimately known. Finally, knowledge exceeds what can be explained.

In the second section I shall present Schopenhauer's account of the ways in which the world appears and in which it is subsequently described. I shall begin by examining his classification of the human approaches to the world. First, he differentiates rational

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1   Among these difficulties, those that have a terminological basis may become the biggest obstacle for the non-specialist reader. Of the terms that he employs with the greatest assiduity, *world*, *representation*, *will*, *appearance*, *intellect*, *metaphysics* and *thing-in-itself* (among others that I shall not use here) need to be handled with special care. To get an idea of how important it can be to correctly interpret passages with these expressions, one just needs to recall that the very title of Schopenhauer's main book, *The World as Will and Representation*, includes three of them. Since this is not a study of Schopenhauer's philosophy, I shall pass over most of his terminological inconsistencies without further mention. On the whole, my policy will be to employ only those meanings, among the ones that he uses, which can be of greater help in connection with Golding's texts. When the argument requires using a term in more than one technical sense, as in the case of *will*, I shall make its meaning clear in every case, for example by resorting to the labels, not employed by Schopenhauer (nor by his commentators), *essential* will — which at its most general can be called the *world*-will — and *individual* will.

— i.e. conceptual — from non-rational approaches. In his view, all animals with a brain are conscious beings. By default, he contends, both human beings and other animals are only aware of the physical side of things. In particular, physical perception establishes a strict separation among individuals, and presents all other objects from the subject's angle as potential sources of dissatisfaction. Young, one of Schopenhauer's commentators, has called physical perception an 'egocentric' variety of consciousness (Young 2005: 109). Schopenhauer locates physical perception at the root of moral egoism and malice, and thus, on the one hand, as a source of the anxiety provoked by the subject's fear of unpleasurable experiences, and, on the other, of all those forms of suffering that result from the individualistic struggle for satisfaction.[2] Human beings have other, non-egocentric states of consciousness — aesthetic contemplation, inner observation, and the saint's vision and compassion — thanks to which the metaphysical side of the world — in its aesthetic, moral and ontological dimensions — is revealed, egoism is avoided, and suffering is prevented; but, originally and by default, conscious beings are egocentric, and these other states of mind are exceptional. Secondly, Schopenhauer differentiates physical — i.e. material — from metaphysical approaches to the world. Regardless of their physical or metaphysical character, the ones that we have seen so far are non-rational. However, it is only starting from them that human beings can achieve a rational comprehension of things. As I shall show at the end of the second section, the reliance on reason is also what all the institutionalised ways of describing the world that Schopenhauer discusses — history, science, art, religion and philosophy — have in common.

In the third section I shall discuss Schopenhauer's notion of the essential will and its relation to cognitive egocentrism, moral egoism and suffering. In the fourth section I shall assess the chances of moral and social regeneration which the individual and society as a whole have.

Properly understanding Schopenhauer's place in the history of philosophy may contribute to situating Golding's world view within the larger context of modern Western thought. Crucially, it will help us to see that Golding's outlook is not an anomaly in the history of our culture. On the one hand, it will prove that Golding is not

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2   Both Schopenhauer and most of his commentators refer to this kind of representation as *egoistic*, but I prefer, like Young, to reserve this term for the discussion of morality.

alone in his concern with the powers and limitations of human cognition, nor in his belief in the existence of an unfathomable dimension beyond human knowledge. On the other hand, it will show that Golding is not the only author for whom suffering is so widespread as to belie all optimistic views of the world and of humankind. In addition, a detailed examination of Schopenhauer's thought may contribute to a more accurate interpretation of specific aspects of Golding's works and their moral and socio-political implications. It may make it easier to appreciate how Golding's novels explore the role of consciousness in the apparition of the knowable world, and how many of his novels confront us with a realm of appearances that half conceals and half reveals an inner force which can be identified, with Schopenhauer's *will*. This will allow us to better appreciate the connection in Golding's novels between egoism and suffering, and may throw light on his moral and socio-political outlook. Finally, the distinction between the knowable world and the unknowable thing-in-itself may throw light on Golding's confession that he is both a pessimist (about the knowable world) and an optimist (about what lies outside the purview of legitimate knowledge).

2.1. Main Issues of Schopenhauer's Philosophy

Schopenhauer's philosophy responds to his interest in the characteristics and limits of human knowledge and by his concern about the constant suffering that, in his view, pervades the world. Considered from the first angle, Schopenhauer's thought stems from Kant's and reacts against the idealism of other philosophers such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Johann Gottlieb Fichte, whose systems proclaim 'the absolute identity of the ideal and the real' (Schopenhauer 2000a: 21). By contrast, from the angle of morality Schopenhauer criticises Kant's rationalism. Moreover, in line with thinkers like Voltaire who argue that this is undoubtedly the worst possible world, he also attacks Leibniz's optimism.

2.1.1. Delimiting Human Knowledge

Schopenhauer's philosophy is, first of all, an attempt to elucidate the nature of cognition. This is a problem that acquired unprecedented intensity at the dawn of modernity with the expansion of scientific enquiry. Starting with Galileo Galilei, the characteristics of objects began to be classified into mind-independent qualities (shapes, motions and numerical relationships) and mind-dependent qualities (colours, tastes, sounds, smells and textures). Taking his cue from Galilei, John Locke adumbrated what Robert Wicks calls a 'representative theory of perception', according to which what we perceive immediately is not the mind-independent world outside but mental images of it (2008: 19). The 'mathematical and geometrical contours' of those mental images — number, extension, figure and motion — are their primary qualities (18). All other properties that we may ascribe to things are mind-dependent, secondary qualities.

It is easy to see why Locke's theory can lead to scepticism about the status and the very existence of the mind-independent material world, as it is impossible to prove how it is and even if it exists at all only by inspecting the images that appear in the mind. From here is but a short step to reduce, as George Berkeley does, the entire world to a collection of images perceived by finite knowing subjects. The connection among these mind-dependent images is established by God, who presents perceptions to our minds in orderly ways which in fact constitute the laws of nature.

David Hume assumes that for our knowledge and communication to have meaning at all they must be traceable back to basic sensory impressions, but denies that we can have access to the realm from which those impressions are supposed to come. Unlike Berkeley, Hume rejects the idea of God. He also dismisses previous arguments that defend the objectivity of the connections among sensory impressions; but for him the connections with which science works reside in our mind. For Hume the events that we experience are themselves, as Wicks explains, 'entirely loose and separate', and the associations that hold them together — including causality — are psychologically established (2008: 22).

Kant presents his philosophical system as a corrective to both Berkeley's argument against the existence of an independent material world and Hume's undermining of causal relations. Kant never denies that there is something that exists outside the mind.

On the contrary, he affirms that there is an unfathomable thing-in-itself lying beyond the subjects' capacity for theoretical knowledge (and hence, for example, beyond the bounds of science). While he sticks to Hume's claim that the connections among events are mind-dependent, Kant describes them as *logical* instead of merely *psychological*; as Wicks explains, Kant's position is that 'we *actively constitute* events as being related to each other in terms of necessary connections' (2008: 23). This idea enables Kant to preserve the notion of causal necessity, and with it his faith in the scientific enterprise. As Kant himself explains, 'all our cognition begins with experience', though 'it does not ... all arise *from* experience' (1999: 136). The mind is empty not in the sense that it is a blank slate on which experience is inscribed, as the British empiricists purported, but in the sense that it is formal, that is, that it originally lacks any particular contents: 'We supply the generalized ... formats to our experience, and a mind-independent reality supplies its particular experiential contents' (Wicks 2008: 27–8).

Schopenhauer is well aware of the place that he and his German contemporaries occupy in the history of philosophy, particularly in relation to British empiricism and Kant's system. In his view, Kant successfully overcomes the rift between rationalists and empiricists. Though Schopenhauer does not respect the distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge, which for Kant is related to the postulation of the theoretically unfathomable thing-in-itself, he contends that Kant's '*greatest merit*' is the distinction between what can be known and what cannot, which he 'based on the proof that between things and us there always stands the *intellect*', for which reason 'they cannot be known according to what they may be in themselves' (1969a: 417–8). For Kant, Schopenhauer reminds us, both the secondary qualities and the primary qualities of things are supplied by 'our faculty of ... apprehension' (418).

Despite his admiration for Kant, Schopenhauer finds fault with some aspects of his philosophy. In Schopenhauer's opinion, it relies on too many redundant categories, and puts too much emphasis on human rationality; also, it is unable to characterise in any positive way the essence that constitutes the basis of the world. Though Schopenhauer follows Kant in maintaining the distinction between the knowable world and the unknowable thing-in-itself, he believes that he can say more than Kant about the latter. One of the most important things that separates his philosophy of knowledge from Kant's is the division of the world into the realm of appearances and the essence — somehow described as will — that underlies them.

2.1.2. Refusing to Justify Suffering

Schopenhauer insists that Kant's moral philosophy is unsatisfactory because it privileges the subject's abstract rationality at the expense of feeling, and because its defence of the dignity of human beings has the perverse effect of setting them apart from other sentient beings and from the rest of nature. The demotion of rationality also plays a fundamental part in Schopenhauer's criticism of Leibniz's opinion that we live in the best possible world.

Leibniz's *Theodicy* (1710) is one of the landmarks of modern philosophy. He wrote this work in response to Pierre Bayle's contention that Manichaeism is the most reasonable explanation for the order of the world. If for Bayle history is, as Susan Neiman states, nothing but a record of crimes and misfortunes, all 'attempts to make sense of it are doomed not just to falsehood but to ridicule' (Neiman 2002: 10). Neiman situates Bayle among those who, in view of the miserable world in which we live, 'denied the reality of anything beyond brute appearances' (11). By contrast, Leibniz ranks among 'those who seek an order to explain the appearances that overwhelm us' so as to persuade us that 'behind all its forms there must be a better and truer reality' that we do not know but which would 'redeem or justify our experience' (xvii, 203). Bayle contends provocatively that witnessing the world's strange mixture of happiness and virtue with pain and wickedness leads directly to the Manichaean hypothesis. According to him, Christian theology is not able to account for people's misdeeds and suffering unless it rejects God's benevolence, God's omnipotence, or both. The only rational explanation for suffering entails replacing the idea of divine omnipotence with that of a never-ending struggle between a bad deity that causes all the pain in the world and a good deity that is perfectly benevolent but too weak to prevail.

The main motivation of Bayle and those who insist that reality is as bad as it seems is, as Neiman points out, a sense of philosophical responsibility: 'Keeping faith with the world, and particularly with those who suffer miserably in it, seemed to require rejecting every attempt to find meaning that would make appearances seem milder' (2002: 324–5). For them, the world 'is so outrageous that no reasonable being would want credit as its Author' (112). Leibniz's response consists in proving, contra Bayle, the conformity of faith with reason, thus asserting the Creator's benevolence and, to some extent, His omnipotence. Leibniz does not defend the absolute goodness of the world,

yet he does claim that God could not have done the world otherwise and that, 'all things considered', it is 'the best that could be chosen' (Leibniz 1990: 67). Leibniz argues that this will only become clear in the course of time as our knowledge of the world increases. As Neiman explains, what Leibniz tells us is that 'if we understood how God made the world, we could not even wish that anything in it were different' (2002: 145).

Leibniz's optimistic rationalisation was put to the test by the 1755 earthquake that destroyed the city of Lisbon, killing several thousands of its inhabitants. Among the reactions that followed the catastrophe, one of the best-known is Voltaire's writing of a 'Poem on the Lisbon Disaster' (1756) and of *Candide* (1759). Voltaire's aspiration in these works is to persuade his contemporaries that Leibniz's philosophy is not only vain but cruel, for its attempt to make sense of life mocks human suffering. According to Neiman, Voltaire follows Bayle in suggesting that 'clear-eyed description of reality should precede any speculation about it' (2002: 131). Candide's starry-eyed optimism derives from the philosophical teachings of his mentor Pangloss, whose discourse recalls Leibniz's. Pangloss's assurance proves indefensible as soon as his disciple gets a taste of the real world. Like others who have pointed out that this world cannot be the best, in the 'Poem on the Lisbon Disaster' and in *Candide* Voltaire wishes, in Neiman's words, 'to acknowledge the pain of others', even if he is well aware that very little can be done to alleviate it (136).

In addition to attacking Leibniz's optimism, Voltaire criticises his rationalism. In Neiman's summary, Voltaire thinks that in Leibniz's hands reason does not serve as an instrument of truth because it is 'inattentive to the claims of the world', and neither does it serve as an instrument of action because 'it is too weak to move anyone to anything' and 'leads us nowhere' (2002: 147). In sum, Voltaire's position is that Leibniz's rationalism 'can't explain the world, and … can't help us to navigate it' (147). A few decades later, Schopenhauer adopts a similar stance, attacking all philosophies that are reductively rationalistic and that do not prove their solidarity with sufferers. In his opinion true philosophers, like religious believers, are spurred by a sense of astonishment stemming from a 'consideration of the suffering and misery of life', often due to human '*wickedness*', and from the confrontation 'with death, … the finiteness of all existence, the vanity and fruitlessness of all effort' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 161, 171, 160). In his opinion, this is a panorama to which philosophy cannot turn a blind eye. As he remarks towards the end of his life: 'A philosophy in between the pages of which one

does not hear the tears, the weeping and gnashing of teeth and the terrible din of mutual universal murder is no philosophy' (cited in Safranski 1991: 2). In the following pages we shall see Schopenhauer's philosophical framework, which includes his conceptualisation of the world's essence as the source of all pain and his description of the remedies for suffering.

2.2. Schopenhauer's Model

In the first part of this study I pointed out that critics have interpreted Golding's novels as dominated by a series of recurring themes. On the one hand, there is the assumption that people's evil nature predisposes them to cause suffering, and the root of that behaviour can be found in egoism. The existence of saints is posited as undeniable but exceptional. For this reason, the most effective solution to human destructiveness is penal restraint. On the other hand, human beings experience things both rationally and non-rationally, and can appreciate both the physical and the metaphysical facets of existence. Reason is generally tied to the physical (whose grasp, according to some commentators, is usually tinged with egoism), and the suspension of reason is often tied to the metaphysical. Also, while some uses of language can only communicate rationally, and their contents are predominantly physical, there are other uses that work in a non-rational way and whose contents are mostly metaphysical.

The overview of Schopenhauer's philosophy that I am going to provide in this chapter shows how the German philosopher deals with all the aforementioned themes in a more nuanced way than Golding's critics; he establishes, for example, a clear-cut distinction between egoistic and malignant attitudes, the egocentric perspective from which they arise (as both the desire for one's well-being and the desire for the others' woe only makes sense if one establishes an egocentric differentiation among individuals), and the evil actions — actions that inflict suffering — in which these attitudes result. Moreover, when Schopenhauer discusses these issues he does not keep them separated, as Golding's critics normally do, but connects them with each other; he speaks, for example, of the origin of the state's penal system as an attempt to make the most of the majority's egoism.

My survey will put the emphasis on both the richness of Schopenhauer's conceptual equipment and the system it forms. It will do so in the belief that, since Schopenhauer touches on the same themes as Golding but in a more ordered way, the philosopher's definitions as well as the organisation and explanatory power of his model can help us better to understand both the novelist's diverse concerns and the way in which they are interrelated.

The cornerstone of Schopenhauer's philosophy is the opposition, adapted from Kantian philosophy, between the knowable world and the unknowable thing-in-itself. Owing to the a priori separation between what can and what cannot be known, a separation that he derives from his theory of the working of the intellect, Schopenhauer's philosophy presents all kinds of knowledge as incomplete. At the same time, however, Schopenhauer regards his metaphysics of the world's knowable essence — the essential will — as an improvement over Kant's theory.

Schopenhauer derives his conception of the world's inner essence from the individual acts of will that one can glimpse through inner observation. In his view, one of the most important differences between the realm of appearances (whose existence presupposes the presence of a conscious subject) and the world's kernel (the essential will whose existence is posited as independent from — indeed as preceding the apparition of — the subject) has to do with freedom. The essential will is posited as pre-existing consciousness, therefore as self-sufficient and free, while every object in the realm of appearances is dependent on something else (at its most basic, it is dependent on the subject in whose consciousness it appears). Moreover, the things and beings, including humans, that make up the realm of appearances are all rooted in the free kernel of the world, yet they cannot choose what to will.

The myriad beings that make up the world as appearance are not an effect but the manifestation of the essential will, the most general aspect of which is a free but purposeless and unquenchable craving. The essential will freely manifests itself in the creation and destruction of countless individuals. At the same time, the essential will is a will to life that manifests itself in the tendency of all living beings to self-preservation and reproduction.

The will to life avails itself of powerful intellectual tools, both non-rational and rational. I have already noted that Schopenhauer's theory expands the limits of consciousness beyond the purview of reason: for him, not only humans but also non-

rational animals are conscious beings. The difference is that, in the latter, the intellect's sole purpose is to keep the organism alive and to help it reproduce itself, something that it can do without the aid of reason and without going beyond the physical sphere. Only in humans, and for reasons that Schopenhauer does not make entirely clear, does the intellect function rationally and is capable of reaching metaphysical depths. Consequently, it is only humans that can know the essential will. This does not mean that humans are the only beings that will or the only beings whose essence is the will, but simply that they are the only ones that are aware of its existence.

The primary function of the intellect is to serve the will to life, thus securing the individual's well-being and facilitating its reproduction. The attempts of conscious beings, both human and non-human, to satisfy their needs and desires are linked to their egocentrism and their egoism: an animal generally sees everything from its unique point of view, and tends to seek its own well-being above everything else. The individual, human and non-human alike, not only tries to satisfy its appetites but, unwittingly, the essential will to life at whose disposal egocentrism and egoism are. As a result, beings enter into conflict and transform the world into the stage of a never-ending tragedy of cosmic dimensions. The only remedy for so much suffering is a non-egocentric perspective. Being linked to metaphysical consciousness, this recourse is available to humans alone. Thanks to it, a person's intellect can cease to serve the purposes of the essential will to life.

The sorts of non-egocentric consciousness to which Schopenhauer draws most attention for their liberating power are, on the one hand, aesthetic contemplation, and, on the other, the saintly visions that lead either to compassionate altruism or to a resigned withdrawal from worldly pursuits. These are both varieties of non-rational consciousness; for Schopenhauer rationality is always at the service of the essential will to life (see Young 2005: 34–5): individuals always use it as a means to avoid suffering and attain satisfaction (in the form of better material living conditions or of professional prestige, for example). Egocentrism is not only avoided through aesthetics and saintly vision, it is also transcended by death, a phenomenon that puts an end to all modes of consciousness. Though Schopenhauer is positive that the rejection of egocentrism, and with it of egoism, is possible at an individual level, he never fails to express his conviction that no comparable solution is feasible for society as a whole. What society needs is to take advantage of the egoism of the majority establishing

adequate moral and legal measures based on the threat to diminish the offender's well-being.

Like Schopenhauer's, Golding's works are concerned with the limits of knowledge, the characteristics of consciousness, the source of evil, and the origin and possible remedies for suffering. In the third part of this study, I shall try to show how the world view that transpires from Golding's writings can be clarified with the assistance of Schopenhauer's philosophy. As we shall see, Schopenhauer's thought can help us to appreciate the ways in which Golding's earlier novels explore the role of consciousness, first non-rational and then rational, in the production of a human world. Sometimes Golding contrasts, like Schopenhauer, the knowable world with another region that escapes cognition — a region where, as one of his essays suggests, other possible worlds may exist (and whose possible existence, despite being only a matter of faith, he announces with surprising optimism). In general, Golding thinks, again like Schopenhauer, that life is usually spent in a realm of appearances that half-conceal and half-reveal the essence behind them. He also likes to remind us that knowledge is always partial and usually concerned with egoistic interests; as a consequence, he suggests that the view that the individual has of the world is always in danger of either being reduced to solipsism or collapsing. Schopenhauer teaches us that it is the world's essence that has availed itself of consciousness, putting it at its service; Golding limits himself to mentioning the world's movement from unconscious existence towards consciousness. However, Schopenhauer's idea throws light on Golding's presentation of the realm of appearances as pervaded by dissatisfaction and conflict, in other words, by suffering. This does not mean that for Golding suffering cannot be alleviated in any way. At the individual level, the most important solutions that Golding contemplates are, as in Schopenhauer, aesthetic contemplation, compassionate altruism and death (resigned detachment, which is so important for Schopenhauer, seems to play no role in Golding's works). At the collective level, Golding earlier novels reject, like Schopenhauer's works, all utopian hopes, suggesting that the only solution is legal repression

Useful as Schopenhauer's philosophy may be to analyse Golding's metaphysical concerns, it does not serve to provide a complete explanation of this topic in all of his novels. At the very end of this study I shall try to show that Golding's later works contain important elements that go against the view of the world so far presented. To

begin with, there is a clear endorsement of free choice (understood as the individual's freedom to choose what to will). Moreover, there is an implicit criticism of the belief that the metaphysical building can be founded on the contents of inner observation. According to Golding, if we derive our notion of the world's essence from inner observation we run the risk of making the world resemble whatever we think we are like. Finally, Golding's later novels contemplate an utopian kind of social organisation where competition and repression have been replaced by collaboration.

2.2.1. Preliminary Considerations

Judging from some interpretations of Schopenhauer's philosophy, it would appear that he does little more than adopt Kant's distinction between the knowable phenomena and the unknowable noumenon or thing-in-itself, renaming the latter the essential will. Schopenhauer certainly adapts the Kantian distinction, referring to the former element as the knowable *world* and to the latter as the unknowable *thing-in-itself*. However, Schopenhauer separates from Kant in holding that the knowable world has two sides — an indivisible *essence* (the essential will) and countless *appearances* (the essential will's manifestations). Confusing the essential will and the thing-in-itself prevents a proper understanding of Schopenhauer's philosophy, though he himself often designates the former by the latter's name. The interpretation that I offer here is more accurate and tallies well with the interpretation of the world offered in Golding's writings as made up of a realm of appearances underlain by a single driving force. It also tallies well with Golding's recognition that the knowable world may not be all that there is.

According to a widespread interpretation of Schopenhauer's philosophy, when he adapts the Kantian distinction between the thing-in-itself and the phenomena, his aspiration is to improve on it by doing more than declaring the former's unfathomableness. Schopenhauer's suggestion, this interpretation goes on, is that we can get a pretty accurate idea of what the thing-in-itself might be through the inner observation of one's appetites and desires, that is, of the motions of one's individual will. When I observe myself from within, I cannot but realise that this is the window to the usually hidden thing-in-itself. Schopenhauer privileges the inner observation of

one's individual will because it is the only access to the essential will. Inner observation allows him to complete the picture of a world that otherwise could only be grasped from without. While the rest of the world can only be grasped from without (as a collection of physical surfaces without depth), I can grasp myself not only from without (as a physical body among other physical bodies) but also from within (as the inner working of my body).

The foregoing interpretation must be rejected because it does not take into account that in Schopenhauer the thing-in-itself is different from the essential will. The cause of the conventional identification between both can be found in Schopenhauer himself,who used the expression *thing-in-itself* with two meanings. One of the senses coincides with Kant's unfathomable dimension beyond human knowledge, but this seldom appears in Schopenhauer; the other sense deviates from Kant and denotes the essence of the world which, together with the countless appearances that are its manifestation, makes up the knowable world.

2.2.1.1.1. The Thing-in-Itself, the Essential Will and Appearances

The conventional interpretation passes over one essential point of Schopenhauer's philosophy: his recognition that the characterisation of the world's kernel as the essential will implies that this kernel is knowable, while the thing-in-itself is not. As Schopenhauer says, 'being-known of itself contradicts being-in-itself' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 198). In his opinion, the 'world as we know it does not belong to the true being of things-in-themselves' (1969a: 421).

By definition, the will — whether observed in its individuality, as it appears inside each of us, or conceptualised as essential and world-pervading — is *knowable*, therefore it cannot be equated with Kant's *unknowable* thing-in-itself. This being so, the influence of the conventional interpretation can only be explained because sometimes Schopenhauer does not limit himself to speaking of the essential will as 'the inner nature of the world' or 'its innermost being, its kernel'; he also asserts that 'the [essential] will is the *thing-in-itself*' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 31, 170). As Wicks's acknowledges, 'Schopenhauer … offers what appear to be conflicting remarks, often in the same text' (2008: 68).

Along with other scholars, Christopher Janaway correctly argues that the best way to solve this contradiction is by assuming that in Schopenhauer's writings 'there are two senses of "thing in itself" at play' (1999: 163). According to Janaway's reading, Schopenhauer normally employs the expression *thing-in-itself* in a different way from Kant: not in the sense of an absolute and ultimate reality 'lying implacably detached from the knowable world', but as 'another aspect of the knowable world' that is 'revealed … to philosophical reflection' (164). Janaway argues that this aspect is 'the *essence* of the world' (166). Schopenhauer himself calls it the undifferentiated and 'innermost essence, the kernel, of every particular thing and also of the whole' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 110). The essential will is the deepest that we can get in our knowledge of the world, and this is why Schopenhauer sometimes feels entitled to speak of the essential 'will as thing-in-itself' in this second, non-Kantian sense (1969a: 112).

In sum, Schopenhauer takes his cue from Kant and declares the thing-in-itself unknowable, distinguishing it from the knowable world. Unlike Kant, however, Schopenhauer holds that the knowable world has two sides — an indivisible *essence* (the essential will) and countless *appearances* (the essential will's manifestations). On this view, the realm of appearances acts as a 'veil' that half conceals and half reveals the essence behind them (Schopenhauer 1969a: 253). Despite the bold claims that Schopenhauer sometimes makes, the opposition between appearance and essence does not reproduce the contrast between Kant's unknowable *noumenon* and knowable *phenomena* (see Schopenhauer 1969a: 419).[3] That of the essential will is the most general metaphysical concept to which philosophical enquiry can arrive through the 'application of [rational] reflection' (110). As an arch-concept this *will* is intended to cover the whole of the known and knowable world. However, insofar as it does not cover the unknowable thing-it-itself, the concept of the essential will 'characterises *penultimate*, not ultimate reality' (Young 2005: 98).

Schopenhauer argues that it is only the inner observation of his individual will that can give the philosopher indirect access to the essential will: 'Here only, therefore, can

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3   Schopenhauer's opposition between the knowledge of the world's *essence* and of its *appearances* (*Erscheinungen*) has been traditionally obscured by the usual English (mis-)translation of *Erscheinung* as *phenomenon*. (The Payne translations that I follow are a good example.) Schopenhauer never uses *phenomenon* in a technical sense, nor does he use *noumenon* at all.

he hope to find the key to the riddle of the world, and obtain a clue to the inner nature of all things' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 179). From a philosophical point of view, grasping one's individual will is the privileged modality of consciousness because it is the only one whose object is within ourselves: 'the concept of *will* is of all possible concepts the only one that ... comes from within' (1969a: 112). The word *will* thus serves to 'express anything but an unknown *x*'; on the contrary, it serves to 'express that which, at any rate from *one* side [i.e. from within], is infinitely better known and more intimate than anything else' (1969b: 318). As a result of treating the individual acts of will as the inner manifestation of the single essence that underlies the entire world (an idea for which he finds confirmation in the behaviour of both lifeless matter and living beings), Schopenhauer reaches the conclusion that 'it must not be assumed that man is specifically, *toto genere*, and radically different from the rest of the beings and things in nature, but rather that he is different only in degree' (174).

This account of the essential will as the knowable kernel of the world does not mean that Schopenhauer finds no use for the unknowable thing-in-itself. In fact, he is well aware that cognition is by definition limited by the conditions that make it possible, that is, by the subject–object polarity and the intellect's forms: time, space, causality and, in the case of humans, rational abstraction. Therefore he maintains that beyond the world that we know and that his philosophy seeks to describe lies an unfathomable dimension about which no legitimate knowledge can be acquired, and which therefore remains out of philosophy's reach. I shall only speak of the thing-in-itself when I refer to this latter dimension.[4]

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4   According to Schopenhauer, no mode of consciousness can ever shed all the forms that conceal the thing-in-itself. During inward observation two of these forms are still present: the polarity between the conscious subject and the object, and the additional form of time. Schopenhauer writes: 'even the inward observation we have of our own will still does not by any means furnish an exhaustive and adequate knowledge of the thing-in-itself. It ... falls apart into subject and object'; thus 'there still remains the form of *time*, as well as that of being known and of knowing in general', and therefore 'in this inner knowledge the thing-in-itself has indeed to a great extent cast off its veils, but still does not appear quite naked' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 196–7). As is happens, grasping one's individual will is not the modality of consciousness that comes under the fewest veils. This merit is allotted to aesthetic contemplation, to which only the division into subject and object applies (in comparison with inner observation, the only shortcoming of aesthetic contemplation is that its focus is without not within).

2.2.1.1.2. Representation, Knowledge and Explanation

So far I have spoken of the limits of legitimate knowledge without saying what this knowledge consists in. In this section I shall try to distinguish this notion from those of conscious representation and valid explanation. In the next section, I shall try to elucidate the exact relationship between representation and the essential will.

Schopenhauer normally uses the terms *representation* (*Vorstellung*), *consciousness* and *knowledge* without spelling out the differences between them. He frequently employs all three terms interchangeably, but this is only because most of what he says has to do not with what humans can be conscious of, in general, but just with what can be known. It is clear that *representation* and *consciousness* can be used as synonyms. Schopenhauer writes: 'the concept of consciousness coincides with that of representation in general, of whatever kind it may be', that is, rational as well as non-rational (1969a: 51). According to Schopenhauer, conscious representation is the product of the mind or intellect, which is itself the function of the brain. However, the scope of the expression *conscious representation* is wider than that of legitimate *knowledge*: thanks to their unique imaginative powers, human beings can represent — be conscious of — states of affairs that do not correspond to the facts of the knowable world (this is what happens, for example, when a person envisages the divinity to be a bearded old man).

The term *knowledge*, for its part, has a wider scope than *explanation*, of which Schopenhauer admits three different types: causal, mathematical (geometrical or arithmetic) and logical explanation (see Schopenhauer 1969a: 463). In Schopenhauer's opinion the knowable world contains things that are inexplicable. Legitimate knowledge is a belief resting on good grounds, not to be confused with mere hopes or guesses. Now what can be known includes not only the things that are amenable to explanation, but also those things that are presupposed by that explanation, and — in Schopenhauer's view — the one thing that can serve to draw all the relations between the others, that is, to offer a unifying account of them. Indeed, Schopenhauer acknowledges that his own philosophy, which aspires to throw light on a world that strikes him as mysterious, includes two things that are 'absolutely inexplicable' (1969a: 81): the very criteria by which he judges something to be a valid explanation and the essential will that he locates at the centre of the world. These two things he can describe

but not explain. Even so, he believes that they are part and parcel of the knowable world, while all other things that cannot be explained belong in the unknowable thing-in-itself.

2.2.1.1.3. The Essential Will and Representation

Schopenhauer believes, in Brian Magee's words, that thanks to the concept of the essential will his philosophy 'makes ... manifestly coherent sense of the enigma of the world in all its details and through all their interrelationships', and that, therefore, 'it is reasonable to accept and unreasonable not to accept' the unifying account that ensues, even if it is impossible to explain all of its elements in a causal, mathematical or logical way (1997: 38, 37). The fact that the essential will can be known means that it is some kind of representation; Schopenhauer himself writes that the essential will must be 'treated as a special class of representations' (1969a: 102).

This explanation obscures the opposition between *will* and *representation* that figures in the very title of his main work, *The World as Will and Representation*; but this distinction only makes sense because Schopenhauer often limits the term *representation* to the essential will's manifestations, that is, to everything that can be known save the essential will. This use of *representation* is inconsistent with the rest of Schopenhauer's model, and therefore it is preferable to treat the term as a perfect synonym for *consciousness*. In the light of this use of *representation*, and of the previous clarification of the terms *will* and *world*, a plausible rendering of the title *The World as Will and Representation* would be: the knowable world as the essential will and its manifestations (see Schopenhauer 1969a: 119).

2.2.2. Varieties of Consciousness and Knowledge of the World

We have just seen that, in order to have a correct understanding of Schopenhauer's thought, it is necessary to establish a preliminary distinction between the unknowable thing-in-itself and the knowable world. We have also seen that both the essential will (the knowable kernel of the world) and its manifestations (the world as appearance)

belong to the field of representation. Having established this, let us now examine the characteristics of representation in more detail.

Like the critical examinations of Golding's works that I surveyed in the first part of this study, Schopenhauer's analysis of representation highlights the existence of several modes of awareness. The first step that he takes in the exposition of his philosophy is to separate the kinds of conscious representation that are non-rational (which he calls *feelings*) from those that are rational (*concepts*), and those that have a physical focus from those whose focus is metaphysical. In addition, he also mentions the existence of imaginative kinds of representation. Though he fails to develop his casual remarks about the imagination into a full-fledged theory, what he says is suggestive enough to merit some consideration.

After discussing the features of the world's apparition, Schopenhauer examines the institutionalised descriptions of the world that humans build from rational concepts. These conceptions are classified according to the characteristics of their objects: either physical (as in history and science) or metaphysical (as in art, religion and philosophy). Schopenhauer gives metaphysical approaches, especially those that make reference to the essential will (i.e. religion and philosophy), precedence over physical approaches. The characterisation of these institutions of knowledge is completed by a consideration of their proper effects: while history, science and philosophy aspire to produce a rational response in the form of concepts, art and religion aspire to produce a non-rational response in the form of feelings. (Of course, nothing prevents these descriptions from having other subsidiary effects.) Given that religion and philosophy have the same object, the concept of the essential will, they are only distinguished from each other by the effect that they intend to achieve: that of religion is non-rational, while that of philosophy is rational.

On the whole, the image that transpires from Schopenhauer's account of representation is not one of wholesale irrationalism, as is often claimed. It is true that he suggests that rationality depends on and coexists with non-rational kinds of knowledge; but it is equally true, as we shall see, that he acknowledges the important part that rational concepts play in social life, and that he defends the philosophical appeal to reason against religious dogma.

As regards Golding's work, Schopenhauer's explanation of the transition from feelings to concepts may illuminate, in the first place, the way in which a recognisable

human world emerges in *Lord of the Flies* and in *Pincher Martin*; my analysis will put the accent on the movement from a non-rational to a rational view of the world at the beginning of both narratives. Secondly, Schopenhauer's references to the imagination may throw light on the creation of a private world by the main character of *Pincher Martin*. Thirdly, Schopenhauer's account of consciousness may explain the ways in which time and space are grasped respectively in *Free Fall* and the Sea Trilogy (a sequence also known as *To the Ends of the Earth* which comprises the novels: *Rites of Passage*, 1980; *Close Quarters*, 1987; *Fire Down Below*, 1988). Fourthly, his distinction between physical and metaphysical cognition may be relevant to my analysis of the conflict between Nick Shales and Rowena Pringle in *Free Fall* and between Dean Jocelin and Roger Mason in *The Spire*, and of the opposition between physical and metaphysical representation as it appears in such later works as *Darkness Visible*, *The Paper Men* and the essay 'Utopias and Antiutopias'. Finally, Schopenhauer's classification of the institutionalised descriptions of the world may help us to understand Golding's interventions on the two cultures debate and his lifelong defence of the metaphysical import of the arts.

2.2.2.1. Human Consciousness and the Apparition of the World

In Schopenhauer's conception, conscious representation does not mean awareness of previously existing objects. The sphere of representation, including the knowable world, makes its appearance only with the first conscious being: 'the world … begins only with the opening of the first eye, and without this medium … it cannot be, and hence before this it did not exist' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 30, 31). The active role of the conscious subject in the apparition of the world and the objects that make it up does not mean that the subject has priority over the object: both are mutually dependent.

2.2.2.1.1. From Non-Rational Feelings to Rational Concepts

Schopenhauer identifies a series of factors that intervene in representation. First, for there to be consciousness of an object there has to be a conscious subject. Every

representation 'is only object in relation to the subject' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 3). When we speak about an object, he adds, we must bear in mind that it 'exists only for the subject' (5). Before the emergence of subjectivity there are no objects. This should not mislead us into thinking that the conscious subject precedes the emergence of the object. Neither subject nor object can exist without the other: 'the Object is at once posited with the Subject (for the word itself would otherwise have no meaning), and conversely, ... the Subject is at once posited with the Object' (1903: 167). The most basic condition of representation is therefore the polarity that separates the representing subject and the represented object, this being 'that form under which alone any representation ... is generally possible and conceivable' (1969a: 3). The same happens with knowledge proper: 'knowing requires a knower and a known' (1969b: 202), because in the field of knowledge, as in the field of representation as a whole, 'being the Subject means exactly as much as having an Object, and being an Object means the same thing as being known by the Subject' (1903: 167).

At this stage, neither the subject nor the object have yet been individuated. For this reason Schopenhauer refers to both as universal. However, it must be borne in mind that representation is only possible because the subject has a mind. For Schopenhauer, as for Kant, the mind has a series of faculties, and when they are operative — as is usually the case, according to Schopenhauer — each of them imposes a different form on the represented object. It is by virtue of these forms that the object becomes individuated in the subject's mind. On this view, the conscious subject and the object are not only interdependent but strictly correlative. Therefore, the characteristics of the represented object are in exact correspondence with the subject's modes of representation, and vice versa. Speaking of knowledge proper, Schopenhauer states that 'when an Object is assumed as being determined *in any particular way*, ... we also assume that the Subject *knows precisely in that particular way*' (Schopenhauer 1903: 167). This is because 'as the object in general exists only for the subject as the representation thereof, so does every special class of representations exist only for an equally special disposition in the subject, which is called a faculty' of the intellect (1969a: 11). In other words, that which is conscious (and the way in which it is conscious) is the 'subjective correlative' of the object (11), and that which one is conscious of (and the way in which one is conscious of it) is the objective correlative of the subject (this idea of correlation is criticised by Young 2005: 146–7). The following

table, which condenses the contents of the rest of this and the next section, gives a preview of Schopenhauer's treatment of the intellectual faculties and the objects associated with them:[5]

non-rational representation (feelings)						rational representation (concepts)	
non-rational feelings (insight) relying on the universal subject-object division	forms of the intellect (introducing individuation)	(time + space) + causality		external perception of matter	physical feelings	+ abstraction	physical rational concepts
		sensations	(time) + space				
			+ time	inner observation of one's individual will in the form of bodily motions (willed action and affects)	metaphysical feelings	+ abstraction	metaphysical rational concepts
		aesthetic contemplation					

Table 1: Main Types of Non-Rational and Rational Representation in Schopenhauer

Once the subject–object polarity has been established, the subject's inner sensibility applies the form of time to the object, thus starting its individuation. Having placed the object in time, the subject's outer sensibility can apply the form of space to it. After placing the object in time and in space, the subject's understanding can apply the form of causality to it, thus completing its individuation. Time, space and causality are, therefore, the forms which separate one object from another by placing them in a

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5   Owing of the difficulties to accommodate them in a suitable place, the table does not include three kinds of representation whose importance Schopenhauer insists on (and whose relevance for Golding cannot be ignored), but which he fails to associate with the forms of the intellect: the saint's vision and compassion, and imaginative representation. Additionally, one must bear in mind that the possibility of sensation in time and space but without the intervention of causality is only a theoretical possibility; in practice Schopenhauer always links space to causality. As regards *insight*, Schopenhauer's use of the term strikes me as easier to understand than Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor's. I also find Schopenhauer's use of *insight* as less problematic than Clements's use of *mysticism* with the same meaning, that is, to refer to the grasp of the object prior to the formation of concepts.

specific temporal, spatial and causal location. The result is 'a plurality of coexistent and successive things' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 113).

Since all cognition starts with the division of the subject from the object, and all minds, whether human or not, apply the three forms of the intellect — time, space and causality — in the same way, the knowable world that arises from these forms is accessible to and shared by all conscious beings. This does not mean that human cognition is exactly the same as that of other species. Schopenhauer argues that non-human animals can only grasp objects affected by time, space and causality. In comparison, human beings have more types of non-rational representations (feelings) than other animals and they are the only beings that have rational representations (concepts).

Schopenhauer defines feelings as mental 'pictures or images' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 72). In his model, the notion of feeling occupies an 'immeasurably wide sphere' capable of accommodating 'the most varied, indeed the most hostile, elements' (1969a: 52). A feeling is not only an emotion, as in the ordinary use of the term, but anything 'present in consciousness that is *not a concept*', that is, any non-rational representation (51). This definition covers non only feelings that are common to all animals, like the 'feeling of sensual pleasure, ... bodily feeling such as touch, pain, feeling for colours, for sounds ... [and the] feeling of ... weakness, health', but also feelings that are peculiar to humans, like 'religious feeling, ... moral feeling, ... aesthetic feeling, ... and so on' (52).

The most basic feeling in human beings has an aesthetic nature, and involves the representation of an object without the intervention of any of the intellect's forms, that is, without being discriminated or individualised in any spatial, temporal, causal or abstract manner. Schopenhauer considers that this state of consciousness reveals the universal dimension of the object, its beauty, and regards both the state and the universal dimension revealed by it as peculiar to the aesthetic field.

When humans add the intellectual form of time to the subject–object opposition, they focus on the inner workings of their own body. This is what Schopenhauer calls '*inner* apprehension' or 'inward observation' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 36, 196). When looking inside, the subject apprehends the succession of 'the individual acts of will' (2000b: 46). The object that one grasps is the individual will, the inner working of one's body. For Schopenhauer, therefore, the individual will comprises not only 'willed action or behaviour' (Magee 1997: 131), but also — and this is the philosopher's peculiar

extension of willing beyond its usual purview — the 'movements of the human heart' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 451), that is, 'all affects and passions' (2009: 38). The latter amount 'in all cases' to 'bodily sensations' of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, of pleasure and displeasure, 'and all those countless sensations that lie between these two extremes', which enter consciousness as something in accordance with one's desires or as something contrary to them (38–9).[6]

As regards representations in space, humans — like all other conscious animals — have perceptions. In perception the understanding imparts to the external objects 'extension, form, impenetrability, mobility, and so on, in short, all that can be represented … only by means of time, space, and causality' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 20).

The aesthetic contemplation of the object, inner observation and perception are all kinds of non-rational representation or feeling, whose subjective pole is the non-rational subject. When humans give those feelings an abstract shape, they transform them into rational representations or concepts, whose combination gives rise to logical propositions. Schopenhauer defines concepts as abstract 'representations of representations' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 40). They are a 'quite special class of general, non-perceptible representations' (518). These definitions are rather vague, and Schopenhauer's whole account of concepts has been described as 'hopeless' (Young 2005: 44, 49); but for our purposes here it will suffice to remember that the examples that Schopenhauer gives of conceptual constructs include the discursive contents of linguistic and scientific representation.

Concepts are formed, through a process of rational abstraction, upon the concrete feelings that the non-rational intellect supplies: 'The *concept* … is the unity … produced out of plurality by means of abstraction through our faculty of reason' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 235). Thus seen, conceptualisation can be described as a rational reduction of the complex to the simple. Here lie many of its strong and weak points.

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6   What one's inwardly contemplated will does not comprise is what Kant calls the power of free choice (*Willkür*). Since this power is precisely what Western thought has usually identified as the defining trait of the faculty of volition, it is difficult to understand why Schopenhauer refers to his inner being as *will*, and not as *force* or *energy*, if not to distance himself from the prevailing understanding of those terms in the natural sciences, and to underline that the individual will is a manifestation of the essential will.

For Schopenhauer feelings are more important than concepts, and this for several reasons. To begin with, inner observation relies on this kind of representation, and it is this state of consciousness that gives us access to the will which, in its most general dimension, Schopenhauer identifies with the world's innermost kernel. Moreover, conceptual representations are unable to add new content to the non-conceptual representations from which they derive: 'the abstract representation ... has all content and meaning only through its relation to the representation of [such kinds of feeling as] perception, without which it would be worthless and empty' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 95). The concept is crippled by its poverty of detail, which contrasts with the wealth of concrete features afforded by feelings: 'the concept ... never descends to the particular case, and its universality and rigid definiteness can never accurately apply to reality's fine shades of difference and its innumerable modifications' (61). The abstract content of concepts is related to concrete feeling 'as a mosaic is to a picture', or as 'as the shadow is to real objects' (57, 481–2).

Schopenhauer also defends the prevalence of feeling over conceptual demonstration — 'a directly established truth is ... preferable to a truth established by a proof' — and reverses the empirical claim that only what has been proven is entirely true: 'every proof or demonstration requires an undemonstrated truth' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 64). Conceptual knowledge 'is merely knowing in the abstract what everyone knows in the concrete' (45). The only thing that reason can do is to confirm the information conveyed by the non-rational intellect through feelings. For this reason, he concludes, making a use of the term *insight* that I shall adopt, only feeling 'imparts *insight* proper' (1969b: 77). Last, but not least, feelings prevail over concepts in both the aesthetic and the moral fields, where the things that really matter are the feeling of the aesthetic dimension of the object (e.g. of the work of art), and the malignant and compassionate feelings that prompt a person to act. Schopenhauer is adamant that 'the mere concept is as unfruitful for genuine virtue as it is for genuine art' (1969a: 376). It would 'be just as foolish to expect that our moral systems ... would create virtuous, noble, and holy men, as that our aesthetics would produce poets, painters' who can appreciate and transmit the aesthetic dimension of objects (271).

If abstract concepts can be judged too schematic in comparison with feelings, their simplicity can be an advantage. Owing to their lack of detail they are easier to communicate and store, in one's mind as well as externally. Moreover, the truths that

are established through the combination of concepts are 'perfectly safe' and 'valid once for all' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 46, 45). Because they are communicable, storable and safe, concepts have, for human beings living together, considerable advantages. Only thanks to concepts are humans capable of cooperation, planned action and sustained enquiry. What explains the existence of social institutions that preserve past customs, regulate present affairs and make arrangements for the future is therefore the power to have, store and exchange rational thoughts. Actually, Schopenhauer argues that 'Past and future are added only in the case of man, and indeed only in the concept; they are known *in abstracto*' (1969b: 572). Non-rational animals 'live in the present alone'; the human being, besides living in the present, 'lives at the same time in the future and the past' (1969a: 36). Because they make possible to go beyond one's immediate experience, and thus to be aware of past mistakes and to prepare for the future (even after one's death), the use of concepts distinguishes man from other animals, 'and gives him the mastery of the earth' (1969b: 518).

Despite their differences in other respects, most feelings and concepts share one fundamental disadvantage. Schopenhauer's theory presents all kinds of knowledge, whether rational or non-rational, as incomplete. Moreover, feelings and concepts often share another feature: they tend to be self-centred. In order to understand this characteristic, it will be necessary to establish another distinction, now between those kinds of representation that are physical (and egocentric) and those that are metaphysical.

2.2.2.1.2. From Physical to Metaphysical Consciousness

Apart from the distinction between non-rational feelings and rational concepts, Schopenhauer's theory of consciousness establishes a different distinction between physical and metaphysical representation. For Schopenhauer, physical representation includes perceptual feelings and the concepts derived therefrom. The imposition of causality in perception completes the individuation of external objects. As regards metaphysical representation, it includes all kinds of non-perceptual feelings — among them, that of one's individual will in time, that of the aesthetic dimension of the object, and that of compassion (the empathy with the other's pain that sometimes results from

the vision of the essential unity of the world) — together with the concepts built on them. Accordingly, Schopenhauer divides his metaphysics into three parts: 'Metaphysics of Nature' (i.e. metaphysics 'in the narrower sense'), 'Metaphysics of the Beautiful' (i.e. aesthetics), 'Metaphysics of Morals' (Schopenhauer 2000b: 18–9).

Schopenhauer believes, as Young explains, that for both humans and non-human animals, 'the entire rich fabric or the world of [physical] objects is constructed … by the understanding, entirely without the aid of concepts' (2005: 39). Let us take a cat, for instance: it is capable of gauging the distance to the mouse, the time that it would take to approach and capture the prey, and the effects that those actions would have. Schopenhauer himself gives a different example: an experienced billiard-player is aware 'of the laws of impact of elastic bodies on one another, merely in the understanding, merely for … perception, and with this he manages perfectly', without having 'a … rational knowledge of those laws … in the abstract' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 56). As his example indicates, Schopenhauer believes that rationality does not come into play *unless* a person reflects on what he or she feels (which is something that a cat, for instance, cannot do).[7]

By virtue of the necessary correlation between the subject and the object, when physical objects are individualised by the imposition of causality, the subject in whose consciousness they appear is also individualised. Insofar as it is conditioned by the individual's position in time, in space and in the chain of causes and effects, the representation of physical objects is always an egocentric kind of representation. The cat perceives the mouse in relation to the spatial, temporal and causal position that the

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7   Schopenhauer further believes that most of those feelings are of physical things. Together, these beliefs would explain why some scholars have referred to physical perception as *ordinary* or *everyday* consciousness (e.g. Young 2005: 107–8). Given the amount of time that people spend reflecting on their feelings, and the way in which specialised concepts — for example from science — have increasingly impinged on their views of the world, it is arguable, to say the least, whether the term *ordinary* is the one that best fits unaided physical perception. Let us recall that Clements calls this perception *mystical*, which, leaving aside the questionable accuracy of the adjective, is a good indication of its extraordinary character. At most, it could be said that ordinary consciousness comprises physical perception together with those concepts that are built on them and do not proceed directly from any specialised field of knowledge. This is what Magee must mean when he speaks — making another unfortunate choice of terms — of *commonsense* consciousness (1997: 167).

cat itself occupies. The same goes for the billiard player and any other sentient being. Schopenhauer believes that during physical perception I establish a complete separation among all the individual things and beings, which I perceive from my unique perspective. Young explains that during physical perception I become 'the focal point' of the world: 'all lines of direction, as it were, radiate out from myself' (2005: 108–9). Thus I am that 'to which all others are related as the world's "centre"' (111).

Unlike physical representation, metaphysical representation is non-egocentric. However, not all kinds of metaphysical representation can escape individualisation to the same degree. As far as the apprehension of the inner will in time is concerned, for example, the will that I grasp as the inner dimension of my body is not the essential will but my individual will as it presents itself at the moment of observation. This inner observation amounts to self-conscious representation. This is 'the fullest consciousness', because it allows us to have a look inside ourselves and to recognise ourselves as willing creatures (Schopenhauer 1969a: 309). This is not only the first step towards seeing ourselves as manifestations of the essential will; it is also the moment when the essential will that manifests itself in us begins to become '*conscious of itself*' (1969b: 195).[8]

In order to get a full grasp of Schopenhauer's explanation of self-consciousness, it is necessary to bear in mind that for him, at the level of feeling, the conscious subject and the object cannot be identical, therefore inner observation involves the notion of oneself as object. This principle prevents Schopenhauer from explaining self-consciousness in the same manner as, for example, René Descartes does, in other words, as the thinking subject's specular self-apprehension. In terms of knowledge, for Schopenhauer 'there can be … no knower without something different from this that is known' (1969b: 202). The knowing subject is 'that which knows wherever there is knowledge' but that 'is never known' to itself through feeling (1969a: 5, 20). Since the conscious subject cannot apprehend itself directly, Schopenhauer believes that 'as the

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8   Alex Neill claims that 'in Schopenhauer's view the [world-]Will is striving to make itself increasingly visible to itself' (2009: 36). He concedes that this reading of Schopenhauer's metaphysics might sound 'thoroughly (and as he would have seen it, horribly) Hegelian' (35), but is confident that the emphasis on the world-will's lack of specific purpose suffices to prevent this charge. This means that the tendency of the world-will towards increasing visibility should not be seen as exclusive or even predominant.

known in self-consciousness we find exclusively the will' (1969b: 202). Even so, the subject must be presupposed as the basis of all consciousness and thus 'can be known … indirectly, through [rational] reflection' (278).

For Schopenhauer the subject of consciousness is not exactly the same as the *I*. As he understands it, the word *I* designates the conjunction of the mind and of the body — i.e. of the subject of consciousness and the individual will — as felt from inside. Inner observation makes it possible for human beings to think of themselves as *I*. The self-conscious subject not only feels the individual will in time; it also realises its own connection with that individual will. Thus the subject gives way to 'the I' only when the former 'apprehends itself as identical with … what wills' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 491, 277). Schopenhauer regards this conjunction between consciousness and will as 'the miracle' par excellence, and acknowledges that it is impossible to explain (1969a: 102, 251). In recognising this conjunction, he breaks with a long tradition that sees the *I* as indivisible and original.

Inner observation does away with causality and time, therefore it is not a type of egocentric consciousness (in the precise sense in which I am using the term). In this respect at least, it is like aesthetic contemplation, which also does away with time. Young says that 'In the moment of aesthetic entrancement … the usual "egocentricity" of consciousness disappears. The [egocentric] "I" vanishes from the scene' (2005: 111).[9] This statement can be applied to all kinds of metaphysical consciousness: insofar as they break with egocentric atomisation, they can be independent of the aspiration to satisfy one's individual desires. The subject's movement away from egocentrism and towards universality has enormous implications for Schopenhauer's theory of the liberation from suffering, which he discusses in connection with art and morality.

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9   The terminological distinction between the *self-conscious I* and the *egocentric I* or *ego*, which I have introduced to separate the individual subjects of consciousness that direct their attention inside from those that direct it outside, is not present in neither Schopenhauer nor Young (the latter of whom nevertheless introduces, as we have seen, a useful distinction between *cognitive egocentrism* and *moral egoism*).

2.2.2.1.3. Unexplained Varieties of Consciousness: The Saint's Vision and Compassion; Imaginative Representation

Before proceeding to the artistic, historical, scientific, religious and philosophical descriptions of the world that derive from the kinds of consciousness so far examined, it is worth pausing for a moment on the role that Schopenhauer allots to other kinds of representation whose origin and connection with the subject's intellect he does not explain. These are saintly vision, the compassion that may result from it and imaginative representation.

We have seen that the key to Schopenhauer's metaphysics of nature is the inner feeling of one's individual will and the philosophical conceptualisation of that individual will as the essential will. Additionally, the essential will can be spontaneously grasped as the kernel of the world through what Schopenhauer calls a saintly vision of external reality. Likewise, the compassion that the saint may feel, and which Schopenhauer places at the centre of his metaphysics of morals, results from the spontaneous realisation that, as all the lifeless objects and living beings in the world share the same essence, the neighbour's suffering his not alien to me. Though saintly vision and compassion occupy prominent positions within Schopenhauer's philosophy, he never specifies their exact relation to the theory of the intellectual faculties. The only thing that is clear is that they are non-egocentric kinds of representation, because they do away with the complete separation among individual things and beings.

As regards imaginative representations, Schopenhauer calls them 'pictures' of absent objects, thus implying that they are non-rational (Schopenhauer 1969a: 39). Apart from this and other passing comments, however, he does not expound a complete theory of the imagination. This is surprising, because Schopenhauer's philosophical model appears in an era that values the imagination more than ever before. What is clear is that for him the imagination functions differently in humans and in non-rational animals. In the latter, its only purpose is to reproduce past perceptions — perceptions and memories being the only kinds of representation that non-rational minds can handle — but without indicating that these reproductions are recollections *of the past*. Persons can also use the imaginative in a reproductive manner. But if they realise that their memories refer to something that is not happening now, it is because they can relate them to the abstract concept of the past. Furthermore, only man can use

his imagination productively to anticipate what may happen in the future, to conjure up alternative states of affairs, and to think of what lies outside the knowable world. Non-rational animals are only allowed to 'satisfy the need of the moment'; but man 'provides by the most ingenious preparations for his future, nay, even for times that he cannot live to see' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 36). Thanks to the productive imagination, a man can therefore 'extend his horizon far beyond the reality of his personal experience' (186).

Though Schopenhauer is not explicit about this, it is reasonable to suppose that, if the only intellectual difference between humans and other animals is the possession of reason, then there must be some relationship between rationality and the ability to grasp objects in other ways than as physical perceptions. This applies not only to the productive imagination but to aesthetic contemplation, inner observation, and the saint's vision and compassion. For some reason they are only possible when rationality is present. However, we must not forget that the activity of the productive imagination, aesthetic contemplation, inner observation, and the saint's vision and compassion always result in feeling, not in rational concepts. For Schopenhauer aesthetic contemplation, for example, cannot have as its object a rational concept: while the use of concepts is always at the service of the essential will, that is, always subordinate to the satisfaction of one's desires, the main value of aesthetic contemplation lies in setting the observer free from the servitude of those desires. These are important points to which I shall return after examining the ways in which people describe the world.

2.2.2.2. Institutions of Knowledge and the Superiority of Metaphysical Descriptions of the World

The necessary incompleteness or partiality of all consciousness, together with the existence of several kinds of representation, open the door to the existence of more than one way of describing and making sense of the world. Schopenhauer acknowledges this plurality of approaches, some of which have become institutionalised in the course of time. Five of these institutions of knowledge receive considerable attention on his part: history, science, art, religion and philosophy. Though Schopenhauer never explicitly makes the point, it is reasonable to assume that all of these approaches use rational concepts as their vehicle. Regardless of this

common feature, the list can be hierarchically arranged according to the merits that Schopenhauer discerns in each approach. He lends more importance to art, religion and philosophy (whose main part he identifies as the metaphysics of nature) than to history and science, because the former focus on metaphysical objects and may even deal with the essential, imperishable side of the world, while the latter describe physical particulars alone. Moreover, he asserts that religion and philosophy — the approaches that refer to the essential will — are superior to art. This is because art remains confined to the representation of the external dimension of things (their aesthetic side), while religion and philosophy follow the inner path, the only one that enables us to grasp the kernel of the world and to describe it in its entirety. Apart from their object, there is another variable that we need to bear in mind to understand Schopenhauer's characterisation of these approaches and their relevance for Golding: their intended effect upon the receiver. History, science and philosophy appeal mostly to the audience's rational intellect, thus they give rise to concepts; by contrast, art and religion appeal more to the non-rational intellect and excite the audience's feelings. As it is, the bottom of Schopenhauer's hierarchy is occupied by history and science, with art in the middle, and religion and philosophy at the top. The following table repeats Table 1, which includes the main varieties of representation, and incorporates the approaches that carry out institutionalised description of the world:

The knowable world's apparition								The knowable world's description	
non-rational representation (feelings)						rational representation (concepts)		(institutionalised approaches)	
non-rational feelings (insight) relying on the universal subject-object division	forms of the intellect (introducing individuation)		(time + space) + causality	external perception of matter	physical feelings	+ abstraction	physical rational concepts	history and science	approaches that give rise to rational concepts
		sensations	(time) + space						
			+ time	inner observation of one's individual will in the form of bodily motions (willed action and affects)	metaphysical feelings	+ abstraction	metaphysical rational concepts	philosophy (metaphysics of nature)	an approach that gives rise to rational concepts (including that of the **ESSENTIAL WILL**)
								religion	an approach that gives rise to non-rational feelings (including that of the **ESSENTIAL WILL**)
		aesthetic contemplation			metaphysical feelings	+ abstraction	metaphysical rational concepts	art	an approach that gives rise to non-rational feelings

Table 2: The Apparition and Description of the Knowable World in Schopenhauer

Some comments about the contents of the table are in order. Owing of the difficulties to accommodate them in a suitable place, the table does not contain the two branches of philosophical metaphysics that accompany the metaphysics of nature: aesthetic metaphysics, whose focus is on the aesthetic experience, whether artistic or not (and which, unlike art, elicits rational concepts from the audience), and moral metaphysics, which hinges upon the agent's desires. Of course, Schopenhauer's understanding of philosophy as an all-encompassing form of enquiry means that all the branches of philosophy spring from a common trunk — natural metaphysics — whose discovery of the essential will is then applied to other areas. Thus, once he has put forward the notion of the inner kernel of the world, Schopenhauer uses it to throw light on the findings of the physical sciences, to criticise the view of history as a teleologial process, to redefine the principles of morals, to separate good religions – those that put the accent on suffering — from bad religions, and to explain what are the desires that we become oblivious of when we contemplate the aesthetic dimension of objects.

2.2.2.2.1. The Physical Approaches of History and Science: Partial Descriptions of the World

According to Schopenhauer's most habitual account of the relations between history and science, both start from physical feelings and appeal to reason. Though he argues that both aim at conceptual knowledge, they differ in the generality of their concepts. In his opinion, scientists work by subsuming the physical particulars with which they work into ever wider concepts, taking them to the highest possible level of generality, while historians simply coordinate the events of the past and give them a narrative shape. As a mode of enquiry, history is inferior to science: whereas history concentrates on unrepeatable singularities, science centres on constantly appearing regularities. Schopenhauer writes that the 'legitimate working' of reason 'always forms a higher generic concept by placing several specific concepts side by side'; thus, 'by omitting their differences and retaining the qualities in which they agree', science 'obtains the generic concept that includes them all, but contains less' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 491). This subordinating procedure also appears in philosophy, though there the triggering feeling is metaphysical rather than physical.

Schopenhauer sometimes states that history is the collective equivalent of individual self-consciousness, thus implying that it also deals with the manifestation of the will in time (obviously, on a longer temporal scale than in the case of inner observation). For Schopenhauer, historians deal with collective behaviour and its motives. Therefore, he thinks that for historians 'the inner nature, the significance of phenomena [i.e. appearances], the kernel of all those shells, can never be entirely lost' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 245). After acknowledging that historians can get some grasp of the inner processes of history, Schopenhauer places historiography side by side with moral philosophy: both deal with the motives behind the actions, from a collective and individual point of view respectively. From this he concludes that 'Only through history does a nation become completely conscious of itself. Accordingly, history is to be regarded as the … self-consciousness of the human race' (1969b: 445). If this is the case, then it could be argued that there is a metaphysical aspect to historiography, and that it therefore affords a deeper kind of knowledge than science. This interpretation may be pertinent in connection with Golding's statement that education should put less emphasis on science than on such other disciplines as art, philosophy and history.

Despite relying on conceptual subordination, science remains within the confines of physical representation.[10] Schopenhauer does not share the scorn for science that transpires in the works of many of his contemporaries, and he thinks that science must provide philosophy with reliable data about physical events. But neither does he believe that scientific reflection is capable of solving the riddle of world. Science, like physical perception (from which it derives, according to Schopenhauer), can only show 'the relation of one representation to another' within the physical realm, and can never get to 'the inmost nature of the world' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 28). As Magee points out, for Schopenhauer the only difference with physical perception is that scientific knowledge is 'more critically self-aware and raised to the level of generality' (Magee 1997: 167). This means that in Schopenhauer's conception there is no real break, no discontinuity, between physical perception and the scientific description of the world: like the former, science remains tied to causality and therefore oblivious of the metaphysical side of the world. The explanation of physical particulars that it provides always ends when it can find no more causes, and therefore no more physical reasons why something happens. Scientific explanation comes to a halt precisely at the point where the true essence of the world is to be found. Therefore, scientific explanation 'is unable to stand on its own feet', and must be supplemented by the metaphysical discoveries made by other approaches (Schopenhauer 1969b: 172).

2.2.2.2.2. The Metaphysical Approaches of Art, Religion and Philosophy: Towards a Total Description of the World

Art, religion and philosophy grant access to the realm beyond causality. Unlike science, they do not 'consider … the why, and the whither in things, but simply and solely the what' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 178). By addressing this latter question, art, religion and philosophy provide a more accurate description of the world and of humankind's place in it.

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10 Though this contradicts the rest of his theory, Schopenhauer occasionally identifies the feeling that gives rise to science (and even to philosophy) with the metaphysical feeling of the universal dimension of the aesthetic object (see Schopenhauer 2000b: 4). Sometimes Golding does something similar, also contradicting the view of science that appears in the rest of his works.

According to Schopenhauer, all metaphysical approaches attempt to satisfy our need for metaphysics. Human beings are metaphysical animals that wonder about the world and their own existence. The wonder that spurs art, religion and philosophy stems from the misery, pain and death which permeate the world and whose ultimate origin can only be metaphysical. While the absence of concepts in other animals spare them the consciousness of their own mortality, man 'carries about with him in abstract concepts the certainty of his own death', which 'can frighten him … when some occasion calls it up to the imagination' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 281). The non-rational animal 'lives without any real knowledge of death', and 'is neither in need of nor capable of' metaphysical enquiry (1969b: 463). The human species is not only conscious of suffering and mortality but helpless against them; this is what makes metaphysics so necessary. Metaphysics shows us why it is that suffering pervades the world, why all living beings must die, and how people's conduct can be changed so to prevent them from causing even more suffering and from killing each other. Moreover, metaphysics serves to counteract 'the terrifying certainty of death' which 'necessarily appeared along with the faculty of reason', because it reveals that, beyond the sphere of physical individuality, we are part and parcel of something greater, something that is timeless and therefore imperishable; this knowledge acts as 'a compensation' or 'antidote to the certainty of death' (463).

According to Schopenhauer, the metaphysical dimension of art involves the apprehension, first by the author and then by the audience, of the aesthetic universality of an object, 'not its relations to other [physical] things' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 188). This universal aspect is the beauty of the object as seen from outside. It is 'permanent, unchangeable', because it is 'independent of the temporal existence of individual beings' (1969b: 364). For Schopenhauer, all genuine art proceeds from the artist's feeling of this aesthetic dimension, 'never from the concept' (1969a: 57). In addition, the work of art serves to convey this feeling to the audience's non-rational intellect.[11]

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11 This account of Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory requires some comment. First, it omits Schopenhauer's characterisation of music, whose incomparable power he believes to reside in being the direct expression of the metaphysical will. Despite its centrality in the philosopher's model — he locates it at the top of the artistic hierarchy — the presence of music in Golding's works (where it appears to be related to the notion that this world is the worst possible world) is fairly limited. Secondly, according to Schopenhauer, everything has an aesthetic dimension, and

As the aesthetic dimension of the work of art depends on the subject–object division, its contemplation still leaves us on the side of representation. Moreover, aesthetic feelings do not touch on the essence of the world (i.e. on the essential will). Nevertheless, thanks to its independence from the temporal, spatial and causal forms that give rise to individuation, aesthetics can take us very close to the contemplation of that essence: the aesthetic dimension of things, writes Schopenhauer, 'is, of course, not as yet the essence' of the thing, but 'the complete expression of the essence that exhibits itself' to contemplation from without (1969b: 364).

One interesting question that arises in connection with art is the possibility of communicating aesthetic feelings through a conceptual vehicle. For Schopenhauer, the task of artists is to translate their aesthetic feelings into conceptual works of art, a process that the audience reverses in order to grasp the artists' aesthetic feelings. Schopenhauer's discussion of this phenomenon can be useful to understand the uses of language that, according to some of his commentators, Golding makes. As Schopenhauer notes, the difficulty resides in explaining how the process of conceptualisation, whereby a feeling is put into words, can be reversed. A great deal of communication 'is reason speaking to reason', so it 'keeps within its province, and what it communicates and receives are abstract concepts' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 40). The meaning of words is immediately understood and accurately grasped without, as a rule, being mixed up with any feelings. However, there are certain occasions on which we

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in order to contemplate it the subject only needs to strip the object from its particularity. Thirdly, Schopenhauer's account of the universality of the aesthetic object raises some doubts. If the aesthetic feeling arises when the individuating forms of time, space and causality are suspended, then all objects without exception must elicit the same aesthetic feeling, which is debatable. Magee is not convinced that this account of aesthetics is 'necessary to Schopenhauer's philosophy at all' (1997: 239). Wicks notes the impossibility of 'a timeless experience' (2008: 98); Young makes a similar point, adding that no object can exist outside space (see Young 2005: 147–8). What really matters for us about Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory is that the feeling of beauty transports the subject into a state of mind where pain fades away. Wicks states that 'no one can … be released from all pain' by beauty (2008: 98); yet I should argue that this is indeed what happens in Golding's novels. Finally, Schopenhauer states that the aesthetic dimension of some objects does not lie in their beauty but in their sublimity. Indeed, the sublime may have a place in Golding's novels, though not from the viewpoint of his characters. In general, I shall only focus on beauty; I shall deal with the sublime in the Conclusion.

pass from concepts to feelings, and then we are forced to produce, as in all cases in which the object that we apprehend is not present, imaginative pictures as non-rational representatives of those concepts: 'While another person is speaking, … we at once translate his speech into pictures of the imagination that instantaneously flash upon us and are arranged, linked, formed, and coloured according to the words that stream forth' (39). As Schopenhauer explains, the same phenomenon takes place in art. Literature, for example, makes the receiver feel the aesthetic universality of the represented object through the pictures into which the concepts are translated, but 'this can take place only by the assistance of his own imagination' (243). For this to happen, that is, 'in order to set this imagination in motion, in accordance with the end in view', so that a non-rational representative will be formed in the receiver's mind, there are several strategies. One of them is to arrange abstract concepts in such a way that 'none can continue in its abstract universality' (243). Schopenhauer, who conceives of each concept as a sphere, points out that the abstract concepts used by literature, for example, are 'so arranged that their spheres intersect one another' (243). One way in which this can be done, he says, is by using 'figurative expression', in particular 'metaphor, simile, parable, and allegory, all of which differ only by the length and completeness of their expression' (240). Resorting to these tropes, and thus blurring the conceptual boundaries of words, artists can appeal to the non-rational intellect rather than to reason. Actually, metaphor does not serve only to convey aesthetic feelings; it is well adapted to the transmission of all metaphysical feelings. Schopenhauer claims that 'metaphorical language … is the only language' which can do justice to them (1969b: 326). Though Schopenhauer's focus on its connection with metaphysical experience does not necessarily prevent metaphorical language from conveying physical feelings too, in Golding metaphor is clearly tied to the opening up of a metaphysical dimension.

Unlike those put forward by Golding's commentators, this classification of linguistic uses — into those that are intended to excite concepts and those that are intended to excite feelings — does not presuppose any direct relationship between the objects referred to and the effects of words. There may be uses of language — such as the ones exploited by Schopenhauer's philosophical discourse — that refer to the metaphysical side of the world but appeal to reason; conversely, there may be uses of language that refer to the physical side of the world but excite feelings. This explains the difference

between philosophy and religion, both of which refer to the same object: on the whole, the latter excites metaphysical feelings in the audience, whereas the former obtains a rational response.[12]

The metaphysical institutions of religion and philosophy are the ones to which Schopenhauer attributes the greatest importance. Like that of art, the focus of philosophy and religion is metaphysical, beyond causality. Also like art, they provide two kinds of consolation in the face of death. One consists in overcoming our individuality; when this happens we realise that the death of our individual selves may not be so terrible after all. Another is the assurance of some kind of immortality, attainable through the participation in what is timeless because unaffected by the intellect's imposition of time. The difference between the metaphysical approach of art and that of religion and philosophy is that art only reaches, as noted, the aesthetic universality of things, whereas religion and philosophy concern themselves with the very kernel of the world, the essential will.

The translation of feelings into concepts and back into feelings (by the addresser and the addressee, respectively) appears not only in art but also in religion, which conveys its insight into the metaphysical will to the non-rational intellect. Without being a believer, Schopenhauer does not hesitate to acknowledge the great power of religion (especially of Buddhism, Brahmanism and Catholicism, whose emphasis on suffering, compassion and withdrawal he finds fully congruent with his own views). In his view, philosophers must follow the example of religious leaders, who take upon themselves the task of shaking their fellow human beings from their metaphysical 'lethargy' (Schopenhauer 2000b: 325). Religion provides a 'metaphysics for the people', because its myths and allegories offer the uneducated masses 'an interpretation of life' that speaks of the world's essence yet is, unlike that of philosophy, 'appropriate to their powers of comprehension' (325). While philosophy appeals to reason and can be understood only after great study, religious myths and parables appeal to feelings that

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12 The skilful manipulation of language offers even more possibilities than the ones that Schopenhauer explores. One that Golding exploits in a number of novels — though not always on purpose — is to refer to the physical objects that attract the characters' attention in such a way that the narrator's words produce a metaphysical effect on the reader. As we shall see in the third part of this study, this makes the reader aware of the metaphysical dimension of the world even when the characters are not conscious of it.

even the uncultured majority of believers can appreciate. Apart from its metaphysical acumen, Schopenhauer acknowledges the capacity of religion 'to restrain the rough … dispositions of the masses', that is, its effectiveness 'in practical affairs … as a guide to conduct' (2000b: 325, 330–1). These 'practical aims in every respect take precedence of theoretical' aims (331). For this reason, he states that his favourite religions 'are necessary for the people, and are an inestimable benefit to them' (1969a: 168).[13]

For Schopenhauer, the main problem with religion is its dogmatism. As Magee explains, he thinks that philosophical theories appeal to reason and 'try to justify themselves in terms of observation and argument', whereas religions usually rest on some authority and 'demand our credence on other than rational grounds' (1997: 54). In Schopenhauer's words, the arguments of religion 'are mainly threats of eternal, and indeed also temporal evils, directed against unbelievers, and even against mere doubters' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 165).

Like science and history, philosophy appeals to reason. And like science, it proceeds by means of conceptual subordination: 'starting from the particular', philosophical knowledge 'is extended to the general' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 508). The difference with science is that in philosophy this process 'can be continued right up to the most universal of all concepts, which then includes everything under it' (508). On this view, 'The task of philosophy is' to provide 'a statement in the abstract of the nature of the whole world, of the whole as well as of all the parts' (82). As a result, 'philosophy will be a sum of very universal judgements, whose ground of knowledge is … the world itself in its entirety, without excluding anything, and hence everything to be found in human consciousness' (82–3). Starting from the feeling of one's individual will, Schopenhauer's philosophy reaches the concept of the essential will, which corresponds to the world's inner kernel. This is something that science, like history and art, would never be able to do, simply because it starts from the feeling of outer objects and fails to

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13 Sometimes Schopenhauer goes as far as to suggest that religious leaders have a greater practical power than philosophers, whose goals are 'always theoretical' and who cannot change people's conduct (1969a: 271). Insofar as practical considerations are always more important that theoretical considerations, religion would be more important than philosophy. The problem with this conclusion is that does not correspond to Schopenhauer's general opinion about the relative merits of philosophy and religion. In principle, philosophy must be just as capable as religion of acting as a practical guide to conduct (see Young 2005: 165–8).

take the feeling of one's individual will into consideration. The given material of philosophy is no other than the entire domain of feeling, which includes the feeling of one's body from within as well as the consciousness of all things from without. In comparison with science, its most prestigious rival, which in Schopenhauer's times had ended up with two complementary yet irreconcilable concepts (those of matter and of energy), Schopenhauer's philosophy purports to provide a single overarching concept (that of the essential will) which is located in a privileged position as the hidden essence of the world — hence also of matter and of energy.

In hindsight, it is easy to see that the privileged position that Schopenhauer assigns to philosophy can be explained in part by the intellectual climate of his age. Kant had set strict limits to theoretical knowledge, arguing that the knowledge of the essence of things is beyond those limits. One important characteristic of Schopenhauer's project is the ambition not only to establish — like Kant — the limits of cognition, but — unlike Kant — to take knowledge beyond physical facts, and thus to offer a thorough description of the world (one which includes aspects that for Kant would pertain to the unknowable thing-in-itself). Behind this departure from Kant lies the aspiration to restore the theoretical hegemony of philosophy against the growing influence of science. Schopenhauer states that, by virtue of the kind of metaphysical focus that is peculiar to it, philosophy surpasses both history and science. 'Whereas history teaches us that at each time something different has been, philosophy endeavours to assist us to the insight that at all times exactly the same was, is, and will be' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 441). Regarding science, its toughest theoretical contender, philosophy surpasses it 'as the most universal, and thus more important, knowledge, promising information for which the others have only prepared the way' (439).

2.2.3. The Primacy of the Essential Will as the Origin of Suffering

We have seen that among all the kinds of representation of which Schopenhauer speaks, there is a metaphysical feeling, of one's individual will, which stands out as the only one that comes from within. We have also seen that this peculiar kind of metaphysical knowledge is privileged by Schopenhauer and also, in his opinion, by

certain religious creeds. It is along this inner route that both the religious and the philosophical approaches arrive at a view of the world as permeated by the essential will of which everything else is a manifestation.

Now it is time to explain the two arguments — one based on analogy, the other based on abstraction — that allow Schopenhauer to come up with the concept of the essential will. After this I shall offer a more detailed characterisation of the essential will as restless activity originally devoid of consciousness, hence of purpose, whose quasi-divine power not only lies beyond good and evil but preexists all the conceptual oppositions that are customarily imposed on the world. Moreover, I shall review the way in which Schopenhauer tries to combine the unity of the essential will with the multiplicity of its manifestations. This involves examining Schopenhauer's description of the essential will at different levels of generality: as the will to life and as the individual's innate character, in other words, as the tendency that all living beings have towards reproduction and self-preservation, and, simultaneously, as the unique and unchangeable tenor of each individual's appetites. I shall also examine Schopenhauer's weakening of the notion of individual freedom as a result of his emphasis on causal determinism and the innateness of character. Then I shall deal with suffering in terms of the need to satisfy the desires dictated by the essential will individualised in the innate character. Finally, I shall examine how the theme of suffering leads Schopenhauer to condemn our world as the worst possible world, an indictment with which Golding concurs.

In the third part of this study, I shall show the pertinence of all these aspects of Schopenhauer's model to a correct understanding of Golding's novels. I shall explore the way in which Golding's *The Spire* deals directly with Dean Jocelin's obedience to the will with which he becomes acquainted through a feeling rising inside him. Though Jocelin identifies it with God's, this will is gradually revealed to be an obscene force more related to the Dean's sexuality than to Christian piety. In *Pincher Martin* we again find the emphasis on willing and on sexual desire, here accompanied by the obsession with self-preservation. The presence and primacy of the will in these two novels has received little critical attention; Schopenhauer's philosophy may help us to better understand the attitudes and behaviour of their main characters, most notably their fixation with sex and survival. Schopenhauer's claim that the individual's essential character is inborn and unalterable may also throw light on Pincher Martin — whose

connection with the allegorical figure of Greed is pointed out in the course of the narrative — and on several other characters who seem dominated by one single passion. In general, Golding's earlier novels argue for the innateness and unchangeability of one's character; together with a belief in causal determinism, this results, as in Schopenhauer, in a diminution of individual freedom. Given that the view of life that Golding's novels offer is as much dominated as Schopenhauer's by insatiable appetites that frequently lead to aggression and which always result in pain and death, it is reasonable to assume that understanding why the latter compares the world to hell will clarify Golding's reasons to voice a similar opinion. On a different note, Schopenhauer's account of the feelings that a means of conceptual communication like language can elicit may serve to explain some striking features of Golding's style, in particular his use of figurative descriptions portraying a force which underlies the whole world and whose primacy explains so much suffering.

2.2.3.1. The Underlying Unity of the Essential Will: Cognition and Characterisation of the World-Will

According to Schopenhauer, the realm of appearances is merely the 'external side' or husk of the world; it is founded on 'an entirely different side which is its innermost being, its kernel' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 30–1). At its most general level, the innermost essence of the world can be conceptualised as the single world-will; the entire realm of appearances is nothing but its manifestation. What follows is a summary of the ways in which Schopenhauer comes to know the undifferentiated world-will, and of its characterisation as originally devoid of consciousness, insatiable, groundless, free, almighty and omnipresent.

Schopenhauer describes the realm of appearances as the 'manifestation' or 'visibility' of the underlying essence of the world, the world-will (Schopenhauer 1969a: 100, 110). As Magee notes, Schopenhauer believes that the world-will 'is not directly accessible to our knowledge' but 'knowable by us only through its manifestations' (1997: 444–5). Of all the ways in which the manifestations of the world-will enter consciousness in the form of feeling — among them, the contemplation of the aesthetic dimension of the object, the inner observation of the individual will, and the perception

of physical objects — Schopenhauer singles out the observation of one's individual will as the only kind of knowledge through which we can obtain some clue about the inner essence of the world.

Schopenhauer recognises that 'the knowledge I have of my will … cannot be separated from that of my body', and that 'I know my will not as a whole, … not completely according to its nature, but only in its individual acts, and hence in time' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 101). Nevertheless, he claims that it is this inner manifestation that allows him to get a rational idea of what the common essence of the world is at bottom. Philosophy can then proceed from the feeling of one's individual will to the concept of the world-will as the knowable essence of the whole world by means of rational reflection. Thus 'it becomes possible … by means of widely pursued reflection and by the ingenious connexion of outwardly directed … knowledge with the data of self-consciousness, to arrive at a certain understanding of … the inner essence of things' (1969b: 288).

Schopenhauer refers on two separate occasions to the dual way in which we can reason our way from the individual will to the world-will. The first time he bases his argument on analogy; the second time he bases it on abstraction. The two arguments, which complement each other, are based on 'The double knowledge which we have of the nature and action of our own body, and which is given in two completely different ways', i.e. from without and from within (Schopenhauer 1969a: 104). Thanks to self-consciousness, Schopenhauer argues, we apprehend the inner working of our body, in other words, the individual will. When this happens we go beyond 'what is given only … from outside', focusing instead on the only object that is 'accessible to us from within', the individual will (1969b: 494). This gesture allows us to discover 'the ultimate thing and the kernel of reality' (494).

Let us begin with the argument from analogy. Of the two sources of cognition — corresponding to the two ways in which one can come to know one's own body — the only possible source of insight into the inner essence of the world is not outward but inward consciousness. Schopenhauer states that the double knowledge of our own body must be used 'as a key to the inner being of every phenomenon in nature', and that 'We shall judge all objects which are not our own body', and which therefore are given to our consciousness only from without, 'according to the analogy of this body' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 105). Thus 'the apprehension in which we know the stirrings and

acts of our own will' must be 'the interpreter' of all other things (197). The subject must avoid assuming that his body 'is essentially different from all others' (104). Consequently, it must be assumed that behind the surface all other physical objects are 'the same as what in ourselves we call *will*' (105).

The other argument that Schopenhauer puts forward makes use of abstraction. The 'way *from within*' is like 'a subterranean passage' which 'stands open to us to that real inner nature of things which we cannot penetrate *from without*' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 195). As one's individual will is the inner dimension of one's body, it is always entangled in the circumstances of one's individual existence. Now if I strip the individual will of all circumstantial particularity (all particular object, direction, causation), what remains is pure willing, that is, a ceaseless inner activity independent of causality (hence of materiality), spatiality and temporality (hence of individuality), and posited as beyond subjectivity and objectivity. It is thus that the distance that separates one's individual will from the world-will can be bridged by the application of reason.

Schopenhauer is aware that the insight of 'The identity of the will and of the body' that opens the door to these two arguments is 'a knowledge of quite a peculiar nature' in that 'it can never be demonstrated' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 102); neither can there be proof of the subsequent analogical and abstractive arguments that try to establish a metaphysical connection between oneself and the rest of the world. In Schopenhauer's opinion, discovering that the key to the world's essence lies in the individual will is immensely more important than the fact that this discovery is impossible to prove. He regards as his main contribution to philosophy 'the insight that what acts and drives in nature, and manifests itself … after getting as far as the state or condition of self-consciousness — now stands out as … *will*' (1969b: 294). In his opinion, this is the solution to the riddle of the world and of human existence. Janaway explains:

> If the world and my place in it can be intelligible to me only if I interpret the world as having the same inner nature as myself, and if a unifying metaphysical account is what the necessary limitation of scientific explanation leaves us crying out for, then it would be irresponsible not to apply the knowledge of my own nature to the metaphysical unriddling of all of the world (Janaway 1999: 145–6).

Illuminating or preposterous as Schopenhauer's discovery may be thought to be, what is clear is that this is the only way that he finds, starting from a Kant-inspired account of knowledge, to proceed beyond Kantism and scientific knowledge. What matters to him is that, after the insight has been gained and the rational arguments have been developed (and accepted), self-consciousness holds 'the key to everything else': what is known from within 'must give us the explanation' of what is known from without; for this reason, 'we must learn to understand nature from ourselves, not ourselves from nature' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 196).

The world-will is the result of abstracting one's individual will from the intellectual forms that individualise its motions in time, and of conceptualising it as preceding not only the subject–object rift (and therefore conscious representation) but also the apparition of life. Schopenhauer defines this world-will as 'a constant striving without aim' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 311). It is 'a ceaseless activity' originally devoid of consciousness, hence of rationality; it is 'blind' (309, 149). The most that we can say about it is, in Janaway's aptly general expression, that it 'strives, or tends somewhere' (Janaway 1999: 144). Schopenhauer is nevertheless convinced that the activity of the world-will 'springs from lack, from deficiency', and that this is 'never fulfilled or satisfied' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 196, 164). That is why the world-will 'goes on for ever' (308).

While the world as we usually know it is made up of countless appearances, the world-will provides them with unity: 'plurality and difference belongs solely to mere *appearance*', beyond which there is 'one and the same essence that presents itself in everything' (Schopenhauer 2009: 253). The abstract image of the essential will at which Schopenhauer arrives has little to do with its manifestation as a person's individual will. The external point of view to which physical consciousness is limited prevents us from seeing the world-will for what it is, but Schopenhauer has no doubts that this world-will is embodied not only in human beings but, more generally, in the 'blind, impetuous, destructive force of nature' that stands in opposition to human aspirations (1969b: 402). The world-will, he says, 'proclaims itself just as directly in the fall of a stone as in the action of man' (299). In Magee's words, for Schopenhauer the world-will 'is in us only because it is in everything. It *constitutes* us as it constitutes everything' (1997: 444).

Despite his scorn for theism (the belief in the existence of a divinity or divinities), Schopenhauer often refers to the world-will in quasi-theological terms. All objects within the realm of appearances are subject to the forms of causality, spatiality, and temporality, as well as to the subject–object division; they are, therefore, wholly 'dependent and relative' vis-à-vis something else that causes them, something that is contiguous in space or in time, and a subject that is aware of them; by contrast, in Schopenhauer's conceptualisation the world-will is not supposed by any of those forms: it is '*groundless*' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 32, 106). Apart from this '*aseity*' or self-sufficiency, the world-will possesses other qualities that are usually associated with the divinity (1969b: 320); it is blind, but also 'independent, free, and indeed almighty', to which we may add that, as far as we can know, it is omnipresent (1969a: 503).

2.2.3.2. Plurality within the Essential Will: The Will to Life and the Individual's Innate Character

When Schopenhauer describes the world-will as a constant striving that can exist independently of the forms of representation, he faces the difficulty of explaining how this single and undifferentiated urge can end up manifesting itself as countless appearances which seem to be involved in a constant struggle with each other. In order to solve this problem, he offers a layered description of the essential will that includes, on a less general level than the world-will, the will to life, and, on the level of greatest individuality, the individual's innate character. The will to life is the essential tendency of living beings to perpetuate themselves; it is characteristically associated with the reproductive instinct, to which all other instincts, even that of self-preservation, are subordinated, and which is linked to the emergence of consciousness. The innate character is the unalterable way in which an individual is bound to will until the very moment of death.

The introduction of these multiple layers in the sphere of the world's essence allows Schopenhauer to proceed from the world-will to its manifestations, and thus from the general lack of purpose to the specific ways in which individuals try to secure their well-being. This layered account it is one of the most problematic aspects of Schopenhauer philosophy; but it is as relevant in relation to Golding as it is in relation to

Schopenhauer. The existence of innate characters that are different from human individual to human individual in inconsistent with other aspects of Schopenhauer's model, according to which multiplicity does not affect the essence of the world and only arises with temporal appearances. Despite its difficulties, Schopenhauer thinks that this layered account of the essential will is necessary to give a complete picture of all living beings as dominated by reproductive impulses and of each human being as possessing their own distinct and unchangeable personality, and consequently their own moral disposition. As regards Golding, Schopenhauer's introduction of the will to life and the individual's innate character may illuminate fundamental aspects of his novels, namely, his emphasis on the constant presence of sexual desire in human affairs, and on the innate moral disposition of many of his characters.

Observing the behaviour of living creatures convinces Schopenhauer that 'what the [essential] will wills is always life'; because of this, he states that instead of speaking of the essential will we can speak of the will to life (Schopenhauer 1969a: 275). This will to life is, in Janaway's words, a 'blind striving for existence and reproduction that manifests itself as organic body' (1999: 149). The energies released by the will to life push every individual to reproduce itself, and to preserve its life in order to do so. In many living beings, humans among them, the will to life fuels the sexual instincts. This leads Schopenhauer to put sex at the centre of existence, describing it as 'the invisible central point of all action and conduct' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 513). All the remaining goals, beginning with survival, must be regarded as collaborating with sexuality in an unconscious manner.[14]

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14 Plainly enough, Schopenhauer's will to life is the predecessor of Sigmund Freud's *libido*. As first conceived, libido — literally wish or desire — is 'the energy of the sexual instincts' (Freud 1995: 22). As such, it 'stands opposed to the instincts of self-preservation' (Laplanche and Pontalis 2006: 239; see Freud 1995: 240). Since in Freud's final account these latter instincts are themselves taken to be 'libidinal in nature', all the life instincts are 'now opposed to the death instincts' (239). Jacques Lacan goes one step further, at least in Slavoj Žižek's reading, and by doing so he comes even closer to Schopenhauer's notion of the will to life. Lacan presents libido — or the *lamella*, as he sometimes calls it — not merely as 'the palpitation of the life substance' (Žižek 2006: 65), but as an energy whose 'blind, indestructible insistence' amounts to 'the "death drive"', this being 'the Freudian name for its very opposite, for the way immortality appears

The the will to life does not only require the individual to protect its lives in order to procreate, but also to sacrifice it when necessary. The pursuit of sexual satisfaction involves feeding on, defending oneself from, attacking and subjugating other individuals of the same or a different species. As the order of nature proves, the need for nourishment, for protection and, ultimately, for reproduction is often met by violent means. A 'ceaseless struggle for existence itself' in which 'the individual life is ... at every step ... threatened with destruction' can be seen at all levels (Schopenhauer 1969b: 584), since in the realm of appearances 'the will-to-live generally feasts on itself', and every being 'can maintain its own existence only by the incessant elimination of another's' (1969a: 147). In view of this, the will to life appears as insensitive to moral considerations. Furthermore, a brief look at the way in which nature functions is enough to convince Schopenhauer that the Saturnian essence of the world does not care for its children, as not a single minute passes without its disposing of scores of them in order to make room and provide food for others. Only the will to life itself achieves self-perpetuation. By contrast, the species, the individual organisms and their component parts are all sacrificed for the will to life's sake.

In the permanent war of all against all in which every living creature is involved, being endowed with consciousness is as necessary as having thorns, teeth or claws. Just as the entire body is 'nothing but my will become visible' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 107), and thus the '*function*' of the will to life, so the intellect, far from having anything to do with the soul, is 'nothing more than the physiological function of an internal organ, the brain' (1969b: 214, 273). Now the brain and the intellect, Schopenhauer says, are the 'one great tool' whereby the animal secures its 'existence, well-being ... and propagation', thus fulfilling the supra-individual will to life (280, 204). In the belief that 'knowledge is merely added' to the will 'as an instrument', Schopenhauer reverses the relation that the prevailing philosophical tradition had established between will and cognition, stating that man '*knows* himself in consequence of, and in accordance with,

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within psychoanalysis: for an uncanny excess of life, an "undead" urge that persists beyond the (biological) cycle of life and death, generation and corruption', in other words, for 'the so-called "compulsion-to-repeat", an uncanny urge ... that seems to outgrow the natural limitations of the organism affected by it and to persist even beyond the organism's death' (62–3).

the nature of his will, instead of *willing* in consequence of, and according to, his knowing' (1969a: 292–3).

The force of sexuality is — like everything that has to do with the essential will — largely unconscious.[15] Schopenhauer says of the will to life that it never gives up pursuing its ends 'in the dark with extreme certainty and infallibility' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 150). Individuals, though, hold their sexual desire — like all other desires — to be theirs alone. This opinion springs from their egocentrism, that is, from their unquestioning reliance on the individualising forms of cognition, which foreground the subject's separation from the rest of the world. However, one's sexual desire is actually serving the will to life's unconscious tendency towards perpetuation: at first, the subject believes that it 'is pursuing individual ends, whereas in truth it is pursuing merely general ends' (1969b: 538). Upon reflection, it becomes clear that life in general 'has a closer and prior right to us than has the individual; hence its affairs take precedence' (556). The deluded individual is 'the dupe of the will' to life (557).

If it is hard to accept that the pursuit of our ambitions and the satisfaction of our desires are both subordinated to the perpetuation of life, it is equally difficult to admit that one's individual survival is a matter of indifference to the world as a whole. Much to our desperation, the world does not grieve over the destruction of any particular part of itself, and continues to exist even without us. The fact that 'the individual must come into being and pass away' does not disturb the essential will to life any more than 'the death of an individual [can] injure the whole of nature' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 276). In truth, what is at stake here is not the maintenance or multiplication of the will to life's individual manifestations, but the perpetuation of life itself.

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15 Schopenhauer's unconscious encompasses a number of different areas. To begin with, the unconscious encompasses the original lack of consciousness of the world-will that permeates both living beings and lifeless matter. Concerning the will to life, unconsciousness encompasses the physiological unconscious, which controls a number of somatic operations, such as digestion, but is ultimately dominated by the sexual instincts. Finally, the innate character determines the individual's unconscious desires. As we proceed from concrete desires through the innate character to the will to life and finally the world-will, the degree of unconsciousness increases, such that the self-conscious subject can feel his or her desires directly, but the innate character, the will to life and the world-will can only be known as increasingly abstract concepts.

Once he has introduced the notion of the will to life as a way of explaining the existence of living creatures, Schopenhauer must still face the objection that there exist innumerable species, each possessing characteristics that distinguish it from the others and composed of innumerable members which, in some cases, may even have their own peculiar characters. To solve this problem, he modifies Kant's notion of the intelligible character, which belongs in the unknowable thing-in-itself, placing it in the essential will. In Schopenhauer's version, all members of a given non-human species share the same innate character, while among humans the innate character of a given individual may be very different from the others'. Since the focus of Golding's novels is on human beings, I shall only draw attention to the main features of people's characters.

According to Schopenhauer, the individuals' innate character is 'the individually modified will', which guides them and determines with strict necessity what they will (Schopenhauer 1969a: 108). The innate character 'is no work of … circumstances subject to chance, but rather the work of nature itself'; it 'is inborn' and 'reveals itself already in the child' (2009: 72). In addition, the innate character is 'impossible' to alter, as it 'lies outside time and change' (1969a: 296). Despite its individuality, it is still one's 'inner being', therefore one 'cannot decide to be this or that' and 'cannot become another person', but '*is* once for all' (292–3).

Schopenhauer claims that the reason why someone has this or that innate character is a mystery. So is the fact that the innate character of some people, who care more about the others' well-being than about their own, seems to contradict the general functioning of the will to life. The innate character precedes all forms of representation, and therefore it is jut as 'groundless' and free as the world-will and the will to life (Schopenhauer 1969a: 124). In the last analysis, when we are faced with the fact that two persons have conflicting personalities, our reaction has to be the same as when we ask why the world's essence consists in willing: for Schopenhauer these questions are 'absolutely inexplicable' (138). Even so, we cannot forget that with Schopenhauer lacking an explanation does not mean being unable to know. Just as I can conceptualise the world-will starting from the feeling of my individual will, so I can conceptualise my innate character starting form its inner and outer manifestations. Thus I can get a pretty accurate idea of my personality by studying my affects and actions.

Even though a person's behaviour might seem to contradict the general will to life, we should not be misled by appearances. Whenever we act in an egocentric manner (i.e.

pitting all individual things and beings against each other, and putting ourselves at the centre of this atomised world), all our actions are intended to fulfil our innate characters; furthermore, both these actions and the innate character that they serve are in harmony with the will to life. Thus, for example, a person's suicide is not at odds with the will to life, but rather is an unworthy 'affirmation' thereof (Schopenhauer 1969a: 398). As David E. Cartwright notes, Schopenhauer thinks that 'the suicide does not reject life … but only the form in which one lives. He or she rejects the suffering and misery of his or her life, but not the will to life itself' (2005: 168). Schopenhauer claims that 'whoever loves life and affirms it, but abhors its torments, and in particular can no longer endure the hard lot that has fallen to just him' might commit suicide (Schopenhauer 1969a: 280–1). Willed annihilation, then, is typical of egoists. Indeed, self-murder is the last recourse of those who try to escape pain but do not realise that they can do so by other means. These involve renouncing all kinds of egocentric satisfaction; only thus can we shake off the shackles of the will to life. Once we have avoided egocentrism, Schopenhauer contends, we shall be able to endure life until death arrives on its own to free us from suffering for good.

2.2.3.3. The Weakening of Individual Freedom

The fact that people have different innate characters is enough to explain why they act differently to the same object. If we knew thoroughly every person's innate character and the objects on which they focus their attention, we could predict all their actions: by virtue of the innate character, with one given object 'only *one* decision is possible, which is accordingly a necessary decision' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 290). This claim, together with the assertion that our innate character is impossible to modify, has important implications for Schopenhauer's understanding of freedom.

To begin with, the essential will is free at all levels (qua world-will, qua will to life and qua innate character). The freedom of the essential will does not occur 'in appearance', but is 'present only in so far as we abstract from appearance and all its forms' (Schopenhauer 2009: 108). What a person wills is, in Schopenhauer's opinion, the expression of his or her innate character, which, like the world-will and the will to life, is posited not only as groundless but as impossible to alter. Those animals that are

endowed with consciousness can choose among the objects that satisfy their desires; by contrast, living beings without a brain resemble inanimate objects in that they cannot even make this choice. What no animal can choose is what to will, let alone whether to will. Schopenhauer contends that no amount of instruction will ever teach us to will what goes against our innate character. He is clear in this respect: 'every particular act of will on the part of a knowing individual' necessarily has an object, 'without which that act would never take place', but the object 'determines only the act of will of a knowing being, at such a time, in such a place, and in such and such circumstances, as something quite individual', without determining 'that that being wills in general and wills in this way' (1969a: 163).

Within Schopenhauer's model an individual is only free to choose among the objects that can satisfy the appetites determined by his or her innate character, but never to act against this character. In other words, conscious beings can only be intellectually free. Obviously, this freedom appears differently in humans than and non-human animals, since the former can make this choice not only without the aid of reason but rationally. It is only through this selection of objects that the intellect can 'illuminate' the will, giving some direction to its obstinate thrust (Schopenhauer 1969a: 293). The implication is that the intellect can guide one's innate character while remaining faithful to it. By deliberately picking the objects to which we necessarily respond in a certain way, we can change our conduct within certain limits. Thus 'a man's manner of acting can be noticeably changed without our being justified in inferring from this a change in his [innate] character' (294).

If, on the one hand, all the actions of conscious beings are internally determined by the combination of their innate characters and the intellectual direction to choose satisfying objects, on the other hand, all physical events without exception are externally determined by causal connection. (With those things and beings without consciousness, the intellectual factor is obviously absent.) Schopenhauer thinks that the results of both kinds of determination coincide at every moment. Though he does not explain why this is the case, Schopenhauer contends, for example, that 'all the events in a man's life are connected in two fundamentally different ways' — internally by the combination of the innate character and the intellect, and externally by causality — such that 'those two kinds of connection exist simultaneously and yet the same event,

as a link in two quite different chains, exactly fits them both' (Schopenhauer 2000a: 220).

2.2.3.4. The Origin of Suffering

While at the level of appearances our wishes find satisfaction in particular objects which are frequently attainable, in truth the essential will is impossible to fulfil. Though our particular desire for this or that object is a product of the essential will — of our innate character and, indirectly, of the will to life and of the world-will — the satisfaction of our desires does not imply the fulfilment of the essential will, as its yearning stems from a perennial lack. The conjunction of a striving that is insatiable and its manifestation in the guise of numberless individuals capable of conscious cognition results in a panorama of constant suffering. For one thing, the individual's attempts at satisfaction are often unsuccessful. For another thing, the attempts to satisfy their needs make individuals clash with each other, thus increasing the others' suffering, while the prevalence of egocentrism leads them to disregard the pain that others may feel.

For Schopenhauer, the intellect 'is a mere accident of our being' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 201), and consciousness is 'originally and by its nature … completely the servant of the [essential] will' (1969a: 176). As a rule, therefore, consciousness is will-coloured, because it 'apprehends originally in things nothing but their relations to the [essential] will, the direct, the indirect, the possible' (1969b: 376). The will that the latter quotation refers to is the innate character (and indirectly, the will to life and the world-will). Due to its influence, physical consciousness, which is always egocentric, presents to us only what bears on our well-being (and, indirectly, on the well-being of the species). Schopenhauer claims that all physical consciousness without exception 'must be a purpose of the [essential] will', i.e. a means for the fulfilment of the desires dictated by one's innate character (and, indirectly, by one's will to life), and that 'the more eagerly this aspires to it, the sooner will it be attained' (2000b: 417). In principle, then, egocentric consciousness shows physical things 'always in relation to me, a being in the world as its spatio-temporal "centre"', and it shows them 'in their utility' (Young 2005: 127). This means that the I–here–now viewpoint, which always includes a

consideration of causes and effects, establishes a causal connection between my body — therefore between my desires — and external objects, such that the latter are inevitably judged according to their potential effects on me. Under these circumstances, egocentric consciousness cannot but be full of 'anxiety' about the possible dissatisfaction of the subject's appetites, therefore it is inextricably linked to 'unhappiness' and suffering (127).[16] It is thus that egocentrism, the built-in cognitive mechanism in charge of sustaining animal life, makes this selfsame life almost unbearable.

For Schopenhauer, all egocentric pleasure is transient. Forgetting that there is an obvious difference between not feeling pain and feeling pleasure, Schopenhauer usually defines the latter as 'a painless state' resulting from the satisfaction of the aspirations and needs arising from our innate character (Schopenhauer 2000b: 287). He also states that a pleasurable object 'delivers us only from a pain or want that must be followed either by a new pain or by languor, empty longing, and boredom' (1969a: 320). Owing to the constant pressure of the essential will, egocentric beings 'pass their existence in anxiety and want', that is, in suffering (1969b: 349). From the individual's point of view, the final outcome of willing is, regardless of the circumstances, frustration; even if one does get 'momentary gratification', it soon gives way to boredom and the need to pursue new objects (1969a: 353). Every conscious subject thus 'swings like a pendulum' (312). This oscillation is not only between pleasure and unpleasure, but also between the painful states of 'want and boredom' (1969b: 359).

Since the only will that I know about directly is my own, the only goals and aspirations that exist are my own, a fact that explains the natural disposition to treat others as mere things — as means not ends — that can be manipulated without scruple in whatever way suits my wishes. The consequence is that, in their vain hope of

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16   According to Bernard Reginster, Schopenhauer's theory is marred by 'a certain lack of clarity' concerning 'the relation between willing and knowing' (2009: 115). In particular, Schopenhauer confuses being interested in an object — in the sense of focusing on it in order to satisfy one's desires — and having a biased knowledge of if. It may well be the case — with philosophy, for example — that 'my practical interests are presumably better served if [my mind] represents the relevant features of the surrounding world accurately' (115). What Reginster does not deny is that, even if we admit that for Schopenhauer not all knowledge is biased, it is clear that for him most knowledge is the slave of one's appetites.

achieving their aspirations, individuals enter into conflict with each other. This conflict leads to 'much and long suffering, constant struggle, *bellum omnium*', a state of cut-throat competitiveness, violence and exploitation, which 'goes on *in saecula saeculorum*, or until once again the crust of the planet breaks', and in which everything is 'a hunter' and simultaneously runs the risk of being 'hunted' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 354). A large part of Schopenhauer's work is devoted to describing how, once it has manifested itself as the realm of appearances — that is, once consciousness has arisen — the world appears as involved in a 'never-ending war of extermination of the individuals ... and in the constant struggle ... with one another' (1969a: 161). This war of all against all is the means that the essential will has to find fulfilment. Since, as far as we can discern, 'nothing exists besides it', we can resort to metaphor and say that the 'hungry' essence of the world 'must live on itself' (154). From this Schopenhauer concludes that existence can but be 'a constant suffering, and is partly woeful, partly fearful' (267), a condition to which human life is no exception.

2.2.3.5. The Knowable World as the Worst Possible World

One of Schopenhauer's main themes is 'the obvious misery of existence' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 184). In his view, if the world is 'the battle-ground of tormented and agonized beings who continue to exist only by each devouring the other', it is due of the primacy of the essential will (1969b: 581). Though 'the attempt has been made to adapt the system of *optimism*' to this world in order to demonstrate 'that it is the best of all possible worlds', for Schopenhauer the 'absurdity' of this enterprise is 'glaring' (581).

In Schopenhauer's view, it is evident that 'this world is arranged as it had to be if it were to be capable of continuing with great difficulty to exist; if it were a little worse, it would be no longer capable of continuing to exist' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 583). Consequently it 'is the worst of all possible worlds' capable of sustained existence (583). From this perspective, the philosopher's fondness for tragedy is easy to understand, as it comes over as the most realistic of all artistic genres, the only one that at its best makes us 'feel ourselves already in the midst of hell' (1969a: 255).

2.2.4. Remedies for Suffering in the Individual and Collective Spheres

Though Schopenhauer envisages the world as inevitably pervaded by suffering, there is more to his philosophy than this. Despite his indictment of our world as the worst possible, he makes allowances for a number of ways in which suffering can be alleviated on the individual and collective levels. I shall conclude this overview of Schopenhauer's thought by focusing on these remedies.

Even if we are able to fence off the others' aggressions, suffering is part and parcel of our lives. Though he seldom misses an opportunity to emphasise the unhappy tenor of egocentric representation, Schopenhauer also draws attention to a series of possible solutions. Among those that work on an individual level, he mentions three which are tied to non-egocentric feelings and which temporarily spare us the pain associated with want and boredom: one is aesthetic tranquillity; the others, which are related to different kinds of saintliness, are compassionate altruism (whose effects are felt by their neighbours) and resigned detachment. Furthermore, Schopenhauer adds another remedy that involves leaving behind, this time permanently, not only egocentrism but all kinds of consciousness: death. At a collective level, Schopenhauer's remedies only protect us from the kinds of suffering that arise from external aggression. In this respect, he points to the ineffectiveness of moral principles, which need to be supplemented by adequate penal measures. History, he concludes, repeats itself and no utopian solutions are possible.

As far as the individual remedies for suffering are concerned, Schopenhauer's discussion of the non-egocentric modalities of consciousness covers the same ground as Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor's examination of the visionary trajectory in Golding's novels. Compared with these critics, Schopenhauer offers a more nuanced account of the ways in which the individual can go beyond his or her individual perspective. Apart from this, there is a striking terminological similarity between Schopenhauer and Golding, who also refers, for example in connection with *Lord of the Flies*, to the figure of the saint. According to his commentators, in Golding's novels this type of character is associated with certain kinds of non-rational feelings. The difference between Schopenhauer's and Golding's saints is that in Golding their insight never leads to passive detachment but only to palliative action. Despite this difference,

Schopenhauer's notion of compassionate altruism may improve our understanding of the cognitive peculiarities and moral importance of Golding's saints. As regards aesthetic tranquillity, Schopenhauer's comments may likewise help us to understand the ending of *The Spire*, which Golding discusses in terms of the main character's contemplation of beauty, and one of the central episodes of *Darkness Visible*. With respect to death, the number of characters that die in Golding's novels is certainly striking. It will be interesting to see whether their deaths can be interpreted as an involuntary liberation from egocentrism, and hence from suffering, or as the egocentric individual's attempt to avoid pain. As to the collective remedies for suffering, Schopenhauer's defence of the desirability of moral repression may cast a new light on the contrast between the meek People and the vicious New People in *The Inheritors* (the contrast has been usually analysed as resulting from the qualitative intellectual differences between two species, only one of which is held capable of rational reflection). Finally, Schopenhauer's claim that moral restraints are hardly sufficient to curb human desires, and that morals need to be supplemented by the legal recourse to force seems to explain not only the collapse of the children's society in *Lord of the Flies*, but also Golding's early denial of historical progress and his concomitant rejection, until late in his career, of utopia.

2.2.4.1. Individual Remedies for Suffering

The first individual remedies for suffering that Schopenhauer introduces are related to kinds of knowledge that fall outside the scope of physical consciousness. In many cases, these varieties of knowledge are characterised by their non-rational nature, and by their suspension of egocentrism, i.e. of atomising individualisation and self-centredness. When egocentrism is shunned, one is elevated above the concern about one's desires, and for this very reason above one important source of suffering, the fact that egocentrism can only be avoided thanks to certain varieties of feeling must serve as a reminder that, according to Schopenhauer, rational enquiry is never independent of the egocentric pursuit of one's goals. This means that only a feeling can avoid being anxiety-ridden, and only insofar as it is metaphysical, because only thus can the subject avoid imposing a causal connection between external things and his or her bodily

appetites, that is, seeing all things as potential means for the attainment of individual ends. Whether elicited directly or through the mediation of a rational description, this absolutely placid and painless kind of feeling is, quite simply, what Schopenhauer calls a *better consciousness* liberated from one's egocentrism and hence from the concern about one's desires (see Young 2005: 7).

The manners in which this liberation takes place are manifold. It can occur, for example, in the course of aesthetic contemplation, when the observer suddenly feels the aesthetic universality of things independently of their bearing on his or her individual appetites. It can also come about as saintly visions that penetrate into the world's hidden essence; this leads either to the saint's compassion towards sufferers, and then to altruistic action, or to a resigned withdrawal from worldly affairs. Unusual as these kinds of insight are in comparison with physical consciousness, in Schopenhauer's opinion they are not the most extraordinary ways of breaking free from one's needs and aspirations. In a sense, the place of honour in his model is reserved for a phenomenon that eliminates not only egocentric consciousness but consciousness in general. This phenomenon encompasses all kinds of death except egoistic suicide.

2.2.4.1.1. Aesthetic Contemplation

Schopenhauer's discussion of better consciousness starts with aesthetic contemplation. The apprehension of the universal dimension of the object, which is thereby located beyond time, space and causality, affords the subject a temporary relief from the suffering associated with egocentric consciousness. In addition to foregrounding the impact that this experience has on the subject, Schopenhauer maintains that the aesthetic effect does not involve concepts; moreover, he emphasises both the negative character of aesthetic pleasure (defined as the mere absence of pain), and the fact that the source of that pleasure is to be found not in the object's form but in its content.

When the aesthetic effect takes place, the subject temporarily transcends egocentrism and, more generally, individuality. Though still a subject looking at an object, the spectator ceases to be an individual and reaches, together with the object, a liberating universality: 'The particular thing and the knowing individual are abolished' so that nothing remains but a 'pure subject' and the aesthetic dimension of the object

that 'is released not only from time but also from space' and causality (Schopenhauer 1969a: 209). The aesthetic dimension that the object exhibits to the beholder is the ideal nature of which particular things are necessarily incomplete or inadequate expressions. This dimension is still on the side of representation, for its contemplation depends of the subject–object opposition, yet it achieves the highest possible degree of universality within that sphere.

Schopenhauer is insistent that aesthetic cognition allows individuals to reach a state in which they become a pure subject 'free from individuality and from servitude to the [essential] will', i.e. from all concern about the satisfaction of the desires dictated by their innate character (Schopenhauer 1969a: 180). When 'the entire consciousness is filled and occupied by a single image', we become universal subjects of aesthetic contemplation, thus breaking free from egocentrism (177). When the egocentric subject disappears from the scene, external objects are no longer judged according to their potential effects on one's desires. As soon as this happens, the subject ceases to feel anxiety. The grasp of the aesthetic dimension of things thus brings out a subject that is 'a pure intelligence' without 'sorrows and sufferings'; what remains is a 'state of pleasure, in other words absence of all pain' (2000b: 415–6).

Schopenhauer writes that the brain and the intellect are not 'designed' for knowing the unity that underlies the world and of which they are part, but only 'for comprehending those ends on the attainment of which depend individual life and its propagation' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 284). They are designed, in other words, for egocentric consciousness, the default mode of consciousness, which is at the service of one's appetites (and, ultimately, of the essential will to life). Non-egocentric modes of consciousness are only a fortunate accident. In order to understand their existence, we must admit that 'a measure of the power of knowledge' exceeds that required for the service of the essential will, and that 'this superfluity of knowledge' can become free or 'purified' of desire (1969a: 186). For Neill, this cognitive excess, 'not in itself necessitated by the survival needs of the individual' and apparently present in humans alone, can be compared to the human capacity for song, which is 'a by-product of the emergence of the physiology of the larynx, vocal cords, etc., which is determined by (what is at least arguably) the survival need of the individual human will for the capacity for verbal communication' (Neill 2009: 33). The intellectual capacity for non-

egocentric representation would then be a a fortunate by-product of the emergence of consciousness, which itself performs an important survival function.

For Schopenhauer aesthetic contemplation does not afford 'a lasting emancipation, but merely … an exceptional, and in fact only momentary, release' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 363). Obviously, this brief relief is itself a valuable experience. The value of aesthetic contemplation does not end here, because the painless state out of ourselves to which it transports us is a good preparation for death. On the one hand, the aesthetic state offers a fleeting glimpse of the permanent freedom from anxiety that comes from the definitive abolition of egocentrism that takes place when we die. On the other hand, aesthetic contemplation shows us what lies beyond individuality, revealing that we share in something that is larger than ourselves, something that will not perish when we pass away.

The aesthetic experience can result from the contemplation of nature and from the contemplation of a work of art. As far as art is concerned, Schopenhauer maintains that the task of the artist is to extend the receiver's mind beyond the surface of concrete perceptions to the universal dimension of the object. Artistic feelings make the represented object's universal character accessible to the observer, in much the same way as aesthetic inspiration — the feeling of the aesthetic dimension of real objects — made it accessible to the author. Unlike aesthetic inspiration and artistic reception, artistic execution is driven by the subject's desire. As it is intended to materialise, 'by deliberate art' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 186), the artist's aesthetic feelings and to produce an equivalent effect upon the audience, the work of art can only aspire to be the fittest technical means to those ends — little more than a necessary prop. Schopenhauer believes that the fabrication of these artistic props requires strong willpower; moreover, he thinks they are not possible without the aid of reason, whose instrumental nature, as a means to the end of personal satisfaction, Schopenhauer never fails to highlight.

It is noteworthy that the philosopher's view of artistic production also extends to history, science, religion and philosophy, whose non-rational object must be communicated with the help of reason. As regards the feelings that trigger them, these approaches may be, just like art, alien to the satisfaction of individual desires; but when these feelings are transformed into concepts the resulting historical, scientific, religious and philosophical theories become a vehicle of its practitioners' desires and grow bellicose with their competitors. In this respect, Schopenhauer puts forward the view

that 'hardly has any philosophical system come into the world when it already contemplates the destruction of all its brothers', a statement that highlights 'this essentially polemical nature, this *bellum omnium contra omnes* of philosophical systems' (Schopenhauer 2000b: 5). In philosophy — as in the other spheres of life — the rational search for personal satisfaction leads to fierce competition. This competition among proposals made within the same area of enquiry compounds the rivalry between rational and non-rational kinds of cognition, between the focus on physical and metaphysical objects, and between the historical, scientific, artistic, religious and philosophical descriptions of the world.

2.2.4.1.2. Saintly Vision and Its Consequences: Compassionate Altruism and Resigned Withdrawal

For Schopenhauer, the saint is a person who has a spontaneous feeling of the essential unity of the world. The saint's vision is the only source of saintliness, but it may have two possible outcomes: either the compassionate identification with other sufferers and the altruistic attempt to palliate their suffering, or the resigned withdrawal from worldly competition. While compassionate saints are regarded by Schopenhauer as the paradigm of moral virtue, resigned saints are beyond moral considerations.

To be a saint one has to recognise 'without reasons or arguments' that the essential will 'constitutes the inner nature of everything, and lives in all … the animals and … the whole of nature' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 372). Saintly vision is, like aesthetic rest, an involuntary feeling: it is 'not to be forcibly arrived at by intention or design, but comes … suddenly, as if flying in from without', that is, as if produced by some kind of '*grace*' (404). Also like aesthetic rest, saintliness makes egocentrism disappear. The saint 'lives in an external world homogeneous with his essence: others for him are not not-I, but are "I once more"' (2009: 254). The saint has no problem to recognise that 'My true, inner essence exists in every living [and inanimate] thing as immediately as it reveals itself in my self-consciousness to myself alone', an insight traditionally expressed by Hinduism with 'the formula *tat-twam-asi*, i.e. "You are that"' (254).

Saintly vision sometimes translates into the compassionate identification with those that suffer and into the desire to help them.[17] This type of saintliness situates us squarely within the realm of morality. As is clear from his references to the positive effects of the moral appeals to conscience made, for example, by religion (see Schopenhauer 1969a: 168; 2009: 188), in Schopenhauer there is an implicit distinction between the theoretical description of people's desires, which are dictated by their innate characters, and the practical prescription of certain courses of action (see Magee 1997: 203). In spite of this, the usual focus of his moral theory is not on people's conduct but on their appetites (see Jordan 2009: 172). Morally speaking, the principal desires that Schopenhauer identifies are three, according as they seek 'one's own weal', 'another's weal' or 'another's woe' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 607 n. 6). These he names *egoism*, *compassion* and *malice*.[18] In his view, egoism — the name that our desires

17 Schopenhauer's theory of metaphysical identification is somewhat problematic. He contends that compassion does not really make us see the neighbour's suffering as ours: 'it remains clear and present to us at every single moment that he is the sufferer, not *us*' and though 'We suffer *with* him, … we feel his pain as *his*' (Schopenhauer 2009: 203). At the same time, though he asserts that when we identify with the neighbour's suffering we 'do not imagine that it is ours' (Schopenhauer 2009: 203), it is not entirely clear if his disagreement here is with the idea that our identification is *imaginative* or with the idea that identification makes us imagine the other's pain *as ours*. Cartwright suggests that the problems with Schopenhauer's notion of compassion would be solved if we interpreted it as 'the imaginative participation in another's suffering' (Cartwright 2009: 150), but acknowledges that this is not exactly the philosopher's intention.

18 Schopenhauer sometimes refers to a fourth type of desire, linked to asceticism, which is also morally indifferent because it seeks 'one's own woe' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 607 n. 6), and whose most relevant characteristic is its association with saintly vision and with the withdrawal to which it sometimes leads. Golding's novels include a few characters that might be termed ascetic, among them Matty in *Darkness Visible*. Matty's voluntary chastity, fasting, prolonged silence, self-castigation, poverty and obedience certainly echo Schopenhauer's characterisation of the ascetic's life. In addition, Golding links his ascetics to sainthood (in his own understanding of the phenomenon, that is, exclusively as compassionate altruism). Nevertheless, my discussion of Golding's novels will not deal with asceticism, as I do not find Schopenhauer's account of the relation between asceticism and saintliness especially illuminating. Schopenhauer states that saintly vision is an involuntary product of grace; but this rules out the possibility of becoming a saint through voluntary asceticism. He also states that asceticism is aimed at the prolongation of the saintly withdrawal that may follow vision; but the saintly attitude of detachment includes the

deserve whenever they are neither compassionate nor malignant — is morally indifferent, because it does not aim at the other's weal or woe. By contrast, compassion deserves to be called virtuous, and malice is reprehensible. The 'meritorious element' of compassion is 'not the deed, but the willingness to do it, the love from which it results, and without which it is a dead work' (1969a: 526). This does not mean that the actions issuing from compassion are not important. Schopenhauer calls them *altruistic*. As for the actions that, being associated with egoism and malice, inflict pain on the other, Schopenhauer calls them *evil*; these are the ones that prescriptive morality condemns and legal systems try to minimise.

As far as a person's desires are concerned, Schopenhauer sees any consideration of moral worth as concerned with feelings rather than with concepts: the basis of compassion is always a feeling. Since only conceptual representations can be reliably communicated and taught, this amounts to saying that virtue, like aesthetic receptivity, cannot be the goal of education: 'Virtue is as little taught as is genius' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 271). In both aesthetics and morality the concept 'can be used only as an instrument' (271). The concept, then, can serve to speak about aesthetics, to teach people the techniques used by artists, to judge the merit of a work of art, and even to elicit an aesthetic feeling in the audience. Likewise, it can be used to speak about morality, to teach how to judge people's intentions in terms of virtue or vice, and even — going from description to prescription — to guide people's conduct so as to prevent the infliction of avoidable pain. However, the concept can produce neither artists nor virtuous people. As in other cases, Schopenhauer's moral stance involves a firm rejection of Kant's rationalism. This is confirmed by Schopenhauer's assertion that the absence of rationality and moral worth are perfectly compatible, and by the association that he establishes between rationality and iniquity: 'Rational and vicious can combine very well, and indeed it is only through their combination that great, far-reaching crimes are possible. Irrational and noble-minded likewise co-exist very well' (2009: 151).

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indifference to one's individual desires and intentions, whereas ascetic actions are intended. Schopenhauer's concern with the problematic link between ascesis, on the one hand, and saintliness and vision, on the other, must be understood in the context of a long tradition in Western thought. It could be argued that this definition of extreme asceticism has as much to do with a self-destructive character as with the saint.

Schopenhauer believes that everyone is morally capable of egoistic, compassionate and malignant desires, which are nevertheless 'present in each one in different and incredibly diverse proportions' depending on one's innate character (Schopenhauer 2009: 238). However, since the essential will makes use of egocentrism to its own advantage — that is, to achieve indirect satisfaction through the individual — egoism naturally prevails. Malice is also linked to egocentrism, because it presupposes an individual subject that establishes a complete separation between the *I* and the others, but compassion is not. This being so, in the course of our life we are likely to come across very many indifferent characters, now and again a character that is malignant, and only as the rarest exception one that is moved by compassion.

The difference between egoism and malice can be measured in the distance between conditional and unconditional harm. With the former, the harm intended 'is merely a means for egoism, not an end, and thus occurs only accidentally'; with malice, by contrast, 'the sufferings and pains of others are an end in themselves and achieving them is a pleasure' (Schopenhauer 2009: 194). While the maxim of egoism is 'Help no one; rather harm everyone if it brings you advantage', that of malice is 'Harm everyone to the extent that you can' (194). Given its prevalence among humans, egoism can lead 'to crimes and misdeeds of all kinds' (194). In theory, these are merely a side-effect of egoism, not a necessary outcome. Yet egoism becomes dangerous as soon as it becomes indifference to others, so, in practice, its evil consequences are often indistinguishable from those of malice. As a result, some confusion may arise when judging people's desires — and their innate character — from their acts.

As regards compassion, it is based on the identification with sufferers. Schopenhauer roots this identification in saintly vision, that is, on the feeling that there are no essential differences among conscious beings. This extension of compassion to all conscious beings, whether human or not, is a fundamental aspect of his philosophy. Schopenhauer is revolted by Kant's notion of the intrinsic dignity and incomparable value of humans, which leads to the idea that only they must be treated as ends in themselves. Other species, he complains, are supposed by Kant to lack such dignity solely because they lack reason. The unfortunate consequence is that they are treated as 'mere "things", mere means to whatever ends you like' (Schopenhauer 2009: 162). For Schopenhauer, the compassionate person refrains from doing harm 'even to an animal', regardless of its lack of rationality (1969a: 372).

Thanks to compassion, writes Schopenhauer, 'the heart feels itself enlarged, just as by egoism it feels contracted' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 373). While egoistic individuals concentrate solely on their own well-being and feel themselves 'surrounded by strange and hostile phenomena', compassionate people live 'in a world of friendly phenomena' whose essence they are somehow aware of sharing and with whose pain they identify (374). In theory, even a person dominated by egoism may comply with the first part of Schopenhauer's principle to 'Harm no one; rather help everyone to the extent that you can' (2009: 140). But the latter part is only satisfied by the compassionate person's altruistic behaviour. As it turns out, though Schopenhauer is clear that seeing the surrounding world as full of enemies or of friends is a function of being egoistic or compassionate, since his emphasis falls on how one sees the world, it would be more accurate to say that it depends on being tied to an egocentric (i.e. physical) perspective or being able to escape it (adopting a metaphysical perspective). In these terms, it is not only egoistic individuals but also malignant ones that see the world as an inhospitable place, and it is for this reason they are opposed to compassionate beings in the first place. Plainly enough, then, when Schopenhauer refers to the world as hellish it is surely because he is describing it from the point of view from which most conscious beings see it, that is, from an egocentric point of view.

While some saints carry out altruistic actions that seek to palliate the other's pain, others realise that for conscious beings *'all life is suffering'*, and that the 'efforts to banish suffering achieve nothing more than a change in its form' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 310, 315). In the wake of this realisation, this kind of saint develops a 'strong aversion' to the world, from which he or she 'withdraws' or 'turns away'; this saint thus ceases to pay attention to his or her desires, including the compassionate impulse to act altruistically (379–80). With the insight into the world's common essence and the disregard of the demands of one's innate character and the will to life, 'the individuality is really abolished also, and with it its suffering and sorrow' (371). Saintly withdrawal opens the door to a better life in which egocentrism is overcome and the demands of the innate character and of the will to life are 'silenced', as it were, and 'not for a few moments … but for ever, … except for the last glimmering spark that maintains the body and is extinguished with it' (390). Unlike the imperfect respites afforded by other kinds of involuntary cognition, this is genuine 'peace and bliss' (391).

The saints' '*denial*' of the essential will is the 'highest good, *summum bonum*', and can be compared to a veritable '*new birth* or *regeneration*' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 285, 362, 403). It is obvious that, insofar as Schopenhauer posits the essential will as '*all-permeating*', his notion of the denial of the essential will is not without difficulties (Wicks 2008: 128). Perhaps these could be avoided by making the saint deny the essential will only at its two intermediary levels (qua innate character and qua will to life), and only in the sense of not heeding the aspirations and needs rooted in them. Consequently, saintly denial can be understood as indifference to the demands made by their innate character and indirectly by the will to life. This interpretation has the problem of diminishing the distance between saintly detachment and the other kinds of metaphysical consciousness; perhaps a better alternative would be to regard the saint's resignation, like the vision that precedes it, as the inexplicable product of grace. Schopenhauer states that the saint's indifference proceeds from a 'changed form' of consciousness (Schopenhauer 1969a: 403). As a result of saintly vision, a person 'knows the whole, comprehends its inner nature' (379). This knowledge eliminates egocentrism, and the objects that had incited us to act in a certain way — always in accordance with our innate character — 'become ineffective': they no longer have any power over us (403). However, what is peculiar to saintly resignation is not only that it follows on from a view of the world's essence but, above all, that it changes the saint's life for ever. While aesthetic contemplation, for example, only affords a momentary respite, saintly vision rids us of anxiety for good.

Saintly detachment is closely connected with quietism, and does not correspond to any of Schopenhauer's moral categories. The main differences between the compassionate and the resigned saints are that the former's compassion for those that suffer only encompasses conscious beings and leads to altruistic action, whereas the latter's aversion is to the whole world and leads to resignation. In other words, compassion entails love for the suffering neighbour while resignation situates one beyond love and hate. This distinction is at odds with the compassion and altruism that, according to his commentators, Golding attributes to all of his saints, because for Golding, as we shall see, the resigned detachment from the rest of the world is never the goal of the saint.

2.2.4.1.3. Death as a Definitive Liberation from Suffering

All experiences of better consciousness — aesthetic contemplation, saintly vision — are a good preparation for death, because they involve an escape from egocentrism and egoism. This is most clear in the case of saints. According to Schopenhauer, the resigned saint who 'no longer takes any interest in his individual phenomenon' because there is no longer 'any keen desire for individual existence, left in him', undoubtedly 'will be least afraid of becoming nothing in death' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 609). With compassionate saints, death may be a consequence of extreme altruism. Schopenhauer states that 'the character that has reached the highest goodness and perfect magnanimity will sacrifice its well-being and its life completely for the well-being of … others' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 375). As a rule, however, people would never risk their lives as saints do: most people are egocentric subjects that fear death precisely because it entails their annihilation.

Though Schopenhauer believes that dying means 'a deliverance from a world whose whole existence presented itself to us as suffering' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 408–9), most individuals fail to recognise the liberating power of death, and they usually revolt against it. Schopenhauer interprets this strong attachment to life as evidence of the will to life's ascendancy over the subject: 'it is not really this *knowing* part … that fears death, but *fuga mortis* comes simply and solely from the blind *will*' of the individual (468), a will that is, at a deeper level, just a will to life, i.e. to perpetuation.

For Schopenhauer, who defends the acceptance of death as a token of wisdom, it is 'only small, narrow minds' that 'are unable to transcend the particular' and 'fear death as their annihilation' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 475). Though conscious beings are programmed for egocentric awareness alone, which effectively prevents their knowledge of the unity of the world, and of the common essence that goes on existing after their death. Those that are unable to transcend egocentrism cannot but fear death as the disappearance of the egocentric I. But to those who have momentarily become a universal subject while contemplating the aesthetic dimension of objects, or who, like saints, have attained the 'higher standpoint' beyond appearances and are sufficiently familiar with the woes of existence, 'it remains at least doubtful whether existence is to be preferred to non-existence'; this view explains Schopenhauer's contempt for the individual who 'clings unconditionally to life, struggles to the utmost against

approaching death, and receives it with despair' (464–6). Indeed, those who have achieved aesthetic tranquillity for a while, or who have withdrawn from the world, are compelled to acknowledge that 'death is the great opportunity no longer to be I', in other words, to break with 'the one-sidedness of an individuality which does not constitute the innermost kernel of our true being, but is … a kind of aberration thereof' (507, 508). The individual that has been fortunate enough to gain non-egocentric insight into the metaphysical unity of the world, or at least to be told about it by those who have, does not need to be afraid of dying any more, and 'may certainly and justly console himself for his own death and for that of his friends by looking back on the immortal life of nature, which he himself is' (1969a: 276). It is therefore necessary to realise that man as appearance 'is certainly perishable, yet his true inner being is not affected by this' (1969b: 493–4).

Not all kinds of death will do though. Despite his commendation of natural and accidental death, Schopenhauer warns us that suicide generally results from the 'strong affirmation' of one's desires (hence of the will to life) and not from indifference to their satisfaction (Schopenhauer 1969a: 398). This is so because the suicide usually wishes to shun the 'sorrows' of the world instead of its 'pleasures' (398). Having said this, Schopenhauer contemplates the possibility of an exceptional kind of suicide that results from absolute detachment: 'death by starvation' proves that the complete indifference to one's needs can surpass one's desire 'to maintain the vegetative life of the body, by the assimilation of nourishment' (401). This second kind of suicide is 'far from being the result of the will-to-live'; it only takes place after the 'completely resigned' saint has ceased to be concerned with the satisfaction of his or her desires (401).[19]

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19 In spite of his youthful admiration for Schopenhauer, Friedrich W. Nietzsche pointed out that there is a certain incongruity in saying that the essential will is characterised by restless striving while simultaneously asserting that our reunion with it must be welcome as our true salvation. The problem only arises if we take death to involve a literal *rest in peace*, because it is evident that being reabsorbed by the essential will, that is, by the ceaseless activity that manifests itself in the realm of appearances, does not afford this kind of rest. Obviously Schopenhauer's theory would be somewhat easier to accept if we acknowledge the existence of a region beyond the essential will — the unknowable thing-in-itself — to which we would return after death. Nevertheless, Schopenhauer only says that when we die we leave suffering behind (because only conscious beings can suffer, and death puts an end to consciousness), not that we leave the

2.2.4.2. Collective Remedies for Suffering

Schopenhauer envisages a series of solutions to suffering at the individual level which involve bypassing egocentric atomisation. However, he refuses to give any chances to a similar solution at the collective level. In his view, the state's legal system is based on egocentrism, more precisely on the egoistic avoidance of pain. That is why the law always includes the promise of rewards and the threat of punishment, even by force. Given that individuals are mostly egoistic and sometimes malignant, however much society may improve, neither the eradication of pain nor historical progress are really possible.

2.2.4.2.1. The Weakness of Morality and the Need for Legal Restraints

For Schopenhauer, moral theory is anterior to legal theory, and the concepts originally applied to moral concerns must be taken into account by legal regulations. Like his moral classification of people's desires, his treatment of the law involves using the notions of weal and woe. Nevertheless, both areas of thought approach these concepts from different angles: while moral classifications are concerned with a person's desires, laws are concerned with a person's actions. In Schopenhauer's opinion, moral descriptions only serve to identify a person's ruling passions, describing the malignant desire to increase the other's suffering as reprehensible and the compassionate desire to increase the other's well-being as virtuous; but those desires depend on the person's innate character, and morality cannot change them. This does not mean that certain forms of morality (for example those associated with religion) cannot have a prescriptive function. Indeed, morals can condemn evil actions — those that cause the other to suffer — and change people's conduct by teaching them to choose more carefully among the objects that satisfy their desires. Ideally, this would lead people to find fulfilment in ways that do not harm the others. However, Schopenhauer believes that the practical norms laid out by morals are too weak to be entirely reliable. That is why, he says, we need the law, which does not limit itself to practical regulations but

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essential will behind.

accompanies them with the threat to enforce them. In this view, the law can only fight evil with evil, threatening to inflict a certain amount of pain to prevent even greater suffering.

One's innate character cannot be altered, holds Schopenhauer, and compassion cannot be taught. Society needs a repressive legal system not only because 'the boundless egoism of almost all' and 'the malice of many' cause an outrageous amount of mutual aggression (Schopenhauer 2009: 188), but also because this is a situation that the weak restraining power of morality cannot prevent (see Jordan 2009: 176). This explanation seems to me to throw light on the conclusion, reached by some of Golding's commentators, that there are occasions on which democratic societies need to make a repressive use of force. Though the state can certainly alter the behaviour of individuals, it cannot do so by transforming the citizens' innate egoism and malice into compassion (see Schopenhauer 1969b: 597). In Schopenhauer's conception, the state exists basically 'for compelling' the majority not to harm each other (2009: 208). This can only be done through hope for recompense or fear of the penalty, by dint of which everyone will be careful not to cause suffering to anyone. Schopenhauer believes that every successful state relies on and promotes whatever egoism there might be in its members. To the extent that the state 'has placed the protection of the rights of everyone in the hands of a force which, infinitely superior to the power of each individual, compels him to respect the rights of all others', it can be regarded as a collective 'masterpiece' resulting from 'the self-comprehending, rational, accumulated egoism of all' (188). The protection that the state offers 'is by no means directed against egoism, but only against the injurious consequences of egoism arising out of the plurality of egoistic individuals, reciprocally affecting them, and disturbing their well-being' (1969a: 345).[20]

The way in which society can make the most of the majority's innate egoism and of the malignant dispositions of a few, is by threatening them and by offering them

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20 There is an important point that Schopenhauer does not make. While egoists can be prevented from harming their neighbours, the solution for malignant individuals has to be different. Arguably, even their malice can be channelled in a profitable way, by allowing them to do violence to others when that behaviour is socially desirable (for example in the exercise of lawful repression and punishment). Schopenhauer does not contemplate this possibility, but Golding does when he discusses Jack's violent conduct in *Lord of the Flies*.

suitable objects through which they can realise their aspirations without causing their neighbours any harm. For Schopenhauer, a just law is a law that takes advantage of (the fear of) suffering in order to minimise suffering. By doing this, society achieves a semblance of virtue without ever altering the inner source of moral behaviour. Even if the state succeeds in channelling its members' passions so that they will not threaten each other's weal, this achievement would not increase the number of compassionate citizens. In one of his most memorable passages, Schopenhauer compares the effect to 'a carnivorous animal with a muzzle', which 'is as harmless as a grass-eating animal' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 346).

2.2.4.2.2. Anti-Utopianism and the Impossibility of Historical Progress

Having examined Schopenhauer's conception of the state's origin and function, it remains to discuss his views of the shape that the state can adopt and of historical progress. Schopenhauer's premise is that the value of any social organisation depends on its success in preventing mutual harm irrespective of each of its members' individual desires; because he sees repression as unavoidable, he dismisses utopian projects as unrealistic.

It would indeed be 'a great thing', writes Schopenhauer, if social organisation managed to reduce mutual harm to a minimum (2000b: 251). Reducing is not eliminating, though, and he insists that egoism and malice are so 'deep-rooted' in human nature as to be impossible to eradicate (251). The ideal state's aim of getting rid of mutual harm 'entirely without leaving a trace' can only be reached 'approximately', because when it is 'cast out in one direction', it will 'creep back in another' (251). All feasible societies share this basic defect, which prevents utopian dreams from being realised.

Given the dependence of social organisations on human nature, this situation cannot be changed. As Terry Eagleton says, Schopenhauer's most important lesson in history is that 'There is no grand *telos*' (Eagleton 1990: 156). As the main enlightened representative of a tradition later kept alive by Karl Marx and his followers, Schopenhauer reaches the conclusion, again in Eagleton's words, that the 'dramatic mutations', the 'epochal ruptures and upheavals' of human history, are 'mere variations

on a consistent theme of exploitation and oppression' (158). The difference between Schopenhauer and Marx is that, as we have just seen, the former never gives any credit to the idea of a revolution that would eventually put an end to this situation. In Schopenhauer's own words, given that the human species does not change, and that egoistic and malignant characters invariably outnumber virtuous characters, it is necessary to 'recognize the identical in all events, of ancient as of modern times, of the East as of the West' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 444). What the past continuously reveals, he argues, is an invariable, immoral reality under different names and in a slightly different guise. Thus he recommends that the motto for human history should be '*Eadem, sed aliter*', the same but otherwise (444).

3. AN INTERPRETATION OF GOLDING'S METAPHYSICS

In the preceding part I examined the difference, which Schopenhauer inherits from Kant, between the knowable world and the unknowable thing-in-itself, together with his vindication of a metaphysics of nature resting on the distinction between knowledge of the realm of appearances and knowledge of the world's essence. I have also surveyed the varieties of cognition — non-rational feelings and rational concepts, both of which can be physical as well as metaphysical. The transition from feelings to concepts, and from physical matter to metaphysical objects, marks the evolution from non-human to human consciousness, and explains the emergence of the recognisable world that we inhabit. I have paid special attention to both the physical descriptions of the world furnished by history and science, and the metaphysical descriptions offered by art, religion and philosophy. After explaining how the essential will can be known and conceptualised according to several degrees of generality — as the world-will, the will to life and one's innate character — I have given an account of its insatiability and of its primacy in all human affairs. As a result of this primacy, of the limitations which it imposes on individual freedom, of the prevalence of egocentric types of knowledge, and of the conflict among individuals that ensues from all these, Schopenhauer envisages the world as inevitably pervaded by suffering. Despite his indictment of our world as the worst possible, he makes allowances for a number of situations in which suffering can be alleviated on the individual and the collective levels. As far as the individual is concerned, the remedies on which he puts the greatest stress are aesthetic tranquillity, saintly vision (leading to compassionate altruism or resigned detachment) and involuntary death. As regards collective life, he tacitly admits that morality is to a large

extent ineffective. At the same time as he points to the need for suitable legal repression, he declares that utopia is unattainable.

The general characteristics of Schopenhauer's model coincide with the world view expressed, in a fragmentary and indirect way, in most of Golding's novels, especially the earlier. Due to this fragmentariness and indirectness, this world view must be reconstructed by the reader; this reconstruction can be carried out with the assistance of Schopenhauer's philosophy. The world view thus recovered can be regarded as an ideal starting point from which Golding's novels proceed, each in its own peculiar way and with its own peculiar emphases, but almost always treating the same fundamental topics and often doing so from a similar standpoint. It is by virtue of these implicit and explicit connections that the novels possess a clear family resemblance.

Particularly in his earlier novels, Golding traces the role of consciousness, first non-rational and then rational, in the apparition of the human world. In parallel, there is a similar transition from the consciousness of physical matter to the contact with the metaphysical sphere. In the belief that everyday existence takes place in a realm of appearances that half-conceals and half-reveals the essence of the world, Golding sees it as his duty to remind the readers of the importance of those metaphysical conceptions of the world — those provided by religion and art, in particular — that gesture towards what is beyond appearances. He also reminds us that, from the very beginning, the harmonious arrangement of these appearances is disrupted not only by the inherent limitations of knowledge (as a result of which the knowable world is always on the verge of collapsing) but also by the unruly essence behind them. Because of the nature of the world's essence, everyday existence is pervaded by conflict and dissatisfaction that engender suffering. This does not mean that suffering cannot be alleviated in any way. At the individual level, the most important solutions are some kinds of consciousness like aesthetic contemplation and compassionate altruism, and death (other remedies such as resigned detachment, which is so important for Schopenhauer, plays no role in the novelist's works). At the collective level, Golding earlier novels suggest that, given the weakness of moral restraints, the solution is legal repression.

Though the existence of this thematic foundation is clear, it must not be thought that, as Golding's career unfolds, his works offer mere variations on the same old themes. On the contrary, it is not very long before a different approach to these basic

concerns begins to slip in. In fact, even as he is attempting to flesh out his initial world view, elements that are extraneous to that world view gradually find their way into his novels. This is the case, most notably, in reference to the possibility of knowing the essence of the world, which Golding soon starts to challenge. This new position has an important bearing on the recognition of free choice in the Kantian sense (a position that is already hinted at, though not substantiated, at the end of Golding's third novel, *Pincher Martin*), and of the chances of socio-political alternatives to a repressive state. Obviously, there is no sharp thematic break but a piecemeal transition between the earlier and the later novels. This means that the introduction of alien premises into a basic framework that by and large coincides with Schopenhauer's is neither smooth nor linear. While Golding's fourth published novel, *Free Fall* reaches a conclusion whose socio-political relevance will only be apparent in the Sea Trilogy, the novel that follows *Free Fall*, *The Spire*, still offers information concerning the essence of the world that is crucial for an accurate understanding of Golding's first three novels. What is clear is that the starting point is close to Schopenhauer, and that as early as *Free Fall* other elements begin to be introduced. It is also clear that all these gradual modifications can be located and understood by reference to Golding's basic stance. This thematic evolution is an aspect of Golding's oeuvre that cannot escape the attention of anyone that reads his fiction and non-fiction chronologically.

First I shall discuss those aspects that are congruent with the model elaborated by Schopenhauer, and whose full implications the philosopher's thought can help to work out. The categories that Golding uses do not always fit neatly into Schopenhauer's classification (a case in point is the novelist's opposition between matter and spirit); yet the latter's theory provides a compass to navigate the latter's works without repeating the conceptual mistakes made by previous critics. Despite Golding's references to the spirit and its presentation as a different world from that of matter, in his works the metaphysical sphere functions as the other side of physical objects. Likewise, despite Golding's occasional talk of the soul, the essential force that appears in his works can in some of them be interpreted as the essential will, and in none does it have to be regarded as a different substance from the body; on the contrary, the body can be considered its manifestation. This analysis contradicts the ontological dualism that other critics have taken for granted. Sometimes I shall refer to the almighty will as that of the divinity that, in Golding's view, presides over the aforementioned realm of spirit;

yet these references must in all cases be interpreted as reflecting the theistic beliefs in a divinity or divinities held by Golding and by some of his characters, not as part of my explanation of the essential will.

The discussion of the points where Golding's and Schopenhauer's world views coincide will be followed by an analysis of some aspects of the novelist's later work — particularly from *Free Fall* onwards — that contrast with Schopenhauer's positions. On these occasions — when he deals with crucial issues like human freedom, our knowledge of the world's essence, and humankind's moral dispositions — Golding's fiction ends up questioning the very assumptions that form the backbone of Schopenhauer's thought. This happens, above all, when he problematises the possibility of knowing the world's essence, when he asserts individual freedom as consisting in the free choice of one's moral norms, and when he concedes that utopia might be feasible after all.

Finally, I shall offer a chronological overview of the changing treatment that the divinity receives in Golding's works, where the belief in the existence of at least one deity is a recurrent topic. Schopenhauer rejects the existence of the divinity, and its presence in Golding's works would seem to go against all my efforts to link their contents to the German philosopher's thought. However, Golding's doubts and changes of opinion prevent his vague theistic beliefs from playing any significant role except as a token of his lifelong personal struggle against scepticism. My claim finds support in the fact that all the important elements for which the deity could be made responsible in Golding's works, beginning with human freedom or the lack thereof, are accounted for in secular terms by Schopenhauer.

3.1. Golding's Basic Stance: From Feeling to Cosmic Optimism

This chapter reconstructs Golding's initial stance. While the focus is in his novels, his non-fictional writings and interviews are also discussed in some detail. In the first sections I examine Golding's view of the knowable world. To begin with, I study the process whereby the a person's intellect humanises the world. Next I analyse the way in which metaphysical cognition allows humans to posit the essential will as the world's

inner kernel, the way in which the primacy of the will fills the world with suffering, and the way in which Golding's moral view of history as resistant to progress leads to pessimism. In the last section of this chapter I explain how Golding directs our attention to unknowable regions outside this world, and why, thanks to this move, he feels entitled to present himself as an optimist.

3.1.1. The Humanisation of the World

In this section I shall concentrate on Golding's depiction of the humanisation of the world through the application of those modes of cognition that are peculiar to humans. These are, on the one hand, rational forms of knowledge that produce and operate with concepts, and, on the other, forms of knowledge whose object is not the physical realm of material objects. This is the knowledge of what Golding and his commentators generally call the spirit (a realm which certainly includes, but is not limited to, the dimension that Schopenhauer links to metaphysical knowledge). In addition to discussing the emergence of rational and metaphysical forms of knowledge in Golding's novels, in this section I shall discuss his subordination of physical science to the arts. First I shall deal with the gradual addition of rational concepts — and with them, of cultural values — to the non-rational feelings through which characters initially locate themselves in the world. This accretion makes possible the passage from life in nature to cultural forms of communication, collaboration and organisation; moreover, the use of concepts in combination with the objects of the imagination gives rise to distinctive human ways of living in time and space. Secondly I shall focus on the addition of metaphysical forms of knowledge — those which start from feelings of objects that are not material, including the essence of the world — to physical cognition. Thirdly I shall address Golding's intervention in the two cultures controversy as an advocate of the arts, which he takes to be capable of describing the metaphysical side of the world and which, thanks to this, is more beneficial to the audience than the physical sciences.

3.1.1.1. Feelings, Concepts and the Order of Culture

From the very first pages of his first published novel, *Lord of the Flies*, Golding's fiction concerns itself with the process whereby physical perceptions, a variety of what Schopenhauer calls non-rational feelings, give way to rational concepts and thus to language and, more generally, to all kinds of cultural meaning. For Golding, as for Schopenhauer, concepts endow with social utility the objects that we initially grasp through feelings. Through rational agreement and coordinated work, the inhospitable world becomes a more or less comfortable home for humankind. In *Lord of the Flies*, a group of castaway boys try to mimic the rational ways which — they naively believe — govern adult society. In *Pincher Martin* the socialised individual is left alone, and the world and its subsequent domestication are only a figment of the title character's imagination. In this novel, one of the first things that attracts the reader's attention is the sensuous quality of Golding's writing. Adapting the terminology used by Clements in his analysis of the style employed by Golding's narrators (and by some of his characters), and explaining it with the help of Schopenhauer's theory of language (according to which the conceptual resources of language, which always make reference to feelings, can certainly trigger concepts in the addressee's minds but also trigger feelings that to some extent reproduce the original ones), I shall examine the sensuousness of the narrator's style at the beginning of *Pincher Martin* in terms of linguistic evocation, that is, as a manipulation of language that makes readers share the characters' feelings and even have feelings that are unavailable to the characters.

From Schopenhauer's perspective, what separates those uses of language that Clements calls *evocative* from those that are *denotative* is neither the medium (all language is conceptual) nor the object that one conveys (language always refers to feelings, or to concepts derived from them), but exclusively their effect on the audience, that is, whether they appeal to the rational or to the non-rational intellect. The difference, in other words, is whether words excite concepts or feelings in the receiver. According to Schopenhauer, what separates philosophy from religion is precisely the different ways in which they use words to convey the same object: the metaphysical concept — often presented in a theistic guise — of the essential will. (Of course, nothing prevents an exact correspondence between the object and the effect of words; actually

this is the norm when conveying the state of consciousness of a character, as in those modernist works where a feeling is both the source and the goal.)

As far as Golding's style is concerned, I shall focus mostly on his narrators, but with occasional references to his characters' language. I shall argue that they use words in a denotative way when they limit themselves to choosing the exact literal word to the exclusion of figurative expressions, and in particular when they refer to abstract ideas; by contrast, I shall say that they use language evocatively when they favour indirection, and even figurative expression, especially to refer to concrete realities. Evocation tends to have a defamiliarising power that puts readers in contact with parts of the world that are normally subordinated to what can be rationally comprehended. Despite this common purpose to render the world less familiar, it is possible to identify two varieties of evocation, according as they elicit physical or metaphysical feelings. To reflect this difference, I shall introduce two further labels — *impressionistic* and *symbolic*[1] — which Ian Watt employs in his discussion of Joseph Conrad's prose (1980).[2] The evocative uses of language with which Golding's narrators and characters arouse the readers' physical feelings — i.e. those that are impressionistic — tend to shun an intense exploitation of metaphor; by contrast, the evocative uses of language that trigger metaphysical feelings — i.e. those that are symbolic — usually veer towards the metaphoric. These stylistic distinctions are not a question of mutually exclusive qualities, but of dominance of one quality over another; further, having the aforementioned effects does not prevent denotation and evocation form producing

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1   This definition of symbolism as metaphysical is a historical oversimplification, and fits romantic and post-romantic symbolism better than the emblematic symbolism from which it deviates (see Watt 1980: 181–2). However, it must be borne in mind that the kind of symbolism which Watt discusses in Conrad's works and which interests me most in Golding's novels — though not the only one that they contain — is metaphysical symbolism (I refer to emblematic symbols such as the conch in *Lord of the Flies* as *emblems*).

2   Clements also speaks of *impressionism*, but only in passing and seemingly without realising the full implications of the idea. Of the two occasions on which he mentions it, the first is a description of Patrick White's style as 'impressionistic and painterly' yet ultimately full of metaphysical resonance (Clements 2012: 103). Here physical impressionism only seems to serve to usher in metaphysical symbolism. The second is a description of Saul Bellow's style in terms borrowed from discussions of Conrad's prose; for Clements, Bellow's concern is always with physical surfaces rather that with metaphysical depths (167–8).

other, subordinated effects. To recapitulate, when dealing with Golding's style I shall describe as *denotative* those uses of language that name objects as directly, precisely, unequivocally and concisely as possible and that excite rational concepts, and as *evocative* those that suggest objects in an imprecise or roundabout way (for example, by naming other objects, often figuratively) and that excite non-rational feelings. When the effect of evocation is a physical feeling, I shall speak of *impressionism*; when evocation causes a metaphysical feeling, I shall speak of *symbolism*.[3]

Though this does not always need to be the case (as we saw in connection with Craig Raine's poem 'A Martian Sends a Postcard Home'), with Golding metaphoric concentration tends to make the reader adopt a metaphysical state of mind. The more language employs metaphors to fuse one concept into another, thus blurring, for example, the limits between the human and the non-human, between the living and the animate and the inanimate, the greater the chances that language will be interpreted symbolically, that is, as reflecting the fact that the differences among discrete individuals are superficial and that the metaphysical essence of all things and beings is the same. In the particular case of *Pincher Martin*, evocation serves first of all to convey the character's feeling of the physical world. The striking use of impressionism at the beginning of this novel suggests that, once he has set the stage for a full deployment of all the modalities of human cognition, Golding, like Schopenhauer, treats concepts, whose role in human consciousness he does not deny or belittle, as subsidiary to feelings. Whether it be impressionistic or symbolic, Golding's reliance on evocation reduces the concept to a mere means whereby feelings are aroused. Even

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3   Actually, it is possible to distinguish not one but al least two varieties of metaphysical evocation. One of them is symbolic or, as Clements calls it, 'kataphatic'; Watt does not mention the other, which Clements calls 'apophatic' and which, according to his definition, turns on negation — for example, saying that something is not good — and even on the negation of contraries — for example, saying that something is neither good not bad (Clements 2012: 20). In Clements's opinion, Golding's novels go from apophasis to kataphasis in their attempt to present what the metaphysical dimension might be like. Actually, the movement is in the opposite direction: in their attempt to describe the essence of the world and the divinity (which, as I shall show in the last chapter, they present as the same thing), Golding's novels go from symbolism (metaphorically speaking, the essence of the world and the divinity are *like this*) to the negation of contraries (the essence of the world and the divinity are *neither like this nor like that*).

more clearly than for Schopenhauer (whose philosophy aspired to be rationally understood), for Golding the denotative use of words does not do justice to the full being of things. Evocative words do not usually refer to objects directly — denotatively — and do not refer to them as something that can be contained or exhausted by conceptual meaning. In view of Golding's prose, this indirection is not something to be regretted. His handling of language cannot be fully understood unless we accept his implicit conviction that words need to be deployed evocatively so that the object that has been felt can shine through them.

3.1.1.1.1. The Return to Culture in *Lord of the Flies* and *Pincher Martin*

The plot of Golding's first published novel is well-known, and can be summarised in a few lines. The story is set on an unnamed tropical island, and until the last pages the only characters in it are a bunch of British boys aged between six and twelve. The world is at war, and the plane that is evacuating the boys from Britain crashes, leaving them stranded without adult supervision in an alien environment. They elect a leader, Ralph, who is assisted by a responsible but unattractive boy called Piggy. One of Ralph's first decisions is to appoint a group of hunters under the leadership of Jack Merridew, a former choir head. Soon habituated to the shedding of animal blood, the hunters begin to recede from the standards of civilisation which Ralph and Piggy strive to preserve, and before long they become vicious outlaws with rituals of their own. In the course of one of their dance-feasts, they kill the only boy who has a real insight into the nature of their problems, a shy boy called Simon. After the killing the hunters lose all sense of restraint and become a threat to everyone outside their group. Piggy is murdered by their self-constituted torturer, Roger, and Ralph is chased like one of the pigs that they are accustomed to hunt down. Before they can kill him, however, a British naval detachment arrives and takes charge of the survivors.

The first two boys that make their apparition in the novel are Ralph, whom Golding describes elsewhere as 'the average, rather more than average, man of … common sense' (Golding 1965: 89), and Piggy, a precocious representative of 'rational humanism' (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 6). Their encounter starts a process whereby the children gather and organise themselves in ways that reflect their

understanding of adult behaviour. The island is explored, its natural resources taken stock of and exploited, and a sort of rudimentary democracy is established. The quick introduction of collaboration and democracy reproduces on a small temporal scale the emergence of human forms of communication, collective work and political organisation, a process that in evolutionary and historical terms took hundreds of thousands of years.[4] Just as quick as the establishment of democracy on the island is its degradation, which is another accelerated re-enactment of what has happened in the adult world.

It has been said that '*Lord of the Flies* furnishes evidence of ... the cognitive flow through which ... objects turn into meaningful signs in a newly conquered environment' (Cmeciu and Cmeciu 2010: 129). The novel begins with the boys' attempt to come to terms with the desert island through what Schopenhauer calls feelings, a notion that in the philosopher's works encompasses an extremely vast range of elements (from bodily sensations — including those of pleasure and pain — through emotions to aesthetic and moral experiences) but which on the opening pages of Golding's novel covers only physical perceptions. The very first paragraph of the novel focuses on Ralph's awareness that 'his grey shirt stuck to him', that 'his hair was plastered to his forehead', that the jungle was 'a bath of heat'; at this early stage, what the narrator calls a bird is not yet identified by Ralph as such, but is reduced in his consciousness to 'a vision of red and yellow' (Golding 1954: 5). When he comes across Piggy, hidden by the undergrowth, at first Ralph only hears the other boy's shout as an echo of the bird's cry

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4   Implicitly, Golding's works draw attention to how the movement from feelings to concepts takes place phylogenetically (in the course of the development of animal species) and ontogenetically (in the course of the development of every human individual). As regards the latter, for example, *The Double Tongue* opens with its character-narrator's remembrance of her birth: 'Blazing light and warmth, undifferentiated', and 'No words, ... not even I' (let us recall that, according to Schopenhauer, the sense of the *I* is not original, but arises the moment one becomes aware of the motions of the will within); her next memory is of a kind of 'knowledge that we bring with us instantly; knowledge of what anger is, pain is, pleasure is, love', and for which there is no need of words (Golding 1995: 3). Similarly, Golding's private journals describe what might be a memory of his own birth: 'His earliest memory was of a colour, "red mostly, but everywhere, and a sense of wind blowing, buffeting, and there was much light"' (Carey 2009: 1). The next thing that he remembers, and to which I have already made reference, is the feeling of a sort of white cockerel strutting along the curtain pole, and the impossibility of telling his parents about the experience.

(5). Until this moment, Ralph grasp of his surroundings is by way of physical perceptions. This means that, before he identifies the mysterious shout as another boy's greeting — '"Hi!" it said, "Wait a minute!"' (5) — his consciousness only contains the same kinds of feelings that, according to Schopenhauer, non-human animals living in a state of nature also possess. This initial glimpse of natural experience does not last though. As soon as Ralph grasps the conceptual content of Piggy's words, he is momentarily reminded not only of the language in which they are inserted but also of the culture of which that language is part. As the narrator tells us, Ralph 'stopped and jerked his stockings with an automatic gesture that made the jungle seem for a moment like the Home Counties' (5). Piggy's influence on Ralph is one of the main thematic lines in the novel. Under his guidance, Ralph gradually becomes 'a specialist in [rational] thought', and recognises it as 'a valuable thing' that gets 'results' (78). It is also in Piggy's rationalism that Ralph's leadership finds its strongest ally. Together, both persuade the other children to attract a rescue ship and, meanwhile, to recreate 'the northern European tradition of work, play, and food right through the day' (58). Both goals are forgotten as soon as the boys surrender to 'the slow swing from dawn to quick dusk' and accept 'the pleasures of morning, the bright sun, the overwhelming sea and sweet air' (57). Politically speaking, this trajectory is mirrored by the establishment of a democracy of sorts and its sudden disintegration. Jack, who will soon become a petty tyrant, argues for the necessity to lay down rules, '"Lots of rules"', a need with which the other boys concur, but apart from a few excited shouts of agreement his threat to inflict severe physical punishments '"when anyone breaks 'em"' does not find much support (32). What does strike a chord among the other boys is Jack's insistence that they have '"to do the right things"', because they are '"not savages"' but '"English, and the English are best at everything"' (42).[5] This means, as the beginning of the novel

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5 In view of what happens later on, the fact that it is Jack who argues for physical repression cannot be accidental. The connection between viciousness and Englishness in *Lord of the Flies* — and later in *Pincher Martin* — has not escaped critical notice. The focus of this study prevents a detailed examination of what is at stake in these novels from this point of view; but the reader can compare Golding's statement that his intention in *Lord of the Flies* is to 'condemn' English people's belief 'that evil is somewhere else and inherent in another nation', while they alone 'are naturally kind and decent' (Golding 1965: 89; see also Biles 1970: 3–4, 35–6), with Stefan Hawlin's misplaced accusation that the novel contains a racist message (2008). For a good

makes clear, setting up a rational system of norms that will ensure the boys' rescue and, while they are waiting for this to happen, the peaceful enjoyment of an unexpected holiday in an earthly paradise. When these rules are nor obeyed, the lack of repressive measures — not necessarily the vicious beating to which Jack's threat points, but forms of physical restraint more fitting of the democratic system that Ralph and Piggy aspire to erect — results in something worse than a mere return to early childhood. The 'understandable and lawful world' slips away (91), and there follows an outbreak of uncontrolled violence that soon claims the lives of Simon, Piggy and an indeterminate number of other children, eventually endangering even its instigators, Jack, Roger and the other hunters, when they set the entire island on fire.

The collapse of cultural and political order is indicative of Golding's view that the world's essence — 'something … not external to man but present deep in himself' (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 20) — cannot be controlled by reason alone and is at the root of suffering. I shall return to this essential dimension of human nature, and to the need for repression to keep it in check, later on. For the moment I am going to concentrate on the movement from the boys' non-rational feelings of the physical surroundings to the rational concepts that they build thereupon, and on the parallel movement that takes them from a state of nature to a rudimentary form of democratic government. Both processes can be best understood if we examine the treatment that their common emblem, the conch, receives as the novel unfolds. After they have met on the beach and are still getting to know each other, Ralph sees 'Something creamy' at the bottom of a lagoon, 'a thing seen' but not yet identified (Golding 1954: 13, 14). At first Piggy confuses the thing with a stone. Then, at Ralph's suggestion that it might be a shell, he recalls seeing a similar one on a boy's 'garden wall', and refers to it as a *conch*. Piggy, in whom the physical attraction that the 'interesting and pretty' object exerts upon Ralph soon recedes before the idea of the uses that it might have, points out that the owner of the one that he has seen at home, before the war, 'used to blow it' to summon his mum (14). So far the presentation of the conch has been carried out so that its presence 'is made real to the senses' of the reader (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 4). Now, wrenched from its natural environment, 'the unliving thing is … given a

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summary of Golding's attacks on English chauvinism in these and his other novels, starting with *The Inheritors*, see Crawford (2002: 12–5, 21–3).

new social purpose' (3). For a while the physical feeling that the boys have of the shiny conch alternates with the consideration of its possible service as a means of communication. When they get the conch out of the water, Ralph still sees it in non-utilitarian terms, as a 'deep cream' object, 'touched here and there with fading pink': all that matters to him is that the shell has 'a slight spiral twist' and is 'covered with a delicate, embossed pattern' (Golding 1954: 14). Inattentive to the conch's shape, Piggy insists on the use that can be made of it, an insistence that is indicative of his general frame of mind. He is convinced that '"Life … is scientific"' and that reason can find a convenient use for every object (84), and for a moment Ralph joins in his enthusiasm. Thinking that the conch could be even more useful on the island than in the back garden where Piggy had first seen it, the boys decide to employ it '"to call the others"' that may have survived the plane crash and to organise a meeting (15). From this point onwards, the conch becomes one of the keystones of the boys' government.

The only people that are brought to the beach by the sound of the shell are children. Realising that no grown-up remains alive, they decide to tell each other their names. Once 'the naming' has finished, they agree that a chief should be chosen (Golding 1954: 20). Despite the protestations of Jack Merridew, the authoritarian choir head, they decide to have a vote. Ralph is elected, apparently for no other good reason than his being the bearer of the conch. To appease Jack, Ralph puts him in control of the choir. When Ralph lays out the rule that the conch should grant the person holding it the right to speak at the assemblies without being interrupted, he endows it with political significance; this new use of the conch make the children forget that it was first used to gather them. Until it is destroyed by Jack's party, the shiny conch represents the system of norms that the young castaways impose upon themselves; transformed into the emblem of the assembly, the conch 'becomes identified with its procedure, with democracy and the right to free speech' (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 4). Immediately after its identification with democracy, recognised by those that want to preserve the political values that it stands for as well as by those that want to destroy them, the conch acquires a new significance as the emblem of colonial power. Under its influence, the children explore the island; convinced that it now '"belongs"' to them, they take possession of it, identifying and naming its different parts (Golding 1954: 27). They find the area by the beach the perfect place for the huts that they plan to build, the nearby rocky platform becomes the site where the assemblies will take place, the salt

water lagoon is for swimming and playing, the mountain is for the signal fire, and the forest is for hunting and collecting fruit.[6]

It is not long before it occurs to the young castaways, beginning with Ralph and Piggy, that everyone should know at all times what to do. It is thus that Jack and the other members of the choir become hunters. After a fire that they kindle gets out of control and kills one of the little ones without giving off any smoke, Ralph proposes that they should also have "'special people for looking after the fire'" (Golding 1954: 41). Piggy, who expresses the need to "'put first things first and act proper'" if they want to be rescued, reminds them of the need to make "'shelters down there by the beach'", a task to which Ralph and Simon devote themselves without much success (44).

With the help of rational concepts, the children in *Lord of the Flies* transform the natural setting that they perceive round them into a cultural location. Reason also allows them to name the objects that they come across, and to put them to good use. It

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6   Though the analysis of the negative light in which *Lord of the Flies* presents colonialist ideologies exceeds the purpose of this study, it is nevertheless convenient to say a few words about the operation whereby Western novels have often turned exotic territories into the perfect backdrop for the white man's exploits. The order that, inspired by the conch, the boys impose on the natural *setting* transforms the uninhabited island into a culturally meaningful *location*. These two terms come from Lennard J. Davis's examination of the mechanisms whereby novelistic space, character, dialogue and plot collaborate in conferring ideological value upon extra-fictional reality. As regards space, his classification is actually threefold: extra-fictional *terrains* are imported into fictional narratives as general *settings* (mere backgrounds for action) and subsequently transformed into ideological *locations*: 'A "terrain" is an actual place in the world; a "setting" on the other hand is a terrain incorporated into a story which serves as a very generalized backdrop to the action which will occur. ... And ... locations are ideological precisely because they delimit action and enclose meaning while appearing only to describe neutrally' (Davis 1987: 61). The first novel that Davis's discusses in detail is Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. The critic's argument is that the modern interest in location is connected with property relations and imperial ambitions: '*Robinson Crusoe* is largely about the claiming of an island that does not belong to Crusoe except in the sense that he is a European and builds something there. But Crusoe's claiming is not simply the manifestation of a military might, ... but of establishing an ideological right to the island' (62). Defoe's heady mixture of imperialistic and religious ideology reappears in such later works as Robert M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1858), whose optimistic smugness Golding criticises in *Lord of the Flies* (see Golding 1965: 88–9). *Pincher Martin* reiterates Golding's stance.

also makes it possible for them to establish not only a series of social duties and roles, but even a series of political procedures. Though Schopenhauer may not be the only thinker that has drawn attention to this kind of trajectory, the attention to the passage from concrete physical feelings to abstract concepts, and the stress on language as necessary for social and political life, is certainly congruent with his theory that feelings precede concepts (indeed, that meaningful concepts are based on feelings), that, as he contends, feeling 'is capable of being communicated only after he has fixed it in concepts' — 'communicable by words', for example — and that, because of this, only reason can bring about 'the harmonious and consistent action of several individuals, ... planned cooperation ... [and] civilization, the State' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 56, 234, 37).

On an even smaller scale, the trajectory from feelings through concepts and to culture can also be appreciated in the first half of *Pincher Martin*, Golding's third novel. As in *Lord of the Flies*, the pattern that emerges here is not strictly linear, but it remains unequivocal. One difference is this: whereas in *Lord of the Flies* the transition is from feelings to concepts, and from nature to culture, in *Pincher Martin* the trajectory goes from concepts to feelings and back to concepts, from culture to nature and back to culture. Another difference is that, whereas the castaway children in *Lord of the Flies* attempt a real-life reproduction of the movement away from individual feelings to a social existence dominated by concepts, here the transition from concepts to feelings and from culture to nature takes place twice, first before Pincher Martin's drowning and then after it, in his imagination, and that the eventual reproduction of the large-scale shift from non-rational to rational consciousness, and hence from the transformation of a purely natural setting into a humanised location, takes place entirely in Pincher Martin's imagination. Only when we realise that the world that he inhabits for most of the narrative is an autonomous creation whose laws do not exactly conform to those of nature can we appreciate, in Stuart Laing's words, 'the central role of consciousness and language in Martin's construction and sustaining of his world' (Laing 1983: 242).

At first sight the novel's plot is, as in *Lord of the Flies*, simple enough. Lieutenant Christopher Hadley Martin, a former stage actor nicknamed *Pincher* during his service in the Royal Navy, is precariously afloat in the sea after his destroyer, on convoy duty in the North Atlantic during the Second World War, has been struck in the middle of the night by an enemy torpedo. Having been flung from the bridge into the water, Pincher

kicks off his sea-boots and comes up for air. As daylight breaks on the horizon, he manages to reach and clamber up a barren rock that he makes out in the middle of the ocean.[7] The rest of the novel is mostly concerned with his tooth-and-claw attempt to survive on the island. There he keeps himself alive for what seem to be six days, while delirium gradually undermines his grip on reality. He finally dies during an apocalyptic storm. In the last chapter we find out that Pincher has been dead all along: 'He didn't even have time to kick off his seaboots' (Golding 1956: 208). Apart from its first and last pages, what the whole novel actually relates is the construction and eventual disintegration of a man's fantasy world in the face of death.[8]

Even before Pincher's imaginary surrogate climbs onto the rock that will apparently save him from drowning, 'the awareness is mainly, even obsessively, physical; an experience through the senses of man's subjection to his environment' (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 102). The first page of the novel tells us how a yet unnamed man is thrown overboard into the water. Here feelings and concepts — the latter embodied in cries for help — collaborate to help Pincher cope with what is happening inside and outside (extensive quotation from the novel's first two chapters is essential to give a full impression of his mental process):

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7   In the North Atlantic there is a real uninhabited islet called Rockall. According to Jack I. Biles, this is 'a tiny point of rock seventy feet high located approximately 184 miles nearly due west of St Kilda, the remotest of the Hebrides', and 267 miles north-west of Donegal in Ireland; despite agreeing that in real life this would be 'the only sensible rock that Pincher could possibly find himself on', Golding reminds Biles that the point of the novel is that Pincher's island 'does not exist' (in Biles 1970: 73). It is not a real place, but rather an imaginary location. If anything, it is based on a conflation of what knowledge Pincher might have of Rockall and the memories of an aching tooth of his.

8   Understanding the relationship between, on the one hand, the mind of the Pincher Martin that is drowning and, on the other, the Pincher Martin that inhabits the private world conjured up by that mind is of the utmost importance to understand what is going on in the novel (though in his comments about it Golding does make any distinction between them). I shall refer to the latter Pincher Martin as an imaginary *surrogate*. As regards the third-person narrator, its role is not always limited to presenting the experiences of Pincher's surrogate as exactly as possible, but sometimes goes beyond them. Thus, though Pincher's surrogate inhabits a world exclusively made up of physical surfaces, the narrator's symbolic descriptions of that world point to a metaphysical dimension that both Pincher and his surrogate are blind to.

> There was no up or down, no light and no air. He *felt* his mouth open of itself and the shrieked word burst out.
>
> 'Help!'
>
> When the air had gone with the shriek, and water came in to fill its place — *burning* water, *hard* in the throat and mouth as stones that *hurt*. ... Then *for a moment* there was air like a *cold* mask against his face and he bit into it. Air and water mixed, dragged down into his body like gravel. ... The *lumps* of *hard* water *jerked* in the gullet, the lips came together and parted, the tongue arched ...
>
> 'Moth — '
>
> ...
>
> The throat ... vomited water and drew it in again. The hard lumps of water no longer hurt (Golding 1956: 7–8; my italics).

These are the last instants of Pincher's waking life. At the beginning of the quotation, the narrator's focus is on the character's spatial (dis)orientation, which, in Schopenhauer's theory, is a question of feeling alone (therefore shared by human and non-human animals alike). In the following sentences, as the expressions in italics show, the narrator puts the emphasis on the feeling that Pincher has of the parts of his body moving, of the cold air briefly pressing against his face and the salt water that he swallows, first burning his throat and then hurting him as if it was as hard as a lump of rock or as a handful of gravel. By the last sentence, Pincher's mind is no longer capable of reacting to any physical stimulus. In the nearly two hundred pages that follow, Pincher will be poised between life and death, living a kind of dream conjured up by his unrelenting mind, 'a little world' over which he can exert his mental control, and which resembles in most respects the one that Pincher's consciousness has abandoned (Golding 1956: 8).

During the very first moments that Pincher's surrogate spends in his imaginary world, his consciousness goes through the same stages as before drowning: while the emphasis initially falls on his rational grasp of the situation, the place of rational concepts is soon occupied by non-rational feelings. The temporary predominance of rational thought is clear in the following passage, where Pincher imagines that his surrogate takes off his boots, blows up his lifebelt, cries for help once more and reflects on what has happened:

> His mouth slopped full and he choked. … He felt a weight pulling him down. … He got his right leg across his left thigh and heaved with sodden hands. The seaboot slipped down his calf and he kicked it free. … He forced his left leg up, wrestled with the second boot and got it free. Both boots had left him. … He began to think in gulps as he swallowed the air. …
>
> He could feel the slack and uninflated rubber that was so nearly not holding him up. He got the tit of the tube between his teeth and unscrewed with two fingers while the others sealed the tube. He won a little air from between swells and fuffed it through the rubber tube. … He blew deeply and regularly into the tube until the lifebelt rose and strained at his clothing. …
>
> He took his mouth from the tube.
>
> 'Help! Help!'
>
> The air escaped from the tube and he struggled with it. He twisted the tit until the air was safe. …
>
> Think. My last chance. Think what can be done.
>
> She sank out in the Atlantic. Hundreds of miles from land. She was alone, sent north-east from the convoy … The U-boat may be hanging around to pick up a survivor or two for questioning. Or to pick off any ship that comes to rescue survivors. … Survivors, a raft, … the dinghy, wreckage may be … only a swell or two away hidden in the mist and waiting for rescue … (Golding 1956: 10–18).

While in this quotation physical perceptions and rational thoughts overlap, it is clear that the main concern of Pincher's surrogate is not with what he feels but with the clear-headed use of reason. Indeed, this obsession with rationality as the only thing that can guarantee survival, and the simultaneous neglect of the feelings that actually furnish reason with the raw materials that are transformed into concepts and words, will recur in the course of the narrative. However, the reason why the pages that this excerpt covers are memorable is not because they record the surrogate's rational process. Actually, before he reaches dry land his musings are gradually replaced by another, more basic kind of consciousness, and when this happens what impresses the reader is the breathtaking vividness of the surrogate's feelings in the water as the darkness of the night is followed by daylight. The following quotation covers the same pages as the preceding, but insofar as it brings together some of the perceptions, in time and space, of temperature and of objects in movement that occupy the mind of Pincher's surrogate (here in italics), it gives a better impression of the overall effect on the reader:

He *felt* his heart *thumping* and *for a while* it was *the only point of reference* in the formless *darkness*. ... His mouth opened and closed for the air and against the water. ...

He stared at the *darkness* as he turned but ... everywhere the *darkness* was *grainless and alike*. There ... was only *darkness* lying close against the balls of the eyes. There was the *movement of water*. ...

His teeth were chattering ... and sometimes this *vibration* would spread till it included his whole body. His legs below him were *not cold so much as pressed, squeezed mercilessly* by the sea so that the feeling in them was *not a response to temperature but to weight* that would crush and burst them. ...

Then he was jerking and splashing and looking up. There was *a difference in the texture of the darkness*; there were *smears and patches* that were not in the eye itself. ... He bent his head forward and saw, fainter than an afterimage, the *scalloped and changing shape* of a swell as his body was *lifted* in it. For a moment he caught the *inconstant outline* against the sky, then he was floating up and *seeing dimly* the *black top* of the next swell as it *swept towards him*. ...

The grain of the sky was *more distinct*. There were *vaporous changes of tone* from dark to gloom, to grey. Near at hand the individual hillocks of the surface were *visible*. ...

The day was inexorably present in *green and grey*. The seas ... *smoked*. When he swung up *a broad, hilly crest* he could see two other *smoking crests* then nothing but *a vague circle* that might be mist or fine spray or rain. ...

One side of the circle was *lighter* than the other. ...

The light made the seasmoke seem *solid*. It penetrated the water so that between him and the very tops of the restless hillocks it was *bottle green*. ... There was also the *noise* of ... tripped ripples running *tinkling* by the ear like miniatures of surf on a flat beach (Golding 1956: 10–19; my italics).

Before the end of the novel's first chapter, where Pincher's surrogate reaches the imaginary rock that he will never leave, we see how all rational processes disappear again, and for a time the focus is only on his feeling of the onslaught of cold water and foam; the painful hardness of stone; the animal fear that makes him scream; the smell of salty water as he climbs up the rock; the stillness of his body as he rests on solid ground just before fainting:

He heard through the rasp and thump of his works the sounds of waves breaking. He lifted his head and there was rock stuck up in the sky with a sea-gull poised before it. ... He ... saw without comprehension that the green water was no longer empty. There was yellow and brown. ... Then he went under ... and there were ... sudden notable details close to of intricate rock and weed.

> Brown tendrils slashed across his face, then with a destroying shock he hit solidity. It was utter difference, it was under his body, against his knees and face, he could close fingers on it, for an instant he could even hold on. … He felt himself … thrust down into weed and darkness. … He saw light, got a mouthful of air and foam. He glimpsed a riven rock face … and the sight of this rock … was so dreadful that he wasted his air by screaming as if it had been a wild beast. He went under a green calm, then up and was thrust sideways. … Hard things touched him about the feet and knees. … There were hard things touching his face and chest, the side of his forehead. … Each wave and each movement moved him forward. … There was a pattern in front of him that … meant nothing. …

> He lay still (Golding 1956: 21–3).

This excerpt conveys what Pincher's surrogate feels without comprehending: formless objects, things for which no exact name exists and patterns to which the rational mind cannot attach any meaning. These paragraphs are dominated by the sheer concreteness of the visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, kinetic and thermal feelings that overwhelm Pincher's surrogate as he tries not to drown again. These feelings are all that is left when a person, left at the mercy of the elements, is reduced to confusion and stripped of everything but animal consciousness.

It could be argued that the passages that I have reproduced are full of concepts — those of direction, light, sea, water, etc.; but this objection rests on a basic confusion between the character's focalising consciousness and the narrator's words.[9] Leaving

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9   Golding's exploitation of the dissonance between character and narrator features prominently in *The Inheritors*, where the the third-person narrative voice even compares Lok, one of the members of the primitive People, to an athlete reacting to the starting signal: 'Lok slept, balanced on his hams. A hint of danger would have sent him flying along the terrace like a sprinter from his mark' (Golding 1955: 43). It is evident that the comparison is not Lok's but the narrator's. Apart from conveying to contemporary readers Lok's feeling of the tension of the moment, the simile serves to remind us that, however long the time elapsed since other human species became extinct, the Lok's feeling is not so different from our own — let alone from the more advanced New People's that in the novel invade their territory. The idea may be that the People, the New People and ourselves often need to run away from danger in order to preserve our well-being and even our lives (perhaps even that contemporary sports have their ritualistic origins in that perennial need). Furthermore, the comparison of Lok to an athlete reminds us that the narrator's task of putting the characters' feelings into words is never straightforward, because for some of them there is no exact word in either the character's or the narrator's vocabulary, and that the

arise the first two pages and the last chapter of the novel, everything that we read corresponds to the contents of Pincher's mind. In the last two quotations we have seen that, as the character loses rational touch with reality, he stops thinking in concepts and only has a vague feeling of what is happening to and about him. Meanwhile, the third-person narrator cannot but convey his feelings in the conceptual medium of language. And since many of the things that he feels are so exceptional or imprecise that no conventional words have been coined to express them, the narrator must choose between remaining silent or resorting over and over again to such imprecise expressions as *things*, *patterns* and *details*.

Golding has commented on several occasions on the process whereby non-rational feelings are put into words, insinuating that its success depends on avoiding the precision of conventional language. Speaking of literature, for instance, he states that his 'job is to scrape the labels off things, to take nothing for granted, to show the irrational where it exists' (cited in Laing 1983: 242). By doing this he, who is 'passionately interested in *description*' (cited in Tiger 2003: 64), not only of what happens outside but also of what happens inside, can reawaken the reader's faculty of wonder: 'I don't simply describe something. I lead the reader round to discovering it anew' (cited in Boyd 1988: 32).

In order to refer to this way of communicating the characters' feelings, I have borrowed Clements's term *evocation*. According to Schopenhauer, the nature of verbal messages is intrinsically conceptual; however, he also asserts that all meaningful concepts are based on feelings. In the last instance, all language is a conceptual medium that refers back to feelings. What allows us to identify two opposed uses of words is whether or not they appeal to the receiver's reason. The evocation of feelings is more likely to occur when figurative expressions are employed that endow an utterance with a defamiliarising quality (and even more when those figurative expressions blur, as happens with metaphor, the limits of the conceptual spheres of words). When they function evocatively, words can, as Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor have argued in relation to Golding's style, 'bring us to the point where we ourselves can "see", for a moment,

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only way in which it can be done is indirectly, that is, through figurative language (notice that in the last quotation from *Pincher Martin* the description of sea as a gigantic animal that plays with the body of Pincher's imaginary surrogate obeys the same logic).

something opening through them, in the space beyond them' where only the incomparable power of inchoate feelings can take us (2002: 290).

Though the two varieties of evocation that I have identified, impressionism and symbolism, have different fields of reference (physical and metaphysical, respectively), they have a common purpose: 'to describe the indescribable', as Golding puts it (1984a: 202). Insofar as the evocative use that they make of language is at the service of physical reference, the descriptions that we have seen at the beginning of *Pincher Martin* are impressionistic rather than symbolic. According to Watt, the ambition of pictorial impressionism — with which Conrad's style has a strong affinity — is 'to give a pictorial equivalent of the visual sensations of a particular individual at a particular time and place' (Watt 1980: 170). To some extent, and leaving aside that the nature of the linguistic signifier is not that same as the one used in painting, this is also the effect intended by Conrad's prose. Though not limited to visual perception, the most striking component of Conrad's impressionism is visual: it suggests 'a field of vision which is not merely limited to the individual observer, but is also controlled by whatever conditions — internal and external — prevail at the moment of observation' (178). In Golding's hands, impressionism likewise amounts to a recreation in the receiver's mind of what Schopenhauer would call the individual's *egocentric* feeling of the *physical* world, that is, of the individual's perceptions, whether visual of not, of what is happening. In the passages from *Pincher Martin* that I have just quoted, the outcome of this strategy is to heighten our response to the description of the (imaginary) physical world at whose centre has placed a copy of himself. By making us share this surrogate's perspective and feel like him, we understand the plight in which he is, and realise the tremendous power of the elements against which he struggles.[10]

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10 In order to bring out the impressionistic tenor of the narration, I have left out from the quotations some cases of denotation and symbolism. Impressionism clearly dominates, while denotation and symbolism are subordinated to it. However, the passages in which symbolism makes its appearance are worth commenting.

   When writing evocatively, Golding often takes advantage of the figurative resources that language puts at his disposal, assigning new, unpredictable labels to objects in order to excite certain feelings, which may coincide or not with the ones that his characters have. For instance, the consciousness of Pincher's surrogate at the end of the first chapter is always of a physical, egocentric kind; but as exhaustion threatens to make him faint, the narrator gradually takes

At the beginning of the second chapter the style is dominated again by an impressionistic vein, with feelings prevailing over rational thought, a fact that prevents Pincher's surrogate from uttering any words (the pattern that he sees is a seagull):

The pattern was white and black but mostly white. It existed in two layers, one behind the other, one for each eye. He thought nothing, did nothing while the pattern changed a trifle and made little noises. The hardnesses under his cheek began to insist. They passed through pressure to a burning without heat, to a localized pain (Golding 1956: 24).

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readers beyond the character's conscious experience, plunging them into a metaphysical plane that Pincher's surrogate is not completely aware of. Through exuberant metaphors, the narrator describes the noises made by the waves and the wind as 'sudden hisses and spats, roars and incompleted syllables' (Golding 1956: 19), then refers to 'the formless mad talking of uncontrolled water' (21). As he swims towards the islet, Pincher's surrogate sees how 'each swell dipped for a moment, flung up a white hand of foam and then disappeared as if the rock had swallowed it' (21). Pulled underwater once more, he discovers what the narrator calls 'a singing world' where the 'hairy shapes' of seaweed flit and twist past his face (21). The narrator also tells us how, just before touching the rock, Pincher's surrogate feels himself 'picked up and … reversed, tugged' by the gigantic force of the sea (22). The next thing that Pincher's surrogate sees when he raises his head is the rock face and what the narrator calls the 'trees of spray growing up it' (22). After telling us that 'The sea no longer played with him', but 'held him gently, carried him with delicate and careful motion like a retriever with a bird', then 'laid him down gently and retreated', the narrator describes us how, during the climb of Pincher's surrogate to the top of the islet, 'The sea came back and fawned round his face, licked him', and how Pincher felt 'the sea run down to smell at his feet then come back and nuzzle under his arm' (22). Likewise, at the beginning of the second chapter, we read this brief description of the sea and the wind: 'Though the sea had treated him so carefully, elsewhere it continued to roar and thump and collapse on itself. The wind too, given something to fight with other than obsequious water was hissing round the rock and breathing gustily in crevices' (24).

These passages convey the feelings of Pincher's surrogate, yet with metaphorical expressions that are not his and that obliterate the conceptual borders between the animate and the inanimate, the human and the non-human. They are examples of a symbolic style that depicts a whole world stirred by the same life force. Later in this chapter I shall devote a separate section to offering an in-depth analysis of the metaphysical import of this kind of figurative description of things and beings in motion.

No sooner has Pincher's surrogate come to, there are hints that his rational self is starting to recover too. To begin with, the hardnesses that he feels under his cheek, the white and black pattern in front of his eyes and, above all, the noises round him begin 'to pull him back into himself and organize him again as a single being' controlled by an identifiable centre of consciousness (Golding 1956: 24). This point of awareness does not take long to realise that it is situated in a recognisable physical environment:

> All these noises made a language that forced itself into the dark, passionless head and assured it that the head was som[e]where, somewhere — and then finally with the flourish of a gull's cry over the sound of the wind and water, declared to the groping consciousness: wherever you are, you are here! (Golding 1956: 24).

Once assured that he is still alive, not only *somewhere* but *here*, that is, once that he has set himself up as the deictic centre of the world, Pincher's surrogate begins not only to make purposeful efforts to move but also to reason, thus getting a more or less clear picture of who he is and where exactly *here* is. At the same time, he recovers the faculty to speak:

> He began to experiment. He found that he could haul the weight of one leg up and then the other. His hand crawled round above his head. He reasoned deeply that there was another hand on the other side somewhere and sent a message out to it. … He moved his four limbs in close … He had a valuable thought, not because it was of immediate physical value but because it gave him back a bit of his personality. He made words to express this thought, though they did not pass the barrier of his teeth.
>
> …
>
> At once he was master. He knew that his body … was exhausted, that he was trying to crawl up a little pebble slope. …
>
> He began to turn on the pebbles, working his back against the rock and drawing up his feet. He saw them now for the first time, distant projections, made thick and bear-like by the white, seaboot stockings. The gave him back a little more of himself. …
>
> The formal words and the pictures evolved themselves. …
>
> 'Where the hell am I?'

> A single point of rock, peak of a mountain range, one tooth set in the ancient jaw of a sunken world, projecting through the inconceivable vastness of the whole ocean — and how many miles from dry land? (Golding 1956: 26–30).

Confident about his 'education and intelligence and will', Pincher's surrogate wastes no time to turn the barren surroundings into a modest home away from home, a gentleman's '"estate"' (Golding 1956: 80, 77). In order to do so he resorts not only to his previous acquaintance with marine environments, which he recreates with a profusion of physical detail, but also to familiar concepts and words from his past life in England. After availing himself of food (mostly in the form of molluscs), drink (the rainwater accumulated in ponds) and shelter (a crevice that protects him against the weather), one of the first things that he does is naming the parts of the rock where he has landed. The following quotation shows that the purpose of this routine is to impose human control over the rock, to tame it and appropriate it, making it 'rationally coherent and, in his terms, civilized' (Tiger 2003: 100), with the hope of turning it into a hospitable place (notice the way in which he refers to the spot where he eats his food as if it were an English pub — the *Red Lion*):

> 'I call this place the Look-out. That is the Dwarf. The rock out there under the sun where I came swimming is Safety Rock. The place where I get mussels and stuff is Food Cliff. Where I eat them is — The Red Lion. On the South side where the strap-weed is, I call Prospect Cliff. This Cliff here to the west with the funnel in it is —'
>
> …
>
> 'Gull Cliff'.
>
> …
>
> 'And I must have a name for this habitual clamber of mine between the Look-out and the Red Lion. I shall call it the High Street.
>
> …
>
> 'I name you three rocks — Oxford Circus, Piccadilly and Leicester Square' (Golding 1956: 84–6).

And so on. Here 'language is seen as the central mechanism: naming the parts of the rock is a necessary precondition of controlling it' (Laing 1983: 242). Pincher's surrogate has no doubts about his immediate goal:

'I am busy surviving. I am netting down this rock with names and taming it. … What is given a name is given a seal, a chain. If this rock tries to adapt me to its ways I will refuse and adapt it to mine. I will impose my routine on it, my geography. I will tie it down with names' (Golding 1956: 86–7).

In Schopenhauer's terms, which link rationality to the use of language, this obsession with labelling reveals him not only as an obstinate survivor and a homesick Englishman, but also as a rationalist. He is a familiar figure in Golding's fiction: the rational man that remains confident, even after his consciousness has begun to fill with strange images, that "'All [can be] explained and known'" (Golding 1956: 146), in other words, that 'his thought … can name and master the conditions of the universe' (Gindin 1988: 41). Michael Quinn states that for Pincher's surrogate rational 'intelligence can explain everything that happens to a man and so strip the world of mystery; as long as things are explicable, they are not beyond man and he remains master' (Quinn 1962: 251–2). But the concern with naming and mastering the parts of the island is not an end in itself. It is simply a means to achieve his main objectives — sanity, survival and rescue. "'Think, you bloody fool, think'" (Golding 1956: 30), he exclaims as he discovers that, in order to survive and to secure his rescue, he must make use of all of his rational powers. Reason is the main tool that he has for 'imposing purpose on the senseless rock' (129).

Like the children in *Lord of the Flies*, Pincher's surrogate sets survival and rescue as his priorities. Even more clearly than the children in *Lord of the Flies*, he aspires to achieve them being, like Robinson Crusoe, the perfect *homo economicus*. For the *homo economicus*, reason is reduced to its instrumental dimension, and is useful only insofar as it produces the desired results. This ideological conception of reason, which Schopenhauer and Golding assert only to repudiate it, is crucial to understand this mentality. The economic man that he exemplifies embodies the masculine ideal of a self-reliant, autonomous individual who, in the free pursuit of his or her aspirations, employs rational calculation as an instrument to rank them and orchestrate their achievement with the most efficient means, minimising the costs and maximising the benefits. Diana Meyers's succinct description of this frame of mind is difficult to surpass:

To achieve maximal fulfillment, homo economicus must organize his chosen pursuits into a rational life plan. He must decide which desires are most urgent; he must ensure that his desires are co-satisfiable; and he must ascertain the most efficient way to satisfy this set of desires. Madcap spontaneity and ... improvisation are registered as defeat (Meyers 2010).

The description fits Pincher's surrogate like a glove.[11] He is convinced that the only way to maximise the satisfaction of his wishes is by planning a rational course of action. He

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11 The terms *master* and *will*, and the relationship between willing and the position of Pincher's surrogate as a Robinson Crusoe-like *homo economicus*, need commenting. Both *Lord of the Flies* and *Pincher Martin* link the characters' violence and chauvinism to the exploration, conquest and exploitation of new territories. Insofar as they are involved in these activities — justified by an ideology according to which the white male becomes, by virtue of his use of reason, not only the master of his own body and passions but also the rightful possessor of the whole physical world — Golding's characters, all of whom are British, become fervent colonisers and even unwitting imperialists. It could be argued that, for Golding, British imperialism consists exclusively in the conquerors' imposing their will on exotic lands and human beings. In this reading, *will* would not be the aseptic, value-free concept that Schopenhauer wanted to turn it into, but a highly charged term functioning, alongside the notion of *character* (which Victorian propagandists liked to subordinate to patriotic and even philanthropic *duty*), as one of the pillars in the complex ideological framework supporting the edifice of the empire. Though he does not believe in any duty except towards himself, Pincher's surrogate certainly sees his will and his right to turn the island into his *estate* in the terms that Victorian ideology saw them; but he does not realise the true nature of his wishes. In Golding's later novels the will is certainly exposed as an ideological reification of social realities that are neither universal nor impossible to change, but this unmasking does not takes place in *Pincher Martin* (let alone in *The Inheritors*, an earlier work concerned with conquest and extermination, and in *Lord of the Flies*). In this novel the will is not directly linked to the imperial enterprise (which is only one of the possible activities in which the will can occupy itself), but amounts to the irrepressible wish to stay alive regardless of the circumstances; likewise, character here is just the innate way in which that wish is acted out. This view of the will explains why, in *The Spire* and *Darkness Visible*, the latter of which was published after Golding had already begun to question the possibility of ever getting to know the essence of the world, Dean Jocelin and Sophy continue to impose on the other characters their individual wills, which have nothing to do with the colonisers' or imperialists' domination. Conversely, in Golding's very last novels, the Sea Trilogy and *The Double Tongue*, imperialism still features prominently, but now dissociated from the will.

insists on the necessity to put first things first, and makes a list of priorities that centres on rescue: "'The end to be desired is rescue'" (Golding 1956: 81). But rescue will only arrive if he takes a series of indispensable precautions. The most basic is to go on living: "'the bare minimum necessary is survival. I must keep my body going. I must give it drink and food and shelter. ... Point one'" (81). The next item is physical health: "'Point two. I must expect myself to fall sick. ... I must watch for signs of sickness and doctor myself'" (81). This is followed closely by mental health: "'Point three. I must watch my mind. I must not let madness steal up on me and take me by surprise'" (81). The last item is a kind of summary of the preceding: "'Point four. I must help myself to be rescued'" (81). All of these points, together with the fact that they are arranged according to a hierarchy of means to the desired end, reveal Pincher's surrogate to believe that rational calculation is the single most valuable ability that a castaway can have.

As in *Lord of the Flies*, the 'economic' aspect of the character's mentality reminds us — and serves as an indirect indictment — of Robinson Crusoe, who also has a penchant for lists and who is still the paramount literary example of economic man. What Pincher's surrogate fails to realise is that in his case, in contrast to Defoe's novel, staying alive is necessary not for his rescue, which is impossible, but for the preservation of his individual identity. He likewise fails to see that no form of thought, whether rational or non-rational, can help him to succeed. If his efforts end in complete failure it is simply because of Golding's belief that the order imposed upon existence by feeling and reason is insufficient to sustain representation — and hence the world — indefinitely: given the limitations of the intellect, both in human and non-human animals, the sphere of representation is bound to break down. The problem of how this happens leads us to a consideration of the differences between the depictions of the world in *Lord of the Flies* and *Pincher Martin*.

3.1.1.1.2. Solipsism in *Pincher Martin*

The first pages of *Pincher Martin* chart the loss of rational and cultural coordinates, followed by their painstaking restoration. By dint of the latter process, the novel is a reflection on the humanisation of the environment. In this *Pincher Martin* resembles

Lord of the Flies. Despite the similarity, we should not forget that the islands represented in the two novels are not exactly of the same kind.

The island in *Lord of the Flies* belongs to a public world populated not only by the castaway children but also by the pilots that fight above their heads while they sleep at night, the parents and grown-ups whose memories console and haunt them, and the navy crew that see the island burning and come to the children's rescue at the end of the narrative. Regardless of the different angles from which every characters might see it, this world always contains the same objects and persons, and obeys the same laws.

By contrast, *Pincher Martin* contains not one but two concentric worlds: the public world from which Pincher comes (as seen in the first two pages of the novel) and where his dead body stays (as revealed in the last chapter), and a private domain — from Schopenhauer's perspective, a *world* only in a loose sense, as it cannot be the object of knowledge proper — in which his mind takes refuge when confronted with death. As in *Lord of the Flies*, the first domain is very much like our own: though the very first thing that the novel tells us about Pincher is that his consciousness is an egocentric 'centre' whose attention extends 'in every direction' (Golding 1956: 7), this domain is populated by a number of different people who, despite seeing things from a number of perspectives that are not the same as Pincher's, have a sense of being there together. The way in which events take place in this world is designed to convince the readers that the same events could occur in the world where they and the novelist live. Similarly, what is said about its setting and its inhabitants is undoubtedly intended to have a direct bearing on the readers' view of their world. The second domain presented in *Pincher Martin* is quite another matter. To begin with, it is only accessible to Pincher's mind, which has created it. Both Pincher Martin that inhabits it and all the other inanimate objects and living beings that he interacts with (the rock and the sea, the gulls, the shellfish, the weeds) are creations of that mind. Inside this world, the centre of consciousness of Pincher's surrogate does not content itself with its position 'inside his head, looking out through the arches of his skull' as if it were sitting 'in the middle of the globe' (15, 83). This description of egocentrism would be just as accurate in the public world that Pincher's mind has left behind as in the private world that it has conjured up. This is, after all, '"the ordinary experience of living" (82). The experiences that Pincher's surrogate has are extraordinary because it is Pincher's mind, which, like his surrogate's, is 'active and tireless' while his body is at the mercy of the

waves, is the sole responsible for this parallel world at whose centre the surrogate stands (83) As a result, the functioning of this private world is not exactly the same as our own world's. Nevertheless, the ordeal that Pincher's surrogate undergoes is clearly symptomatic of two common enough features of real human beings — the egocentric nature of the most frequent varieties of consciousness, and the ensuing fear of death — what is said in the narrative about the world that he builds, including its eventual destruction, has a clear relation to the novelist and the audience's world. The comparison with *Lord of the Flies* is instructive.

In comparison with that of Pincher's surrogate, the egocentrism of the children in *Lord of the Flies* does not pose a threat to the shared status of the public world. In the following extract, Piggy and Ralph play by the lagoon, and from the former's position the shadows and lights are inoffensively reversed due to the reflection of light in the water: 'Piggy looked up at Ralph. All the shadows on Ralph's face were reversed: green above, bright below from the lagoon' (Golding 1954: 13). In *Pincher Martin* we find this passage where the exhausted surrogate, still lying on the rock, manages to focus his eyes and obtains a more usual sense of perspective:

> He remembered how eyes should be used and brought the two lines of sight together so that patterns fused and made a distance. The pebbles were close to his face, pressing against his cheek and jaw. ... He did not move his head but followed the line of the hand back to an oilskin sleeve, the beginnings of a shoulder. His eyes returned to the pebbles and watched them ... while the water came back and this time the last touch of the sea lopped into his open mouth. Without change of expression he began to shake, a deep shake that included the whole of his body. Inside his head it seemed that the pebbles were shaking because the movement of the white hand forward and back was matched by the movement of his body (Golding 1956: 25).

Both passages appear early in their respective stories, when the rational regulation of life has not been completely re-established yet. However, as the two narratives in which they are embedded unfold, they take on very different connotations. The position of the shadow in *Lord of the Flies* does not alter the shape of the face in which it appears, nor does it cast doubts on the face's ontological status. By contrast, there is a good reason why it seems to Pincher's surrogate that it is him that causes the pebbles to shake; and the reason is that this is indeed the case. Pincher does not move them with his body, but with his mind. Despite his initial denial, by the end of the novel he acknowledges

that everything in and round the island, including his own body and the pebbles on which it has lain, are a construction of his own mind. It is true that he survives death for a while, but only in an '"invented"' or '"created"' world, quite apart from the other characters' (Golding 1956: 194, 196). Pincher has been described as 'a man who can only think, whose existence is predicated on thought' (Raine 1987: 108). The same dependence on his thought affects the island which he has created, and which is just an 'I/land' (Tiger 2003: 100).

The egocentrism of Pincher's surrogate is an aberration, an apotheosis of solipsism. This is particularly evident in the way in which his mind handles meteorological phenomena. Initially, while he is still swimming about, his attention is occupied by feelings of two different kinds. On the one hand there are inner sensations and outer perceptions whose content escapes precise conceptualisation. On the other hand there are a series of 'Pictures [that] invaded his mind'; some of the images — flashes from the past — are of things and people 'not seen … for so many years', while the content of others is much more recent, but they all serve to remind the reader of the normal life that Pincher had before falling into the ocean (Golding 1956: 16, 8). Their origin lies in the reproductive imagination which in both humans and other animals fills the subject's consciousness with perceptions from the past as if they were being produced now. Though its importance in human consciousness cannot be underestimated, its products pale in comparison with the contents of the productive imagination, of which Pincher makes extensive use in the rest of the novel.

This second sort of imaginative representation functions to satisfy the individual's egoism. According to Schopenhauer, sometimes 'the person … imagines what does not exist' (1969b: 401). This happens, for example, when the imagination 'is used to build castles in the air, congenial to selfishness and to one's own whim, which for the moment delude and delight' (1969a: 187). This is what happens in *Pincher Martin*. When Pincher's surrogate reaches the rock which he will never abandon, there is no indication that it may be something other that an actual place located in the North Atlantic. At this point, Pincher's mind still tries to maintain the verisimilitude of the world that it has created. The idea is that, if he can make the imagined world function in the same way as the real world does, then Pincher's surrogate can go on deluding himself. This is why he insists on asserting his sanity. '"I must keep my grip on reality"' (Golding 1956: 82), he says without realising that, in fact, he has already lost it. As the

suspicion begins to creep in that neither survival nor rescue might be guaranteed, Pincher's efforts to reproduce the natural order of things start to show their limitations. It is at this moment that he begins to suspect that he cannot succeed unless he 'imposes his own laws on the universe so that it will conform to his own sense of order' (Baker 1965: 43). This is the point when he accepts that not all of his wishes, modest as they are, can be fulfilled on the rock: '"I should like a bed with sheets. I should like a pint or two and a hot meal. I should like a hot bath"' (Golding 1956: 83). Later, his wishes become more ambitious, and he does not refrain from satisfying them. When, tormented by thirst and by the scorching sun, he protests: '"I said there would be rain!"', the narrator simply adds: 'and there was rain' (170, 171), and the reader is left in no doubt that Pincher's power is not related to the informed prediction but rather to the creation of meteorological phenomena. Strong as it is, this mental power cannot be sufficient to sustain a world of fantasy indefinitely. When the familiar coherence of the world begins to vanish, and he begins to lose control of the situation, Pincher's surrogate realises that he is in 'a world where hard facts go limp' (Whitehead 1971: 19); a world in which, for instance, the rock seems to move and, simultaneously, to be excessively hard, in which guano is insoluble, and in which live lobsters are as red as if they had been cooked.

Painfully aware that these factual mistakes make no sense, at first Pincher's surrogate pretends that he is dreaming. Having made sure that he is awake, he goes on to hypothesise that he is suffering from food poisoning. After purging himself he puts everything down to the fact that the sunlight's reflection causes optical illusions, and finally he decides that, if being sane involves admitting that he is on the verge of death, then sanity is 'Worse than madness' (Golding 1956: 169). However, not even the declaration that he is '"raving mad"' will save him (190). Little by little, the 'amphitheatre' that the former actor's mind has conjured up is 'destroyed, erased like an error', as if it had been 'painted on … paper' (79, 201, 200).

When this happens, it is presumably because of Pincher's cerebral death. Schopenhauer writes: 'With the brain the intellect perishes, and with the intellect the objective world, this intellect's mere representation' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 500), and this is exactly what happens in Golding's novel: the moment that Pincher's brain stops working, the environment that the imaginary castaway has colonised implodes and disappears. In an attempt to bring home the way in which the mental sphere of

representation becomes the world, Schopenhauer points out that in fact the latter 'resides inside our head, for there is its whole scene of action', comparing the effect to what happens when 'in the theatre we see mountains, forest, and sea, yet everything remains within the house' (22). Apart from throwing light on the status of Pincher's little world as a mental representation, and on its description as a stage set, Schopenhauer's comments can help us to see its relation to the public world where the other characters live on. He adds: 'The fact that in other brains a similar world lives and moves, now as before, is a matter of indifference with reference to the intellect that is perishing' (500). By the same token, it could be argued that the fact that one subject's intellect perishes is a matter of indifference as long as the world continues to exist in other brains. This is the really relevant point in connection with Golding's novel: the juxtaposition of the last two chapters of *Pincher Martin* (one dominated by the lonely castaway's perspective, the other centred on other characters and told from a detached point of view) serves to highlight how Pincher's whole world qua imaginary representation disappears, as if erased out of existence, with his decease, and how another world, sustained by other characters, survives his death.

As soon as Pincher's surrogate dies, it becomes obvious that his private world 'of papery stuff' is not the public world that the rest of conscious beings share (Golding 1956: 201); when Pincher's consciousness is definitively extinguished and this world disappears into 'the pit of nothing' (200), there still remains that other world. This public world is the setting of the novel's last chapter, where the living gather the '"sad harvest"' of dead bodies — Pincher's among them — which the war deposits on the beach (203). However, we should not be misled by the discrepancies between these two worlds inside the novel. Despite not being absolutely identical, Pincher's private world and the world in which the rest of characters live are not so different: the public world in which the last chapter takes place also disappears, only a little later than Pincher's, when the narrative ends and we readers close the book. In addition, there are clear links between between the fictional world and the factual world. On the one hand, Pincher's private world functions to a large extent according to the way in which the mind that has conjured it up sees the public world in the novel, and since this way of seeing the world — this ideology that puts the rational efficiency, the optimisation of effort, the mastery over the body and the rest of the world at the service of individual self-sufficiency — is also present in the world that Golding shares with his audience,

shaping their lives in the same way as it shaped the imaginary castaway's efforts to survive, the disappearance of Pincher's private world is not as complete as it would seem. On the other hand, and from Schopenhauer's perspective, even if the world outside the novel does not disappear at the same time as we close Golding's book, we can be sure that it will not last for ever. Schopenhauer's claim that the represented world that we inhabit appeared with the first conscious animal suggests that the condition of this world is precarious. The fate of Pincher's private world is indicative of the fate of the public world within the book; it is also a reminder of the fate that awaits the world outside the book. Golding's novel thus suggests that even this world will be, like Pincher's, ultimately reduced to 'absolute nothingness' when the last conscious being perishes (Golding 1956: 201).

3.1.1.1.3. Modes of Temporal Awareness in *Free Fall*

We have seen that, at a very basic level, Golding's novel illustrate the opposition between non-rational feelings and rational concepts as well as the transition from a natural world that humans share with other animals to forms of cultural organisation that rest on the human ability to reason, and thus to act — and to interact with other people — in unprecedentedly complex ways. We have also seen that human imagination does not only have a reproductive function but can also be instrumental in picturing states of affairs that do not correspond to the public world. In this and the following sections I am going to focus on *Free Fall* and the Sea Trilogy in order to explore the three kinds of temporal and spatial awareness — felt space and time, conceptualised space and time, and the sense of space that results from the marriage between the imagination and reason — that they bring to our attention.

In *Free Fall* we meet, for the first time in Golding, with a first-person character-narrator called Sammy Mountjoy. Sammy is a prestigious painter that hangs in the Tate, but if he tells us the story of his own life, from early childhood to adult age, it is not with the sole intention to trace his development as an artist, but mostly to provide a confession of his moral corruption and of his subsequent regeneration. To begin with, Sammy recalls his childhood: his relationship with his mother, his early life in the absence of his father, and his upbringing in the slum of Rotten Row; then his

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attendance to infant school, and his adoption — the beginning of his social ascent — by the rector, Father Watts Watt. Sammy also recalls the figures that influenced him at the local grammar school, most notably two of his teachers, a kind yet priggish scientist called Nick Shales and the cruel religious bigot Rowena Pringle. He reflects on his uncompromising pursuit of the beautiful Beatrice Ifor, and on his determination to possess her both artistically and sexually, without omitting how his insistence on painting her nude and on making love to her, her reluctant submission, and their engagement, was immediately followed by his infidelity with a girl called Taffy. He pauses to discuss his generation's moral and political commitment and scepticism, and his own attitude to the extremes of right and left politics prior to the Second World War. He looks back at his confinement in a prisoner-of-war camp and at his psychological torture by the Nazis, an incident that shows him the cruelty of his own torture and abandonment of Beatrice. In the last two chapters, Sammy tells us about his visit, after the war, to the mental hospital where Beatrice has been incarcerated since his desertion, and to his former teachers. Chronologically, the final event in the novel is the narration of his story as he 'fumbles at the typewriter' and speculates about the moral meaning of his life, especially about the events that led to his mistreatment Beatrice and about his later moral conversion in the Nazi camp (Golding 1959: 8).

As befits a painter, many of Sammy's recollections are purely visual. Despite the mixed nature of Sammy's consciousness, there are certain occasions on which the disparity between the felt and conceptual modalities of representation is easily discernible in his narrative. The most striking case is his recollection of a moonlit tree whose majesty impresses Sammy as a child. Having trespassed into a private garden with his friend Johnny Spragg, Sammy is left speechless by the sight of a natural wonder that his childish words cannot describe and that even the mature narrator can only depict indirectly, by means of figurative imagery:

> We were eyes.
>
> ...
>
> I can remember this. ... The moon was flowering. She had a kind of sanctuary of light round her, sapphire. All the garden was black and white. There was one tree between me and the lawns, the stillest tree that ever grew ... The tree was huge and each branch splayed up to a given level; and there, the black leaves floated like a level of oil on water. Level after horizontal level these leaves cut across the splaying branches and there was a crumpled, silver-aper depth, an ivory

quiet beyond them. Later, I should have called the tree a cedar and passed on, but then, it was an apocalypse (Golding 1959: 45–6).

Interestingly, the last quoted sentence can be read as suggesting that children may be more awake to fresh feelings than adults are. It also indicates that the reason for this may be found in the latter's greater reliance on the abstractive power of conceptual consciousness, which has many advantages but also renders all objects familiar or ordinary, depriving them of their freshness and mystery.

In his reading of Golding's earlier novels, Clements makes reference to another scene in *Free Fall* that is revelatory of the distance that separates feelings from concepts, the world as 'seen' and the world as described through concepts. In the course of Sammy's confinement in the German camp, Dr Halde, his interrogator, asks him if he possesses any information about a possible prison break. As Clements notes, 'Sammy insists that he knows nothing, believing this to be the truth' (2012: 83). Even when Halde offers to give whatever it is that Sammy '"want[s] most in the world"', the prisoner confesses that, being '"no hero"', he rejects the offer only because he does not know anything (Golding 1959: 146, 147). Yet the point is that he does know something, in fact that he knows everything that Halde might want to find out. In hindsight, Sammy realises that, though no one had told him anything about the escape, he 'had known something for more than a year. … I could have said at any time that out of the hundreds of us there were perhaps twenty-five who might actually try to escape' (149). The problem is the information that he has is an intuition — a feeling — without rational support; and if he does not think it worth providing during the interrogation it is because he cannot back it up with rational argument:

> Day after day a complex of tiny indications had added up and now presented me with a picture. I was an expert. Who else had lived as visually and professionally with these faces and taken knowledge of them in through the pores. Who else had that puzzled curiosity about man, that photographic apprehension …?
>
> …
>
> I could say to him quite simply; I do not know when or where the escape organization operates now — but take these twenty men into your trawl and there will be no escapes (Golding 1959: 149).

Sammy's knowledge of the escape is not rational, but remains stored (indelibly, as his account of it proves) without aid from reason. Schopenhauer teaches us that the insight gained through feeling does not need to be rationally proved, and indeed that some of the most important kinds of knowledge are not amenable to that kind of demonstration; but Sammy dismisses his own insight beforehand as lacking credibility, and precisely because of its non-rational character. What this shows is both the importance of feelings and how even a person like Sammy, whose keen eye for perceptual detail should have taught him to trust what his eyes have seen even in the absence of rational evidence, can be tempted, under certain circumstances at least, to dismiss them as not worth sharing or as not furnishing a valid kind of knowledge.

Apart from showing that feelings are often stifled and outshined by the concepts that we superimpose on them, *Free Fall* shows how the interplay of feelings, concepts and the imaginative counterparts of feelings shapes a person's experience of time. Humans, in contrast to other animals, possess a rational — i.e. abstract — awareness of the pastness of our recollections and of the futureness of our predictions. This is combined with the possibility of seeing the future in the light of the past, and of rectifying our lives to give them a better shape before we die. These potentialities are the basis of Sammy's temporal awareness, which we can begin two understand through the analysis of these two excerpts (the second is a reflection on the cedar tree episode):

> time is not to be laid out endlessly like a row of bricks. That straight line … is a dead thing. Time is two modes. The one is an effortless perception native to us as water to the mackerel. The other is a memory, a sense of shuffle fold and coil, of that day nearer than that because more important, of that event mirroring this, or those three set apart, exceptional and out of the straight line altogether.
>
> …
>
> I am not a man who was a boy looking at a tree. I am a man who remembers being a boy looking at a tree. It is the difference between time, the endless row of dead bricks, and time, the retake and coil (Golding 1959: 6, 46).

Clements takes Sammy at his word, arguing that *Free Fall* confronts us with two different temporal modes. According to this critic, if we speak about 'time-as-experienced' (the metaphorical *row of bricks* of irreversible, chronological time), then

we cannot but admit that Sammy's past 'is lost to him' and impossible to recover; alternatively, if we speak about 'time-as-recalled' (the *retake and coil*), we can admit the possibility of moving back and forth along the line of one's life (Clements 2012: 81–2). However, regardless of Sammy's own view of the issue, if we look at these two excerpts through the prism of Schopenhauer's philosophy it is clear that Sammy describes not *two* but *three* temporal modes: the constant present of felt time, the chronological line of conceptual time, and the combination of conceptual time and the imagination.

The first mode, which Sammy calls *an effortless perception native to us as water to the mackere*l, corresponds to what Schopenhauer calls feeling. Like all feelings, this experience of time is bound to the immediacy of the present. Schopenhauer writes: 'only in the present ... are there real objects', because 'the form of life or of reality, is really only the present, not the future or the past'; this constant now 'is that which always exists and stands firm and immovable', but also, paradoxically, 'That which, empirically apprehended, is the most fleeting of all' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 278, 279). The present is also the dimension of the imaginative reproductions of past events.

The second mode, chronological time, is a *straight line* that is *laid out endlessly like a row of bricks*; this *endless row of red bricks* is *a dead thing* which corresponds to Schopenhauer's conceptual time. About the distinction between the first and the second kinds of temporal experience, Schopenhauer says this:

> We can conjure up in our minds through perception only particular scenes of the past, but of the time that has since elapsed and of its content we are conscious only *in abstracto* by means of concepts of things and of numbers that now represent days and years, together with the content thereof (Schopenhauer 1969b: 60).

Conceptualised time is abstract, linear time; it can be measured and calculated. These measurements and calculations adopt different forms, which explains why there exist different ways of dividing the day and a number of calendars (of course there is also the possibility of rational translation among them). For Schopenhauer, past and future are

'mere concepts', never feelings, and as such these notions correspond to abstract time too (1969a: 279).[12]

The third mode of time is *a sense of shuffle fold and coil*, and this *retake and coil* corresponds to an alliance between reason and the imagination. This is different from the other animals' imaginative repetition of past feelings without any awareness of their being past. In human beings the memories conjured up by the reproductive imagination are accompanied by reason, and because of this the experience that people have of time may include the realisation that what one is aware of does not correspond to *now* but to *then*. This *then* is located in the past or in the future. Realising the impact that the memory of the past has on him, Sammy states that he is 'not a man who was a boy', but 'a man who remembers being a boy' (Golding 1959: 46). He is 'the sum' of those memories (46). Actually, the images that Sammy associates with the concept of the past are not limited to memories of real events in which he was involved, but also include pictures created by his productive imagination. Though Sammy is mostly recalling things that occurred in *his* past, this is not always the case, as evidenced by his reference to the 'victories and defeats' (in the First World War) and the 'revolution' (in Russian) that took place in 1917, the year when he was born, and by his speculations not only about his mother's relationship with his father, whom he 'never knew', but also about his 'inscrutable' ancestry in general (9). Alternatively, *then* can be projected, again thanks to the productive imagination, into the future. As we are about to see, the possibility of locating imagined events in the past and in the future has enormous implications for an accurate comprehension of Sammy's narrative. They have to do with the narrative form given to Sammy's message, whose very organisation — its plot — endows the character-narrator's life-course with moral significance.

The narrative emplotment that Sammy carries out takes advantage of the treatment given to time by the combination of reason and the imagination. Conversely, this treatment finds its privileged mode of expression in narrative; for this reason

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12 My interpretation of these two modes of time follows Magee (1997: 214) and Wicks (2008: 73–5). According to Wicks's account, for Kant 'time is given to us as … a line that extends infinitely forward and backward, where all points are of the same qualitative value' (Wicks 2008: 73). By contrast, Schopenhauer usually 'states … that only the present is the true temporal reality' (74). According to Magee, Schopenhauer's point is that the contents of non-rational consciousness, 'being not abstract, can exist in a present only' (Magee 1997: 214).

narratologists refer as *narrative time* to that kind of temporal awareness that can only be human. H. Porter Abbott states that narrative, not necessarily continuous, *'is the principal way in which our species organizes its understanding of time'* (2008: 3).[13] Narrative is certainly the way in which Sammy understands and communicates the events that make up his life as it unfolds in time from childhood to adulthood.

Though Schopenhauer does not examine this possibility, once one's life has been organised into a narrative the temporal distance does not only translate into a psychological distance, but also into a narratological distance between the character and the narrator, and a moral distance between the sinner and the saint. In this respect, Sammy's confession follows the model of Augustine's *Confessions*. According to John Freccero, after Augustine every first-person narrative, whether factual or fictional, can be read as 'the story of a conversion' (1986: 17). This conversion must be understood in psychological terms, as a 'myth of … maturation' (19). It can also be understood in moral terms, as 'a separation between the sinner and the saint who tells the story' (19). Finally, it can be understood in narratological terms, as 'the death of the self as character and the resurrection of the self as narrator' (16–7). In this sense, Sammy's narrative depicts, as every autobiography does, 'the self aware of itself, sometimes as totally other' in three dimensions apart from the temporal one (22). From all these perspectives, Sammy's autobiography prompts the following questions: how can a person undergo such radical psychological change?, how can one leave behind all the sins committed?, and how can the character cross the diegetic boundary and become a narrator?

As it turns out, the way in which the main character is portrayed in *Free Fall* adds a further complication to the structure that Freccero identifies, because to the distance between the narrator and the adult character that took advantage of Beatrice, Sammy adds the distance between the sinning adult and the child. Indeed, old Sammy is

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13 The most detailed philosophical discussion of narrative time is probably Paul Ricoeur's three-volume *Time and Narrative*, according to which it is not that human time enables a person to make events into narrative sequences but that 'time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative' (1984: 3). From Schopenhauer's perspective, however, it is important to remember that conceptual time (without the need for narrative elaboration) is also human time. Abbott's statement is sufficient to highlight the privileged position of narrative in the context of human time, and tallies better than Ricoeur's with Schopenhauer's views.

insistent that (despite all appearances to the contrary) the child that lived in Rotten Row is not the same person as the adult. As he ponders on the pictures that he is about to bring back for our benefit, he makes the following remark:

> I have no responsibility for some of the pictures. I can remember myself as I was when I was a child. But even if I had committed murder then, I should no longer feel responsible for it. There is a threshold here … beyond which what I did was done by someone else. Yet I was there. … Perhaps reading my story through again I shall see the connection between the little boy, clear as spring water, and the man like a stagnant pool. Somehow, the one became the other (Golding 1959: 9).

Later he adds: 'he is not I', and, conversely: 'I am not he' (Golding 1959: 46, 78). This emphasis on the separation between the child and the adult — 'He is no more a part of me than any other child. I simply have better access to him' (70) — adds an interesting twist to the structure that, according to Freccero, characterises the confession. Moreover, it represents a departure from Schopenhauer's understanding of the conditions under which a person can examine his or her past life. According to Schopenhauer, human beings lead a 'double life' — a 'life in the concrete', i.e. according to feeling, and a 'life in the abstract', i.e. according to reason (Schopenhauer 1969a: 86). In his view, it is reason that allows a man to carry out a panoramic 'survey of [his] life as a whole', whereby 'what previously possessed him completely and moved him intensely appears to him cold, colourless, and, for the moment, foreign and strange; he is a mere spectator and observer' (86). In *Free Fall*, the temporal distance certainly involves this psychological distance to young Sammy, to whom old Sammy has 'objective … access' and over whom he 'sits in judgment as over a strange being' (Golding 1959: 78). However, when old Sammy describes young Sammy as 'some other person' (78), he establishes a more radical separation between past and present than Schopenhauer.[14]

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14 Ricoeur also links narrative time to narrative identity. In his view, human identity does not consist in 'being the same (*idem*)' but in being 'oneself as self-same (*ipse*)', in other words, not in 'a substantial or formal identity' but in 'a narrative identity' (1988: 246). The latter 'can escape the dilemma of the Same and the Other' because it relies on 'a temporal structure' conforming to the 'dynamic' model of 'poetic composition' (246). As it rests on memory, narrative self-sameness

The discrepancy between Sammy and Schopenhauer has to do with the understanding of freedom that Golding introduces in *Free Fall*. While Schopenhauer thinks that one cannot become a different person because the innateness of one's character prevents such a radical break with one's past, Sammy's enquiry puts the emphasis — as the title of the novel indicates — on the free choice that transforms the child into the adult sinner. It is true that Sammy's later transformation into a saint, which does not result from another free choice but from a sudden vision, tallies better with Schopenhauer's theory. However, if Sammy's narrative bears witness to the changes that took place in his life, it is surely because he expects it to serve — apart from the aesthetic effects that the literary artist's work may have — as a moral model for the readers. These can, thanks to Sammy's example, use their own productive

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is 'constitutive of self-constancy'; but, unlike abstract sameness, it 'can include change, mutability, within the cohesion of one's lifetime' (246). Grasping one's life as a narrative helps to understand oneself, for the 'writer' is at the same time the 'reader' of one's life (246).

Sammy Mountjoy is convinced that the reason why 'all patterns' that he has tried to impose on life 'have broken one after another' is 'that life is random' (Golding 1959: 25); but the attempt to understand how the child turned into the adult narrator by imposing a narrative pattern on his life brings him close to Ricoeur's understanding of identity as 'the discordant concordance that constitutes the cohesiveness of a life' (Ricoeur 1988: 140). Nevertheless, there might be a crucial difference between Sammy's and Ricoeur's uses of narrative. Though Ricoeur sees narrative identity as including the possibility of revision — 'the story of a life comes to be constituted through a series of rectifications applied to previous narratives' (247) — and of initiating something new, there are limits to the changes than one can introduce, as the principle of self-constancy, and thus of responsibility, 'is the highest factor' in narrative self-fashioning (249). If Ricoeur's theory is interpreted as stating that, while all actions for which one feels responsible must be included in one's life story, the latter may also include events for which one does not feel responsible, then Sammy's autobiography is of a piece with that theory. If, however, the theory is interpreted as stating that one's responsibility must extend to all the events included in one's life story, regardless of how one feels about them, then Sammy's autobiography goes against the theory, as Sammy denies all responsibility for the earliest events of his life: they can be included in his life story, but not morally integrated. Sammy's position might contradict Ricoeur's understanding of narrative identity; and though it tallies with the opinion, voiced by a philosopher like Galen Strawson, that some people see their lives as episodic rather than as continuous narratives, it also contradicts Strawson's view that in the episodic life the present is no 'less informed by or responsible to the past' than in the continuous life (Strawson 2004: 432).

imagination to anticipate how their decisions would change their future, and thus take the appropriate actions. And if the readers can follow Sammy into a better life, it is not because of his vision (let us recall that Schopenhauer describes it as a consequence of grace rather than of a voluntary effort), but because the freedom of choice — which is, the novel implies, available to everybody — can not only lead to sin but also lead away from it. In other parts of this study I shall examine, on the one hand, the life-changing insight that comes from saintly vision and the other kinds of metaphysical insight identified by Schopenhauer, and, on the other, Sammy's free embrace of evil, which can only be understood in the context of the increasing differences between Golding's and Schopenhauer's world views. Before that, however, it is necessary to examine other aspects of Golding's novels, beginning with his characters' experience of space and the modes of consciousness by means of which they go beyond the physical sphere of matter.

3.1.1.1.4. Modes of Spatial Awareness in the Sea Trilogy

A similar interpretation to the one given for time in *Free Fall* can be offered regarding the treatment of space in the Sea Trilogy. Here it is Reverend Colley's diary that includes the three varieties of representation that I have brought up in relation to time. Though the comments that Schopenhauer makes about the human experience of space are by no means as suggestive as those about time, it is easy to identify the three kinds of spatial awareness that Colley speaks of as felt space, conceptualised space and the sense of space that results from the marriage between the imagination and reason.

The main character and narrator of the trilogy is Edmund Talbot, a young gentleman who has been forced to learn his way into adulthood during a year-long voyage to Australia in the earlier nineteenth-century. The first book of the trilogy, *Rites of Passage*, begins as a journal that Talbot keeps during the voyage for his godfather, who has found him a post in the administration of the Australian colony. When Colley dies, apparently of unbearable shame after being humiliated in an Equator-crossing ceremony, Talbot appropriates the diary that the parson has been keeping for his sister and inserts it into his own.

Though Colley's diary will soon acquire more sombre overtones, at first it is an innocent record of his reflections about the voyage on which he has embarked and the people with whom he will have to live for several months. Not long after the ship has set sail, the cleric confesses to his sister the 'curious feelings about the strangeness of the world' that have seized him on the open sea (Golding 1991: 173). His first thoughts draw attention to the surprising fact that the dark surface of the sea prevents him from appreciating its depth:

> I went to the side of the vessel and leaned against the railings … and looked down where the timbers of our enormous vessel bulge out past her closed gunports. Her slight progress made a tiny ripple in that sea which I made myself to inspect coldly, as it were. My sense of its depth — but how am I to say this? I have seen many a millpond or corner of a river seem as deep! (Golding 1991: 173).

This quotation refers to an object located immediately before the observer in space as he can feel it from outside without having any possibility of penetrating beneath its surface. When one looks in this way at the 'material nature of the globe', as Colley says (Golding 1991: 173), one can only perceive the outer physical appearances that are in sight.

From this feeling of the space that extends right before his eyes, Colley moves on, pushed by his incipient homesickness, to how, in order 'to calculate that segment of water and earth and *terrible deep rock*' that separates him from their village, he will have to ask a shipman, 'who will be well enough acquainted with the angles and appropriate mathematics of the case' (Golding 1991: 174).[15] Here we are confronted with abstract geometrical space, which can be measured and calculated. This procedure allows the subject to get an objective impression of distance without moving from where he or she is. (As with time, space can be conceptualised in different ways.)

After this reflection on how the conceptualisation of space and its rational calculation can give him a pretty accurate idea of his current position in the world, Colley realises that his imagination is beginning to run wild. Though he manages to

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15 A similar instance of conceptualised space appears in *Pincher Martin*, where Pincher's imaginary surrogate uses a primitive diagram, made with his knife, to calculate in inches, and then mentally in miles, the distance at which he can be seen from passing ships (see Golding 1956: 106).

restrain himself from 'looking … over the horizon (in [the] imagination, of course)' in his sister's direction (Golding 1991: 174), he cannot help wondering if everything will be upside down in Australia:

> How immeasurably strange it will be at the Antipodes to stare (near enough I think) at the buckles of my shoes and suppose you — forgive me, I am off in a fantasy again! Do but think that there the very stars will be unfamiliar and the moon stood on her head? (Golding 1991: 174)

This is the experience of space that arises from the alliance between the imagination and reason. In the above passages imaginatively reproduced space includes Colley's remembrance of different English settings, always with the awareness that he is not *there*, and the image of Australia, another *there*, this time productively imagined, where he has never been and where he will never be.

3.1.1.2. The Grasp of the Physical and Metaphysical Sides of the World

Golding's views on the different dimensions of what there is both within and without the field of human knowledge are, like Schopenhauer's, quite complex. As in the philosopher's works, in Golding's the distinction between non-rational and rational knowledge is cross-cut by another, to which he often refers as the distinction between the dimensions of *matter* and *spirit*. Matter — which the novelist sometimes calls the *universe* — corresponds to what in my discussion of Schopenhauer I identified as the physical realm. Spirit includes Schopenhauer's metaphysical realm, which can be known, as well as the unknowable thing-in-itself. For Golding, the physical dimension and the spiritual dimension make up the entire *cosmos*. I shall deal with the unknowable thing-in-itself at the end of this chapter. In this and the following sections I shall stick to those characteristics of the spiritual plane that can be known, that is, to what Schopenhauer designates the metaphysical field of knowledge. The following table summarises the correspondences between Golding's and Schopenhauer's understanding of the coexisting planes of existence:

Schopenhauer		Golding	
knowable world	physical dimension	material dimension (*universe*)	*cosmos*
	metaphysical dimension (including the essential will)	spiritual dimension	
unknowable thing-in-itself			

Table 3: Planes of Human Existence in Schopenhauer and Golding

For Golding, as for Schopenhauer, appreciating the aesthetic, moral, epistemological and ontological significance of what lies beyond physical appearances is a fundamental aspect of being human. In Golding, as in Schopenhauer, both physical matter and those aspects of spirit that we can know are initially accessible to the non-rational intellect in the form of feelings, and only then converted into abstract concepts. Cognition of the world's metaphysical plane seldom goes beyond inchoate feelings; when people verbalise their conceptions of the world they usually refer to its physical side (usually by using language denotatively), and, with the exception of philosophers, when people try to convey their awareness of its metaphysical side they seldom appeal to their audience's rational intellect (most frequently by using language in an evocative way). This may explain why, as we saw in the first part of this study, Golding's critics have tended to identify physical representation with reason and denotation, on the one hand, and metaphysical representation with feeling and evocation, on the other. I shall try not to make the same mistake, keeping the three pairs separated (if only because, as I have shown, Golding's characters come into contact with physical objects as much through non-rational feelings as through the rational concepts that derive from them, and because his narrators use evocation not only to arouse metaphysical feelings but also physical feelings). Moreover, given the presence in Golding's novels of aesthetic contemplation and of inward observation (both of which refer, according to Schopenhauer, to metaphysical appearances), we must also bear in mind that in Golding the distinction between physical matter and metaphysical spirit may not be exactly the same as the opposition between appearance and essence.

Golding's position, repeated in most of his writings, is that human experience would be greatly impoverished if we could not step out, a least occasionally, from the physical boundaries of the world. To him, human life takes place simultaneously in two different but complementary dimensions. In the following passage, from the essay entitled 'Utopias and Antiutopias', he labels one of the dimensions *spiritual*, and notes that it coexists with another dimension — here unnamed yet easy to identify as that of physical events — to which an everyday experiences like riding a bicycle are usually reduced:

> Consider a man riding a bicycle. … We know he got on the bicycle and started to move. We know that at some point he will stop and get off. … That is the metaphor for the journey through life of any living thing … To confuse the issue I might add in parenthesis that I believe in another spiritual dimension which crosses that journey at right angles, so to speak (Golding 1984a: 178).[16]

In two other pieces published in the same volume, 'Belief and Creativity' and the Nobel lecture given in 1983, Golding is more explicit. Side by side with the dimension which 'we know through our eyes at the telescope and microscope and open for daily use', Golding places another dimension which scientists 'ignore' (Golding 1984a: 201, 204). The first is the physical side of the world, while the latter — which he again defines as 'spiritual' (204) — comprises the immanent metaphysical side of the knowable world plus 'everything else that *is* in every state and level of being', that is, whatever may exist in a transcendent sphere beyond our knowledge, making up 'a whole which is quite unimaginable' (201). Establishing an ad hoc distinction, Golding says that for him the physical side is the 'universe', while the spiritual side is the 'cosmos' (201). When I discuss Golding's faith in the existence of other, parallel worlds of which we can have no real knowledge, I shall deal directly with the unfathomable thing-in-itself. Until then, my focus will continue to be only on the knowable world. Thus my argument will provisionally develop as if Schopenhauer's metaphysics and Golding's spirit were perfectly synonymous.

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16 At the same time as it serves Golding to illustrate the interpenetration of the physical and metaphysical dimensions, the complete passage serves him, as we shall see, to illustrate the impossibility of utopia.

Having introduced the distinction between the physical universe and the spiritual side of the cosmos, the Nobel lecture refers to an earlier attempt to bring these two planes together. This attempt is not in the form of an essay, but of a novel, *Free Fall*, where he couches the distinction (somewhat confusingly) in terms of complementary worlds. Towards the end of his self-examination, in the course of which he recalls the role played in his upbringing by Nick Shales (the science teacher) and Rowena Pringle (the religion teacher), Sammy reaches the conclusion that people 'live in two worlds at once', both of which 'are real' (Golding 1959: 251, 253). There is a kind of explanation, of the kind epitomised by science, that throws light on the world and makes the advances of modern life possible; but it also makes the world seem less mysterious than it actually is, and separates it from human subjectivity and motivation:

> All day long the trains run on rails. Eclipses are predictable. Penicillin cures pneumonia and the atom splits to order. All day long, year in, year out, the daylight explanation drives back the mystery and reveals a reality usable, understandable and detached (Golding 1959: 252).

There are occasions, however, when 'The scalpel and the microscope fail'; one of these occasions is when it is necessary to investigate human behaviour (Golding 1959: 252). What Golding calls *daylight* explanation cannot go beyond our external actions. For this reason, it can neither describe the sources of human conduct nor attach moral value to it. If we want to overcome the limitations of the 'materialistic' perspective (226), we must resort to alternative descriptions. In doing so we enter the metaphysical realm of spirit, the only one in which morals make sense: 'All day long action is weighed in the balance and found not opportune nor fortunate or ill-advised, but good or evil. For this mode which we must call the spirit breathes through the universe and does not touch it' (252–3).

In *Free Fall*, physical and metaphysical cognition are associated with Nick Shales and Rowena Pringle, respectively. Sammy's relationship to the two teachers proves crucial in his intellectual development. So potent is their influence that Sammy calls them his second 'parents', stating that 'if anyone had made me, they made me' (Golding 1959: 194). In Miss Pringle's classroom he discovers the mysteries of the Bible, the majesty of the metaphysical dimension, and the need for moral judgement. In another classroom, Mr Shales speaks of an entirely different dimension, dominated by the

'mechanics of cause and effect' (5). From Nick's perspective, the physical outlook seems 'impregnable plate-armour'; from the perspective of spirit, Nick's beliefs seem 'very formal, very complete, very ignorant' (6).

A similar opinion about physical knowledge is voiced by Dean Jocelin in *The Spire*, Golding's following novel, where the opposition between the two complementary sides of experience leads to the same conclusion as in *Free Fall*.[17] The narrative recounts the construction of a four-hundred-foot spire in mediaeval England. The action of the novel is triggered by an episode during which, in his own account, Dean Jocelin understands God's will to be that a great spire be added to the existing cathedral. On the basis of this alleged revelation, the Dean drives the master builder Roger Mason to carry out the project despite the temple's marshy foundations. The narrator abstains from giving us clear evidence to decide whether or not Jocelin is a true visionary; but at the same time the text also undermines the scepticism of Jocelin's opponents. The story begins many years after Jocelin had is revelation, when the construction of the spire has already started. Even before the builders begin to experience any serious difficulties, Jocelin reveals that his memory of his vision is as faint as that of 'a dream remembered from childhood' (Golding 1964: 67). The only proof that the construction of the spire is in response to God's intention is Jocelin's word, but frequent doubts are cast on his sanctity and his very sanity. However, it soon becomes clear that those who criticise the Dean's unquestioning religiosity — beginning with Roger — are motivated by a short-sighted perspective based on rational calculation. Even the other priests are too concerned with worldly business to pay attention to the manifestations of the supernatural. The building work destroys the normal fabric of cathedral life and ruins the lives of all involved. No longer blinded by the intensity of the revelation, Jocelin eventually sees so much destruction that he is forced to recognise his own secret motivations — the hitherto unconscious sexual desire for Goody Pangall that he has been sublimating — as well as those of the people round him. After the work has been brought to completion, Jocelin's life ends in puzzlement as he observes the soaring pinnacle.

Throughout the novel Jocelin speaks about the material and the spiritual — the latter being the origin of his conception of the soaring spire — as two distinct

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17 I have discussed *The Spire* elsewhere (Saavedra-Carballido 2014).

dimensions of experience. While he is firmly positioned in the latter, which he equates with his own religious faith, the former is occupied by Roger Mason. While Jocelin is certain that 'The spiritual is to the material three times real' (Golding 1964: 193), he is not so stupid as to interfere with the business of building the new steeple, and leaves it to Roger Mason to work out the means to build a durable structure. The master builder tries to convince him that it is madness to continue building without consideration of the physical laws that the materials with which he works obey. As the two characters soon realise, in the absence of any common intellectual ground they can only share the same perspective if one succeeds in forcing his own point of view upon the other. Jocelin tries to convince Roger and his army of workers that the spire's erection has been ordained by God Himself, while the master builder reacts by exposing the Dean's folly. When Roger attempts to persuade Jocelin to stop building, he emphasises the physical characteristics of stone and glass:

> 'Look down, Father — right over the parapet, all the way down …'.
>   'I see'
>   'Let your eye crawl down like an insect … You think these walls are strong because they're stone; but I know better. We've nothing but a skin of glass and stone stretched between four stone rods, one at each corner. D'you understand that? … Look down, Father … I've clamped the stones together but still I can't make them stronger than stone. Stone snaps, crumbles, tears' (Golding 1964: 117).

Even so, Jocelin remains blind to all considerations of feasibility and insists on the need to 'build in faith, against advice' (Golding 1964: 108). Apparently, the foundations are not strong enough, and neither are the four central pillars that have to bear the new steeple: under its weight, they start to bend. And yet, in the end, the pinnacle is finished, and the cathedral does not collapse. As Lerner puts it: 'When building is concerned, Roger … understands what he is saying; and he is shown wrong. Jocelin, in his ignorance succeeds: for all his corrupt motives, for all his defeat as a human being, he built the spire' (Lerner 1981: 7). In the world that the novel depicts, spirit triumphs

over matter.[18] Even if it is Roger Mason who, being force to translate spiritual insight into technical solutions, invents the steel bands that bind the tower together, the fact is that, were it not for Jocelin's spiritual certainty, nobody would have had the idea of building the spire in the first place: 'The function of a Jocelin is not to brush aside the master builder, it is to recognise Roger's genius, and to drive him to do what he would not otherwise have managed' (Lerner 1981: 7). Whether this means or not that the dimension of the spirit makes miracles possible — not only in this novel, but also in other books of Golding's, and by extension in the real world — is a moot point (it could be argued that not knowing the reasons why something happens does not mean that those reasons do not exist). Despite Sammy Mountjoy's talk of 'a world of miracle' in *Free Fall* (Golding 1959: 189), Golding's novels always leave us in doubt whether a materialistic interpretation suffices. The fact that Jocelin's pinnacle eventually stands might be '"a miracle"', as Jocelin believes, or a tribute to Roger Mason's expertise, or sheer luck (1964: 38).

The two dimensions — the physical surface and the metaphysical underpinnings — reappear in later novels, published after Golding had begun to question the possibility of metaphysics. Thus, *Darkness Visible* and *The Paper Men* go as far as to centre on characters who believe that the metaphysical side of the opposition is the place where the essence of the world — and hence of human begins — can be found.

Darkness Visible is divided into three parts. The first part of the novel centres on a boy called Matty. The opening chapter describes him as a naked, half-burnt child emerging from a bomb explosion during the London Blitz. After his discharge from hospital, he becomes a ward of the state and is put into a boarding school, where he is shunned by the other children and rejected by one of his teachers, the homosexual paedophile Mr Pedigree. The second part of the novel focuses on two twin girls, Toni and Sophy Stanhope. Their story starts in their childhood and continues until they

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18 The real-life model of the novel's cathedral lies in Salisbury cathedral, with which Golding was familiar (see Biles 1970: 96 ff.; Carey 2009: 128–9). His essay 'An Affection for Cathedrals' contains a description of how Salisbury cathedral stands 'in the middle of a swamp' and 'with complete indifference to such things as health, foundations … and general practicability' (Golding 1984: 17). Golding insinuates that there may be 'a weight-bearing stratum in the swamp' about which 'the builders could not have known', so the building 'does not float by some miracle' (17); but *The Spire* never mentions this bedrock.

become young adults. The twins are as exquisite as they are loveless. Sophy is presented as the kind of person that can only experiment a physical orgasm by inflicting pain on others; Toni ends up becoming an international terrorist. The third part of the novel brings all four characters together. Sophy and Toni plan to kidnap the son of an oil sheik from the school where Matty works, but Matty sacrifices his life to foil their plans. In the final scene of the narrative what seems to be his ghostly apparition causes Mr Pedigree's death, liberating the former teacher from the desire that has him 'wandering round lavatories and public parks' in search of possible victims (Golding 1979: 260).

One of the novel's secondary characters points to the possibility of piercing the physical surface of things, i.e. of pulling down the cognitive wall of separation that egocentric consciousness has erected among individuals (and which certain ideologies can present as impossible to destroy), when he explains that those who gain an insight beyond the physical dimension are generally seen as '"funny"' for believing that they '"could see through a brick wall"' (Golding 1979: 258). *Darkness Visible* does not say that this is an easy thing to do, yet it does suggest that the goal is feasible, and that once it has been attained the physical side of the world is revealed, in Baker's words, as 'the facade of a spiritual realm' that one can access through hidden doors (2000: 325). In the novel the character with the clearest metaphysical abilities is Matty. As the story unfolds, we discover that his life has been marked by his alertness to a dimension beyond physical surfaces, 'the world of spirit' (Golding 1979: 233). In the novel this metaphysical dimension is presented as the place where the essence of the world can be found. Pausing to examine the objects displayed in a shop window, Matty sees a glass ball lying on a wooden stand. When he stares into the ball, he suddenly pierces through the usual 'cloth of what had seemed separate', becoming conscious of what the narrator calls — using an expression with Melvillian pedigree — 'the warp and woof from which events and people get their being'; this is 'the seamy side, where the connections are' (48), and whose knowledge — and the conclusions that he draws from it — separates Matty from most of the characters with which he comes into contact.

Though not as explicitly, *The Paper Men* also makes reference to the opposition between the realm of appearances and the essence behind them. The narrative presents itself as the autobiography of the famous British novelist Wilf Barclay. Wilf tells the reader about his declining career and about his frenzied flight from Rick L. Tucker, an American academic that aspires to be his biographer. Urged by Rick to review his past,

Wilf reveals his ugly side. Eventually convinced that he is an unredeemable sinner, he abruptly decides to write his autobiography for Rick. Unaware of this, the latter seeks to take revenge and kills the subject of his research.

The most important episode for our purposes here is the one in which the novel's main characters, the alcoholic writer and the aspiring biographer, go for a walk along a mountain path. Rick draws Wilf's attention to the sound of a nearby stream:

> The stream, a single skein of falling water ... had two voices, not one. There was the cheerful babble, a kind of frivolity as if the thing, the Form, enjoyed its bounding passage downward, through space. Then running under that was a deep, meditative hum as if despite the frivolity and surface rattle the thing sounded from some deep secret of the mountain itself (Golding 1984b: 83).

Commenting on this passage, Redpath persuasively argues that the two voices represent the two sides of experience to which Golding's writings call attention: 'The first voice ... is surface existence, the daily life we lead working, sleeping, and forming relationships with people and things. ... Beneath this is ... the "deep secret", and *The Paper Men* treats this as a metaphysical question of being' (Redpath 1986: 183). As Wilf puts it, the question of being is that of 'asisness, *Istigkeit*' or '*isness*' (Golding 1984b: 161, 176), that is, of the essence of the world in which his own character is rooted. Wilf refers to this essence as 'inexplicable' and 'indescribable' (176). In Schopenhauer's terms, the reason why Wilf finds it impossible to explain the essence of the world is that it is independent of any of the forms of representation that locate object in time, space, in the chain of causes and effects, or, at the very least, in relation to a subject, in other words, that this essence is groundless; as for the impossibility to describe it, the problem only arises if language is used denotatively. Using language evocatively — as Wilf does, without meaning it, when he speaks of the mountain stream with two voices — makes metaphysical communication easier.

In the beginning, Wilf only pays attention to the sound of the stream because Rick has prompted him to; but when he loses his footing and falls off the mountain path, he is overcome by the fear to die, and he realises that the only thing that he can now hear — and *see* — is the noise of rushing water, suddenly transformed into a murmur from the underworld:

> The deeper voice of the stream had consumed the lighter one. It was as if the mountain was speaking with the same deep tone that had been audible and now, in the mind, *visible* round the falling lump of rock (Golding 1984b: 89).

Here, writes Redpath, 'the stream speaks in one voice, the voice of the mountain, revealing what lies behind day-to-day being' (1986: 184). This is the voice of the deeper metaphysical level. When Wilf 'discovers that he was in no danger of falling down the mountain, that death and what lies beyond death was, in fact, nowhere near him' (184), this single voice undergoes another transformation: 'I found myself listening to the sound of water. It had only one voice, and this was the light, babbling one' (Golding 1984b: 135). Redpath describes this 'surface voice' as the sound of 'the "frivolity" of ordinary life' (1986: 184). All these changes can be interpreted as follows: when he realises how dangerous the path that he is following may be, and he begins to envisage the possibility of dying, Wilf hears two voices in the stream, one symbolising his everyday concerns and the other symbolising the usually hidden essence of the world that threatens to swallow him up; when this possibility becomes a certainty, he gets so frightened that he can only hear the deeper voice that announces his individual annihilation; and when he discovers that he is sound and safe, he returns to his former frame of mind dominated by superficial concerns.

Indirectly, but also relating to the opposition between physical surfaces and metaphysical depths, the fact that the stream has two voices may be linked to Wilf's refusal to tell Tucker about his past, and hence to disclose his real personality. According to Redpath, Wilf is intent on hiding 'the deep hum' of his memories of lust and perversion with his lover Lucinda, of pride and obscenity towards his first wife Margaret, of disloyalty towards his second wife Elizabeth, of his latent homosexuality, and of his probable killing of a man in a hit and run accident (1986: 188). By contrast, he has no qualms to accept 'the surface babble of life', and even adds to it through a disconcerting accumulation of erudite quotes and indirect allusions, as if he wanted the sound of other voices to muffle his own, thus burying his true nature under them (188). This means that the deep and surface voices of the stream not only symbolise the essence of the world and the manifestations — here, the mountain landscape — on which, as a rule, we put the focus, but also Wilf's innate character, which is but another aspect of the world's essence. Of course, Wilf's strategy fails, as the world's essence

shows its true colours when he least expects it. This resurfacing of his inner being is embodied in the annoying literary critic that insists on following him wherever he goes: 'In running from Tucker, Barclay is running from himself', yet 'wherever Barclay runs Tucker seems to be there too because this inner life accompanies Barclay' (189). It is therefore appropriate that it is Tucker, the only person who may uncover Wilf's darkest secrets, who draws the novelist's attention to the double voice of the stream, the thin superficial voice of everyday life and the deep voice that represents both the writer's innate character and the essential kernel of the world.

One of Golding's recurrent ideas is that we cannot forget that we live simultaneously in both planes of existence. Doing otherwise, Golding warns us, is not only a mistake that distorts our knowledge of the world, but is a kind of perversion that causes unnecessary harm. For this reason, human beings need to be aware that both the physical and the metaphysical perspectives coexist, and then, as the novelist says to Biles, neither makes sense in isolation: 'Either, on its own, makes sense, but when you've got them both there — and this is the situation — neither one taken alone does' (in Biles 1970: 82). Living as if only one realm were real may make things seem less messy. The problem is not only that it is an impoverishment of experience, or that it amounts to self-deception, but that it can be very dangerous. This danger appears in a number of novels, but here I shall only analyse its manifestations in *Free Fall* and *The Spire*, the two that I have been discussing in greatest detail in this section. Miss Pringle, Sammy and Jocelin prove that it is just as bad to have an empty, materialistic lifestyle, as if the world were composed of depthless material objects, as being so enmeshed in the metaphysical realm as to grow blind to the material exigencies of everyday life.

In *Free Fall*, as we have seen, the conflict between a concentration on physical phenomena and the emphasis on the metaphysical realm is embodied in Nick Shales and Miss Pringle. Poised between Nick's science lesson and Miss Pringle's readings of the Bible, Sammy struggles to bring their stances together. Both teachers present their systems as complete and orderly, but Miss Pringle's is more attractive. The problem with Miss Pringle is that she has 'deceived herself completely'; forgetting that she also has those needs, she acts as if she lived 'in only one world', that of spirit (Golding 1959: 252). At first Sammy presents himself as an 'earnest metaphysical boy', for whom his religion teacher's 'stories where the scale is good and evil seemed the hub of life, the essential business', and he is convinced that and Miss Pringle are 'too of a kind' (196,

204). Though young Sammy is glad to discover that 'Watts invented the steam engine', he is more interested in the voice that 'spoke to Moses out of a bush that burned but was not consumed away' (196). This flame he finds 'far more important' than Nick's lessons about the composition of water (197).

In hindsight, however, he realises that Miss Pringle is an expert manipulator, 'a past-master of crowd psychology' (Golding 1959: 195). Her lesson to her pupils is not one of sympathy and forgiveness: 'She ruled, not by love but by fear. Her weapons were no cane, they were different, subtle and cruel, unfair and vicious. They were teeny, arch sarcasms that made the other children giggle and tore the flesh' (195). Miss Pringle is dangerous because she is oblivious of the everyday needs (mental as well as bodily) of other people.

After suffering the psychological consequences of her fanatic catechism, Sammy starts to believe that 'when she made [him] suffer … the fault was [his]' (195), and his admiration turns into dislike for her hypocrisy:

> how could she crucify a small boy, tell him that he sat out away from the others because he was not fit to be with them and then tell the story of that other crucifixion with every evidence in her voice of sorrow for human cruelty and wickedness? (Golding 1959: 210).

Eventually, personal antipathy for Miss Pringle's 'cruelty and discipline' turns into distaste for her whole world view, whose recognition of the metaphysical roots of moral judgement she reduces to a constant threat of punishment (Golding 1959: 197). Nick's materialism is not only 'dull' but short-sighted (6): being sceptical about everything other than causally determined events, for him 'the word freedom is a pious hope for an illusion' (191). His materialism may prevent him from realising the metaphysical roots of human behaviour; but he finds it so 'easy to be good' that his pupils adore him (214). In the end, it is Nick's personal qualities that prompt Sammy to embrace his outlook: 'The beauty of Miss Pringle's cosmos was vitiated because she was a bitch. Nick's stunted universe was irradiated by his love of people' (226). As a consequence, Sammy repudiates metaphysics and adopts a purely physical approach to the world. Contrary to what he thinks, Sammy's conclusion might have little to do with 'logical' considerations (226). The distance between Sammy's arguments and his true motivation illustrates his own claim that, however much we try to rationalise them,

sometimes 'our decisions are not logical but emotional', in other words, that 'We have reason and are irrational' (222). Like other Golding novels, *Free Fall* is intended to convey the idea that, though human beings are rational animals, human attitudes and behaviour normally owe more to feelings than to reason.

Reasoning that 'There are no morals that can be deduced from natural science', he concludes that, without metaphysics, the world is 'a savage place' where a man has been left alone to 'enjoy what he could while it was going' (Golding 1959: 226). In the physical dimension of matter, Sammy thinks, 'man is the highest' and 'right and wrong [are] nominal and relative' (226). Not content with stating that 'good and evil is decided by majority vote', it occurs to him that 'Conduct is not good or bad, but discovered or got away with' (218). But then, why should he 'go with a majority decision? Why should not Sammy's good be what Sammy decides?' (226). The fact that his attitude would have revolted Nick Shales does not deter Sammy, nor does he realise that his conclusion might be simply a way of justifying the satisfaction of his desires (desires of which he is aware and which he can only have felt inside himself, that is, according to Schopenhauer, metaphysically). In the end, Sammy's line of thought makes him the mirror image of Miss Pringle, and just as dangerous as her. She torments her students in the name of a badly understood religion; he ends up sliding into a life of depravity, and abusing his girlfriend Beatrice for the sake of pure physical pleasure.[19]

Though in *The Spire* no one adopts the amoral materialism that Sammy recommends in *Free Fall* — and which he takes to sanction his immoralism — the contrast between Nick's physical short-sightedness and Miss Pringle's metaphysical fanaticism reappears in the relationship between Roger Mason and Dean Jocelin. At the outset of the novel Jocelin is, like Miss Pringle, blinded to human needs by the exclusive concern with metaphysics. As Kinkead-Weekes states, the rest of the novel

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19 The characterisation of Sammy as an uber-materialist repeats that of Pincher Martin's surrogate. The private world that Pincher creates and of which his surrogate is the centre is — as the allusions to painted paper and theatrical representation make clear — a world of surfaces without real consistency. His reliance on a materialistic ideology — whose moral implications are so graphically couched by Sammy Mountjoy — leads him to replicate the physical aspects of the public world without realising that its metaphysical aspects are equally important. When his world has collapsed almost entirely he begins to suspect that, in comparison, the regions that await him after death are 'three times real' (Golding 1956: 200).

serves 'to bring home to Jocelin … how blind he has been to physical reality, to people' (Kinkead-Weekes 1987: 69).

The first scene of the novel shows us Jocelin on a visit to the building works. One of the workers is carving a gargoyle in the Dean's honour. 'Nose, like an eagle's beak. Mouth open wide, lined cheeks, hollow deep under the cheekbone, eyes deep in their hollows' (Golding 1964: 23) — this is what the gargoyle looks like, in the narrator's words. But when Jocelin looks at it full of pride, it does not remind him — as it does the reader — of a stooping bird of prey. What Jocelin sees instead is himself in rapture, 'Rushing on with the angels, the infinite speed that is stillness, hair blown, torn back, straightened with the wind of the spirit, mouth open, not for uttering rainwater, but hosannas and hallelujahs' (24). The Dean, however, is no angel. One by one, four people are sacrificed on the altar of his obsession: Roger Mason, Pangall and their respective wives. Far from condemning it, Jocelin encourages and condones the adultery of Roger Mason and Goody Pangall because '"She will keep him here"' (64). Later on we learn of the Dean's secret love for her. When Goody gets pregnant and dies in childbirth, Roger Mason breaks under the strain and becomes a drunkard; later, after a final confrontation with Jocelin, he tries to commit suicide and ends up as helpless as an infant child, nursed by his cuckolded wife. As for Pangall, he disappears mysteriously, and when we discover that he has been killed and thrown into the pit under the crossing as a sacrificial victim, it becomes clear that Jocelin is indirectly responsible for this (and that he has always known, in what he calls the cellarage of his mind, how it happened). The overall effect of Jocelin's madness on the rest of the cathedral's community is disastrous, as the Pope's visitor notes: the services of the church have been discontinued, and the burning candles have been replaced by the tools of the workers, whom the visitor from Rome describes as '"Murderers, cutthroats, rowdies, brawlers, rapers, notorious fornicators, sodomites, atheists, or worse"' (167). In the end, even Jocelin's physical health suffers too. One day, when he catches a glimpse of himself reflected in a piece of metal sheet at the construction site, the first thing that attracts his attention is 'the wild halo of hair, the skinny arms and legs that stuck out of a girt and dirty robe' (154). He examines 'his eyes, deep in sockets over which the skin was dragged — dragged too over the cheekbones, then sucked in', and 'the nose like a beak and now nearly as sharp, the deep grooves in the face, the gleam of teeth' (154), and the image of his decrepitude startles him. Realising how much damage

he has done, as soon as the works have finished he approaches Roger to ask for forgiveness. "'I thought I was doing a great work; and all I was doing was bringing ruin and breeding hate'" (209), he confesses, just before the master builder — a broken man who has found refuge in drink — throws him out of his house.

3.1.1.3. The Two Cultures Debate in Golding's Novels and Essays

So far, Schopenhauer's philosophy has thrown light on the oppositions explored in Golding's novels between non-rational feelings and rational concepts, between the focus on physical objects and the focus on metaphysical objects. In Golding these two oppositions coalesce into a classification of the descriptions of the world that in the course of history have been established as veritable institutions of knowledge.

For Schopenhauer, some descriptions of the world (such as science) focus on its physical side and appeal to reason; among the ones that focus on the metaphysical side of the world, some (art and religion) excite feelings, while others (those of philosophy) excite rational concepts. Though he usually describes history as focusing on physical objects and appealing to reason, he sometimes suggests that it may have a metaphysical focus on people's inner motivations. Schopenhauer thinks that, because of its characteristic combination of the appeal to reason, its exclusive attention to the physicality of objects, and what he typically sees as its emphasis on their utility, the scientific description of the world is usually the vehicle of egoistic — perhaps even malignant — desires, hence less valuable than metaphysical descriptions, which, by contrast, liberate us or else teach us how to break free from those desires.

Though he does not provide as many details as Schopenhauer, Golding reaches similar conclusions. The analysis of and essay that he devoted to Copernicus and of an apparently trivial episode in the Sea Trilogy, in with the dangers of confusing religious dogma with scientific data are described in a humorous fashion, will show how Golding agrees with Schopenhauer that the autonomy of secular enquiry must be asserted against the influence of religion. The analysis of Golding's essay 'On the Crest of the Wave', originally published in 1960, will then show how Golding, like Schopenhauer, not only contrasts science — whose utilitarian character he usually highlights too — with what he calls the *arts*, but also how he subordinates the undeniable achievements

of the physical sciences to those of art, religion and the other metaphysical conceptualisations of the world. As we shall see, Golding's preference for the arts is in stark contrast with the position of Charles P. Snow, another contemporary novelist whose famous 1959 Rede Lecture on the two cultures extolled the revolutionary potential of science while simultaneously dismissing the arts — epitomised by literary studies — as backward-looking. Golding's reasons for privileging the arts coincide which those given by the literary critic Frank R. Leavis in his angry response to Snow. Because of this, Golding's essay — which is not presented as a direct reaction to Snow's lecture — can be read as an indirect intervention in the two cultures debate. More to the point here, the arguments that Golding employs also coincide with Schopenhauer's: what makes the arts so important, suggests Golding, is that only they can, to different degrees, describe the world in its entirety, i.e. physically *and* metaphysically, that only they can provide people with either aesthetic quietude or compassionate insight, only they guide the conduct of people, only they teach us how to pass aesthetic and moral judgements, in fine, that only they can alleviate our suffering and console us for death. It is precisely the importance that Golding attaches to the arts that justifies discussing his treatment of the two cultures. Though it amounts to a brief shift of attention away from the novels (where the opposition between science and the arts is present but not discussed directly), the discussion of 'On the Crest of the Wave' will ease the transition between the fictional exploration of the varieties of knowledge, which I have already examined, and the other issues with which his novels are most frequently concerned (the sources of suffering, the divinity, aesthetics, morality, politics and, increasingly, the historical evolution of society's organisation), and which, once introduced, will take up the rest of this study.

3.1.1.3.1. Golding's Defence of the Autonomy of Science

Golding's view of science is very similar to Schopenhauer's. On the whole, both believe that rational concepts derive their reliability and utility from the non-rational feelings on which they are based, and in relation to which they add no new knowledge. As regards scientific enquiry, whose division into a pure and an applied strand they generally deny, both usually state that it starts with the perception of the physical

world, and is only as reliable and useful as this perception is accurate. We have seen how, in *Free Fall*, Sammy Mountjoy's references to science put the emphasis on the way in which it *reveals a reality usable* where *trains run on rails* and *penicillin cures pneumonia*. These utilitarian considerations appear in other novels too, from *Lord of the Flies* (where Piggy tries to convince the other children that there are *doctors for everything, even the inside of your mind* and that *if there is something wrong, there's someone to put it right* because *life is scientific*) to the Sea Trilogy (where Lieutenant Benét's impressive inventiveness, thanks to which a broken mast is repaired, ensures the ship's arrival in Australia).

However, this is not the only account of science that appears in Golding's and Schopenhauer's writings. Golding's essays sometimes offer what, from Schopenhauer's perspective, would be a metaphysical account of scientific discoveries, which he links to the figure of the 'Natural philosopher' (Golding 1965: 130), and which has nothing to with the technological advances that may derive from it. Indeed, this alternative view of science is not entirely alien to Schopenhauer, who occasionally identifies the true object of science – and of philosophy — as the metaphysical-aesthetic, hence universal, dimension of the object (see Schopenhauer 2000b: 4). Though as a rule my discussion of science in Golding's works will treat it as a rational enterprise whose roots are in physical perception and whose purpose is necessarily utilitarian, this alternative account is suggestive enough to deserve some commentary.

In a piece devoted to Nicolaus Copernicus, Golding states that heliocentrism involves 'an imaginative break-away' from the geocentric system (Golding 1965: 34). Elsewhere he shares with Carey his belief that 'the best kind of scientist works imaginatively' (in Carey 1987: 183), and in a piece entitled 'Belief and Creativity' he gives more detail about the role of the imagination. Here he speaks of the 'geniuses' that are 'brave enough or foolish enough' to hedge their bets on 'a consuming belief', a 'most passionate and unsupported conviction' (Golding 1984a: 189, 197). Though Golding concedes that 'the structure built on it' might well be rational, as in the cases of science and philosophy (190), he makes it clear that the ground of this 'absolute conviction, a declaration to be held in the face of all the world' which gives those who cling to it 'a voice of authority' (194, 193), is 'mysterious' because it is 'irrational' (190). What is more, he thinks that this non-rational belief connects the work of the scientist with that of the novelist and 'the poet at his height' (192). In all these cases, the 'rare

moments of insight' involve the use of the imagination and are the tokens of 'genuine creativity' (197, 196). On this view, creativity always has to do with aesthetics, in science as in art. Even the heliocentric hypothesis, says Golding, was 'aesthetic' in character, and Copernicus felt its truth despite being initially unable to prove it mathematically (Golding 1965: 36). On this account, then, what triggers the scientific enterprise is the same aesthetic feeling as in art, and what follows this common apprehension of the object from an aesthetic perspective is, both for the scientist and the artist, the heroic attempt to convey an indescribable feeling by means of rational signs, be they mathematical formulae or words.

As I said before, this is by no means the view of science that transpires from Golding's novels. On the contrary, they usually put the accent on its physical focus and its utilitarian character. The focus on perception is what lies behind Schopenhauer's comments on Isaac Newton's theory of gravity and the rest of Golding's discussion of Copernicus's heliocentrism. Schopenhauer tells us that, when Newton understood how the system of gravitation worked, and 'attempted to verify it by applying it to the motion of the moon', the first results that he obtained 'did not tally exactly', because 'the sole empirical datum' of the size of the degrees of the earth's circumference was wrong (Schopenhauer 2000b: 146–7). Golding tells a similar story Copernicus's heliocentric model, which at first 'did not allow exact prediction', among other reasons because the empirical data recorded in the astronomical tables with which he worked 'were inaccurate' (Golding 1965: 37). Though Tycho Brahe, who came after Copernicus, 'knew the value of accurate observations, and spent his life compiling them', he endorsed geocentrism and did not bother to correct Copernicus's model (39). It was only when Johannes Kepler combined Copernicus's ideas with Brahe's data that the heliocentric system 'worked exactly' (39). What this story shows, according to Golding (and his opinion here coincides with Schopenhauer's), is that 'Reason … has something to offer but only in terms of itself and depends for its effect and use on the nature of the premise' (1984a: 191).

Apart from agreeing that scientific concepts are only as reliable as the physical perceptions from which they derive, Golding and Schopenhauer reject the encroachment of religion upon the secular descriptions of the world (science, history, art and philosophy). While Schopenhauer asserts the self-sufficiency of philosophy against the interference of theology, Golding defends the autonomy of science.

Schopenhauer contends that 'every ... branch of knowledge is spoilt by an admixture of theology' (Schopenhauer 2000a: 187). This is particularly true of philosophy. When religious faith interferes with its rational procedures, philosophical enquiry stops being the secular enterprise that it should be and is used spuriously to rationalise and justify the philosopher's religious beliefs. According to Schopenhauer, if one wants to be a theologian, one 'must be consistent and not abandon the foundation of authority' (2000b: 390), but this acceptance of religious dogma is paramount among the things that one has to avoid to become a true philosopher. As regards Golding the reasons why he defends the autonomy of science rather than of philosophy may be that religion may diminish the accuracy of science's theoretical results, and that science has nothing to teach from a practical point of view: scientific theories cannot change the conduct of people, they cannot prevent them from harming and killing each other. By contrast, the metaphysical emphasis that characterises art and philosophy allows them to have a practical bearing upon their audience. This practical potential is something that these secular metaphysical approaches have in common with religion. Noxious as the influence of religious doctrine may be upon them, it does not alter their practical impact.

In Golding's opinion, then, as in Schopenhauer's, among the approaches that embody secular conceptions of the world — both mention history, art, science and philosophy — there are some that resent the influence of religion even more than the others. This endorsement of the independence of secular approaches can be seen as part and parcel of the broader process of *modern differentiation*. According to the sociologist Scott Lash, 'modernization is a process of ... differentiation' (Lash 1990: 2). The modern period — starting in the early sixteenth century — is characterised by 'the development of many separate institutional, normative ... spheres, each with their specific conventions and modes of evaluation' (Lash and Urry 1994: 272). It involves the break of each sphere with '*heteronomous* legislation from another, universalist "instance" such as nature, or reason, or the real, or God' (Lash 1990: 9). In modernity all the spheres move away from pre-modern heteronomy — a situation in which some spheres impose their values on the others — and towards full autonomy: they tend to be self-legislating. The artistic sphere, for example, moves towards works of art which make reference to other works within the same field rather than to external objects, and

which are evaluated on their own artistic merits rather than on such criteria as the non-artistic function that they fulfil.

Schopenhauer's rejection of the heteronomous interference of religion was relevant because he was writing at a time when the process of modern differentiation (autonomisation) of social spheres was still under way. In Golding's case, this rejection may have to do with the fact that his first published novels appear at a time when there begin to be strong signals of the reverse process, that is, of a postmodern de-differentiation (de-autonomisation) of social spheres. In contrast to modernisation, which lasts until the mid-twentieth-century, '*post*modernization is a process of ... "*de*-differentiation"' (Lash 1990: 2). On this view, postmodernity 'is a breakdown of the distinctiveness of each sphere and of the criteria which legislate within each ... dimension' (Lash and Urry 1994: 272). Whereas Schopenhauer tries to increase the independence of secular forms of knowledge vis-à-vis religious speculation, thus contributing to the project of modernity, Golding sees this project as still incomplete, and tries to preserve the independence of secular descriptions in the face of postmodern advances.

The *incomplete* project that I have mentioned has strong affinities with Habermas's *unfinished* project of modernity. Nevertheless, the very difference in wording is intended as a hint at the contrasting views that Golding and Habermas may have on the modern project. Though their defence of modern autonomy may be the same as regards science, their views of art seem to be very different. In respect of literature, for instance, Golding conceives of it as having an essential heteronomous component, while Habermas defends the full autonomy of artistic works, which are produced 'all in accord with their own immanent logic' (Habermas 1997: 45). For Golding, the design of a novel, for example, must have effects on the reader's life other than the aesthetic experience. It is true that, for him, 'The strength, profundity, truth of a novel lies not in a plausible likeness and rearrangement of the phenomenal world but in a fitness with itself' (Golding 1984a: 146). Yet in a very general sense of the adjective — a sense that does not exclude the 'desires to inculcate a moral lesson' — the novel must be 'didactic' (1965: 85). In addition, it must ensure a wide readership for the author; otherwise the didactic impulse would be crippled. The idea is that 'the novel, if it climbs into an ivory tower, will find no audience except those with ivory towers of their own' (1984a: 208). Habermas also contemplates the possibility of a kind of reception, on the part of 'the

general public', that recuperates the significance of works of art for everyday concerns; in this way 'laypeople … are capable of relating their aesthetic experience back to the problems of their own life' (Habermas 1997: 48, 51). But he never fails to defend the subordination of this mode of reception to both the autonomous production and the autonomous interpretation by 'experts', that is, by 'interpreters who form part of the process of artistic production itself' (45, 48). After all, he concludes, 'artistic production will inevitably degenerate semantically if it is not pursued as the specialized treatment of its own immanent problems, as an object of expert concern without regard for exoteric needs' (51). While Golding limits himself to defending the idea that works of art should not limit itself to obey the rules dictated from other social spheres, Habermas's position comes much closer to defending the autotelism — self-sufficiency — of the work of art.[20]

Despite his defence of an impure art, that is, of an art that does not fall in the trap of autotelic aestheticism and that denies neither its practical dimension nor its ties with other metaphysical discourses, Golding still asserts the autonomy of science. Earlier we saw how Golding used Copernicus's experience to show that, though rational knowledge always derives perfectly safe and valid truths if the empirical data with which it works are correct, if those data are incorrect the results that reason obtains from them will be false too. Golding does not conceal the fact that the lack of exactitude of Copernicus's calculations was due not only to the astronomical tables with which he was working, but also to the noxious interference of religious belief with the scientific method. As 'a faithful child of the Church', he 'still believed the circle to be the perfect movement; and no matter how he rearranged the solar system with the sun at the center, still the old system of circles on circles did not allow exact prediction' (Golding 1965: 37). As with the use of more precise of astronomical tables, Golding explains that it was only with Kepler that science 'got rid of the last hangover from the ancient system' that the Christian Church had inherited from the Greeks — 'the idea that movement in a circle is perfect and therefore the one movement admissible in the heavens' — and was thus able to prove Copernicus's theory (39).

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20 For the the way in which hermetic autotelism contrasts not only with heteronomy but also with critical autonomy, see Sacido-Romero (2012: 7–8).

While in the essay on Copernicus Golding shows how the mistakes that religious dogma insists on imposing may prevent science from reaching valid conclusions, in the Sea Trilogy Golding shows that, if one gives full credibility to religious beliefs, the reliable conclusions reached through accurate observation and rational calculation run the risk of being dismissed as if they were a mere fiction. Interestingly, the clearest — if still indirect — illustration of this position appears in the Sea Trilogy, a sequence of novels set in the early eighteenth century — Schopenhauer's own time. Golding thus performs one of his customary transpositions to other times of issues that he does not want contemporary readers to overlook. The episode that concerns us here makes fun of both literal interpretations of the Bible and of the obstacles that religion has often put to scientific enquiry. We have already seen Reverend Colley's reflections on time in the first book of the trilogy, *Rites of Passage*. At the end of *Rites of Passage*, Talbot puts an end to the journal that he was writing for his godfather — and in the middle of which Talbot has inserted Colley's own journal — and begins another one, this time for his personal use alone. Needless to say, Talbot's writings do much more than record their author's experiences: much to his surprise, they tacitly testify to his slow psychological development. In the second book, *Close Quarters*, Talbot records another suicide, that of the ship's servant Wheeler, and his journal undergoes one more transformation, turning into an autobiographical narrative written many years after the completion of the voyage. Thus, in the third book, *Fire Down Below*, simultaneous narration gives way to a retrospective account of young Talbot's rite of passage into an adult world that at the time he did not understand as well as he thought. At this point the reader discovers a new intention of Talbot's writing: the private diary (whose first part is in fact a letter) eventually reveals itself as part of a travelogue, that is, in a sense, as a message that its author, now a senior official at the Foreign Office, addresses to his yet 'unborn' great-great-great-great-great grandchildren — who are contemporary of the reader (Golding 1991: 758).

The shift from simultaneous to retrospective narration allows Talbot to comment on the voyage from the vantage point of old age. Moreover, it allows him to add new materials, written by people that did not make the voyage with him, to his narrative. *Fire Down Below* includes, for example, the expert opinion of an acquaintance of Talbot's, a scholar that rejects the existence of Antarctica because the conclusions at which he arrives through a simple calculation — based on Talbot's eyewitness account

— do not tally with the data derived from a literal reading of the Bible. In response to his first-hand description of an endless wall of ice in the middle of the Antarctic ocean — actually the cliffs of as yet undiscovered Antarctica — Talbot receives a message from this 'old and learned acquaintance' who 'is the final court of appeal in matters of hydrology and associated -ologies' (Golding 1991: 700). Talbot's description, the scholar says, 'would be well enough for a fiction', but cannot be taken seriously by 'a respectable geographer', because if Talbot's cliffs were 'a hundred feet high', as he claims, they would extend 'seven hundred feet below the surface of the water'; and if this iceberg 'was so long, so vast that it even affected the weather', as Talbot states, 'then it must have stretched so far south that it would be more like a floating continent than a patch of ice', in other words, 'a whole continent lying over and round the South Pole!' (700, 701). As it happens, this scholar has spent the greater part of his adult life 'perfecting a proof that such a continent is *geographically impossible*', so 'by a simple calculation of the volume of ice contained' in Talbot's cliffs it can be shown 'that its formation must date from several thousands of years previous to the creation of the world in the spring of the year four thousand and four B.C.!' (701).

As an illustration of how religious prejudice may lead to the rejection of scientific truth, this comic interlude serves as a reminder of the pressures under which rational enquiry often worked before its full emancipation from religious doctrine. As Golding remarks in connection with Copernicus, the Church to which the father of heliocentrism belonged 'forbade his theories to be taught' (Golding 1965: 40), and Martin Luther dismissed them in the following terms: 'This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy; but sacred Scripture tells us that Josua commanded the sun stand still and not the earth' (cited in Golding 1965: 39). What Joshua's miracle proves, in Luther's opinion, is that the sun normally moves round the motionless earth. Of course Luther was wrong; and we know that he was because science has thrown off the shackles of religion and asserted the truth of heliocentrism. Defending the autonomy of scientific discovery, as Golding does, in no way involves a denigration of religion. In his view, religion has a legitimate place in society and in the individual's life, but this place is not the same as that of science.

3.1.1.3.2. Golding's Assertion of the Primacy of the Arts

In his contribution to the two cultures debate, Golding puts the emphasis on science, art and religion (philosophy and history are classified with the latter two, probably by virtue of their metaphysical focus, but receive less attention). He argues that the focus on the metaphysical dimension, though often dismissed in our age, is at least as necessary to human life as the focus on the physical dimension. Even more, he writes that science 'is not the most important thing. Philosophy is more important … so is history … so is aesthetic perception' (Golding 1965: 129).[21] The reason is that moral and aesthetic judgement, not calculation, is what makes us human. In this section I shall analyse Golding's position and why it can be better understood if the alleged flaws that Schopenhauer attributes to science are borne in mind. In particular, I shall rely on Schopenhauer's suggestion that its physical object puts scientists in an egocentric position, and that the combination of this egocentrism with a rational method ties science to calculation to the detriment of judgement; moreover, since science appeals to the rational intellect, its effect is to put its audience in an egocentric position too.

The alleged existence of two cultures in Britain began to attract public attention in the wake of Snow's 1959 Rede Lectures.[22] Snow argues that 'the intellectual life of the

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21 Golding's praise of history does not tally well with Schopenhauer's predominant view that it is a mere description of the events in which the human race has been involved; but it does tally with Schopenhauer's statement that history is the collective equivalent of individual self-consciousness. Clear-headed historical accounts amount to depictions, from different angles, of the uniform manifestation of humankind's inner tendencies across the ages. Indeed, Golding states that 'history is a kind of selfknowledge' which can 'give us the right clue to our behaviour', hence its 'supreme importance' (Golding 1965: 91, 90). It is in 'that attempt to see how things have become what they are, where they went wrong, and where right, that our only hope lies of having some control over our own future' (90–1). If this is the case, then the metaphysical aspect of historiography — which must not only study the motives of people and also pass moral judgement on them — makes it more important than science.

22 Snow's lecture and his 1963 piece entitled 'The Two Cultures: A Second Look' can be found in a single volume (Snow 1993). As the two texts offer the same argument, I shall quote from both.

Since the 1960s, the debate has been usually associated with Snow's lecture and Leavis's response. In fact, the Snow-Leavis skirmish repeats previous exchanges — such as the one between Thomas H. Huxley and Matthew Arnold — about the alleged split, in the education

whole of western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups' (Snow 1993: 3), those devoted to 'science' and those devoted to 'the arts' (100), the latter epitomised by literature, and that between the two there is 'a gulf of mutual incomprehension — sometimes ... hostility and dislike, but most of all lack of understanding' (4). This leads him to state that 'There seems to be no place where the two cultures meet' (16).[23] In Snow's view, the only way in which the rift between them can be bridged is through 'the rethinking of our education' (18).

Snow's lecture, then, starts off as a plea for what he calls a 'common culture', achieved by decreasing the emphasis on specialisation, at least until the last stages of higher education, a change that would bring scientific and non-scientific knowledge together (Snow 1993: 60). However, once he has disclosed the humanitarian reason why this common culture is needed — to raise the 'material standards of living' of the world's poor (25) — and once he has dismissed any difference in kind between 'pure' science and 'applied' science (to the detriment of the former), Snow ends up presenting what he calls the 'industrial-scientific' revolution led by engineers as the only possible hope for the population of non-western countries (68, 23). Though he does not explicitly deny the importance of the arts, he does equate them with a 'traditional'

system and intellectual life, between the arts and the sciences. A good introduction to the contemporary history of these discussions can be found in Stefan Collini's Introduction to the Snow pieces (see Collini 1993).

23 Snow goes some way towards acknowledging that perhaps he ought speak of 'at least three cultures' (Snow 1993: 8). This view would result not from the division of science into its applied and pure varieties, but from the insertion, in between science proper and the arts, of what we might call the social sciences, that is, of the rising disciplines that 'are concerned with how human beings are living or have lived ... in terms of ... fact', and which, given his admiration of engineers, he perhaps sees the social sciences' reduction of all non-quantifiable aspects of human life to mere 'legend' as paving the way for true social engineering (70). Nevertheless, in the end Snow prefers to stick to a binary classification on the grounds that, at the moment of writing, it was 'probably too early to speak of a third culture already in existence' (70–1). Golding also sticks to two broad kinds of knowledge. Like Snow, and like Schopenhauer before him, he generally conflates the pure strands of science with the applied ones; in general, Golding has a rather old-fashioned view of science, as is evidenced by the fact that he, like Schopenhauer, does not so much as mention the social sciences (presumably they would not consider them any different from the other sciences).

mindset (11), i.e. a 'reactionary' wish (32) — characteristic of 'natural Luddites' (22) — that 'the future did not exist' (11). By contrast, he states that scientists 'have the future in their bones' (11), as evidenced by the fact that while many are indeed 'conservatives', but never reactionaries, most are political 'radicals' (10). Further, he states that scientific 'culture is in its human relations a democratic one. In their own internal climate, the breeze of the equality of man hits you in the face' (48). The implicit opposition between this democratic ethos and the social prejudice that apparently inheres in the arts leads Snow to remark that 'there is a moral component right in the grain of science itself' (13), which thus functions as a source of 'moral health' (71). Though a professional novelist, Snow had actually been trained as an experimental scientist, and he does not have much to say about the scientists' need for non-scientific education. Thus, despite his theoretical call for a rapprochement between scientific and non-scientific enquiry, whose division is a 'practical and intellectual and creative loss' to everyone (11), in practice his rhetoric — which includes wielding the scientific method as a yardstick to which the 'unscientific' attitudes prevailing in the other fields of knowledge do not measure up (11) — only contributes to making that division worse. Indeed, his main concern is not with increasing the cultural level of all students, but with solving the scientific illiteracy of the elite of non-scientists that in his opinion still 'manages the western world' (11), and whose ignorance of the second law of thermodynamics he compares to not having read any Shakespeare (see 14–5). Snow concedes that non-scientific interests may be a good way 'to do something worthy and satisfying with our lives', yet he concludes saying that they should only be pursued 'once the elemental needs are satisfied' (79).

In Golding's novels, the epitome of Snow's optimistic confidence in science would be Nick Shales, one of the secondary characters in *Free Fall*, were it not for the fact that the teacher's moral stature and Sammy Mountjoy's regard for him has nothing to do with his devotion to science. From Golding's perspective, which I take to coincide with Schopenhauer's, speaking of science as essential to moral health simply does not make any sense. As regards the two cultures, Golding's position in the piece 'On the Crest of the Wave' (originally published in 1960, one year after Snow's famous lecture, and perhaps prompted by it) is actually the opposite of Snow's, and in this sense not only prefigures the one adopted by the literary scholar Frank R. Leavis in his response to the latter's lecture, but does so because it picks up, like Leavis, the criticisms voiced in the

nineteenth century by Matthew Arnold. Arnold was worried that rational calculation and measurement generally might be displacing such feelings as compassion. He feared that the insistence on calculation, together with an undue emphasis on wealth and a high standard of living, might monopolise all considerations of value, thus leading a reduction of human experience to what can be quantified and efficiently managed. For Arnold, the aim of education was not to produce technocrats, but rather to hinder the advance of philistine industrialism, the vision of human well-being as dependent on the efficiency of the impersonal social machinery whose functioning takes therefore priority over people's weal. While Leavis's reply to Snow shares all of these elements, Golding separates from both in rejecting the elitist claim that the expansion of higher education could only be achieved by lowering the standards (this summary of Arnold's position follows the one in Collini 1993). Apart from this, Golding's essay is of a piece with Matthew's and Leavis's positions.[24]

Raised in a rationalistic family, Golding's admittance to Oxford was to train as a scientist (see Biles 1970: 83–4, 88–90; Carey 2009: 7–14, 41–58). Though he soon switched to English, he knows enough about science to meet Snow's requisite of knowing the second law of thermodynamics, which he summarises saying that 'everything is running down and will finally stop like an unwound clock' (cited in Tiger 2003: 79), and which he uses in his novel *Darkness Visible*. However, the argument of 'On the Crest of the Wave' is that education should put less emphasis on science and more on the arts. The piece begins by explaining that in the 1950s British society considers itself to be 'on the crest of the wave of universal education' (Golding 1965:

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24 This rejection of elitist notions of education is no doubt grounded in Golding's 'own class consciousness, dating from his resentment of the privileged young gentlemen at Marlborough College', one of the great public schools in Britain (Carey 2009: 395). The house in which the Goldings lived when he was a child stood near the school, whose sight would fill young William 'with hatred and envy' (cited in Carey 2009 17). Carey suggests that it was not only Golding's lifelong 'sense of social inadequacy' that was rooted in his early memories of the college's masters and pupils, but his writing ambitions too (Carey 2009: 17). Later, his experience as an undergraduate in Oxford only served to make him feel 'socially and academically inferior' (62). On leaving Oxford, he was interviewed by the university's appointments committee, for careers advice, and marked down as 'Not quite a gentleman' (cited in Carey 2009: 57). As a literary author, Golding transformed class issues and the ensuing feeling of resentment into a recurring, if usually secondary, narrative theme.

126). In this situation, the accent, which used to fall on the non-scientific disciplines, has shifted, and all the educative efforts are devoted to teach science (in particular, its applied varieties). The scientific training provided by contemporary centres no longer deserves to be called education:

> Education ... has been brought to see, in a down-to-earth manner, that what we really want is technicians ... and that only she can supply them. She still calls what she is doing 'education' because it is a proper, a dignified word — but she should call it 'training', as with dogs (Golding 1965: 130).

Golding pits science against the arts, that is, in Schopenhauer's terms, the physical conception of the world par excellence against the metaphysical approaches. For him, as for Schopenhauer, 'The heart of our experience ... is a mystery' that physical cognition alone cannot penetrate (Golding 1984a: 192). Not only has contemporary education, with its emphasis on the physical functioning of the world and its appeal to reason, 'forgotten that there is a difference between a puzzle and a mystery' (1965: 72); in doing so it has turned its back on other, more important issues of a metaphysical nature.[25] Science is 'busy clearing up the universe', but scientists will always remain unaware of other areas where darkness is not just the absence of light; the only possible way to live with plenitude is to move beyond scientific description, living up to the challenge of facing our 'looming terror' and of discovering what something is (as opposed to why something happens or how something works), whether an object is beautiful, when someone's desires are praiseworthy or reprehensible, how we can act

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25 Golding lingers on the effects of contemporary education in the aesthetic sphere. Concerning literature, he remarks that, as a result of the rule of scientific experimentalism, 'The appreciation of the power of expression in all its richness is dimmed. The vitality of writing — that energy of conception and expression which can give passionate significance to an apparent commonplace — this vitality has to fight another layer of imperception. ... In many schools — in most, for all I know — boys spend a considerable fraction of their time writing up experiments. They are taught to report the phenomena in a detached way ... using their own language with the grey precision of an electronic computer. Is it any wonder that writers seem to them to use a language they have to learn all over again?' (Golding 1965: 131). To translate his comments to the terms adopted in this study, the dominance of denotative language is making evocative language unintelligible.

without increasing each other's suffering (172–3).[26] Nowadays the tendency is to back scientific 'certainties' as 'the obvious winners' (170), a situation that Golding regrets:

> The pendulum has swung too far. There was a time in education — and I can just remember it — when science fought for its life, bravely and devotedly. … But now the educational world is full of spectral shapes, bowing acknowledgements to religious instruction and literature but keeping an eye on the laboratory where is respect, jam tomorrow, power. The arts are becoming the poor relations (Golding 1965: 130).

Currently it is thought that 'the good life' can only be reached through science, because it is there that 'the naked power, the prestige' and the money can be found (Golding 1965: 130). Having thus linked scientific competence to high social standing, Golding adds that in contemporary society it is better to be 'well-paid than happy', 'successful than good', or, in Shakespearean terms, 'vile than vile-[e]steemed' (130). Human nature cannot be confined to the physical dimension alone, but contemporary society has forgotten that what is most valuable about humankind lies elsewhere, not in calculation with a view to technological application but in moral and aesthetic judgement (notice the unmistakable Schopenhauerian overtones of the expressions with which Golding refers to the disease that only these value judgements can treat):

> Our humanity, our capacity for living together in a full and fruitful life, does not reside in knowing things for the sake of knowing them or even in the power to exploit our surroundings … *Our humanity rests in the capacity to make value judgements* … the power to decide that is right, that is wrong, this ugly that beautiful, this just, that unjust. Yet these are precisely the questions which 'Science' is not qualified to answer with its measurement and analysis. They can be answered only by the methods of philosophy and the arts. We are confusing the immense power which the scientific method gives us with the all-important power to make the value

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26 It is not only in his essays that Golding presents metaphysical insight as opening the door to a mystery that is radically different from the puzzles that scientific enquiry tries to solve. In the Sea Trilogy, Mr Prettiman confesses to Talbot his suspicion that 'at the heart' of the universe there is 'a profound mystery' to which human beings 'would be admitted' (Golding 1991: 713). This is the mystery of what lies behind the veil of physical appearances. Mr Pretiman's claim that it is possible to know the mysterious essence of the world is an exception to Golding's general questioning, in his later novels, of the possibility of knowing that essence.

> judgements which are the purpose of human education. … For the arts cannot cure a disease or increase production or ensure defence. They can only cure or ameliorate sicknesses so deeply seated that we begin to think of them in our new wealth as built-in: *boredom and satiety, selfishness and fear* (Golding 1965: 130; my italics).

The square quotes round the word *science* are a hint that here Golding views true science as a pure form of enquiry whose basis is metaphysical, distinguishing it from its utilitarian applications (on which the emphasis usually falls in contemporary society). When he separates our capacity for *knowing things for the sake of knowing them* from *the power to exploit our surroundings*, Golding acknowledges that science may have a purely speculative intention; however, he also asserts that today this kind of enquiry has been replaced by another kind which always aims at controlling the world, that the natural philosopher has given way to the technician. Nowadays pure science is hardly valued as it is deemed to be 'too vast, too remote, too useless on the national scale' (Golding 1965: 128).

Though this view also appears in other essays, Golding's novels always present science as dominated by utilitarian considerations, hence they deny that pure science can be disengaged from it applied varieties. Schopenhauer's philosophy helps us to understand why this is the case. The crucial thing to remember, says Schopenhauer, is the physical focus that characterises all kinds of science. For one thing, physical cognition has nothing to do with aesthetics and morality. For another, the egocentric character of the physical perceptions on which scientific concepts rest transforms science into a means for attaining egoistic and even malignant ends. In the last instance, it is the instrumental character of all rational knowledge that makes it impossible to see a clear-cut break between scientific speculation and its technological materialisation in the 'inventions' of which humans avail themselves (Schopenhauer 2000b: 417). At the end of the long quotation above, Golding states that by definition science is incapable of doing what the arts can do, that is, incapable of judging things in aesthetic and moral terms. Even worse, Golding highlights the way in which the prevalence of science has contributed not only 'to enlarge the importance of measurement' but also to diminish the capacity to make value judgments' (Golding 1965: 131). The introduction of measurement and judgement into the discussion points to the rational nature of science. If Schopenhauer is correct in his characterisation of

rational concepts, then the focus on physical objects is not the only shortcoming of science: the conceptual vehicle that it employs is always at the service of the essential will qua innate character of the individual. Though this is true of all institutionalised descriptions of the world, there is a crucial difference among them: those that excite feelings (art and religion) can avoid putting the audience in the same egocentric position as the sender, while those that excite concepts cannot, regardless of whether their objects are physical (as in science) or metaphysical (as in history and philosophy). Their metaphysical focus and their appeal to the non-rational intellect may be the reasons why Golding's novels present artistic and religious figures as most distant from scientists, while historians and philosophers — which in this respect would be closer to scientists — are conspicuous by their absence.

While this section has showed that Schopenhauer's philosophy may illuminate Golding's demotion of science, the following section will examine the role played in the lives of many Golding's characters by their essential needs and desires. It will also explore the negative consequences of their egocentric efforts to satisfy those appetites in a predominantly egoistic — and sometimes malignant — way, of the boredom that overcomes them as soon as they have achieved some satisfaction, and of the constant fear of death in which many of them live because of their egoism.

3.1.2. The Essential Will and Suffering

We have seen that, for Golding, the specificity of human consciousness allows us to experience the world in ways that are not available to other animals; these ways are, on the one hand, rational and, on the other, metaphysical. From the human perspective, the physical dimension of the world coexists with a deeper, metaphysical dimension; the human world is a world whose characteristics can be conceptualised along different lines, as witness the existence of the disparate approaches of science, art and religion.

From now own I shall focus on Golding's conception of human consciousness as capable of seeing beyond the realm of appearances — more specifically beyond the physical wall within which scientific activity and daily routines take place — thus gaining some insight into the common essence which underlies the world. Golding's earlier novels provide enough clues to legitimate the identification of this kernel as the

essential will that Schopenhauer's philosophy brings to our attention and whose manifestation the realm of appearances is. The influence of the essential will is a crucial aspect of Golding's world view, yet it has never been paid sufficient attention; most previous commentators do not even mention it, while others such as Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor, who do introduce it in their discussions, do so from a rationalistic point of view that misses the point.

Both *The Spire and Pincher Martin* provide strong evidence that in humans, as in other living beings, the essence of the world operates as a will to life driving the individual to self-preservation and perpetuation. *The Spire* places the will of the individual as the inner manifestation of the individual's and the whole world's essence. Apart from emphasising the pressure exerted by the essential will to life, *Pincher Martin* illustrates the general subordination of knowing to willing. This subordination can be understood with the help of Schopenhauer's claims that the essential will is a constant search for satisfaction, that it can only find satisfaction through its individual manifestations, that its fulfilment depends on availing itself of powerful intellectual tools, and the only kind of consciousness that allows individuals to satisfy their needs and desires (by preying on their neighbours) is egocentric consciousness. The intellect is therefore subordinated to the essential will, a characteristic that will become clear when I focus on the way in which the mind works in *Pincher Martin*.

Egocentrism is at the root of egoism and malice, the most usual moral categories that Schopenhauer identifies. Insofar as they cause pain to others, the actions motivated by egoistic and malignant desires are evil. Both egoism and malice appear in most of Golding's novels: Pincher Martin is a predominantly egoistic character, and so is Mr Pedigree, one of the characters in *Darkness Visible*. Roger in *Lord of the Flies* and Sophy in *Darkness Visible* are malignant.

According to Schopenhauer, the world's essence is an amoral urge that seeks satisfaction through an egocentric grasp of objects, that is, through the only variety of consciousness that relates things to the individual and transforms them into potential sources of fulfilment. Unfortunately, egocentrism also hinders the subject's escape fom suffering. By transforming things into potential sources of fulfilment, egocentrism makes the desiring individual live in a constant state of anxiety to attain them. In addition, egocentrism often makes things undergo another transformation, this time into potential threats that the subject is at great pains to avoid or destroy. Finally,

egocentrism not only leads to these two kinds of egoistic behaviour, but also to malignant actions that aim at destruction for destruction's sake. Because all of these factors, the manifestations of the world's essence are permanently involved in a daunting spectacle of pain and violence. The result is the worst possible world, a world which Golding labels, like Schopenhauer, as hellish. In Golding's novels, many of the physical structures that his characters build serve as diagrams of this world. Just as the knowable world for which the subjects are responsible is always on the verge of destruction, so these constructions, which in Golding's novels go from the cathedral in *The Spire* to the old ship in the Sea Trilogy, are constantly threatened by ruin and collapse.

What persuades his readers that all the living beings and inanimate objects in the world are interconnected as manifestations of the same essential will to life is the extensive use made in his novels of what I shall call *dynamic descriptions*, that is, evocative descriptions of events by virtue of which plants acquire animal properties and inanimate objects are endowed with animal and plant attributes.

3.1.2.1. Inner Feeling and the Essential Will in *The Spire*

In many of Golding's novels the realm of appearances is presented as a multiplicity with an underlying essence that provides the world with unity but can only be known through its manifestations. Paramount among these manifestations or appearances is the individual's inner feeling, which makes it possible to identify the world's inner essence with will. This essential will is omnipotent, amoral and originally devoid of reason. The most clear illustration of this can be found in *The Spire*.

The metaphysical insight into the all-powerful will, which Jocelin initially attributes to the Christian God, originates in his inner feeling (not in something outside himself, let alone in something beyond his world). Jocelin excludes from consciousness the inner feeling of the will — the essence that he shares with the rest of the world — and the desires that this feeling reveals because he cannot accept the amoral tenor of what he has seen. Though the novel does not refer to it by this name, I shall root the Dean's desire in the essential will to life.

What happens to Jocelin can be interpreted, in psychoanalytical terms, as an instance of repression, immediately followed by an attempt at sublimation and the uncanny return of the repressed. According to Freud, repression is a psychic operation that consists '*in turning something away, and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious*' (Freud 1995: 569–70). The reason for repression is that something is found disagreeable because incompatible with the ego.[27] In Jocelin's case, what gets repressed is the inner feeling of an amoral will. The Dean cannot admit that this constant striving is (also) inside himself. As a consequence, it seems to him that the omnipotent power only manifests itself in the rest of the world. In the end, however, Jocelin cannot but acknowledge the uncanny force with which the essential will makes itself felt in him. He no longer attributes willing to God — or at least not to God alone — but to himself. Since the tendency of this essential will is basically towards sexual satisfaction, Jocelin is forced to admit that the pinnacle that he has had built, and which responds to his own will as much as to God's, works mainly as a sublimation of his less than divine sexuality.

The vision that triggers the construction of the spire is strikingly absent from the main storyline, and is only described in some detail towards the end of the novel. The allusions to the episode, which occurred when Jocelin was still young, are scant and difficult to interpret. The longest reference is the Dean's own record in an old notebook:

> One evening ... *a feeling rose from my heart*. It grew stronger, reached up until at the utmost tip it burst into a living fire ... which passed away, but left me now transfixed. For ... *a fountain burst up from me*, up, out, through ... an implacable, unstoppable, glorious fountain ... The vision left me at last; and the memory of it ... shaped itself to the spire (Golding 1964: 191–3; my italics).

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27 Sometimes a difference is established in Freud's works between repression and suppression. Repression is an unconscious operation that expels the representatives of affects into the unconscious. Suppression is a conscious operation whereby the affect itself, which by definition 'cannot become unconscious', is 'inhibited, or even abolished' (Laplanche and Pontalis 2006: 439, 438). Some other times the terms *repression* and *suppression* are used interchangeably with a meaning that combines both senses. Here I shall only speak of repression, without distinguishing the affects from their representatives. As for *suppression*, I shall never use the word in a technical sense.

The incident, which has not received sufficient critical attention, prompts Jocelin's acquaintance, in his own view, with 'a Will without limit or end' which he identifies with 'God's will' and to which his own individual will is somehow linked (Golding 1964: 84, 40). From what he says, it is nevertheless apparent that the will that urges him to action is not (only) God's but (also) his own. In Schopenhauer, the inner feeling of one's individual will is the first stage of the conceptualisation of the essential will, which is later achieved through the rational 'application of reflection' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 110). This feeling allows individuals to grasp the source of their voluntary actions as well as the site of their emotions and passions. Although the Dean subsequently attributes his vision to God, the old notebook does not mention the divinity at all. Jocelin's notes locate the origin of the vision within not without; they describe it as rising *from the heart*. This tallies with Schopenhauer's contention that 'in the heart of everyone there actually resides ... the will-to-live' (2000b: 215). Other passages in the novel make it equally clear that when Jocelin speaks of God's will he might be unwittingly referring to his own will. A case in point is his attempt to reassure the master builder with these words: "You'll see how I shall thrust you upward by *my will*. It's *God's will* in this business" (Golding 1964: 40; my italics).

If the Dean never fully realises the full import of his insight, this is because the passions that dwell inside him are more carnal than pious and he represses them. The existence of those passions is something that Jocelin knows deep down in his mind, but which he can never allow to rise to the surface. In Schopenhauer's opinion, the inner insight recorded by Jocelin not only allows to know the almighty force that underlies the entire world. It is also by virtue of this inner insight that one gains self-consciousness and the sense of the individual *I* arises. In Jocelin, self-conscious individuality is tainted by egocentrism, by virtue of which Jocelin explicitly dissociates himself from the rest of the world (non-human animals are also egocentric, but their separation from the rest of the world is only implicit). What matters to Jocelin is the distance between himself and the others rather than his metaphysical links with them, even though the distance is only apparent and the links are essential. If he sees himself

as free from the amoral yearning that he sees in God and in the rest of the world, it is because he has somehow come to pit himself against everything else.[28]

Though the episode recorded in Jocelin's notebook begins with an explosion that rises from the heart, it also describes how he is subsequently struck by the idea of a new spire. The episode, therefore, seems to have consisted of two different kinds of experience: inward contemplation (whose findings are repressed) combined with aesthetic sublimation. By virtue of this second moment, *The Spire* would be an account of the artistic process, which starts with the work's inception, proceeds to its production by Roger Mason but at Jocelin's instigation, and ending with its reception by Jocelin himself on his deathbed. In the rest of this section I shall only focus on the second stage.

As far as artistic production is concerned, Schopenhauer argues that, as it is intended to materialise the artist's aesthetic feeling and to produce a similar effect upon the audience, the work of art can only aspire to be the most suitable technical means to the artist's ends. On this account, the work of art is one of the possible embodiments of the artist's desires. In Schopenhauer's opinion the disparity between the sudden inspiration and the planned construction is present in all artistic manifestations, but it could be argued that it is most evident in the case of architecture. In *The Spire*, for example, Jocelin's inspiration is in stark contrast with the technical effort that Roger has to make. In both cases, it is the satisfaction of their desires that is at stake, but those desires have little to do with aesthetics. Roger risks his professional prestige and his very life, and for this reason he is intent on employing rational calculation to perfect his building techniques. Jocelin's obsession with finishing the pinnacle does not respond to artistic motivations either. He is not even aware that he may have been blessed with artistic inspiration. Consciously, Jocelin justifies the construction as a way of pleasing the divinity; also, it is a way of proving to himself and others that he had a genuine vision, that he has been chosen for the task and that his is not a 'bogus sanctity' (Golding 1964: 209). At an unconscious level, the spire is a sublimation of his repressed

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28 Jocelin's inner insight is an example of the rise of self-consciousness that we can see in other Golding characters (most clearly, Sophy in *Darkness Visible*). Despite this similarity, Jocelin is different from them, not because of any intrinsic peculiarity of the sense of the *I* that he gains from the observation of the force that is active inside him, or because of his egocentrism, but because of his desperate attempt to repress his dependence on that force.

sexuality as well a means of asserting his power and the Church's over the whole region. The way in which his thirst for power fuses with lust is illustrated in this scene:

> He ... was looking away from the tower and out into the world ... I would like the spire to be a thousand feet high, he thought, and then I should be able to oversee the whole county ... He examined the strips and patches of cultivation, the rounded downlands that rose to a wooded and notched edge. They were soft and warm and smooth as a young body. ... In a flash of vision he ... understood how the tower was laying a hand on the whole landscape, altering it, dominating it, enforcing a pattern that reach*e*d wherever the tower could be seen, by sheer force of its being there. ... The countryside was shrugging itself obediently into a new shape (Golding 1964: 105–8).

As the story unfolds, Jocelin becomes progressively aware of these dual motivations. The discovery shakes his faith as much as the difficulties of construction shake Roger Mason's confidence in reason. Whereas the builder can hardly believe that the spire has not yet collapsed despite its possible lack of foundations, the cleric becomes increasingly suspicious that the pinnacle may be the fulfilment of something other than the Christian God's will. At first he simply believes that he is attuned to the omnipotent divinity. Initially he is adamant that his will 'is linked to a Will without limit or end' (Golding 1964: 84). As the story advances, and the afflictions caused by the construction multiply, he becomes uncertain whether his illumination is the result of God's will, or 'his [own] will, or whatever will it was' (150). By the end of his mental and physical ordeal Jocelin cannot but harbour serious doubts about God's plans: '*There is no innocent work. God knows where God may be*' (222). This is not a questioning of God's existence, nor does it have to do with the impossibility of knowing the divinity. It is simply a questioning of a conception of God that Jocelin has always taken for granted but now reveals its inadequacy. Perhaps Jocelin is correct in believing that he is obeying an omnipotent will, and perhaps he is entitled to regard this force as divine; but in that case, what kind of God is he talking about? Like Schopenhauer's (see Young 2005: 223), Golding's image of the force on which the world depends as insensitive to morality — rather than the source of morality — 'is more pagan than Christian' (Baker 1965: 45). Both authors see omnipotence and amorality as defining characteristics of the awful will beyond the veil of appearances.

Several critics have linked this amorality to Jocelin's sexuality. Carey states that 'The ruthless willpower with which Jocelin drives on the spire's "erection" is … a sublimation of his lust as well as — or rather than — an expression of pure faith' (2009: 272). According to Freudian psychoanalysis, sublimation is the process whereby the sexual impulse 'is diverted towards a new, non-sexual aim', one whose 'objects are socially valued ones' (Laplanche and Pontalis 2006: 431). Examples of these objects include intellectual enquiry and — as in *The Spire* — artistic creation. As Golding confesses to Biles, at first he thought that, in order to make the sexual undertones of Jocelin's obsession all the more manifest, the novel 'ought to be called *An Erection at Barchester*' (in Biles 1970: 100). Though he did not stick to this title, Golding made sure that the concern with sexuality would not escape the reader's attention. The description of the model of the cathedral with the new spire suggests an erect man lying on his back: 'The nave was his legs placed together, the transepts on either side were his arms outspread. The choir was his body; and the Lady Chapel … was his head. And now also, springing, projecting, bursting, erupting from the heart of the building, there was its crown and majesty, the new spire' (Golding 1964: 8). That the spire takes on the function that the Dean's penis is not allowed to perform is hinted at when Jocelin describes an inner feeling 'rising in him' that reminds us of the one that led to the construction of the spire; but rather than comparing this feeling to a clear fountain, as Jocelin does in his notebook, the third-person narrator now compares it to 'a level of dark water' that rises responding to the demands of the Dean's 'unruly member' (138). So contaminated is Jocelin's Christian love by his unconscious concupiscence, that when he clasps his hands and lifts up his head so as to cheer the workers up with 'one tremendous ejaculation: "Rejoice, O daughters of Jerusalem!"' (71), it is hard to suppress a smile of complicity at the mischievous narrator.

Jocelin's will (one of whose main components is sexual) is linked to the whole world's essential will (qua will to life), and that it is embodied in the erect pinnacle. Even after he has begun to realise that the force that he locates exclusively outside himself might be connected with his own inner will, and that both the inner and the outer will are aspects of the single essential will that underlies the entire world, Jocelin clings to the comforting idea that the will that he obeys is, like his own conscious motivations, morally irreproachable. By refusing to see the obscene drive that propels him for what it is, he tries to divorce himself from the obscenity. According to Kinkead-

Weekes and Gregor, Jocelin is 'seriously ignorant of human nature, priding himself in his attempt to exclude sexuality in excessive and morbid revulsion' (2002: 184). When he affirms that the spire is not so much 'a diagram' of 'Jocelin's Folly' — the name given to the construction by the workers — as of 'God's folly' (Golding 1964: 128, 121), he seems to ignore the true implications of the words that he has chosen. Admittedly, the term *folly* has a long history in Christian literature. At the end of his *Praise of Folly*, for example, Desiderius Erasmus reminds us of St Paul's assertion that '*God chose what is foolish in the world...*', and that 'God decided to save the world through foolishness since it couldn't be renewed through wisdom' (2008: 106; cited from 1 Corinthians 1:27 and 1:21). From the Dean's perspective, his folly is the token of true faith, it is a Christlike folly. As Erasmus recalls, 'Christ himself clearly says to the Father: "You know my folly"' (105; cited from Psalm 69:5). Indeed, it is his folly that sets Jocelin apart and above most other characters in the novel, who are driven by worldy calculation. However, there are reasons to doubt that Jocelin's passions, and the will itself to which they are linked, are what he believes them to be. Among the senses of *folly*, the OED records that of 'lewdness' or 'wantonness' (see Boyd 1988: 93–4). The very term *will*, Boyd reminds us, has carnal and genital connotations (1988: 94–5). On this linguistic evidence, argues this critic, the will 'that forces the spire upwards' is more closely linked to the pagan 'dark gods' abhorred by Jocelin than to the Christian divinity (100).

Speaking of the way in which Schopenhauer's will to life dominates all living creatures, Young argues that, if we thought that their destructive behaviour was part of some kind of conscious plan, then we would be forced to admit that it is the work of 'a completely sadistic god, bent on creating beings for the sole purpose of entertaining itself through the sight of their pain' (2005: 81). This portrayal comes very close to the image of God that Jocelin gradually forms in *The Spire*. If the Dean has problems to understand what God wants from him, it is because he takes from granted His goodness and rationality. However, as McCarron notes, the novel suggests that 'the irrational, numinous force ... at the centre of existence ... can be apprehended as much, if not more, by outrage and violence as it can by conventional piety' (McCarron 2007: 192). Jocelin's view of the force that drives him is triply inaccurate: the will is not rational (actually, it is not even conscious), it is not good, and it is not divine. Behind his conscious motives lies a demonic impulse that tends towards excess and disruption,

an almighty drive that takes no account of human morality and of the individual's needs.

Agfter he has repressed it, Jocelin's repressed desire it returns in an uncanny way. As Freud explains, 'the uncanny [*unheimlich*] is something which is secretly familiar [*heimlich-heimisch*], which has undergone repression and then returned from it' (Freud 1976: 637). He adds that 'an uncanny experience occurs either when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed' (639). Thus, uncanny effects are triggered by things that recall 'repressed desires and surmounted modes of thinking belonging to the prehistory of the individual and of the race' (637). As far as Jocelin is concerned, it is the first source that predominates, but the second is also present.

Among the exuberant images that abound in the novel, two of them point with clarity to the way in which the repressed workings of the will returns to haunt Jocelin's cloistered consciousness. When the workers start digging a hole at the centre of the cathedral's body, they open the gates of an uncanny area that Jocelin would have preferred to remain ignorant of, something that, according to Friedrich Schelling, 'ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light' (cited in Freud 1976: 623). From the bottom of the pit arises a force that stirs — as Schopenhauer's essential will does — even lifeless matter:

> a patch … fell out of the [pit's] side below him and struck the bottom with a soft thud. The pebbles that fell with it … never settled completely. He saw … that they were all moving more or less, with a slow stirring, like the stirring of grubs. … Some form of life; that which ought not to be seen or touched, the darkness under the earth … Perhaps … the living, pagan earth, unbound at last and waking, Dia Mater (Golding 1964: 79-80).

In this passage, the encroaching powers that come out of the subterranean chambers of the earth and the unconscious are associated with femininity. In this case the female figure is Dia Mater or Demeter, the ancient pagan goddess of agriculture who presided over the fertility of the earth, and whom Jocelin sees as the relentless enemy of 'God the Father' (Golding 1964: 7). The cause of the Dean's repulsion is the uncanny re-emergence of an obscene life force associated not only with repressed contents but also

with surmounted religious beliefs. What comes out of the open pit is a double threat to his chastity and to his Christian faith.

This is not the only occasion when the unstoppable energy of plant life is linked to Jocelin's growing awareness of a dimension of the world that he prefers to ignore. There is another passage in which the narrator tries to convey, in Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor's words, 'the disturbance of a mind unconsciously aware of things it does not wish to know consciously, things which insist on intruding' (2002: 180). Here the image of plant growth conveys the invasion of Jocelin's mind by a force that exceeds human control:

> he saw there was a twig lying across his shoe, with a rotting berry that clung *obscenely* to the leather. He scuffed his foot irritably … He found himself thinking of the ship that was built of timber so unseasoned, [that] a twig in her hold put out one green leaf. He had an instant vision of the spire warping and branching and sprouting; and the terror of that had him on his feet (Golding 1964: 95; my italics).[29]

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29 The expressions through which my argument has been conducted derive from the novel's own language, but some of them may no doubt have reminded of Lacan. In a Lacanian interpretation, the spire would function for Jocelin as the *objet petit a*, that is, as an objectification of the lost real thing — in truth never lost — which triggers his desire by embodying his lack and simultaneously promising to cover it over, and round which his obsession circles. Instead of that of Freudian sublimation, then, this reading invokes the Lacanian notion of the sublime '"object–cause" of desire' as an obscene presence that, as in the canonical discussions of sublimity, both repels and attracts, and which 'exerts a power of fascination which leads ultimately to death and destruction' (Evans 1996: 125, 199). If I do not pursue this line of interpretation, it is because Lacanian theory, which is not directly relevant to a discussion of *The Spire* based on Schopenhauer, would obscure my use of Freud, which is certainly relevant here; more importantly, because in Lacan it is the subject that transforms an ordinary object into the object *a*, while Jocelin's spire *is* the embodiment of the yearning that he shares with the rest of the world, not *made to be* that embodiment by him: unlike the status as a Lacanian object *a*, the status as a manifestation of the common essence of the world is not imposed but gradually discovered. I shall deal with to the possibilities (and limits) of a Lacanian reading of Golding's novels in the Conclusion.

This is reminiscent of Schopenhauer's description of the essential will as 'the inner, mysterious, sprouting force' from which appearances grow (Schopenhauer 1969b: 478). According to Schopenhauer, the whole world palpitates with an inner will to life that leads first to organic existence, then to consciousness and finally — in humans — to self-consciousness, which combined with rational reflection amounts to the essential will's 'knowledge of itself' (1969a: 266). Golding's journal recounts the first stages of a similar process: the entire world 'might ... be seen as a ... being that becomes conscious of itself. There are ... next-to-infinite pastures for unconscious life as it moves towards awareness' (cited in Carey 2009: 395). Apart from foreshadowing the rise of consciousness (whose culmination in self-consciousness may repel a person that is as trapped in self-delusion as Jocelin), the image of 'a plant with strange flowers and fruit, complex, twining, engulfing, destroying, strangling' symbolises the 'unlooked-for things' that come with the spire, 'things put aside' that return to upset Jocelin's sense of reality (Golding 1964: 194, 105). In the course of his ruminations about the formidable force that drives him, Jocelin even compares himself to 'a flower that is bearing fruit' and 'puts all other business by' to complete his mission regardless of the cost in human lives (97).

While Jocelin's dismissal of rationality and the rest of the characters' calculating reason is maintained throughout the novel, other oppositions are gradually blurred: between consciousness and unconsciousness (hence between appearance and essence), faith and sexuality, Jocelin's Christianity and the workers' pagan rituals, masculinity and femininity (God the Father and Demeter), the spire and the pit. The aspects of the essential will that Jocelin considers positive are associated by him with a male God, while its negative aspects are associated with femininity. In reality, both are attributes of the same essential force that pre-exists human consciousness and therefore remains untouched by the moral and generic distinctions superimposed on it. Jocelin gradually discovers that the first cluster of elements is not opposed to but must be understood as manifesting or at least depending on the second.

The obliteration of binary distinctions in *The Spire* is a good example of the coincidence of opposites to which, according to McCarron (1995), Golding's novels increasingly point, and which can be better understood as the cancellation of binary contrasts that characterises non-rational cognition and the essence of the world. It is clear that those oppositions are conceptual constructs that humans impose on the

world, but it is equally clear that the essential will is beyond all such distinctions. This relative cancellation of contrasts is at work not only in Golding's later novels, as McCarron claims, but in all of his works, insofar as they draw our attention to our knowledge of the world through feelings and to the very essence of the world. Starting with *Lord of the Flies*, all of Golding's novels show how human beings 'attempt to impose a rational order or pattern upon the vital chaos of their own nature', and how they fail (Baker 1965: 9). This failure does not necessarily entail the denial of the conceptual distinctions that we employ, or of the descriptive frameworks — scientific, artistic and religious, for instance — within which those concepts are deployed. Our metaphysical feelings — and the evocative uses of language that reproduce them in the audience — certainly put into question those binary oppositions, which have nothing to do with the essence of the world; but the rational patterns by means of which we describe the world are commonly organised round those contrasts, upon which the accuracy and effectiveness of the descriptions depend.

A the the same time as he realises that the ground on which the categories that he uses to describe the world are built is not as stable as he thought, he is forced to admit the wisdom of Roger Mason's old master's words — 'a spire goes down as far as it goes up' (Golding 1964: 43) — not only as an explanation of the fact that the loftier the spire, the deeper its foundations are bound to be, but as a metaphorical expression of his own personal situation: the higher Jocelin soars, the more clearly his unconscious motivations are exposed. Here again it is easy to see the relevance of Schopenhauer's characterisation of the will as 'the *prius* of consciousness, and the root of the tree of which consciousness is the fruit' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 139). The unconscious essential will is not opposed to conscious representations, but is rather their source or 'maternal soil' (390). A similar idea lies behind Jocelin's repeated allusions to the unconscious motives that thrive, as in a dark pit, 'in the vaults, the cellarage of [his] mind' (Golding 1964: 166).

Though *The Spire* is, among Golding's novels, the one in which the individual's inner being is most clearly presented as having its roots in the essential will, there are other works that speak of the way in which the presence of the world's essence may be felt. Though written at a time when Golding has already begun to question the possibility of knowing that essence, *Darkness Visible* still confronts us with certain moments when 'the screen that conceals the workings of things' shudders and the mind

touches 'for once on the nature of things' (Golding 1979: 16). Though this screen usually blocks our knowledge of the essence of things, it also makes it possible. Bearing this in mind allows us to make sense of the title *Darkness Visible*, which Golding takes from John Milton's comparison of hell, in *Paradise Lost* (book 1, lines 62–9), to 'one great furnace' whose 'flames' gave 'No light but rather darkness visible', and 'Served only to discover sights of woe, / Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace / And rest can never dwell, hope never comes / That comes to all but torture without end / Still urges and a fiery deluge fed / With ever-burning sulfur unconsumed' (Milton 2005: 5). McCarron directs our attention to Golding's use — which I call symbolic — of such 'self-contradictory' expressions as *darkness visible* to convey metaphysical experiences (2007: 187). We have seen that paramount among those experiences is the discovery of the essential ground on which the realm of appearances stands. In this respect, we must remember that Schopenhauer often refers to the essential will in terms of its darkness: he calls it, for example, 'an obscure, dull urge', and also an 'impetuous and dark impulse' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 149, 203); he adds that we can envisage it as 'originally without knowledge and working in the dark' (1969b: 286), at least until it 'kindled a light for itself' in the form of consciousness (1969a: 150). If the notion of the essential *will* denotes, as he maintains, the amoral and 'obscure depths of our inner being' (1969b: 197), and if the whole plane of appearances 'is only the visibility of the will' (1969a: 266), then the description of those appearances as *darkness visible* is pretty accurate.

The link between darkness and an essential dimension recurs in Golding's writings, both fictional and non-fictional. In an autobiographical essay entitled 'The Ladder and the Tree', he recalls how his childhood was marked by 'a shuddering terror that was incurable because it was indescribable', linking it to the inchoate awareness of 'a central, non-comprehended darkness' both sitting at the heart of human life and spreading 'all around, inexplicable' (Golding 1965: 167, 174). The existence of this central darkness, which I identify with the essential kernel devoid of consciousness in which the realm of physical appearances is rooted, is conveyed in topographical terms, not only in this piece but also in several of his fictions. Originally, the place associated with it is the cellar of the family home at Marlborough. Since the Goldings' property was next to the cemetery, young Billy became afraid that the dead which lay at the other side of the garden wall could somehow make their way through the 'dripping' walls of

the cellar where the boy's father had rigged a swing for use in rainy days (166). The only refuge where Bill could have a respite from his morbid obsession with the skeletons was a chestnut tree which he used to climb in search of refuge and a privileged outlook on the world, and which can be interpreted as a symbol of consciousness. (Secondarily, the essay establishes a connection between the darkness and childhood; the tree is a refuge against adulthood as well as a symbol of its inevitability and the ladder built by his rationalistic father to help Bill to climb the tree is the symbol of his unavoidable but initially rejected access to the world of adult rationality. Billy does not take long to break the ladder: he wants to climb up, but as a child, not using a ladder like an adult.) In an article devoted to the theme in the novels from *Lord of the Flies* to *The Spire*, Jeanne Delbaere analyses how the image of the cellar, 'so deeply rooted in the novelist's personal experience, developed through his mature work'; though it 'became increasingly complex' (Delbaere 1991: 3), often being replaced by the equivalent symbols of the deep blue sea, the cave, the pit, the cell — and, I would like to add, the crevice or crack (in *Pincher Martin* and *The Double Tongue*), the bowels of the vessel where a wave rolls (in the Sea Trilogy), the recesses of the individual's interior whose rhythmical motions resemble a wave (in *Darkness Visible*). What these images have in common with that of the cellar is the emphasis on their concavity, interiority or envelopment, darkness and/or wetness — the last two being associated with 'formlessness' (10). In all cases, Delbaere argues, they represent the realm 'from which man comes and to which he must inevitably return' (3). Opposed to them, there are those places that replace the original tree and are characterised by their height (the higher the better), their brightness and/or their dryness: mountains and cliffs, islands, rocks and ships in the middle of the sea, spires.

If the interpretation of the essential will that I am giving here is correct, the image that transpires from *The Spire* is of essential unity or wholeness behind the manifold of apparent experience. The recognition of this unity depends on the obliteration of all the boundaries imposed by physical consciousness. At the level of the world's essence, beings are no longer male or female, rational or non-rational, and their actions are no longer moral or immoral. The essential will has no sex and no gender, it has no consciousness, and it is not restrained by moral considerations. And even after the emergence of human consciousness, and with it of the categories that we impose on the

world, the influence of the essential force that underlies the whole world continues to be felt whether or not we are aware of it.

Outside his fiction, Golding pays homage to this single essence when he shares with Biles his belief that 'there *is* a unity', and his conviction that humanity's 'overriding necessity' is '*to bring the whole thing together*' again (in Biles 1970: 102). The adverse consequences of Jocelin's blindness to human needs and to the role played by willing in every human being, prove that our welfare depends on being able to live with one eye on the realm of appearances and the other eye on the essence of the world. As an author, Golding takes on as his personal duty not only 'to bring the disparate into equation', but to remind his readers that we live on two different planes at one and the same time, and that an awareness of both is necessary for us to live a full human life (Golding 1984a: 202). *Pincher Martin*, the novel that I shall look at next, provides further evidence of the preponderance of the essential will in human life and how the individuals' ignorance of that preponderance is partly responsible for their suffering.

3.1.2.2. The Subordination of the Intellect to the Will in *Pincher Martin*

Apart from *The Spire*, the other book in which the main character's will is most consistently brought to the fore is *Pincher Martin*. The novel narrates the imaginary misadventures of a solitary castaway on a rocky islet, where his will and reason act in unison, presumably as they used to do before he fell overboard, to ensure survival. Though the character's rationality — with which I dealt in relation to the humanisation of the world — has been stressed by a number of critics, the role of his will has only been directly commented on by Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor, who subordinate it to his rational powers. I shall offer an interpretation that is different from theirs, and compatible with my previous analysis of the will in *The Spire*. As in *The Spire*, and despite the contrary impression that we may get from the relationship between the intellect and the will inside the main character's mind, in *Pincher Martin* the will is the essential force that comes before knowledge, no matter if this knowledge is rational or not, and which not only governs the main character's life but also brings about his death. Contrary to *The Spire*, however, *Pincher Martin* puts the focus on the main character's physical feelings and concepts rather than on his metaphysical feelings.

Another difference is the characterisation of the essential will to life, both inside Pincher's imaginary world and outside it. In *The Spire*, the essential will to life is mostly linked to sexuality. Though in *Pincher Martin* the character's memories reveal that this was a main driving force of his behaviour in the past, as soon as his life is in danger sexuality is overridden by the instinct of self-preservation. The eagerness to stay alive at all costs guides the title character's intellectual efforts, not only at his moments of greatest rational lucidity but also in those of wildest delusion. His struggle reveals how exceptional he is, not only because his innate character makes him cling to life with unusual strength, but also because his egocentric intellect is so powerful that, even if it cannot secure his physical survival any more, it creates a small world where an imaginary version of Pincher can survive. As regards the latter point, the novel illustrates how, even if the human mind is designed to meet the body's needs, as Schopenhauer says, its capabilities go beyond what is required by the body. *Pincher Martin* allows us to see that this not only happens, as Schopenhauer claims, when the mind works in a non-egocentric way (for example, when it engages in aesthetic contemplation), but also when it continues to work egocentrically even if this activity no longer benefits the body. In the end, however, Pincher's mind also succumbs to the essential darkness from which it has risen and to which it is forced to return.

Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor's treatment of Pincher's will begins by focusing on the way in which he apparently creates the imaginary world where he stays for what seem to be six days. Using the same biblical tone as the narrator itself sometimes adopts, they write: 'On the first day the Will creates sea and sky around itself, creates day and night, creates the rock' (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 112). Once it has been established that it is Pincher's god-like intellect that conjures up this private world, it is obvious that Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor associate the will with consciousness and, in particular, with the construction and preservation of a private world. In the rest of their discussion they link the character's will to reason, bodily control and individual identity. Willing for them is secondary in comparison with the unrelenting deployment of rationality. Though this view may be defensible if we only pay attention to what happens in Pincher's imaginary world, the eventual destruction of this mental refuge under the pressure of the dark force that it tries to keep at bay evidences that Pincher's intellect is actually at the service of the essential will.

While Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor briefly mention the will, Golding's own account of the novel leaves it out of the picture. These are the relevant parts of his explanation: 'Christopher Hadley Martin has no belief in anything but the importance of his own life'; he is 'little but greed', and when his individual existence is in serious danger his 'greed for life', which has been 'the mainspring of his nature', forces him 'to refuse the selfless act of dying'; while 'His drown body lies rolling in the Atlantic', his 'ravenous' mind 'invents a rock for him to endure on' out of 'the memory of an aching tooth'; even on the verge of death, Pincher will 'centre the world on himself'; actually, 'He is not fighting for bodily survival but for his continuing identity in the face of what will smash it and sweep it away — the black lightning' (cited in Baker 1965: 35–6). Golding's comments are certainly illuminating; however, they can also be misleading, because they refer to the character's *greed for life* alone, never to the impersonal will to life at its root, and because they mix this greed with his fight for *continuing identity*. To clarify the role of the will to life in the way in which Pincher's surrogate attempts to survive, it is convenient to begin with an analysis of his misapprehension of the will.

As we saw in the section devoted to the humanisation of the imaginary world that his mind has conjured up, even within this world Pincher's surrogate puts all the emphasis on the power of consciousness to master his surroundings. Very frequently his thoughts are not directed to the imaginary world outside but to his own consciousness. When this happens, he reduces his intellectual existence to a point of awareness. This point, located 'inside himself at the top end', is, in his egocentric opinion, 'at the centre of everything' (Golding 1956: 82, 45). What is more, this centre is equated with his whose identity: from the first instants of his ordeal he finds himself inside his head, looking out. It is obvious that the centre can only be the subject of consciousness, which for Schopenhauer is the correlative of all representations.

Regarding the egocentric subject of consciousness, that is, the subject the perceives the physical objects outside, Schopenhauer describes it as 'the extensionless centre of the sphere of all our representations, whose radii converge on it' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 452).[30] He adds that this egocentric subject must be envisaged as 'the dark point in

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30 In *Free Fall*, Sammy Mountjoy describes the ego as 'a single point' that has no 'shape or size but only position'; this position stands at the centre of shapes that flee 'away outwards along the radii of a globe' (Golding 1959: 190). Like Pincher Martin's surrogate, Sammy takes this point to be related to his 'own interior identity' as an individual (190).

consciousness', and compares it to the eye, which 'sees everything except itself', and which can only be known indirectly, as a concept (1969b: 491). The way in which the intellect of Pincher's surrogate is described in Golding's narrative is similar: insofar as Pincher's surrogate is a subject of consciousness that cannot 'even examine itself', he is called 'an unexamined centre' (Golding 1956: 45, 161). As the conscious subject cannot know itself directly, Schopenhauer argues that 'self-consciousness could not exist if there were not in it a known opposed to the knower and different therefrom', and that otherwise the knower 'would be the known of another knower' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 202). As we know, in his understanding of self-consciousness what the conscious subject grasps when it looks inside is not itself but the motions of the individual will devoid of consciousness. Unlike *The Spire*, *Pincher Martin* does not contain any clear description of the character's self-conscious grasp of his individual will, yet in an interview with Biles Golding does refer elsewhere to the latter novel as illustrating the subject's impossibility to be conscious of itself: 'You think about yourself, and no matter how many layers you strip off, there is always something thinking about yourself. The thing which is thinking, which is examining, cannot examine itself ... because it is the thing which is examining'; thus Golding believes, like Schopenhauer, that in every conscious being there is 'this one point of awareness which cannot examine itself, because it is working when it tries to examine' (in Biles 1970: 74).

These comments go — like Schopenhauer's — against the kind of rational self-reflection captured by Descartes's *cogito*, and are consistent with Golding's overall suspicion of rationalism. Golding's criticism of Cartesianism also extends to ontological dualism. The centre of consciousness of Pincher's surrogate may be unable to examine itself, but this does not prevent it from imposing rational 'patterns' on the bare rock (Golding 1956: 108). During his stay in the imaginary world, Pincher's surrogate believes that he has put his indomitable will at the service of this rational centre, or at most that both are on an equal footing: on the one hand, there is 'Will like a last ditch. Will like a monolith'; on the other hand, there is the 'invulnerable centre' of representation — and hence of his world — that is 'certain of its own sufficiency' (163). Like Descartes, Pincher's surrogate thinks that he is two independent 'things, mind and body' (176). He also believes, like the French philosopher, that the mind is 'sufficient', not 'a slave' to the body (161–5), 'self-existent and indestructible' (45). Convinced that even 'Sleep is a condition to be attained by thought like any other' (87), Pincher's

surrogate does not realise that his actions betray a force that is even greater than that of his mind. Indirectly, many of his thoughts, many of the things that he says, and especially his behaviour, betray the existence of this powerful energy that feeds both his past sexual desire and his present attempts to survive: from the very beginning, it emerges that his conduct in the imaginary world that he has created obeys, as it did in the world that he has left behind, where 'an ancient' automatism mentioned by the third-person narrator drives his body to try to stay afloat (8), a 'relentless' force — the imaginary counterpart of the will to life — that does not fail to 'use the mechanism' of the surrogate's mind in the same way as it uses that of the body (11). Little by little, the image of the monolith becomes the perfect way of conveying its strength as well as its obtuseness and unidirectionality.

The other main clue to a correct appreciation of the influence of the essential will to life is the surrogate's alternation between the modal verbs *shall* and *will* in conjunction with the first person. This oscillation is symptomatic of the occasions when his egocentric intellect works as if it were responsible for everything that is happening, and, alternatively, of the occasions when it is presented, even in the imaginary world, as subservient to the will to life that reveals itself through the individual's speech. In one case the intellect seems to be in control and takes all the necessary measures to survive. In the other cases it is clearly the will to life that prevails, and the egocentric intellect is the unwitting servant through which the essential will speaks like a ventriloquist through a puppet.

In the following quotations Pincher's surrogate sticks to the traditional British use of *shall* with the first-person pronoun. After conjuring up the imaginary sea on which he floats, and remembering that his ship has been torpedoed by a German submarine, Pincher's surrogate concludes: 'I shall see wreckage' (Golding 1956: 14); later, when he has already reached the imaginary rock where he is to spend his last imaginary days, he announces: '"I shall call those three rocks out there the Teeth"' (90). On both occasions the emphasis is on the certainty of what is bound to happen and on the rational determination to tame a hostile environment.

If we compare this with the isolated instances in with Pincher's surrogate uses *will*, we can infer that when *will* crops up its modal value is volition. (In British English, using *shall* to express certainty and determination is also possible, but if Golding would have done so it would have ruined the contrast with the expression of volition through

will.) The first appearance of this use, at a moment when the surrogate's consciousness responds to little more than the animal instinct for self-preservation, is to affirm his will to live: 'I won't die' (Golding 1956: 14). Later on, the almost hysterical surrogate asserts his will to keep on living:

> '*I* am busy *surviving*. … If this rock tries to adapt me to its ways *I will* refuse and adapt it to mine. *I will* impose my routine on it, my geography. *I will* tie it down with names. … *I will* trap rainwater and add it to this pool. *I will use my brain as a delicate machine-tool* to produce the results *I* want' (Golding 1956: 86–7; my italics).

If the surrogate's will is the same as appears in *The Spire*, then we should not be mislead by his insistence, through the use of the first-person singular pronoun, on the subject's responsibility for the will. This is an effect of his perspective, which is tainted by egocentrism. Regardless of how Pincher's surrogate may see the issue, outside Pincher's imaginary world it is not the mind that prevails over the will but the other way round. Passages like the above show that the notion of person includes willing as well as knowing. Moreover, they can be interpreted as pointing to the way in which, even within an imaginary world like the one created by Pincher, a person's innate will makes use of his or her brain, and hence of his or her mind, as if it were a tool like any other, while simultaneously allowing the egocentric mind, which is incapable of realising its subordination to the will, to think that it is responsible for volition. Other passages show, as we are about to see, how, once physical survival is out of the question, the intellect may still function to secure, even within an imaginary world, not only its own survival but even its individuality.

While he struggles to keep the spark of consciousness alive, Pincher's surrogate is assailed by unpleasant memories of Pincher's previous life. If these scenes from the past can be said to have some common denominator, it is the character's lust. This theme echoes the emphasis, in *The Spire*, on Jocelin's own sexuality, the difference being that Pincher is fully awake to this energy that fuels his conduct and does not make any effort to keep it in check. Thus, we gradually learn that Pincher has had sex with both women and men. He has gone to bed with Sybil, the woman whom his friend Alfred loved; he has slept with his producer's wife, Helen, whom he remembers as a mere 'instrument of pleasure' (Golding 1956: 95); he has tried to seduce and rape Mary

Lovell, the girlfriend of his friend Nathaniel, whose 'eyes', 'silences', 'little guarded breasts' and 'impregnable virtue' excites Pincher's 'furious musk' and drives him mad (95, 148).[31]

After his ship has sunk, the emphasis changes and it is no longer sex that matters, but rather the fear of death and the wish to preserve egocentric identity, at an imaginary level, when most of Pincher's body is already dead. According to Schopenhauer, the human being, unlike other animals that are devoid of reason and therefore lack the concept of the future and of life's termination, 'consciously draws every hour nearer his death' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 37), and knowing that they are bound to die fills him with anxiety. So strong is their fear of death that it may contaminate other aspects of human life. This is indeed what the surrogate's fear of sleep reveals.

Pincher's surrogate reacts to sleep as if it were a temporary death. His fear to fall asleep is actually fear of individual extinction, of what Golding calls, in his summary of the novel, *the selfless act of dying* that involves welcoming the fact that one's individuality is destroyed. After trying to think himself into sleep, Pincher's surrogate realises that he cannot do it after all. What is more, he discovers that since he is on the rock he has grown afraid of sleeping, and for several reasons. To begin with, he is aware that sleeping involves a loss of conscious control over reality, the dissolution of egocentric subjectivity and the simultaneous obliteration of the rational patterns that he has so carefully built. Furthermore, he suspects that dreams reveal the nasty truth about himself and about the reality that he has invented. Finally, he fears sleep as a prelude to or preparation for death. The following passage condenses all these reasons and shows the strenuous psychological ordeal undergone by a man who, refusing to die, cannot afford to lose conscious control over a world of his own creation:

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31 Pincher's obsession with Mary Lovell and the reference to his musky desire announces Sammy's seduction and sexual exploitation of Beatrice Ifor in *Free Fall*. There the power of the sexual and self-preservative drives acts as the main motive of Sammy's immoral behaviour: the prospect of sexual pleasure pushes him towards Beatrice and, when he has obtained it, to Taffy, a sexually liberated girl that soon becomes his wife; the fear of death tempts Sammy to accuse his fellow prisoners during the war.

Sleep is a relaxation of the conscious guard, the sorter. Sleep is when all the unsorted stuff comes flying out as from a dustbin upset in a high wind. ... Or sleep was a consenting to die, to go into complete unconsciousness, the personality defeated, acknowledging too frankly what is implicit in mortality that we are temporary structures patched up and unable to stand the pace without a daily respite from what we most think ours —

...

Sleep is where we touch what is better left unexamined. ... There the carefully hoarded and enjoyed personality, our only treasure and at the same time our only defence must die into the ultimate truth of things, the black lightning that splits and destroys all, the positive, unquestionable nothingness.

...

Why can't I sleep?

Gripping the lifebelt in two hands, with face lifted, eyes staring straight ahead ... he whispered the answer to his own question in a mixture of astonishment and terror.

'I am afraid to' (Golding 1956: 91–2).

As Babb explains, while Pincher's surrogate seems to rest, his egocentric consciousness 'sustains itself, warding off nothingness through remembering the past' (1970: 80). Pincher's surrogate is afraid to discover that he is no longer conscious of the public world that the other characters perceive, and this is a token of Pincher's own fear of death. In Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor's words, Pincher has invented 'his whole world by a kind of deliberate dreaming which must always obey every law of being awake so that he never finds out it is a dream' (2002: 112). Sleeping and dreaming would perhaps cause a short-circuit in the system of representations that he has so carefully constructed and struggles to sustain, and this short-circuit would cause the definitive blackout of consciousness, thus preventing him from warding off death.

When Pincher's surrogate finally discovers the truth about the island on which he is stranded, an island created on the memory of a decayed tooth, he cannot avoid the uncanny feeling of having discovered something very strange and, at the same time, scarily familiar:

His tongue felt along the barrier of his teeth. His tongue was remembering. It pried into the gap between the teeth and re-created the old, aching shape. It touched the rough edge of the cliff, traced the slope down, trench after aching trench, down towards the smooth surface where the

> Red Lion was, just above the gum — understood what was so hauntingly familiar and painful about an isolated and decaying rock in the middle of the sea (Golding 1956: 174).

Nevertheless, not even this discovery of what the islet really is can stop him from clinging to a mental life where, as in an imaginary nutshell, he is the sole protagonist and the centre of all action. In a sense, the most illuminating — if indirect — presentation of this attitude is the narrator's description of his snail-like retreat into a crevice in the rock:

> There was a slab of rock that had slipped and fallen sideways from the wall of a trench. This made a triangular hole between the rock and the side and bottom of the trench. ... The hole ran away and down at an angle following the line of the trench and inside there was darkness. The hole even looked drier than the rest of the rock. ... He began to turn his body in the trench, among a complication of sodden clothing. ... He backed to the triangular opening and put his feet in. He lay flat on his stomach and began to wriggle weakly like a snake that cannot cast its skin. ... The oilskin was hard and he backed with innumerable separate movements like a lobster backing into a deep crevice under water. He was in the crack up to his shoulders and rock held him tightly. He hutched the lifebelt up till the soft rubber was across the upper part of his chest. ... His hand found the tit and he blew again slowly until the rubber was firmed up against his chest. He folded his arms, a white hand on either side. He let the left side of his face fall on an oilskinned sleeve and his eyes were shut — not screwed up but lightly closed. (Golding 1956: 45–6).

The backward movement of Pincher's surrogate into the seemingly bottomless crevice expresses Pincher's retreat into a solipsistic shell. In the course of this retreat, Pincher substitutes his own imaginative signifiers for the field of reference that the other characters share, and thus construct for himself a private world increasingly detached from the public world where the other characters remain. The implication is that this public world, unlike Pincher's, is not made up of signs of images but consists in the referents to which signs point, but that the world outside the novel, in which Golding and his readers live, certainly runs the risk of becoming a spectacle of free-standing signifiers. Since Golding's attitude towards Pincher is of frank condemnation, the castaway's solipsism, and the increasing similarity that the world outside the novel bears to it because of the passage from modernity to postmodernity, may too be interpreted as reprehensible. At this point, it becomes clear that Golding's defence of

the modern project includes, apart from his criticism of the interference of other approaches, particularly religion, with science, an attack on the treatment of signifiers as if they were the referent. This confusion is an important ingredient of the process of postmodernisation, which in Lash and Urry's conception not only involves the de-differentiation among social spheres, but also between the signifier and the referent. The postmodern frame of mind, they say, 'problematizes the relationship between representations and reality' (Lash and Urry 1994: 272). 'Since what we increasingly consume are signs or images, so there is no simple "reality" separate from such modes of representation' (272). In sum, postmodern de-differentiation questions 'our experience of *reality* itself' (Lash 1990: 15). This is a questioning that in Golding's opinion must be resisted.

In Pincher's case, the shell where he takes refuge is made up of physical objects acting as barriers against the darkness of the undifferentiated essence that threatens to swallow him up. However, the crevice in the rock prefigures the cracks which will cause the shell to break down and which, from the point of view of Pincher's surrogate, look like a branching black lightning. The collapse of the shell will mark the end of Pincher's mental life, and with it his return to the undifferentiated essence from which he — like all conscious beings — has issued and which is infinitely more powerful than his mind.[32] For the time being Pincher's surrogate is able to use his body as a stop that prevents his imaginary world from going down one of those crevices where 'a terrible darkness' lurks (Golding 1956: 124). Eventually, however, the pressure exerted by the essence that Pincher's imaginary world excludes is too strong, and the crevice that Pincher's surrogate sees as a black lightning destroys it for good. Babb explains: 'As his world dissolves, his consciousness is increasingly invaded by indications of otherness in the universe, an otherness that itself denies the postulate of Martin's private universe', the 'total self-sufficiency' of the egocentric subject of consciousness (1970: 79).

Frank Kermode and Leon Surette bring out the real implications of Pincher's stubborn resistance to individual death. Kermode states that Pincher 'will do anything

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32 From the proper metaphysical perspective, says Schopenhauer, death means reuniting with the essential force out of which one rises, that is, returning to where one belongs. Nowhere in Golding's oeuvre is this clearer than in *The Inheritors*, even if there, as we shall see in the last section of this study, the force that engenders the individuals and with which they reunite is identified as divine and given a (fictive) deity's name — Oa.

rather than accept the loss of himself' (Kermode 1971: 248). Surette makes a similar point: 'Martin is willing to go to any lengths to preserve his identity'; what looks like 'indomitable fortitude' is nothing more than 'a senseless clinging to identity' (Surette 1994: 220). Confronted with this behaviour, the reader may find it hard to pass a negative judgement on Golding's character: 'The sharpest difficulty this novel has for its readers is its requirement that they withdraw their approval from Martin's indomitable struggle to maintain his identity', even if it only is through an imaginary surrogate (220). What both Kermode and Surette fail to see is that the original function of Pincher's identity is, like that of tenacious personality to which it is associated, and which the castaway is eager to '"reinforce"' (Golding 1956: 106), to be a necessary instrument of the essential will to life. Nor do these critic realise that, if his egocentric consciousness still clings to life, it is out of inertia: even when its services are no longer needed, and Pincher is about to return to the will to life that gave birth to him and that can dispose of him whenever it finds fit, his self-centred mind cannot help going about its usual business.

By the end of this sixth day on the rock, after a long resistance, Pincher's surrogate is so exhausted that 'black nothingness' (extinction, both physical and mental) manages to 'engulf him utterly, finally' (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor: 129). The black lightning is just a crack in the mental shell that Pincher has built and that is waiting to deliver the final blow on his fantasies of self-sufficiency. When the black lightning widens and branches to form 'lines of absolute blackness', Pincher's world is reduced to a centre and a pair of gigantic pincers clinging to the rock; then the rock is gone, leaving the serrated, lobster-like claws — 'huge and strong and inflamed to red' — gripping each other; finally the black lines advance towards the centre of awareness, as if 'waiting for the moment when they could pierce it', and to the claws, 'playing over them, prying for a weakness, wearing them away ... without mercy' (Golding 1956: 201).

The key to understand what has happened is to remember the intellect's subordination to the essential will: the essential will can only find satisfaction by means of its manifestations, and only insofar as they are endowed with an egocentric consciousness and, therefore, with a strong sense of individual identity. In Pincher's case, the egocentric predisposition to satisfy the needs of the body is so strong that it tries to do so until the very last moment, when the last embers of the living body are extinguished, that is, even when the conditions are so adverse that the organism to

which the intellect is associated can no longer be satisfied. Pincher's inert body — lungs full of water and, most likely, heart arrested — quickly–approaches cerebral death; meanwhile, his brain tries to perform its function at all costs by conjuring up an imaginary world where it can do so. Within this world, Pincher's surrogate makes the same effort to survive as Pincher would have made, under similar circumstances, in the world of which he is no longer aware. As Pincher used to do in this world, his surrogate makes the mistake of behaving as if the satisfaction of his individual desires were an end in itself. Finally, on the island the surrogate also tries to preserve his individual identity until the end, because this is the only way in which satisfaction can be attained.

The attitudes and the behaviour of Pincher's surrogate are only an exaggerated version of that of the majority of people. By the same token, his rejection of death in the imaginary world is consistent with Pincher's vain struggle not to drown when he falls overboard at the very beginning of the novel. The result of this first refusal is the creation of an imaginary rock surrounded by an imaginary sea. After this has been accomplished, we discover that his surrogate also refuses to die because he considers his life to be irreplaceable and 'Precious' (Golding 1956: 14). Towards the end of the novel we witness a similar refusal, to no effect:

> 'What do you believe in?'
>   ...
>   'The thread of my life'.
>   'At all costs'
>   ...
>   'Didn't the others want to live then?'
>   'There are degrees' ...
>   'I have a right to live if I can!'
>   ...
>   'Consider',
>   ...
>   'I will not consider!' (Golding 1956: 196).

Pincher's surrogate prefers an imaginary continuation of life, '"pain and all"', to death (Golding 1956: 197). Perishing involves, from the point of view of this egocentric individual, a '"sheer negation"' of what one most cherishes' (70), including what John

Peter calls 'the theatrical paper world he has made for himself' and where he can be the absolute protagonist (Peter 1957: 590).

This kind of resistance to death is clearly a mistake. The black lightning destroys Pincher's imaginary world, and his surrogate with it, as if it were erasing a flawed creation or an unsatisfactory draft. This seems to align Golding with Schopenhauer, for whom the wish to live indefinitely is an error that betokens the individual's failure to grasp the simple truth that surrendering to death is better than clinging to life:

> To desire immortality for the individual is really the same as wanting to perpetuate an error for ever; for at bottom every individuality is really only a special error, a false step, something that it would be better should not be (Schopenhauer 1969b: 491–2).

Elsewhere Schopenhauer suggests that the error has to do with egocentrism, a mode of consciousness which acts as the principle of individuation giving rise to discrete physical things and thus — according to Schopenhauer's theory of the exact correspondence between object and subject — to individual perceivers. Now egocentrism is linked to so much suffering as would convince the individual 'that it would be better … not to exist' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 605). Moreover, egocentrism prevents all metaphysical knowledge — in Schopenhauer's opinion, one of the possible palliatives for suffering — and in particular the knowledge of the essence of the world. This means that egocentrism makes us turn our back on what we essentially are. The following remarks by Schopenhauer are especially relevant here:

> however much my individual existence, like [the] sun, outshines everything for me, at bottom it appears only as an obstacle which stands between me and the knowledge of the true extent of my being. And because in his knowledge every individual succumbs to this obstacle, it is simply individuation that keeps the will-to-live in error as to its own true nature … Death is a refutation of this error and abolishes it (Schopenhauer 1969b: 601).

Because his mind works egocentrically, Pincher conjures up a world of physical appearances, of surfaces without depth. This is the only world to which, for most of the novel, his surrogate and we readers have access. I have already mentioned how this private world resembles a theatrical stage; now it becomes apparent that its

background resembling painted cardboard prevents everyone — actor and spectators alike — from seeing what happens backstage. Only when the black lightning starts destroying Pincher's mental shell do we begin to realise what the death that awaits all the manifestations of the essential will might entail. Not only does death put an end to an egocentrism that perpetuates our pain and hides from us our essential being. It is also a remedy for the egocentric frame of mind on which moral egoism and malice rest, and which therefore has no small share in the rest of the world's sufferings. What exactly the role of egoism, malice and suffering is in Golding's novels, *Pincher Martin* among them, will be examined next.

3.1.2.3. Incarnations of Egocentrism: Egoistic and Malignant Characters

According to Schopenhauer, my egocentrism means that, as a rule, my consciousness falls short of probing the essential kernel of the world; instead, it functions in such a way that my apparent individuality is pitted against the others'. It also means that, as a consequence, my attempts to fulfil my desires take it for granted that they are exclusively *mine*, and that those attempts do not usually take into consideration the well-being of my neighbour. Morally speaking, Schopenhauer argues that the prevailing desires among humans are linked to their egocentrism. This is what happens with egoistic desires (by dint of which the egocentric seeks his or her well-being alone) and malignant desires (by dint of which the egocentric seeks to harm the other, as if this were not, in a sense, an attack on his or her own essence). Having analysed the presence of the essential will qua will to life in *The Spire* and *Pincher Martin*, we can proceed to examine the most frequent moral forms that this craving for life can adopt in Golding's novels when coupled up with egocentric modalities of consciousness. Golding offers a wide gallery of characters that can be identified with the moral categories of egoism and malignity. Among them, Pincher Martin is predominantly egoistic; Roger in *Lord of the Flies* is malignant, and so are Philip in *Free Fall* and Sophy in *Darkness Visible*.

In Schopenhauer, the behaviour of every thing and being in the realm of appearances reveals their innate character and, indirectly, the single essence that they share with the rest of the world. A person's conduct is to some extent indicative of that

person's desires and thus of his or her innate character, in other words, of the unchangeable way in which one wills what one wills. The same happens in Golding's novels, both in respect of the world's essence, as we have seen, and in respect of one's innate character. In the most extreme cases, the novelist's texts suggest that this innate character can be summarised in one single word or sentence, as in a mediaeval morality play: the main character in *Pincher Martin*, for instance, is described as greed incarnated. This schematic reduction — on occasions to a single trait — bears out Golding's comments to Biles that, despite his belief that 'what is important is the people, and the ideas come second', his first published novels 'tend to lean towards the ideas being important and the people not' (in Biles 1970: 32).

Pincher Martin's main character is an egocentric who regards his own life as irreplaceable. Golding points out to Baker, in an exercise of understatement, that Pincher is 'more of an egotist than most' (in Baker 1982: 143). Both his stay on the imaginary rock and his memories of the years before the war show that Pincher not only crushes and eats but proves insatiable. In the novel eating is the expression of ruthless competition and violence. Pincher thinks that 'You could eat with your cock or with your fists, or with your voice. You could eat with hobnailed boots or buying and selling or marrying and begetting and cuckolding' (Golding 1956: 88). As Edmund L. Epstein notes, in Golding's narratives the gaping mouth is often used as 'the symbol of ravenous, unreasoning and eternally insatiable nature' (1988: 303). *Pincher Martin* does indeed put the stress in its main character's use of his mouth to bite, tear, chew and swallow whatever gets in his way. Indirectly, this draws attention to a general dynamic that characterises the world as a whole.

Thanks to the memories that insist on interrupting the train of thoughts of Pincher's surrogate, we gradually learn about the numerous victims of his consumptive compulsion. There is Peter, the boy whom he maims by riding too dangerously in order not to be defeated in a motorcycle race; and there is Sybil, a woman that Pincher takes to bed so that his friend Alfred, who is in love with her, can see them together. He has often had sex for power, with girls and with boys. He sleeps with his producer's wife, Helen, not only to obtain pleasure, but also because she can help him to advance his career and to avoid forced recruitment. Not content with comparing his 'phallus' to a 'sword' and Helen to a 'dog', he recalls what he used to think about her: 'I should love to eat you' (Golding 1956: 95). In addition, he tries to seduce and rape Mary Lovell, the

chaste girl with whom he is obsessed, and who drives him to 'a madness, not so much in the loins as in the pride', which instils in him 'the need to assert and break' (148). In Pincher's fantasy, lust and the hunt for pleasure go hand in hand with violence and torture (notice how his verbal abuse of her is ejaculated rather than merely shouted):

> Those nights of imagined copulation, when one thought not of love nor sensation nor comfort nor triumph, but of torture rather, the very rhythm of the body reinforced by hissed ejaculations — take that and that! That for your pursed mouth and that for your ... closed knees, your impregnable balance on the high, female shoes — and that if it kills you for your magic and your isled virtue! (Golding 1956: 149).[33]

Last, but not least, Pincher attempts to murder his best friend, Nathaniel, after serving as best man at Nathaniel's wedding with Mary. Pincher hates Nathaniel so much for this that he thinks that he 'could eat' him too (Golding 1956: 100). When we learn about the attempted murder, we infer that Pincher is as much the victim of his depravity as he is of chance. Being on the same ship as Nathaniel, he orders a sudden change of course in order to throw his friend — who is praying by the railing — into the sea. We cannot know if Nathaniel dies or not as a result, but it eventually dawns on Pincher that it is the change of direction that puts the ship in the trajectory of a Nazi torpedo. Pincher is thus responsible for his own death.

Metonymically reduced to a pair of claws and a gaping mouth, Pincher is always ready to clutch and devour whatever and whoever comes within reach: '"I kill and eat"', he says (Golding 1956: 115). His personality, thus summed up, depends as much on his individuality, his ability to reason and to speak, as on his capacity of domination: 'Domination. Identity' (191). As we know, Pincher's greedy appetite has two main

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33 The Sea Trilogy provides another illustration of the rapport between sexuality and violence: Talbot describes his furtive sexual intercourse with Zenobia comparing it to a battle 'with the Delicious Enemy' (Golding 1991: 87). Witness the choice of vocabulary, which stresses his aggressive assertiveness as well as his partner's increasing passivity: 'We wrestled for a moment by the bunk, she with a nicely calculated exertion of strength that only just failed to resist me, I with mounting passion. My sword was in hand and I boarded her! She retired in disorder to the end of the hutch ... I attacked once more. ... Ah — she did yield at last to my conquering arms, was overcome, rendered up all the tender spoils of war' (77).

objects, corresponding to two different stages in his life, before and after the shipwreck. Sexuality and nourishment, two of the main goals of the essential will to life, meet in his mind, for example, when he recalls calling his producer's wife a 'sweet' that he would 'love to eat', and likewise when he remembers how much Mary's 'apple breasts' used to excite him (95, 148). Before being assailed by those memories, he has often conflated sex with food, sometimes in the opposite direction, as when he compares the anemones that he intends to eat to 'breasts when the milk has been drawn from them' (63).[34]

Inflicting suffering on others can be an end in itself (as in the case of malice) or as a mere means to our egoistic ends. On the whole, Pincher's behaviour is not the result of

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34 The same link between consumption and sex appears in other novels. Though the list of possible examples is longer, here I shall only make reference to those novels that I have analysed so far (for more details, see the discussion of each individual work in Crawford 2002). In *The Inheritors* the New People are described as having 'wolf teeth' rather than the 'broad' teeth that the primitive People use for 'grinding' (Golding 1955: 175, 174). From the perspective of the People, the sexual relations of the New People involve not only 'lying with' but 'eating' one's partner, the 'wolflike battle' ending only when they have 'consumed each other' (175, 176). In *Free Fall*, as Crawford points out, 'Sammy is seen as immersed in low, dirty sexual behavior where women become meat to his greedy palate' (2002: 107). Though Sammy is not the only character in the novel whose sexual appetite is linked to consumption — the desire of the boy's benefactor, Father Watts-Watt, is for the 'forbidden fruit' of the pupil's company (Golding 1959: 76) — but Sammy is the one whose desires are strongest: when he has casual sex with a girl called Sheila, their relation consists in giving 'each other a little furtive pleasure like handing round a bag of toffees' (91); and when he recalls Miss Manning, her sexy French teacher, he puts the emphasis on her 'creamy' looks (227). Similarly, in *Darkness Visible*, Sophy's sadistic appetite for boys makes her describe them as 'edible' (Golding 1979: 176).

From a Freudian point of view, this emphasis on the link between sex eating would perhaps be interpreted as pointing to an oral fixation. Let us recall that the oral stage corresponds to a pregenital period during which sexual pleasure 'is bound predominantly to that excitation of the oral cavity and lips which accompanies feeding', and that 'desire and satisfaction are forever marked by this first experience' (Laplanche and Pontalis 2006: 287, 288). As is usually the case, in Golding's novels this oral fixation has what Freud calls 'cannibalistic' features (Freud 1995: 273). It involves 'a *regression* ... to original narcissism' whereby the subject attempts to 'incorporate' the object 'into itself', and 'to do so by devouring it' (587). During the oral stage, concludes Freud, 'the act of obtaining erotic mastery over an object coincides with that object's destruction' (621).

malignant desires; however violent and harmful to others his actions are, what seems to move him is not so much the desire to hurt as his eagerness to satisfy his own wishes, thus securing and incrementing his well-being, without . As his producer explains while preparing a new play, the role that suits Pincher best is that of allegorical Greed:

> 'This ... bastard here takes anything he can lay his hands on. ... He takes the best part, the best seat, the best money, the best notice, the best woman. He was born with his mouth and his flies open and both hands out to grab' (Golding 1956: 120).

The producer's reference to the use that Pincher makes of his hands anticipates his imaginary surrogate's transformation into a pair of claws stubbornly clinging to life. In general, the combination of the will to life and Pincher's egocentrism results in the ruthless domination, exploitation and consumption of everyone and everything round him. As we share, in a series of flashbacks, his memories, we are revolted by his former life, which 'has been little more than a play for power, for domination, for the control of other human lives' in order to secure the egocentric satisfaction of his 'monstrous' appetites (Dickson 1991: 52). The character's nickname is significant in this connection. His identity disc reads Christopher Hadley Martin, and, Golding reminds Biles, all 'Martins are called "Pincher" in the Royal Navy' (in Biles 1970: 71). But in everyday language, *pincher* is also one who pinches, that is, hurts, extorts or steals (see Baker 1965: 39). In the end, just before the complete obliteration of the imaginary world where he tries to survive, Pincher's surrogate is reduced to the gripping claws, the perfect image of the character's egoistic rapaciousness. As Golding explains, 'He'd spend his whole life acquiring things that really belong to other people, and bit by bit they were taken away from him ... till he ended as what he was' (cited in Baker 1965: 39).[35]

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35 The emblematic characterisation of Pincher Martin as greed bears out the novelist's confession to Biles that some of his books are 'more interested in ideas than in people' (in Biles 1970: 7). This use of a simple, static character whose moral disposition can be summed up with just a couple of words is not exceptional in Golding's oeuvre. As it turns out, other characters of his can also be profitably classified according to the moral parameters supplied by Schopenhauer.

   Reflecting on his penchant for this kind of characterisation, Golding puts it down to his admiration of Greek tragedy, which he regards as a major influence in his first published novels.

Though Pincher's egocentrism results in an egoistic attitude, Golding's novels feature a number of egocentrics that are best classified as malignant. The most relevant examples can be found in *Lord of the Flies*, *Free Fall* and *Darkness Visible*. *Lord of the Flies* features one of the most terrifying characters ever created by Golding. Though the novelist's comments on the book usually focus on Jack, the head of the hunters, whose desires are equally malignant, it is through its focus on Roger's thoughts and actions that the novel reveals the true colours of malice. As the story unfolds, Roger gradually develops from a 'furtive boy whom no one knew, who kept to himself with an inner intensity of avoidance and secrecy', to a painted torturer and murderer (Golding 1954: 20). He is a 'dark boy' (20), first because of his secretive personality, then because of the fear that he inspires. A crucial moment in this development is when he and Maurice destroy the sandcastles built by the little ones on the beach:

> Roger and Maurice came out of the forest. They … had come down for a swim. Roger led the way straight through the castles, kicking them over, burying the flowers, scattering the chosen stones. Maurice followed, laughing, and added to the destruction. The three littluns paused in their game and looked up. As it happened, the particular marks in which they were interested had not been touched, so they made no protest. Only Percival began to whimper with an eyeful of sand and Maurice hurried away. In his other life Maurice had received chastisement for filling a younger eye with sand. Now, though there was no parent to let fall a heavy hand, Maurice still felt the unease of wrongdoing. At the back of his mind formed the uncertain outlines of an excuse. He muttered something about a swim and broke into a trot (Golding 1954: 59).

Left on his own, Roger continues to observe the little ones. Soon one of them, Henry, leaves and starts to play at a distance from the rest. For no reason in particular, Roger starts throwing stones at him:

Baker observes that 'there is no question that the Greeks, taken collectively, represent one of the most potent forces in shaping (or confirming) Golding's conception of human psychology and human fate' (Baker 1965: xvii). In one of his interviews with Biles, Golding concedes that this may be the reason why his novels 'lack a number of dimensions of reality' (in Biles 1970: 20). His debt to the Greeks does not end with his early treatment of character, but also bears on his conception of narrative plot (see Baker 1982: 165; for more details, see Baker 1965: 72–3, 94 n. 5; Carey 1987: 182–3; Roncace 1997).

> Roger stooped, picked up a stone, aimed, and threw it at Henry — threw it to miss. The stone, that token of preposterous time, bounced five yards to Henry's right and fell in the water. Roger gathered a handful of stones and began to throw them. Yet there was a space round Henry, perhaps six yards in diameter, into which, he dare not throw. Here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life. Round the squatting child was the protection of parents and school and policemen and the law. Roger's arm was conditioned by … civilization (Golding 1954: 61).

According to William R. Mueller, here Roger, like Maurice, still 'manifests a thin sheath of decency and restraint' (Mueller 1988: 265); but the memory of moral and legal repression soon vanishes in him. Immediately after this episode, Roger comes across Jack, who has covered his face and body with mud, clay and ash so as to prevent the wild boars that he intends to kill from sensing him. Later, when Jack has already led some of the boys to settle down away from Ralph and Piggy, Roger praises him as '"a proper chief"' (Golding 1954: 162). And when he learns that Jack has decided, without giving any explanation, to tie another boy as a punishment, Roger receives the news 'as an illumination, assimilating the possibilities of irresponsible authority' (163). From this moment on, Roger strives to outdo Jack's cruelty. The highest point is his murder of Piggy, when, 'with a sense of delirious abandonment', Roger leans all his weight on the lever that moves a huge rock. The rock strikes Piggy a 'blow from chin to knee', bursting the conch in his hands and killing him (185). The narrator reports how, from this moment on, 'The hangman's horror clung round him' (186). He becomes '"a terror"' who hurts the other children and whom even Jack seems to fear (195). When Roger and Jack decide to hunt Ralph down and behead him like a pig, it is the former that Ralph is really afraid of, as he carries 'death in his hands' (201).

Roger has been called 'a natural sadist' (Epstein 1988: 301). The same label could be applied to Philip Arnold, one of Sammy's schoolmates in *Free Fall*. Of this 'pale, timid' boy, Sammy says that in comparison with himself and with their mutual friend Johnny Spragg, both of whom were regular school bullies, Philip 'was far more dangerous' (Golding 1959: 48). Philip 'loved fighting when anyone else was being hurt'; he 'liked to inflict pain' so much that 'a catastrophe was his orgasm' (48). This metaphorical

description also fits Roger and Sophy, one of the main characters in *Darkness Visible*. The actions of all three are not only egoistic, as in Pincher's case, but truly malignant.[36]

Like that of the title character in *Pincher Martin*, Sophy's consciousness is characterised by extreme egocentrism. Being only a child, she realises that the world extends 'out of her head in every direction but one; and that one was … the direction through the back of her head' (Golding 1979: 112–3). As in Pincher's case, it is the overestimation of this central position that prompts her to exclaim: "'I shan't die!'" (112). Unlike Pincher's, however, her egocentrism is not allied to egoism but to malice, the desire for the other's suffering.[37] The antiquarian bookseller Sim Goodchild, another of the characters in *Darkness Visible*, believes himself to be, despite his surname, dominated by a 'diabolical thing *down* there'; the 'sheer wantonness' of the actions that this demonic urge inspires involves 'hindering' a rival bookseller because it is more 'fun' than helping him (194). Nevertheless, Sim's description of malice fits Sophy even better than himself. The first clue to this effect comes from an episode

36 Reflecting on evil, Golding says to Biles that 'intelligence and evil are inextricably mixed up, whereas knowledge and evil may not be' (in Biles 1970: 109). The former claim is borne out in *Darkness Visible* by the description of the Stanhope twins, whose malice soon becomes evident, as having 'phenomenal intelligence' (Golding 1979: 129). From Schopenhauer's perspective, Golding's reference to intelligence may be interpreted as pointing to rationality (in his instrumental understanding of it). According to Schopenhauer, only rational animals, i.e. human beings, can carry out evil actions (but, by the same token, only they can act altruistically). The other animals may have knowledge, in the form of feelings, but are not capable of rational thought. Regardless of the suffering that they may cause, their intentions and actions can only be egoistic (exclusively concerned with their own weal). As for the question whether the presence of evil only when there is rationality is a question of simultaneity or of dependence (a question that Schopenhauer does not help us to settle), Golding suggests that 'perhaps … intelligence and evil are not inseparable, but parallel things, as a matter of genetics' (109).

37 Like Sammy Mountjoy in *Free Fall*, sometimes Sophy uses the language of moral relativism to justify her attitude. She has her 'own wishes and rules', which from her perspective are like 'a measuring rod' (Golding 1979: 135). Examining such notions as *ought* and *must*, she reaches the conclusion that, if they are 'not appropriate' to her, she can make them vanish behind the imperatives of *want* (135). Moving from desires to actions, she believes that all acts are morally neutral, therefore 'that stealing was wrong or right according to the way you thought' (124). If she never takes to stealing, it is simply because she finds it 'boring' (124). Her aspirations are very different, related to the gratuitous infliction of pain rather than with material gains.

where she repeats Roger's throwing of stones, the difference being that Sophy does not feel the restraining force of parents and police. Having discovered a brook near her house, the little girl feels the need to throw stones at a family of ducks that she has caught swimming away (the description of the action emphasises her estimation of time and space): 'left arm held sideways, upper arm rotating back from the elbow past her left ear in a little girl's throw', she is able 'not merely to jerk her upper arm forward but also to let go the stone at the precise moment, angle, speed' (108); next she feels 'the *satisfaction* of the event' (109; my italics). At this point in the novel, when Sophy is still a child, this is an unexpected response to the damage which she has done, and which the narrator describes in vivid detail:

> the qualified splash, the mother shattering away from the water, half flying over it with a cry like pavements breaking, the chicks mysteriously disappearing, all except the last one, now a scrap of fluff among spreading rings, one foot held up at the side and quivering a little, the rest of it motionless except for the rocking of the water (Golding 1979: 109).

Though here we only have access to her feeling of achievement after killing one of the chicks, we are not given any details about her motivation to throw the stone. In itself, this absence of explanation is indicative that she does it simply because she can and because she suspects that it can give her some pleasure. Subsequent events in the story support this view of the gratuitousness of her action.

In the course of one of her first sexual relationships, lying on a divan, Sophy finds the whole experience mildly 'pleasant' but 'ludicrous' (Golding 1979: 145). When Roland, her partner, criticises her lack of implication, she feels some 'deep rage' boiling out of her (145). Without saying a word, she 'fiercely' jabs a little knife which she happens to be holding in her hand (145). Roland jerks away with a howl, but when, still 'spread on the divan', she sees his blood on the blade, she notices a strange feeling 'expanding inside her and filling her', and finally becoming 'a shudder then an unstoppable arching of her body' (146). Crying out 'through her clenched teeth', she lets 'Unsuspected nerves and muscles' take charge of her, sweeping her forward 'in contraction after contraction towards some pit of destroying consummation' (146). Not only does violence afford her a vague sense of satisfaction: it gives her, quite literally, the orgasm that she has not been able to reach through conventional sex.

Sophy's leitmotiv is: '*I hate! I hate! I hate!*' (Golding 1979: 138). It shows the extent to which she is dominated by a 'deep, fierce, hurting need, desire, to hurt' everyone and everything (127). It is in response to this desire that she becomes a terrorist. Waiting for her accomplices to arrive with the boy that they were planning to snatch, she imagines how it would be to murder him:

> Should have brought a gun only I don't know, it's better with the knife — oh much better!
>
> The boy was ... waiting for her on the flat stone. She began to fumble at his jersey with her left hand and he made no move; but when she pulled out the front of his shirt he began to struggle ... But the bonds were beautifully done, ... and she swept her hand over his naked tum and belly button, ... and she felt the paper-thin ribs and a beat, beat, thump, thump at left centre. So she got her trousers undone and held his tiny wet cock in her hand as he struggled and hummed through his nose. She laid the point of the knife on his skin and finding it to be the right place, she pushed it ... and felt it touch the leaping thing or be touched by it again and again while the body exploded with convulsions and a high humming came out of the nose. She thrust with all the power there was, deliriously; and the leaping thing inside seized the knife so that the haft bet in her hand ... There was liquid everywhere and strong convulsions and she pulled the knife away to give them free play but they stopped.
>
> ...
>
> She was trembling with the passion of the mock murder (Golding 1979: 251–2).

While Sophy is still relishing the scene, the noise of her accomplices' car pulls her out of her reverie. One of them tells her that the operation has failed because 'some burning bugger' has come out at him and rescued the boy (Golding 1979: 252). As we shall see in the section devoted to the ways in which Golding's characters die, the rescuer is Matty, the novel's main character, who ends up his life as he started it, shrouded in flames. What matters here is that in this passage, as in the rest of the novel, Sophy's pleasure stems from a combination of cruelty and sexuality. This reminds of what happens in other novels. However, her satisfaction does not seem to be of the same kind as, for example, Pincher Martin's. While it is easy to interpret the behaviour of Pincher's imaginary surrogate as having to do with self-preservation, and Pincher's own conduct before his ship has been torpedoed as related to the reproductive instincts, Sophy's actions seem to bear no connection with either individual survival or perpetuation. The same happens with other malignant characters of Golding's, a fact that may be

indicative not only of the difficulties to explain why someone has a certain character, but also of the difficulties that modern philosophy and literature have had to explain the existence of malignant characters. Thus, though in Golding's novels egoism can be interpreted as serving the general goal of life to protect and perpetuate itself, in the last analysis malice represent an inscrutable mystery.

3.1.2.4. 'We Are in Hell': Evil and Other Sources of Suffering

We have seen that many of Golding's characters never manage to shed the egocentric perspective from which, according to Schopenhauer, conscious beings generally grasp their place in the world. We have also seen that, when it comes to satisfying their needs and aspirations, their atomising egocentrism has important consequences, as it makes them establish insurmountable differences between themselves and the others, blinding them to the common essence that manifests in all individuals. Because of this, egocentric individuals treat their personal desires as if they were theirs alone, that is, as if they had nothing to do with the neighbour's desires and as if they did not derive their force, in all cases, from the same essential urge that keeps the entire world in motion.

Egocentrism is at the service of egoistic and malignant desires. In the case of such predominantly malignant characters as Roger, Philip and Sophy, their actions are always designed to harm others. In the case of predominantly egoistic characters, for example Pincher Martin, the situation is slightly different. Though their conduct does not necessarily cause the others harm, it frequently does: since their concern is not with the neighbour's weal or woe, they will normally try to find gratification in the easiest way, even if this implies resorting to unnecessary violence. Schopenhauer teaches us that, when this happens, the actions of egoistic individuals are indistinguishable from the actions based on malice. And when the egocentric individuals' attempts to satisfy their desires increase the world's pain, they deserve to be called evil regardless of their motivation. This proves that, though Kinkead-Weekes's statement, already mentioned, that for Golding there is an evil kind of seeing may not be entirely accurate, it is not far from the mark: looking at them from Schopenhauer's perspective, it is evident that in Golding's novels there is a kind of seeing — egocentric consciousness — that is very likely to result in evil. The best example of this perspective appears in *Darkness Visible*.

During Sophy's first encounter with the chicks and the mother at which she will shortly start throwing stones for no apparent reason, the birds seem, from her self-centred point of view, to be going 'right into her eyes', and Sophy herself is described as being 'nothing but seeing, seeing, seeing!' in a way that resembles 'reaching out and laying hold with your eyes' (Golding 1979: 107–8). Coupled with her desire to harm and consume the world round her, this way of seeing becomes 'a kind of absorbing, a kind of drinking' (108). As we are about to see, in *Darkness Visible* the individual's desire is repeatedly expressed in terms of thirst.

In Golding's novels, evil actions are not the only source of suffering. One interesting thing that we learn from Schopenhauer is that, when they are not satisfied, the egoistic or malignant desires dictated by a person's innate character will also cause him or her to suffer when combined with egocentrism. We have already seen that it is only from an egocentric perspective that objects appear as potential sources of pleasure and unpleasure, this being the reason why the egocentric subject spends his or her life in anxiety. What this means is that the very association of one's innate appetites with egocentrism can explain why suffering is so prominent in the world even without the intervention of violence.

In the present section I shall deal with the reasons why, in Golding's writings, suffering is presented as an unavoidable ingredient of the lives of egocentric individuals. I shall begin by showing how *Pincher Martin*'s main character explains his scorn for the other's well-being as part and parcel of a universal process of mutual consumption. I shall move on to *Free Fall*, where Sammy reflects on the inevitability of conflict and pain. Then I shall explore the roots of this lethal combination, which *Lord of the Flies* and Golding's comments locate in human nature (in Schopenhauerian terms, in the innate character of the immense majority of humans), which is shared by child and adult alike. Finally, I shall turn to *Darkness Visible*, where Mr Pedigree's paedophiliac passion causes him to suffer whether it is physically satisfied or not. What Mr Pedigree's plight indicates is that egocentric individualism is necessarily tinged with suffering: not only the other's (when the egocentric individual's desires are satisfied at another person's expense) but also one's own (in all cases, simply because of the connection between those desires and egocentrism).

In many of Golding's novels, the combination of willing and egocentrism results in a panorama of universal strife in which all living beings are involved. Reflecting on the

predatory conduct that Pincher Martin has engaged in throughout his life, his surrogate tries to justify himself by arguing that he is just one example of a general process that leads to never-ending conflict. Schopenhauer makes it possible for us to see that this conflict obeys the logic of manifestation of the world's kernel, whereby myriad individuals are created and destroyed so that the essential will can find fulfilment. Towards the end of his stay on the rock, Pincher's surrogate realises that his destiny is not in his hands, and that he is not just a victimiser but yet another victim of this process, which in the novel is conveyed through images of eating. 'The whole business of eating' to which he devotes so much time is 'peculiarly significant'; in the surrogate's opinion, 'eating with the mouth' is 'only the gross expression of … a universal process' of mutual humiliation, defeat and consumption (Golding 1956: 88). A crucial passage recalls how Pincher's producer, who knows him very well, recounts a story aimed at illustrating universal strife and the final destiny of all that are involved in it:

> 'Y'see when the Chinese want to prepare a very rare dish they bury a fish in a tin box. Presently all the lil' maggots peep out and start to eat. Presently no fish. Only maggots.
> …
> They haven't finished yet. Only got to the fish. … Well, when they've finished the fish, Chris, they start on each other.
> …
> The little ones eat the tiny ones. The middle-sized ones eat the little ones. The big ones eat he middle-sized ones. Then the big ones eat each other. Then there are two and then one and where there was a fish there is now one huge, successful maggot. Rare dish' (Golding 1956: 135–6).

It is only at the end of the novel that we understand the full import of this story. When the maggots have devoured each other and there is only one left, the Chinese open the tin box and take the last standing maggot out in order to eat it: ''N when there's only one maggot left the Chinese dig it up — … Have you ever heard a spade knocking on the side of a tin box, Chris? Boom! Boom! Just like thunder' (Golding 1956: 136). Eventually, Pincher's surrogate does hear a thunder-like bang, and it makes him realise that the world that he has created is 'a tin box so huge that a spade knocking at the side sounded like distant thunder' (144). Only then does it dawn on him that he is not the last but, if anything, 'the last maggot but one' (184). Accustomed to be the biggest, most voracious predator around, the castaway suddenly finds out that there is something

bigger, stronger than himself. When he hears 'the sound of the spade against the tin box' (199), Pincher cannot but be afraid of being 'Eaten' (186). The '"bloody great bully"' that finally swallows him up is not a person like him, but the omnipotent, amoral force that avails itself of countless short-lived individuals in order to achieve satisfaction (191).

The story of the maggots concludes with an ominous hint at the way in which all individuals, however violent and powerful, are eventually crushed by a force stronger than themselves. Before reaching this conclusion, the story depicts the way in which individuals come into conflict as soon as they attempt to satisfy the innate needs and appetites derived from that essential force. The title character of *Pincher Martin* believes that violence is the unavoidable result of human interaction, and other characters of Golding's reach the same disheartening conclusion. Sammy Mountjoy, the character-narrator in *Free Fall*, reasons, in the light of his own behaviour and of his knowledge of the others' (first his communist party fellows', later the Nazis'), that '"People don't seem to be able to move without killing each other"' (Golding 1959: 248). Talbot makes a similar discovery in the Sea Trilogy. Fearing that he may have been indirectly responsible for Colley's and Wheeler's suicides, and that he may also have caused Mr Prettiman's death by falling on him, he becomes paranoid about the 'offhand ability to spread destruction' that allegedly makes him '"kill people without knowing it"' (Golding 1991: 545, 620). This is a consequence not of any malignant desires but of his careless egoism, which blinds him to the seriousness of his fellow passengers' problems.

Golding's pessimistic belief in the inevitability of violence and suffering is rooted in the horrors of the Second World War. During his service in the British Royal Navy — which he joined in 1940 — he went into combat (see Carey 2009: 83–6). The war brought him face to face with what he later called, in an interview with Biles, 'the human condition' (in Biles 1970: 33), and became much of a turning point in his life. Because of the humanistic education received from his parents, he had previously 'believed in the perfectibility of social man; that a correct structure of society would produce goodwill' (Golding 1965: 86).[38] Golding does not grow up believing, as Sammy

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38 In the essay entitled 'The Ladder and the Tree', Golding describes his father Alec a rationalist who 'hated nothing in the whole world unless it were a tory, and then only as a matter of principle and on academic lines', and who represented, in his young son's eyes, 'incarnate

Mountjoy does in *Free Fall*, that 'The supply of nineteenth-century optimism ... had run out before it reached me' (Golding 1959: 226). Nevertheless, the war persuades him of the inherent viciousness of human beings. This assertion of human depravity is clearly at odds with the liberal humanist defence of human goodness and with the warning against the corrupting powers of society:

> I had discovered what one man could do to another. ... It is bad enough to say that so many Jews were exterminated in this way and that, so many people liquidated — lovely, elegant word — but there were things done during that period from which I still have to avert my mind less [*sic*] I should be physically sick. ... I must say that anyone who moved through those years without understanding that *man produces evil as a bee produces honey*, must be blind or wrong in the head (Golding 1965: 86–7; my italics).

As we saw at the beginning of this study, previous Golding critics have applied the term *evil* to human nature itself. Schopenhauer teaches us that evil actions, those that cause harm to others, can follow from egoism as well as malice. Though Golding does not describe evil in so much detail, his position is certainly compatible with the philosopher's. Moreover, it is evident that in this quotation the word *evil* characterises, as in Schopenhauer, a spontaneous or natural product of human behaviour. In this respect, the comparison with the bee is as misleading as it is telling: even in those species of bees that produce honey — only a small fraction of the total — not all individuals do it, and even these are capable of other things too; nevertheless, Golding speaks as if all that humans wanted was to harm their neighbour. Thus, despite being aware — as the inclusion of other modes of consciousness in his novels proves — that the egocentric perspective out of which violence arises is not the only one available, in his non-fiction Golding, much as Schopenhauer, tends to overlook this dimension of life.

While Golding's remarks above express his personal stance after the war, elsewhere he turns his own change of mind into a generational feature:

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omniscience' (Golding 1965: 168). Commenting on their political activities, Golding recalls how Alec and his wife Mildred were actively involved in Labour campaigns (in support of feminine suffrage, for instance).

> Before the Second World War my generation did on the whole have a liberal and naive belief in the perfectibility of man. In the war we ... saw, little by little, what man could do to man, what the Animal could do to his own species (Golding 1984a: 163).

Both passages are intended as warnings against the mistaken belief that evil has its origin in social, economic and political problems which can be solved in an ideal society. In Golding's opinion, such a belief can only make things worse. Speaking about the schoolboys on which *Lord of the Flies* focuses, he says to Biles that they run into trouble because they do not understand 'all the beastly potentialities of man' (in Biles 1970: 38). For Golding, the solution to human violence involves, to begin with, acknowledging that this is one of the defining features of being human.

One of Golding's favourite metaphors to express the human penchant for violence is that of a disease. If one of his texts expresses his aspiration to know the truth bout humankind — 'What man is, whatever man is under the eye of heaven, that I burn to know' (Golding 1984a: 199) — another explains how, in the wake of the war, he came to believe 'that man was sick — not exceptional man, but average man' — and 'that the condition of man was to be a morally diseased creation' (1965: 87). As this generalisation shows, Golding's main interest is not with social organisation, which is always historical and provides a better or worse solution to the problem, but with our timeless essence.

Much the same can be said of the religious expressions that he uses to describe human nature. 'Man is a *fallen* being. He is gripped by *original sin*' (Golding 1965: 88; my italics).[39] Schopenhauer's definition of the Fall and original sin adds an interesting twist to our understanding of these expressions. According to Schopenhauer the 'original sin' of humankind has less to do with what people do than with what they are (Schopenhauer 1969a: 254). The 'Fall' is related to the inborn combination of ceaseless yearning and egocentric consciousness (1969b: 604). When Schopenhauer states that original sin is 'the affirmation of the will-to-live' (608), he is making a similar point: insofar as conscious beings feel and seek to satisfy their desires in an egocentric manner, they are affirming the essential will to life.

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39 The Fall that I am going to discuss here is not the same as the fall on which *Free Fall* focuses. The latter has its origin in the individual's free choice of how and what to will. Since this position is incompatible with Golding's initial stance, I shall not examine it in this chapter, but in the next.

For Schopenhauer the combination of egocentrism and desire results in malice and egoism, and these bring about suffering. Because of this, egoistic and malignant beings are fallen beings. Even if they were not in thrall to their desires, egocentric beings would be fallen beings, because they establish a sharp separation among individuals, that is, because, subsequent to the subject–object polarity, the individuating forms of representation — time, space and causality — start producing countless competing individuals. Even if they did not intervene in it, then, egocentric beings could never be innocent witnesses to the endless war that is waged on a worldwide scale, for it is their intellect that divides the world into conflicting parts. In its origin, the world is undifferentiated, timeless and without shape, but when the intellect divides it into separate elements, there arises a living theatre of death and destruction. Schopenhauer thinks that, insofar as they are born to be egocentric, all egocentric creatures, human and non-human, are guilty of the crimes that are committed in the world (see Wicks 2008: 124–5). For him original sin, whether linked to the egocentric attempt to satisfy the desires dictated our innate will or to egocentrism alone, comes hand in hand with 'the guilt of existence itself' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 254).

Golding's treatment of the Fall of humankind and of guilt is compatible with Schopenhauer's explanation in terms of what human beings are, in particular of their being desiring beings endowed with egocentric consciousness. As Golding says to Carey, he thinks that the expressions *original sin* and *selfishness* 'could be interchangeable' (in Carey 1987: 174). As it turns out, the two terms *cannot* be interchangeable, because his malignant characters are obviously just as sinful as, if not more than, his egoistic characters. What both types of character can be said to have in common, however, is a perspective on the world that places them as its sole centre.

The Fall, original sin, guilt — Golding, like Schopenhauer, believes that all egocentric beings are affected by them. Among humans, they affect children and adults alike: if they are related to the timeless essence shared by all humans, the roots of suffering must already be present since birth; this is indeed Golding's point when he says to Carey that 'the root of our sin' is already 'in the child' (in Carey 1987: 174). The idea that young children are as capable of inflicting pain as adults — indeed that 'the most terrible things can be done by children' (174) — appears as early as *Lord of the Flies*. Halfway through the story, when Jack's choir (with the exception of Simon and the addition of Roger) have already become bloodthirsty hunters, we witness the

ruthless imposition of their will on a wild boar: overwhelmed by 'the compulsion to track down and kill', and excited at the memory of the chase and the bloodshed, Jack tells Ralph how he and his hunters have 'closed in on the struggling pig', how they have 'outwitted a living thing, imposed their will upon it, taken away its life like a long satisfying drink' (Golding 1954: 50, 68).[40] This is not the only occasion when the novel directs our attention to humankind's cruelty. The scene where Roger and Maurice kick over the little ones' sandcastles is followed by a lengthy description of the smaller children's engrossed behaviour, as seen from Roger's perspective. The scene that he witnesses leaves us in no doubt that the same qualities that we have observed in him inhere in them too. One of the boys, Henry, entertains himself controlling the tiny animals that live at the edge of the beach:

> He went down the beach and busied himself at the water's edge. The great Pacific tide was coming in and every few seconds the relatively still water of the lagoon heaved forwards an inch. There were creatures that lived in this last fling of the sea, tiny transparencies that came questing in with the water over the hot, dry sand. With impalpable organs of sense they examined this new

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40 In other novels this imposition adopts different forms, but in all cases it has to do with the character's belief that his or her individual will is radically separated from — and stronger than — the others'. In *Darkness Visible* Sophy voices this idea several times, for example, while trying to persuade one of her cronies to carry out the kidnap that they have been planning: '*My will is stronger than his*' (Golding 1979: 162). For her the whole operation is satisfying insofar as it is 'a triumph of the will' (173). In the first volume of the Sea Trilogy, Colley's journal describes his public humiliation at the hands of the sailors during an an Equator-crossing rite of passage, saying that they have 'had their sport, their will' with him, and adding that what humans can do to each other 'with that snarling, lustful, storming appetite' is incomparably 'crueller than death' (Golding 1991: 207, 209).

When it comes to impose one's will on other human beings, knowing what makes them tick is crucial. The echoes of this idea resonate in *Free Fall*. Commenting on Philip, his sadistic crony, Sammy recalls that he 'knew about people' (Golding 1959). That is why his schemes never backfire. It is at Philip's suggestion that Sammy robs the smaller boys of their 'fagcards' (50). At first sight, the outcome of the operation is more favourable to Philip than to Sammy. The plan brings Sammy 'one king of Egypt and Philip about twenty assorted cards' (51). Likewise, it is Philip's 'careful manipulation' that incites Sammy to spit on a church altar, his reward being a slap from the verger (58). In both cases Philip's intervention goes undiscovered, which shows the extent to which sadism and calculation can go hand in hand.

field. Perhaps food had appeared where at the last incursion there had been none; bird droppings, insects perhaps, any of the strewn detritus of landward life. Like a myriad of tiny teeth in a saw, the transparencies came scavenging over the beach.

This was fascinating to Henry. He poked about with a bit of stick, that itself was wave-worn and whitened and a vagrant, and tried to control the motions of the scavengers. He made little runnels that the tide filled and tried to crowd them with creatures. He became absorbed *beyond mere happiness* as he felt himself exercising control over living things. He talked to them, urging them, ordering them. Driven back by the tide, his footprints became bays in which they were trapped and gave him *the illusion of mastery*. He squatted on his hams at the water's edge, bowed, with a shock of hair falling over his forehead and past his eyes, and the afternoon sun emptied down invisible arrows (Golding 1954: 60; my italics).

This description is significant because it highlights the universality of the attempts to satisfy one's desires at the expense of other living beings. Just as the older boys kill pigs and throw stones at the little ones, the latter play with the tiny creatures that they find in their way, exerting what little power they may have. This behaviour is the result of a lethal combination of amoral desire and egocentrism. However, the enjoyment thus obtained by the subject has a cost in terms of suffering. As Golding explains to James Keating, 'giving way' to the beasts that lurk within us 'is always a pleasure, *in some ways*' (in Keating 1988: 211; my italics). The key to Golding's afterthought lies in the fact that the pleasure obtained from satisfaction is not absolute, as it tends to be tinged by the other's pain. This is not the only problem. Precisely because it takes for granted the barriers among individuals erected by the atomising power of the egocentric mind, the satisfying feeling of mastery is based on an illusion: it rests on the unquestioning — but erroneous — belief that the egocentric *I* and the other have nothing in common, while the truth is that they are manifestations of the same undivided essence.

So far I have focused on the suffering that is caused by the egocentric attempts to satisfy one's desires. However, even when one tries not to harm others, the essential will's unquenchable yearning makes it impossible for egocentric subjects to avoid suffering: as long as we remain tied to egocentric modes of consciousness, we will suffer even in isolation, because if we cannot avoid seeing the surrounding world as a potential source of pleasure or of unpleasure, our life will always always tinged by anxiety. The best example of this is Mr Pedigree, the paedophilic teacher in *Darkness Visible*. If Jack compares the fulfilment of his desires to a long satisfying drink, Mr

Pedigree compares the urgency of his appetites to a raging thirst. Trying to explain to Matty how this thirst is, Mr Pedigree tells him that it is 'the most terrible thing in the world' (Golding 1979: 32). As if to excuse himself of his own attraction to beautiful boys, Mr Pedigree explains to Matty that there are 'all kinds of thirst in all kinds of desert', that we are all 'dipsomaniacs' whose thirsts are 'not to be controlled', and that therefore we are 'not to blame for them' (32). Mr Pedigree's thirst follows, in his own words, 'a rhythm' like 'a wave motion' (260). If his reference to thirst reminds us of the hunter's experience of killing a wild boar in *Lord of the Flies*, his description of the wave-like motion of desire echoes not only Jocelin's inner feeling of dark water in *The Spire*, to which I have already referred, but also 'the feeling of waters rising' that Matty has when, looking at the glass ball in a shop window, he glimpses the common essence of the world (48). This essence is a mighty, amoral craving from which Jocelin's unruly member, like that of many other characters of Golding's, derives its tormenting force and in which Mr Pedigree's 'disgusting appetite' is rooted (213). Towards the end of the novel, Mr Pedigree confesses that, despite people's opinion, he has really 'never hurt anybody' except himself, though he is afraid that he could in the future (265). What is remarkable, then, about desire is that it results in terrible suffering even when one succeeds in controlling it.

The problem with desire, as it appears in Schopenhauer and in Golding's novels, is that the essence of the world being as it is — amoral, blind and always active — suffering is bound to ensue whether our desires are satisfied or not. We have just seen that the feeling when we fail to achieve gratification is of a raging thirst. When our desires are fulfilled, pain also follows. Though it is true that satisfaction often takes place to the detriment of other conscious beings, from the aggressor's point of view this matters very little. More problematic for the aggressor is the fact that the pleasure obtained always gives way to boredom and then to new desires. This idea appears in Schopenhauer, and in Golding too. The latter says that when one has found fulfilment, 'satiety' soon gives way to 'boredom' — and, presumably, to new desires (Golding 1965: 130). As Talbot complains in the first volume of Sea Trilogy, 'the danger of being bored' is a terrible thing indeed (Golding 1991: 162). In the second volume he repeats the same complaint: after Colley's death, his narrative lack a hero; it also lacks a heroine, a villain 'and some comic relief to ameliorate [the narrator's] deep, deep boredom' (251). The

reason for the passage from intense yearning to boredom lies, as he explains, in how 'soon one accepts as normal a state once desperately desired' (516).

The world's inner kernel being what it is, and the suffering that ensues from it being so intense, Golding does not hesitate to describe this world as hellish. His essay 'Belief and Creativity' begins with the speculation that there might exist other, 'parallel' worlds (Golding 1984a: 201). Considering all the suffering that occurs in our world, and the chance that some of those worlds might be more 'joyous' than ours, Golding makes the bold guess that 'we are in hell' (201). This comment puts Golding in Schopenhauer's camp against Leibniz's theodicy.

According to Leibniz, the world that we inhabit is the best possible world, created by a benign God in such a way that, despite its flaws, it could not be better. Actually, he argues, the world is defective only from the finite perspective of human beings. If we were able fully to understand God's plan, we would realise that the world's alleged flaws — the sins and the pain, both intentional and unintended — contribute to its overall goodness. Schopenhauer considers this proposition absurd, stating instead that our world is actually the worst possible, and comparing it to hell. As far as we know, he explains, the essence of this world is an endless yearning which, in order to find some satisfaction, endows itself with consciousness and manifests itself as countless appearances that feed on each other. This makes our world so bad that a worst world would not be capable of existing at all.

We have seen that Golding also presents the world as comprising an essential side of which the apparent side is but the manifestation. We have also seen that his novels can be read as identifying, like Schopenhauer, the world's inner kernel as the essential will. To conclude this section, I shall focus on a series of human constructions which, unawares to their builders, function as diagrams of the world at whose centre the essential will is. The flimsiness and state of dilapidation of Jocelin's cathedral in *The Spire* and of the ship that carries Talbot to Australia in the Sea Trilogy give a good idea of the sorry condition of the world.

In *The Spire*, Jocelin compares the cathedral to a '"world of wood and stone"' (Golding 1964: 148). When Jocelin states that after the works the cathedral '"will be even more glorious than before"', Pangall wonders if this can be done '"By breaking the place down"' (15). Actually, the works can be regarded not as damaging the building's

structure, but rather as transforming it into a more faithful map of the world.[41] Before the building of the new spire has even started, Roger Mason warns the Dean that the foundations on which '"the building floats"', as he says adopting Jocelin's expression, '"are just about enough for a building of this weight"' (38). To his trained eye, it is clear that with those foundations the altered building will hardly be able to stand up. When the pillars begin to snap under their own weight, Roger Mason tells Jocelin that it is time to stop ascending (117). Otherwise, he says, the consequences will be disastrous:

> 'Sooner or later there'd be a bang, a shudder, a roar. Those four columns would open apart like a flower, and everything else up here, stone, wood, iron, glass, men, would slide down into the church like the fall of a mountain' (Golding 1964: 118).

The pillars' awful noises do not stop, and the completed spire is '"an ungainly, crumbling thing"' (Golding 1964: 193). Yet, regardless of its structural weakness, when we reach the novel's last lines we find out that the cathedral has not and will not collapse.

At a certain point in *The Spire*, Jocelin imagines the finished steeple and compares the cathedral to 'the ark, the refuge, a ship to contain all ... people and now fitted with a

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41 Robert A. Scott points out that the 'devotion to geometry' according to which the great churches are models of the whole world, and which was so widespread in the Christian middle ages, dates back to classical antiquity (Scott 2003: 127). As Philip Ball explains, Plato's *Timaeus* presents God as 'a builder' that works 'using ... strict geometric ... principles' (Ball 2008: 118). Augustine adopts from Plato the idea 'that the geometry of nature reveals its intrinsic "goodness" and thus provides an objective basis for aesthetic judgement' (188). In other words, he holds that beauty comes 'not from the hands and minds of artists but from order and proportion' (118). The architect, for example, 'makes a "good" building by observing simple mathematical relationships between its dimensions and by dividing space using geometric figures' (118). The great churches' proportions in physical space thus mirror the organisation of the world. This way, 'one may build a temple or church that reflects the true, divinely beautiful structure of the universe' (118). In Plato, and in the tradition that mediaeval builders inherit from him, the world is beautiful and good, just like the divinity that is responsible for it and like the ideal order that serves as its model. By contrast, Golding casts doubts not only on the benevolence but also on the very existence of the divinity, and presents the world as well as the buildings that replicate its true character as run-down and dangerous.

mast' (Golding 1964: 107). We have good reason to mistrust Jocelin's confidence that the new spire will secure, as a ship's mast would do, the faithful's arrival at the port of salvation. What is clear is that the building works as an artificial replica of the world, performing this function in the same way as a ship would. Indeed, the Sea Trilogy can be read precisely as an extended reflection on the link between a ship and the whole world. At the beginning of his voyage, Talbot informs his godfather that the ship carrying him to Australia is 'an ancient ship of the line' which he describes as 'a decrepit vessel' whose timbers are 'falling apart' (Golding 1991: 6, 444). This ship that takes water and is 'quite possibly sinking' is 'a universe in little', a condensation of the whole world with its two sides: the essential will and its myriad manifestations (490, 169). As regards the former, her sprouting force poses — as in *The Spire* — 'a real danger' to the smooth development of ordinary life aboard (373). Ships, the on-board carpenter teaches Talbot, are sometimes made of a combination of seasoned and unseasoned timber; this composition, which resembles the world's mixture of inanimate things and living objects, explains why sometimes a seaman or a passenger can 'come across a bud sticking out of a knee' (373). As in *The Spire*, the budding boards remind us that, for Golding, as for Schopenhauer, the entire world palpitates with an inner will to life that pushes towards organic existence. In the Sea Trilogy, the awful force of the world's inner essence is also symbolised, much as in *Darkness Visible*, by a swell that rolls within. Hence its description as an 'internal wave' that produces 'the glutinous chuckling of appetite' as it travels the ship's length with a tireless 'rhythm' (389, 385). While the image of the budding sprout evokes again the emergence of life as a process that escapes human control, that of the inner wave suggests once more the unstoppable force of desire. Together, both images remind us of the essential will to life whose force, so strong in comparison to that of its individual manifestations, is nevertheless insufficient to engender a world that is not on the verge of destruction.

For all of its '"defects"' — the unseasoned timber of which she is made, the broken foremast, the water that she carries in her bowels — this ship that renders '"like an old boot"' will continue her way (Golding 1991: 392, 395). Badly built as this world in miniature may be, she will not collapse so easily — at least not yet. Only after reaching her destination, the ship catches fire and explodes. Perhaps the explosion occurs because the controlled fire that Lieutenant Benét started down below to repair the foremast has acted as a slow fuse; perhaps because of the fireworks with which the

authorities of the Australian colony have received the newcomers. Be that as it may, we can take the fate of the old vessel as hinting at one of the possible reasons why the world outside the fiction may be destroyed. Judging from this episode, the world is not an entirely safe place to live, and the delicate balance that keeps it going can be tragically upset by human intervention.[42]

Human presence can make the world even worse, and perhaps, given enough time, even destroy it; but it can also improve it. So far I have only shown how humans contribute to the pain that pervades the world. I shall also discuss the ways in which humans can reduce it, but only after analysing the linguistic means whereby Golding evokes the hidden source of so much suffering, that is, the inner essence which, in his fiction, underlies the entire realm of appearances.

3.1.2.5. Dynamic Descriptions with Metaphysical Resonance

In the foregoing sections I have restricted my analysis of the essential will and suffering to the actions of conscious beings, particularly human beings. Nevertheless, it is clear that, since by default the intellect separates all individual things from one another, pitting them against each other, the other living beings and the inanimate objects and forces are also engaged in universal strife and conflict. This is an aspect of Golding's world view that appears as early as *Lord of the Flies*, and which his characteristic use of description serves to convey.

Apart from describing static objects, Golding's novels typically include exuberant evocative descriptions of conscious actions and natural events. They are *dynamic descriptions*. In my analysis of the dynamic descriptions of the physical world that appear at the beginning of *Pincher Martin,* I focused on the evocative uses of language with a physical referent. These I called, as Watt does in his discussion of Conrad's style,

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42 The implications of the ship's destruction can also be applied, in a more restricted way, to this part of the knowable world that we call the Earth. If so, then this episode in the Sea Trilogy is intended to support Golding's warning, issued in the course of his Nobel lecture, that contemporary humans 'face two problems — either we blow ourselves off the earth or we degrade the fertility of the earth bit by bit until we have ruined it' (Golding 1984: 210). In either case, he adds, the attitude that has taken us here is 'preposterous' (213).

impressionistic. There is another evocative use of language, one which in romantic and post-romantic writing is typically bound up with metaphysical reference. In Golding, the purpose of these passages is to bring to the fore the metaphysical realm that underlies the physical side of the world, and which includes the essential will to life shared by humans with the rest of nature. This use of dynamic descriptions is, to borrow another term from Watt, *symbolic*. Even more than impressionism, symbolism is characteristic of literature texts 'whose expressive idiom was intended to be inaccessible to exposition in any conceptual terms', and which 'demand ... exegesis' in symbolic terms (Watt 1980: 197). Watt states that for Conrad, as for the romantics and the symbolists, 'The world of visible objects was valued only insofar as it offered concrete manifestations which correspond to spiritual ... meanings' (185). He adds that 'Conrad wanted to pay as much attention to the inside as to the outside, to the meaning as to the appearance; and this is one of the reasons why, in the last analysis, he is so different ... from the ... Impressionists' (179). Much the same can be said about Golding (and about other authors such as Patrick White, as argued in Clements 2012: 103), whose writing also feeds symbolically upon its own impressionism, working itself up from careful depiction of physical realities into a metaphysical mode of expression. Watt's summary of the way in which Conrad uses physical impressionism as a preparation for metaphysical symbolism also applies to Golding (as seen in the first chapter of *Pincher Martin*):

> The symbolic method ... begins by making the same descriptive demand as that of impressionism: the writer must render the object with an idiosyncratic immediacy of vision, which is freed from any ... explanatory gloss; and the reader must be put in the posture of actively seeking to fill the gaps in a text which has provoked him to experience an absence of connected meanings (Watt 1980: 197).

The recipient, then, appreciates a 'semantic gap' in the text, and only a symbolic interpretation allows him 'to see the larger implications of all the particularities which confront him' (Watt 1980: 197, 195).

As far as Golding is concerned, when his descriptions take on a symbolic significance it is most often thanks to a recurrent descriptive technique that uses metaphor to blur the limits among the conceptual spheres that denotation strives to

keep separated. On the one hand, it sometimes happens that a person is likened to a non-rational animal or a plant. It may even be that an living being is described as a lifeless thing. This contributes to destabilising our notions of animate and inanimate existence, of the differences between plants and animals, between humans and other animals, effectively equating them all at some level. On the other hand, we have the opposite procedure: if we envisage nature as comprising inorganic objects and phenomena, plants, non-rational animals and rational animals (human beings), we realise that Golding tends to depict plants as if they were animals, and inanimate things as if they were either animals or plants. The consequence of this latter stylistic resource, which he never ceases to exploit, is that we see the world as dominated at all levels by a force that I have identified as the essential will.[43] What is more, it makes us feel that behind the veil of appearances, where individuals enter into conflict with each other, everyone and everything palpitates and breathes at unison, thus mirroring each other's fundamental behaviour. Symbolic description thus works metonymically: if an inert part of nature is described as if it were a living being and as behaving like a person or a non-rational animal, then we can surmise that all of nature shares in this life and behaviour. Moreover, the impact is cumulative: once the inner life of a given thing or being has been symbolically evoked in this way, the effects of this resonate through the entire narrative, so that subsequent mentions of the same or a similar object are likely to trigger, even if they are not evocative at all, an identical feeling of the inner drive behind the veil of appearances. Finally, it could be argued that, thanks to symbolism, the non-conscious essence at the heart of the world shines through the novelist's rational representations in a similar way as it shines through the non-rational representations by virtue of which the world emerges as a realm of appearances in the first place.

If human beings are engaged in a constant war from which they cannot escape, the same could be said of the rest of the world, from the tiniest creatures to the most powerful forces of nature. Two examples, one from *Lord of the Flies* and another from the Sea Trilogy, illustrate this point. We have seen that, in the former novel, children hurt each other on a regular basis. A kind of war also takes place among other living

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43 This technical procedure has gone unnoticed to previous critics, including those — Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor — that have devoted more attention not only to Golding's descriptive style but also to its metaphysical import.

beings, some of which die so that others can live on. The tiny creatures with which little Henry plays on the beach are compared to 'tiny teeth in a saw' that feed on accumulated 'detritus' (Golding 1954: 60). This indicates that these brainless scavengers are not simply Henry's victims but also benefit from the war of all against all in which all beings are engaged.

The Sea Trilogy, written much later, brings to our attention the indifference, even hostility, of inanimate nature towards humankind. Confronted with the raging elements and the icy cliffs of the Antarctic continent, Talbot reflects on the 'neutral and indifferent but overwhelming power' against which the 'ridiculous wood and canvas' of the ship — let alone the human flesh and bones that have built and govern it — are powerless and run the risk of being 'smashed to pieces' (1991: 688). This is an 'unequal struggle with an ocean never intended for ships' and with the 'savagely indifferent', actually 'implacable', walls of Antarctica (644, 694). Earlier, the semblance of indifference of 'a world of blind force and material' is revealed to hide something even more sinister: even when calm, writes Talbot, the sea has '"an appearance of malevolence"' (466, 390). In addition to his thoughts on inimical nature, Talbot records what seems to be the mutual antagonism of some inanimate parts of reality with others. He describes, for example, how in stormy weather the air and the water enter into conflict, prey and feed on each other: 'Wind against wind, wave against wave, fury feeding on itself' (697). Both the reference to the rest of nature as the individual's enemy and the description of a world at war with himself reminds of *Pincher Martin*, whose narrator describes, at the end of the first chapter, the interaction between the rock and the waves that break against it in terms of conflict. Pincher's surrogate, we are told, is surprised that the rock dares 'to interrupt the thousands of miles going about their purposeless affairs', and interruption that causes 'the world' to spring 'into sudden war' (Golding 1956: 22). Later, he comes to see this same rock on which he is staying as somehow '"inimical"' to him (172).

Most of these quotations from the Sea Trilogy — and some parts of *Pincher Martin* too — share a striking characteristic that we should not overlook: they present blind force and matter as if they possessed some kind of life and consciousness of their own. The ocean and the Antarctic cliffs are indifferent and implacable. Sometimes they even give the impression of responding to some malevolent desire to make human beings suffer, to thwart their plans. What is more, in the middle of the storm both the wind

and the waves seem to prey on each other, as if the tempest consisted in little more than their reciprocal consumption and the collateral damage that it causes. Given the late date when the trilogy was written, the words of the character-narrator could certainly be taken to be symptomatic of his state of mind rather than an accurate portrayal of the world. Though it is true that Talbot's words are in fundamental agreement with the way in which the sea is represented in *Pincher Martin*, where the presence of the essential will to life has already been established, it is equally true that in this latter novel too the presentation of the sea's behaviour is mostly done through the character's consciousness. What matters, however, is that the characters' view of the surrounding world as involved in perpetual conflict and as putting the individual's life at risk, both in *Pincher Martin* and as late as the Sea Trilogy (where Talbot is alone in holding it), though clearly associated with an egocentric perspective alone, is still the one that tallies best with the author's basic stance, according to which this one perspective is, as in Schopenhauer, the most common one. It is true that in Golding's fiction this viewpoint, shared by Pincher's surrogate and Talbot, is neither the only possible nor the only valid (we have seen, and shall continue to see, examples of non-egocentric consciousness), but it is equally true that it is the one that Golding tends to emphasise in his non-fictional comments about the basic stance embodied by his earlier novels. At the time of writing *Pincher Martin*, the problem that Golding has with Pincher's surrogate is not so much that this character sees the world as dominated by discord — an opinion that may not be entirely accurate but that Golding nevertheless tends to agree with — as that his lack of restraint makes things even worse.

The restless activity of the sea is a recurrent element in Golding's novels, where it is also often described in terms of life processes. Though this descriptive technique may be used in connection with other lifeless objects — the first occasion on which this occurs is when the third-person narrator of *Lord of the Flies* refers to Ralph's loosening 'the snake-clasp of his belt' (Golding 1954: 8) — it is the focus on the sea that yields some of its most remarkable effects. A good instance is when Ralph, who has gone searching the island for the beast that terrorises the little ones, pauses to examine the way in which the waves erode and encroach on the rocks. The narrator successfully conveys the idea that, though Ralph does not realise it yet, what the boy is seeing is the outer appearance of the beast that lurks in the heart of all things:

Soon, in a matter of centuries, the sea would make an island of the castle. On the right hand was the lagoon, troubled by the open sea; and on the left —

Ralph shuddered. The lagoon had protected them from the Pacific: and for some reason only Jack had gone right down to the water on the other side. Now he saw the landsman's view of the swell and it seemed like the breathing of some stupendous creature. Slowly the waters sank among the rocks, revealing pink tables of granite, strange growths of coral, polyp, and weed. Down, down, the waters went, whispering like the wind among the heads of the forest. There was one flat rock there, spread like a table, and the waters sucking down on the four weedy sides made them seem like cliffs. Then the sleeping leviathan breathed out, the waters rose, the weed streamed, and the water boiled over the table rock with a roar. There was no sense of the passage of waves; only this minute-long fall and rise and fall (Golding 1954: 106–7).

This passage begins by directing our attention to a temporal scale on which centuries pass by as if they were years, hours, minutes. This is time in a dimension that is strange to human individuals, whose lifespan is much shorter. This confrontation with the immensity of time — and space — serves to transfigure the immediate reality with which the individual observer is familiar. We are thus taken into a realm where human consciousness does not usually tread, a region that escapes our habitual focus on physical appearances but which can only be understood, we begin to suspect, by looking into those appearances. When the narrator begins to introduce unexpected metaphorical references to the sea's signs of life, our suspicions are confirmed. The sea resembles a monster which, though asleep, does not stop breathing, and now and then its whispers become an intimidating roar. The alliteration of /w/ in *the waters went, whispering like the wind* is a good clue — one that reappears in other stretches of the novel, as we shall shortly see — that the description is going beyond mere impressionism, and takes the description to unprecedented levels of figurative complexity. On the semantic plane, the sea in described as whispering not like a human being but like the wind, which thereby undergoes a similar process of personification. On the prosodic plane, the sea and the wind are likewise identified by virtue of their identical initial phonemes. Since, on the semantic plane, this kind of identification extends to all the other objects described, we can say the narrator's concern in this passage is not only with the purely perceptual qualities — visual, auditory, kinetic — of material objects, but also with the overwhelming power that is active in the sea, in the forces of nature and in human lives. Despite being apparently inanimate, the ocean is

represented as having attributes associated with organic life, animal or vegetable. Interestingly, when the focus changes from the sea to the rocks, these are likened to a table, that is, to a man-made object. While the description of these granitic structures serves to convey the fact that all objects, natural and artificial alike, somehow resemble each other, the quasi-animistic tone in which the sea is described suggests that this resemblance lies in being endowed with some kind of life.

Using the present passage as an example, Gregor highlights how Golding succeeds in describing the physical detail of the scene, the 'extraordinary sense of space' and distance (despite its *remoteness*, the sea reaches *down here*) while making the reader participate (*you could follow with your eye* the motions of the sea) in Ralph's absorption (Gregor 1987: 90). Gregor also foregrounds — without mentioning how exactly this is done — the 'extraordinary ability' of Golding's narrators 'to oscillate between conscious attention to detail and ... awareness' of what lies behind physical appearances (90). This causes, in his opinion, 'the creative tension that runs throughout the entire novel' (90), and indeed — I would like to add — through Golding's entire oeuvre. By the end of *Lord of the Flies* Golding has created, thanks to passages like this, 'the imaginative conditions which make us feel, instinctively, in the presence of an extraordinary mystery' (90). The mystery is linked to the essence that underlies that realm of appearances.

The symbolic references to the sea recur in *Lord of the Flies*. When Piggy is killed, the narrator tells us, again in animal terms, that 'the sea breathed again in a long, slow sigh, the water boiled white and pink over the rock; and when it went, sucking back again, the body of Piggy was gone' (Golding 1954: 185). Towards the end of the novel, when Ralph is running away from the hunters, the description combines animal and plant imagery: 'the restless ocean lay under his left hand, as awful as the shaft of a pit. Every minute the water breathed round the death rock and flowered into a field of whiteness' (192).

The sea is the only element of the tropical landscape that is described in terms of living matter. In the very first chapter of the book, Ralph's encounter with Piggy occurs against a backdrop of lush vegetation and intense sunlight. The wind and the spots of are depicted as creeping, sliding and fluttering as if they were animals, while the ruffle of the leaves, which are already endowed with life, is described as an animal whisper:

little breezes crept over the polished waters beneath the haze of heat. When these breezes reached the platform the palm fronds would whisper, so that spots of blurred sunlight slid over their bodies or moved like bright, winged things in the shade (Golding 1954: 13).

The wind is depicted as an animal in other parts of the novel too: as we follow Ralph round the island, we share his awareness of 'the declining sun and a little wind created by his speed that breathed about his face' (Golding 1954: 76). And so is the fire that, on two occasions, threatens to burn the island to ashes. When the first bonfire that the children light in order to attract passing ships gets out of control, the wind is presented as a winged creature and the fire not as one but as two different kinds of tree-climbing animals:

Small flames stirred at the trunk of a tree and crawled away through leaves and brushwood, dividing and increasing. One patch touched a tree trunk and scrambled up like a bright squirrel. The smoke increased, sifted, rolled outwards. The squirrel leapt on the wings of the wind and clung to another standing tree, eating downwards. Beneath the dark canopy of leaves and smoke the fire laid hold on the forest and began to gnaw. Acres of black and yellow smoke rolled steadily toward the sea. At the sight of the flames and the irresistible course of the fire, the boys broke into shrill, excited cheering. The flames, as though they were a kind of wild life, crept as a jaguar creeps on its belly toward a line of birch-like saplings that fledged an outcrop of the pink rock. They flapped at the first of the trees, and the branches grew a brief foliage of fire. The heart of flame leapt nimbly across the gap between the trees and then went swinging and flaring along the whole row of them. Beneath the capering boys a quarter of a mile square of forest was savage with smoke and flame. The separate noises of the fire merged into a drum-roll that seemed to shake the mountain (Golding 1954: 43).

The flames, which resemble *a kind of wild life*, are initially likened to a gnawing squirrel, then to a presumably hungry jaguar. By referring to the flames as a short-lived kind of foliage, the description suggests that the smoke and the fire have brought to light the *savage* life force with which — perhaps less spectacularly but no less clearly — the whole forest is also infused. Finally, the mountain is humanised by a drum-roll that throws it into commotion.

In the last chapter of the novel we accompany Ralph as he is trying to avoid the other children, who have set the entire island ablaze: 'He swung to the right, running

desperately fast, with the heat beating on his left side and the fire racing forward like a tide' (Golding 1954: 205). In this quotation the advancing flames are compared to a tide which, in turn, is matter-of-factly described in human terms. It may be because of such details that, whether it be 'Water, air — now fire as a destructive force, Golding is always at his best writing about primal elements' (Gregor 1987: 95). Golding's writing certainly reaches its highest peaks of intensity when evoking the raw forces of nature. Their presentation offers him the perfect chance to display his mastery of description.

After *Lord of the Flies*, evocative description recurs in other novels. If at the beginning of this first novel the narrator speaks of 'skull-like coconuts' (Golding 1954: 8), at the beginning of *The Inheritors*, Golding's second published novel, the members of the primitive People explain the fact that the log that they have always used to cross a certain stream has disappeared by saying that it has 'crawled off on business of its own' (1955: 14). Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor explain that the People 'see anthropomorphically, investing their whole environment with humanity. The river sleeps or is awake, trees have ears, the island is a huge thigh, shin and foot, logs go away, everything is alive' (2002: 53). It is tempting to dismiss the style in which most of the narrative is written as the third-person narrator's attempt to convey the People's intellectual limitations. However, the fact that the third-person narrator of *Lord of the Flies* uses a similar language, even on occasions when the children cannot possibly do so, evinces that these descriptions are sanctioned by a higher diegetic authority than the characters'. At the beginning of *Darkness Visible*, where the narrative voice is again in the third person, Matty emerges from a 'burning bush', that is, from a building in flames (Golding 1979: 9). From this point on, the description is once more carried out in terms of animal life. The narrator refers to 'the roar of the fire', and adds that 'the heart of the fire' is 'shivering rather than beating' (9–10, 11). As for the effects of the flames, the narrator informs us that 'the heat-induced contractions and expansions of material ... can mimic muscular movement' (12). Overall, the idea conveyed is that 'the objects ... seem endowed with life' (12). The strangeness of the scene is compounded by the fact that the burning structure of brick and metal gives birth to a child.

A similar case is that of the descriptions that give isolated parts of the body attributes usually associated with the whole conscious agent. On the first page of *The Inheritors* the narrator informs us that 'Lok's feet were clever. They saw. They threw him round the displayed roots of the beeches, leapt when a puddle of water lay across

the trail' (Golding 1955: 11). Similarly, in the first two chapters of *Pincher Martin*, we find narratorial statements like the following: 'the lips came together and parted, the tongue arched, the brain lit a neon track' (8), 'His mouth slopped full', 'His mouth was clever. It opened and shut for the air and against the water' (10), 'His eyes returned to the pebbles and watched them idly' (25), 'His hand crawled round above his head' (26), 'His teeth came together and ground' (27), 'His shoulder lifted a little' (28), 'His mouth shut then opened' (29), 'His hand … fumbled in oilskin. … The hand found the blunted hollow, and pitched the limpet beyond the edge. … The fingers searched stiffly, found the limpet, hit with the haft of the knife. … His hand let the knife go' (38). According to Paul Simpson's linguistic analysis, these expressions serve to highlight 'the *fragmentation* of the consciousness of a drowning man, his *loss of physical self-control*' (Simpson 1993: 105; my italics), and for this reason they are gradually abandoned as Pincher's surrogate (re)constructs his identity and his mind (re)gains control of the situation within the little world that the drowning man has conjured up. Additionally, what these expressions show is, first, that at least in certain extreme situations the consciousness of a contemporary human is not so different from the consciousness of the primitive People; second, and more generally, that the same will to life stirs the world as a whole as well as each of its parts.

As has been noted, these descriptions do not refer to static objects but to movements and events. What Watt has said of Conrad can be equally applied, with little modification, to Golding: he typically presents 'a picture, not of a static landscape [or character] but of nature [or characters] in motion' (Watt 1980: 44–5). Golding's descriptions are not simply vivid, nor do they only recreate something before the reader's own eyes. Golding's novels typically include striking descriptions of action or events. When this kind of description possesses metaphysical import, it does not necessarily reflect the perspective of metaphysically aware characters. More often than not, it conveys metaphysical meanings to the audience, but behind the character's back. By contrast, static metaphysical descriptions usually convey those moments when the characters leave behind causality, space, time and, with them, the egocentric pursuit of their passions, that is, when they acquire aesthetic and saintly insight. The descriptions are static because, from the perspective of the characters, the object that they depict has been wrenched out of time. When this occurs the characters are aware of experiencing something extraordinary.

When dynamic description is used evocatively, it makes readers overcome egocentrism, in particular, makes them realise that the same inner urge, externalised as perceptible physical movement, pervades the apparent world as a whole. Though at first its ground may seem physical, dynamic description is not merely impressionistic: as soon as its metaphysical object becomes clear, the description is seen as symbolic of something that remains unvoiced.[44] The linguistic means signalling the transition from physical impression to metaphysical symbol are manifold, but they are all linked to metaphoric intensification. Sometimes there is a recurrent use of an expression linking the conscious actions of people to natural events. The presence of the verb *beat* in *Lord of the Flies* (for example in the last sentence that I have quoted from the novel) is a case in point. The plot of the novel shows us how, once the power of conventional custom has worn away, the rhythms of the children's behaviour get back into synchrony with those of the rest of the island. When we are told that, in the course of one of their rituals, 'The dancing, chanting boys' free themselves from the shackles of adult life and begin to follow 'nothing but a wordless rhythm' (Golding 1954: 99), we realise that the gap between the children and rest of nature of nature is closing. At the same time, the latter begins to be described in terms of the formers' physical motions. The explanation may be that, for Golding, it is through the body that one gets acquainted with nature to begin with, in other words, it is first of all in the body that nature makes its claims felt. In Golding, as in Schopenhauer, the parts come to display the same behaviour as the whole world, but it is through the parts that we can know the whole. Thus, for example, after having witnessed the continuous rise and fall of the waves, we are reminded of the

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44 In Golding's novels metaphysical feelings are seldom identified as such, and sometimes not even described as a character's. Rather, as Kinkead-Weekes says, they are often 'actually created in the reader' by means of the narrator's flamboyant handling of evocative language (1987: 78, 74). In these cases, Golding's attitude seems to be, in the critic's words: 'Those who have eyes to see, let them see — and feel' (75). Schopenhauer helps us to see that, for the readers who have thus gained metaphysical insight, the language of Golding's novels is like a 'ladder' that is used to climb 'to the summit of knowledge' but can then be thrown away (Schopenhauer 1969b: 80). By contrast, states Kinkead-Weekes, 'Those who have no such eyes will of course see nothingness, meaninglessness, the absurd … — and space will be made for that reading' (1987: 75). Golding's elusive style is therefore designed to allow a sceptical reading, 'an ending in nothing, or in ambiguity' (80). Consequently, the risk persists that 'the vision may fail, or be seen as delusion in the character, or the author' (76). It is up to the reader to finish the author's work.

bodily dimension of the motif by the following description of Ralph's vital signs: 'He caught sight of the rise and fall of his diaphragm and was surprised to see how quickly he was breathing. Just left of center his heart-beats were visible' (199). Throughout the novel, the verb *beat* is used with different meanings, which nevertheless come to be identified with each other: one has to do with the pulsation of the heart, another conveys the notion of hitting, still other senses are linked to that of rhythmic sound or movement. We have just seen one example of the first definition of *beat*. Another appears during Simon's interview with the dead pig's head, on which occasion the boy feels a pulse beating on his brain. Regarding the second sense, after killing a pig the hunters explain how they have formed a circle round the panic-stricken animal, and thus 'the circle could close in and beat and beat —' (74). As for the idea of rhythmic movement, when Simon is killed the circle of children is described as beating with a steady pulse. In all cases the impression is that not only the children but the whole island — the entire world in fact — is a single organism propelled by a myriad hearts that beat as one. If *The Spire*, then, like Schopenhauer, identifies the heart as the seat of the inner force that runs through the individual, *Lord of the Flies* shows, in this scene and elsewhere, that it is not only in the individual but in the whole world that a heart palpitates, in fact that the heart of the individual is nothing but a miniature of the giant pumping heart to which the entire world can be likened.

There are occasions when humans are described as if they were non-rational animals. When he is left alone with Simon and Piggy, all the other children having joined the hunters, Ralph describes the trio as '"Three blind mice"' (Golding 1954: 92), which gives a good idea of their loneliness and defencelessness. Piggy's name is also telling, and announces the way in which the mob will kill them — or at least try to kill them — like pigs. During his first hunting spree, Jack is said to be first a 'dog-like' thing, 'on all fours' and with 'his nose only a few inches from the humid earth', then an 'ape-like' thing 'among the tangle of trees' (47, 48). Minor characters are also presented as if they were animals. When Ralph sees Sam and Eric, the accommodating twins, for the first time, they are 'grinning and panting' at him 'like dogs' after a long run (17).[45]

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45 Similarly, Pincher Martin's surrogate describes his situation on the imaginary rock that Pincher has conjured up by comparing himself to '"a limpet"' (Golding 1956: 36). Later, the surrogate's backward movement into a crevice resembles the wriggle of 'a snake that cannot cast its skin' or 'a lobster backing into a deep crevice under water' (46). In the end, as we have seen, the surrogate

Taking a further step, there are people who are compared to plants. When Ralph sees them approach at the beginning of the narrative, the intense heat and their black uniforms have given the choir boys 'the complexion of newly washed peaches' (18). Finally, there are descriptions that refer to an organic body in terms of inanimate objects. Early in the novel we are told, for example, that 'The palms … made a green roof' (10). Later, the narrator describes the unexpected calm that follows Simon's violent murder. The description, one of the few passages in the novel where the third-person narrator does not stick to any of the character's perspective, shows how the moonlight has transformed the boy's corpse into a marble statue:

> The air was cool, moist, and clear; and presently even the sound of the water was still. …
>
> The edge of the lagoon became a streak of phosphorescence which advanced minutely, as the great wave of the tide flowed. The clear water mirrored the clear sky and the angular bright constellations. …
>
> Along the shoreward edge of the shallows the advancing clearness was full of strange, moonbeam-bodied creatures with fiery eyes. … The tide swelled in over the rain-pitted sand and smoothed everything with a layer of silver. … The water rose farther and dressed Simon's coarse hair with brightness. The line of his cheek silvered and the turn of his shoulder became sculptured marble. The strange attendant creatures, with their fiery eyes and trailing vapors, busied themselves round his head. The body lifted a fraction of an inch from the sand and … turned gently in the water.
>
> Somewhere over the darkened curve of the world the sun and moon were pulling, and the film of water on the earth planet was held, bulging slightly on one side while the solid core turned. The great wave of the tide moved farther along the island and the water lifted. Softly, surrounded by a fringe of inquisitive bright creatures, itself a silver shape beneath the steadfast constellations, Simon's dead body moved out toward the open sea (Golding 1954: 156–7).

In their discussion of the scene, Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor state that this 'studiously scientific description' intimates a wider perspective which 'includes everything' (2002: 37). At his point, they hold, the narrative asks us 'to experience the fact' that Simon 'has "got back to where he belonged"' (37). Though I would never call the narrator's intervention as *studiously scientific*, I agree with them that Simon's body is returning to the fountainhead of life. The passage does not directly attribute any metaphysical

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is reduced to a pair of gigantic pincers clinging to each other.

dimension to the cycle of life and death in which Simon and the tiny creatures that feed on his dead body are involved. However, all of the objects in the scene are described as resembling each other by virtue of their being illuminated by a silvery light: the foam of the sea and the sand of the beach, the phosphorescent bodies of the scavengers and Simon's corpse, the moon above from which this light comes. All of these are physical objects; yet all participate in a dynamic of life and death that can only be grasped if we are aware of their metaphysical roots in something that remains out of sight. In a sense, the relation of these bodies to the invisible sun from which their brightness ultimately comes can be interpreted as representing the relation between the appearances and the hidden essence that manifests in them and lends them its energy. It is because this common essence underlies everyone and everything that Simon's inert body can be meaningfully described in evocative terms that stress its resemblance to silver and marble. Like the earth, the moon and the sun, in the world at large everything keeps a precarious balance that depends on countless births and deaths, and behind the scenes everything is interrelated.

The analysis of evocative descriptions in *Lord of the Flies* affords a good opportunity to tackle the issue of the writer's authority over his texts, as well as its implications for the functioning of language in the hands of a literary artist. Despite priding himself in keeping the plots of his novels 'under strict control', Golding acknowledges that in the process of writing 'the imagination can get out of hand' (Golding 1965: 97). In a novel, he concedes, 'there are many places' where the story 'splits at the seams' and manages 'to get out of hand' through sheer 'excess' (99). When this happens, 'The author becomes a spectator, appalled or delighted, but a spectator' (97). What matters to Golding is to be honest enough to recognise that 'the splits do not rise from ineptitude or deficiency but from a plenitude of imagination' (99). It is often at the moments when the fiction manages 'to come to its own life', thus disclosing the seamy side of things, that the work 'in fact may have become something more valuable', thereby 'succeeding' independently of the author's efforts (100). The example that Golding gives is the sermon that the Lord of the Flies delivers to Simon. He does not provide any details on the matter, yet it is to be surmised that the hallucinatory quality of the scene was not a planned thing.

Though he puts the emphasis on the power of words rather than on the power of the author's imagination, Medcalf makes a similar point. He notes that there are moments

in Golding's oeuvre that evince 'the contrast between the artist who more or less knows all that he is doing, and the artist who is doing much more than he can account for' (Medcalf 1987: 43). The former uses language as a mere tool for speaking about whatever he wants to, while the latter — the author's *daimon*, as Medcalf calls it, which resembles the author's own voice but is actually 'a voice from beyond himself' — is happy to get carried away by the 'peculiar power' and 'independent existence' of the flow of language (39, 38). The *daimon* does not use words to refer to objects, but lets the objects emerge from the words. Despite the occasional wrong notes, the overall result is a tide that may take the author as well as the audience to unexplored territories. According to Medcalf, the contrast between both voices can be best appreciated if we compare *Darkness Visible* with Talbot's erudite but restrained style in *Rites of Passage*, the first novel of the Sea Trilogy (the discussion could be extended to the other two novels). Whereas the former's style is like 'an overtaking flood' (33), the latter's language comes 'nearer' than most of his fiction to Golding's 'conversational self' (33, 42).

Though mentioned by neither Golding nor Medcalf, the following description of the ocean as seen through Ralph's eyes is arguably another of those passages where where the writing has escaped the narrator's conscious control (I have numbered the four paragraphs for ease of reference):

[1] He turned and looked out to sea.

[2] Here, on the other side of the island, the view was utterly different. The filmy enchantments of mirage could not endure the cold ocean water and the horizon was hard, clipped blue. Ralph wandered down to the rocks. Down here, almost on a level with the sea, you could follow with your eye the ceaseless, bulging passage of the deep sea waves. They were miles wide, apparently not breakers or the banked ridges of shallow water. They traveled the length of the island with an air of disregarding it and being set on other business; they were less a progress than a momentous rise and fall of the whole ocean. Now the sea would suck down, making cascades and waterfalls of retreating water, would sink past the rocks and plaster down the seaweed like shining hair: then, pausing, gather and rise with a roar, irresistibly swelling over point and outcrop, climbing the little cliff, sending at last an arm of surf up a gully to end a yard or so from him in fingers of spray.

[3] Wave after wave, Ralph followed the rise and fall until something of the remoteness of the sea numbed his brain. Then gradually the almost infinite size of this water forced itself on his

attention. This was the divider, the barrier. On the other side of the island, swathed at midday with mirage, defended by the shield of the quiet lagoon, one might dream of rescue; but here, faced by the brute obtuseness of the ocean, the miles of division, one was clamped down, one was helpless, one was condemned, one was —

[4] Simon was speaking almost in his ear (Golding 1954: 112–3).

Here, again, we are confronted with the indifference of the roaring sea. To this are added the images of its obtuseness, of the foamy arms and fingers of the waves, of the seaweed resembling hair. It has been said that this excerpt exemplifies the 'essentially visual' nature of Golding's imagination, which through 'the accuracy of the seeing' on which his narratives rely tries 'to make us see more than we know' (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 362). This means, I think, that here Golding's language abandons denotation for evocation — first impressionistic and then symbolic. When we direct our attention from the signified to the signifier, we realise that the prosodic features of the passage — 'the texture and movement of the language itself' (362) — enhance its symbolic power by blurring the border between conceptualised sound and sense. This is consistent with Medcalf's reference to Golding's daimon, and can be envisaged as the untoward dehiscence of language. Before proceeding to the analysis of the description, and pending further stylistic research, a caveat should be added: the conclusions drawn here might not be applicable to other descriptions. On the one hand, the fact that in this quotation the quasi-autonomous movement of language has a captivating power is linked to the metaphysical meanings simultaneously conveyed. In other passages, where denotation rather than evocation prevails, a similar prosodic profile might not be so noticeable. On the other hand, not all evocative descriptions should be expected to have the same phonological properties, and even in those that did it would not necessarily respond to a relaxation of authorial discipline.

In the second paragraph of the quotation, the narrator asserts that, if you followed Ralph down to the rocks, *almost on a level with the sea*, then *you could follow with your eye the ceaseless, bulging passage of the deep sea waves*. The rhythm of these two segments is characterised by the regular rhythmic alternation of what Derek Attridge calls, in his introduction to poetic rhythm in English, *beats* and *offbeats*. A similar pattern characterises subsequent segments such as *the island with an air of disregarding it and being set on other business*, *a momentous rise and fall of the*

whole ocean, *gather and rise with a roar*, *swelling over point and outcrop*, *at last an arm of surf*, *to end a yard or so from him*; likewise, in the third paragraph we have: *forced itself on his attention*, *one might dream of rescue*, *the brute obtuseness of the ocean*, *one was clamped down*, *one was helpless*, *one was condemned*. Attridge explains that beats and offbeats — whose succession, when purposefully organised, provides the foundation for metrical language in compositions that range from nursery rhymes to dramatic monologues in blank verse — are usually realised as one stressed syllable and one or two unstressed syllables, respectively (see Attridge 1995: 48–62). In fact, however, what matters is the relative prominence of a syllable in relation to the one that follows: a stressed syllable can be (part of) an offbeat if it is perceived as less prominent than a contiguous syllable, which is a beat; and an unstressed syllable can be a beat if it is perceived as more prominent than a contiguous syllable, which is an offbeat. This is what happens in *the deep sea waves* and in *of the whole ocean*. In the former, *sea* is an offbeat if it is regarded as less prominent than the adjacent syllables. In the latter, *whole* is an offbeat if it is regarded as less prominent than the following syllable, while *the* is a beat if it is regarded as more prominent than the preceding syllable. Offbeats can also be realised by two syllables instead of one, as in *one was clamped down* (where I take *one* to be a beat and *clamped* to be part of the offbeat) and *one was condemned* (where I take the anaphoric *one*, whose presence adds to the overall effect of recurrence, to be a beat again). When double offbeats appear consecutively, the rhythmic profile becomes more emphatic. This is what happens with *The filmy enchantments of mirage* (where the first offbeat is nevertheless single) and with *gather and rise with a roar*.

Gregor singles out the 'hypnotic rhythm' of one sentence in the third paragraph (Gregor 1987: 90): *Wave after wave, Ralph followed the rise and fall until something of the remoteness of the sea numbed his brain*. Though he does not explain how the reader comes to be hypnotised, he may be referring to the impact of the segments *wave after wave*, *rise and fall* and *numbed his brain*, whose rhythmic contours are identical (a central offbeat realised by one or two unstressed syllables and flanked by two stresses, each realising a beat). In the passage where they are inserted, these repetitions mimic the ebb and flow of the sea as well as the swing of the pendulum used by hypnotists. Among the phrases that close the paragraph, there are others that display the same strict succession of stressed beats and unstressed offbeats: *one might dream*

of rescue is a case in point. By the end of the paragraph, it is clear that the author has definitely become dominated by the rise and fall of stresses, and that the beats of language — like the other kinds of beats that I have mentioned — have been functioning as metonymies for the pulse of the inner force that inheres in the whole world.

The repetition of phonemes also contributes to hypnotic effect. The phonemes /w/, /r/, /f/ and /s/ appear twice each at the beginning of stressed syllables. As with the stresses, the semantic import of the sentence makes the very reiteration of these phonemes acquire a significance that it would not have otherwise, such that the words involved in that reiteration are linked semantically as well as prosodically.

The repetition of lexical words (*almost*, *fall*, *miles*, *mirage*, *rocks* and *side* all appear twice; *down*, five times; *sea* and *water*, four times; *here* appears three times, and so do *island* and *ocean*; together, *follow* and *followed* appear twice; *wave* and *waves* appear three times; *rise* appears another three times, as a noun and as a verb), of phrases (*rise and fall* and *on the other side of the island* appear twice) and of other syntactic structures (*they* — i.e. the waves — appears as the subject of three consecutive sentences), in conjunction with the use of expressions with the same field of reference (*the divider, the barrier*) serves to evoke the recurrent rolling of the surf. Apart from the ones that I have already mentioned, in the quotation there are other phonological repetitions: in the last sentence of the second paragraph alone, we find two occurrences of /p/ (*pausing … over point and outcrop*), /r/ (*rise with a roar*), /k/ (*climbing the little cliff*) and /s/ (*sending at last an arm of surf*); with the exception of /p/, between the two occurrences of these phonemes there is not any other alliterating phoneme. The overall impression is intensified by the use of *the sea* as a subject of verbs like *pause* and *climb*, a syntactic function that endows it with some kind of agency. As we approach the end of the quotation, the repetition of *one was* at the beginning of four consecutive sentences (preceded by another instance of initial *one* functioning as subject) turns the description into a sort of desperate litany that not only evokes the obtuse insistence of the waves but betokens Ralph's sombre mood. The opposition of this *one* and the preceding *they* makes us share his sense of defeat at the prospect of the

unequal struggle of the conscious individual — Ralph, who thus becomes, for all his individuality, the representative of all humankind — and the insensible sea.[46]

The dash that ends the third paragraph marks the precise point when — after a lengthy description of the ocean and its relentless rhythm, which eventually comes to be mimicked by the rhythm of the phrases — the controlling author regains conscious command of the text. Notice that the sentence *Simon was speaking almost in his ear* is a iambic pentameter (with an initial inversion) and that from *speaking* onwards it has the same prosodic alternation as we have seen in previous segments. Here, however, prosody does not come hand in hand with evocative imagery. In fact, the very use of a strict iambic pentameter (a form whose deceptive naturalness epitomises authorial control and represents more than any other the triumph of literary artistry over expressive spontaneity) can be seen as both indicative and inductive of a normal state of consciousness (on the part of the author and of the reader, respectively). The abrupt shift interrupts a movement that threatens not only to obliterate the individual observer but also to swallow up the entire island, thus prefiguring what the black lightning will do to the castaway and his rock in *Pincher Martin*.

Generalising from what we have just seen, it can be hypothesised that when Golding's narrators get carried away by their creative imagination and the thrust of language, the consequence is always a symbolic heightening of words. From the point of view of Schopenhauer's philosophy, it would be reasonable to say that, just as the superhuman drive of the hidden, non-conscious essence of the world — including of the speaker or writer — manifests itself through non-rational representation, so there are occasions on which it emerges through such rational representations as words, and it does so bypassing not only the focalising character's awareness — which is limited to physical surfaces — but even the writer's conscious intentions. On the receiving side, it is not only the imagery employed that appeals symbolically to the addressee's feelings;

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46 The judgement that Watt passes on Conrad is apposite here: 'Conrad's attitude to nature is in one sense the opposite of Wordsworth's. He does not feel love for the landscape, or try to persuade himself that his feelings are in any sense reciprocated: … the ties which most obviously "bind" mankind to the visible universe are really the shackles which the laws of the cosmos impose upon human aspiration, the iron condition within which men must attempt to live' (Watt 1980: 96–7). In Golding, these shackles are not only physical (in the form of causal determinism) but metaphysical (in the form of the essential will's obtuse craving).

the concentrated exploitation of the prosodic resources of language — resources that in the last instance are non-conceptual — also sidesteps rationality, thus fulfilling its symbolic function more effectively. When this happens, 'out of the concretely focused consciousness' through which the narrative is presented, there wells 'something at first unconscious, but then forced on our attention' (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 362). It is important to insist that this phenomenon may take place even when the narrative consciousness through which the scene is focalised remains unaware of it.

In the last chapter of *Pincher Martin* there is a revealing conversation that sheds light on the response that this kind of symbolic evocation elicits from the audience. Mr Campbell, the islander who has found Pincher Martin's dead body on the beach, describes the lean-to where the corpse has been provisionally placed as '"Broken, defiled. Returning to the earth, the rafters rotted, the roof fallen in — a wreck"' (Golding 1956: 207). The description refers, in an indirect way, to Pincher's own body. More generally, the description of the derelict shed functions, like that of the leaning cathedral in *The Spire* and of the superannuated ship in the Sea Trilogy, as a symbolic reference to the sorry state in which the whole world is. Additionally, the third-person narrator suggests that 'the mossed stones, the caved-in and lichenous roof' are like 'a profound … language' that we are 'privileged to read only on a unique occasion' (205), namely, when an altered state of consciousness (of which Schopenhauer identifies a number of varieties: aesthetic contemplation, inner observation, the saint's vision or compassion) gives us access to the metaphysical side and even to the essence of the world.

Medcalf writes that, for Golding, it is 'as if the world were words' (Medcalf 1987: 38). Golding, this critic adds, believes that 'there is a conversation going on in the world which we are not exactly excluded from, but are on the outside of' (38). This outsidedness is due to the limits imposed by physical consciousness (a mental state dominated by egocentrism and thus by the exclusive focus on the appearance of individual objects); at the same time, the states of consciousness that put an end to this outsidedness can be spontaneous or induced by another person. On this view, when Golding uses evocative descriptions that endow inanimate objects and natural forces, for example, with attributes that are usually associated with living beings, the effect is to make the audience grasp the common essence of the world through the veil of

linguistic representation, a veil that thereby stops concealing in order to reveal what lies behind.

3.1.3. Remedies for Suffering

We have just seen that in Golding's novels the knowable world is characterised by pain, and that one of the major causes of this pain is the constant conflict — often described in symbolic terms — among the objects, forces and creatures in it. In this section I shall deal with the ways in which, according to Golding, human intervention can reduce the suffering that plagues the world. On the one hand, at the individual level there are remedies like the aesthetic tranquillity associated with the contemplation of beauty, the saint's vision and compassion, and death; all of them avoid the pitfall of egocentrism, and, except death, they involve metaphysical states of consciousness. As in other cases of non-rational feeling, the proper language for referring to these states is evocative language, which is precisely the kind of language employed to this effect in Golding's novels. On the other hand, at the collective level there are remedies that, far from fighting against egocentrism, take advantage of it, combining it with repression to achieve their ends; these are moral restraints and the legal restraints established by the state.

All of these solutions are analysed by Schopenhauer, who, however, adds one more to the list of individual remedies: the renunciation to the satisfaction of individualistic desire that sometimes follows the saint's vision of the world's essence. Unlike the compassionate saint, the resigned saint realises that suffering cannot be eradicated, renounces all action and withdraws from the world in order to have a secluded life. Short of death, this is for Schopenhauer the most effective path that the individual can follow to avoid suffering. It is interesting to note that Golding does not endorse the kind of cloistered quietism that characterises some of Schopenhauer's saints. Instead, he associates saintliness only with those characters that strive to improve their neighbours' lives, even sacrificing their own in the process. In what follows I shall argue that, unlike Schopenhauer, Golding envisages active intervention as the way of straightening a crooked world. Golding's model for humankind is not an indifferent

and person, but the compassionate person that actively seeks to reduce the other's pain.[47]

Another difference between Schopenhauer and Golding lies in their approach to death. The philosopher recommends not worrying about death and even welcoming it when it comes. What he does not recommend is to pursue death as a means of avoiding the suffering that comes hand in hand with egocentrism; pursuing death in this way, argues s, would amount to pursuing the satisfaction of your egoistic desires. To be sure, Schopenhauer's position is not entirely coherent, because all deaths, no matter how they come about, entail the suppression of consciousness, hence of pain. Golding's attitude might be interpreted as pointing in this direction. Indeed, his novels include characters who are so miserable that let themselves go and end up dying, and who arouse the other characters' and the readers' sympathy. Yet they also include characters that will themselves to death to avoid unbearable suffering, and the expected reaction from the other characters and from the audience might not be of total condemnation. In both cases death can be understood the last resort of the desperate subject that finds no other way of putting an end to pain. Finally, there are those characters that are killed by others, whether intentionally or not. These are more problematic; but if we consider the painful elements of their lives to outweigh its pleasures (think of Pincher Martin, of Mr Pedigree — who, at least from his own perspective, is liberated from life by Matty's ghostly apparition — and of Wilf Barclay) we can argue that, as in the other two cases, their deaths are a happy event.

In this light, the only reason why Golding's characters do not look forward to dying might be, as in Schopenhauer's philosophy, because their egocentrism blinds them to the fact that perhaps they would be better off dead than alive and conscious of pain. Golding's novels never explicitly justify suicide, they never allow us to share the perspective of those characters that let themselves die or will themselves to die, and they never advocate terroristic nihilism (of the kind attempted by Sophy in *Darkness Visible*). The very contemplation of other solutions to suffering may be intended to persuade us that killing oneself is not such a good idea. After all, aesthetic

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47   Needless to say, this generalisation proves more accurate concerning some of Golding's novels than others. Compare *The Spire*, where aesthetic contemplation and death are the only correctives, while compassion and altruistic action are conspicuous by their very absence, with *Darkness Visible*, where Matty's sacrifice is instrumental in saving a child's life.

contemplation and compassionate altruism can spare us a considerable amount of suffering, while an adequate social organisation can prevent us from hurting each other. Given the inclusion of all of these solutions in his novels, Golding seems to regard them as complementary: aesthetic contemplation allows the subject to shun egocentrism and anxiety for a time, but it makes him or her vulnerable to external aggression; compassionate altruism can mitigate the other's pain, but it has the same shortcoming as aesthetics; moral and legal repression is useful to prevent much violent behaviour, but it can do nothing to alleviate the pain associated with egocentrism.

In this section I shall examine, first, the liberating power of beauty in *The Spire* and *Darkness Visible*, where the observers are freed from the torment caused by their illicit sexual desires (once more, the emphasis on these desires confirms the primacy of sexuality, the essential will to life's stronger component, in human life). Secondly, I shall examine compassion and altruism in *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*. I shall also pay attention to the mixture of aesthetic insight, saintly vision and compassion that is attributed to Sammy in *Free Fall*. Thirdly, I shall focus on death. One of the most striking features of Golding's narratives is the number of people that die in them. Leaving aside the deaths of non-rational animals, the most relevant demises in his novels are those of Simon, Lok, Pincher Martin, Dean Jocelin, Matty, Mr Pedigree, Wilf Barclay, Reverend Colley, Wheeler and Ionides, the main male character in *The Double Tongue*. (As it turns out, it is only in *Free Fall* and *The Pyramid* that no main character dies.) To simplify the issue a little, I shall group up these cases into three categories: deaths that are accepted as an altruistic sacrifice (Matty's; perhaps Simon's); involuntary deaths that represent an obvious release from egocentric suffering though the characters may not realise it (Pincher's, Pedigree's and Wilf's; perhaps also Jocelin's); voluntary suicides that the characters commit in the belief that personal extinction is the only lasting liberation from egocentric suffering (Colley's, Wheeler's; perhaps Lok's and Ionides', though it could also be argued that the pain of these two characters is so intense that they simply let themselves go and slip into death). My examples will be Matty's sacrifice, Pedigree's resistance to death and Colley's voluntary embrace of it.

3.1.3.1. Individual Remedies: Aesthetic Contemplation; the Saint's Vision and Compassion; Death

The clearest example of aesthetic contemplation in Golding's novels is Jocelin's appreciation of the finished pinnacle's beauty in *The Spire*. As we have seen, the Dean's old notebook tells us how, following on from the metaphysical explosion that rises from his heart (the inner feeling of his own individual will), he is struck by the idea of a new steeple. To understand Jocelin's subsequent obsession we must remember that the feeling of the will cannot be expressed through denotative words. A writer may use language to arouse the audience's metaphysical feelings; a painter may create a two-dimensional picture; a sculptor and an architect may conceive three-dimensional structures. The spire functions not only as a monument to the almighty and omnipresent will but also as a direct expression of Jocelin's will and as a work of art. Joelin's revelation took place in three different moments: inward contemplation followed by repression and aesthetic sublimation. By virtue of this last moment the novel would be a meditation on the artistic process, starting with the work's inception, proceeding to its production and ending, as we are about to see, with its reception. This analysis tallies with Golding's account of the novel, in the course of an interview with Baker, as an exploration of 'the problem of what is an artist, why is an artist, how is an artist' (in Baker 1982: 150).

Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory helps to understand Golding's treatment of the artistic process in *The Spire*. In his frequent mentions of beauty, Schopenhauer maintains that the artist's task is to elevate the receiver's mind beyond the physical dimension of objects to the metaphysical-aesthetic sphere. Aesthetic contemplation produces 'the deliverance of knowledge from the [egocentric] service of the will, the forgetting of oneself as individual, and the enhancement of consciousness to the pure ... timeless subject of knowing' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 199). The work of art makes the aesthetic dimension accessible to the audience in much the same way as artistic inspiration made it accessible to the author. Grasping objects in an aesthetic manner (and any object can be treated in this way) allows individuals to transcend themselves by reaching a state in which they become free from egocentrism and from all concern about the satisfaction of the desires dictated by their innate character. In this state — in

which the craving individual gives way to an observer that appreciates universal beauty in a particular object — the door is opened, temporarily at least, to a better life.

All these features of Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory are present in the aesthetic experiences that Golding's novels portray. The inner feeling that Jocelin records in his notebook is immediately followed by a moment of aesthetic inspiration: the memory of his inner insight turned into a mental image of the spire. Joelin is not aware of this last step, but this is unsurprising: at first he is also unaware of the continuity between the will that he locates outside and his own inner will. The concluding pages of the novel foreground the dawning on Jocelin of the aesthetic dimension of the pinnacle. As he lies dying, he catches a glimpse of the finished spire, and sees it not from a religious perspective but aesthetically, as an object of beauty. Golding writes: 'The book is about the human cost of building the spire' (1984a: 166). Yet it is also about something else. So important is the aesthetic interpretation for Golding, that he places it as the book's main theme: 'after all the theology, the ingenuities of craft, the failures and the sacrifices, a man is overthrown by the descent into his world of beauty's mystery and irradiation' (167). Jocelin 'does not think of beauty' until the very end of his life (166). 'Only when he is dying does he see the spire in all its glory' (167). Previously he has not been aware of the aesthetic character of the enterprise, but after many hardships have transformed him into a new man he comes to appreciate the pinnacle from an artistic angle.

In the novel, aesthetic inspiration and aesthetic reception are separated not only by a lapse of several decades but also by a gulf of unsettling experience. The place of the pinnacle that does not initially exist outside the Dean's imagination is at the second moment occupied by a completed physical structure that everyone can admire. Jocelin initially believes that the projected spire satisfies God's all-powerful will, but later he realises that it is his own lascivious desire that the spire fulfils. Eventually he discovers the spire's beauty, and this allows him to escape, during an instant of tranquillity, from the egocentric ties to his innate will. Schopenhauer's discussion of these two features of aesthetic cognition (the contemplation of beauty and the accompanying relief) can help us understand the ending of the novel.

Lying in his deathbed, Jocelin likens the spire to an '*appletree*' (Golding 1964: 233); for a man who — as Golding explains — has never paid any attention to aesthetics, this is perhaps the only possible image of beauty, one that does not so much hint at the way

in which aesthetics can turn a paradise lost into a paradise regained (as we shall see when dealing with his view of history, Golding never seeks this kind of mythical solace) as suggest the manner in which aesthetics can establish an unprecedented paradise on earth. Further, the description of a human construction in terms of plant life is yet another example of the kind of description, by virtue of evocation, appeals to the feelings of the reader by blurring the limits between animals, plants and inanimate objects. The peculiarity is that here the description is not dynamic but static: instead of drawing attention to the conflict that characterises nature in movement, it focuses on the calm associated with a motionless object. This description is a good example of a characteristic of Golding's style that I mentioned when dealing with dynamic descriptions, namely, the focus on static objects that serves to convey not the essential identity of a world torn apart by ongoing conflict but the way in which the contemplation of things that do not move makes them seem to be unaffected by the passage of time and simultaneously allows characters to escape not only the tyranny of temporal, spatial and temporal consciousness, but also suffering.

Despite its fundamental function in Golding's novels, this use of evocation has not been well received by all critics. Lerner is probably the most critical of its use in *The Spire*. He writes:

> There is no human purpose in an appletree, there is no spontaneous growth in a spire. Stone is laid on stone by men for a reason; blossom bursts with cloud and scatter as part of a natural process, and it is meaningless to ask of a tree what it is there for, and expect the same kind of answer as for a cathedral. This is obvious, but it needs saying (Lerner 1981: 11).

Lerner is not aware that, by calling it an apple tree, the spire is seen as yet another manifestation of the essential will to life, now aesthetically appreciated. By a happy coincidence with Golding's narrative, Schopenhauer explains the aesthetic dimension of his philosophy through the example of a tree: 'if ... I contemplate a tree aesthetically ... it is immediately of no importance whether it is this tree or its ancestor that flourished a thousand years ago, and whether the contemplator is this individual, or any other living anywhere and at any time' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 209). The particular tree and the individual subject are abolished and nothing remains but the universal dimensions of the beautiful object and of its observer. The coincidence of vocabulary

makes even clearer the connection between Schopenhauer's ideas and Jocelin's contemplation of the spire qua aesthetic object. The universal quality that the philosopher attributes to art makes it easier to explain why the spire's contemplation makes Jocelin blurt out: 'Now — I know nothing at all' (Golding 1964: 223). On the subjective side, aesthetic reception involves the suspension of the usual egocentrism of the conscious subject: the *I* is not longer the *I* as we usually understand it, i.e. as a subject that is not only individual but egocentric. On the objective side, aesthetic contemplation does not afford any kind of conceptual knowledge; nor does it consist in the egocentric feeling of a physical thing in particular.

As the observer of the aesthetic dimension of an object, notes Schopenhauer, I leave my needs and desires behind. Whoever comes across beauty becomes a 'will-free … intelligence without aims and intentions', a person in whom the will 'vanishes entirely from consciousness' (Schopenhauer 2000b: 415). Since the strife to satisfy one's will is the source of one's suffering, 'with the disappearance of all willing from consciousness, there yet remains the state of pleasure, in other words absence of all pain' (416). The feeling of the object's metaphysical-aesthetic dimension, then, is not knowledge as we usually understand it, but a new knowledge that transforms the observer and the observed into the universal and interdependent poles of representation, liberating the subject from the suffering associated from an egocentric appreciation of objects as potential causes of pleasure or displeasure rather than as manifestations of timeless beauty.[48]

The pain that sexuality causes Jocelin is so intense that not even sleep can interrupt it. One of the most telling illustrations of the narrative's carnal implications is a dream of Jocelin's in which the cathedral is identified with his lying body, whose penis is stroked by a red-haired Satan resembling Goody: 'Only Satan himself … clad in nothing but blazing hair stood over his nave and worked at the building, *tormenting him so*

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48 The reference to trees in connection with the metaphysical experience of beauty allows us to interpret similar episodes in Golding's novels aesthetically. The scene in *Free Fall* where young Sammy enters a garden and sees a tree in the moonlight has already been mentioned as an example of the distance between non-rational feelings and rational concepts. It could also be interpreted, precisely because it endows the non-rational contemplation of a tree with an extraordinary aura, as another illustration of beauty. However, this episode lacks the liberating dimension of the aesthetic experience.

that he writhed … and cried out aloud' (Golding 1964: 65). The appreciation of beauty puts an end to the Dean's suffering and crying. It also gives a moment's rest to the other characters. It is Jocelin's desire that impulses the pinnacle's construction and thus inflicts almost unbearable pain on all round him. By calming its inspirer, the beautiful building also affords a moment of relief to all the other people that he has manipulated as if they were mere puppets.

The appreciation of beauty reappears in *Darkness Visible*, a novel that reminds us that all objects, not matter how ordinary, have an aesthetic side, and where, as in *The Spire*, the experience brings the subject — here Sim the bookseller, whose scepticism Matty tries to overcome — a brief relief from sexual desire. While some believe that Matty can '"pierce a partition"' through the mesh of rational concepts and the fabric of physical appearances, Sim is confident that partitions will '"remain partitions"' (Golding 1979: 225). Though his scepticism is very strong, it is not long before facts prove him wrong, at least in part. In the course of a kind of seance with Matty, Sim becomes conscious of the aesthetic dimension which all things possess, but which is usually obscured by our egocentric consciousness of their physical appearance:

> He looked into his own palm, pale, crinkled, the volume, as it were, most delicately bound in this rarest or at least most expensive of all binding material — and then he fell through into an awareness of his own hand that stopped time in its revolution. The palm was exquisitely beautiful, it was made of light. It was precious and preciously inscribed with a sureness and delicacy beyond art (Golding 1979: 231).

At the end of this quotation, the narrator speaks as if the beauty of Sim's hand was such that it could not be reproduced by works of art. Though this is an idea that Golding never developed, the passage suggests that art can never do justice to natural beauty. Moreover, if we go back for a moment to *The Spire*, Jocelin's comparison of the pinnacle to an apple tree suggests that the best way to comment on a work of art's beauty is by referring to previous experiences of natural beauty.[49] What is clear is that,

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49 Speaking about *The Spire*, Golding remarks that, in order to assess the value of the novel, the reader should 'measure the intention against the achievement' (Golding 1984: 164). This recommendation (which, as is clear from Golding's subsequent discussion, also applies to our assessment of Jocelin's achievement in the novel) might be taken to suggest that the reason why

after the beauty of Sim's hand has given him a 'convulsion unlike anything he had ever known', the little room where he is fills his consciousness again (Golding 1979: 231). Looking at his palm once more, he realises that it is 'a tiny bit sweaty, but not in any sense dirt, and just a palm like any other' (233). Interwoven in these two quotations there are several important themes that we have previously examined. First, the physical dimension of Sim's hand is linked to rational calculation: its surface reminds him of the cost of the volumes that he stores in his bookshop. Secondly, aesthetic contemplation is a variety of metaphysical consciousness in which time halts, so to say. Thirdly, the aesthetic dimension of the object — of the hand, in this case — is a reservoir of beauty. Fourthly, the aesthetic experience is always temporary. When it ends, the object loses its universality — and with it its beauty — and so does the subject; both return to their previous condition.

In this scene, it is not clear whether Matty can induce involuntary episodes of aesthetic contemplation or not. What is clear, however, is that the contemplation of beauty has a liberating dimension. Sim regards Mr Pedigree's appetite for young boys disgusting, but the desires of both men are more similar than Sim can imagine, as he is as much a slave of his own sexuality as the old paedophile. When Sophy and Toni are still little girls, Sim starts to buy children's books with a 'furtive passion' in the hope of attracting the twins to his shop (Golding 1979: 195). At first he disguises his secret desire as paternal instinct. Yet when the girls grow up, he finds them 'wonderfully *nubile*' (213). If Sim finds the twins attractive, even when they are still little girls, it is not because he is just 'a sentimental old thing' suffering from the empty nest syndrome,

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natural beauty is superior to artistic beauty is that, with the former, there is no authorial intention with which the finished work can be compared, and that neither the technical limitations of the artist nor the limitations of the artistic medium itself hinder the work's perfection. As we shall see when dealing with the place of the divinity in Golding's works, there are two problems with this interpretation: on the one hand, a number of of Golding's texts do compare the divinity to an artist; on the other, the created world is so far from perfect that the divinity obviously lacks the necessary skills. A possible clue to why the narrator of *Darkness Visible* speaks of natural objects as more beautiful than man-made objects may be that this novel, and the ones that follow it, cast doubts on the accuracy of any characterisation of the essence of the world and, therefore, on the characterisation of the world as the worst possible. I shall examine this issue in the next chapter.

as he would have everyone believe, but because he is dominated by 'the unruly member' that torments him as much as it does Dean Jocelin in *The Spire* (226). However, Jocelin is not the character that, as far as his illicit craving is concerned, Sim resembles the most. After all, the Dean's passion is for an adult woman, while Sim does not discriminate on grounds of age. In this Sim is much more like Mr Pedigree, who is also an 'old thing', but one whose 'filthy' proclivities are known to the public (265). There is good reason to think, therefore, that the anxiety that has accompanied the old teacher throughout his life is the same feeling that Sim has when he sees the girls, the real difference between both men lying perhaps in the extent — greater in Sim's case — to which repression operates in them.

Sim's sexual frustration makes him suffer as much as Mr Pedigree and Dean Jocelin, and it is reasonable to suppose that beauty rescues him, as it does Jocelin in *The Spire*, from this pain. Also as in *The Spire*, Sim's aesthetic respite does not last. Jocelin dies immediately after becoming aware of the spire's beauty, and Sim eventually returns to his previous life. Despite its undeniable liberating power, then, aesthetic contemplation is marred by its brevity. As Schopenhauer puts it, through aesthetics we cannot achieve 'a lasting emancipation, but merely … an exceptional, and in fact only momentary, release from the service of the will' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 363).

Metaphysical awareness of the aesthetic dimension of objects is not the most extreme escape from egocentrism that Golding's novels bring to our attention. The place of honour in this respect corresponds to saintly vision, the compassion and altruism that follow from it, and death.

Golding's first saint is Simon, one of the main characters of *Lord of the Flies*. Initially introduced as a member of Jack's choir, it soon becomes clear that he is not only an introverted, self-effacing boy, but someone separated from the other characters by his metaphysical insight and altruism. According to Golding, Simon is 'a lover of mankind' (Golding 1965: 98). This is clear from very early in the novel, when we see him supply with fruit a group of hungry little ones that he meets in the forest:

> Simon found for them the fruit they could not reach, pulled off the choicest from up in the foliage, passed them back down to the endless, outstretched hands. When he had satisfied them

> he paused and looked round. The littluns watched him inscrutably over double handfuls of ripe fruit (Golding 1954: 55).

We have seen that in Schopenhauer's philosophy altruism is triggered by compassion, which, in turn, is rooted in the awareness that we share the same essence with (the rest of) sufferers. Schopenhauer explains:

> whatever goodness, affection, and magnanimity do for others is always only an alleviation of their sufferings; and consequently what can move them to good deeds and to works of affection is always only *knowledge of the suffering of others* (Schopenhauer 1969a: 375).

For Schopenhauer, the compassionate identification of the others' weal with one's own, and therefore the urge to alleviate their pain, is 'pure affection (ἀγάπη, *caritas*)' untainted by egoism and malice (Schopenhauer 1969a: 375).

As the plot of *Lord of the Flies* unfolds we realise that Simon's attempts to help the others have to do with his unusual alertness to the fact that all human beings share the same essence, and that this essence is the ultimate source of all violence and suffering. Several hints are given of Simon's gradual realisation that the difficulties that the boys face might be caused by their own nature. It is Simon who first suggests, in the course of an assembly, that the beast that gives the little ones nightmares might be in themselves:

> 'Maybe', he said hesitantly, 'maybe there is a beast'.
>   The assembly cried out savagely and Ralph stood up in amazement.
>   ...
>   'What I mean is . . . maybe it's only us' [ellipsis in the original].
>   ...
>   Simon became inarticulate in his effort to express mankind's essential illness (Golding 1954: 89).

In the context of the novel and of Golding's whole oeuvre it is obvious that Simon is right. The switch from the character's voice to the more authoritative narratorial voice at the end of this quotation contributes to highlight this point. Nevertheless, Simon's

insight into human nature is not accepted by the other children. Piggy, for example, is naive enough to believe that there are "'doctors for everything, even the inside of your mind'", and "'if there is something wrong, there's someone to put it right'"; similarly, he is certain that "'there isn't no beast'" on the island, and that there can be "'no fear, either'" (Golding 1954: 84). The only other person that comes close to Simon's point of view is Jack. At one point he remarks, in passing, that the beast might be a person — not any kind of person, but "'a hunter'" that, like himself, prowls the island (129).

Painfully aware that he "'couldn't kill it'" despite his best efforts (Golding 1954: 129), the only way that Jack finds of dealing with this supernatural hunter is to appease it with a gift: a pig's head on a stick that he and his followers leave in a clearing and that soon gets covered with flies. Jack's bloody offering, the obscene Lord of the Flies, plays a pivotal role in the narrative, for it is a chance encounter with it that confirms Simon's suspicions about human nature:

Simon stayed where he was, a small brown image, concealed by the leaves. Even if he shut his eyes the sow's head still remained like an after-image. ...

Simon ... opened his eyes quickly and there was the head grinning amusedly in the strange daylight, ignoring the flies, the spilled guts, even ignoring the indignity of being spiked on a stick.

Simon ... saw the white teeth and dim eyes, the blood — and his gaze was held by that ancient, inescapable recognition. In Simon's right temple, a pulse began to beat on the brain.

...

Simon's head was tilted slightly up. His eyes could not break away and the Lord of the Flies hung in space before him.

'What are you doing out here all alone? Aren't you afraid of me?'

Simon shook.

'There isn't anyone to help you. Only me. And I'm the Beast. ... Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!' said the head. ... '*You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? ...* I'm the reason why it's no go? *Why things are what they are? ...* You know perfectly well *you'll only meet me down there —* ... I'm warning you. ... We are going to have fun on this island. Understand? We are going to have fun on this island! So don't try it on, my poor misguided boy, or else — '

Simon found he was looking into a vast mouth. There was blackness within, a blackness that spread.

'— Or else', said the Lord of the Flies, 'we shall do you. ...'

> Simon was inside the mouth. He fell down and lost consciousness (Golding 1954: 140–1, 146–7; my italics).

This scene conveys a saintly vision of the inner nature of humankind, anticipated by Simon's feeling of blood beating in his temple, an unmistakable token that what follows will refer to the essential dimension that can be grasped first of all by confronting what lies deep down inside oneself. It is encounters like this that Golding has in mind when he calls Simon 'a visionary' (Golding 1965: 98). The image of humankind that rises in the boy's mind is of a being 'at once heroic and sick' (Golding 1954: 104). According to Golding, our disease consists in our capacity to harm our neighbour for no good reason; our heroism rests on the attempt to mitigate the pain we feel. In other words, we are sick because of the desires that fuel our acts and which frequently lead to mutual harm, but the attempts at self-understanding and altruistic redemption can only be described as heroic.

Needless to say, being a hero — a saint — is more difficult than it seems. As Baker points out, even when we 'make a heroic attempt to rise to a level ethically superior to nature, and to our own nature, again and again we suffer a fall … because of the limiting defects inherent in our species' (Baker 1965: 6). That is why sometimes, after catching a brief glimpse at the essence that humans share with the rest of the world, we fall back into our daily routine as if we had not learnt anything, or as if what we have learnt was of no consequence. Golding explains this attitude to Keating saying that the impulse 'to just go and … let the whole thing slide' is a 'perennial temptation' (in Keating 1988: 213).

Though Simon does not succumb to this temptation, the other children do prefer to ignore what he has to say. As in *The Spire*, in *Lord of the Flies* this suppression of the truth about themselves has disastrous consequences. Boyd states that the children's 'self-congratulatory attitude', the belief that they are 'decent and fair-minded', actually 'allows the Devil to go to work, evils to be perpetrated' (Boyd 1988: 12). Donald R. Spangler makes a similar point when he writes that the children's complacency, exemplified by Piggy, 'causes imagined "beasts" forever to be misidentified and slain … so that, unrecognized, the beast endures'; in the last instance, this amounts to 'man's

inability to recognize his own responsibility for his own self-destruction' (Spangler 1988: 235–6).

After his encounter with the Lord of the Flies, Simon climbs the mountain where the children believe to have seen the prowling beast. What he finds instead is a dead fighter pilot whose parachute, at the mercy of the wind, makes him now sit up now lie back down, over and over again. The child releases the rotting parachutist from the tangle of lines, and hastes to tell the other children about his discovery, thus freeing them — as he has freed the parachutist — from the compulsive behaviour in which they are trapped. Baker writes: 'The truth he brings would set us free from the repetitious nightmare of history, but we are, by nature, incapable of receiving that truth' (Baker 1965: 13). The sun has set, and the majority of children are on the beach, having a feast of meat round a fire. During the frenzied ritual that follows, they dance in a ring and intone an ominous chant. Simon runs towards them stumbling in the dark, and is confused with the beast. The description of the scene that ends with Simon's death begins by putting the emphasis on the rhythmical beat that arises from and guides the group's movements. This pulse is an unequivocal sign that, even if they are not aware of this, the hungry beast that they want to kill is also in them — notice the comparison of the circle to a gaping mouth ready to swallow — and that, individual peculiarities of character aside, in the last instance they are not so different from Simon as they think:

> The movement became regular while the chant lost its first superficial excitement and began to beat like a steady pulse ... the center of the ring yawned emptily. ... There was the throb and stamp of a single organism.
>
> The dark sky was shattered by a blue-white scar. An instant later the noise was on them like the blow of a gigantic whip. The chant rose a tone in agony.
>
> '*Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!*'
>
> Now out of the terror rose another desire, thick, urgent, blind.
>
> '*Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!*'
>
> ...
>
> The circle became a horseshoe. A thing was crawling out of the forest. It came darkly, uncertainly. The shrill screaming that rose before the beast was like a pain. The beast stumbled into the horseshoe.
>
> ...
>
> '*Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!*'

...

The sticks fell and the mouth of the new circle crunched and screamed. The beast was on its knees in the center, it's arms folded over its face. ... The beast struggled forward, broke the ring and fell ... to the sand by the water. At once the crowd surged after it, ... leapt on to the beast, screamed, struck, bit, tore. There were no words, and no movements but the tearing of teeth and claws.

Then the clouds opened and let down the rain like a waterfall. The water ... poured like a cold shower over the straggling heap on the sand. Presently the heap broke up and figures staggered away. Only the beast lay still, a few yards from the sea. Even in the rain they could see how small a beast it was; and already its blood was staining the sand (Golding 1954: 155–6).

As his death makes clear, Simon is what Golding calls, in his interview with Keating, 'a Christ figure' (in Keating 1988: 212). As Golding explains to Kermode, Simon's fate is exemplary of sanctity: 'a saint isn't just a scapegoat, a saint is somebody who in the last analysis voluntarily embraces his fate', be it simply bringing others the news about their nature — as in Simon's case — or dying to improve the others' lives (in Kermode 1988: 219). That those who have humiliated and laughed at him are among the boys that Simon tries to help can be explained by Schopenhauer's opinion that compassion is 'the spirit of love enjoining one man to spare his enemies' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 492–3). If Simon attempts to liberate all the other children without distinctions it is because he does not regard any of them as his enemies. Unlike the egoist, the compassionate person does not consider the world to be populated by antagonistic powers but by friendly beings.

After giving the above definition of compassion, Schopenhauer goes on to add that, sometimes, this spirit of unconditional love pushes man, 'even at the risk of his life, to befriend a person never previously seen' (Schopenhauer 1969b: 493). This explains one of the most striking aspects of Golding's second novel, *The Inheritors*, where Lok, the main character, feels the need to go and greet with open arms those who will try to kill him.

The plot of *The Inheritors* is as straightforward as that of *Lord of the Flies*, and in some respects similar to it. The characters of the story are also divided into two groups:

the primitive People and the New People who invade their territory.[50] The contact between the two tribes proves fatal to the former. The People are a family formed by two leaders (the Old Man, called Mal, and the Old Woman), two men (Lok, the novel's main focaliser, and Ha), two women (Fa and Nil), a small girl (Liku) and a baby (the New One). At the outset of the narrative we witness Mal's accidental death, and most other members of the group — beginning with Ha, Nil and the Old Woman — are subsequently killed by the New People. The intruders also take Liku and the New One. Liku is not only killed but eaten, whereas the New One is adopted by Vivani, one of the New People's women. After killing Fa with their arrows, the New People leave Lok to his grim fate. Dimly aware of the fact that he might be the last of his kind, he dies out of exhaustion and sorrow. The novel's last chapter is narrated from the perspective of Tuami, the New People's artist, as they set sail in search of new lands.

Lok's first encounter with the New People shows how, despite being as terrible 'as the fire or the river', they draw him 'like honey or meat' (Golding 1955: 198). If Schopenhauer equates compassion with a kind of non-sexual, unconditional 'love' even for one's enemies (Schopenhauer 1969a: 374), Lok's feeling for those beings 'who would kill him if they could' is also said to amount to 'a terrified love' (Golding 1955: 191). Having seen the intruders from a tree, he hurries to hail them across a river:

'Hoé new people'

A great strength entered into Lok. He could have flown across the invisible water between them. He dared a desperate acrobatic in the thin boughs of the beech top, then shouted as loudly as he could.

'New people! New people!' (Golding 1955: 102).

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50 Both Golding and most of his commentators refer to the People as the last Neanderthal survivors. However credible their characterisation might have seemed in the mid-1950s, it is now obvious that the People are, if anything, a much more primitive species than the Neanderthalers (see Hughes 1987: 161–2; Carey 2009: 178). Though Golding defended the scientific accuracy of his portrayal (see Biles 1970: 106–7), his well-known distaste for research raises justified doubts about this theory (see Biles 1970: 96–8; Carey 2009: 25–6, 178, 285, 397). It is better to read Golding's novel as recounting the counterfactual encounter between the Cro-Magnons and a fictive species of more primitive anthropoids.

The reception that the New People give him is far from cordial and includes the throwing of arrows (the description of the attack is a good illustration of the style that dominates much of the narrative):

> A head and a chest faced him, half hidden. ... The man turned sideways in the bushes and looked at Lok along his shoulder. A stick rose upright ... Suddenly Lok understood that the man was holding the stick out to him but neither he nor Lok could reach across the river. Lok would have laughed ... The stick began to grow shorter at both ends. Then it shot out to full length again.
>
> The dead tree by Lok's ear acquired a voice.
>
> 'Chop!'
>
> His ears twitched and he turned to the tree. By his face there had grown a twig: a twig that smelt of other, and of goose ... He was lost in a generalized astonishment and excitement (Golding 1955: 106).

As the New People are shooting at him their arrows, Lok's only thought is 'a confused idea' that they are 'trying to give him a present' (Golding 1955: 111).[51] Thereafter Lok

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51 The whole description forces the readers to share Lok's perspective, and to perceive what he perceives. Since the narrator refrains from giving the objects that Lok sees the usual names that they receive in present-day English, the readers' conceptual decoding of the episode, which initially depends on sense-impressions alone, will be delayed until they find the exact word for the sticks that the New People have thrown. It is only after some moments' thought that the readers can realise that the sticks are arrows.

Both what happens in the scene and how it is conveyed reminds of a similar passage in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, where it takes Marlow some time to identify the long cane that has killed his helmsman as 'the shaft of a spear' (Conrad 1990: 202). The kind of reception that both descriptions demand exemplifies what Watt calls, in his analysis of Conrad's style, *delayed decoding*. In Watt's definition, this is 'an original narrative solution to the general problem of expressing the process whereby the individual's sensations of the external world are registered and translated into ... conceptual terms' (1980: 179). Conrad's way to trigger delayed decoding is 'to present a sense impression and to withhold naming it or explaining its meaning until later' (175). As a result, the readers are forced to go through the whole process whereby the rational consciousness elicits conceptual meaning from perception.

Plainly enough, delayed decoding works by putting the stress on the distance that separates feelings from concepts. Though in this scene from *The Inheritors* the narrator never gives the objects that Lok sees their proper name, the readers are encouraged to supply it themselves. In

and Fa come to understand how dangerous the New People can be. Fa explains to him why they are so aggressive: "'The new people … watch the forest over their backs. … They are frightened of the air where there is nothing'" (206). Their paranoid fear, which arises from their atomising egocentrism, makes them very dangerous. As for Lok, his attraction to them is so strong that he comes to identify with them and feel how "'frightened and greedy'" they are (97).

Despite their aggressiveness, it must not be thought that the New People are incapable of compassion, that is, of unconditional love. In the last chapter of the novel, where the focus shifts from the People to the New People, we witness Vivani's motherly affection for the New One, and Tuami's surprise at finding out that the essential unity of both species can be turned into an aesthetic object. As the New People sail away from Lok, their leader Marlan, who insists on seeing the world round him as hostile, makes 'stabbing motions at the mountains with his fingers' (Golding 1955: 232). By his side, Tuami whiles time away honing the blade of a knife with which he intends to kill him. Something happens next to Tuami that makes him give up his murderous desires. Observing Vivani's play with the New One, it dawns on Tuami that 'the frightened, angry love' between the woman and the abducted baby might provide 'an answer' to the implicit question: how can fear and suffering be got rid of? (233). The affection that the woman feels for the hairy baby exceeds rational explanation; but this does not prevent it from being, as Tuami suddenly realises, 'a password' to a better life where the relations among different species are not dominated by aggression, where enemies become friends, and where it is fraternity rather than violence that inspires the artist (233). At the same time as Vivani shows her love for the New One, Tuami sees their relationship as a source of beauty.[52] If the knife that he feels under his hands matters, he reflects, it is not because of the blade but because of the 'shapeless lump' of ivory that he will turn into a carved haft (Golding 1955: 232). Tuami feels in his fingers how Vivani and the baby are 'waiting in the rough ivory of the knife-haft that [is] so much more important than the blade', not only because the haft can be turned into a work of

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the end, their understanding of the events is likely to be, despite the delayed decoding, much better than Lok's.

52 This example of how compassion can become an aesthetic object recalls the artistic representation of 'a foundling rescued from its floating cradle by a great lady', praised by Schopenhauer (1969a: 231).

art, but because this can be done by representing compassionate love, the only moral impulse that, as he now realises, can counteract aggression (233).

If the ending of *The Inheritors* adds the representation of beauty to compassion, thus offering a double solution — aesthetic as well as moral — to the problem of violence, *Free Fall* goes even further, blurring the limits between the aesthetic contemplation of beauty, compassion towards other human beings and the vision of the whole world's common essence. In the scene where he acquires this 'new mode of knowing' that allows him to 'see … through a brick wall', that is, to pierce the physical façade of the world (Golding 1959: 133), Sammy Mountjoy gains insight into the nature of humankind and into the suffering to which everyone is exposed. Having undergone Dr Halde's psychological torture, Sammy suddenly sees his fellow prisoners, whom he has just tried to betray, in a new light.[53] This is the moment when Sammy undergoes the conversion that justifies the writing of his autobiography. Sammy's transformation is a kind of new birth — to borrow an expression used by Schopenhauer to speak about saintliness — or resurrection. Coming out of the interrogation room, Sammy feels like 'a man resurrected' (188). All of a sudden, the inmates, the trees and the mountains

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53 His seeing them is accompanied by tears. It is not clear whether they are caused by the pain he feels or by the pain that he sees in others. What is clear though is that these tears — which Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor link, without further explanation, to the apprehension of the inner kernel of the world — call back to mind Schopenhauer's claim that saintly vision, which he describes as the outcome of grace, has two possible sources. The first, occurring 'only in the case of a few', is simply the spontaneous apprehension of that single essence that underlies all appearances; but the second, the one that matters here, follows 'the greatest personal suffering' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 392). Since Schopenhauer does not say why pain can turn a person into a saint, all types of saintliness are presented as equally mysterious. His failure to find an explanation does not prevent him from emphasising, as Christianity and other religions have traditionally done, the 'force of suffering' as the most common source of sanctity (2000b: 348). In this case, as in a few others, Schopenhauer's model does not serve so much to explain the elements included in Golding's novels as to confirm their importance and to link them to other elements in a suitable way. In *Free Fall*, the tears that Sammy sheds because of the intense pain that he feels or sees in the others entail — like the pain that Schopenhauer links to saintliness — giving up a certain way of being in the world, a lifestyle dominated by egocentrism and the search for personal satisfaction at all costs. As usual with Golding's characters, Sammy's new frame of mind involves being more alert to the others' needs.

that surround the camp show a new face. Sammy finds himself surrounded not by 'unshaven, haggard' soldiers but by the 'kings of Egypt in their glory' (186, 188).[54] The trees appear as 'crowded shapes extending up into the air and down into the rich earth, … aflame at the surface and daunting by right of their own nature', while the mountains reveal themselves to be 'not only clear all through like purple glass, but living' (186). As the accustomed 'paper wrappings of use and language' drop from him, Sammy discovers that everything is 'related to everything else' at a deeper level than that of physical appearances, a level that whoever clings to denotative language can only find 'indescribable' (186–7). The experience of universal unity has an aesthetic dimension: 'What had had the ugliness of frustration and dirt, I now saw to have a curious reversed beauty' (188). As in all cases of aesthetic contemplation, the transmutation of the object is accompanied by a similar alteration in the subject: Sammy stands still, transformed into a universal subject that does not see things egocentrically, that is, in their particularity and as means to satisfy his desires. For the first time in a very long time, he feels as if he were 'desiring nothing', not willing to get what he wants at the cost of the suffering of others (186). Eventually the discovery of beauty gives way to love. Whereas egocentric cognition operates in such a way that aggression naturally results, Sammy now feels — and the way in which he couches this feeling reverses Golding's own view of why humans resemble bees, thus challenging the novelist's pessimistic outlook on life — his 'transmuted' heart 'makes love as easy as a bee makes honey' (188). This kind of love, if we are to believe Schopenhauer, is compassion, the impulse where true moral virtue lies and which has nothing to do with a Kantian sense of rational duty. The difference with Schopenhauer is that in Sammy's case, as always in Golding's novels, saintly vision has nothing to do with the resigned withdrawal to which the philosopher attributes the greatest value, but with the recognition of the dignity of all conscious beings and the solidarity with sufferers.

Casting a retrospective glance on the episode, Sammy reasons that all these things could be dealt with in two ways: 'the one explained them away' in a scientific manner (as Nick Shales, his former science teacher, would do), while 'the other accepted them

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54 The apparently arbitrary reference to ancient Egypt has its explanation in Golding's habit to associate Egyptian culture with non-rational and metaphysical cognition, contrasting it with the rational and physical emphasis that, in his opinion, defines the classical Greek world view (see Gindin 1988: 11–2).

as ... relevant to the nature of the cosmos' (Golding 1959: 188). Giving up the outlook that he has inherited from his teacher, a rationalistic stance that is blind to all metaphysical considerations, he opts for the latter option. He accepts that the 'wonder' discovered in the Nazi camp involves 'a kind of vital morality, ... the relationship of individual man to individual man — once an irrelevance but now seen to be the forge in which all change, all value, all life is beaten into a good or a bad shape' (189). This knew knowledge, grounded in the virtuous feeling of compassion rather than in any rational notion of duty, nevertheless means that Sammy can no longer turn his back on suffering.

His mistreatment at the hands of Dr Halde leads Sammy to the realisation that the pain that he has caused in the course of his life is the same kind of pain that the Nazis are inflicting on his fellow prisoners and on himself. As soon as Sammy has been invaded by an untoward feeling of compassion, the narrative's focus shifts back to Great Britain. We are never told whether his new feelings for the other inmates were followed by an effort to relieve their pain. What Sammy does tell us about is his new perception of Beatrice, his former girlfriend, whose virtues — heretofore confused with a 'negative personality' and an 'absence of being' or 'vacuum' — now are seen to include being 'simple and loving and generous and humble' (Golding 1959: 191). Learning that she has been confined in a mental institution resembling 'a prison camp' ever since he jilted her (238), Sammy pays her a visit with the aim of atoning for his past behaviour and, perhaps, of doing some good to her. Her reaction, however, is not at all what he expects: the very moment she recognises him, she pisses over her skirt and shoes. Later, her doctor informs him that she will never be restored to normality. Insofar as Sammy fails to undo, despite his good intentions, the wrong that he has done, we are led to the view that, for Golding, sometimes compassion and the readiness to act altruistically are of little use. In a situation like this, the only thing that one can do is learn to live with the memory of those that have been hurt, and try not to act in the same way again.

Thanks to its combination of aesthetic contemplation with saintly vision and compassion, the metaphysical insight that Sammy gains in the Nazi prison camp helps him to abandon the way of life that brought so much suffering to Beatrice, but does not take him beyond the limits of representation. However, Golding's works remind us that there is a way in which we can escape from individuality and consciousness (hence

suffering) forever. This way is death. For Schopenhauer death affords the long-awaited 'deliverance' from an existence that 'presented itself to us as suffering' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 408–9). In Golding's novels death is also the most effective remedy for pain, and for the same reasons: it allows us to escape the consciousness of suffering and to do so for good. Therefore, compared with aesthetic contemplation and with the saint's vision and compassionate altruism, death has the advantage — in Golding as in Schopenhauer — of providing a more effective and permanent relief from an individual existence that is too painful and too long.

Some of Golding's characters see their lives and deaths as part and parcel of some grand design that endows them with significance. This is indeed how Matty sees his own existence, which is dominated by altruism and sacrifice, in *Darkness Visible*. This does not mean, of course, that Matty is never tempted to act differently. The novel puts a lot of emphasis on sexual desire (Mr Pedigree's for young boys; Sim Goodchild's for young girls, including Sophy and Toni Stanhope; Sophy's for their own father), and it is undeniable, judging from his tendency to become infatuated with the women round him, that perhaps not even Matty, whose character is mostly that of a saint, is totally immune to the vicissitudes of sexuality. Nevertheless, it is not the gratification of his sexual instinct but altruistic action that provides the standard of behaviour to which he tries to live up. Not only does he stand out for his alertness to a dimension beyond physical surfaces, the metaphysical realm, but he is willing to sacrifice his lives for the benefit of other human beings. Like Simon's in *Lord of the Flies*, Matty's altruism is rooted in a vision of the entire world's common essence. These roots are emphasised on several occasions. On one of them, already mentioned, he looks into a glass ball, and what he finds there is the loom where the threads of being are woven. As usual in Golding, Matty is not content with his spontaneous feeling of 'the centre of things' (Golding 1979: 91), but needs to transform that flash of insight into actions. Thanks to Schopenhauer's account of how the world's inner essence gives rise to suffering in its manifestations, and how the individual is tied to that kernel and to that suffering, we can understand the reason why Matty feels this need: having caught a glimpse of what the world is at bottom, he aspires to reduce the amount of pain that pervades it. He does not revenge on a world that has disfigured him and alienated him from other human beings. What he does, like other Golding saints, is return good for evil,

preventing the outrageous suffering of a helpless child and thus making up, as far as possible, for the ignominy that taints existence.

In their attempt to kidnap one of the pupils of the school where Matty works, Sophy's accomplices detonate a number of bombs that set the building on fire. When one of them tries to escape carrying a student wrapped in a blanket, he is stopped by a 'fire-monster' that runs out of the garage towards him (Golding 1979: 248). The monster is Matty, who has been caught in the fire and who comes so close to the kidnapper as to frighten him and make him drop the bundle. Immediately the kidnapped boy frees himself and runs away. Matty jigs and whirls for a while, then falls down and dies. Admittedly, it is hard to say whether Matty's last act is intentional or not. If it is, Matty's heroic attempt to rescue the abducted child provides a good illustration of Golding's general emphasis on altruism as an active means of freeing the world from suffering.

The fact that Matty is burning to death when he rescues the abducted child is significant: the terrorists' bombs transform Matty into 'a burnt offering' (Golding 1979: 238). Throughout his life he has wondered about his identity, his nature, his purpose. As he grows increasingly aware of practical issues, his original question, *Who am I?*, becomes *What am I?* and eventually '*What am I for?*' (68). Convinced that his fate is not in his hands, he comes to the conclusion that, since he has ended up working in a school, the task for which he is destined has 'something to do with children' (100). As in *The Spire*, it is not clear whether Matty's destiny depends on God's will, as he believes, or not. What is clear though is that his faith is so strong that he is ready to accept whatever happens to him. Being in contact with schoolchildren makes him 'more happy than at any other time in his life', simply because they seem to be 'very interested' in his physical aspect and 'not a bit frightened or horrified' (100). However, this happiness does not make him forget that, in the grand scheme of things, his life and his well-being have very little importance. His death is involuntary, it is not a suicide; but Matty accepts dying as a sacrificial victim because he believes that this is part of the divine plan to which he has pledged obedience. This explains why, when he catches fire, he does not seek the necessary help that might save his life but instead offers to rescue a helpless child. Thus his death can be interpreted as the fulfilment of his life's purpose on two counts: because it is a sacrifice and because it is altruistic.

Darkness Visible does not end with Matty's heroic sacrifice but with Mr Pedigree's reluctance to die. Golding's presentation of death as an unavoidable and indeed positive conclusion to individual life helps us to appreciate the magnitude of Mr Pedigree's error. The novelist says to Baker: 'I hope devoutly that there is no survival after death. I don't wish to live with myself for eternity. Eternity is far, far too long' (in Baker 1982: 143). While he states that 'to be endlessly extended is pointless' (143), he does not give a reasoned account of that pointlessness. To find an explanation, it is necessary to turn to Schopenhauer's philosophy.

According to Schopenhauer, the existence of most living beings is characterised by a constant attempt to escape death. This fear arises with the individualisation of the essential will. When the essential will endows itself with an egocentric intellect, the resulting individual cannot see that his or her desires are not so personal after all. However, what one needs and ambitions — be it money, knowledge or the wish to live forever — is rooted in one's innate character, that is, ultimately, in the essential yearning that underlies the whole world. Once the individuals have served their purpose, they are invariably sacrificed on the altar of death. The essential will can only achieve gratification through the mediation of egocentric individuals, whose instinct of self-preservation is but a part of the essential will's general tendency to find some fulfilment; but egocentrism prevents those individuals from realising that they are disposable, that their lives are too tainted by suffering to be worth living for a long time, and that, in fact, death is a solution to that agony. For Schopenhauer, the acceptance of death is a token of wisdom. Indeed, death is the moment of definitive 'liberation from … individuality' and thus from pain (Schopenhauer 1969b: 508). Non-egocentric modalities of consciousness like aesthetic contemplation, saintly vision and compassion are a good preparation for death: a person whose egocentric ties to desire have been 'burnt up and consumed' by non-egocentric cognition will no longer be afraid of disappearing with death, and will in fact be content to die (609).

In this light, it can be argued that Mr Pedigree's opposition to death stems — like Pincher Martin's — from his limited perspective on the world: like Pincher, Mr Pedigree is unable to step out of the egocentric circle in which he stands. He is well aware of the dangerous desires that dominate him, and he has come to understand that everyone — each in their own way — is similarly caught in the wave-like rhythm of those desires. 'The thing they all want without knowing it', he realises, may be 'many

things'; among those things he mentions money, power, knowledge and, of course, sex (Golding 1979: 264). Even so, he falls short of grounding the inescapable influence of those desires in an essence shared not only by all humans, but by inanimate things and living beings alike. Just before dying, Mr Pedigree speculates that Matty might be 'all connected with everything else' (264). This view, which is correct but incomplete, indirectly shows the limitations of his perspective. Since he is looking at the world from an egocentric standpoint, he does not realise that not only Matty, but everyone and everything else, including himself, are connected below the disjointed surfaces around which one's daily life revolves.

Mr Pedigree has spent his sordid life pursuing his paedophiliac desires, which draw an 'anxious' expression in his face (Golding 1979: 210). However, when he realises that he is about to die, he rejects the chance to get rid of himself. Clutching the red ball that he uses to attract small boys in the park, he cries: "'No!, No!, No!'" (265). Like Pincher Martin, he does not realise that the 'terrible death of the self' is actually the opportunity to become 'one-and-all' with the rest of the world, perhaps even with whatever lies beyond the fathomable world, in regions that remain forever unknown (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 254). To avoid any possible confusion, the novelist does not hesitate to tell us that, despite Mr Pedigree's wish to go on living, death grants him '*Freedom*' — freedom, that is, from his own individuality and from the demands that the essential will imposes on his egocentric consciousness (Golding 1979: 265).

The last example of death that I would like to examine appears in the first volume of the Sea Trilogy. Whatever his other defects, Reverend Colley realises the advantages that the annihilation of selfhood has, and does not hesitate to embrace it. In some respects, Colley's attitude and conduct are the exact opposite of Mr Pedigree's. Instead of being aware of his own sexuality, Colley is naively blind to it: in the letter to his sister, he describes how the sailors 'go about their tasks, their bronze and manly forms unclothed to the waist, their abundant locks gathered in a queue, their nether garments closely fitted but flared about the ankles like the nostrils of a stallion', without realising how much the passage may reveal about his character (Golding 1991: 166). Instead of remaining blind to the metaphysical side of all things, Colley often seems to revel in it: in a passage that reminds us of Dean Jocelin's folly, Colley records how, once in the high sea, he offers up 'a brief prayer' for the ship's safety 'subject always to HIS Will' (165). Finally, instead of denying death, Colley throws himself into its arms.

Of course, in other respects Colley and the old paedophile are two of a kind: as the quotation about the sailors suggests, the parson's appetites are not untainted by concupiscence, and his inclination is for young men rather than women. Colley's admiration of men provides a crucial clue that cannot be overlooked when we study the sequence of events leading to his death. They develop in two directions: one is his estrangement from the crew and the other passengers; the other is his attraction to the tanned sailors. The crossing the line ceremony brings both threads together: originally designed as an initiation rite that could help Colley to ingratiate himself with the crew, it ends with the parson's engagement in oral sex with one of the shipmen.

Though his public humiliation by the ship's captain turns him into 'an object of scorn and amusement' not only to Talbot but to everyone aboard, Colley does not give up hope of winning their hearts (Golding 1991: 183). Something similar happens when he is forced to participate in the opening of the crossing the line ceremony. When he surprises the sailors filling the badger bag — a tarpaulin awning — with stagnant sea water and urine, he does not so much as suspect that he will soon have a bath in that 'slippery paunch' (209). The gruesome ritual that follows resembles the ceremony that has traditionally served as an initiation rite among seamen, and whose purpose Golding explains to Baker in these terms: 'After a boy had been through that he was then accepted as a sailor' (in Baker 1982: 161). Colley is no sailor, but to be admitted as a full member into the ship's society he must undergo this rite of passage nevertheless.

Because of what happens in the second part of the ceremony, when he is summoned before King Neptune, Colley 'fails to make the grade' (Golding 1991: 161). The cause of his failure lies in his infatuation to the King, who turns out to be no other than his favourite shipman — his 'particular hero' (191). Colley likes him so much that in his letter home he ingenuously confesses to have 'yearned to kneel before him' as a token of appreciation (191). At first he is convinced that his heart's 'passionate longing' is merely 'to bring this young man to OUR SAVIOUR', but he soon has the occasion to find out his real motivation (191). After the badger bag, Colley decides to come back to the deck in order to 'rebuke' and bring repentance and reconciliation to the shipmen, whom he calls the 'unruly but truly lovable children of OUR MAKER' (216). He sees this as 'the happiest outcome of all [his] distress and difficulty' (217); but his plan breaks down as soon as he accedes to taste the sailors' rum and, 'helplessly drunk', he not only urinates

in front of everyone but, now out of sight, performs a fellatio on his admired King (220).

When he comes into view again, Colley's first reaction to this physical reconciliation with his hero is of joyful exhilaration: "'Joy! Joy! Joy!'", he exclaims flinging out his arms 'as if to embrace' all round him (Golding 1991: 102). Only after he has returned to his cabin and the effects of the rum have worn off does he realise what he has done. Shut up in his cabin, he refuses to speak and to abandon his bunk. One of the officers, Lieutenant Summers, says to Talbot that the parson is not only "'losing his wits'" but "'willing himself to death'" (130, 134). After paying him a reluctant visit, Talbot surmises that, 'in a passion of self-disgust', the parson has surrendered to 'a deepening pain, deepening consciousness, widening memory, his whole being turning more and more from the world', and that in the end 'he could desire nothing but death' (137). After his death, Summers shares with Talbot the conviction that 'the absolute humiliation' of his behaviour, and no other thing, has killed him (220).

Colley's delicate position results directly from a failure to recognise his own desires. Golding describes him to Baker as 'a silly ass' that is too 'naive' for his own good (in Baker 1982: 164). Not only has he 'made an equatorial fool of himself', as Talbot scornfully concludes; his infatuation to the young sailor, combined with a small amount of liqueur, have sufficed to bring him 'from the heights of complacent austerity to what his sobering mind must have felt as the lowest hell of degradation' (Golding 1991: 244). Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor describe Colley as 'a man of desperate extremes, viewing himself passionately in one way, then being forced to see himself intolerably in another, torn apart by contradiction and shame that can be resolved by willing himself to die' (2002: 269). For the young parson the shock of discovering his own sensuality proves too painful to endure, and the only solution that occurs to him is to put an end to his life as soon as possible.[55]

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55 The desire to die brought about by extreme humiliation sets Colley's death apart from Matty's and Mr Pedigree's, but foreshadows the death of Ionides, the conceited High Priest of the temple of Apollo, in *The Double Tongue*. Ionides is arrested for plotting against the Romans, and though they show the utmost respect towards him, the whole affair — above all his unexpected liberation — fills him with unbearable shame. When he returns to the temple, he tells Arieka about the explanation of Roman power that Lucius Galba, the Roman governor of southern Greece, has offered him: Rome robs conquered people 'of their dignity' (Golding 1995: 162). Immediately

At this point, Colley's gesture raises an important question. As a solution to the suffering caused by egocentrism, it is deeply ambivalent, at least from the perspective of Schopenhauer's philosophy. As Wicks explains, sometimes 'a person kills himself or herself to avoid some present or anticipated pain', the suicide's motivation being 'a basic assumption that life would have been embraced, had pleasure been anticipated rather than pain' (2008: 129). When I examined Schopenhauer's treatment of death, I pointed out that for him a person's suicide is not at odds with the will to life, but rather an affirmation thereof. Schopenhauer regards voluntary death as a symptom of egoism, distinguishing it from the deaths for which the individual has no responsibility whatsoever and from those that are motivated by compassionate love. Despite his flirtations with the metaphysical realm, then, Colley's death may prove that he is an egoist who can neither accept his repressed sexual tendencies nor stand the pain that he has brought upon himself. For the parson, as for other Golding characters, death is a liberation from suffering. There is no doubt about that. But if this extreme liberation is egoistic, then it must be regarded — unlike Simon's and Matty's altruistic deaths, however limited their palliative effects may be — as a poor solution to the suffering that egoism has contributed to create.

3.1.3.2. Collective Remedies: Moral and Legal Repression

Having analysed the ways in which isolated individuals can act against suffering, we can proceed to analyse the social measures that can be taken to prevent violence and to reduce the chronic pain that ails humans. In *The Inheritors*, morality prevents the People from behaving violently; indeed, the People's contrast with the New People can be understood in moral terms. In *Lord of the Flies*, legal repression is also necessary because morality alone is not enough to hold society together. According to Golding, Jack, like any person that fulfils his desires in violent ways, should become a police officer (more specifically, a member of the riot squad) or even a hangman. Given his defence of democratic values, it is to be presumed that for Golding, as for

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after this revelation, Ionides is overcome by 'a silliness without any wisdom in it' (164), and begins to slide into an imagined corner where he can 'hide, ... draw into and away from himself, his shame', a quiet place 'where at last there is the peace of ... nothingness' (163).

Schopenhauer, this use of (the threat of) suffering is only legitimate when it serves to prevent a greater suffering. This means that, in becoming a police officer, Jack could cause as much harm as he wanted, but always with within the limits of the law, which must sometimes exert a certain amount of pain to prevent even greater suffering.

Golding's view of society is based on the belief that its functioning depends on the nature of its members: 'society is the product of the people', he says to Biles, and so 'society is what men are' (in Biles 1970: 46, 45). The reason why he decides to write *Lord of the Flies* is precisely to illustrate this idea. The moral of the novel, he states, is that 'the shape of a society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual', and its whole plot is 'an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature' (cited in Epstein 1988: 299). The natural roots of all social problems explain why in *Lord of the Flies* it is not only among the children but also, to begin with, among the adults — and on a bigger scale — that war has broken out. In the end, then, adult life is not as 'dignified and capable' as it would seem to be, but 'in reality enmeshed in the same evil as the ... children on the island' (cited in Epstein 1988: 299). Of all the possible opinions that a worldwide war may give rise to, Golding's is one of the most negative. Even if the British officer that the children meet on the beach has 'interrupted a manhunt', nothing good can come from the conflagration in which he is involved; even if the adults' war were, like the Second World War, a war against totalitarianism, this is not enough to justify the violence that ensues. Thus, says Golding, the point of the novel's ending is that the cruiser in which the naval officer presumably intends to take the children off the island 'will presently be hunting its enemy in the same implacable way' as Jack and his hunters have tried to hunt Ralph (cited in Epstein 1988: 299). The aim of the scene, therefore, is to make the reader wonder: after they have rescued the children, 'who will rescue the adult and his cruiser?' (cited in Epstein 1988: 299). For Golding the answer is obvious: no one.

Like Schopenhauer, Golding believes that an ideal state could only be created if it was possible to produce individuals whose nature permitted them to sacrifice their own well-being to public welfare. Though as a rule Schopenhauer states that it is impossible to understand why a person has a certain innate character (a claim that is consistent with his belief that it is impossible to say why the essential will is as he says that it is), sometimes he comes close to a genetic explanation, arguing that utopia could only be 'attained on the path of generation by a union between the noblest men and the

cleverest and most brilliant women' (Schopenhauer 2000b: 256). This perfect state ought to be composed of 'beings whose nature permits them generally to sacrifice their own good to that of the public' (1969a: 343). Sometimes Golding comes close to this position, as this quotation shows:

> we have had *australopithecus, homo habilis, homo neanderthalensis*, Mousterian man, Cromagnon Man, *homo sapiens* — has nature done with us? *Surely* we can search that capacious sleeve and find something a bit better! ... We must produce *homo moralis*, the human being who cannot kill his own kind, nor exploit them nor rob them (Golding 1984a: 184).

In Schopenhauer's terms, the only disposition that is worthy of moral praise is compassion. This means that, from Schopenhauer's point of view, Golding's moral people could never be egoistic individuals, even if they could find the way of fulfilling their needs and desires without hurting the others. This is clear when Golding adds that 'With good people, loving, co-operative, unselfish people, any social system will work' (Golding 1984a: 184). Since he maintains that by nature most people are predominantly egoistic and even malignant, and in these moral people to which he now refers compassion and altruism prevail, it is difficult to see how their *loving, unselfish* dispositions could be secured except through eugenics.

Since the eugenic solution would only work in the long term, ans since it would perhaps be impossible to begin with, Golding suggests that interim solutions should be found for the short term. Given that the prevalence of egocentric frames of mind results in a preponderance of egoistic and malignant desires (and thus, very frequently, in evil actions), it cannot be excepted that the good feelings of a few people alone will provide an adequate basis for social organisation. Compassion is the only motivation that Schopenhauer's moral theory finds praiseworthy; but given its exceptionality, and the fact that it cannot be imposed artificially, a more effective solution is needed. In this situation, Schopenhauer asks, what can be more effective than basing social order on the majority's egoism? As we saw in the presentation of Schopenhauer's philosophy, the protection that the state offers does not attack egoism but takes advantage of it (see Schopenhauer 1969a: 345). The state, then, relies on the rational egoism of the majority (see Schopenhauer 2009: 188). Golding's position seems to rest on the same assumptions, as he agrees with Schopenhauer in proposing moral and legal repression

as the solutions to the worst kinds of suffering. Unlike moral prescriptions, which go against all actions — whether intentional or not — that cause the others pain, that is, against all evil actions, legal prescriptions threat to inflict a certain amount of pain to prevent even greater suffering; the law, therefore, does not so much seek to eliminate suffering completely as to minimise it through the exertion of the minimum amount of violence. Apart from this, everything suggests that for Golding, as for Schopenhauer, neither morality nor the law can alter our innate character, but they can change our conduct insofar as they impose a careful selection of the objects by means of which we can satisfy our appetites.

From Schopenhauer's perspective, it is easy to explain why the legal threat of sanctions appeals to the individual's egoism: I comply with the law only because I want to preserve my well-being. In the case of moral prescriptions, the ground of their effectiveness is egoism too: I comply with moral prescriptions because I do not want to suffer the pangs of conscience. The problem is to explain how moral conscience appears in the first place. It can be argued that, though moral sanctions *no longer* need to be associated with external disciplinary measures, they have originated in the threat of punitive measures. Schopenhauer never says that this is the case, but according to Freud the genesis of moral conscience is a two-stage process: first comes the renunciation of our potentially dangerous intentions 'owing to fear of aggression by the *external* authority', and then comes 'the erection of an *internal* authority' and the renunciation of those intentions 'owing to fear of conscience' (Freud 1995: 759). In a nutshell: 'The aggressiveness of conscience keeps up the aggressiveness of the authority' (759). Freud's account is useful for us because it throws light on the relationship between morality and egoism in Golding's novels, and because it does so without contradicting Schopenhauer's understanding of morality and legality.

3.1.3.2.1. Moral Repression in *The Inheritors*

The conflict between the People and the New People in *The Inheritors* can be explained in two different ways: either as the clash between different innate characters or as the clash between two groups that exercise moral repression more or less effectively, the former being, paradoxically, the apparently more primitive People. In contrast to

previous readings of the *The Inheritors* — and to Golding's sporadic comments thereon — I shall interpret the differences between the People and the New People not so much in terms of nature as of culture, not of biology but of social and moral rules. My reading will therefore focus not only on the quantitative differences in their natures but also in the qualitative differences in their conceptions of society.

The general trend among previous critics of the novel has been to analyse in qualitative terms the contrast between the meek People and the conquering New People — a race whose physical and intellectual features seem to be exactly the same as ours, and whose mentality and social organisation also have many features in common with ours. In his ground-breaking stylistic analysis of the contrasting mind-styles associated with each group, Michael A.K. Halliday argues that the People's and the New People's mentalities are completely different. For him, these differences have to do with the People's peculiar intellectual configuration:

> At first, and for more than nine-tenths of the book … we share the life of the people and their view of the world, and also their view of the [New People's] tribe: for a long passage … the account of their doings is confined within the limits of Lok's understanding, requiring at times a considerable effort of 'interpretation'. At the very end … the standpoint shifts to … that of the [New People's] tribe, the inheritors, and the world becomes recognizable as our own, or something very like it (Halliday 1971: 348).

Halliday attributes this difference to the fact that, in those passages that describe the People's actions, thoughts and language, 'there is no cause and effect' (Halliday 1971: 353). The People 'do not act on the things around them; they act within the limitations imposed by the things' (354).

A similar difference has been signalled by other critics, in whose opinion it conditions the People's relationship with their environment. Since they do not employ expressions like *with which* or *by means of*, they are allegedly devoid of instrumental reason (see Nelson 1986: 307 ff.). Therefore, the People 'cannot gain mastery over nature', and 'they will always be controlled by chance and by their environment' (Boyd 1988: 38). By contrast, the New People 'will go to any lengths … in order to get on, to gain control of the world', an impulse that includes the ambition to 'gain ascendancy over other creatures' inside and outside the group (39).

According to this line of interpretation, the intellectual differences have direct moral effects. After observing that 'it is generally the self-seeking, the aggressive, the ambitious and the ruthless who gain and hold earthly power', Boyd notes that in *The Inheritors* 'the meek and gentle' People are murdered by the New People, 'who possess the monstrous and brutal qualities of ruthlessness and self-interest which will enable them to survive' (Boyd 1988: 24). Translating Boyd's comments into the terms that I have been using so far, it can be said that the New People prevail over the People not simply because they are rational but also because they are egoistic, perhaps even malignant.

Unfortunately, this sharp separation between the obtuse, meek People and the ingenious, destructive New People is unconvincing. It is true that the differences between the styles through which the People's and the New People's consciousness are presented are immediately noticeable. As recent stylistic analyses show, the language associated with the People relies on 'short, simple sentences'; it refers to 'body parts and inanimate objects as agents, and as subjects of mental process and perception verbs, and [of] intransitive verbs of motion'; it presents 'inanimate objects with attributes normally associated with animate beings'; it comprises 'a small, concentrated, peculiarly distributed vocabulary of short words', a high proportion of which are 'concrete, physical nouns and verbs' used repeatedly; it lacks 'words referring to modern cultural phenomena and activities' and instead uses 'natural object words ... to refer to artifacts' (Clark 2009: 190). But those same analyses prove that 'it is not true that the Neanderthal world as a whole lacks cause and effect, nor that the people cannot act as agents in their world, as Halliday claims' (cited in Clark 2009: 189). Two passages will illustrate this point. When Fa remembers the New One sleeping on her back, we are told that 'She did not fear that he would fall *because* she felt his hands gripping her hair at the neck and his feet holding the hair farther down her neck but she trotted softly *so that* he should not wake'; and when the People find that the log that they have always used to cross a nearby stream has disappeared, we are told that Ha 'had thought that he must make sure the log was still in position *because* if the water had taken the log ... then the people would have to trek a day's journey round the swamp and that *meant* danger' (Golding 1955: 12, 14; my italics). The People are just as able to establish cause-and effect connections as the New People.

To be sure, from Schopenhauer's point of view, the ability to establish causal connections would not itself be a token of rationality: insofar as they are egocentric, all conscious beings — whether human or not — perceive the world in causal terms. Therefore, it can be assumed that in *The Inheritors* the hyenas with which the People are occasionally forced to compete for dead meat are not rational, yet they impose on the world the same causality as the People — and as the New People, for that matter. Actually, Schopenhauer would say that for the hyenas the world has the same basic temporal, spatial and causal characteristics as for the People and the New People. Thus, causality alone would not take neither the People nor the New People beyond the sphere of non-rational feeling.

It is certainly true that the People's consciousness relies more on non-rational feelings — *pictures*, as they are called in the novel — than on rational concepts, and Lok sometimes can find 'no words' to 'formulate' his feelings (Golding 1955: 78). For the most part, they do 'not need to speak' to communicate with each other, because they can share their feelings in other ways (12). However, the People do resort to words when they want to express particularly complex thoughts, for example when Fa asks a question of Ha and he answers her 'with his mouth' (13), or when, trying to tell Lok what has happened to the other member's of the People, we are told how 'Fa pressed her hands on her head and gave her pictures words' (114). Another token of rationality is their awareness of the pastness of the past and of the futureness of the future, and their creative representation of alternative states of affairs. Liku has a toy, a woman-shaped root that they identify with the mother goddess Oa, and the Old man repeats the mythical narratives composed by their ancestors to explain their and the world's history. They use stones to cut branches, boil meat in water to make a broth that serves as a medicine. They can make discoveries that go beyond their own and the New People's stage of development, as proved by Fa's idea of growing plants instead of gathering them (if Fa's idea is not implemented it is because of the Old Woman's fear of that kind of innovation, and because she is killed soon afterwards). They can devise strategies to snatch Liku and the New One form their captors. When the Old Man dies and Lok becomes the male leader of the group, even he, who until this moment has proved less than bright, ends up describing the New People by means of arresting

similes. Moreover, the People can also resort to aggression, as proved by the way in which Lok and Fa fight to rescue Liku and the New One.[56]

As far as the New People are concerned, they are just as capable of non-rational feelings, including that of compassion, as their foes. They can feel, for example, the beauty of objects, as Tuami's aesthetic insight at the end of the novel shows; more generally, they cannot but be able to have the feelings on which their rational concepts rest. Moreover, they can be loving and tender as well, as illustrated by Vivani's motherly play with the New One, and they collaborate in the activities of exploring and sailing.

As shown by their intellectual powers and their moral dispositions, the respective natures of the People and the New People are not so different: the People are rational beings, and to some extent they are egoistical beings too; like the New People, they can be creative as well as destructive. Why then is the impression that we get from them so different? In part because of their lack of advanced tools and their reliance on concepts that may strike us as primitive in comparison with the New People's (let alone with ours). In part because they do not resort to violence until they are attacked by the New People. In part, as we shall presently see, because of the contrasting ways in which both groups understand social organisation and government, on the one hand, and moral rules, on the other.

As regards the way in which they are organised as a group, the qualitative difference is that the People are not ruled by a man alone, but by a man and a woman. As Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor note, among the New People the relationships between men and women are strictly determined by dominance and subordination: 'The society

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56 In doing so Fa and Lok are merely exercising their right to self-defence, which is itself a token of egoism. In Schopenhauer, this right is founded on the idea that, if we want to preserve our well-being, 'we are under no obligation to endure wrongs at the hands of others, such that we are entitled to use force or cunning in order to repel any attempt to wrong us' (Jordan 2009: 173). Therefore, 'if the will of another denies my will, as this appears in my body and in the use of its powers for its preservation ... then I can c*ompel it* [i.e. the other will] ... to desist from this denial'; and so 'I have a *right* to deny that other person's denial with what force is necessary to suppress it; and ... this may extend even to the killing of the other person whose encroachment as pressing external violence can be warded off with a counteraction somewhat stronger than this' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 340). This is the only exception to the state's monopoly of lawful violence.

[of the New People] is wholly man-directed and the women are inferior', while the People see both sexes as 'equally precious' (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 76). The New People have a single chief, Marlan, who acts both as the priest of the stag-centred religion and as their guide in secular affairs. By contrast, the People's men and women are equals, and the group has two leaders: the Old Man, who decides on such matters as when they must migrate from the coast to the inland forest, and the Old Woman, who holds the secrets of a religious creed centred on the mother goddess Oa. As Janet Burroway points out, the distribution of male and female roles is not hierarchical: as a result of dividing their tasks according to 'a "separate but equal" role-assignment', the Old Man has secular authority and the Old Woman has religious authority (Burroway 1981: 65). 'Each accepts the other's authority in these spheres, and there is no cowardice either in man's trembling before Oa or in a woman's submission in a task' (65).[57] This division of roles is respected until the Old Man's falls ill and dies; in the absence of a male with the necessary experience, the Old Woman begins to take on new responsibilities.

The New People's religion and government are based on Marlan's authoritarianism and his subordinates' fear. In contrast to the Old Man and the Old Woman's traditional authority, Marlan's power depends on the force of violence, constraint (mainly in the form of sanctions) and manipulation. This is one of the reasons why the New People's hierarchical organisation — only reluctantly accepted by the subordinates — is always in danger of being overthrown, whereas the New People never question the legitimacy of the Old Man and the Old Woman's authority.

Apart from the division of power within the People, which disappears as soon as Lok and Fa are left alone after the Old Man and the Old Woman's deaths, the other qualitative difference between the two groups — one which is of even greater consequence — has to do with the moral rules that they follow. In this respect, the clue lies in an apparently trivial episode that precedes Lok and Fa's attack to the New People. Prior to attempting to save the New One, they get drunk with the New People's

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57 A similar division of power is later found in 'Clonk, Clonk', one of the short stories collected in *The Scorpion God* (1971) and in *The Double Tongue* (1995). In all of these cases social life is directed by the 'patriarchal government' and the 'matriarchal religion' (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 58). Translating these into the terminology that we have been using here, we can speak of the physical authority of men and the metaphysical authority of women.

mead, and suddenly start 'pulling and shouting at each other' in a 'loud and savage' way (Golding 1955: 201). Lok feels 'furiously angry', but he also feels that he has 'the power of the new people in him', as if he were 'one of them' (201, 202). After striking Fa with a stick, as he has seen the New People do with Liku, he suddenly becomes 'frightened' (203). Before falling asleep, it occurs to him that 'Fa must cut off his finger' (204). The idea is not original either, as it repeats one of the sacrificial rituals of the People's which Lok and Fa have just witnessed. The episode corroborates the view that, as far as their capacity for evil is concerned, the People and the New People are not so different after all. Though it is tempting to argue that Lok's behaviour here is triggered by a dangerous combination of alcohol and a proneness to imitation, it is clear that to act in that way something apart from alcohol must have made that imitation possible. Why is it that other Golding characters such as Simon never resort to violence?, and why is it that Lok has so far refrained from it? The answer to these questions is that Lok is by no means as compassionate as Simon, and that he usually appears to be more compassionate than he really is because of the moral rules that he normally complies with.

I would argue that alcohol has awakened the potentialities that lay dormant in Lok, but it would be more accurate to say that it has merely relaxed the curbs that prevented those potentialities from coming to light. This would indicate that the difference between both groups lies in the People's choice of objects to satisfy their desires. The People are not only used to following their compassionate feelings — even at their own peril, as when Lok feels irresistibly attracted to the New People and runs to greet them — but also to controlling their egoism and malice so that they will not be a threat to anyone. They prefer, for example, not to eat meat except from dead animals: if they do not hurt the animals themselves 'there is no blame' in using their carcasses (Golding 1955: 37). Within their group, they always prefer collaboration over competition, though they could well do otherwise. Finally, they prefer a strict separation between masculine and feminine roles, but only because there is a rule in this respect, and when Fa proposes that Lok should go and find out who the New People are, the Old Woman chides her for taking on the masculine role of planning actions: '"A woman for Oa and a man for the pictures in his head. Let Lok speak"' (70). It is these and the New People's contrary preferences, dictated by pre-existing rules, that explain the divergences between their respective behaviours, rather than the alleged distance between their intellectual and moral natures.

The People's choices show that they obey strict moral principles, and the description of the Old Man and the Old Woman as figures of authority shows where moral repression comes from. The People's two leaders are portrayed as having 'a remote stillness' in them that leaves the other member of the People 'humble and abashed'; they are 'loved' as well as 'dreaded', but always 'without fear' (Golding 1955: 109). The love that the others feel for them is not without relevance: love also plays a crucial role in Freud's conception of morality. Freud's starting point is the condition of 'helplessness and dependence upon others' in which human beings find themselves, especially in their childhood; in such a state, one tries to avoid whatever the others may find reprehensible or punishable, in other words, 'whatever causes one to be threatened with loss of love' (Freud 1995: 757). Loosing the other's love would threaten one's well-being:

> If he loses the love of another person upon whom he is dependent, he also ceases to be protected from a variety of dangers. Above all, he is exposed to the danger that this stronger person will show his superiority in the form of punishment (Freud 1995: 757).

This account of morality is based on what Schopenhauer calls *egoism*. The function of moral regulations is to dissuade people from acting in such a way that someone else may get harmed. This is applies even to predominantly malignant beings, who take the greatest pleasure in harming others: even in them there must be a certain amount of egoism (as is clear from the fact that they too strive to satisfy their basic physiological needs), and it is to this that morality appeals.

The younger members of the People do not fear the Old Man and the Old Woman in the same way as Marlan is feared by the rest of the New People. The old couple do not employ manipulation to get what they want; they do not threat the rest of their family with violence, nor with the promise of material rewards and physical sanctions. In the last instance, Lok, Fa and the others fear losing the old couple's love and being unable to face the challenge of survival without them. And it is the group's moral sense, rooted

in the love and reverential respect that the other members feel for their elders, that prevents them from harming each other and keeps the group together.[58]

In contrast to the People, who believe that community is foremost and the individual comes second, the members of the New People are fiercely individualistic. They are alienated from each other and from the rest of the world. When the People discover them they are encamped on an island, guarding themselves against the world across the water. This is why Boyd has described the New People as the 'island people', a collection of individuals 'cut off by mistrust, fear and aggression from nature and from one another'; contrary to what John Donne thought possible, but in line with the extreme isolation seen in *Pincher Martin*, within their group '*each* man is an island' that sees everything and anyone else as a threat (Boyd 1988: 35). Among them competition and aggression often proves to be stronger than collaboration.

The People's morality results in a very different behaviour: everything seems to be permitted as long as it is not detrimental to the group or to any of its members. They are dominated by a striking sense of togetherness, mutual dependence and solidarity. As Lok says, '"People understand each other"' (Golding 1955: 72). Before his encounter with the New People, Lok has no doubts that he is 'one of the people, tied to them with a thousand invisible strings' (104). This attachment to his family changes due to his contact with the newcomers: when Lok smells and hears the New People in the forest, he is suddenly seized with terror because he feels 'cut off and no longer one of the people', as if his identification with the strangers 'had changed him' and now 'he was different' from his relatives (78). The further he moves away from the People the stronger his feeling is that the strings that bind him to them are 'not the ornament of life but its substance', such that 'If they broke, a man would die' (78). As he discovers after all of his relatives have been killed, '"It is bad to be alone. It is very bad to be

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58 In his reading of *The Inheritors* (see Sugimura 2008), Yasunori Sugimura relates the evocative language and the social organisation associated with the People to Julia Kristeva's *semiotic* mode of representation, which is predominantly feminine and communal, and the language and the social organisation associated with the New People to the predominantly masculine and individualistic *symbolic* mode (see Kristeva 1986: 92). This kind of analysis can be developed into a more general examination of Golding's oeuvre along feminist lines. In the Conclusion I point out some points that such an examination could deal with.

alone'" (196). Returning to the cave where his ancestors are buried, he lies down and lets himself die. As he has always suspected, loneliness leads directly to death.

3.1.3.2.2. Moral and Legal Repression in *Lord of the Flies*

We have seen that, for Golding, the only realistic solutions to violence and suffering that society can offer are morality and legality. We have also seen Freud's view that the respect for moral rules within a group is rooted in egoism. This section will deal with the disastrous consequences that a relaxation of moral standards has in *Lord of the Flies*, and with Golding's defence of legal repression.

In his interview with Keating, Golding confirms both the importance of moral prescriptions and its possible ineffectiveness: 'I think that … attitude of voluntary curbs put on one's own nature is the only possible way for humanity'; nevertheless, since it is impossible to know whether 'an adult society … can put sufficient curbs on our own natures to prevent it from breaking down', it is impossible 'to say that it's going to work out, or survive' (in Keating 1988: 211).

One striking example of such failure of morality is the way in which the children's society collapses in *Lord of the Flies*. At first, the children take it for granted that decent English people are immune from the evil to which the rest of people are prone. Not only are the few rules that they lay to organise themselves insufficient to prevent aggression, but the norms are rendered ineffective by the boys' failure to establish the appropriate repressive mechanisms to enforce them. The castaways must rely only on their own moral resources to control the satisfaction of their desires, yet without adult authority the repressive power of their conscience soon wears away.

The island where the action of *Lord of the Flies* is staged is a tropical paradise: 'Flower and fruit grew together on the same tree and everywhere was the scent of ripeness and the booming of a million bees at pasture' (Golding 1954: 55). If it becomes a hellish place it is because of the children's lack of restraint. This change does not occur all of a sudden, but as a process of gradual degeneration. At the beginning of the novel, the children can still feel the influence of adult morality. When he and Roger destroy the little ones' sandcastles on the beach, the narrator tells us how, 'though there was no parent to let fall a heavy hand, Maurice still felt the unease of wrongdoing'

(Golding 1954: 59). Similarly, when Roger starts throwing stones at another boy, he misses him on purpose because his arm is 'conditioned by ... civilization' (61). As we know, Roger eventually becomes the hunters' torturer and executioner. His evolution is bound up with Jack's. Though at first Jack does not hide his enthusiasm about norms, suggesting that they should have '"Lots of rules"' (32), he is the first to violate them when he discovers that killing pigs with his hunters is more entertaining than keeping the fire. When Ralph reminds him of the rules, he exclaims: '"Bollocks the rules! We're strong — we hunt!"' (92). After this, things can only go downhill. The community splits into two groups — the bloodthirsty hunters and those that strive to maintain the adults' standards of civilisation. As the story develops, the latter are hunted down one by one. This kind of killing — so Golding's argument goes — takes places when there is no one around to 'implement' the law and to punish those who flout it (in Keating 1988: 211).

The outcome bears a striking resemblance to Schopenhauer's picture of what human life would be without an adequate legislation enforced by the state:

> At bottom, man is a hideous wild beast. We know him only as bridled and tamed, a state that is called civilization; and so we are shocked by the occasional outbursts of his nature. But when and where the padlock and chain of law and order and once removed and anarchy occurs, he then shows himself to be what he is (Schopenhauer 2000b: 211).

It is because there is a state, founded on a collective desire the minimise violence and suffering, that 'the boundless egoism of almost all, the malice of many' does not lead to harmful actions: 'compulsion has bound all' (Schopenhauer 2009: 188). So great is the illusion of meekness created by the influence of the state that when it is broken we can hardly believe the consequences:

> in individual cases where the power of the state is unable to protect or is evaded, and we see the insatiable greed, ... the spiteful malice of human beings appearing, we often recoil in horror and raise a hue and cry, thinking we have been attacked by a monster never before seen; but without the compulsion of laws and the necessity of civil honour such occurrences would be the order of the day. You have to read crime stories and descriptions of states of anarchy to recognize what, in a moral respect, the human being really is. The thousands that swarm around one another before our eyes in peaceful intercourse should be regarded as just so many tigers and wolves whose bite is made safe by a strong muzzle. So if we think of the power of the state being removed, i.e. that

muzzle being thrown off, anyone with insight recoils trembling before the scene that we could then expect (Schopenhauer 2009: 188).

Schopenhauer believes that the law is necessary because the moral appeal to 'conscience' has 'little effect' on most people's conduct (Schopenhauer 2009: 188). Golding is of the same opinion. Being questioned about the violent conduct of the hunters in *Lord of the Flies*, he says to Keating that 'if you don't curb yourself, then this is what will happen to you' (in Keating 1988: 212). He believes that the collapse of the children's society results from humankind's natural tendencies, but he suggests that 'it is possible society will not break down' if we keep our nature under strict control (211). Sometimes this control consists in offering individuals alternative ways of fulfilling their desires. In this respect, what Golding says to Biles about Jack, whom he presents as the paradigm of sadistic malice, could be equally applied to Roger or to any malignant character in his other novels: 'If you can give a boy a box of paints and if he does go along with the box of paints, instead of smashing shopwindows he will paint pictures. You have diverted him' (in Biles 1970: 48). This diversion can be in the form of moral prescriptions, but Golding immediately shifts from morality to legality. If one writes out rules for children, he says, 'they will abide by the rules, provided the rules give them, perhaps, authority'; and if children are induced to satisfy their desires 'legally, that is a triumph for everybody' (48). It is thus that even the evil behaviour of 'pathological killers' can be 'canalized in a good direction or, at least, in a possible direction, after all' (47). In this way 'the hangman *can* be integrated into society' (48). In Jack and Roger's case, Golding says that they could become police officers, members of the riot squad: 'you give a cop with sadistic views a club and you give him laws to go by, and he will become a good member of society instead of a bad one' (46). According to Schopenhauer's moral theory, the malignant *desires* of sadistic policemen would still be morally reprehensible. However, what matters to Golding is that — in a democratic system at least — their *actions* would be under strict legal control and at the service of a greater good.

Society can put limits to the infliction of pain by allowing sadists to apply the physical punishments contemplated by the law. This implies the need to admit that criminals must be punished by the state's legal apparatus. It is thus that 'the ordered society … enables us to show our bright side' (in Biles 1970: 44). When social systems

forget their repressive function, they become 'detached from the real nature of man' (Golding 1965: 87). Elaborating on the idea that Jack's behaviour should have been prevented or at least corrected, Golding wonders: 'Why have we got police forces?' (44). Insofar as it is intended as an answer to this question, the first half of *Lord of the Flies* can be read, as Woodward points out, a case for strict law and order. It shows that, even when there are rules, without 'the power to enforce them, incipient democracy breaks down' (Woodward 1997: 94–5).[59]

For Golding, as for Schopenhauer, historiography is a kind of self-knowledge, an 'attempt to see how things have become what they are, where they went wrong, and where right, that our only hope lies of having some control over own future' (Golding 1965: 90–1). On this view, the lesson to learn from history is that, when a given member of society acts in a disruptive way, he or she should be restrained by the other members. Speaking to Kermode, Golding says:

> I think that ... arbitrary checks ... are nothing but the fruit of bitter experience of people who are adult enough to realise, 'Well, I, I myself am vicious and would like to kill that man, and he is vicious and would like to kill me, and therefore, it is sensible that we should both have an arbitrary scheme of things in which three other people come in and separate us' (in Kermode 1988: 218–9).

According to Woodward, Jack should be 'hunted down as a public enemy' (1997: 94). If, despite this kind of legal measures, Jack managed to set up his own bellicose tribe he should be 'assassinated by a CIA, or incarcerated in a penal colony' before his behaviour got out of control (94). The second half of *Lord of the Flies* shows that, if this did not suffice, Ralph's group should be prepared to engage in direct confrontation: 'England was forced to go to war against Hitler, and Golding would certainly agree that such action was required' (94).[60]

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59 As Talbot points out in the Sea Trilogy, the power to enforce the law must remain in the hands of the majority, otherwise it will not be effective: 'A minority, even one possessing the natural authority of office, cannot guarantee obedience in making the body politic punish itself!' (Golding 1991: 646). This is why, when the shipmen abandon their duty to protect themselves from the fury of the sea, the captain is forced to let his subordinates' neglect go unpunished.

In Woodward's opinion, Golding's lesson is that sometimes 'the democratic system must be bent in order to perpetuate the system', the obvious problem being when to stop bending it so it will not break (1997: 94). Though this recourse to force involves leaving aside any naive prejudices against violence, it must be employed judiciously so as to protect democracy without destroying it. As Spitz points out, since societies need to maintain a police forced and armies, they are in a double bind:

> We are caught, then, in a pathetic dilemma: we cannot seem to do without force, and in this respect every society runs the risk of being oppressive; but we cannot do without justice, and in this respect force becomes not an end but a means, an instrument in the service of right (Spitz 1970: 32).

Golding takes it for granted, as he says to Keating, that 'the democratic way is the way in which to move', and adds that 'democracy is moving in the right direction' (in Keating 1988: 210). But he cannot ignore the constant perils that democracy must face:

> it seems to me that a democracy has inherent weaknesses in it — built-in weaknesses. You can't give people freedom without weakening society as an implement of war, if you like, and so this is very much like a sheep among wolves. It's ... a question ... as to whether democracy can survive and remain what it is. Every time democracy pulls itself together and says, 'Well, now I'm being threatened by a totalitarian regime', the first thing it has to do is give up some of its own principles. In England during the Second World War we had to give up a tremendous number of principles in order to achieve the one pointed unity which could possibly withstand Hitler. It's possible to look at the question in this way and say, 'Is the remedy not as bad as the disease?' I don't know (in Keating 1988: 210).

The obvious problem for democracy, then, is to strike a balance between irresponsible leniency and totalitarian repression, as both increase rather than reduce the overall amount of suffering, thus going against Schopenhauer's ideal of applying repression

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60 Even Fa and Lok, the survivors of the meek People in *The Inheritors*, eventually resort to aggression and order to defend themselves against the New People and to rescue little Liku and the New One. It is obvious that the reader's judgement of them is no more negative than before because of this new behaviour than before. Given our knowledge of their technological inferiority, we cannot but see their efforts as heroic.

locally to control violence globally. *Lord of the Flies* does not provide a solution to this problem. The reason why the children's parents are waging a global war is not entirely clear. The novel does not give any details in this respect, but we may speculate that it is because they have not been severe enough with their enemies, or, alternatively, because they have been too forceful to begin with. (The problem with the second explanation is that it would imply a complete disassociation between the democratic ideology, which the children inherit from their parents, and the latter's behaviour, which would be characterised by an undemocratic excess of violence.) In either case, the fact remains that in the beginning the children's murderous violence does not spring from an organised exertion of force, but from the lack of it.

3.1.4. 'Change Rather than Progress': History and the Impossibility of Utopia

For Golding, all societies depend on the innate characters of their individual members. This means that, despite the apparent changes that may take place, the essence of history cannot be understood in terms of progress, that is, morally speaking, as the triumph of compassion. However, his novels show that, though the innate characters of the majority are egoistic and malignant, enduring societies are anything but helpless to deal with the threats that could destroy them. We have seen that their response involves moral and, above all, legal repression, that is, a measure of controlled violence. In this section we shall see that for Golding the tenor of history is anti-utopian. We shall also see that the rejection of utopia has been taken to be a token of Golding's pessimism and political conservatism. Finally, we shall see that the grounds on which Golding rejects utopia in the essay 'Utopias and Antiutopias' do not coincide with the characterisation of human nature that has so far emerged from his novels.

Because it is rooted in human nature, which cannot be altered, Golding sees the essential characteristics of history as repeating themselves over and over again. Given that the nature of most people is egoistic and even malignant, historiography can be seen as a record of numberless acts of cruelty. History, Golding says to Baker, is 'really no more than a chronicle of original sin' (a sin linked, as we have seen, to the egocentrism that makes egoism and malice possible), and characterised, if anything, by

apparent 'change rather than progress' (in Baker 1982: 158). This view coincides with Schopenhauer's remark, already examined, that despite the superficial changes in customs history always has the same violent tenor. In his reading of *The Inheritors*, Baker states that the technical advances have not served to improve human nature, adding that 'We are today essentially what we were in the past — heroic and sick, enisled and afraid' (Baker 1965: 19).

The idea that history repeats itself is voiced by Talbot halfway through the Sea Trilogy,: "'I have studied history as much as I may. There will be no change'", at least not if that means making human beings virtuous (Golding 1991: 336). By the end of his voyage, the Prettimans will have given ample reason to question this assertion. The utopian prospect, which is indeed a crucial component of the political vision conveyed by the trilogy, must be counted among those later elements added by Golding to his initial stance. However, Golding's previous novels generally bear out the novelist's rejection of utopian forms of social organisation. It does not matter if the events recounted are set on a tropical island, as in *Lord of the Flies*; in a prehistoric forest, as in *The Inheritors*; in the North Atlantic in the Second World War, as in *Pincher Martin*; in the English Middle Ages, as in *The Spire*; in the years between the First World War and the 1970s, in England and in other Western countries, as in *The Pyramid*, *Darkness Visible* and *The Paper Men*. Most of the events that take place in these settings resemble each other by virtue of the egoistic and malignant impulses behind them. Despite the superficial differences, they are all manifestations — mediated by the majority of people's egocentric consciousness — of a force that takes neither morality nor legality into consideration.[61] Even in those cases in which those

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61 Outside the novels, other texts confirm this sombre view of history. In the essay 'Digging for Pictures', Golding tells us about his passion for archaeology, warning against the tendency to focus on the past in order to 'escape from a corrupt present' (Golding 1965: 68). In his opinion, if we do so we run the risk of seeing in the remains from the past 'what we want them to be, rather than the truth' (68). Thus, for example, he confesses that sometimes, having discovered what seems to be the remains of a family, he has to suppress the thought that they 'could not match our wickedness' because they lived in 'the days of innocence' (69). But in view of the strange position of one of the skeletons that he has unearthed — 'One arm twisted behind her back, and her legs ... splayed' — he cannot avoid the suspicion that he has dug up the scene of 'a prehistoric murder' (70).

desires can be checked by means of repression the situation does not improve, for repression, even in the case of the People in *The Inheritors*, is just another manifestation of the egoistic and malignant desires that prevail in human beings: as they want to survive, they set up institutions of moral condemnation and legal punishment.

As Crawford remarks, in Golding's novels there is a clear connection 'between the "perennial" and the "political"', and they 'privilege "diagnosis" of the human condition … over and above engagement with and reference to contemporary social, political, and historical phenomena' (Crawford 2002: 112–3). In an early reflection on the duties of the literary writer, Golding describes himself as someone that treats 'current affairs' as 'only the expressions of the basic human condition where his true business lies'; in describing human beings not in an everyday social setting but from the standpoint of eternity, he 'is committed to looking for the root of the disease [of human viciousness] instead of describing the symptoms' (Golding 1957: 817). That is why his novels have been seen, for instance by Crawford, as politically conservative: Golding's 'pessimistic view of "the human condition" suggests that nothing [essential] will change in the future and militates against political intervention. It marks him as a small *c* conservative pragmatist' (Crawford 2002: 235). This conservatism explains why many of his novels, starting with *Lord of the Flies*, reject utopia in favour of 'a pessimistic dystopian form' (46).

Actually, the reasons why Golding dismisses utopia in his fiction are nor exactly the same as the ones that he adduces in the essay entitled 'Utopias and Antiutopias', where he presents his views on the history of humankind and on its possible future. The problem, he says in an attempt to explain what it is that separates human societies from perfection, is that utopia can only offer a 'changeless' ideal (Golding 1984a: 178). Comparing 'any society of living things' to a man riding a bicycle, Golding expresses his conviction that 'if at any point between the beginning and end of his journey he stops moving and does not get off the bicycle he will fall off it' (178). Just as 'the bicycle that stops as in a snapshot, and no longer relies on *the balance between change and stability*, will fall on the road', so a utopian community 'would fall clean off the world and vanish with the dinosaurs' (179; my italics). Translated into the moral terms that I have been using, it could be said that utopian societies would succumb because, even if the egoistic and malignant satisfaction of one's desires could be eradicated (an

impossibility, given the inborn and immutable nature of its members, despite the above mention of the *homo moralis*), at the individual or collective level, this apparently desirable situation would amount to a state of moral stasis which for some reason — Golding never says why exactly — would lead directly to the collapse of the ensuing social body.

Even if we interpret Golding's defence of the need to strike a balance between change and stability as referring to the impossibility of changing human nature and simultaneous desirability of constantly improving the means of repression, so that they will be not only increasingly effective but also increasingly humane, there would something odd in saying that the existing moral stasis — i.e. the inalterable prevalence of egoism and malice — can be taken advantage of in order to make collective life better (the solution suggested by *Lord of the Flies* and Golding's comments thereon), while maintaining that the opposite kind of moral stasis — the prevalence of compassion — would necessarily destroy the community.[62] Nevertheless, in the last instance it matters very little if the dismissal of utopia in 'Utopias and Antiutopias' fails to convince, because this failure does not affect the criticism expressed in many of Golding's novels, according to which, if human nature cannot be changed, neither can the moral structure of society no matter how much, or how well, repression is applied.

3.1.5. Cosmic Optimism: Beyond the Knowable World

In the preceding I concentrated on Golding's characterisation of the knowable world. I have argued that according to Golding human beings can be conscious of the world not only physically — when they grasp material objects — but also metaphysically. He also believes that something may exist outside the limits of human consciousness. This unfathomable dimension is what I called, in my overview of Schopenhauer's

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62 Alternatively, Golding could have suggested something different, namely, that utopias cannot survive because their greater reliance on compassion renders them helpless before any possible threats. The difficulty here is that utopias are described as motionless to begin with, therefore no such threats can arise from within. They might arise from without, but this is a situation which Golding does not contemplate in 'Utopias and Antiutopias' and which has nothing to do with the lack of movement.

philosophy, the unknowable thing-in-itself. Unlike Schopenhauer, Golding sometimes uses the term *universe* in a special sense, to designate the physical side of the knowable world, and he pits *matter* against *spirit*, the latter of which corresponds to a dimension encompassing both what Schopenhauer calls the metaphysical side of the world and the unknowable thing-in-itself. Moreover, Golding also speaks of the cosmos, which comprises the material and spiritual sides of our world. For the sake of clarity, I repeat here the table summarising the relations between all of these planes:

Schopenhauer		Golding	
knowable world	physical dimension	material dimension (*universe*)	cosmos
	metaphysical dimension (including the essential will)	spiritual dimension	
unknowable thing-in-itself			

Table 4: Planes of Human Existence in Schopenhauer and Golding

In this section I shall focus on the way in which Golding acknowledges the existence of the unfathomable thing-in-itself, especially in his writings from the late 1970s and early 1980s. Admitting the existence of something that can never be known gives Golding the opportunity of declaring himself, in the non-fictional pieces published at the time, an optimist. Responding to the charge that his pessimism is excessive, he points out that he is indeed pessimistic, but only as far as the knowable universe is concerned; regarding the entire cosmos, which includes the sphere beyond all possible knowledge, he describes himself as an optimist.

Despite the impossibility of knowing the thing-in-itself, human beings have never refrained from speculating about it. Some of these theories are fuelled by religious faith, though this does not always need to be the case. In two of his later non-fictional pieces, the Nobel lecture and 'Belief and Creativity', Golding indulges himself in this kind of exercise, thanks to which he can offer a new perspective on his alleged pessimism. Golding's position is that, if this is the worst possible world, then other worlds must also exist that are much better than ours.

In the acceptance lecture that he delivers upon receiving the Nobel prize for literature, in 1983, Golding confesses that, despite the widespread image of him as a thoroughly pessimistic writer, he does not see himself as a bearded prophet of gloom. Instead, he prefers to be described, for all possible qualifications, as an optimist. To clear his stance out, he suggests an ad hoc differentiation between the universe — the reality 'which the scientist constructs by a set of rules' (Golding 1984a: 204) — and the cosmos. This is a distinction that also appears in another crucial text of the same period, 'Belief and Creativity', where he says that the universe comprises only the physical world which we know through the telescope and the microscope 'is only part' of what exists; as for the cosmos, he defines it as the totality comprising both the knowable world and an unfathomable dimension lying beyond all possible knowledge (201). On the basis of this distinction, Golding presents himself in both pieces as 'a universal pessimist but a cosmic optimist' (201, 203).[63] His optimism stems from the belief that, though the universe that we inhabit is a veritable hell, in that part of the cosmos that we can never get to know 'There must be an infinite number' of worlds: some as ugly and sad as our own hell, and some so beautiful and joyous that they are difficult to imagine (201). Though our world is composed of an unequal mixture of 'transient beauties and horrors' (with the emphasis on the horrific elements), Golding is confident that outside the sphere of human consciousness 'there is a Good which is ultimate and absolute' (202). At this point, Golding seems to find consolation in the thought that other conscious beings might be living in worlds to which we have no knowledge but where suffering would by no means be the rule.

When he describes the existence of parallel worlds that are immensely beautiful and joyous, Golding's argument — if an argument it is — takes on an unmistakable religious dimension, as his those worlds coincide with what some religious people would call heaven. But given that, in his opinion, the best life that we can imagine is life in a parallel world that might exist or not, and to which we have not access, those readers with a pragmatic turn of mind may have difficulties to share his optimism.

Golding may have been aware of these objections. Given the way in which he presents his basic stance — which coincides with Schopenhauer's presentation of his

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63 This kind of assertion is not new in Golding. In an interview given in the early 1960s, he states that he is 'basically' and 'by nature an optimist' despite being 'by intellectual conviction a pessimist' (in Keating 1988: 211).

own — cosmic speculation is, apart from repression, the only reason for hope that he can admit. He does not realise that the possibility of metaphysical consciousness, in all its varieties, means that the sombre picture of human life that he has been offering — as dominated by egocentrism and tending to evil — is not entirely accurate. Accordingly, in his attempt to find some reason for optimism in the known world, he feels the need, as his literary career unfolds, to modify the most pessimistic aspects of this basic stance. I analyse these modifications, as a result of which his novels took a more optimistic tone, in the next chapter.

3.2. Golding's Gradual Additions to His Basic Stance: Towards Utopia

In the preceding chapter I dealt with those metaphysical themes of Golding's which coincide with Schopenhauer's, and to which Golding gives a treatment that is generally consistent with Schopenhauer's. In this chapter I shall focus on how, at a certain point in his literary career, Golding begins to give a different treatment to three of these themes: the chance of free choice understood as the individual's freedom to decide what to will (a moral issue), the possibility of knowing the essence of the world (an epistemological issue) and the chance of utopia (a socio-political issue). Golding's critics have been more concerned with Golding's determinism, essentialism and pessimism than with human freedom: in shunning moral determinism, Golding is forced to alter the way in which he interprets the essence of the world and the relationship that appearances have with it; additionally, free choice opens the door to a reconsideration of socio-political utopia as an ideal based on the individuals' free decision to collaborate with each other, and in the ensuing abandonment of repression. In order to analyse the moral and socio-political implications of free choice, I shall introduce some basic notions of Kant's philosophy, in particular his theory of moral norms.

From *Free Fall* to the Sea Trilogy, Golding oscillates between two ontological creeds: one is compatible with Schopenhauer's theory; the other dismisses that kind of theory as deceptive, either because it denies the individual's free choice (a possibility that *Free Fall* begins to assert), or because it denies that knowing the essence of the

world is impossible (a denial that begins to be unmistakable in *Darkness Visible*, but which was maturing for a longer time). As it turns out, Golding's new approach to these issues sometimes makes its first appearance in a text published before another text in which the old approach is still being fleshed out. Moreover, despite its growing importance the new approach never completely replaces the earlier approach. Sometimes each of these approaches appears in different texts published at about the same time, and sometimes both approaches coexist in the same text. As far as the possibility of knowing the essence of the world is concerned, for example, while in 'Fable', a piece of non-fiction dating from the early 1960s, Golding begins to cast doubts on the possibility of knowing the kernel of the world, in *The Spire*, a novel published somewhat later, he still encourages us to identify it with the essential will. As regards free choice, in *Free Fall* we find old Sammy's emphasis on the moral implications of his feeling of compassion towards sufferers and, side by side with it, his suggestion — corroborated by the novel's title — that to understand his moral trajectory the only thing that matters is the free choice to meet or shirk his duty. Something similar happens in *Darkness Visible*, where Mr Pedigree's servitude to his innate appetites appears side by side with Sophy's free decision to become a terrorist. In all these cases, the result is a juxtaposition of heterogeneous stances that cannot be brought into line with each other. Though this juxtaposition may raise suspicions about the basic world view that I reconstructed in the preceding chapter, it does not invalidate it. On the contrary, the new way in which Golding treats some of his favourite themes can only be appreciated by reference to that basic world view. My intention in this chapter is not to resolve these contradictions, but to draw attention to the reasons why they appear.

The first section of this chapter will examine the way in which Golding comes to defend the possibility of freely deciding what to will. The defence starts in *Free Fall*, where free choice is put forward as the explanation for Sammy Mountjoy's behaviour towards his girlfriend Beatrice.

The second section will address the challenge that *Darkness Visible* and the Sea Trilogy pose to the identification of the kernel of the world as the will to life. In the former novel, Sophy envisages the essence behind appearances as an entropic tendency to total exhaustion. Because of this, she feels legitimised to contribute to that goal with nihilistic violence. In the latter work, Mr Prettiman explains his view that the kernel of the world is not amoral but absolutely good. If we put the essential will to life, the

entropic tendency and the absolute good side by side, we can interpret this very abundance of explanations as a criticism not only of the inward path that Schopenhauer follows to grasp the inner kernel of the world, but also of the possibility of knowing that kernel at all. At this stage, the kind of metaphysics of nature argued for in his earlier novels is dismissed as an ideological product of psychological projection.

The third section will evaluate the feasibility of utopian solutions in a context where the possibility of free choice has been asserted and, concurrently, the possibility of knowing the essence of the world has been put into question. The discussion will focus on the Sea Trilogy, where Mr Prettiman's plan to set up a utopian community in the Australian outback is enthusiastically supported by Miss Granham but rejected by Edmund Talbot. Contrary to what happens in earlier novels, above all *The Inheritors*, here the sense of community does not depend on the realisation that all individuals share the same essence, or in the acceptance of a series of moral prescriptions that deepen that feeling of togetherness at the same time as they prevent mutual aggression, but on the free commitment that individuals with very different personalities and from very different backgrounds make to share their destinies. Neither Miss Granham's nor Talbot's decisions depend so much on their innate characters or on social constraints as on their freedom to choose what to do and where to go. Thus understood, Talbot's social and political cowardice throws light on the decisions made by Oliver, the narrator and main character of an earlier novel, *The Pyramid*.[64]

3.2.1. The Freedom to Choose what to Will in Free Fall

Though previously an advocate of moral determinism (which for him, as for Schopenhauer, means that most humans are either egoistic or malignant, and that these innate characters cannot be changed), in *Free Fall* Golding begins to contemplate the possibility of freely choosing what to will, thus overriding, if necessary, one's inborn inclinations. This amounts to the possibility of selecting one's moral rules. At this stage, the belief in an essential urge of which our needs and desires are a direct manifestation

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64 The first and third sections of this chapter develop the argument of my paper 'A Forward Look into the Past: Moral and Political Hope in William Golding's First-Person Novels' (Saavedra-Carballido 2013).

has not been abandoned yet, but the moral situation is complicated by the assertion that we are capable of free choice. If our actions result in suffering, it is our sole responsibility: if we have decided, for example, to act in such a way that our appetites can find satisfaction immediately and/or regardless of the consequences, we are the only ones to blame. This evinces a new conception of the will in Golding's works. Now the will is not (only) the seat of our appetites, which are themselves rooted in the essence of the world, but (primarily) a faculty or ability peculiar to humans and on which the individual's moral freedom depends.

This new freedom, which is more akin to Kant's philosophy than to Schopenhauer's, adds a new twist to Golding's consideration of optimism. We have seen that in his Nobel lecture Golding declares himself an optimist of sorts. In the course of the 1980s this optimism solidifies into a different literary approach. In the Foreword to the one-volume edition of the Sea Trilogy he addresses what some readers have seen as the sequence's increasing optimism. To settle the matter once and for all, he protests: 'I myself am commonly thought to be a pessimist, a diagnosis with which I heartily disagree', asserting that in writing this narrative sequence he has found himself 'less and less inclined to portray life as a hopeless affair' (Golding 1991: xi).

After *Pincher Martin,* we witness a shift away from determinism, as a result of which some of Golding's subsequent novels begin to provide a more positive view of the human condition. *Lord of the Flies*, he says, expresses all the things that he had come to believe during the Second World War; yet by the 1960s — after what he describes to Biles as 'a long and slow process' of reflection (in Biles 1970: 35) — he feels compelled to point out that he has somewhat changed his mind (see Biles 1970: 31–2; Golding 1965: 86; Golding 1984a: 99).

This new direction coincides with the abandonment of third-person narration in favour of the first-person. The shift takes place with *Free Fall* (Golding's first first-person novel, the only perspective that he will employ from *Rites of Passage* on. It seems to be no mere coincidence that the contrast between the earlier novels and the later (more optimistic) works is also a contrast between narrative perspectives: while the ambition of Golding's first three books is to cast an objective glance at what the author sees as the unchanging order of things (the innate propensity to violence and the ensuing need for moral and legal repression), in his last works he offers the subjective perspective of individuals who have had the opportunity to change the course of their

lives. Though Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor do not draw explicit attention to the adoption of the first person, yet they correctly observe that, beginning with *Free Fall*, 'the tragedy … has a before and after, we are led to examine what led up to it and what … followed' (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 138). In these novels, they go on to say, the accent falls not on 'being' a vicious person or not, but on 'becoming' one (136). The main characters in these novels have a look into their past not (only) to show readers how miserable human life can be, as the narrator's of his third-person novels usually do, but (also) to prove that our attitudes and our behaviour can be modified, and so to open the door to hope in a brighter future.

The turning point in Golding's treatment of freedom is *Free Fall*, a novel which Monod considers 'in many ways a new departure in the author's career' (1982: 250). It tells the story of Sammy Mountjoy, who, reviewing his life from his childhood in the slums of Rotten Row to artistic success, searches for the exact moment when he made a crucial decision that exacerbated his natural inclinations, that is, the moment at which he gave up his freedom to act against them. Though Sammy's sense of moral autonomy has been played down by some critics (most recently by Eagleton 2010: 40), there is no compelling reason to doubt the honesty and accuracy of the character-narrator's self-analysis when he draws attention, at the very outset of his enquiry, to 'the decision made freely that cost me my freedom' (Golding 1959: 7). This interpretation is supported by the novel's very title, by the text's insistence on the free loss of freedom, and by the author's comments on the novel.

Sammy's autobiography moves back and forth in time in order to trace the gradual transformation of the boy that he was (and for whose acts old Sammy does not feel responsible at all) into the man that he is at the moment of writing. As we strive to put the most important scenes that make up his life in chronological order, we see how the child gives way to the adolescent that embraces sin, how the adolescent gives way to the adult that turns his back on sin (a transformation from sinner into saint that takes place when Sammy gains metaphysical insight in the Nazi camp), and how the adult that turns his back on sin gives way to the autobiographer that reviews his life by turning it into a written story. While he rules out several moments in his life that could be interpreted as a fall into sin — his childhood pranks, which he discards saying '"Not there"' (Golding 1959: 70, 78), or 'Not here' (217), and his infidelity, already as an Art School student, to his girlfriend Beatrice, which he dismisses with the same '"Not here"'

(132) — Sammy points to the only other moment when he can have exercised his freedom to become a sinner: the moment, just before leaving the country grammar school in which he and Beatrice are classmates, Sammy's eagerness to seduce her leads him to exercise his freedom by choosing a norm of conduct that determines all his subsequent acts, thus effectively putting an end to his freedom, and after which he is 'no longer free' (79). It is at this moment that he acknowledges his lust, proclaiming 'Musk, shameful and heady, be thou my good' (232), and sacrifices everything else in order to gain her. Sammy makes his decision immediately after a brief conversation with the school's headmaster. Though he has heard conflicting reports about the boy, the headmaster knows that Sammy is one of the most promising pupils. He calls the boy into his office for a last word of encouragement before his departure for the Art School in London, but soon becomes worried about the boy's failure to see the link
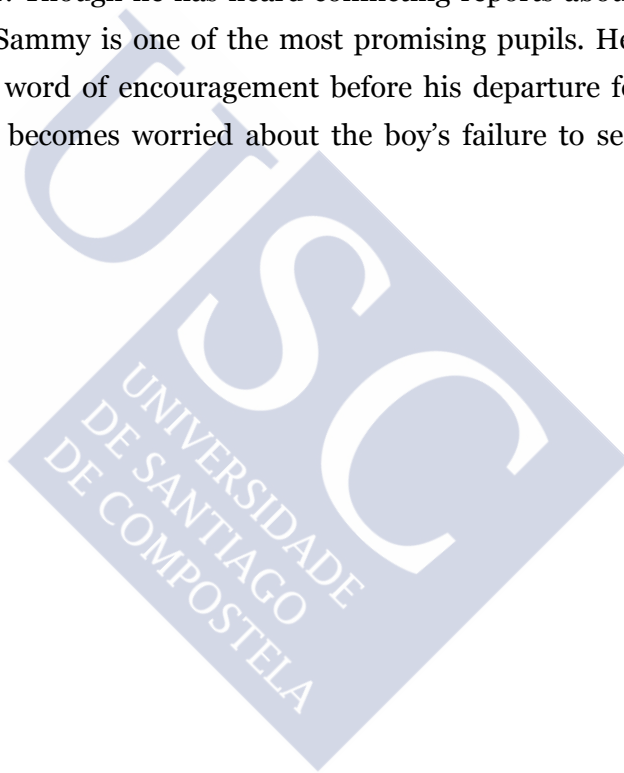
between artistic talent and moral responsibility.[65] Fearing the boy's desire for easy gratification, the 'wise man' issues an ominous warning (208):

> If you want something enough, you can always get it provided you are willing to make the appropriate sacrifice. Something, anything. But what you get is never quite what you thought; and sooner or later the sacrifice is always regretted (Golding 1959: 235).

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[65] From the point of view of the moral development of the main character, in Augustine's *Confessions* the very conversion that justifies its writing introduces in the narrative a sense of moral discontinuity, but at the same time the narrative brings together what comes before and after in such a way that the impression is of preordained development fostered by divine providence: as soon as 'the pattern of the Redemption' begins to emerge from Augustine's life there occurs 'the transformation of autobiography into biblical allegory' (Freccero 1986: 28). This providential pattern underlies what Stephen Kern calls the *religious plot* (2011: 18), which becomes increasingly rare in nineteenth and early twentieth-century literature. In the realistic *Bildungsroman*, the sense is clearly of moral continuity, though often for internal rather than external reasons. According to Kern, the typical realistic narrative is 'grounded in the idea that individuals develop in accord with an organic model, as a tree grows from a seed, through stages', towards the dual goal of maturity and social integration, but this 'teleology' is not always presented as 'directed by a providential spirit or deity who cares for his creatures and directs their lives' (40–1). In the hands of the modernists, the sense of continual development is replaced by that of moral discontinuity, the lack of preordained goals and social alienation. Alienation from the values of the rest of society also characterises the modernist *Künstlerroman* charting the development of the artist, where the only sense of continuity is provided by the protagonist's aesthetic vocation.

In Golding's *Free Fall* the continuous trajectory of social ascent and artistic development is subordinated to the sense of moral discontinuity, between the child and the adult, which Sammy's free fall provokes (and which is hardly counterbalanced by a narrative structure that fails to present Sammy's life as informed by any teleological sense of moral purpose). Insofar as Sammy's free decision has, as he acknowledges, 'Byronic' overtones (Golding 1959: 232; see Boyd 1988: 80), and insofar as modernism inherited Lord Byron's rejection of conventional morality in favour of aesthetic rupture, Sammy's condemnation of his youthful gesture can be viewed as a tacit indictment of the modernist elevation of aesthetics 'above everything, including morality' (Childs 2008: 30).

Too young and reckless to care about regret, Sam forgets the last part of the headmaster's monition, and concentrates on the satisfaction of his appetites through the exploitation of Beatrice's 'white, unseen body' (Golding 1959: 235). Apart from the indirect allusion to the Faust myth, in Sammy's vow there is a partial quotation of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (book 4, line 110). While Milton's Satan turns away from God exclaiming: 'Evil, be thou my good' (Milton 2005: 80), Sammy subordinates everything to his sexual desire. It hardly matters if sex is alien to Beatrice, who 'knows nothing of it, thinks nothing of it', and who, seeing that Sammy can hardly think of anything other than getting to bed with her, confesses not to 'feel like that' at all (Golding 1959: 232, 110). Impervious to the girl's reticence, Sammy adopts a lifestyle whose exclusive aim is the pleasure derived from her sexual exploitation. Like Milton's Satan, Sammy is free to choose good or evil, and he chooses evil as his guiding principle.

As Golding explained in an interview with Biles, *Free Fall* is his most articulate attempt to substantiate 'the proposition that man has free will', and that 'once you have free will … you have alternatives before you' (in Biles 1970: 76). The very title of the novel implies that these alternatives may lead in the direction of immorality. Taking advantage of the use of the expression *free fall* in the physical sciences, Golding endows it with moral significance.

Strictly speaking, *free fall* refers to a type of motion in which the only force acting upon an object is gravity. It also designates, somewhat improperly, the absolute or relative lack of gravity. The latter is the meaning that Golding uses first when talking about the novel: 'It is where your gravity has gone; it is a man in a space ship who has no gravity', or one who, having got lost in deep space, can only 'float about' and 'is completely divorced from the … idea of a thing up *there*' or down here (in Biles 1970: 81).

Taking his cue from the astronaut's situation (which he also uses in Golding 1965: 115), Golding gives the expression *free fall* a couple of senses related to morals: one of them has to do with the state of disorientation that, in his opinion, afflicts the modern individual; the other has to do with the free choice of evil, which this state makes easier than ever. According to Golding, moral relativism — the abolition of all moral points of reference — has infiltrated contemporary lifestyles since the demise of traditional standards of value, and makes it easier than ever to make choices independently of any shared criteria of moral value. This is what he means when he says: 'Where for

hundreds of thousands of years men have known where they were, now they don't know where they are any longer' (in Biles 1970: 81). This meaning of *free fall* can be better understood in the light of Mary Midgley's definition of morality as 'a medium for arbitrating, and to some extent resolving, inner and outer conflict by acceptable systems of priority' (Midgley 2001: 178). While traditional systems of morality provide a 'way of dealing with *the up-and-down dimension* which everybody who thinks seriously about human life must see as our central problem' (199; my italics), Golding's novel suggests that shared priority systems no longer have any influence on the individual's choices. That is why Sammy compares these and other 'systems' to 'hats' that he has hung out of sight (Golding 1959: 6). As regards the interpretation of *free fall* as referring to the free choice of evil, Golding makes explicit mention of it when he explains to Baker the 'thesis' that Sammy's life illustrates (in Baker 1982: 133):

> the fact that without a system of values, without an adherence to some, one might almost call it, codified morality, right and wrong, you are like a creature in space, tumbling, eternally tumbling, no up, no down, just in 'free fall' …. Also, of course, you can link it with the … concept of free will (in Baker 1982: 133).

As the last sentence of this quotation makes clear, the last meaning that Golding gives to *free fall* has to do with the free adoption of an immoral conduct. As Golding himself acknowledges (see Biles 1970: 76, 80–1), this interpretation is based on the Satan's fall as recounted in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (book 3, line 99). Golding's novel, like Milton's poem, relies on the notion that we are all 'Sufficient to have stood though free to fall' (Milton 2005: 59). This indicates that starting with *Free Fall* Golding begins to countenance the idea, in Anthony Burgess's words, that 'one's fall is free, one wills the descent into evil' (Burgess 1986: 819).

This sense of moral freedom differs from Golding's earlier emphasis on the inborn and unchangeable status of the individual's will. This emphasis on a new kind of freedom can be better understood with the help of Kant's theory of the individual's moral autonomy. One of the staunchest defenders of free choice, he argues that subjects always act following the moral rules that they imposes upon themselves, and classifies those into two types, depending on their generality. On the one hand, there are the

specific moral *maxims* that we impose upon our own behaviour. On the other, there is the overall moral attitude or *disposition* which governs those maxims.

Kant defines a maxim as a 'subjective principle of volition' (Kant 1998: 14 n.), that is, 'a rule that the power of choice itself [*Willkür*] produces for the exercise of its freedom' (1996: 70). The assumption is that the subject is free to choose what to will. As Fred Feldman explains, 'To adopt a maxim is to commit yourself to acting in the described way whenever the situation in question arises' (Feldman 1998: 187). The commitment to a maxim lasts indefinitely, unless another maxim is adopted. A maxim can be good or evil, depending on whether or not it obeys or not the categorical imperative, in other words, depending on whether it can be generalised and transformed without contradiction into a universal law of conduct. Since the universal law of conduct might well oppose both our desires and our personal aspirations, this kind of generalisation will ensure that we act out of duty instead of personal inclination or opportunism.

Regarding one's disposition, Kant defines it as 'the first subjective ground of the adoption of the maxims', adding that it 'can only be a single one' and that it 'applies to the entire use of freedom' (Kant 1996: 74). According to John R. Silber, Kant presents one's disposition as 'the enduring pattern of intention that can be inferred from the many discreet acts of Willkür', a pattern that both 'reveals' the 'ultimate motive' of one's maxims, and 'is essential to moral self-identity' (cited in Bernstein 2002: 23).

The primary opponent of virtue is, Kant contends, human nature itself. In his opinion, humankind is characterised by what he calls radical evil: 'a *natural* propensity of the human being' to give individual inclinations priority over the categorical imperative in our moral rules (Kant 1996: 77). In this consists 'the *depravity* of human nature, or of the human heart' (77). This propensity 'is universal', because 'it is woven into human nature' (78). We can deviate from the imperative not only out of 'ambition, self-love in general', but even because we follow 'a kindly instinct such as sympathy' (78). In all these cases we are acting in a way that is not moral, because our duty is to follow the categorical imperative regardless of the consequences of our actions (it could well be that our conduct increases our pain or the other's, but this is irrelevant from the moral point of view).

According to Richard J. Bernstein, it is tempting to identify radical evil with the 'natural inclinations' rooted in 'our phenomenal sensuous nature' (2002: 27).

Nevertheless, Bernstein argues against this reading of Kant, stating that bodily needs and desires are not the source of our disobedience to the law. In his view, radical evil 'is related solely to the corruption of the will', and this corruption consists in the propensity 'not to do what duty requires' (28).

Despite recognising the existence of a natural propensity in humans to act against the categorical imperative, Kant asserts the fact that we are always capable of choosing what to will, that is, of choosing to obey a valid universal law. A person is at all moments responsible for his or her disposition, that is, for his or her 'overall character' (Bernstein 2002: 24). Kant claims that 'The human being must make or have made *himself* into whatever he is or should become', and this 'must be an effect of his free power of choice' (Kant 1996: 89). As Bernstein explains, in Kant's understanding free volition 'is never compromised by external events or by our natural inclinations' (Bernstein 2002: 27). Given that our moral autonomy has no conditions, it is impossible to explain 'why we freely adopt the maxims ... that we actually adopt'; the ultimate ground for our choices is '*inscrutable*' (35, 235).

Kant's vigorous defence of freedom is at odds with his introduction of radical evil; this has led Bernstein to state that, as far as his moral theory is concerned, 'Kant is at war with himself' (2002: 33). If 'human beings as finite rational agents are free', then 'they are solely and completely responsible' for their moral choices (33). But in this case, what is the role of radical evil? According to Bernstein, though it should explain why we insist on deviating from the categorical imperative, in fact it does not have any function whatsoever:

> Presumably, the introduction of the notion of radical evil is intended to explain *why* ... we deviate from following the moral law. We do not always follow the moral law *because*, as human beings, we have an innate propensity to evil. ... But does this 'because' really explain anything? Does it do any conceptual work? I do not think so. When stripped down to bare essentials, it simply reiterates the fact that human beings who are conscious of the moral law sometimes (freely) deviate from it. Furthermore, it is *always* within our power to resist this propensity, no matter how strong it is supposed to be. In short, radical evil — the alleged propensity to moral evil which is a universal characteristic of human beings — does not have *any* explanatory force ... at all! (Bernstein 2002: 33).

This brief detour can help us to see what exactly is at stake in *Free Fall* and several other first-person novels that follow it. It is obvious that Sammy Mountjoy's circumstances have a lot in common with the ones described by Kant: there is something in human nature that can potentially separate the individual for the exercise of duty. In Golding, as in Kant, this natural propensity has to do with the will: for the latter, it is the corruption of the individual will; for the former — whose approach here still resembles Schopenhauer — it is the essential urge in which the individual's passions are rooted. Though Sammy sums up his childhood years in terms of the 'lies', the 'sensuality' and the 'violence' which result from 'selfishness', perhaps even from 'cruelty' and 'wickedness' (Golding 1959: 78), adolescence reveals his basic propensity to the egoistic pursuit of sexual satisfaction. (The stress of this novel on sexuality links *Free Fall* to most of Golding's other fiction, beginning with the book that precedes it — *Pincher Martin* — and the one that follows it — *The Spire*.) In the last analysis, however, Golding maintains, like Kant, that neither external circumstances nor this internal propensity can determine the individual's free choice. Sammy's commitment to satisfy his sexual desire at all costs does not stem from Nick Shales's or Miss Pringle's influence. Neither does it arise from his sensuous nature. Sammy's embrace of musk is a conscious choice, the free adoption of a moral disposition that determines his future conduct.[66] Sammy tells us how, after having made it, his choice ties him to a certain course of action:

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66 In real life these norms of conduct, maxims and dispositions alike, are likely to remain unvoiced; yet it is only natural for a work of literature to put it into so many words, and for our response to the work to be influenced by its explicit formulation. Hence Sammy's bold appeal to musk, which not only sums up the way in which Sammy sees himself as dominated by lust but also conditions the reader's opinion of him.

   The maxims that follow from Sammy's disposition are morally reproachable because they do not conform to the categorical imperative. From Kant's perspective, Sammy's choices are evil but, unlike Milton's Satan's, they are not diabolical. Apparently, for Kant diabolical choices would be impossible to find among humans, because they — contrary to Satan — cannot side with evil for evil's sake all the time. From the perspective of Kantian rigorism, which judges not one's actions or their consequences but the maxims and dispositions behind those actions, Sammy is as evil as a human being can be, simply because he fails to comply with the categorical imperative.

> as I remembered myself as well as Beatrice I could find no moment when I was free to do as I would. In all that lamentable story of seduction I could not remember one moment when being what I was I could do other than I did (Golding 1959: 191).

If we accept Bernstein's description of a disposition as one's overall character, it is evident that in Golding's works the understanding of a person's character undergoes a transformation. Though for a time his novels continue to assert the existence of a knowable essence that is completely alien to moral considerations, the emphasis on the inborn and unchangeable innate character (exemplified by Pincher Martin) gradually gives way to a foregrounding of the possibility of choosing one's overall character or moral disposition (as exemplified by Sammy Mountjoy).[67]

As we have seen, the belief in an essence that is common to all beings is a remnant from Golding's earlier stance, and it neither diminishes Sammy's moral autonomy nor justifies his evil choices. What this belief does, in combination with the new belief in the freedom to do as one wills, is throw light on Sammy's puzzling — and misleading — explanation that the ultimate cause of Beatrice's suffering is his own guilt. Old Sammy recalls his younger self's certainty that guilt for what we are (for being essentially amoral and for making the world a battleground through our egocentric consciousness of it) sanctions even the most perverse behaviour: 'Guilty I am; therefore wicked I will be' (Golding 1959: 232). This use of *will* with the first-person pronoun reminds of *Pincher Martin*; what distinguishes it from that of Pincher's imaginary surrogate is that here *will* does not convey an innate urge that, independently of conscious control, determines the person's conduct, but the individual's free and conscious determination of what to will. As regards the reversal of guilt and criminal action, it is as if young

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67 Golding's new position, with its focus on the individual's free choice of a what Kant calls a moral disposition comes hand in hand with a new attitude towards the representation of character in his novels. Gone is his preference for ideas over people, and, with it, his use of flat (simple and static) characters that, like Pincher Martin, can be summed up in a single word. Now, Golding thinks, the novel must perform 'no less an act than the rescue and the preservation of the individuality and dignity of the single being, be it man, woman or child' (Golding 1984: 209). Though his former characterisations were not all as flat as his comments would suggest (Pincher Martin is exceptional in this sense, even by Golding's standards), it is true that now they tend to be rounder.

Sammy's sense of guilt about the sorry state of the world were so great that it could not be possibly increased. This may have caused in him the feeling that, while none of his actions can make the world a worse or better place, at least some of them — it does not matter if they are the greatest crimes — can increase his pleasure. Combined with his mistaken view that materialism leads to extreme moral relativism, Sam's guilt liberates him from all constraints, opening the door to all kinds of misdeeds. This explains why old Sammy concludes that 'Guilt comes before the crime and can cause it' (232). Being tortured by guilt to begin with, what difference does it make if, as Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor put it (2002: 161), one takes 'the conscious and deliberate decision that fixes that guilt'?

According to the Schopenhauerian definition of guilt that I have employed until now, Sammy is guilty from the moment of his birth. The problem at this point is that Sammy describes the child that he was as 'innocent of guilt' (Golding 1959: 78). From the perspective of Schopenhauer's philosophy, the meaning of this expression is that, as a child, Sammy is still unaware of his own nature. Therefore the child's 'terrible and irresponsible innocence' has nothing to do with the lack of guilt (25). It is, rather, ignorance of that guilt.

This interpretation depends on Schopenhauer's distinction between the facts of *being* guilty and of *feeling* guilty (see Wicks 2008: 139). What distinguishes the feeling of guilt from the fact of being guilty is that this feeling is peculiar to humans, for it results from the knowledge of their nature: the feeling of 'guilt is to be found not in willing, but in willing with knowledge', such that a plant's innocence is not due to its lack of will — for the will is in everything — but only 'due to its want of knowledge' of itself (Schopenhauer 1969a: 156). As in the plant, and for similar reasons, the feeling of guilt may be absent in small children. We feel guilty, writes Schopenhauer, only once we have realised that we have certain needs and desires and that we are endowed with consciousness: 'we are all innocent to begin with, and this merely means that neither we nor others know … our own nature' (296). We are innocent while we are ignorant; but as soon as we become aware of having certain appetites and of being endowed with consciousness, we cannot but feel guilty about the sorry state of the world.

Something similar happens in Golding's writings. As we saw in the Introduction, at the start of his novelistic career Golding used to think that people suffer from an appalling ignorance of their own nature. Like Schopenhauer, he equates this ignorance

with innocence. This is evident if we turn, temporarily, to the ending of *Lord of the Flies*. On the last page of the novel, when the schoolboys run into the naval officer, Ralph cannot but weep for 'the end of innocence' which comes with a recognition of 'the darkness of man's heart' (Golding 1954: 207, 208). In a later interview Golding explains in more detail what has happened to the children:

> They don't understand their own natures and therefore, when they get to this island, they can look forward to a bright future, because they don't understand the things that threaten it. This seems to me to be innocence; I suppose you could almost equate it with ignorance of men's basic attributes, and this is inevitable with anything which is born and begins to grow up. Obviously, it doesn't understand its own nature (in Keating 1988: 210).

As Samuel Hynes aptly puts it: 'Ralph weeps for the end of innocence, but when did it exist, except as an illusion made of his own ignorance?' (Hynes 1997: 63). When Ralph bursts into tears, it is not only because of what Jack and his hunters have done on the island, but because of the share that he has in the violence leading to Simon and Piggy's killings.

Though the English expression *innocent of* can mean 'ignorant of' or 'unaware of', Golding sometimes suggests that he — unlike Schopenhauer — is conscious of having mixed two notions, those of innocence and ignorance, that should be kept separated: normally, he says to Carey, 'we confuse [ignorance] with innocence' (in Carey 1987: 174), but, as he says to Biles, 'it's an equation which ... is no longer valid' (in Biles 1970: 109). Nevertheless, in his later writings he insists on using both terms as if they meant the same. In the essay entitled 'Utopias and Antiutopias', for example, he still states this: 'I remember reading [such utopian narratives as] *Men like Gods* by H.G. Wells when I was a boy and I remember feeling with a positive surge of joy that I myself could walk straight into such a society and live there. I do remember asking myself in my innocence — or ignorance — why the world was not like that and was too young to know the answer' (Golding 1984a: 177).

Though more obliquely than *Lord of the Flies*, *Free Fall* also alludes to Sammy's loss of innocence as the realisation of his guilt. Indeed, Sammy stops being an innocent child long before making the free choice to stalk and seduce Beatrice, when he is chided for robbing the other elementary school children of their fagcards. Instead of punishing

Sammy for what he has done, the head teacher of his school prefers to make him 'conscious of his guilt' (Golding 1959: 52).

The discovery that he is a guilty person, together with the feeling of guilt that follows serves old Sammy to rationalise, in a way that cannot makes us forget that his free adoption of an evil disposition that solidifies his moral character and will determine all his subsequent actions. However, Sammy's exploration of his past life does not finish with his emotional and sexual exploitation of Beatrice. He also recounts his moral reformation and reconciliation with his former self, which take place years later, and only after he has been subjected, as a prisoner of war in a Nazi camp, to exacting cross-questioning and psychological torture. As soon as the Nazis allow him to go back with his fellow prisoners (and probably sensing that tortured has put him in a similar position to the one in which he had put Beatrice, that is, feeling that he has become the object of ruthless manipulation), he undergoes a revelation. Not only does he see his fellow prisoners in a new light, as beings endowed with invaluable dignity despite their sorry state in the camp. He is also able to realise, at long last, Beatrice's 'nun-like' sanctity and true human stature (Golding 1959: 112). So much so that, when he returns to England, he decides to visit Beatrice so as to atone for his mistreatment of her.[68] This is an unprecedented gesture in Golding's fiction, but we cannot forget that it is caused by a flash of metaphysical insight more related to Golding's earlier novels than to the new moral stance, based on autonomous choice rather than on compassionate feelings, that *Free Fall* adumbrates.

When Sammy tries to apologise for his behaviour, he finds it impossible to get Beatrice's forgiveness, because she has been in a mental institution ever since he abandoned her (perhaps *because* he abandoned her, though he cannot confirm his suspicion). Since she is no longer aware of either Sammy's past cruelty or his present good intentions, she is unable to grant him the expected forgiveness. The meaning of this episode is clear: having made his choice, his control of its consequences is very limited. Sammy did not want Beatrice to lose her reason, he just wanted to have some fun with her; yet this does not change the outcome of their relationship. Likewise, even

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68 Echoes of Dante's *Vita Nuova* have been pointed out by a number of critics, who have, however, limited their comments to Sammy's infatuation with Beatrice (see, for example, Carey 2009: 226). In moral terms, what follows Sammy's decision to seduce her is truly a new way of life whose sole centre is sexual satisfaction at all costs.

if he starts a new life and becomes a new person, he cannot change the past, and neither can he shun responsibility for what he did before his moral conversion: though Sammy tries to congratulate himself with Beatrice, the fact remains that she is no longer able to accept his excuses. Her present condition reminds Sammy of his past cruelty, haunting him as he writes his confession.

Needless to say, Sammy's failure to make amends does not diminish the collective implications of Golding's new assertion of freedom. Once he has acknowledged the possibility of selecting one's moral disposition, he has little difficulty in offering an alternative to the universal war that he has diagnosed and the constant repression that he has advocated as a solution. The implication is that, if we are free, there is a chance that our joint decisions may lead to better, perhaps utopian ways of organising social life.

3.2.2. The Refusal to Characterise the Essence of the World

The link between Kant's and Golding's concern with free choice can help the literary historian to locate the latter, who prided himself in keeping his distance from the work of his contemporaries, in the mid-century British and Continental literary scene. The connection lies in the affinity between the Kantian disposition and one of the central notions of Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism, the *projet fondamental*, defined as a groundless choice that is responsible for the whole mode of life of a person (see Bernstein 2002: 24). At the time when Golding was writing *Free Fall*, an existentialist morality had crystallised across the channel thanks to philosophers like Sartre and writers like Albert Camus. According to Clements, in Kant 'Goodness … is not found, nor aspired towards — it is made'; this notion, adds Clements, 'was taken to its logical extreme in the 1940s and 1950s in the philosophy of Sartre and Camus' (Clements 2012: 3). According to this interpretation, for the existentialists, as for Kant, moral value is not given but created through one's virtuous action.

In Britain, the existentialist movement's influence made itself felt in the writings of such authors as Colin Wilson, whose *The Outsider* appeared in 1956. As Alan Sinfield notes, two of the principal aspects of existentialism, philosophical and literary alike, are the 'anguish at our meaninglessness', a feeling exacerbated by human self-

consciousness, and the 'affirmation of human responsibility' (Sinfield 1983: 101). In its Sartrean variety, existentialism is a kind of humanism that tries to create 'the possibility of genuine human existence' by making 'man "responsible for what he is"' (102). Like Kant, among others, the existentialists believe that the human subject is not the passive viewpoint from which subjective experience is had, but the locus where value-judgements and choices of action are made. It is free to act, and constructs itself in the course of action. In this sense, the subject's fundamental project forms the core of a whole nexus of choices and behavioural dispositions making up the totality of the individual *I*.

Though Golding was aware that he belonged to 'the existentialist generation' (in Biles 1970: 75), it is difficult to identify his world view with either existential or Kantian philosophy. However, the fact remains that a heady combination of Kant-like autonomy and quasi-existentialist angst becomes apparent in the view of moral action conveyed by *Free Fall*. The novel's stress on of free choice *Free Fall* features intermittently in Golding's subsequent novels: though it does not appear in *The Spire*, for instance, it does appear in *The Pyramid*, *Darkness Visible* and the Sea Trilogy. In *Darkness Visible*, for instance, one of the things that Sophy finds in Sim Goodchild's bookshop is an old notice announcing a conference by Bertrand Russell 'on HUMAN FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY' (Golding 1979: 121). Later it is suggested that Sophy's attempt to become a terrorist issues from a free choice: when she gets involved in the child's kidnap, Sophy reassures herself with the memory of her decision: 'I chose' (251). This insistence on the ability to make one's own choices notwithstanding, the fact is that *Darkness Visible* also offers another explanation of human behaviour, one that still fits in with Golding's basic stance: as we have already seen, Mr Pedigree is characterised as dominated by a passion — a thirst — that he has not chosen and that he cannot control. To the extent that it includes these two alternative views showing any clear preference for either of them, *Darkness Visible* is perhaps the novel in which the tensions between Golding's basic stance and the gradual additions to it are most conspicuous.

Apart from problematising the issue of how best to account for people's actions, in *Darkness Visible* Golding begins to treat the possible knowledge of the essence of the world in a way that differs from his basic stance. Thus, in addition to questioning the position that human conduct is determined by our inborn nature, *Darkness Visible* also starts to contemplate the impossibility of accurately describing the essence of the world

by implicitly suggesting that those descriptions may be as diverse as the feeling that every person may have of what lies inside him or her. The fact that *Darkness Visible* appears after *Free Fall* suggests that Golding's increasing doubts about to the idea that we can provide an acceptable description of the inner kernel of the world — doubts which the Sea Trilogy stresses — are not the precondition for his assertion of free choice, but the consequence of that assertion. Together with the foregrounding of individual autonomy and the undermining of all conceptions of the essence of the world, there is another change in Golding's later novels that allows him to present alternative ways of picturing the world, a diversity of opinions that contributes to further undermine the accuracy of all such conceptions. At the same time as they include only one possible characterisation of the essence of the world, namely, as an all-powerful will to life, Golding's first novels present non-egocentric, i.e. metaphysical, forms of consciousness as exceptional and even (think of Simon in *Lord of the Flies* and of the People in *The Inheritors*) as leaving the subjects defenceless against a majority of beings dominated by egocentric, i.e. physical, consciousness. Both elements cooperate to create the impression — strengthened by Golding's non-fiction — that the only plausible description of the world is as a hellish place where the natural elements and the immense majority of living beings are in perpetual war with each other. In his later novels Golding modifies both of these elements, such that, apart from starting to present alternative ways of conceiving of the essence of the world, he stops presenting non-egocentric consciousness as weakening the subject in any way. Having made these changes, in the Sea Trilogy Golding presents Mr Prettiman's metaphysics of nature, according to why the world is a place populated by friendly beings where harmony rather than discord prevails, not as implausible or impractical, but as being neither more nor less tenable — and in many respects even more desirable — than the alternatives. However, the very inclusion of this new stance on an equal footing with the others has the effect of undermining them all, such that, in the last instance, Mr Prettiman's stance is just as questionable as any other. Let us see why Golding seeks to create this effect and and how exactly he does it.

Given the affinities between Golding's treatment of the world's essence in his early novels and Schopenhauer's, it could be argued that the objection raised against the philosopher's metaphysical views, namely, that his arguments for the identification of the world's essence as will cannot be demonstrated (a fact that he concedes), is also

valid for the novelist's. Perhaps aware of this kind of criticism, in *Darkness Visible* Golding begins to challenge the reliance on inner observation as the path along which the metaphysics of nature can proceed by showing that each of us can feel something different inside. He does so by presenting conflicting conceptions of what the essence of the world may be, all of which begin with the subjects' feeling of their inner being.

In order to understand the full import of Golding's new position, it is convenient to return a moment to the description of one such episode of inner observation that Sammy Mountjoy offers in *Free Fall*. We have already seen that, at a certain point during his confinement in a Nazi camp, Sammy is overcome by a sudden a feeling that blends compassion towards his fellow prisoners, the appreciation of their beauty and dignity, and the apprehension of the surrounding mountains as something living. Then, looking inside himself, he catches a glimpse of 'the most loathsome substances that man knows of, or perhaps the most loathsome and abject creatures, continuously created' (Golding 1959: 190).Sammy never links what he sees inside himself to the will, yet he suggests that it could be the inner manifestation of 'human nature', itself linked to the process whereby new appearances are forever coming into being — a process, in his own words, that 'continually defied the law of conservation of energy' (190). Though the relationship between Sammy's feeling of what lies outside and his feeling of what lies inside is not totally clear, it is undeniable that the latter resembles, like the experience that young Jocelin records in his notebook in *The Spire*, the inner feeling whereby, according to Schopenhauer, one becomes aware of the motions of the will to life within.

Like Sammy in *Free Fall* and Jocelin in *The Spire*, Sophy in *Darkness Visible* is presented as undergoing episodes of inner observation. However, her experience differs in important respects from those described in the two other novels. To begin with, Sophy realises while she is still a child that she can intentionally direct her attention inside as well as outside. What she sees on those occasions is very different from the outer appearance of things:

> There are eyes in the back of my head. The … thing called Sophy can sit looking out through the eyes, the thing which really is nameless. It can choose either to go out into the daylight or to lie in this private segment of infinite depth, distance, this ambushed separateness from which comes all strength —

> She shut her eyes with sudden excitement. … With her front eyes shut it was as if those other eyes opened in the back of her head and stared into a darkness that stretched away infinitely, a cone of black light (Golding 1979: 134).

Sophy believes that self-consciousness allows her to apprehend her true being as an 'interior, nameless thing' (Golding 1979: 188). She initially holds this urge to be a private characteristic that separates her from the rest of the world. But when she hears about the notion of entropy on a radio programme, she becomes convinced that, in fact, what she has found inside her is closely bound with the inner being of the world, and that she is more attuned to it than most. In her opinion, the dark recesses of her interior are the site or source of her wish to hurt, a wish which she has been calling, for lack of a better term, 'a passionate desire in the darkness to be Weird — … Weird and powerful', or else 'a hunger and thirst after weirdness' (126, 132). After she has heard a radio talk 'about the universe running down', a theory that for her 'explained so much it was obvious', she is able to find a more accurate designation for this urge (131). According to the second law of thermodynamics, entropy is a modification of the principle of conservation of energy, to which the first law of thermodynamics gives expression: though energy can neither be created nor destroyed, under certain circumstances it can no longer be transformed. It is thus that highly energetic systems lose the energy that they need for their own conservation, and unless new energy comes in from outside their structure dissolves as a result (see Safranski 2010: 272). In this light, it could be said that everything is governed by a kind of will to death. This is precisely the conclusion that Sophy seems to reach.[69]

Sophy establishes a connection between the entropic movement towards dissolution and the dark abyss that spreads in her interior. In other words, she links, like Dean Jocelin before her (and like Schopenhauer before both), the physical realm outside and the metaphysical realm to which inward observation grants privileged access. She is thus able to articulate a holistic interpretation of the world, according to which

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69 The entropic tendency towards absolute exhaustion must be distinguished from the possible disappearance of the world as representation, which will come about when the last conscious being perishes (a scenario examined in connection with *Pincher Martin*), but which has nothing to do with the disappearance of non-conscious life — let alone with the unavailability of energy.

everything is metaphysically connected to everything else.[70] In her view, the inside and the outside of the world like the two sides of a coin, both bearing the stamp of death. Living in harmony with the world means contributing to its extinction, and the best way to do so is, in her opinion, through the malignant behaviour that has marked her life at least since the killing of the chicks:

> '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'.
>
> ...
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> A truth appeared in her mind. *The way towards simplicity is through outrage* (Golding 1979: 167).

What is most striking about Sophy's discovery is that, for the first time in Golding's novels, an individual's understanding of the world is not dominated by sexuality and the desire for individual survival, in sum by the will to perpetuation, but by the contrary tendency towards annihilation. Sophy discovers that she and the rest of the world are governed by entropy, a view that is the exact opposite of Sammy Mountjoy's idea, quoted above, that his inner nature is characterised by an incessant activity that defies the law of conservation of energy, hence entropy too. As far as Sophy is concerned, the best description of the craving that keeps the world moving, and which Matty considers *the warp and woof* of everything that exists, is no longer as a will to life, but rather as a will to death and general dissolution.

The disparity between the philosophical notion of the will to life and the scientific theory of entropy has been brought out by Barbara Hannan, according to to whom the manifestations of Schopenhauer's essential will display what we could call an anti-entropic behaviour:

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70 The difference with Schopenhauer and Dean Jocelin is that Sophy does give the rest of the world the name of what she finds inside her, but the other way round. The explanation may be that, as a little girl, she cannot find an accurate term for her inner being. (Let us remember that Schopenhauer settled for the term *will* only after toying with the idea of referring to the essence of the world as *force* or *energy*. He may have rejected these two terms to distance himself from what, for him, was short-sighted scientism.)

> Today, biologists tell us that life is differentiated from nonlife by various entropy-resistant activities, such as metabolism, self-repair, and self-replication. These are all features of ... the apparent striving of the organism to keep itself and its kind in existence. Schopenhauer's ... theory says that all substances and objects possess just such autonomy (Hannan 2009: 52).

As Hannan goes on to add, to this day scientists have had difficulties to understand this anti-entropic character of living organisms: 'Life, with its purposeful, entropy-resistant activities ... is apparently a complex chemical phenomenon, but even modern scientists remain stumped as to how exactly living matter arises out of nonliving matter' (2009: 54).

As regards Golding's novels, so far we have seen the way in which life is said to sprout out of seemingly dead matter — stone and timber — in *The Spire* and the Sea Trilogy. When Dean Jocelin's and Edmund Talbot's express their horror at the thought of the buddying, disruptive force which could destroy the cathedral and the ship on which their lives depend, they are merely reacting to the anti-entropic tendency of all life. So strong is the emphasis that other Golding novels place on the kind of behaviour that results from the entropic-resistant tendency towards reproduction and self-preservation that, for the reader familiar with those novels, Sophy's description of the world as entropic must come as a shock.

Sophy's view of the essence of the world is not only different from the main characters' in the novels that precede *Darkness Visible*, but also from Mr Prettiman's in the Sea Trilogy. Mr Prettiman is an optimist who does not want to destruct the world but to improve it. In the course of his conversations with Talbot, he tries to convince the young toff that the world is surely 'great and glorious', because, he says, '"the whole"' cannot '"be less than good"' (Golding 1991: 667, 676).[71] Upon his arrival in

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71 This explanation that equates wholeness and goodness can be applied not only to the knowable world, as Mr Prettiman does, but also to the cosmos. Golding believes that the cosmos, which contains the world that we know and that can only be described as hellish, is not accessible to our knowledge in all its dimensions. His cosmic optimism, already examined, not only implies that in that part of it that we cannot know there must be worlds that are better than ours, but also that, despite comprising our hellish world, on the whole the cosmos must be good by virtue of that unknown part. His guess is 'that there are ... infinite universes, and beyond that there is a thing that I call the Good' (cited in Clements 2012: 69).

Australia, Mr Prettiman plans to set up a community where each individual — even the '"poor depraved criminal"' (676) — can live in harmony with the whole and with his or her fellow humans.

If we understand Mr Prettiman's explanation of *universe* as the *world*, that is, as the sum of everything that can be known, in the physical as well as the metaphysical realms, it will be easier to understand why his ideal society is a community in which every man can '"live in conformity"' with the Good, '"take it to him and open himself to it"' and, '"lifting his head, gaze straight into the fire of … love, … χάρις"' (Golding 1991: 676). As Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor put it, Mr Prettiman sees the world as dominated by an all-inclusive harmony and love 'to which it is the longing and destiny of man to conform' (2002: 329). The meaning of the Greek noun that Mr Prettiman uses, *χάρις*, throws light on his views. According to Henry G. Liddlell and Robert Scott's lexicon, the most usual translations of the noun include 'grace'. Other meanings go from external 'beauty', through 'goodwill', 'kindness', 'favour' and 'gratitude', to 'delight'. Since it is akin to the verb *χαίρω*, 'to delight', 'to rejoice', 'to express one's joy', *χάρις* can also be translated as 'joy' (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1978–9, 1960–70). Thus the term used by Mr Prettiman brings him close to a fellow passenger who also feels, though intermittently, the joy of existence — Reverend Colley. According to the social philosopher, joy appears when there is '"nothing between our eyes and the Absolute"' (Golding 1991: 676), that is, when one can look straight into it without the mediation of rational concepts. In the course of a private conversation with his friend Lieutenant Summers, Talbot provides more details about Mr Prettiman's position, explaining that the social philosopher believes in a force that can be felt both '"up there"', in the outer world, and '"down here"', inside the individual (681). This suggests that Mr Prettiman, like other Golding characters, may be describing the world according to the opinion that he has of his inner self. If this is the case, then it can be surmised that his joy arises not only from the belief that there is an exact correspondence between the inner and outer dimensions of the world, between the common essence and the way in which it appears in consciousness, but from the feeling that the entire world thus described is good.

The implications of the characters' disagreement about the nature of the world are far-reaching. While in his earlier works Golding usually gives preference to the description of the world as a hellish place pervaded by an amoral life force, in his later

novels he not only offer other world views but presents them as equally defensible. When *Pincher Martin* and *The Spire* point to a will that might be identified as the essence of the world, the novelist remains silent on the matter; if we can interpret these characters' views as an indication of Golding's beliefs, it is because his early works did not offer any credible alternatives. Now that his characters become engaged in an implicit debate about the essence behind the appearances, referring to it in other terms than *will*, Golding continues to refrain from taking sides. However, the very fact that more that one view is now presented as plausible shows a recognition on the author's part that there may be a problem with the strategy of focusing inside in order to grasp how the world is behind the screen of appearances. The lack of agreement among his characters suggests that inner observation is bound to yield different results with different people: while some see the activity of the world as constant, others, such as Sophy in *Darkness Visible*, see this activity as decreasing (hence the world itself as dominated by entropy); while Jocelin sees obscene lust, Sophy sees nihilism and Mr Prettiman sees perfect goodness. At least in the last stage of his career, Golding is convinced that, in general, 'seeing the situation from the point of view of two people' without lending more weight to one than to the other serves to 'undercut both of them' (cited in Clements 2012: 97). In Golding's view, this clash of different perspectives with the same chances of being true should be enough to convince his readers that knowing and reaching a consensus about the essence of the world is impossible.[72]

A good way of understanding how the very structure of Golding's novels serves to convey this authorial change of attitude towards the metaphysics of nature is by

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72 At the same time as he problematises our knowledge of what lies behind appearances, Golding asserts his belief in that 'the great god Entropy' dominates the physical world (Golding 1984: 204). Golding's treatment of entropy is interesting in two respects. First, it is different from Sophy's, insofar as he does not establish any connection between this physical phenomenon and his inner impulses. This can be interpreted as an implicit rejection of Sophy's belief that entropy is the essential drive that stirs the entire realm of appearances; in his later works, Golding's point is that, if it exists, the essence of the world cannot be known in any way. Secondly, the recognition that entropy will eventually prevail in the physical realm does not prevent Golding from taking account of its local exceptions. Life itself — its appearance, preservation and reproduction — is exceptional in the context of an entropic universe, and, indeed, Golding is keenly interested in this and other violations (as noted by Medcalf 1987: 38).

explaining it as a shift from what the Russian theorist Mikhail M. Bakhtin calls a monologic narrative to a dialogic narrative. As Bakhtin puts it, the monologic work can be compared to a 'stenographer's report of a *finished dialogue*, from which the author has already withdrawn and *over* which he is now located as if in some higher decision-making position' (Bakhtin 1984: 63). The dialogic work is strikingly different:

> the ... artistic position of the author with regard to the hero ... affirms the independence, internal freedom, unfinalizability, and indeterminacy of the hero. For the author the hero is not "he" and not "I", but a fully valid "thou", that is, another and other autonomous "I" ("thou art"). ... This is ... an authentic and unfinished dialogue (Bakhtin 1984: 63).

This contrast occurs because, in the monologic work, 'The all-encompassing field of vision of the author enjoys an enormous and fundamental "surplus" in comparison with the fields of vision of the characters' (Bakhtin 1984: 70). With the dialogic work this surplus does not exist. This means that, 'By the very construction of the novel, the author speaks not *about* a character, but *with* him' (63). When this happens, 'A character's word about himself and his world is just as fully weighted as the author's word usually is; it is not ... a mouthpiece for the author's voice' (7).

If we turn to Golding, we see that some of his earlier characters do act as his mouthpieces — think of Simon's mention of the *essential illness* that plagues human beings. Concerning the use of narratorial perspective that he makes throughout his career, it is evident that the shift from monologism to dialogism is related to the gradual abandonment of third-person narrators whose reliability and authority over the contents and characters of the story is never put into question in favour of first-person character-narrators whose opinions have the same authority and validity — or lack of it — as the other characters' — and as the author's — and whose remarks about the limitations of their knowledge and narrative skills, on the one hand, and about the scepticism about the metaphysics of nature with which experience has inoculated them, on the other, become more and more frequent.

Golding's change from monologism to dialogism is also related to his writing method. As he acknowledges in *The Hot Gates*, his first book of non-fiction, Golding intended his first published novel to be a novel of thesis or, as he prefers to call it, a *fable* (Golding 1965: 85 ff.). Recalling its conception, Golding explains how one day,

'tired of these islands with their paper-cutout goodies and baddies and everything for the best in the best of all possible worlds' (Golding 1984a: 163), he said to his wife, 'Wouldn't it be a good idea to write a book about real boys on an island, showing what a mess they'd make?' (cited in Tiger 2003: 22).[73] Before starting writing, then, he already had a clear and 'coherent picture of the subject' (Golding 1965: 96). Discussing with Carey the process of writing itself, Golding says: 'I planned that very carefully' (in Carey 1987: 187; see Biles 1970: 60–1). His intention, in brief, was to work 'within strict limits' so as to exclude as many superfluous details that might distract the reader as possible (Golding 1965: 96). Given his view, shed with Biles, that 'any book is infinitely complicated, no matter how simple it looks' (in Biles 1970: 57), Golding would surely have acknowledged that the exclusion of all such details may become an impossible task. Apart from the elements that Golding intended to support his thesis but that can be interpreted in a different way, then, in *Lord of the Flies* there are others that do not contribute to that thesis or even contradict it. In his subsequent novels, whose writing relies 'less and less' on this 'careful planning' (in Carey 1987: 187), and these elements take up more and more space, such that from a certain point on they may make us forget what the original thesis was.

When he begins to challenge the possibility of knowing the inner kernel of the world Golding does it by suggesting that all essentialist interpretations of the outside world can be labelled as psychological projections. Generally speaking, projection is 'the operation whereby a … psychological element is displaced or relocated in an external position, thus passing either from centre to periphery or from subject to object' (Laplanche and Pontalis 2006: 349); in Freudian psychoanalysis, the term designates the defence mechanism 'whereby qualities, feelings, wishes or even "objects", which the subject refuses to recognise or rejects in himself, are expelled from the self and located in another person or thing' (349). The process of projection involves perceiving an element of the outside world not objectively, as the subject believes, but according to the subject's own internal characteristics.

Golding's criticism has failed to notice the complex process whereby Golding comes to substitute the notion of projection for his initial belief that everything shares the

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73 Generally speaking, Golding wrote *Lord of the Flies* to answer the question, 'What would happen, if?' (in Carey 1987: 183). In his interview with Carey, he suggests that this imaginative search for answers through the formulation of hypotheses is what links the literary writer to the scientist.

same essence, that this essence can be known, and that the most accurate knowledge that we can have of it derives from an analogy between one's own body — which one see not only from without but also from within — and the rest of the world. Indeed, projection has often been adduced as a way of accounting for the attitudes and behaviour of Golding's earlier characters. McCarron, for instance, writes about *Lord of the Flies*: 'When the hunters place the severed head of a pig in a clearing they are performing an act of propitiation: they have projected evil outside themselves. Simon, however, realizes that the severed head is an ineradicable part of humanity' (McCarron 2005: 293). In a like vein, Baker states that, in seeing Simon as the Beast, the other children feel free to complete the circle and get rid of their feared enemy: 'the beast materializes in the only form he [*sic*] can possibly assume, the very image of his creator. And once he is visible, projected (once the hunted has become the hunter), the circle closes in an agony of relief' (Baker 1965: 13–4). This serves Baker to diagnose that people are 'incapable of perceiving [the] truth' about human nature (13). In an early psychoanalytical analysis of the novel, Claire Rosenfield likewise argues that the children's 'new mythology', according to which the outside world is populated with demons and spirits, results from 'the projection into a beast of those impulses that they cannot accept in themselves' (Rosenfield 1988: 291).

The problem with these readings is that they refer to a novel that, when examined in company with *Pincher Martin* and *The Spire*, makes better sense without mentioning projection at all. In Schopenhauerian terms, *Lord of the Flies* is, like *The Spire*, a fictional account of the way in which many individuals repress the essential urge which is active inside them (just as it is active in the whole world), and whose activity they recognise in external reality but deny in themselves.[74] The confusion of that role that repression plays in these novels with the workings of projection can only be understood if we take some of Golding's comments about projection, later in his career, to refer to his earlier works. Trying to explain the way in which human beings generally come to terms with the world, he says to Baker: 'I think there has been a tendency in man's mind, man's nature, to make the universe in the image of his own mind. After all, there is very little else he can do with it' (in Baker 1982: 131). The example that precedes this

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74 A comparable mistake is made in the reading of *The Spire* offered by Saavedra-Carballido (2014), where projection is mentioned instead of repression as the reason why Jocelin initially sees the will as something external to himself.

assertion throws some light— despite the awkward reference to inner and outer black holes — to Golding's position:

> I think it's quite likely that we've got black holes out there because we've discovered them *in here*. You know we've done some things in this century that we didn't think human beings could do and which are indescribable, and those are black holes in a way. So the next thing we do is find them *out there* in the universe (in Baker 1982: 131; my italics).

This is a recognition that the structure of our minds affects the way in which we see the world; this is a recognition that our grasp of our inner tendencies (*man's nature* as we know it *in here*) will also affect our comprehension of the world at large. Yet this recognition can be taken to refer to spurious projection only if we consider the resulting picture of the world as unreliable. In my reading of his earlier novels, Golding does not see this unreliability. Rather, in them Golding accepts — like Schopenhauer — the contents of inner consciousness as being a solid base on which to build a complete and accurate picture of the world. In the course of time, however, Golding learns to refrain from saying that the analogy from one's body can result in a better knowledge of the world. In this sense, we cannot forget that the interview in which he speaks about the black holes within was given after the publication of *Darkness Visible* and *Rites of Passage*, that is, after Golding had already begun to question the legitimacy of the picture of the world resulting from inner consciousness. This means that, even if we interpret his remarks as casting doubts on the legitimacy of any metaphysics of nature, these doubts cannot be taken to reflect the picture of nature offered in his earlier novels.

Even in the novels in which Golding lends credibility to the analogy between inner and outer experience, many of his characters do not realise what is at stake. With the exception of such gifted individuals as Simon, Golding's characters are usually unaware that they and the rest of the world share the same essence. As we have seen in *Lord of the Flies* and *The Spire*, people frequently repress what lies inside them, that is, they regard themselves as free from uncontrollable impulses that they hold — correctly — to dominate the rest of the world. In this respect, the situation in *Pincher Martin* is the exact reverse, because its main character sees himself as he really is, but when he is confronted with the force that rules the world, he tries to dismiss it — mistakenly — as a

mental creation. "'You are a projection of my mind'" (Golding 1956: 194). Ironically, Pincher's surrogate refuses to admit that the whole island world where he has been since his fall overboard is only a mental product.

Starting with *Darkness Visible*, the extrapolation from what is inside the individual to the rest of the world is not as straightforward as in the works that come before. The new perspective also affects the way in which he *re*interprets the earlier novels, at the cost of ignoring much textual evidence, so that their treatment of the metaphysics of nature will be more consistent with the treatment given in the later novels. The seed of such a change can be found in 'Fable': *Lord of the Flies*, he says in hindsight, illustrates 'the objectifying of our own inadequacies so as to make a scapegoat' (Golding 1965: 94). If this is not a retrospective reference to projection, it sounds very much like one.

In acknowledging that our search for essences may incur the error of projection, Golding reaches the same point as some of Schopenhauer's critics. The characterisation of the inner essence of all things and beings that Schopenhauer puts at the centre of his pessimistic world view may tally well with how the egocentrism of most conscious beings makes them see the world, but Magee considers this pessimism to be 'logically independent of [the rest of] his philosophy' and rooted only in 'his psychological development', in particular in the experience of 'maternal rejection' (Magee 1997: 13, 241, 20). Eagleton's criticism is slightly different, insofar as he contends that Schopenhauer's description of the world as dominated by ceaseless yearning, 'irrespective of this or that particular hankering' (Eagleton 1990: 158–9), is nothing more than a spurious extrapolation from the commercial world of the early nineteenth century (a world in which Schopenhauer occupies a privileged position by inheritance). By Schopenhauer's time, Eagleton explains, capitalist society has evolved to the point where

> the determinant role and regular repetition of appetite … permits a dramatic theoretical shift: the construction of desire as … a momentous metaphysical event or self-identical force, as against some earlier social order in which desire is still too narrowly particularistic, too intimately bound up with local or traditional obligation, to be reified in quite this way (Eagleton 1990: 159).

What permits this kind of reification is not only 'the emergence of a social order in which, in the form of commonplace possessive individualism, appetite is now becoming

the order of the day, the ruling ideology and dominant social practice', but, more specifically, 'the perceived infinity of desire in a social order where the only end of accumulation is to accumulate afresh' (Eagleton 1990: 159). As it is hypostasised, 'desire comes to be seen independent of any particular ends, or at least grotesquely disproportionate to them' (159). In the end, capitalist appetite 'begins monstrously to obtrude itself as ... an opaque, ... self-propelling power utterly without purpose or reason' (159).[75]

While Schopenhauer 'privileges the inward in Romantic style' as the royal road to the essential will, 'he nevertheless refuses to valorize it' (Eagleton 1990: 170). Hypostasising desire as he does allows Schopenhauer to accept 'the categories of Romantic humanism' while simultaneously 'inverting the valuations' (160). Thus, on the one hand, he 'can retain the whole totalizing apparatus of bourgeois humanism at its most affirmative — the singular central principle informing the whole of reality, the integrated cosmic whole, the stable relations of phenomena and essence' (160). On the other hand, he can empty these forms of their idealised content — the 'freedom, justice, reason, progress' that provides 'the ideological substance of the system' — and proceed to replace it with 'the actual degraded materials of everyday bourgeois existence' (160). As a result, 'the uncouth rapacity of the average bourgeois' is transformed into 'the prime metaphysical mover' of the entire world, which is thereby 'recast in the image of the market force' (160). The image of the individual that emerges from this theory is that of 'a helpless puppet of the will' (160). As such, it has very little in common with the humanist belief in an individual that is, in Paul Smith's words, 'undivided and whole', rational and autonomous (Smith 1988: xxxiii). The human individual is thus in thrall to the same inhuman force that underlies the rest of the world as appearance:

> At the very root of the human subject lies that which is implacably alien to it, so that ... this will is the very pith of my being, which I can feel from the inside of my body ... is absolutely unlike me at all, without consciousness or motive, as blankly unfeeling and anonymous as the force which stirs the waves (Eagleton 1990: 161).

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75 I have omitted from these quotations the parts in which Eagleton, following the popular interpretation of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of nature, equates the essential will with 'a *Ding-an-sich*' or thing-in-itself that is 'unfathomable' (Eagleton 1990: 159).

The claim that the bourgeois person and the waves or the polyp share a common essence, and that this essence is sordid craving, 'shakes bourgeois ideology to the root', and 'removes the hope of any historical alternative' (Eagleton 1990: 160). This is indeed what happens in Schopenhauer, and in Golding too, insofar as his metaphysics of nature coincides with the philosopher's.

If what Schopenhauer presents as the essential will is actually the very essence of the capitalist enterprise, then his presentation 'naturalizes and universalizes bourgeois behaviour' (Eagleton 1990: 160). Since the naturalisation and universalisation from which Schopenhauer's characterisation of the essence of the world results are two of the main features of ideological discourse that Eagleton mentions in his *Ideology: An Introduction* (1991), it is obvious that — contrary to what its initial lack of philosophical impact might suggest — this aspect of Schopenhauer's theory is much 'in keeping with the temper of the time' (Magee 1997: 419), because it is actually linked to the period's predominant economic ideology. As defined in the Marxist tradition, to which Eagleton himself belongs, ideology is a set of beliefs, practices and normative aspirations that may function to preserve the social status quo and that often employ to that end strategies of unification, rationalization, legitimation, naturalisation and universalisation.[76]

As Eagleton explains, its naturalising and universalising components are 'part of the *dehistoricizing* thrust of ideology, its tacit denial that ideas and beliefs are specific to a

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76 I shall define these strategies in turn. According to Eagleton, ideologies 'are rarely homogeneous', but, by virtue of their thrust towards social unification, they 'strive to homogenize' and 'lend coherence to the groups or classes which hold them, welding them into a unitary, if internally differentiated, identity, and perhaps thereby allowing them to impose a certain unity upon society as a whole' (Eagleton 1991: 45). In the psychoanalytical definition of the term, which Eagleton adopts, the rationalisation of the social situation is a 'Procedure whereby the subject attempts to present an explanation that is either logically consistent or ethically acceptable for attitudes, ideas, feelings, etc., whose true motives are not perceived' (cited in Eagleton 1991: 51; originally in Laplanche and Pontalis 2006: 375). The legitimation of the social situation is 'the process by which a ruling power comes to secure from its subjects an at least tacit consent to its authority' (Eagleton 1991: 54). Naturalisation involves making the social situation 'appear spontaneous and inevitable' (55). Universalisation consists in presenting values and interests that 'are in fact specific to a certain place and time ... as the values and interests of all humanity' (56).

particular time, place and social group' (Eagleton 1991: 59). Therefore, extending the capitalist organisation of human life to all historical periods and, beyond the human sphere, to all animate and inanimate beings, thus giving the idea that the capitalist way of life is necessary and unavoidable, is doubtlessly an ideological manoeuvre. This is precisely the move made by Schopenhauer when he reifies the passions that keep capitalism going into a timeless urge that underlies the world as a whole irrespective of spatial and temporal considerations. Despite this fundamental flaw, Eagleton does not dismiss Schopenhauer's thought as totally worthless. On the contrary, it deserves being paid attention to because of what it reveals about human history. Once its ideological underpinnings have been laid bare, Schopenhauer's philosophy can be read as an indictment not of the entire world, but of past human history, of the history of capitalism in particular, and thereby as a guiding light for the future. Thus Eagleton admits that Schopenhauer's 'appalling vision' of history is accurate in many respects: 'The dramatic mutations of human history, its epochal ruptures and upheavals, have been in one sense mere variations on a consistent theme of exploitation and oppression' (Eagleton 1990: 158). Though Eagleton hurries to specify that Schopenhauer's bleak portrayal is only a characterisation 'of all history *to date*', the qualification does not prevent him from adding that the philosopher's thought serves as a reminder that this 'intolerable narrative cannot continue' (158; my italic). It is the belief that the course of history can be changed that inspires emancipatory political struggles (of the kind that Eagleton supports), 'even as the crippling burden of that history would seem to bear mute witness against the feasibility of such a faith' (158).

It can be argued that Golding's earlier novels too are a testimony to the horrors of history, insofar as they are trapped by the same ideology as Schopenhauer's thought, that is, insofar as they repeat Schopenhauer's naturalising and universalising move by depicting individuals as dominated by an uncontrollable thirst, a desire to explore and exploit whatever resources they come across, in sum to obtain as much benefit as possible from any situation. There is a difference though between the two authors. While Schopenhauer maintains his position concerning the world's essence throughout his life, Golding does not. Starting with *Darkness Visible*, he does not hesitate to problematise the hypostasisation of the contents of inner consciousness. However, whereas Eagleton criticises Schopenhauer's model as a vehicle of ideology, Golding seems to have moved beyond his earlier stance for empirical reasons: since the contents

of inner observation are bound to vary among individuals, positing those contents as the door to the inner side of the entire world will not develop into a unified body of theory but will degenerate into an intractable proliferation of conflicting opinions.

We have seen that, as they cast doubts on the kind of extrapolation carried out by Schopenhauer, Golding's later works start to dismiss essentialism and to consider it a case of psychological projection. This does not mean that the new approach will save Golding from criticism. His characters tend to view the external world as characterised by fragmentation and conflict, hence by suffering; but perhaps their view is the result of their projecting inner fragmentation and conflict. Judging from what psychoanalysis has to say about the fragmented psyche, Golding's presentation of external conflict as arising from projection could be ideologically inflected too.

From a psychoanalytical perspective, fragmentation and conflict are the most salient features of the human psyche. According to Freud, the psychic apparatus is divided into systems (according to the first topography, these are the unconscious, preconscious and conscious) and into agencies (according to the second topography, these are the id, ego and superego). According to Lacan, the subject is constituted by a gap, essentially divided, a split that 'indicates the presence of the unconscious' (Evans 1996: 192). Lacan's 'objection to any reference to totality in the individual' stems from the fact that subjectivity itself, which is a consequence of socialisation, 'introduces division therein' (Lacan 2006: 242). Psychoanalytical theorists are well aware that the way in which the individual deals with this gap is historically inflected. Sometimes the solution is projection. In this regard, Lacan argues that there is a certain psychological attitude that is peculiar to the modern mind: 'The me [*moi*] of modern man … has taken on its form in the dialectical impasse of the beautiful soul who does not recognize his very reason for being in the disorder he denounces in the world' (233). In Muller and Richardson's interpretation of this passage, it is not only the *belle âme* that 'projects internal conflict onto the world and then proceeds to denounce it' (Muller and Richardson 1982: 313). In their opinion, this attitude is characteristic of the modern frame of mind as a whole: in Western modernity, they say, 'the defensive self-righteousness of the ego arises to cover the gap and overcome the fear of fragmentation, and this internal disorder is in turn denounced in the other, who is seen as a threat to the ego' (130). It could be argued, in this light, that what Golding does is to present this kind of projection not as peculiar to modernity but characteristic of all human history.

Thus, Golding himself could be accused of projecting the modern frame of mind to other eras, turning it into a transhistorical constant. The outcome would be just as ideological as that of the extrapolation from the desires of contemporary humans to the entire world.

As it turns out, not all of Golding's characters see the external world as the stage of never-ending discord and antagonism. As we have seen, in his latter novels some prefer to project an ideal order or harmony of goals. This applies even to Sophy, who in *Darkness Visible* offers a nihilistic version of that harmony: in her opinion, as we have seen, outer reality is as much dominated as her own interior by an entropic tendency that will inevitably result in a state of peace from which there is no escape. A naive observer might conclude that the way in which the world runs down is through violence and conflict; yet the entropic impulse to general consumption which dominates the whole is also characteristic of its separate parts, all of which move together in this direction. More straightforward examples of the harmony that the world may reach can be found in the Sea Trilogy; two of its main characters, Reverend Colley and Mr Prettiman, display the same faith as Sophy in a harmonious whole, the difference being that they see that whole not as heading for self-destruction but as glorious and good. Certainly not all of the characters in the trilogy are as optimistic as them: Talbot, to take a case in point, still sees in both humans relationships and natural phenomena a perpetual inclination to conflict.

From Eagleton's and Lacan's perspectives, it is obvious that all of these characters are trapped by an ideological dynamic of projection. It is equally obvious, however, that in his later novels Golding's attitude is very different from the one in his earlier novels: instead of endorsing, as he used to do (e.g. through the use that his third-person narrators make of dynamic descriptions), the metaphysical view — always the same — that his visionary characters hold, now Golding prefers to refrain from endorsing any of the metaphysical theories that his characters put forward. In itself, this is an implicit gesture of authorial rejection, a gesture that Golding no doubt wants his readers to imitate. By virtue of the diverging metaphysical attitudes towards the external world that they contain, and by virtue of the distance that Golding now — unlike before — prefers to keep from all of those views, *Darkness Visible* and the Sea Trilogy thus succeed in offering a treatment of the metaphysics of nature that, by presenting it as inevitably guilty of projection, avoids the ideological traps against which Eagleton and

Lacan protest. As the introduction of the term *projection* in his retrospective discussion of *Lord of the Flies* makes clear, Golding also wanted his readers to approach his earlier novels from the position of suspicious detachment that his later novels were meant to place them.

3.2.3. The Path to Utopia in the Sea Trilogy

The realisation that all the descriptions of the world's immanent essence along Schopenhauerian lines are likely to be cases of projection must have been a difficult one for Golding, because it involved abandoning one possible explanation for his own personality. Golding's dismissal of this kind of metaphysics of nature involves rejecting not only his later characters' opinions in this respect, but also the opinions that he defended in his earlier novels and which might have served him to explain why some individuals can have the kind of visionary experiences he himself claimed to have undergone, and why so many people, starting with himself, nevertheless find it so easy to engage in violent behaviour. In this latter respect, we must not forget that he sometimes described himself, in terms that remind of many of the children in his novels, as having been a self-centred and 'difficult' child who not only loved 'fights' and had 'a desire to be rowdy, and a leader in rowdiness', but 'enjoyed hurting people' and 'exulted in … the complete subjugation of [his] adversary' (Golding 1965: 159–61); his journals record how, being an Oxford undergraduate, he 'tried unhandily to rape' a girl in the same way as Oliver does in *The Pyramid* (cited in Carey 2009: 46); and like Sammy Mountjoy in *Free Fall* he later 'ditched the girl [he] was going to marry' to marry another instead (cited in Carey 2009: 76).

At the same time as he abandons the essentialist positions that inform his earlier novels (and which are connected with the way in which he sees his own personality), Golding moves closer than ever to the optimistic political positions that he associates with his radical parents (whose personal qualities he always admired but whose opinions in this respect he had hitherto described as naive). Actually, this movement has less to do with the rejection of essentialism than with the defence of the individual's moral autonomy offered in *Free Fall*. In this novel, let us recall, Golding's individuals become autonomous moral subjects, in whose power it is to alter the course of their

lives and to contribute to social transformation. Though in this novel the positive political opportunities afforded by free choice remain unexplored, Golding elaborates on them in his last finished books: in the Sea Trilogy Golding examines the possibility of setting up a utopian community as an alternative to existing social structures. Together, the three novels recount a year-long voyage to Australia in the early nineteenth-century, and the events that take place immediately after his arrival there. For young Edmund Talbot, the main character and narrator, the journey consists in an often painful process of maturation. Among the numerous events that contribute to this, the main ones can be brought under just a few thematic headings: love, aesthetics, death, the value of compassion, society and politics. Here I shall only focus on the last two.

In *Free Fall* we see how, as he recalls his confinement in a Nazi camp during the Second World War, Sammy Mountjoy establishes a direct connection between the free adoption of a moral disposition and the socio-political situation of the age: the Second World War, he says, is like 'the ghastly and ferocious play of children who having made a wrong choice of a series of them were … helplessly tormenting each other because a wrong use of freedom had lost them their freedom' (Golding 1959: 150). This passage draws attention to the negative consequences of one's misuse of freedom, not only those that follow from the adoption of the wrong kind of moral disposition, but also those added by stubbornly clinging to this evil disposition. In the latter case (on which existentialist philosophy put a lot of emphasis), the autonomous subject betrays his or her freedom by renouncing use it in order to abandon the evil disposition that he or she has adopted. According to Sartrean existentialism, this 'loss of freedom', to which Monod draws attention (1982: 252), would be an example of bad faith.

Though it does explore the negative consequences that the misuse of freedom may have, *Free Fall* does not explore the positive consequences that may follow from people's choices. This is something that Golding postpones until the Sea Trilogy. Like *Free Fall*, the trilogy is a first-person narration. The autobiographical mode allows character-narrator to assess, in hindsight, his own evolution towards maturity over a period whose memory keeps haunting him many years later. Crucially, this process of self-assessment has an important socio-political dimension.

The vicissitudes of the voyage on which Talbot has embarked teach him, among other things, to differentiate between the social façade and true worth (respectively

exemplified by Lieutenants Deverel and Summers), and to assume the social duty of improving collective life. By the end of his narrative, he is virtually a new man. The distance between Talbot's younger and older selves can be measured by the descriptions that he provides at the beginning and at the end of his story. Young Talbot smugly considers himself 'a good enough fellow at bottom' despite his 'boundless' ambition (Golding 1991: 3, 9). By contrast, old Talbot is wise enough to remember neither 'a young gentleman' on his way 'to assist the governor in the administration of one of His Majesty's colonies', nor 'a man of breeding, education and intelligence', but 'a lanky young fool with everything to learn and nothing to lose' (3, 484, 750).

Talbot's painful re-education begins when he is forced to face up to the consequences of his repeated social blunders, with the ship's captain as well as with his fellow passengers. As the narrative unfolds, it becomes increasingly clear that many of these errors are caused by his unfortunate proneness to social misjudgement. This is especially evident in his relationship with Lieutenants Summers and Deverel. Owing to his excessive reliance on external signs of social position such as accent, attire and manners, Talbot is slow to realise that Summers, a good officer of humble origins who has made his way through the ranks, is much worthier of close friendship than the better-bred Deverel, whom Talbot takes to be 'the most gentleman-like of the officers' (Golding 1991: 310). It is only after Deverel's 'negligence and intemperance' has not only put the ship and everyone's lives at risk but also insulted his captain, that Talbot becomes aware of the danger of relying so much on social appearances.

The passengers whom Talbot's 'lofty demeanour' and obtuseness annoy most are undoubtedly Letitia Granham, a former governess, and her fiancé and later husband Mr Prettiman, a 'social philosopher' whom everyone considers an atheist and upon whom Talbot has to 'keep an eye' at his godfather's request (Golding 1991: 247, 50, 240). Having just set out, Talbot declares his opposition 'to those who approve of the outrageous follies of democracy' (34). By contrast, Mr Prettiman is said to be a declared 'friend of Republicans and Jacobins', and to extol 'the social benefits of revolution' (170, 250). Like many revolutionaries, Mr Prettiman is a firm believer in 'the inevitability of the process by which true liberty must lead to true equality' (238); but his own methods are pacific. His and his partner's plan is 'to lead a caravan to found the Ideal City' in the Australian outback, aided by 'A handful of immigrants and freed *government men*' (ex-convicts), and 'one or two savages' (704, 744). While that moment arrives, the

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Prettimans take upon themselves the task of re-educating Talbot, whose 'birth and upbringing' they regard a 'disadvantage' (242).

After many perils (including, in *Fire Down Below*, a near crash, which the ship miraculously avoids, against the icy cliffs of as yet undiscovered Antarctica), the crew eventually sights the coast of Australia. Paradoxically, it is upon his arrival at Sydney Cove that young Talbot goes through what he calls 'the unhappiest period of [his] life' (Golding 1991: 733). After receiving the news of his godfather's recent demise, a 'disaster' that thwarts his worldly ambitions (729), Talbot witnesses how Summers — whom, despite the growing distance between them in social and political matters, he still considers a good friend — dies in the fire that destroys the moored. Then, unexpectedly, two letters from his parents announce to him that, thanks to his godfather's death, he has been bought into Parliament via a rotten borough, that is, via an election constituency that, before the passing of the Reform Bills between 1831 and 1832, had so few electors that they could be personally bullied or bribed (see Arnold-Baker 2001: 1054–6). Now that Talbot's fortunes are restored, three alternatives open up to him. In the first place, he can go back to his old self — and thus to the view that the best form of government '"cannot be representation by everyone"' (253), that, as long as they remained '"in the right hands"', rotten boroughs would be an invaluable part of '"a contradictory and cumbersome system"' whose '"imperfections"' made it all the more suitable to govern its far from perfect subjects (254), and that '"civilized nations will more and more take over the administration of the backward part of the world"' (253) — and take possession of his seat 'to exercise power for the betterment of [his] country', that is (and here that reader is expected to share the author's distance from the character), 'for the benefit of the world' (678). Alternatively, Talbot can reject his seat and join the Prettimans, as they expect him to, in their construction of an egalitarian community. Finally, Talbot can steer a comfortable middle course and 'accept election by the route of … a "Rotten Borough" solely … to [work for] the reform of an insane and unfair system!' (757). Talbot has set out on the voyage as a committed Conservative; but due to his friendship with Summers, and his flirtation with the Prettimans' radical sensibility, the choice proves more difficult than expected. In some respects, Summers is just as conservative as Talbot; but, paradoxically, the discovery of Summers's professional and personal worth predisposes Talbot to admit the benefits of meritocracy — a system upon which the strength of the navy seems to rest — over the

aristocratic values in which he has been raised. For a while the Prettimans' influence seems to open Talbot's eyes to the need for a fairer social structure than would be achieved through mere reform; yet in the end Talbot remains too tied to 'common sense' to countenance the idea of joining the Prettimans' 'festival of joy' (677, 761). Though the only evidence that we have in this respect at the end of the trilogy is Talbot's own statement of intent, if we take him at his own word for once his subsequent political career is in the reformist camp.

Obviously, the point of Talbot's narrative is to show how his whole life turns — like Sammy Mountjoy's in *Free Fall* — on a crucial moment of choice. This moment provides the coda to *Fire Down Below*, the last novel of the Sea Trilogy. McCarron explains the relationship between Talbot's and Sammy's decisions:

> Like Golding's earlier novel *Free Fall*, *Fire Down Below* is principally concerned with choice. In *Free Fall*, Samuel Mountjoy chooses Beatrice Ifor: the world of the flesh over that of the spirit. In *Fire Down Below*, Talbot makes precisely the same choice; the narrative is centred upon his crucial decision not to accompany Mr Prettiman on his quest (McCarron 2007: 196).

Despite his refusal to join Mr Prettiman, Talbot is no longer the chauvinist Conservative that he used to be. At the beginning of his narrative, he expresses his scepticism about the promise of '"an impossible liberty and equality"' offered by '"a perfect scheme of government may be fitted over the poor, imperfect face of humanity"' (Golding 1991: 289, 254). Upon his arrival in Australia, he is still too concerned that the Prettimans' success might destroy his 'sanity and security' (760). Nevertheless, he no longer identifies utopian revolution, as he does until the Prettimans' disclose their pacific intentions, with an outbreak of violence that could turn 'ordered societies into images of chaos' (290) Due to his conversations with the Prettimans, Talbot distances himself from Summers's (honest but short-sighted) conservatism, moving much closer to radical positions than he was when he left home.

McCarron points out that 'Talbot chose the life he would lead and it has been a good one, but he never stops wondering whether he made the correct choice' (2007: 199). Some readers may see his choice as wrong. In order to decide whether this is the conclusion that Golding wants his readers to reach, I think it necessary to compare the character's position with the author's. Always a committed supporter of democracy,

Golding describes himself to Biles as 'more socialist than liberal' (in Biles 1970: 49). The inclusion of the Prettimans' in the Sea Trilogy, and the respect that they are probably intended to inspire in the reader, shows that Golding does not see violence as the only possible path to utopia. He nevertheless remains, like Talbot, somewhat sceptical about utopian solutions. Even in his later writings, political reform seems to be the only route that viable societies can follow, first to survive, and then, if possible, to become increasingly fair. In the piece entitled 'Belief and Creativity', Golding suggests that, confronted with the choice between conservative stasis and the revolutionary leap of faith, he would like to be able to join the 'revolutionary' in the 'revolt against reductionism' represented by Lieutenant Summers (Golding 1984a: 187). Nevertheless, the novelist confesses straight away to not counting himself among 'the geniuses of belief' that 'can murder for democracy' or that, like the Prettimans, set out to create a paradise on earth (189).

Commenting on the differences of character between the Prettimans and Talbot, Golding contrasts the former's 'impossible quest' with the latter's lack of 'passion' (Golding 1991: xi). If we take this remark to cast Talbot's reformism in a slightly negative light, the same judgement must be passed on Golding's political realism. Because of the similarities between Golding's and old Talbot's political realism, the Sea Trilogy can be read as an indictment of the novelist's lack of political daring. Even so, that Talbot and Golding fail to live up to the utopian promise does not mean that utopia is out of the question. Judging from Talbot endorsement the Prettimans, it looks as if he — like Golding — wished to be proved wrong in his conviction that utopias are not feasible; but it also looks as if he — again like Golding — did not have the courage to produce the proof himself. As it seems, Golding uses Talbot to examine, and distance himself from, his own anti-utopian tendencies. It must be recalled, in this respect, that Golding could never forget about his radical parents' utopian longings. As Carey suggests, Golding's characterisation of the Prettimans is reminiscent 'of his own parents — the two idealists who, in family legend, had stood ... forwarding the cause of women's rights and other worthy aims' (Carey 2009: 477). In the piece entitled 'The Ladder and the Tree', Golding himself states that her father was a 'generous, loving, saintly' man whose 'human stature' grows the more he thinks of him (173–4) — just like Mr Prettiman's in Talbot's memory.

In comparison with Golding's parents' active involvement in the transformation of existing society from inside, the Prettimans' plan to set up an ideal community could be interpreted as an escapist gesture. From this angle, our judgement of Talbot may change somewhat (indeed, it may become more positive than Golding probably intended): despite Mr Prettiman's sympathy for the French revolutionaries, he can offer no real hope for mankind, while Talbot's return to the metropole is a token of political maturity. In general, however, readers of the trilogy have sided with the Prettimans against Talbot. In view of Talbot's rejection of the Prettimans' invitation to accompany them, McCarron, for example, concludes that 'the last of Golding's books published in his lifetime can also be read as a deeply conservative political allegory and, overall, as one of his most deeply pessimistic novels' (2007: 194–5). Carey, who concurs, further states that the trilogy ends with the Prettimans 'being shown as the moral and intellectual superior[s] of the toff Edmund Talbot' (Carey 2009: 477). According to this critic, the last stretch of the narrative puts the accent on Talbot's 'cowardly failure to respond to [the Prettimans'] altruism or share their hopes of mankind' (476).

From McCarron's and Carey's perspective, what makes the ending of the Sea Trilogy sad is Talbot's cowardice. But even if they are right about Talbot and the Pretimmans, they seem to miss several important points. To begin with, Talbot undergoes an evolution that brings him closer to progressive politics. As a result, the implications of the Sea Trilogy are not as conservative or pessimistic as McCarron says. The same conclusion can be reached if we compare the trilogy with the novels that precede it: here Golding no longer endorses moral and physical repression — always within the limits of democratic legislation — as the only way of improving society. Obviously Talbot is not a revolutionary, but this does not mean that his newly acquired reformism can be played down. In the context of Golding's oeuvre, Talbot's trajectory is a great advance. If we compare the complicitous response that is expected from the readers of *Lord of the Flies* — a novel that sides with repression unequivocally — with the indignation with which we are expected to react to Talbot's view that violent repression — additionally tainted by classism, sexism and imperialist racism — is '"a civilized attempt at reformation"' whereby '"the violent and hopelessly depraved ones are restrained"' and the '"really wicked ... are sent off to an island and beaten too"' — though '"never too much"' (Golding 1991: 747). The moral and socio-political worlds

depicted in *Lord of the Flies* and the Sea Trilogy are very different — and so is the authorial attitude to them. Long past is the time when Golding could write a novel whose theme is, as he says of *Lord of the Flies*, the 'emotion' of 'grief, sheer grief, grief, grief, grief' (Golding 1984a: 163). Even if Talbot's tepid reaction to Mr Prettiman's summons were a token of his political failure, in the trilogy there is another character — Letitia Graham — who does choose to commit herself to Mr Prettiman's cause. Though Talbot is the main narrator and focaliser in the Sea Trilogy (the other being Reverend Colley), his reliability is in question from the outset. His perspective colours our understanding of almost everything that happens in the novel, but the authorial position is closer to the Prettimans'. From this angle, the political point of the trilogy is that, though many of us may lack, like well-intentioned Talbot, the courage or the determination to make a clean break with the past, thus contributing to alter the course of history, many others may well be more daring.

At this point in Golding's career, what makes radical transformation or gradual improvement possible is that, however strong one's innate propensities and the power of habit, we are basically free, and nothing prevents us from taking a determined step forward. This idea contradicts the earlier view that the essential features of society cannot be changed because it depends on human nature, which is dominated by egoism and malice, and the ensuing advocacy of repressive measures as the only solution to uncontrolled violence. There are several possible reasons for this authorial change of mind. Golding's earlier works suggest that, despite the impossibility of changing one's inborn character, everyone, including malignant persons, can find their lawful place in a democratic system. Perhaps Golding realised that, depending on which laws are in force, such practices as torture, even if morally reproachable, could be seen as desirable from a legal perspective. This position must have seem to him untenable. Another possible reason why Golding came to reject his earlier views on character is even more directly related to his political leanings. Precisely for their possible conservative thrust, the implications of his earlier novels must have become unacceptable to a man who describes himself to Boles as '*Bitterly* left of center' (in Biles 1970: 48). In order to change the conclusion that only repressive societies are feasible he had to change the premises, i.e. that because of their most humans are naturally inclined to cause evil. This is indeed what he does in *Free Fall*. After this, nothing prevents Golding from giving utopia a more positive treatment than, for example, in 'Utopias and Antiutopias'.

Interestingly enough, Talbot's free embrace of worldly comfort instead of utopia throws retrospective light on the choice made by the protagonist of an earlier novel, *The Pyramid*. Like *Free Fall* and the Sea Trilogy, *The Pyramid* is a first-person narrative. It is made up of three juxtaposed episodes from the life of Oliver, who acts as their protagonist and narrator. Though the narrative sometimes veers towards light comedy, this does not suffice to counterbalance the ominous intimation of collective paralysis. The tone of defeat of Oliver's narrative has to do with his portrayal of social prejudice, in such matters as class and sexual orientation, of the villagers' lack of love and of their obsession with materialistic calculation. On its very last page *The Pyramid* tackles, like *Free Fall* and the Sea Trilogy, the thorny issue of free choice.

Set for the most part in the 1920s, *The Pyramid* tells us about Oliver, who, at eighteen, wants to enjoy himself before going to university to read chemistry. He lives in Stilbourne, a small English country town where everyone knows everyone, and where the streets and their inhabitants are marked out in terms of social class and a corresponding hierarchy that extends from the respectable to the disreputable. Oliver's family belongs to the lower middle class, and though his parents pin all their hopes of social advancement on the shoulders of their only son, he endangers them by becoming sexually involved with Evie, a local working-class girl, and by developing a sudden obsession with playing the piano (an activity that he initially takes up because his parents' see this kind of hobby as a mark of social status). The novel finishes with a visit that old Oliver, who has eventually pursued a career as a scientist, pays to Stilbourne, during which he shares his suspicion that a musical vocation would have hindered his material success. Reflecting on his 'power of choosing the future', a power that would have enabled him to leave behind the values of prudish comfort and materialistic calculation in which he has been raised, Oliver asserts, like Sammy Mountjoy in *Free Fall*, that he 'would pay anything — *anything*' to change the course of his life; but 'in the same instant' he rejects the idea, feeling compelled to admit, like Edmund Talbot, that he 'would never pay more than a reasonable price' for such a life (Golding 1967: 217).

If we read it side by side with *Free Fall* and the Sea Trilogy, we realise that *The Pyramid* turns on the notion of freedom, on the inevitability of making choices and on the negative consequences that they may have. The way in which Sammy Mountjoy describes his own choice and its effects limits their influence to the personal sphere; but

The Pyramid and, above all, the Sea Trilogy, open the focus in order to show the social and political repercussions of our decisions. Like the emphasis on the freedom to decide what to will, the idea that this individual freedom can affect social and political organisation is a departure from Golding's basic stance. In the last analysis, this idea opens the door to utopia, and for this reason it can be interpreted as giving Golding some reason for hope.

3.3. The Changing Place of the Divinity

In the foregoing two chapters I have investigated the metaphysical themes that Golding shares with Schopenhauer, first focusing on the way in which Golding's basic stance coincides with the philosopher's, and then proceeding to analyse the ways in which Golding's gradual additions diverge from Schopenhauer's views. Now I shall look into an element that is not included in Schopenhauer's model, but which occupies a salient place in Golding's world view, both in the earlier and in the later phases of his career. This element is the divinity, whose presence and function, inside as well as outside his fiction, merits some examination.[77] From the point of view of Golding's metaphysical views, the analysis of the treatment that he gives to the divinity receives in his novels is interesting because it tends to run parallel to — indeed to become confused with — the treatment of the inner essence of the world; though Golding's novels eventually stop paying attention to that essence, they still concern themselves with the divinity, and their treatment of the latter can still throw light, by dint of that initial confusion, on Golding's changing views on the world's essence.

Though Golding constantly refers to the divinity, in his fiction and outside it alike, he always makes it clear, as we saw in the Introduction, that his beliefs do not conform to the orthodoxy of any religious creed, whether Christian or otherwise. Though the language that he uses to talk about the divinity outside his fiction brings him close to Christianity, the image of if that transpires from his novels, even from those in which

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77 Given the polymorphous characterisation of the divinity that Golding offers, I prefer to employ the pronoun *it* and the lower case, except when discussing the ways in which Golding (who usually prefers the masculine pronoun *he* in lower case), his narrators or his characters tackle the issue; in those cases I adopt the terms that they use.

the knowledge of the divinity is asserted, often fails to conform to the Christian idea of a benevolent Creator that takes care of His creation. In this regard, Golding's novels are closer to Schopenhauer — who rejects the 'ontology of traditional Christianity' according to which 'world, God and devil as separate entities' (Young 2005: 250 n. 8) — than the novelist's own opinions are. This is due to the confusion mentioned above: if the divinity appears in the same terms as the essence of the world, and if this essence is presented as having, especially in Golding's earlier novels, the same features as Schopenhauer's will to life, then the divinity cannot but come over as a fearsome, amoral force. Outside his novels, Golding generally managed to avoid this confusion, keeping his references to the divinity separated from those to the essence of the world.

My discussion of the ways in which the divinity appears outside Golding's novels will proceed in chronological order. The focus will be both in Golding's retrospective comments on his novels and in he other remarks about the divinity in his essays, reviews and interviews. As we shall see, Golding speaks of the divinity in two different ways: as a (probably transcendent) God whose attributes are generally compatible with those of the Christian Creator, and the (immanent) mother goddess. Though these descriptions of the divinity are incompatible with each other, their coexistence can be understood as an embodiment of Golding's opinion, expressed in the opening essays of *A Moving Target*, that throughout history cultural beliefs have always come 'in layers, each age superimposed on an obscurer and more savage one' (Golding 1984a: 37); despite the widespread impression of historical progress, these layers have always 'existed together' (37), especially in the religious sphere where all the successive revolutions 'have affected only the top half of our minds', leaving us with older attitudes 'deep in our ... unconscious' (9). Using the cult of Apollo at Delphi as an example, Golding explains how in ancient Greece male-centred religion tried to displace — without complete success — the earlier cult of 'the Great Mother, the Earth Mother' (37). Similarly, Christianity did not supersede paganism completely, and the probable reason is that Christian faith derived much of its power from pagan beliefs which nevertheless continue to thrive — as *The Spire* makes clear — 'just below the surface' (37).

As regards the view of the divinity as a male Creator, the emphasis of my discussion will fall on the way in which Golding uses the existence of God — an existence that he first presents, like His goodness, as a verifiable fact, but which he later reduces to a

matter of faith — to explain certain aspects of his fiction. As we shall see, this kind of explanation separates him from Schopenhauer. This is evident, for instance, when Golding tries to explain the presence of saints — the living proof that a good God exists — in his novels. Unlike Schopenhauer, he does not link the existence of saints to the free activity of an essential will that is neither good nor bad, but directly to the existence and benevolence God. Apart from the existence of saints, God serves Golding to explain why some of his characters die despite their reluctance to do so, and where their vicious conduct comes from. Commenting on *Pincher Martin*, for instance, the novelists states that the main character's death confirms the existence of a merciful God that puts an end to a life dominated by suffering. Golding also suggests two possible sources of the main character's behaviour, both of which have to do with his status as a divine creation: either he has been endowed by God with an innate character, in which case he cannot but act as he does (an explanation that is consistent with Golding's basic world view), or God has granted him the power of free choice. The final aspect of human existence that Golding tries to explain through God is creativity. In 'Belief and Creativity', he reduces the existence of God to a matter of faith. This does not prevent him from claiming that, if we look at people's creative efforts, we can imagine what God is like, but also that the belief in God's creativity, together with the belief that He has created us in His own image, can serve to explain why humans are creative beings.

As regards the view of the divinity as the mother goddess Gaia that is identical with our planet, it comes very close to the image of the divinity that we encounter in *Lord of the Flies* — where God is said to have given shape to the island, and hence He is made, by extension, responsible for the emergence of the realm of appearances — and in *The Inheritors* — where the People worship the mother goddess Oa, who, being responsible for the cycle of life and death to which human beings, like the rest of living beings, are subjected, uses her power not only in a creative way but also to bring destruction. In both cases, it is not difficult to identify the divinity with the essential will that Schopenhauer speaks of. If we compare Schopenhauer's attitude with Golding's novels, however, we should not be misled by their common use of Christian terminology. Though Schopenhauer discusses the possible existence and attributes of the divinity, it is only to argue against the inclusion of divine elements into any serious philosophical model. The philosopher strives to save philosophy from the claws of religion, in general, and of theism (broadly defined as the belief in the existence of a divinity or

divinities), in particular, but at the same time he preserves and takes advantage of whatever he finds valuable in theology: the ideas of aseity, omnipotence and omnipresence, like those of original sin and inner illumination, are good examples of his approach. The view of the world that Golding's novels convey has many aspects in common with Schopenhauer's, but with unequivocal theistic overtones. The frequent references to the divinity have convinced some critics that it is necessary to attempt theological interpretations of his fiction. To take a case in point, the article that Coskren devotes to *Lord of the Flies* begins by arguing against previous Calvinistic readings of the narrative, but only to assert that 'theological terms ... are perhaps the most accurate critical tools for explaining this novel' (1988: 275). Coskren's observation is wrong.

While the hints at the presence of the divinity are a recurrent element in Golding's novels, its function is far from clear. Though in the beginning the existence of at least one god and our knowledge thereof is taken for granted, the possibility of knowing it is increasingly put into question, until the divinity is eventually dismissed as unfathomable and its presence in the knowable world rejected. While in *Lord of the Flies* theistic references are used even by the authoritative third-person narrator, in his first-person novels the knowledge of the divinity is put into question by the character-narrators themselves. In Golding's novels the divinity, which is indeed the origin of the world, can be identified both with Christianity and with pagan cults, and it can be masculine as well as feminine. Sometimes these contradictions appear even in the same novel. In *The Inheritors*, for instance, the People revere a mother goddess and the New People try to placate a divine stag; in *The Spire*, Demeter asserts her power in the face of Jocelin's belief in God the Father. Moreover, the divinity can be presented in a way that tallies with the Christian ideal of morality or as its contrary. According to Golding, a compassionate saint like Simon in *Lord of the Flies* can exist only because a Christian-like divinity exists, but the Lord of the Flies itself is a beastly god. In the long but incomplete draft set in Ancient Greece and published posthumously under the title *The Double Tongue*, the divinity is more Dionysian than Apollonian. Lastly, Golding's novels sometimes elaborate on the idea that our character is innate and immutable because we owe our existence to the divinity, while on other occasions our divine creation is adduced to support the claim that we are free to override or alter our inborn nature (these two contradictory positions are asserted, almost simultaneously, by the main character towards the end of *Pincher Martin*). In general, we can read Golding's

whole oeuvre as an extended evocation of a divinity whose nature — like that of the immanent essence of the world — somehow escapes rational conceptualisation.

Though my analysis of the ways in which the divinity appears in Golding's fiction shall follow a chronological order, the discussion of the novels where the presence of the divinity has already been acknowledged — mainly *The Spire* and *Darkness Visible* — will be comparatively briefer. I shall argue that the place of the divinity in Golding's fiction is that of an all-powerful force that underlies the realm of physical appearances. What is more, I shall argue that the theistic aspects of Golding's novels are just an alternative way of conceiving of and speaking about the essence of the world. This means that a correct understanding of Schopenhauer's theory of that essence can help us to appreciate the place of the divinity in Golding's writings. In the novels that go from *Lord of the Flies* to *The Pyramid*, the knowledge of that essence and of the divinity is affirmed, and, despite the disparate names that the divinity is given, the characterisation of both is identical. When the knowledge of essences has already been denied, as in *Darkness Visible* and the subsequent novels, so is the knowledge of the divinity; as far as the divinity is concerned, this denial is most conspicuous in *The Double Tongue*, the novel that Golding was writing when he died. Golding moves from a tripartite division into knowable appearances, knowable (and divine) essence and unknowable thing-in-itself, to a bipartite division into knowable appearances and unknowable thing-in-itself (where the divinity is then suggested to belong). The latter position is at odds with the one to which Schopenhauer gives philosophical expression.

If in Golding's works the idea of the divinity has the same field of reference as that of the essence of the world, then it is legitimate to analyse the latter — as I have done until now — without using the alleged existence of the divinity as an explanation. It would be tempting to say that in Golding's texts the divinity performs no independent role. Nevertheless, there is one fundamental respect in which references to the divinity are important. Despite not providing any explanation that cannot be found elsewhere, the divinity is a symptom both of Golding's personal need to believe and of ingrained religious beliefs that modern consciousness has been trying to shed since the Enlightenment. Golding's novels, especially the earlier ones, go against the modern aspiration to disenchant the cosmos. As Weber writes, saying that the cosmos is 'disenchanted' means that 'there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play', and so 'that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation' (1946: 139).

Golding's references to the divinity — like his references to the metaphysical essence of the world — amount to an attack on the modern descriptions of the world that remove 'our fear' of the cosmos, destroying 'our sense of awe and wonder towards it', and are satisfied with a rational explanation and instrumental manipulation of its physical forces (Brennan 2011). Those references, then, point to the need to reenchant the cosmos by positing the existence of regions beyond the physical surface of objects and whose characteristics are beyond rational explanation. To be sure, Golding is not alone in this concern. By virtue of this focus on the metaphysical, he becomes a member of a widespread movement, noticeable in philosophy as well as literature from the Second World War on (see Clements 2012: 185–6), to convince the general public that the due attitude towards the surrounding world is one of humbleness and respect.

Some of Golding's extrafictional reflections on the divinity are intended to establish a link between the existence of God and the inclusion in *Lord of the Flies* of an altruistic saint. Golding maintains that the function within the fiction of a character like Simon is to prove without resorting to logical demonstrations both that God exists and that God is good. Simon, he points out to Kermode,

> is for the illiterate a proof of the existence of God because the illiterate person who is not brought up on logic and not brought up always to hope for the worst says, 'Well, a person like this cannot exist without a good God' (in Kermode 1988: 220).

In the novel, the most illiterate people of all must be the little ones whom Simon feeds when they are hungry, but it is doubtful that their thoughts — or the other characters' — are ever occupied with theological questions. Another unvoiced presupposition of Golding's is that in his saintliness Simon resembles real-life saints. The trick in both cases is, as Kermode observes, to present the illiterate person (whose psychology and beliefs Golding apparently knows very well) as someone 'whom we are tacitly but unmistakably expected to attribute a correct insight here' (Kermode 1971: 244). Golding takes it for granted that this insight must be accepted as a piece of legitimate knowledge, probably because he thinks (as Schopenhauer does about his discovery of the essential will, as we saw when setting out his distinction between causal, mathematical or logical explanation, on the one hand, and valid knowledge, on the other) that some truths are evident enough even if they cannot be explained. Actually,

what really matters regarding Golding is not whether Simon can prove the existence and goodness of God, but the fact that the latter's inclusion in the novel responds to the novelist's certainty about the existence of a benevolent God that seeks the well-being of humankind.

The image of the divinity that Golding gives when commenting on *Pincher Martin* is similar. According to him, Pincher's death at the end of the novel has to do with the existence of a merciful God. By 1958, only two years after the publication of *Pincher Martin*, Golding had already realised that its first readers had not grasped its intended religious meaning. To avoid misunderstandings, Golding offered an explanation that, he suggested, should be reprinted in subsequent editions. According to this account, Pincher does not believe in God, and therefore his encounter with Him is 'not presented to him in overtly theological terms'; but this does not prevent 'the compassion of God' from extinguishing the last embers of his consciousness (cited in Baker 1965: 35–6). Elsewhere Golding makes the same point. Speaking to Biles, he puts the emphasis on the negative feelings that Pincher's surrogate has towards the divinity: 'The reason God seems dreadful to Pincher Martin is really that … he has created God in Pincher Martin's image. Pincher Martin is hateful, therefore God appears to him as hateful' (in Biles 1970: 76). Though the existence of an all-powerful force within the fiction is an objective fact, the specific ways in which this force appears vary from character to character. In Pincher Martin's case, his mind can only conceive of it as a sailor. This does not mean that the force, which Golding calls divine, is just a projection of Pincher's mind; it simply means that, while God does exists independently of what his thoughts, Pincher can only conceive of God as his own creation and by drastically reducing the stature of the divinity. The description of the sailor in divine terms tallies well with the authorial explanation of Pincher's death, which Golding presents to Baker as a token of God's compassion: 'I think any really merciful God would destroy painlessly, let us hope, creatures who've had seventy or eighty years of it, or whatever you get' (in Baker 1982: 143).

Another aspect of Golding's explanation of *Pincher Martin* is the status of the main character's surrogate as God's creation. Golding's 1958 explanation of the ending of the novel turns on free choice. Though Golding tends not to make any distinction between Pincher and his mental surrogate, in this case his argument applies to both. Since Pincher, says Golding, 'was created in the image of God' he has 'a freedom of choice

which he used to centre the world on himself' (cited in Baker 1965: 35). During an interview with Baker, more than a decade later, Golding elaborates on this idea: Pincher, like all human beings, 'had free will because he was created in God's image', that is, 'he had free will the way God has it'; Pincher's life shows that 'you have alternatives before you. You can either turn towards God or away from Him. And God can't stop you turning away from him without removing your free will' (in Biles 1970: 76). As a result of his choices, Pincher has turned his back on the divinity that created him. In Golding's view, this is enough to explain why the lightning that puts an end to his surrogate's life is black (Nathaniel identifies the black lightning with heaven, whereas Golding — and the third-person narrator of the novel — identifies it with God; the point in both cases is that the apparition of this black lightning involves the extinction of individuality): 'When you turn away from God, He becomes a darkness; when you turn towards Him, He becomes a light' (76). Golding finishes his account of the novel explaining to Baker that Pincher represents 'the experience of the human being turning away from God and into egotism, the darkness of egotism' as a result of which it may even seem that God is one's creation (in Baker 1982: 144).

The problem with this authorial explanation is that it does not account for those thematic elements that I take to be at the centre of the novel: the varieties of consciousness displayed by the main character; the opposition between his will and his intellect, and the prevalence of the former; his obsession with sexuality; his deep-seated fear of death. Neither does it help, I think, to say, as Golding does when talking to Baker, that 'Man, unless he is prevented somehow, will turn away from God' (in Baker 1982: 144). Though it suggests that people reject God because they are egoists, a statement like this does not even try to explain — as Schopenhauer's philosophy does — where this egoism comes from. At bottom, Golding claim does little more than stress the need for moral and legal repression that I have already explored from a secular point of view. To find a suitable explanation for egoism we have to return to the other view that Pincher's surrogate has on his behaviour. As we shall see below, in the novel itself we can find a more familiar picture, one that turns on innate character.

Though, in some respects, the traditional image of God on which Golding sometimes relies is not suitable to explain his fiction, he continues to assert His existence, and to speak about His attributes. As before, this is not a question of legitimate knowledge but of faith. This is the attitude that can be found in 'Belief and

Creativity', where the divinity is cornered into the unfathomable thing-in-itself. In an attempt to spell out his ad hoc distinctions between the cosmos and the material universe, he explains that for him the cosmos includes 'God and man' (Golding 1984a: 201). This God may or not be present in the physical universe (given Golding's description of the universe as the object of scientific research, the latter option is more plausible); but, even if He were, He would be in excess of it. Actually, He would even be in excess of the metaphysical side of the world that we can have legitimate knowledge of. 'Belief and Creativity' credits God with the creation of this and other universes that we cannot know. At least insofar as He is the Creator of those other universes, He remains inaccessible to our knowledge. How can we be sure that He exists then? This certainty can only rest on faith. At this moment in his life, Golding admits that he does not have any evidence of the existence of God, but he still believes in it. Now how can we be sure how He is? Again, this question exceeds our knowledge. In his attempt to answer it, Golding begins by acknowledging that human beings often envisage God as one of their kind. As a rule, he says, 'men make God in their own image' (200). And to to the list of characterisations of God that humans have offered throughout history — warrior, lover, father, mother, etc. — he adds the description of God as an artist:

> he is of all things an artist who labours under no compulsion but that of his own creativity. ... We are said to be made in his image, and if we could but understand our flashes of individual creativity we might glimpse the creativity of the Ultimate Creator! (Golding 1984a: 200).

As this quotation shows, at the same time as Golding states that we can understand God through human creativity, he states that we are creative beings because we have been created by God in His image. As regards God's creativity, Golding is confident that it is not exhausted by the act of creating humankind and the universe that we inhabit. Adducing his faith in the goodness of God, he remarks that, in view of the hellish nature of this universe, it would a denial of both His goodness and His creativity to reject out of hand the existence of other, better universes. Despite Golding's reverential tone in the above quotation, it is clear that the claim that the divinity's creativity has produced better worlds than ours cannot amount to a justification — à la Leibniz — of the suffering that pervades our world. Given the theological implications of his earlier works, Golding's claim rather puts into relief the incompetence of a divine artist whose

'achievement' — an expression borrowed from Golding's comment on the distance between the human artist's 'intention' and his or her results (Golding 1984a: 164) — many have questioned.

The conceptualisation of God as a creative agent rests on an analogy that includes not only God and the artist as a representative of humankind but also the literary character. Though in his earlier interpretations of *Pincher Martin* he does not touch on this theme, now Golding begins to foreground the metaartistic implications of Pincher's retreat into an imaginary world and of his bid for omnipotence: like an artist, Pincher 'is God of his own … world' (Golding 1984a: 200).[78] Moreover, the way in which Golding describes the collapse of island world created by Pincher's mind throws light on the relationship between the literary character, the author and God. The untoward intervention of an external force that puts an end to the imaginative adventure of Pincher's surrogate can be interpreted as a reminder that he is just a novelistic character, whose existence depends on a superior instance — the author — that can dispose of him even before the novel ends. At the same time, Pincher's death also reminds us of the eventual death of the creative person whom, in Golding's view, God has created in His image and whose life He can bring to an end at will.

Though so far we have seen that, outside his fiction, Golding tends to refer to the divinity as a God whose attributes are generally compatible with those associated with Christianity, in his non-fictional texts it is possible to find an image of the divinity that is very different. There is, for example, Golding's reference, probably figurative, to 'the great god Entropy' in his Nobel Lecture (Golding 1984a: 204); I have already analysed it as a challenge to Sophy's interpretation of the essence of the world in *Darkness Visible* (entropy, as Golding knows well, is a physical rather than metaphysical notion). More interesting is Golding's introduction of the divinity in a 1976 review entitled 'Gaia

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78 In an interview with Carey, Golding reiterates his view that the artist 'is bound to play at God' with his materials; since he 'has to decide what happens' within his works, and since sometimes this includes 'terrible things', this God 'might well wish not to do what he has to' (in Carey 1987: 186). When applied to the divinity rather than a human being, this kind of remark puts into question the idea of free choice that Golding's later novels assert. Nevertheless, we have already seen that, however hard he tries, Golding cannot keep all of his imaginative and linguistic materials under control: as he says, sometimes they get out of hand. There is no reason to think that humans — the divinity's creations — cannot go their own way too.

Lives, ок?'. Here he speaks of the goddess Gaia (Earth), whom he identifies, as the ancient Greeks used to do, with the entire planet, describing her as an irritable deity that has often 'wrecked cities' and blown out 'the side of a whole mountain' (84); for Golding, these are signs that Gaia 'must be obeyed' if we value our lives (84). It is not difficult to link this comments to Golding's ongoing environmental concerns. As Carey notes, ecology is one of the global problems that starts to engage Golding's attention in the mid-1960s. This interest 'came about through his friendship with Professor James Lovelock, propounder of the Gaia hypothesis' — as he called his theory at Golding's suggestion (Carey 2009: 290). It is even present in Golding's Nobel lecture, which in the end becomes 'a plea for Mother Gaia' (435). In 'Gaia Lives, ок?', he describes how, if we succeed in 'growing up out of our lonely egotism', we can 'see our mother' as a 'creature of argent and azure' rather than 'a lifeless lump' (Golding 1984a: 86).

The change from seeing the divinity as a benevolent God responsible for this world to seeing it as a female goddess in whose lap human beings live is not the only one that Golding . At the end of his life, he came to see the divinity as neither male nor female, but as unfathomable. According to Carey', he shared with one of his friends the suspicion that 'on the subject of God or the gods nothing can be known' (Carey 2009: 510). The divinity in which he continues to believe is no longer a benevolent God nor the mother goddess Earth; but is a divinity nevertheless. As Carey puts it, 'his religious belief seems to have become more and more tenuous as time went on, until it was simply belief in something that could not be known. Yet it was still belief' (520).

Outside Golding's fiction, the divinity is initially presented as if its existence and goodness could be proved by the existence of saints. In the end, however, it is acknowledged that neither the existence nor the attributes of the divinity can be known in any way. In his fiction we find a similar trajectory. While his first published novels give the impression that the existence of the divinity and its attributes can be asserted as an objective fact, the characters in his later novels become increasingly sceptical about the possibility of knowing the divinity, whose existence and qualities are reduced to a question of faith. However, even while the knowledge of the divinity is asserted, the image thereof is seldom that of a good God that provides consolation in times of distress. Instead, the preferred view that the novels convey is that a divinity that either displays its compassion in ways that human beings cannot quite understand or that is so indifferent to moral considerations as to be frightening.

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The first mention of the divinity in Golding's oeuvre appears in *Lord of the Flies*, where we are confronted with an ambivalent deity whose goodness can be inferred by the conduct of compassionate saints but whose ways are so mysterious that it can also be taken for a devil. This is a conception of the divinity that Golding fleshes out in subsequent novels. At the very beginning of *Lord of the Flies*, then, we are informed in a matter-of-fact tone that the physical configuration of the island where the castaway children have landed is the result of an 'act of God' (Golding 1954: 10). Though there is no need to interpret the statement literally, doing so allows us to connect the content of the novel with Golding's religious beliefs. Interestingly, the comment is made by a third-person narrator that is perfectly reliable and has a greater knowledge of what is happening than any of the children.[79] This is not always the case in the novel; on the contrary, long stretches of the narrative rely on the limited perspective of the boys — mainly Ralph, Jack and Simon, but also Roger — or of the naval officer that comes to their rescue at the end of the novel. However, in the context where it appears there is no doubt that the reference to God does not convey any of the children's thoughts.

The narrator's reference to the divine act that gave shape to the island where the action takes place is the only direct assertion in *Lord of the Flies* of the existence of God. However, the Lord of the Flies from which the title of novel derives is an indirect reference to the divinity. In a sense, this reference complicates the place of God in the novel rather that clarifying it. The piked head of a pig is not only a 'gift' for the beast that rules over the island, but its emblem and incarnation (Golding 1954: 140). During a conversation with Keating, Golding does not hesitate to describe Simon's 'interview' with the pig's head as an encounter 'with Beelzebub, or Satan, the devil' (in Keating 1988: 213). As it turns out, finding out the real identity of the Lord of the Flies is not as easy as it would appear. Despite accepting that the expression *Lord of the Flies* is a

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79 Witness how, at the beginning of chapter six, the same narrator tells us how 'a sudden bright explosion' in the sky is followed by 'a corkscrew trail across the sky' and the fall of a dead parachutist on the island; this is 'a sign' unwittingly sent 'from the world of grownups', though no child is 'awake to read it' (Golding 1954: 96). The scene, already quoted, where Simon's dead body is carried away by the waves after the other children have already abandoned the crime scene is another example of the third-person narrator's ability to inform us in a detached and reliable way about all of the events that take place in the story.

literal translation of the name *Beelzebub*, Mueller traces the origins of the latter to one among many pagan nature gods rather than to a devil:

> The term 'lord of the flies' is a translation of the Hebrew word 'Baalzebub' or 'Beelzebub'. The Baal were the local nature gods of the early Semitic peoples. In II Kings 1:2 Baalzebub is named as the god of Ekron. All three Synoptic Gospels refer to Beelzebub; in Luke 11:15 he is called 'the chief of the devils'. In English literature ... it is left to Milton to delineate his character at some length. Weltering by Satan's side he is described as 'One next himself [Satan] in power, and next in crime, / Long after known in *Palestine*, and nam'd Beelzebub' (Mueller 1988: 268–9; the quotation is from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, book 1, lines 79–81 [Milton 2005: 6]).

What we have, then, is a pagan deity reinterpreted as a false god by the Jewish tradition and as a devil by the Christian tradition. Therefore, Forster is right — partially at least — when he writes: 'When a deity does appear [in the novel], he is the Lord of the Flies, Beelzebub' (Forster 1988: 230). He is also right in adding that, in Golding's presentation, this god is not a transcendent entity: 'Beëlzebub, Lord of the Flies, is Roger and Jack and you and I' (Peter 1957: 583). Supposing that this beastly deity that can be confused with a devil is the same as — or another aspect of — the God that Golding and the narrator mention (and which both Forster and Peter overlook), then this would be a highly ambivalent god: on the one hand, its goodness would explain Simon's presence on the island; on the other, it would also be an 'obscene' deity that the hunters try to placate (Golding 1954: 147). In Schopenhauer's terms there is no contradiction in saying that the groundless essence of the world is immanent and that the realm of appearances springs from an act of this essence: in his opinion, every movement and every action is the 'appearance' or manifestation of an 'act of [the essential] will' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 107); actually, he adds, the entire realm of appearances 'springs' from 'the act of [the essential] will' (1969b: 645). Thus, to return to Golding's novel, it is possible for the Lord of the Flies to be identical with the God whose activity has given rise to the island. To the extent that the beastly side of the deity inheres in the children, its mark or emblem would also the totemic emblem of the castaways and, by extension, of all humankind. Now if the bad side of the divinity can be found in humankind, nothing prevents us from assuming that the same is true of the

good side. This ambivalence of human beings would be what the narrator of *Lord of the Flies* means by calling humans heroic as well as sick.

In a brief psychoanalytical reading of *Lord of the Flies*, Epstein emphasises the immanency of the Lord of the Flies, equating it with the Freudian id:

> Golding's Beelzebub is ... the anarchic, amoral, driving Id whose only function seems to be to insure the survival of the host in which it is embedded or embodied, which function it performs with tremendous and single-minded tenacity. ... The tenets of civilization, the moral and social codes, the Ego, the intelligence itself, form only a veneer over this white-hot power, this uncontrollable force (Epstein 1988: 300).

As far as human beings are concerned, the translation of this passage into Schopenhauer's terms is straightforward: the Lord of the Flies is the essential will which provides the propelling power of human behaviour and to which the intellect lends a guiding light. Though Schopenhauer's attribution of aseity to the immanent essence of the world is reminiscent of the divinity as presented by monotheism, he insists that this kernel cannot be called divine; yet this is precisely what Golding does when he invites us to identify this essence — as seen not only in the castaway children but also in their surroundings — with the pagan Lord of the Flies.

Golding's following novel, *The Inheritors*, resembles *Lord of the Flies* in offering not one but two images of the divinity. On the one hand, there is Oa, the People's mother goddess. On the other, there is the stag that the New People associate with the hunt. Given that the perspective through which most of the novel is narrated is that of Lok, one of the members of the People, the features of Oa are much more fully delineated than those of the stag.

In the People's opinion, the goddess has the power to bring forth and destroy life, she is the principle of life and death in nature. Just before narrating the history of the People, the Old Man explains that "'the great Oa ... brought forth the earth from her belly. She gave suck. The earth brought forth woman and the woman brought forth the first man out of her belly'" (Golding 1955: 35). When Lok and Fa come across a dead doe that a big cat has killed, Lok cannot suppress his sadness, for "'Oa brought the doe out of her belly'" (54). By contrast, when the Old Man dies after a long illness the Old Woman sententiously declares that "'Oa has taken Mal into his belly'" (91). As Baker

explains, 'Just as the making of a new life is the sacred prerogative of Oa, so is the power to take a life' (1965: 25). Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor draw attention to the fact that, when Lok lies dying, at the end of the novel, 'He curls up into a foetal position again … This foetus is inhibiting life, it is "growing" only backwards into the womb' from which he came forth (2002: 92).

The ambivalence of Oa is also evident in Lok's comparison of the New People to her. The New People hunt and kill to eat, attack and abuse each other, but also create fascinating artefacts for their use in everyday tasks and religious rites. Observing them, Lok is reminded of the powerful creative and destructive force of the mother goddess. Unlike the People, who are incapable of creating tools, and whose only toy, Liku's Oa-doll, is but a woman-shaped root, the people carry all kinds of handmade objects. Apart from their weapons, tools and boats, and from their clothes, hairstyles and ornaments, they create the propitiatory gifts and totems with which Lok comes across in the forest. The artistic-religious objects that they possess are made by Tuami, and when the narrator's attention is focused on him, in the novel's last chapter, he is sharpening the blade of an ivory dagger which he intends to use against Marlan. Astonished by the New People's 'skill and malice', both attracted and terrified by them, Lok reflects on their fear and their viciousness, but also on their occasional tenderness: '"The people are like a famished wolf in the hollow of a tree. … The people are like honey trickling from a crevice in the rock"' (Golding 1955: 194, 195). They are bitter-sweet like the mead that they produce and drink: '"The people are like honey in the round stones, the new honey that smells of dead things and fire"' (195). They are destructive: '"They are like the river and the fall, … nothing stands against them"' (195). But when he remembers their astounding inventiveness, Lok compares their godlike destructiveness and creativity to Oa's omnipotence: '"They are like Oa"' (195). Like the People's mother goddess, they are both frightening and attractive: 'Terrible they might be as the fire or the river but they drew like honey or meat' (198).

It is not difficult to identify the mother goddess Oa with the force that Schopenhauer calls the essential will. After all, both Oa and the essential will underlie the natural world with its seemingly uninterrupted cycles of birth and demise. If Schopenhauer tells us that we can get a glimpse of the characteristics of the essential will through the careful study of its manifestations, in Golding's novel all living beings — even the cats, the hyenas and the highly ambivalent New People — and such

inanimate elements as fire (which can destroy life but also make it easier) provide constant information about Oa's features. This takes us to the question of pantheism. For Schopenhauer pantheism is the only creed that agrees with the assumption of an immanent deity. However, this is a stance that he rejects, together with all other forms of theism. *The Inheritors* gravitates, like *Lord of the Flies*, towards a pantheistic interpretation; but it never takes the crucial step of obliterating the difference between the feminine creator of the world and her creation. All the creatures in the novel issue from Oa's womb, but they are not Oa and neither is Oa inside them. If we take the People's references literally, a pantheistic interpretation will not do, because Oa is still characterised as distinct from her creatures. An alternative, less literal reading would describe all individual beings as manifestations of Oa (or of her power), rather than as their children.

The Inheritors is not the only novel of Golding's that oscillates between the image of the divinity as a force and as a creator, as occupying a totally or partially immanent position within the knowable world and all its inhabitants, thus tending towards pantheism or panentheism (the doctrine that the divinity includes the world but exceeds it), and as occupying a transcendent position beyond the created world that we can know. This kind of hesitation, which complicates the treatment of divinity in *Lord of the Flies*, results from the fact that, as Kinkead-Weekes remarks, Golding 'is both intensely "sceptical" and intensely "religious"' (1987: 66), and is also apparent in *Pincher Martin*. In this work, the attitudes towards the divinity are initially divided between Pincher's scepticism and his friend Nathaniel's theism. Since the bulk of the narrative sticks obstinately to the perspective of Pincher's surrogate, and since the only part of the novel that is narrated from a different point of view — the last chapter — does nothing to dispel our doubts, it is difficult to say whether there is a divinity or not outside Pincher's mind. Even Nathaniel's opinion is presented to us through the thoughts of Pincher's surrogate, so it does not really help us to solve our doubts.

Everything depends on how we interpret the last moments of Pincher's surrogate on his island world, in particular his confrontation with a mysterious sailor that advises him to surrender to death. Given that the whole island world is a creation of Pincher's mind, his encounter seems only a figment of his imagination. It is interesting to compare what Pincher's surrogate and Golding have to say on the matter. When the character clings to madness as the last chance to keep on living, he mentions

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hallucinations among its symptoms. No sooner has he said this than the sailor appears on the rock. Pincher's surrogate does not hesitate to refer to the sailor as God; but he does so in order to reassure himself that this God does not exist outside his mind. He declares: "'On the sixth day he created God. … In his own image created he Him'" (Golding 1956: 196). When the sailor suggests that Pincher's surrogate should reconsider his refusal to die, the latter adopts a defiant tone: "'I have created you and I can create my own heaven'", to which the sailor replies: "'You have created it'" (196). Pincher's imaginary island is all that a limited mind can invent, and for this reason the private realm where his surrogate lives is, like his former life, full of anxiety, toil and suffering.

The conversation with the sailor reminds us of the description that, according to the memories of Pincher's surrogate, Pincher's friend Nathaniel provides of the attitude that most people — being what I have been calling egocentric subjects — adopt towards heaven. Pincher's imaginary world is, in the words that Pincher's surrogate attributes to Nathaniel, "'The sort of heaven we invented for ourselves … if we aren't ready for the real one'" (Golding 1956: 183). In other words, the surrogate's existence on the rock is the kind of self-inflicted suffering reserved for those whom individualism prevents from accepting death. Pincher's surrogate remembers Nathaniel saying: 'as we are *now* … heaven would be sheer negation. Without form and void' (70; my italics). That is, the real heaven that awaits us after death consists in the abolition of the egocentric centre of consciousness. Given the individualism round which the contemporary frame of mind is organised, this annihilation amounts to a negation of what we value most. According to Nathaniel, real heaven appears to us in the guise of the black lightning that destroys conscious life. In his opinion, we should welcome this extinction of individual consciousness as a liberation from ourselves; but Pincher can hardly see the positive side of death.

Both Pincher and his surrogate end up dying, and their death is brought about by a 'compassion' that is 'timeless' (Golding 1956: 201). During my discussion of *Pincher Martin* in Schopenhauerian terms, I explained the force that encroaches upon Pincher's cloistered consciousness in terms of the essential will which precedes the emergence of the subject–object division and remains not only outside time but also outside space and causality. The fact that the characterisation of this essence in this and other novels and the characterisation of the divinity in this one coincide lends weight to the idea that

in Golding's fiction both tend to be confused. The fact that both the essence and the divinity are described with the same kind of evocative language provides further evidence of this confusion. At the same time as the God that destroys Pincher's imaginary world is called compassionate, the novel speaks of Him as 'without mercy' (Golding 1956: 201). Whether we call it divine or not, describing it as simultaneously merciful and merciless is a contradiction in terms; this does not mean that the description is devoid of significance. As it happens, it exemplifies pretty well the symbolic evocation of a force to which denotative description cannot do justice. Golding's subsequent practice confirms that the phrase *without mercy* — which actually contradicts what seems to be his own beliefs — must have seemed to him a felicitous find, as it recurs in some of his subsequent novels.

During his confrontation with the sailor, Pincher's surrogate argues that his created nature includes the capacity of free choice, which should be respected: '"You gave me the power to choose and all my life … my choice was my own"' (Golding 1956: 197). However, the suggestion that he has been created as a free creature is not enough to explain some of the most important aspects of the novel. Actually, Pincher's surrogate has another explanation for his conduct, one that tallies better with these elements. After recalling '"the bodies of used and defeated people"' that he has left behind, Pincher's surrogate protests: '"If I ate them, who gave me a mouth?"' (Golding 1956: 197). Thus, by putting his voracious nature down to God's act of creation, the surrogate effectively recriminates God for his own compulsion to tear, chew and eat. The point is, of course, that he should not be blamed for acting in accordance with his being, nor for being as his alleged Creator has made him. Leaving aside the mention of God, there is a clear relationship between this perspective and one that foregrounds the way in which Pincher's behaviour is a function of the essential will to which he owes his inborn character. Equally clear is the relationship between Golding's remark that 'God is the thing we turn away from into life and therefore we hate and fear him and make a darkness there' (cited in Delbaere 1991: 5), and the view that, though living individuals issue from and are destined to return to the essential will originally devoid of consciousness and operating in the dark, the egocentric perspective from which they see the world leads them to fear and reject death. In both these cases, as in the others that I mentioned at the beginning of the paragraph, a secular explanation through the

prism of Schopenhauer's philosophy is superior to the religious explanation that Golding tries to force upon his readers.

At the end of *Pincher Martin*, the oscillation between a defence of determinism and a full endorsement of free choice would seem to prevent settling the question of why we act as we do. Indeed, the novel contains some elements that support the explanation in terms of the power of free choice that the divine Creator gives human beings. However, the elements that contradict this explanation are far more numerous. For this reason, even if we accept Golding's theistic terms (i.e. even if we refer to the inner kernel of the world as divine), *Pincher Martin* has more to do with *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*, which emphasise one's inborn nature and on repression, than with *Free Fall*, which highlights one's power to choose what to will and what to do. The recourse to the freedom of choice is significant because it shows that the belief that a person can freely choose what to will seized the novelist's mind before the completion of *Pincher Martin*. If his treatment of freedom in this novel is not entirely consistent, as it appears side by side with an explanation grounded in inborn dispositions, *Free Fall* goes a long way towards remedying this by effectively omitting any references to the innate character. What interests me here is not its assertion of free choice, an aspect of *Free Fall* that I have already examined, but its description of the merciless judge in whom Miss Pringle believes and that Nick Shales rejects.

During her religion classes, the message that Miss Pringle conveys is not of meekness and tolerance but rather of fanatic cruelty. Her God is not Jesus Christ's but a deity that administers justice in an implacable way, delivering rewards and punishments according to His assessment of one's merit and showing no mercy. The novel shows that not everyone finds this presentation of God to their tastes. Reflecting on the different personalities of Miss Pringle and the good-natured scientist Nick Shales, Sammy Mountjoy reaches the conclusion that the latter's embrace of atheism was caused precisely by his personal antipathy to the religion that he had been taught at school. Sammy's narrative associates God with masculinity and with violence, linking both to the imperialistic and totalitarian personality that he has frequently seen among his fascist and communist contemporaries. To Sammy's mind, this suffices to explain Nick Shales's rejection of the religious views held by his Victorian educators, views which, having been inherited by early twentieth-century schools, were also inculcated in Sammy and his fellow schoolchildren:

'they showed you … in your Victorian slum … the old male maker, totem of the conquering Hebrews, totem of our forefathers, the subjectors and quiet enslavers of half of the world. … The male totem is jackbooted … and ignorant and hypocritical and splendid and cruel. You rejected him as my generation rejects him' (Golding 1959: 250).[80]

Though it lacks the socio-political resonances that it acquires in *Free Fall*, in some respects the characterisation of God the Father in *The Spire* also diverges from the Christian conception of a just, benevolent parent. I have already dwelt on the way in which Dean Jocelin envisages God: as the all-powerful will whose intervention in human affairs is more likely to result in conflict, pain and death than in humbleness and charity. In my previous discussions of the novel I mentioned that the supremacy of this God in Jocelin's eyes is threatened by the return of the older cults of such pagan divinities as Demeter, the goddess of agriculture that for the ancients personified the earth's fertility. I also argued that the entity that Jocelin calls God can be interpreted as the essential will which manifests as the sexual drive and which, sublimated, finds its artistic embodiment in a soaring spire. This explains why Jocelin has so many difficulties to make the outcome of a revelation allegedly inspired by the Christian God tally with the Judaeo-Christian view of that God. The narrator neither supports nor questions the idea that there is a superhuman power which acts behind the scenes and on which Jocelin's behaviour depends. Jocelin does not really question the existence of the divinity or the possibility of knowing it; yet he does question the Christian

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80 Sammy suggests that, though Nick Shales is a rationalist, his embrace rationalism is not for rational reasons but due to the visceral rejection of the kind of resentful religiosity represented by Miss Pringle: '"You did not choose your rationalism rationally. You chose because they showed you the wrong maker"' (Golding 1959: 250). Nick's is an 'illogically adopted system' (226). A similar non-rational basis of rationalism is characteristic of another character of Golding's, the freethinker Mr Prettiman, who in the Sea Trilogy shoots an albatross during a voyage to Australia in order to prove Coleridge and superstition wrong. In fact what he demonstrates 'to the thoughtful eye [is] how really irrational a rationalist philosopher can be!' (Golding 1991: 65). Both Nick and Mr Prettiman are modelled on Golding's rationalistic father, whose 'absence of religious belief' the novelist describes to Biles as 'really founded in a profound religious *feeling*' (in Biles 1970: 83). All of these examples confirm that our attitudes and behaviour normally owe more to feelings than to reason, an idea that Schopenhauer's philosophy throws more light on than any theistic explanation.

characterisation that he has always taken for granted. When the workers dig a pit at the centre of the cathedral, they plant the seed of doubt about Jocelin's belief in a male God. In this respect, the opposition between Jocelin's male God and the goddess whose dominions can be glimpsed through the pit exemplifies some of the different interpretations of the essential will that have existed throughout history. What all this indicates is that, at bottom, the omnipotent power that underlies the knowable world is neither male nor female; it remains as unaffected by our generic definitions as by our moral categories.

Coming after a novel that puts the divinity at its centre, *The Pyramid* may strike us as the least religious among Golding's novels.[81] This goes some way towards explaining why it is often considered the less typically Goldinesque, an opinion already voiced by the first readers of the novel — Babb, for instance, states that 'One's immediate impressions on reading *The Pyramid* … are of how radically it differs from its predecessors' (1970: 169). This view has since become much of a critical commonplace, and it can be accepted to a certain extent. Concerned as it is with the character-narrator's place in the community and with his social and personal blunders, the narrative has little time to reflect on the divinity. However, the fact is that *The Pyramid* does allude to a merciless divinity, and it can be argued that the allusion contains the seeds not only of a full-fledged criticism of the belief in the existence of the divinity, but, given the connection in previous Golding novels between the divinity and a certain understanding of the essence of the world, also of a criticism of this understanding.

Being dominated by an irresistible urge to accumulate riches, Henry, the owner of an ever-expanding garage, is presented as exemplary of the philistinism and mindless materialism of the town of Stilbourne as a whole. According to Oliver, the protagonist and narrator, what pushes Henry to such extremes of material accumulation is 'the thrust not liked or enjoyed but recognized as inevitable, the god without mercy' (Golding 1967: 159). This 'god' is Mammon, that is, materialism, greed and unjust wealth.

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81 The book is really an amalgam of three novellas that appeared earlier in periodicals. Because these novellas were purposefully drawn into a novel form, I have included *The Pyramid* within my study. This principle does not hold for *Scorpion God* (1971), which avowedly remains a collection of novellas.

Unlike Beelzebub, whom some pagans believed to be a real pagan god, no one has ever believed that Mammon is anything but a false god or idol. This is a key difference. I have been arguing that Schopenhauer's theory of the essential will can help us to understand the place of the divinity in Golding's novels. However, if the urge to accumulate wealth which seems to dominate most of the characters in *The Pyramid* is presented as a false divinity, and the basic features of this urge — its mindlessness, its insatiability, its virtual universality — coincide with those of the essential will which previous novels purport to be the kernel of the world, then this essence can also be taken to be a false one. Thus *The Pyramid* would become the first of Golding's novels to challenge the earlier characterisation of the inner kernel of the world, which his preceding novels present as true In doing so, it perhaps anticipates the criticism, carried out from *Darkness Visible* on, of the belief that the essence of the world can be known at all. If this is the case, then *The Pyramid* also anticipates Eagleton's claim that making the inexhaustible desire peculiar to capitalist societies — which Golding's novel designates as Mammon — function as the hidden essence to the realm of appearances is an ideological gesture which tries to pass capitalist appetite off as the natural and universal force that rules the world, and to which everyone must adapt. This is also a gesture that, far from showing us the truth about the world that we inhabit, detracts from our knowledge of it.

The following novels, *Darkness Visible*, *The Paper Men* and the Sea Trilogy, do not really add to our understanding of Golding's attitude towards the divinity. Much of what has been said about Dean Jocelin's faith in *The Spire* is valid for Matty in *Darkness Visible*. If anything, Matty's attitude towards God is less complicated than Jocelin's: while the latter, who starts by taking God's existence for granted and expressing absolute certainty about His will, eventually comes to suspect those certainties, Matty's attitude throughout *Darkness Visible* does not vary so much. As I have already noted, he soon becomes convinced that his fate is not in his hands and that he must embrace the divine will. It is evident that Matty's faith is strong enough to make him accept whatever happens to him. However, the novel as a whole does not really provide any evidence that Matty's destiny really depends on God's will, as he believes, or that the God in which he believes exists.

I have argued that the characters' talk of the divinity in previous novels is their way of referring to the essential power that underlies the realm of appearances. Except in

The Pyramid, the characterisation of this essence as an insatiable yearning was generally asserted: even if the characters in Golding's earlier novels fail to grasp what that essence consists in, the novels themselves can be interpreted as encouraging their readers to grasp that essence, and to do so, most clearly in *Lord of the Flies,* within a religious framework. In *Darkness Visible* the situation undergoes a radical change. Sophy's conceptualisation of the force that determines the destiny of the world as entropy is radically different from that of the other characters in Golding's novels. By pitting Sophy's view against the other characters in the novel (and in the novels that precede and follow it), without ever taking sides, *Darkness Visible* challenges the very possibility of knowing the essence of the world.

The questioning of our knowledge of both the world's inner essence and the divinity continues in the Sea Trilogy. At the same time as it casts a negative light on Talbot's religious scepticism, the first part of the narrative ridicules Reverend Colley's naive Christian faith and his misguided attempt to impose it on his fellow passengers and on the crew. However, when Talbot inserts Colley's diary into his own narrative it becomes clear that the depth and honesty of the parson's beliefs deserve more respect. Having seen the sun and moon simultaneously in the sky and flanking the ship, Colley writes that they are both a natural sign of God's presence in the world and an injunction to fear a God that can become incarnate as a 'MERCIFUL SAVIOUR' (Golding 1991: 183), but also administer His merciless justice:

> Our huge ship was motionless and her sails still hung down. On her right hand the red sun was setting and on her left the full moon was rising, the one directly across from the other. The two vast luminaries seemed to stare at each other and each to modify the other's light. On land this spectacle could never be so evident because of the interposition of hills or trees or houses, but here we see down from our motionless vessel on all sides to the very edge of the world. Here plainly to be seen were the very scales of GOD.
>
> The scales tilted, the double light faded and we were wrought of ivory and ebony the moon. The people moved about forward and hung lanterns by the dozen from the rigging, so that I saw now that they had erected something like a bishop's *cathedra* beyond the ungainly paunch of tarpaulin. I began to understand. I began to tremble. I was alone! Yes, in that vast ship with her numberless souls I was alone in a place where on a sudden I feared the Justice of GOD unmitigated by HIS Mercy! On a sudden I dreaded both GOD and man! I stumbled back to my cabin and have endeavoured to pray (Golding 1991: 205).

Having got drunk during the crossing the line ceremony (presided by a sailor disguised as the pagan god Neptune), Colley tries to share his joy by flinging out his arms 'as if to embrace' everyone on the ship (Golding 1991: 102); next he bestows his blessing on all those present. This is Talbot's account:

> Mr Colley raised his right hand and spoke, though slurredly.
>
> 'The blessing of God the Father Almighty, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost be with you and remain with you always'.
>
> Then there was a commotion I can tell you! If the man's uncommonly public micturation had shocked the ladies, to be blessed by a drunk man in a canvas shirt caused screams, hasty retreats and, I am told, one *évanouissement*! (Golding 1991: 103)

After this, Colley has a sexual relationship with one of the sailors. When Colley eventually recovers his sobriety, his reaction to the enormity that, in his opinion, he has committed throws light on the God in whom he believes. If everything is part of God's plan, including the trials that He imposes on us, as Colley believes, then He must be held responsible, in Talbot's words, for 'all that is monstrous under the sun and moon' (Golding 1991: 144). In this light, the ceremony organised by the sailors is not only a social test but a divine test that Colley has failed.

In hindsight, old Talbot realises that his spontaneous prayers in the frequent situations of extreme risk that arise during the voyage were made 'to a God in whom [he] did not believe', but to whom, in situations of extreme peril, he finds himself praying nonetheless (Golding 1991: 614). According to Talbot's description, Mr Prettiman is even more sceptical about the existence of the divinity. However, we gradually discover that Mr Prettiman's alleged atheism is actually an unorthodox brew of theism. When Talbot reads to him the passage in Voltaire's *Candide* where one of the inhabitants of Eldorado remarks '"We don't pray to God, he gives us what we need, we are eternally grateful — we do not need priests, we are all priests!"' (664), Mr Prettiman expresses his agreement with enthusiasm. Later, Talbot tries to defend Mr Prettiman against Summers's accusation of atheism, explaining that the social philosopher conceives of the force that pervades the world as a '"divine fire"' that burns both inside and outside the individual, and which is absolutely good (681). In this Mr Prettiman is more optimistic than Reverend Colley, and indeed than any other character of

Golding's. It is noteworthy that Mr Prettiman's ideas influence Talbot's outlook in this respect as well, for once the latter has arrived sound and safe in Australia and has learnt about his choice as an MP, he begins to suspect that 'good fortune and happiness seem … much more compelling towards the Great Truths of the Christian Religion than their dreary opposites!' (756).

The last novel in which the possibility of knowing the divinity is contemplated, even if questioningly, is *The Paper Men*. Wilf Barclay, the protagonist and narrator, is not a believer. Early in the narrative, he puts down to his sceptical attitude the break-up with one of her mistress, an Italian woman whose religious fervour he disapproves of:

> My Italian connection came to an end. The fact is that religion, in the shape of Padre Pio, had got to her. Out of curiosity we'd been to one of those dawn masses which always ended in a stampede of the faithful, anxious to get a glimpse of the man's stigmata before his helpers carried him away out of sight. I was a bit shocked to see that cool, civilized woman scrumming with the rest (Golding 1984b: 20).

Though God is always on his lips (usually in expletives, a habit that he shares with the character-narrator of the Sea Trilogy), Wilf has 'a passionate need for there *not* to be a miracle' (Golding 1984b: 20). As he acknowledges, he himself is '*very receptive to hypnotic suggestion*' (21), and so is, in his eyes, everyone that believes in supernatural events.

Despite the scepticism that he flaunts at the beginning of the story, personal experience will soon prove Wilf wrong, at least partially. In a trip to Sicily, just after a tremor that makes old women cross themselves, Wilf enters a cathedral whose dark atmosphere betrays, from the very beginning, 'a complete absence of gentle Jesus meek and mild' (Golding 1984b: 122). His suspicions are confirmed when he comes across the shocking statue of a man whose fierce, intolerant expression hardly reminds of Christ:

> It was a solid silver statue of Christ but somehow the silver looked like steel, had that frightening suggestion of blue. It was taller than I am, broad-shouldered and striding forward like an archaic Greek statue. It was crowned and its eyes were rubies or garnets or carbuncles or plain red glass that flared like the heat in my chest. Perhaps it was Christ. Perhaps they had inherited it in these

parts and just changed the name and it was Pluto, the god of the Underworld, Hades, striding forward. I stood there with my mouth open and the flesh crawling over my body. I knew in one destroying instant that all my adult life I had believed in God and this knowledge was a vision of God. Fright entered the very marrow of my bones. Surrounded, swamped, confounded, all but destroyed, adrift in the universal intolerance, mouth open, screaming, bepissed and beshitten, I knew my maker and I fell down (Golding 1984b: 123).

As in previous novels, but even more clearly, the narrative presents the Christian God as being endowed with attributes inherited from earlier pagan cults. The encounter with this figure results in Wilf's conversion — but to what religion? Wilf realises that, if he is to take his past behaviour as an indication of what the implacable God worshipped in the Sicilian church has in store for him, he can only be 'predestined and damned' by 'the divine justice without mercy' (Golding 1984b: 125). Since He is not only our Judge but also our Creator, any 'attempt at influencing divine intolerance, a steel Hades' is 'pointless' (125). This last comment, made by Wilf in relation to the divinity, could also be made in relation to the essential force that, in Golding's earlier novels, determines the individual's character and hence his or her destiny.

Despite the centrality of Wilf's strange conversion, *The Paper Men* fails to dispel our doubts as to the novel's endorsing his faith in the existence of the divinity. Towards the end of his narrative, Wilf comes to the belief that, for some reason that escapes his comprehension, he has got the stigmata in his hands and feet: 'like St Francis only in reverse as it were, for being a mother-fucking bastard ... instead of getting them as a prize for being good' (Golding 1984b: 159). The problem is that his stigmata are invisible, therefore he feels the pain of wounds but has no external marks: '"You can't see the wounds, unlike with poor old Padre Pio. But I assure you my hands and feet hurt like hell — or should I say heaven?"' (188). Their invisibility, together with the comments that Wilf has made about his receptiveness to psychological suggestion, intimate, as in other novels by Golding, that maybe 'it's all in the mind' after all (158). The last quotation suggests that even Wilf can question, after his religious conversion, the very existence of the divinity: it might be a figment of one's imagination. This is a suspicion with which many of Golding's narratives confront his readers.

So far we have seen how, even as the structure of Golding's novels — of *Lord of the Flies*, for example — asserts the existence of the divinity, many of his characters have doubts that it really exists. We have also seen that both the novels and the characters

that believe in the divinity initially give a precise image of how it is (an amoral force behind the realm of appearances), but that the novels soon begin to incorporate characters that, despite continuing to believe that the divinity exists, come to suspect that all our conceptualisations of it are bound to be inadequate, because they think that this kind of knowledge is beyond human reach and because their faith is to no avail, either because it is not strong enough to sanction any description of the divinity, or because they think that faith alone does not suffice. In the narrative published as *The Double Tongue*, which Golding left unfinished at his death, the existence of the divinity is still asserted, but as a matter of faith. The same happens with the divinity's attributes, which are declared impossible to know for certain.

The Double Tongue is, according to John H. Stape, Golding's 'final statement about a number of issues that had concerned him throughout his career' (2001: 392). Like *Pincher Martin*, this unfinished draft can be read figuratively as a meditation 'on the varied facets of creativity' (393). More literally, this novel contributes to clarify Golding's position about the degree to which the divinity can be known. *The Double Tongue* shows that Golding's final position is that God is absolutely unfathomable.

The story is set in the Greek province of the Roman empire in the first century before Christ, and its main character and narrator is an elderly woman called Arieka. Born to a rich Phocian family that resents her lack of feminine qualities, Arieka is brought to Delphi by Ionides, the cynical high priest of Apollo. After taking over as the Pythia by whose mediation the god conveys his ambiguous messages (hence the title of the novel), Arieka becomes increasingly sceptical not only about the source of those messages but also about the true nature of the divinity. Arieka's attitude towards the deity contrasts with that of Ionides, whose lack of faith recedes little by little under her influence. After recounting Ionides' death, Arieka ends her story with an assertion of her faith in the existence of a divinity that, however, cannot be known.

From the very moment when Arieka delivers her first oracle, doubts arise as to the identity and the very existence of the divinity that supposedly speaks through her. The ceremony is preceded by the sacrifice of 'the chosen goat', after which Arieka occupies her position in front of the multitude and is spontaneously seized by shudders and convulsions (Golding 1995: 86). As her body stars to move 'like some automaton', she hears a 'rolling, rollicking laughter' coming through her mouth; when her mouth starts bleeding 'at the passage of the god's voice', she manages to ask the god — but 'What

god, which god, where?' — for mercy (87–8). Casting a backward glance on the event, old Arieka describes the deity as taking possession of her, raping and tearing her mouth. Once the divinity has spoken and the ceremony has finished, Ionides explains, perhaps to persuade Arieka of the need to get used to those violent trances, how the god was also '"brusque ... not to say brutal"' with the former Pythia — '"He raped her"' too (63).

The violence of Arieka's fit alerts us about the risk of taking for granted the identity of the god that apparently takes possession of her. According to popular belief, whenever Apollo is absent from the temple — 'in the three winter months' when he goes to live among the Hyperboreans and Delphi is 'almost deserted and dead' — his place is occupied by Dionysus (Golding 1995: 102). Though Apollo's oracle is suspended during those months, the possible presence of Dionysus in the temple is enough to complicate the explanation of Arieka's trances. On a certain occasion, while she is waiting to fall into an oracular trance, she grows impatient with 'the god or the gods' (95). She asks: 'Are you there? Both there, Dionysus, winter god for the three winter months, Apollo, you who mastered me yesterday, are you ... there?' (95). Uncertain about the identity of the deity that she is addressing, the only thing that she can add is that 'There was no answer' (95). Arieka's doubts are understandable, for in some respects the two gods are not totally opposed to each other: in Greek mythology, both 'provided inspiration for seers as well as for poets' (Grimal 1957: 50). Though this does not mean that no differences between them exist, this common characteristic makes it more complicated to say where the Pythia's oracular messages really come from.

As it turns out, if we are to trust Nietzsche's theory of Greek art, it seems that Arieka's trances are, if related to the divinity at all, more Dionysian than Apollonian. After introducing it in his *The Birth of Tragedy*, in *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche elaborates on the opposition between the Apollonian and the Dionysian impulses by describing both 'as types of intoxication' (Nietzsche 2005: 196). Translating this brief characterisation into the terms that I have been using in this study, it could be said that both the Apollonian and the Dionysian involve altered states of consciousness in which feelings prevail over rational concepts; thus both stand in opposition to the Socratic frame of mind. According to Nietzsche, the Apollonian state is that of the painter and the sculptor; the Dionysian state has to do with mimicry and play acting, dance and music. Using a language that is clearly reminiscent of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche

establishes a connection between the Apollonian and individual appearances, on the one hand, and between the Dionysian and the essential unity of the world, on the other:

> Apollo stands before me as the transfiguring genius of the *principium individuationis*, through whom alone release and redemption in semblance can truly be attained, whereas under the ... jubilant shout of Dionysos the spell of individuation is broken, and the path to the Mothers of Being, to the innermost core of things, is laid open (Nietzsche 1999: 76).

Nevertheless, if we look at from the angle of Schopenhauer's theory of art we can also interpret the connection between the two impulses in a different way: the Apollonian drive that characterises painting and sculpture would thus involve what Schopenhauer calls the serene contemplation — and reproduction — of the aesthetic dimension of objects, while the Dionysian drive that characterises music (and, according to Nietzsche, other art forms that Schopenhauer does not mention like mimicry, play acting and dance) would consist in the direct expression or performance of the essential will to life; therefore Dionysian manifestations would be intimately related to the inner passions that the subject can get a glimpse of when looking inside. This Schopenhauerian interpretation would explain the ecstatic excitement that, in Nietzsche's opinion, characterises Dionysian art: 'In the Dionysian state ... the entire system of affects is excited and intensified'; the Dionysian 'enters into any skin, into any affect: he constantly transforms himself' (Nietzsche 2005: 197). Thus considered, the fundamental thing about the Dionysian state is the similarity 'to certain hysterics who can take on any role at the drop of a hat', that is, 'the ease of metamorphosis' (197). In the case of Arieka, her oracular trances involve either uttering the predictions of the deity as if it were hers — sometimes in a voice that is different from hers — or faking those predictions. Together with the fact that they are accompanied by laughter, shudders and convulsions, this lends her utterances an unmistakable Dionysian tone. This explanation not only clarifies the nature of Arieka's oracular episodes, it also confirms the problems surrounding the identification of the divinity in Golding's novels.

An examination of Greek mythology may even tempt us to dismiss the opposition between Apollo and Dionysus as secondary or irrelevant. Perhaps the Apollonian and the Dionysian are just two sides — with their differences and their things in common —

of the same deity. Indeed, the history of the oracle at Delphi teaches us that the site of the temple was initially associated with Gaia (Earth), the mother goddess, from whom not only Apollo and Dionysus but all the twelve Olympians descend. In its origin, Delphi was believed to be the centre or navel of Zeus' grandmother Gaia, a deity that in *The Double Tongue* functions as the Greek version of Oa (the mother goddess that the Pople worship in *The Inheritors*) and of Demeter (the goddess of fertility that appears in *The Spire*). According to Hesiod, Gaia was the primordial element — born immediately after (or perhaps out of) Chaos — from which sprang the divine races (beginning with Uranus, the Sky, to whom she bore Zeus' father Cronus). In the beginning, Gaia's navel was protected by the serpent Python, later slain by Zeus' son Apollo; this is why Delphi's original name was Pytho. As regards the Pythia, originally she was Gaia's priestess, yet she retained her title after Apollo's takeover.

The step of relating Apollo to Dionysus and both to Gaia is not taken by Arieka, who is nevertheless aware that 'the deep cleft in the rock' in the innermost part of the temple — the adytum — may be 'that same cleft … which had been the lair of Pytho', and from which, according to popular belief, in former days a 'compelling vapour' used to issue that put the Pythia in a trance (Golding 1995: 81). Though Arieka never denies the existence of the divinity, she does suggest that the impossibility of ascribing any unequivocal features to it amounts to the impossibility of knowing its features at all.

As it appears in this and the rest of Golding's novel, the divinity has more to do with the essence of the world as described by Schopenhauer than with the Christian God. Arieka's divinity is oblivious of human morality, which can make it frightening rather than lovable. This is consistent with the image of the divinity in previous novels, in the light of which critics have stated that Golding's characters inhabit a universe which is more pagan than Christian. Storr, for instance, writes that the faith in God that his novels convey 'is not that of a Christian' but 'is closer to that of the ancient Greeks' (1987: 141). McCarron has a similar opinion. After acknowledging that 'religion is a central issue in Golding's fiction', he adds that 'it rarely manifests itself as conventional, contemporary Christianity' (McCarron 2005: 291). His description of the image of the divinity in Golding's novels is difficult to surpass (though it appears in an analysis of Golding's earlier novels, it is just as suitable for the later ones):

> Golding suggests that the supernatural forces at the center of existence, which his protagonists are eventually compelled to recognize, are capricious and irrational, generating horror and fear as much as joy and peace. ... Religion, in Golding's work, is often depicted as [being concerned with] a force, morally neutral and even capricious (McCarron 2005: 291).

McCarron concludes that, despite incorporating not only 'traditional Christian imagery' but also 'the redemptive possibilities suggested by the New Testament', at times 'Golding's religious vision ... seems determinedly pre-Christian' (McCarron 2005: 291).

As the plot of *The Double Tongue* unfolds, there are moments when Arieka comes close to doubting that the divinity really exists. The fame of Arieka's 'suitability for mediating between the physical universe and the spiritual cosmos' spreads throughout Greece (Golding 1995: 70). But no one outside the temple can even suspect that her doubts about the connection between the oracular trances and the divinity began as soon as it occurred to her that burning leaves of laurel herself could remedy the silence with which the audience's queries often met. The first time that this happens, at the start of her second oracular session, she takes some dry laurel leaves, as she has seen her assistants do, and throws them into the brazier. As soon as she inhales the fumes, she falls into a deep trance. When she speaks again, her voice contains what Ionides later describes to her as a touch of the '"numinous"' (98).

Once Arieka has learnt to take advantage of burnt laurel, everything changes. At first she believes her first oracle was indeed 'a rape' by a God that 'fitted [her] into the seat, twisted [her] anyway he would' (Golding 1995: 88). But later she admits that everything could have been just an effect of the laurel smoke coming from the nearby brazier that she inhaled. As she says, 'There had been a brutality in his rape of me *or in my hysteria*' (119; my italics). At the same time, Arieka realises how much the oracles resemble 'dramatic representations' (96), and her doubts multiply. Even when the oracles are not rehearsed responses, they '"lack a certain universality"', as Ionides complains, and end up '"restricting the god to looking for stray sheep or finding someone's grandmother's necklace"' (121). As time passes, Arieka notices how her responsiveness to the divinity diminishes — or how her tolerance to laurel increases — until the moment comes when not even the laurel can guarantee an answer that has not been rehearsed in advance. As the absences of the divinity become more and more prolonged, Arieka's faith begins to falter, and there follow 'years of part-belief, of

searching for a proof that all [she] had believed in was a living fact and if twelve gods did not live on that mountain, they did in fact, in real fact, live somewhere, in some other mode, on a far greater mountain' (Golding 1995: 136). By contrast, we see how Ionides — the 'cynic, atheist, contriver, liar' who has always insisted that 'there's no magic and nothing holy' about the oracle (136, 92) — now begins to believe in a divine power that speaks through her.

The proof of the divinity's existence that Arieka demands never arrives, and the divinity stops being a household presence. The place that it used to occupy in Arieka's mind becomes a void that knowledge cannot fill. Until now, we have seen that, in many of Golding's novels, there is a tripartite division between the knowable appearances, the knowable essence that manifests through them and the unknowable thing-in-itself. We have also seen that in those novels the characterisation of the divinity and that of the essence of the world tend to coincide. In *The Double Tongue* the knowledge vanishes as a possibility of approaching the divinity, leaving an image of the cosmos as composed, on the one hand, of a physical realm of knowable appearances from which the divinity is absent and, on the other, an inscrutable thing-in-itself.

Arieka substitutes for the familiar divinity an unknowable sphere where either no divinity exists, as she suspects in her bleakest moments, or where the divinity becomes unfathomable. The first mention of a void left by the divinity's absence appears when Arieka recounts her childhood. On occasion of a punishment that her parents impose on her, Arieka realises that her grief may be caused by fear of the gods' anger rather than of her family's. She is afraid that her alleged misbehaviour may have caused the gods to turn their backs on her: 'There is a void when the gods have been there, then turned their backs and gone. Before this void as before an altar there is nothing but grief' (Golding 1995: 23).

The feeling of grief returns to her years later, after becoming the Pythia, because of the divinity's reluctance to speak through her. As in her childhood, she sees the place where the divinity used to be as a void. Unlike the little girl living at her parents' house, the Pythia now identifies this void with a nothingness, thus passing from the suspicion that the divinity may be impossible to know to the opinion that it may not exist at all. Once this idea has found its way to her mind, it threatens to develop into atheism:

> So that void which I felt I had come across and before which I lay in grief was — a kind of god?
> No. A void is a void, a nothingness. My hair prickled and I felt as though the skin of my back had
> frozen. I was an unbeliever. I was anathema (Golding 1995: 125).

Arieka's narrative suggests that there is some kind of relationship between the empty region where no divinity can be found and death. As a child, the grief caused by her parents' punishment and the divinity's desertion turned death — the entrance to a dimension where she would not need to worry about her feelings, her parents and the divinity — into an attractive prospect. She states: 'of course the void was the door of death, which … brought me a measure of peace: for I saw that death was an escape and a refuge' (Golding 1995: 25). As in the case of grief, the association between the void and the absence of the divinity, of the authority figures, of individuality and of suffering reappears in her adulthood. Having discovered that Ionides is involved in a plot against the Empire, the Romans proceed to arrest him. After his return to the temple, Ionides finds it so hard to cope with the feeling of humiliation that he can only look for a 'place to hide, to draw into and away from himself, his shame the last bit of clothing to be dropped before the void, where at last there is the peace of not god, not-man — nothingness —' (163). The conclusion, it seems, is that there is a dimension where no human individual and no deity can live. This amounts to saying that the divinity, already banished from the knowable world, is also absent from the only place left where it could be now — the unknowable thing-in-itself.[82]

In *The Double Tongue*, this conclusion is only temporary. Despite the lack of proof about the existence of the divinity, Arieka attempts to keep the last embers of belief

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82 The terms *void* and *nothingness*, here employed here to refer to what lies beyond individual appearances, are reminiscent of the ones that Nathaniel uses in *Pincher Martin* to convey the dissolution of egocentric identity in the formless realm that awaits the individual after death. There is a difference though. Nathaniel characterises this void without form as the radical negation of individuality, not necessarily as what cannot be known in any way. In this and other novels of the same period, what lies beyond individuality but remains within the purview of human knowledge is posited as the essence of the world. This essence and the divinity are frequently confused or treated as identical. By contrast, Arieka's position is that the void into which we disappear after death — and where the divinity, should it exist, would be — is impossible to know.

alive. In the last scenes of the novel we see how she fails to prove to herself that the divinity really inhabits the temple, and how she asserts her faith nonetheless.

Arieka's opportunity to check whether the Delphic myth has any real substance comes when Ionides, at the moment of his arrest for plotting against the Romans, gives her 'a silver key' with both ends 'shaped as a labrys' (Golding 1995: 160). Holding the key, Arieka heads for the innermost part of the temple to find out the truth about the divinity. What she expects to find there is a deep cleft in the rock from which, in former days, a divine vapour used to issue (81). According to the myth, this is 'the centre of the world', the place where its innermost secrets — the 'mysterious heart' or 'hidden centre of existence' — come to light (10, 99). As Arieka knows well, in truth things are very different: '"the centre no longer speaks"', the intoxicating vapour rising 'from the centre of the earth' has been replaced by the smoke of laurel, and 'the fabulous cleft in the rock' is covered by two thick curtains (56, 95). When she approaches the curtains and inspects them for the first time, she sees that they picture Apollo's fight against Pytho: 'A stiff, not to say crude image of Apollo woven into the stuff of the left-hand curtain faced some misshapen monster in the right' (161). The picture tallies with traditional stories, but what she discovers behind the curtains does not:

> The key with the double labrys was hanging round my neck. I pulled the drawstrings lowly and the curtains slid back. There was a double door behind them. … I put the silver labrys into the silver lock and turned the key. The doors were easy enough to open. There was the solid, impenetrable rock of the mountain behind them (Golding 1995: 164–5).

Correctly understanding the meaning of the solid rock is crucial to understand not only the novel as a whole but, more generally, Golding final opinion about the divinity. In Apollo's temple everything is double and everything can be interpreted in two ways — from the sex, identity and existence of the divinity to the equivocal oracles that Arieka delivers when sitting in front of the multitude. Even the door is double, and the silver key that opens it is doubly double. But whatever meaning we give to the specific details of this passage, the presence of a wall of solid rock gestures towards one single conclusion: the divinity cannot be known. Instead of the expected cleft in the side of the mountain against which the temple leans, what Arieka finds is a solid wall without a single chink through which to glimpse what might be behind. The wall of rock that the

curtains and the doors conceal correspond to the void formerly occupied in Arieka's mind by the divinity. Arieka feels, once more, that the gods have 'turned their backs on [her]' (Golding 1995: 162). Once the curtains have been drawn and the doors have been opened, there is only a wall of solid rock beyond whose surface we can never go.

Arieka's encounter with the wall at the back of the temple, and the conclusions that she draws from it, must be compared the opinion, voiced in *Free Fall* and *Darkness Visible*, that the physical surface of things is like a brick wall. The comparison reveals some interesting differences. While in earlier novels some characters believe that the brick wall of physical appearances can be pierced through metaphysical cognition, and that it is possible to gain metaphysical knowledge of the essence of the world, in *The Double Tongue* Arieka never goes beyond the surface of the wall, which for her means that the divinity cannot be known. However, the differences in treatment cannot conceal the connection that is established between the essence of the world and the divinity. This is not the only passage in Arieka's narrative that reminds us of this connection. We have seen that, at the beginning of one of her oracular sessions, she grows impatient and addresses the divinity directly. To show her readiness, she refers to her and the divinity's will: 'Here I am, I said, ready and willing. Do your will. ... Will you answer?' (Golding 1995: 95). Here, as in *The Spire*, the will of the divinity — be it Apollo, Dionysus or some other — and that of the individual that obeys it are confused. In *The Double Tongue*, however, there are no further mentions to the role that the will may play as the essence of the world. Nor is Arieka's address accompanied by the dynamic descriptions of the surrounding world or the usual images of sprouting forces and rhythmic waves that in other novels evoke the influence of the essential will. Because of this, the passage looks more like a remnant from a previous stage in Golding's career than like a continuation of that stage.

Together, Arieka's references to the divine will and to the wall at the back of the temple confirm the idea that, in Golding's novels, the presence of the divinity is indissociable from the manifestation of the essential kernel of the world. The way in which Arieka opens the curtains at the bottom of the temple in order to find out the real identity of the divinity has much to do with the image of drawn veils that Schopenhauer uses to describe metaphysical experiences, in particular the knowledge of the essence of the world. By the same token, her discovery of a wall of solid rock behind the curtains can be read not only as a negation of the possibility of knowing the divinity but also as a

repudiation of the view, voiced by some of Golding's earlier characters, that achieving metaphysical knowledge would be like seeing through a brisk wall. The physical surface of objects is neither a veil nor a door. Even if Arieka could pierce into the impenetrable rock, what she would find would be even more rock, more physical surfaces that preclude any insight into the inner recesses — the essence — of the earth. This essence, if there is any, remains forever out of the bounds of human knowledge, and so does the divinity that Golding's novels insist on linking to that essence.

The discovery that knowledge cannot go beyond the realm of physical surfaces does not amount, however, to denying the existence of the divinity, or to refusing to characterise it in any way. It only means that believing in the existence and the meaningfulness of the divinity is a matter of faith. In this sense, the novel carries a sobering message. Outside the physical there is no knowledge proper, but only speculation that will never amount to knowledge.

The ending of Arieka's autobiography focuses on the conclusions she draws from her feeling of the void and her encounter with the wall of rock. Having received a letter informing her that, in consideration of her long service as Pythia, the city of Athens wishes to erect a stone statue of her among the altars on the Field of Mars, old Arieka replies keeping the void in mind:

> I wrote back — remembering the void — and feeling strangely that there was *a kind of tenderness* in it that I could explain to nobody. I asked that rather than an image of me they should erect a simple altar and inscribe there:
>
> TO THE UNKNOWN GOD (Golding 1995: 165; my italics).

Despite her doubts, Arieka does not turn her back on the divinity. The divinity in which she continues to believe is neither Apollo nor any of the other Olympians; it is not even Gaia, but is a divinity nevertheless. She even has a feeling that the divinity must be endowed with some kind of tenderness. Nevertheless, she realises that her feelings — which she considers incommunicable — do not amount to legitimate knowledge, and accordingly she recommends that the statue should be in honour of a divinity that cannot be known.

At this point we may recapitulate on the attitudes towards the divinity that appear in Golding's novels. I have shown that the trajectory of what is explicitly presented as

the divinity runs parallel to the trajectory of what is implicitly presented as the inner essence of the world. When the knowledge of the divinity is asserted, the essence does not take on the attributes of the Christian God but of a force reminiscent of Schopenhauer's essential will (this happens, for example, in *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*); when the knowledge of the divinity is questioned, the features of the essence become (this happens, for example, in *Darkness Visible* and the Sea Trilogy) less clear. Finally, when the possibility of knowing the divinity is denied, so seems to be the knowledge of the essence (this explains why the inner essence of the world is strikingly absent from *The Double Tongue*). The ending of Arieka's narrative points to the separation of the knowable world from the unknowable thing-in-itself; it also suggests that whatever deity may exist belongs — as does the essence of the world — in the latter. The existence and characterisation of the divinity is a matter of belief, and so is the existence and characterisation of the essence of the world.

However hard Golding tries to separate the references to the essence of the world and to the divinity outside his novels, the terms in which both are presented in his fiction are generally indistinguishable. So much so that an interpretation in terms of the knowable essence of the world hardly differs from an interpretation in terms of the divinity. Despite their similarities, the former reading must be preferred for reasons of economy: if referring to the undivided, formless kernel of the world — whether to assert our knowledge of it or to deny that knowledge — suffices to explain the novels, there is no compelling reason to bring in an endless panoply of deities, except to show the conflicting religious conceptualisations of the primordial force at the centre of the world. This is precisely the treatment that I have given to the presence of the all-powerful force that in Golding's fiction is sometimes said to dominate human beings.

CONCLUSION

In the Introduction to this study I suggested that William Golding's world view, as usually described by critics, bears a striking resemblance to Arthur Schopenhauer's. Both the novelist and the philosopher take metaphysical wonder to be the spur of the most valuable kinds of intellectual enquiry; both claim that the world is divided into a sphere of appearances and a metaphysical essence of which those appearances are a manifestation; both are convinced that violence and suffering are rooted in that essence, hence impossible to eradicate in a permanent way except through death or, at the collective level, through a judicious use of repression whose total effectiveness can never be guaranteed; both are dominated by what is generally taken to be a pessimistic mood.

These similarities suggested that reading Golding's novels in terms of Schopenhauer's philosophy could improve our understanding of Golding, This applies not only to aspects of his fiction that had already been dealt with by his critics, but also to other important themes that previous critics have generally overlooked, such as Golding's interest in the limits of human knowledge, or in the exact role of the intellect in human life.

Having conducted an extensive analysis of Golding's oeuvre through the prism of Schopenhauer's metaphysical theories, it is necessary to assess the extent to which the philosopher's views have helped us to understand Golding's literary treatment of the human condition as well as the originality of the novelist's approach. The comparison with Schopenhauer shows that for Golding suffering and violence, the central problems that human beings face, cannot be dealt with in a scientific way: physical science can neither identify their roots nor solve them. Among the discourses that, being metaphysical, can identify the sources of these problems, there are two that Golding

also finds unsatisfactory: the religious discourse, which tends to dogmatism and to interfere with the other spheres of enquiry, hindering the attainment of their goals, and the philosophical discourse, which Golding never deals with in depth, and whose rational, abstract aims Schopenhauer takes to be likely to limit its practical effects. Unlike Schopenhauer, Golding thinks that the most adequate approach to suffering and aggression is art, particularly literary art, not only because literature is able to pinpoint the roots of humankind's most serious problems as accurately as philosophy and without falling in the trap of religious dogmatism, but also because, thanks to its manipulation of language so that it will excite metaphysical feelings, it can change the audience's world view and also improve their behaviour towards their neighbour. In this respect, Golding's novels contradict Schopenhauer's claim that the main difference between art and the other descriptions of the world are found at the level of content rather than at the level of form.

Golding's fiction is concerned from the very beginning with exploring ways of escaping suffering. In his novels the source of suffering lies in the essential nature that humankind shares with the rest of the world, understood as an all-powerful and amoral will to life. This is why many of his characters, naturally programmed to secure their own self-preservation and the reproduction of the species regardless of the consequences, are obsessed with survival and sex.

Golding wonders not only at the horrifying spectacle of mutual aggression, pain and death in which humankind plays a central role, but at the metaphysical sources of this spectacle. As human beings cannot manipulate the metaphysical roots of suffering in the same way as they manipulate physical objects, pain cannot be eradicated. Though human nature, grounded as it is in the will to life, allows for some individual variations, the individual character of each person is inborn and immutable; in Schopenhauer's terms, for each compassionate person that seeks the others' well-being and tries to alleviate their suffering, there are countless egoistic people that only seek their own well-being, and even malignant people that obtain pleasure when they make the others suffer. Egoism and malice are linked to the basic modality of consciousness, on which the individual's (and, ultimately, the will to life's) satisfaction depends and through which only the physical properties that separate one thing from another are grasped. Compassion is linked to a different mode of consciousness, one which, instead of reducing things to potential sources of pleasure and unpleasure, that is, to mere means

to the desired ends, reveals the metaphysical dimension that all objects have in common.

Despite highlighting their importance, both Schopenhauer and Golding consider all metaphysical alternative states of mind exceptional and, in general, not for the subject to choose: originally and by default the intellect is at the service of the essential will to life, whose demands can be met by physical consciousness alone; this makes it impossible to explain why the human mind is capable of metaphysical forms of consciousness. Nevertheless, the recognition that apart from physical consciousness there are metaphysical modes of consciousness has important consequences. Their existence and the kinds of things that they allow to know mean that the purview of human cognition is not limited to the physical realm, that is, to what can be explained, for example, by science.

Apart from throwing into relief the difference between physical and metaphysical consciousness, Golding's fiction explores the difference, also present in Schopenhauer's philosophy, between the rational and the non-rational products of the human mind. These two distinctions are useful to understand Golding's intervention in the two cultures debate in defence of the arts, and his privileging of certain varieties of consciousness as the only ones that allow the individual to avoid suffering.

As regards Golding's defence of the arts, it is important to bear in mind that, according to Schopenhauer, all of the varieties of consciousness mentioned so far work without the help of reason. They consist in what the philosopher calls *feelings* not *concepts*. As a rule, these feelings provide the foundation for the concepts with which reason operates, and therefore for the rational descriptions of the world that have become institutionalised in the course of history. Though outside his fiction Golding deals with science, history, art, philosophy and religion — the five descriptions of the world that Schopenhauer characterises in detail — his novels usually focus on science, art and religion.

In Schopenhauer's writings, science is normally a conceptual elaboration of physical perception, art is a conceptual elaboration of aesthetic contemplation, and religion, like philosophy, is a conceptual elaboration, with the notion of an all-powerful will at its centre, of the inner observation of one's affects and passions. In Golding's novels, as in most of Schopenhauer's texts, science does nothing more than create the best possible conditions to secure the person's survival and thereby the reproduction of the human

species. Though Golding never plays down the importance of the scientific approach, and though he defends its autonomous operation as the only way in which it can achieve its best results, he suggests that the current hegemony of the scientific approach conceals its uselessness when it comes to questions of value, be it aesthetic or moral, and that this approach cannot tell what the world and human beings really are at bottom.

As regards the possibility of putting an end to suffering, Schopenhauer's model helps us to understand why in Golding's fiction only metaphysical feelings can do this. What these feelings have in common, and what separates them from physical perception, is that they do not present the world as a mere source of satisfaction or dissatisfaction; they are not a means to the essential will's ends. This is the reason why, when entering a metaphysical state of mind, the subject ceases to relate things to his or her desires. As a result, the temptation to compete with other individuals for the same goal disappears, and with it the anxiety that accompanies the search for pleasure. In Golding's novels, by contrast, all concepts serve as means to the end of making the world comprehensible, less dangerous, and thus, ultimately, to the end of all ends: the satisfaction of the essential will.

Apart from showing the difference between feelings and concepts, Golding's fiction tries to demonstrate that concepts can be translated into words that excite metaphysical feelings in the audience. This possibility is what separates the use of language that science makes and the use made by religion and, above all, by literature, both which are, in comparison, more likely to arouse metaphysical feelings (adapting two terms employed by Clements 2012, these two uses can be called *denotation* and metaphysical *evocation*, respectively). Though Schopenhauer is also aware that language can transform concepts into metaphysical feelings, his own writing does not exploit this power to the same extent as Golding's.

Some of the most memorable passages in Golding's fiction convey a vivid feeling of the metaphysical dimensions of things, characters and events. In this sense, a number of his novels begin with a detailed description of the physical concreteness of the objects and elements with which the characters interact, but they go on to show, usually in a figurative way which blurs the limits among discrete individuals, that this physical façade is but a manifestation of the entire world's metaphysical kernel. Whether to reproduce the characters' inner observation of their needs and appetites, their aesthetic

contemplation of things, or their vision of the essence of the world, Golding's use of language reminds the reader that the contemporary dominance of scientific training at schools can render students incapable of appreciating the metaphysical evocation, and that this dominance can blind us to the aspects of experience that science turns its back on because they are not amenable to explanation.

Schopenhauer's discussion of the differences between the physical and metaphysical descriptions of the world helps to understand Golding's concern about the possible demise of metaphysical evocation due to the hegemony of science. At the same time, it throws light on the different metaphysical purposes that Golding's prose serves; in particular, Schopenhauer's explanation of aesthetic contemplation as wrenching the object out of the flux of time and simultaneously freeing the subject from the demands of the will to life also helps to understand the difference between the two ways in which Golding describes the metaphysical dimension of the world: both as the source of suffering and as providing, when seen from an aesthetic angle, a possible remedy for that suffering. In this respect, Golding's metaphysical descriptions not only focus on things in movement, and thus, by extension, on a world dominated by an inner force that gives rise to constant agitation, conflict and suffering. There are also occasions on which Golding describes static objects whose contemplation puts those characters fortunate enough to appreciate their beauty in a state of painless tranquillity.

Apart from aesthetics, one of the most important aspects of metaphysics, in Golding as in Schopenhauer, is morals. Schopenhauer's distinction between descriptive morality, which differentiates the kinds of intentions behind people's acts and praises those that lead to a reduction of the neighbour's pain, and prescriptive morality, which prescribes a course of action that minimises the neighbour's suffering, can improve our understanding of the distance, in Golding's novels, between the solution to suffering offered by compassion and a solution involving moral repression.

Though Golding's fiction abounds in egoistic and malignant characters whose grasp of the world is limited to physical perception, it also includes a few compassionate characters that have gained an exceptional insight into the metaphysical links that connect all beings. While Golding's egoistic and malignant characters do not see the others' weal or woe as being directly related to themselves, his compassionate characters feel the neighbour's suffering as their own and are pushed to act altruistically.

There are important similarities and differences between Schopenhauer's and Golding's treatment of compassion. As in Schopenhauer, in Golding's first novels moral worth consists in doing justice to the common essence that all living beings, regardless of their apparent differences, share. For Golding, as for Schopenhauer, those who gain a compassionate insight into this common nature, and who assign the same dignity to all, are the only kind of people that are praiseworthy from a moral point of view. That is why they call them *saints*. But while Schopenhauer applies this label to two different kinds of people that have grasped the essence of the world — those that are moved by compassion and those that withdraw to live a solitary life without caring about the fate of their neighbour — Golding never presents resignation as a solution: sanctity for him necessarily involves a direct engagement with the suffering of others.

Despite his insistence on their value, Schopenhauer never misses a chance to point out that neither the saint's vision nor the other metaphysical feelings can offer a lasting remedy for suffering. For this reason he also speaks of the death of the individual and of collective repression. Golding does the same. Some of his characters lead such a painful life, or cause so much harm to others, that their deaths seem an acceptable solution. However, neither Golding not Schopenhauer are totally happy with death, not only because it is often linked to the egoistic rejection of suffering but also because, if taken to its logical extremes, would wipe most living creatures out of the the world. This leads them to offer repression as a way of preventing people from making each other suffer. In Golding's earlier fiction repression does not prevent the fulfilment of people's desires, but encourages them to attain it without hurting anyone. In this respect, Golding suggests that physical repression is preferable to moral repression not only because the threat posed by moral regulations is not strong enough to control transgressions, but also because moral standards are easily forgotten.

Golding's early emphasis on the innateness and immutability of every person's character, and on the egoism and malice of the majority, and his endorsement of physical repression as the only feasible way to prevent society from collapsing, make it certainly difficult to avoid the conclusion that he is a pessimist. Nevertheless, in Golding's own writings we find several elements that put this alleged pessimism into question. As we have seen, his novels include plenty of examples of metaphysical consciousness and altruistic behaviour that show that he does not think that aggression is all there is. Moreover, in contrast to Schopenhauer's exploration of the human

condition, Golding's does not stick to the doctrines of a knowable essence of the world and of determinism that lead to advocate physical repression as the only realistic weapon that human societies have against suffering. Finally, in some of his essays and lectures Golding, despite acknowledging that there is little room for hope in the world as we know it, affirms his faith that there might be other worlds where things are better.

Even before finishing to exploit all the fictional possibilities of a world view so closely related to Schopenhauer's, Golding was already putting some of its basic tenets into question. In the course of his novelistic career, Golding gradually abandoned the essentialist, deterministic and repressive attitudes that inform his earlier novels and that became for him unfounded beliefs. It can be reasonably argued that these beliefs derive not only from his participation in the Second World War but also from certain ideologies whose influence is much stronger that Golding realises. In this sense, Eagleton's interpretation of Schopenhauer's universalising and naturalising doctrine of essential desire as a projection of capitalist dynamics also applies to Golding's position.

Implicitly acknowledging the perils that speaking of essences entails, Golding's novels embark on a gradual exploration of other sources of suffering. The abandonment of the view that the essence of the world can be known comes with the abandonment of the view that a person's attitudes and conduct are determined by his or her inborn nature. And once essentialism and determinism have been rejected, there is less reason to go on rejecting utopia. Indeed, it can be argued that in his last finished novels Golding contemplates the possibility that people's free choices might lead to the creation of an ideal community where competition would not be the rule.

The interpretation of Golding's metaphysics proposed in this thesis has by no means exhausted the richness of his novels. They contain many elements that still need elucidating. The following pages present some of these issues and suggest possible lines of analysis.

To begin with, Golding's novels include a series of themes that can be approached, at least in a preliminary way, through Schopenhauer's philosophy, but whose full analysis would require adopt a different perspective. These themes include the treatment of women and of homosexuals, and, more generally, the treatment of outsiders and the very definition of humanity.

Schopenhauer deals with gender issues, but his explanations are exclusively grounded in natural factors to the detriment of the social factors that are so important in Golding's novels. Thus, for example, Schopenhauer describes women as naturally endowed with beauty, charm and compassion, but also as incapable of prolonged intellectual or physical work. In Golding's novels, women are just as likely as men to be compassionate, and indeed one of his most memorable female characters, Sophy in *Darkness Visible*, is nothing short of malignant. As for their intellectual stamina, in *The Double Tongue* Arieka is the focaliser and narrator of her own life, and her performance of those roles throughout the entire novel shows that she is far from being intellectually limited. Something similar happens with homosexuality. Like Schopenhauer, Golding only deals with homosexual men; and like Schopenhauer's works, Golding's novels explain their homosexuality, as we saw with Mr Pedigree in *Darkness Visible*, in natural terms. However, the particularities of Schopenhauer 's account, according to which nature decrees that homosexual tendencies should increase in individuals with fewer chances to beget healthy children, such that, by directing the sexual impulse away from procreation, the species itself is benefited by not having individuals produce weak, deformed, and short-lived progeny, are totally alien to the characterisation of male homosexuals in Golding's novels.

Among Golding's critics, the one that has devoted most attention to gender issues is Crawford (2002). His examination of the characterisation that Golding's novels offer of heterosexual male, women and homosexual men in terms of the adoption and imposition of different cultural roles rather than of natural inclinations points to a possible way in which the limitations of Schopenhauer's essentialistic model could be overcome. However, Crawford's reading of Golding's novels is lacking on at least two counts. First, it hardly pays attention to the similarities and differences between Golding's and his contemporaries' approach to gender, which would greatly clarify his position in the contemporary literary scene. In this respect, it is necessary to carry out a more exhaustive analysis than McCarron's in order to determine whether Golding's attitude towards 'the aggressive ethos of masculinity so prevalent in the literature of the period' (McCarron 2007: 290), whether he, like the Angry Young Men, equates 'masculinity with ... possession, attainment', whether he also links male 'success' to 'a material acquisition, or ... a favourable advance in society' (185), and whether he shares the Angry Young Men's view of heterosexual relationships as 'the site of class struggle'

(Dollimore 1983: 69). Secondly, Crawford's reading is lacking insofar as it ignores the psychological process whereby the prejudices against women and homosexuals spread through the social body.

The first of Crawford's omissions makes it necessary to compare Golding's treatment of gender not only with that of the Angry Young Men, but also with that of such female writers as Iris Murdoch and Muriel Spark, whose moral concern is as strong as Golding's and who, like him, not only have an apparent readiness to subordinate character to the 'schematic development' of moral ideas, but likewise 'depart ... from the socially concerned "neorealism" predominant ... in the fifties' (Stevenson 1986: 179, 181). As regards Crawford's second omission, it can perhaps be solved with the help of psychoanalytical theory, in particular of Lacan's account account of the relation but the real and fantasy. In some important respects, Lacan's theory of the real is compatible with Schopenhauer's metaphysics of nature. Though he usually reserves the notion of antagonism for the sphere of (physical) appearances, Schopenhauer sometimes states that the essential will itself should be interpreted not only in terms of a desire rooted in lack or deficiency but in terms of 'antagonism' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 161, 253, 331). Similarly, Žižek describes the Lacanian real not only in terms of a 'lack' (of consistency, of harmony) which is also an 'excess' of negativity (Žižek 1989: 54), but also in terms of an inner 'split', a 'fissure' or 'antagonism' (126–7). As regards Lacan's theory of fantasy, what links it to the real is the notion of the *objet petit a*. This concept, applied to *The Inheritors* and *Free Fall* by Sugimura (2008: 48, 87), was already mentioned in this study when discussing Jocelin's relation to the pinnacle in *The Spire*; it can also be used to analyse other natural or man-made objects in Golding's novels, from the conch that some boys treasure and others want to destroy in *Lord of the Flies* to the netsukes that Mr Pedigree fingers compulsively in *Darkness Visible*. Regarding gender issues, the object *a* may be relevant because, as Sacido-Romero explains, its function is to provide the illusion that the inner lack that the subject, individual and collective alike, suffers from can be remedied, either by filling it through identification with an ideal mirror-image or by displacing it to another subject (see Sacido-Romero 2003: 90–1). In connection with Golding, it is necessary to investigate whether the first strategy can explain the assumption of stereotyped heterosexual roles by his male characters, and whether the

second strategy can explain the violent behaviour to and sexual exploitation of women to which Golding's males are prone.

Apart from its possible application to Golding's treatment of gender, Lacan's theory of the object *a* can perhaps provide a better explanation than Schopenhauer of why some of Golding's characters see the others as less than human or even monstrous. Schopenhauer distinguishes human and non-human animals according as they are capable of rational thought or not. Though this criterion would perhaps explain why in *Free Fall* Sammy Mountjoy describes Minnie, an intellectually challenged schoolmate of his, as a non-human animal, it does not serve to identify the reasons why, in *The Inheritors*, the New People refuse to see the People — who are more capable of rational thought than Minnie — as human beings. Nor does Schopenhauer's criterion explain Jack and his hunters' attempt to exterminate their rivals — Piggy, Ralph and Simon — in *Lord of the Flies*. A possible explanation may come from the Lacanian idea that the displacement of inner lack sometimes involves seeing another person as a 'foreign body', that is, as an 'intruder' (Žižek 1989: 126, 127). The outsider, of which the Jew as seen by the Nazis is a paramount example, is hold to be guilty of 'introducing … disorder, decomposition and corruption [in] the social edifice' and therefore 'appears as an outward positive cause whose elimination would enable us to restore order, stability and identity' (126–7). From this perspective, it would be interesting to analyse the purpose of the contrast between the corporativist view of the outsider as the 'anti-figure', the 'antichrist' that threatens to destroy the group's illusory ideal (Stavrakakis 1999: 140), and Golding's description of an outsider like Simon, whose murder takes place precisely when the other boys stop seeing him as a person and confuse him with a beast, as a saintly martyr or Christ-figure. Finally, psychoanalytical theory could perhaps determine the extent to which, as Golding states in his early piece 'Fable', violence in *Lord of the Flies* is the consequence of 'an unconscious legacy wished on children by their parents' (Golding 1965: 92).

The last aspect of Golding's novels that Schopenhauer deals with, but whose full elucidation in Golding's novels calls for a different theoretical perspective, is the sublime. Though this thesis has focused on the characters' contemplation of beauty, this is not the only aesthetic feeling theorised by Schopenhauer. Following Kant, he also mentions the feeling of the sublime, which arises when someone contemplates without fear 'a power beyond all comparison superior to the individual, and threatening him

with annihilation' (Schopenhauer 1969a: 205), and which reveals more of the terrible nature of the essential will than beauty. Though it is clear that the feeling that Golding's characters have when confronted with unbound nature is never of aesthetic exaltation, but rather of pure terror (remember, for example, the descriptions of the raging sea that panic-stricken Talbot sees in the Sea Trilogy), it is necessary to assess the possibility that Golding's portrayal of humankind and of the whole world may sometimes excite a sublime feeling in the reader. Should this be the case, it would further be necessary to analyse the effects that this sublime component may have outside the fiction. Finally, dealing with this effects of the sublime would lead to an analysis of the relationship between Golding's world view and literary Romanticism. Though a number of critics have compared his metaphysical interests to those of writers like William Blake, William Wordsworth and Samuel T. Coleridge (see Acheson 1976; Boyd 1988: 25, 31; Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 2002: 269–70, 368; Carey 2009: 201–2, 397), none of them has focused on the possible links between Golding's outlook and such Romantic concerns as the emphasis on the power of the productive imagination — operative not only in the arts but also, as Percy B. Shelley claimed, in science — to counteract 'the selfish constraints of the liberal atomistic self' at whose service reason allegedly is (Habib 2005: 410); the place of humankind within nature and the need for an environmental ethics (let us remember the comments on 'the rape of our planet', in Golding 1984a: 212–3); the ambivalent view of individualism, now condemned as one of the 'central features of the new bourgeois social and economic order' based on 'the principles of "utility" and "calculation"' and fostering the illusion of self-sufficiency (Habib 2005: 409), now praised as the true expression of the liberty and possibilities of self-development that every person must have and which the artist embodies better than anyone (remember the claim that artists represent 'the true human being', in Golding 1984a: 197). Though this thesis has already compared Golding's handling of most of these topics with Schopenhauer's, the comparison between their treatment in Golding's fiction and in Romantic literature is still a pending task.

Apart from the issues that Schopenhauer deals with, but whose full elucidation calls for a different approach, in Golding's novels there are a number of themes that Schopenhauer ignores. These include imperialism and racism, the postcolonial

encounter with the native and the multicultural consequences of the collapse of the British empire.

As a number of critics have pointed out, Golding's novels from *Lord of the Flies* to *Pincher Martin* deal, indirectly, with the way in which white men have explored and conquered new territories, often exterminating their original inhabitants. Though even more evident, the imperial theme in the Sea Trilogy, set in a period when Australia has just begun to be conquered by the British, and *The Double Tongue*, where Greece is ruled by the Roman empire, still needs to be examined. Something similar happens with racism, postcolonialism and multiculturalism. When mentioning Hawlin's criticism of *Lord of the Flies* as an imperialist and racist novel that equates Jack and his hunters' savage behaviour to that of the inhabitants of Western colonies (see Hawlin 2008), it was argued that the attack is groundless, because for Golding those (English) people that pride themselves in being civilised are just as savage as the rest. Though the problematic role of the native in Golding's earlier novels has already attracted some critical attention, the role that the colonial and postcolonial subjects play in Golding's later works is virtually unexplored. The only exception is *An Egyptian Journal* (1985), a travelogue which focuses on the distance between real Egyptians and the mythical Egyptians fantasised by and for Western visitors, and which has received strikingly polarised responses, from those that condemn it as the work of a chauvinist (see Soueif 1985) to those that praise it for challenging Orientalist preconceptions of cultural superiority (see Regard 2005). More light on the encounter with the native in postcolonial contexts could perhaps be thrown by analysing the marginal but unforgettable role played by Australian Aborigines in *Darkness Visible* and the Sea Trilogy, where their behaviour is either misunderstood by the main characters' or presented as impossible to understand. As regards multiculturalism in contemporary societies, particularly in Britain, the phenomenon makes a fleeting appearance in *Darkness Visible*, where some of the locals resent the transformation of London into an ethnic and cultural mosaic due to the arrival of immigrants from former British colonies. The reasons why former colonies like Australia suddenly started to awake Golding's interest at such a late date merit attention in their own right. Moreover, the themes of imperialism, racism, the postcolonial encounter with the native and multiculturalism call for a of properly historicised analysis of the possible relationship between the positions contained in Golding's writings and the general context in which

the latter appeared. Though Golding's emphasis on humankind's essential nature and the invariability of history has served to discourage this kind of reading, Crawford's example has shown some of its possibilities (for multiculturalism, for example, see Crawford 2002: 163–5).

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RESUMEN

Como William Golding (1911-1993) reconoció en más de una ocasión, toda su vida, desde su más tierna infancia, estuvo dominada por un sentimiento de estupor ante el inagotable espectáculo que el mundo le ofrecía. En parte, Golding heredó este asombro de sus padres. Sin embargo, las similitudes no pueden oscurecer las diferencias entre su sentimiento de admiración y el de sus padres. Golding consideraba que la curiosidad de estos era limitada, porque era meramente científica; por contra, él nunca se contentó únicamente con las explicaciones que la ciencia ofrecía, y siempre creyó que su insatisfacción abría la puerta a una comprensión más exhaustiva del mundo. Se podría decir que el enfoque de sus padres era físico, mientras que el de Golding era metafísico. Y eran precisamente el encuentro con este ámbito metafísico, y el estupor que le provocaba, lo que llevaba a Golding a escribir.

En Golding, la admiración metafísica está estrechamente ligada a la convicción de que la gente adolece de una terrible ignorancia de su propia naturaleza. Por regla general, la gente solo ve la cara física del mundo, y por tanto es incapaz de apreciar la dimensión metafísica que sus vidas tienen. En este sentido, la principal aspiración de Golding era llamar la atención sobre esta dimensión, la única en la que tienen algún sentido su preocupación por la capacidad destructiva del hombre (tanto a nivel individual como colectivo), y, de manera más general, por el sufrimiento. En última instancia, este es el motivo por la cual Golding dirige su atención a la naturaleza humana para examinarla *sub specie aeternitatis*, es decir, desde la perspectiva de la eternidad. En general, se considera que las conclusiones a las que su investigación lo conduce son pesimistas.

El sentimiento de estupor, la adición de intereses metafísicos al interés por la dimensión metafísica del mundo, el énfasis en la violencia y el sufrimiento, y el

supuesto pesimismo resultante de todo ello están también entre las características más destacadas de la filosofía de Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860). Schopenhauer declaró en más de una ocasión que desde los albores de la historia todas las búsquedas por una explicación adecuada a la vida han sido impulsadas por la admiración, añadiendo que en su forma más pura esta admiración es necesariamente metafísica. De acuerdo con su explicación del contraste entre la física y la metafísica, esto significa que algunas personas no se asombran ante el funcionamiento físico del mundo, sino más bien ante sus características ontológicas, morales y estéticas.

Los temas que la filosofía de Schopenhauer aborda incluyen la epistemología, la ontología y la estética, la moral, la ley y la política. Estos temas coinciden con los principales intereses que, según la mayor parte de los críticos, conforman la visión del mundo de Golding. Schopenhauer es famoso por haber defendido la existencia de una voluntad todopoderosa y ciega que opera a escondidas como la esencia de la humanidad y del resto del mundo. Lo sorprendente es que la voluntad también ocupa un lugar destacado en las novelas de Golding, donde a menudo aparece como una fuerza incontrolable alrededor de la cual giran las vidas de sus personajes. Como en Schopenhauer, el tratamiento que en las novelas de Golding se da a este tema aspira a mostrar la importancia primordial de la metafísica. Además, ambos autores coinciden en resaltar las características morales de sus respectivos proyectos. Otra característica común es que ambos expresan sus intereses metafísicos en términos religiosos; las referencias a la santidad, por ejemplo, son recurrentes en ambos.

En general, la crítica de Golding ha sido capaz de dar una interpretación acertada de los principales aspectos metafísicos de sus obras, pero los ha tratado de manera aislada. Si comparamos la obra de Golding a un mosaico, está claro que los críticos non han sido capaces de descubrir las posiciones que las diferente piezas ocupan en relación unas con otras, menos aún de averiguar el significado global que expresan.

Esta tesis está basada en la hipótesis de que el modelo filosófico de Schopenhauer ayuda a aclarar y unir entre sí los componentes metafísicos, aparentemente inconexos, que aparecen en las novelas de Golding. El uso del modelo de Schopenhauer debería, por tanto, permitir una reconstrucción crítica de la visión básica que Golding tenía del mundo. Relacionada con esta hay una segunda hipótesis: que los intentos de Golding por corregir esa visión del mundo —los cuales se vuelven cada vez más evidentes a medida que sus novelas se van sucediendo— pueden entenderse mejor si los

comparamos con la postura que aspira a dejar atrás. Mi análisis no presupone que las visiones del mundo de Golding y de Schopenhauer tengan una coherencia interna absoluta ni que ambas sean enteramente idénticas. Sí que presupone que es más fácil entender algunas de las cuestiones metafísicas más importantes que Golding aborda si somos conscientes de las cuestiones que Schopenhauer abordó más de dos siglos antes. Además, mi análisis presupone que las conexiones que Golding establece entre esas cuestiones son más fáciles de apreciar si somos conscientes de la manera en que Schopenhauer las conecta.

Los puntos de contacto entre ambos autores son tan numerosos que es difícil evitar la sospecha de que Golding estaba familiarizado con las obras de Schopenhauer. Sin embargo, John Carey, que es no solo el biógrafo de Golding sino el único investigador al que se le ha permitido acceder a sus documentos personales y a su biblioteca, no ofrece ninguna prueba concluyente a este respecto. La biografía de Carey menciona los libros más importantes que Golding leyó, pero la lista no incluye ninguno de Schopenhauer; por lo que parece, Golding tampoco poseía ninguna obra del filósofo alemán. Las similitudes entre el novelista y el filósofo pueden ser o no casuales. A pesar de no poseer ninguno de sus libros, Golding pudo haber entrado en contacto con un autor tan conocido e influyente en otra parte. Los argumentos propuestos en este estudio no dependen de que Golding hubiese leído los libros de Schopenhauer; lo único que pretenden demostrar es que el pensamiento de Schopenhauer representa una perspectiva fructífera desde la cual se puede dar cuenta de muchos de los aspectos más básicos de los escritos de Golding. Esta actitud debería hacer más fácil no caer en la tentación de tratar las novelas de Golding como si fuesen ilustraciones literarias de las ideas de Schopenhauer.

La comparación entre Golding y Schopenhauer muestra que para Golding el sufrimiento y la violencia, los dos problemas centrales a los que los seres humanos se enfrentan, non pueden ser tratados de una manera científica: la ciencia física no puede ni identificar las raíces de estos problemas ni solucionarlos. Entre los discursos que, por ser metafísicos, sí pueden identificar las fuentes de estos problemas, hay dos que para Golding no son totalmente satisfactorios: el discurso religioso, que es proclive al dogmatismo y a entrometerse en los otros ámbitos del conocimiento, entorpeciendo la consecución de los fines que les son propios, y el discurso filosófico, que Golding nunca trata en profundidad, y cuyos fines racionales, abstractos Schopenhauer considera que

quizá limitan sus efectos prácticos. A diferencia de Schopenhauer, Golding cree que el enfoque más adecuado del sufrimiento y la violencia es el arte, en particular el arte literario, no solo porque la literatura es capaz de identificar de manera tan precisa como la filosofía, y evitando el dogmatismo religioso, las raíces de los problemas más serios de la humanidad, sino porque, gracias a su manipulación del lenguaje para que produzca sentimientos metafísicos, puede cambiar la visión del mundo de la audiencia y mejorar su comportamiento hacia el prójimo. Debido a esto, las novelas de Golding contradicen la opinión de Schopenhauer de que la principal diferencia entre el arte y las otras descripciones del mundo no se produce a nivel de forma sino a nivel de contenido.

La obra narrativa de Golding aspira desde el principio a explorar las maneras en que se puede evitar el sufrimiento. En sus novelas la fuente del sufrimiento se encuentra en la naturaleza esencial que los seres humanos comparten con el resto del mundo, la cual es entendida como una voluntad de vivir amoral y todopoderosa. Esta es la razón por la cual muchos de sus personajes, programados por la naturaleza para asegurarse su propia conservación y la reproducción de la especie sin importar las consecuencias, están obsesionados con la supervivencia y el sexo.

Golding no solo se muestra estupefacto ante el pavoroso espectáculo de agresiones mutuas, dolor y muerte en el que la humanidad tiene un papel destacado, sino ante las fuentes metafísicas de este espectáculo. Como los seres humanos no pueden manipular las raíces del sufrimiento de la misma manera en que manipulan los objetos físicos, el dolor no puede nunca ser erradicado. Aunque la naturaleza humana, a pesar de tener su fundamento en la voluntad de vivir, permite algunas variaciones individuales, el carácter de cada persona es innato e inmutable; utilizando los términos escogidos por Schopenhauer, por cada persona compasiva que busca el bienestar de los otros y trata de aliviar su sufrimiento, hay innumerables personas egoístas que solo persiguen su propio bienestar, e incluso personas malignas que obtienen placer del dolor que causan a los demás. El egoísmo y la malicia están ligados a la modalidad básica de consciencia, de la cual depende la satisfacción del individuo (y, en última instancia, de la voluntad de vivir), y a través de la cual solo se pueden captar las propiedades físicas que separan a una cosa de otra. La compasión está vinculada a un modo de consciencia diferente, el cual, en vez de transformar todas las cosas en fuentes potenciales de placer o displacer, es decir, en meros medios para la consecución de los fines deseados, revela la dimensión metafísica que todos los objetos tienen en común.

A pesar de subrayar su importancia, ni Schopenhauer ni Golding ocultan que todos los estados de consciencia metafísicos son excepcionales y que, en general, no está en manos del sujeto el escogerlos: originariamente y por regla general, el intelecto está al servicio de la voluntad de vivir esencial, cuyas exigencias solo pueden ser cumplidas por la consciencia física; esto hace que resulte imposible explicar por qué la mente humana está capacitada para las formas metafísicas de consciencia. Sin embargo, el reconocimiento de que aparte de la consciencia física hay modos de consciencia metafísicos tiene implicaciones importantes. La existencia es estos otros modos y los tipos de cosas que permiten conocer significan que el ámbito del conocimiento humano no está limitado al ámbito físico, es decir, a lo que puede ser explicado, por ejemplo, por la ciencia.

Aparte de poner de relieve la diferencia entre la consciencia física y la metafísica, las novelas de Golding exploran la diferencia, también presente en la filosofía de Schopenhauer, entre los productos racionales y no racionales de la mente humana. Estas dos distinciones son de gran utilidad para entender la intervención de Golding en el debate de las dos culturas en defensa de las humanidades, y la manera en que el novelista privilegia algunas variedades de consciencia por considerarlas las únicas que permiten al individuo evitar el sufrimiento.

Por lo que respecta a la defensa que Golding hace de las humanidades, es importante tener en cuenta que, según Schopenhauer, todas las variedades de consciencia mencionadas hasta ahora funcionan sin ayuda de la razón. Consisten en lo que el filósofo llama *sentimientos*, no en *conceptos*. Por regla general, estos sentimientos sirven de base a los conceptos con los que opera la razón, y por lo tanto a las descripciones racionales del mundo que se han ido institucionalizando a los largo de la historia. Aunque fuera de su obra narrativa presta atención a la ciencia, la historia, el arte, la filosofía y la religión —las cinco descripciones del mundo que Schopenhauer describe en detalle— en sus novelas Golding habitualmente se centra en la ciencia, el arte y la religión.

En los escritos de Schopenhauer, la ciencia normalmente es una elaboración conceptual de la percepción física, el arte es una elaboración conceptual de la contemplación estética, y la religión, al igual que la filosofía, es una elaboración conceptual, en cuyo centro se encuentra la noción de la voluntad todopoderosa, de la observación interna, por parte del sujeto, de sus afectos y pasiones. En las novelas de

Golding, como en la mayor parte de los textos de Schopenhauer, la ciencia no hace otra cosa que garantizar la supervivencia de la persona y a través de ella la reproducción de la especie. Si bien Golding nunca resta importancia al enfoque científico, y si bien defiende que su funcionamiento autónomo es la única manera en que puede alcanzar sus mejores resultados, al mismo tiempo sugiere que la actual hegemonía del enfoque científico oculta su inutilidad cuando se trata de cuestiones de valor, sea moral o estético, y que este enfoque no puede decirnos qué es lo que en el fondo son el mundo y los seres humanos.

En relación a la posibilidad de poner fin al sufrimiento, el modelo de Schopenhauer ayuda a entender por qué en las novelas de Golding solo los sentimientos metafísicos pueden hacerlo. Lo que estos sentimientos tienen en común, y lo que los separa de la percepción física, es que no presentan el mundo como una simple fuente de satisfacción o insatisfacción; no son un medio para la consecución de los fines de la voluntad esencial. Esta es la razón por la cual, cuando entra en un estado metafísico de consciencia, el sujeto deja de poner las cosas en relación con sus deseos. La consecuencia es que desaparece la tentación de competir con otros individuos para alcanzar el mismo objetivo, y con ella desaparece también la angustia que acompaña la búsqueda del placer. En las novelas de Golding todos los conceptos, por contra, sirven de medios para el fin de hacer el mundo comprensible, menos peligroso, y de esta manera, en última instancia, para el fin de todos los fines: la satisfacción de la voluntad esencial.

Además de mostrar la diferencia entre los sentimientos y los conceptos, las obras narrativas de Golding intentan demostrar que los conceptos pueden materializarse en palabras que dan lugar a sentimientos metafísicos en la audiencia. Esta posibilidad es la que separa el uso que la ciencia hace del lenguaje y el uso que se hace en la religión y, sobre todo, en la literatura, las cuales tienen, en comparación, más probabilidades de producir sentimientos metafísicos (adaptando los dos términos empleados por James Clements, estos dos usos pueden denominarse *denotación* y *evocación* metafísica). Aunque Schopenhauer también es consciente de que el lenguaje puede transformar los conceptos en sentimientos metafísicos, sus propios escritos no sacan partido de este poder en la misma medida que los de Golding.

Algunos de los pasajes más memorables en la obra narrativa de Golding transmiten un vivo sentimiento de las dimensiones metafísicas de las cosas, los personajes y los

acontecimientos. En este sentido, algunas de sus novelas empiezan con una descripción en detalle de la concreción física de los objetos y los elementos con los cuales interactúan los personajes, pero pronto pasan a mostrar, normalmente mediante un estilo figurativo que difumina los límites entre los diferentes individuos, que esta fachada física no es más que la manifestación del núcleo metafísico del mundo entero. Sea para reproducir la observación interna, por parte de los personajes, de sus necesidades y apetitos, su contemplación estética de las cosas, o su visión de la esencia del mundo, el uso que hace Golding del lenguaje recuerda en todo momento al lector que el dominio actual de la formación científica en las escuelas vuelve a los estudiantes incapaces de entender la evocación metafísica, y que este dominio puede impedirnos apreciar aquellos tipos de experiencia a los que la ciencia da la espalda por considerar que no son susceptibles de explicación.

La discusión, por parte de Schopenhauer, de las diferencias entre las descripciones físicas del mundo y las metafísicas nos ayuda a entender la preocupación de Golding por la eventual desaparición de la evocación metafísica debido a la hegemonía de la ciencia. Al mismo tiempo, arroja luz sobre las diferentes finalidades metafísicas que cumple la prosa de Golding; en particular, la explicación que Schopenhauer da de la contemplación estética como una experiencia que arranca el objeto del flujo del tiempo y que simultáneamente libera al sujeto de las exigencias de la voluntad de vivir ayuda a entender las dos maneras en que Golding describe el ámbito metafísico: por una parte, como la fuente del sufrimiento, y, por otro, como la puerta que lleva, durante la contemplación estética, a un posible remedio para ese sufrimiento. A este respecto, las descripciones metafísicas de Golding no solo se centran en cosas que se mueven, y, por tanto, por extensión, en un mundo dominado por una fuerza interna que da lugar a una agitación, un conflicto y un sufrimiento constantes. También hay ocasiones en las que Golding describe objetos estáticos cuya contemplación pone a los personajes que tienen la fortuna de apreciar su belleza en un estado de tranquilidad sin dolor.

Aparte de la estética, uno de los aspectos más importantes de la metafísica, tanto en Golding como en Schopenhauer, es la moral. La distinción que Schopenhauer establece entre la moral descriptiva, que diferencia los tipos de intenciones detrás de los actos de la gente y alaba aquellas que conducen a una reducción del dolor ajeno, y la moral prescriptiva, que recomienda conductas que minimicen el sufrimiento del prójimo, mejora nuestra comprensión de la distancia, en las novelas de Golding, entre la

solución al sufrimiento que ofrece la compasión y la solución que pasa por la represión moral.

Aunque las novelas de Golding contienen numerosos personajes egoístas y malignos cuya comprensión del mundo está normalmente limitada por la percepción física, también incluye unos cuantos personajes compasivos que han alcanzado un discernimiento excepcional de los profundos vínculos que conectan a todos los seres entre sí. Mientras que los personajes egoístas y malignos de Golding no ven que la buena o mala fortuna de los otros esté íntimamente relacionada con la suya, sus personajes compasivos sienten el sufrimiento ajeno como si fuese propio, lo cual los empuja a actuar de manera altruista.

Entre el tratamiento que Schopenhauer y Golding dan a la compasión hay importantes similitudes y diferencias. Como en Schopenhauer, en las primeras novelas de Golding la valía moral consiste en hacer justicia a la esencia común compartida por todos los seres vivos, con independencia de las aparentes diferencias. Para Golding, como para Schopenhauer, quienes alcanzan a discernir esta naturaleza común, mostrándose compasivos y asignando la misma dignidad a todos, son los únicos dignos de alabanza desde un punto de vista moral. Por eso los llaman *santos*. Pero mientras que Schopenhauer aplica esta etiqueta a dos clases de personas que han captado la esencia del mundo —los movidos por la compasión y los que se retiran para llevar una vida solitaria sin preocuparse de lo que le acontece al prójimo— Golding nunca presenta la resignación como una solución válida: para él la santidad necesariamente implica una preocupación directa por el sufrimiento de los demás.

A pesar de insistir en su valor, Schopenhauer nunca pierde oportunidad de señalar que ni la visión del santo ni los demás sentimientos metafísicos pueden ofrecer un remedio duradero contra el sufrimiento. Por esta razón habla también de la muerte del individuo y de la represión colectiva. Lo mismo hace Golding. Algunos de sus personajes tiene una vida tan llena de penalidades, o causan tanto daño a los demás, que sus muertes parecen una salida aceptable. No obstante, ni Golding ni Schopenhauer están totalmente satisfechos con este remedio, no solo porque a menudo está ligado a un rechazo egoísta del sufrimiento, sino también porque, si se lleva a sus extremos lógicos, borraría a la mayoría de los seres vivos de la faz de la tierra. Estas consideraciones llevan a ambos autores a presentar la represión como una buena manera de evitar que las personas se hagan sufrir mutuamente. En las primeras

novelas de Golding, la represión no evita la satisfacción de los deseos de la gente, pero sí la anima a alcanzar esa satisfacción sin hacer daño a nadie. En este sentido, Golding defiende que la represión física es preferible a la represión moral, no solo porque la amenaza de las reglas morales no es lo suficientemente fuerte como para controlar las transgresiones, sino porque las normas morales se olvidan fácilmente.

El énfasis que Golding pone inicialmente en la naturaleza innata e inmutable del carácter de cada persona, y en el egoísmo y la malicia de la mayoría, y su apoyo a la represión física como la única manera factible de evitar la destrucción de la sociedad, hacen que sea muy difícil evitar la conclusión de que es un pesimista. Sin embargo, en sus propios escritos encontramos abundantes elementos que desmienten este supuesto pesimismo. Para empezar, sus novelas incluyen numerosos ejemplos de consciencia metafísica y de conducta altruista, los cuales muestran que Golding no piensa que no haya alternativa a la violencia. Además, a diferencia de la exploración de la condición humana llevada a cabo por Schopenhauer, la de Golding no se acaba con las doctrinas de la esencia cognoscible del mundo y del determinismo, las cuales llevan a defender la represión física como la única arma que, siendo realistas, las sociedades humanas pueden blandir frente el sufrimiento. Por último, en algunos de sus ensayos y conferencias, donde reconoce que el mundo que conocemos no da muchas razones para la esperanza, Golding también expresa su fe en que pueda haber otros mundos donde las cosas vayan mejor.

Incluso antes de acabar de explorar todas las posibilidades literarias de una visión del mundo con tantos parecidos a la de Schopenhauer, Golding ya había empezado a cuestionarse algunas de sus premisas básicas. A lo largo de su carrera como novelista, Golding fue abandonando poco a poco las actitudes esencialistas, deterministas y represivas que informan sus primeras novelas y que a sus ojos se convirtieron en creencias sin fundamento. Es razonable afirmar que estas creencias derivan no solo de su participación en la Segunda Guerra mundial, sino también de ciertas ideologías cuya influencia es mucho más fuerte de que lo él creía. En este sentido, la interpretación que Terry Eagleton ofrece de la doctrina universalizadora y naturalizadora de un deseo esencial como una proyección de la dinámica capitalista también es aplicable a la posición de Golding.

Reconociendo implícitamente los peligros que entraña hablar de cualquier esencia, las novelas de Golding se embarcan en una exploración gradual de otras posibles

fuentes del sufrimiento. El abandono de la idea de que se puede conocer la esencia del mundo viene acompañado por el abandono de la idea de que las actitudes y la conducta de una persona vienen determinadas por su naturaleza innata. Y una vez rechazados el esencialismo y el determinismo, hay menos razones para seguir rechazando la utopía. De hecho, se puede afirmar que en sus últimas novelas acabadas Golding contempla la posibilidad de que las libres elecciones de la gente puedan conducir a la creación de una comunidad ideal en la cual la competición no sea la norma.

Aunque la lectura general de las novelas de Golding que aquí se ofrece está basada principalmente en la filosofía de Schopenhauer, muchos de los detalles específicos de mi argumento encuentran apoyo teórico en otros modelos filosóficos como los de Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche y Jürgen Habermas, en el psicoanálisis, en la teoría marxista de la ideología y en la sociología. Una de las razones por las cuales estas adiciones son necesarias es que, cuando se aplica a las novelas de Golding, se aprecia que el modelo de Schopenhauer tiene algunas carencias significativas. Así, por ejemplo, en el capítulo dedicado a las posiciones básicas de Golding, la actitud del novelista hacia al proyecto de la modernidad, y en particular hacia la ambición de garantizar la autonomía del proyecto científico, no se puede entender únicamente con la ayuda de Schopenhauer, sino que debe ser abordada por medio de la caracterización, común a Habermas y a algunos sociólogos, de la modernidad como un proceso de creciente diferenciación tanto de los ámbitos sociales como de los discursos asociados con ellas, y de la posmodernidad como un proceso inverso. Asimismo, la noción de la represión, tomada del psicoanálisis freudiano, ayuda a entender el mecanismo mediante el cual algunos de los primeros personajes de Golding suprimen los deseos que surgen de la voluntad esencial, y los comentarios que hace Sigmund Freud acerca del origen de la conciencia moral sirven para llenar un hueco importante en la explicación que Schopenhauer da de las prescripciones morales. La otra razón para la inclusión de adiciones teóricas de autores diferentes a Schopenhauer es la perspectiva dual desde la que se ha realizado la lectura de la obra de Golding: como una estructura más o menos coherente cuyas líneas temáticas principales generalmente coinciden con las de la filosofía de Schopenhauer, y como una propuesta que va cambiando a lo largo del tiempo mediante el añadido de nuevos elementos. En el capítulo dedicado a las adiciones que las novelas de Golding van incorporando y que chocan con la visión del mundo encarnada en la filosofía de Schopenhauer, la teoría de Freud ayuda a explicar

por qué todas las descripciones de la esencia del mundo son denunciadas como otros tantos casos de proyección psicológica. Asimismo, la teoría marxista sirve para determinar en qué medida el efecto naturalizador y universalizador de estas proyecciones se puede considerar una reificacion ideológica de actitudes que hunden sus raíces en una situación cultural concreta (en este caso, en la sociedad capitalista). En cuanto a la teoría kantiana de la autonomía moral, sirve para explicar el tipo de libre elección que Golding niega a sus primeros personajes —una posición que de hecho cierra la puerta a la utopía— pero que concede a sus últimos personajes —restableciendo así la posibilidad de la utopía—. En el último capítulo de esta tesis, la teoría de Nietzsche sobre las similitudes entre el impulso apolíneo y el dionisíaco ayuda a esclarecer la imagen que las novelas de Golding dan de la divinidad. Finalmente, la teoría sociológica de Max Weber, según la cual el desencantamiento moderno consiste en el uso de la razón instrumental para explotar los recursos físicos del mundo, aclara hasta qué punto la subordinación de la ciencia por parte de Golding a enfoques metafísicos como el religioso y el artístico, que no describen el mundo en términos de su posible utilidad para el ser humano, está conectada a sus preocupaciones medioambientales.