

One Redeemer for Each Sinner : Individual  
Salvations in Darkness Visible (In Honour of  
Professor Kenji Noguchi and Professor Osamu  
Osaka On the Occasion of Their Retirement)

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# One Redeemer for Each Sinner:

## Individual Salvations in *Darkness Visible*

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Glorie Tebbutt rightly points out that William Golding's *Darkness Visible* depicts modern England as "a nation in peril" (55).<sup>1)</sup> We can sense a great despair in the novel. Few can miss the apocalyptic image depicted in the war scene in Chapter One where London is scathingly bombed and is burning like hell. Staring absent-mindedly at London in the middle of the Blitz, a member of the firecrew wonders, "Was it Apocalypse? Nothing could be more apocalyptic than a world so ferociously consumed" (15). After this apocalyptic disaster, instead of constructing a nation that is to be governed by Christ and God's people, the public seem to be degrading themselves even further. As the novel's heroine Sophy Stanhope declares, "[w]e're not very wholesome" (185) and "[e]verything's running down", or "[u]nwind[ing]" (166). Everyone is suffering from some sort of "unwholesomeness" in this world on its way to ruin, and, consciously or not, everyone is looking for redemption.

Despite their desperate need for redemption, however, the post-war English public have put Christianity "on the decline" (Boyd 126). On his return to England after about a twenty-year absence, Matty, the fanatically-Christian hero of this novel, who has a "tendency to regard everything in a Biblical light" (Redpath 47), feels "torn by the spirit" when he finds "a heathen temple built right next door to the Seventh Day Adventists!!" (*DV* 96). And Sim Goodchild, a representative of the modern English public (especially of the intellectuals of that dis-

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1) See also Boyd 127. Though Boyd speaks of savage modern 'Britain', like Tebbutt I would like to say that what was in Golding's mind was 'England'. As L. L. Dickson reveals, Golding once told Virginia Tiger that he wanted to write a novel "not about Britain, about England" (111).

trict), admits that Christianity is no longer his dominant belief :

I believe it [everything reasonable and unreasonable] all as much as I believe anything that is out of sight; as I believe in the expanding universe, which is to say as I believe in the battle of Hastings, as I believe in the life of Jesus, as I believe in—It is a kind of belief which touches nothing in me. It is a kind of second-class believing. My beliefs are me; many and trivial. (200)

To make matters worse, there seems to be virtually no hope of achieving any heartwarming unity among the people. Part Three of *Darkness Visible* bears a subtitle “One Is One”. This derives from a line in an old song which Sim sings to himself bitterly—“One is one and all alone and ever more shall be so” (225). Sim, like many others in this society, is skeptical and pessimistic about the possibility of human bonds of unity. He believes that “we’re all mad and in solitary confinement” (261) and that the partitions between each human being are impenetrable—“Partitions ... remain partitions” (225). How then can they expect the advent of a save-everyone redeemer like Jesus Christ in this modern English society, where people are living their individualistic, solitary lives and Christianity is so moribund that “Christ” can only function as a swear word?<sup>2)</sup> Their redemption seems almost hopeless.

Golding, however, does not tarry long in despair. He says that, although in the late 1950s he “accepted the label ‘pessimist’ thoughtlessly without realising that it was going to be tied to [his] tail”

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2) See Boyd 126. Boyd presents only Sophy’s father as an example of a user of this word as a swear word, but it seems to be a pet phrase of many characters in the novel. There appears to be only one case in the novel where “Christ” is not used for cursing; in Chapter One, after rescuing Matty from the apocalyptic fire, a fire captain murmurs, “Thank Christ my kids are out of it” (15).

(*Critical Essays* 149), now in the 1980s he hates to be considered as a through-and-through pessimist. He refuses to submit to the tragical state of the modern world which is “running down” according to the law of ever-increasing entropy. In his lecture at the Nobel Prize Award Ceremony in 1983, he defined himself as “a universal pessimist but a cosmic optimist”.<sup>3)</sup> He went on :

... when I consider a universe which the scientist constructs by a set of rules which stipulate that his constructs must be repeatable and identical, then I am a pessimist and bow down before the great god Entropy. I am optimistic when I consider the spiritual dimension which the scientist's discipline forces him to ignore. (qtd. in *Critical Essays* 150)

Golding seeks a way to be optimistic by going so far as to devise a new concept of redemption. If people no longer believe in global-scale redemption and are living in “solitary confinement”, then, they will have to be redeemed individually. Golding optimistically hopes that Heaven still has plenty of redeemers in store and will assign one of them to save each sinner.

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Most readers will agree that Matty (with no fixed surname), whom Ian Gregor calls “the Holy Man” (“He Wondered” 94), is one of these redeemers. From childhood he is capable of “wordless communication” (*DV* 18) with the ones who dare to touch him. Thus, when

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3) Golding had already used this phrase in a lecture titled “Belief and Creativity” in 1980. In it he explained his wording: to Golding, cosmos means “what Tennyson meant with all in all and all in all—the totality, God and man and everything else that is in every state and level of being” whereas universe is “the universe we know through our eyes at the telescope and microscope or open for daily use” (*A Moving Target* 201).

an affectionate nurse squeezes him in her arms, Matty can show her "a certain delicacy about the nature of her own mind" (19). He is endowed with a mystic power which can pierce through the partitions isolating each human being.

Matty eventually becomes a Bible maniac who makes painful pilgrimages in search of his *raison d'être*. The left side of his body gets almost irremediably burned during the London Blitz, which he miraculously survives. After he gets out of hospital, he wanders at home and abroad, asking himself, "Who am I?" (51), "What am I" (56), and "What am I for?" (68). He comes to think of himself as a prophet and tries to warn people of the approaching end of the world. For example, he tries piling up matchboxes in front of a sneering crowd (68-70) in order to show symbolically that humankind is intent upon annihilating itself ; civilization is, at best, a series of suicidal, self-destructive attempts to accumulate things of explosive potential that will someday end up wiping out the entire human race. On another occasion, on June 6, 1966, he puts the bloody number 666 on his forehead and walks along the streets to let the people know that the end of the world is coming (89). On every occasion he is derided, humiliated, and viewed with contempt, but he never stops making this fruitless effort.

What makes Matty a potential redeemer is his sense of sin and his wish to atone for it. Matty always feels blamed by Pedigree for Henderson's apparently accidental death, and somehow he accepts this imagined guilt. As atonement, he tortures himself physically and mentally everywhere he goes. He punishingly clothes himself in black all the time, eats almost nothing, endures various rough and humiliating words from other people, devotes himself to any "hard things to do and humble things too" (98), and is even "crucified" by an Aborigine in the Australian desert (64-65). Unlike the English public, "the whole damned race" insensible of the fact that they are degrading their morality, Matty is not really a sinner, and yet feels a need to make amends through deeds for his imagined sins. This is the

reason that he is chosen as “the best material that can be obtained in the circumstances” (93) from which to make a redeemer. But even as “the best material”, Matty cannot become a global-scale redeemer. As I will discuss later, Matty can only partially influence Sim through his seance, and although Matty comes in contact with Sophy more than once, he correctly understands that he can leave no trace at all in her heart “as they [the Stanhope twins] are everything to each other they do not need me [Matty]” (102).

After some thirty trying years he finally comes to believe that his life’s purpose is to serve an undiscovered boy who was born on June 6, 1966 to be a new Messiah for England. The spirits in Matty’s dream tell him that his life is meant for that *one* child, flatly denying the possibility of his life being meant for the general public, the boys in Wandicott House School, or the Stanhope’s twins. Although who the spirits mean by the “one boy” remains vague, one thing is clear to the readers: Matty’s redemptive power is not to be exercised indiscriminately. Matty is dying to be a servant of this future Redeemer. But we come to see that, in fact, his life has always been intertwined with the existence of Sebastian Pedigree. And, at the end of Pedigree’s sinful life, Matty functions, contrary to his expectations, as the redeemer for that sinner only.

Pedigree’s sin is the same as that of Father Watts-Watt in *Free Fall*: an irresistible homosexual lust for young boys. Pedigree cannot stop himself from bringing his pet students into his room on the pretext of giving them “private lessons” though he knows that this is against the bylaws of the school. Even after he is dismissed by the school, he still does everything he can to seduce young boys into public lavatories and molest them there, repeatedly risking being sent to jail for contravening public law and morality. He explains to Edwin and Sim the irresistible nature of his immoral passion—

“You think I *like* wandering round lavatories and public parks, desperate for, for—I don’t want to, I have to! Have to! ... I

have a rhythm.... Mine's a wave motion.... [E]very so often I can feel the time coming, creeping up on me. You don't know what it's like to want desperately not to and yet know you will, oh yes you will! ..." (260)

He cannot help being sinful, but there is Matty to interfere in (if not to stop) Pedigree's self-destructive deeds. Right after joining Pedigree's class, Matty begins to "dog" (28) Pedigree all the time, involuntarily hindering Pedigree from going too far with the affair with Henderson. And, some thirty years later, Matty takes away the colour ball which Pedigree has been using as bait to attract children. Thus, even before he finally becomes a redeemer, Matty has always been unwittingly acting as a brake to (or, counteracting) the ongoing downfall of the immoral Pedigree.

Matty does all this because of his pure love for Pedigree, who once (though only ironically) called Matty his "treasure" (28), but who, in reality, detests Matty because of his deformed face. At the beginning of his end, hovering between the realms of life and death, however, Pedigree sees Matty approaching, waist deep in a golden sea of light, with a face that is no longer horrible but "quite pleasant to look at" (264). On the verge of death, Pedigree writhes in agony and tries to refuse the liberation of his soul which is being offered to him because, just like Pincher Martin, he is afraid to let go of the sinful life he has been leading. But, unlike Pincher, he has his redeemer, and he senses that he is receiving redemption. He realizes that his redeemer is Matty and that the time has come for him to be cleansed of his sin :

"The thing they all want without knowing it ... it should be you, ugly little Matty, who really loved me ! ... And you know about the last thing the thing I shall be scared into doing if I live long enough—just to keep a child quiet, keep it from telling—that's hell Matty, that'll be hell—help me !" (264-65)

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Like Pedigree, Sim, who has been reluctant to admit it, has always been subconsciously hoping to be saved by someone. He feels empty without his children. One is married and far away from England, and the other is in a mental ward and is only capable of “complete non-communication” (195). Sim desperately longs to be consoled by the Stanhope twins and tries everything he can to entice them into his place—setting up a children’s book section in his bookshop which otherwise is full of rare academic books, inviting the twins to tea in the back of the shop, and playing the fool to entertain them. He wishes to dispel his loneliness by means of the pair of beautiful girls, who make little of his existence and consider him silly. He says he is doing it out of “[p]aternal instinct” (224), but he knows in his heart that there is something more than normal affection behind “the generation-long folly of Sim Goodchild” (223). Somewhat like Pedigree, Sim is seized by a pedophilic lust.

However, the Stanhope twins prove to be no redeemers for Sim Goodchild. On the contrary, they both bring home to him that his hope of being saved has been nothing but wishful thinking.

Like a redeemer Matty, Sophy Stanhope is aware of the existence of a special force existing beyond her that acts through her (See Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes, “The Later Golding” 122-123), but she uses it quite differently from Matty. While Matty tries to make use of his power in order to help others gain salvation, Sophy uses it to help the world “run down”.

Although it takes her a long time to realize it, Sophy finally discovers that she has always been obsessed by an immoral impulse to abuse young boys to death—the same impulse that Pedigree tries desperately to repress. In much the same way that greedy Pincher Martin threateningly says to the victim of his lust, “I should love to eat you.... You’re not a person, my sweet, you’re an instrument of pleasure” (*Pincher Martin* 95), Sophy, on seeing a pretty little boy in



Wandicott House School, says inside herself: "*Lovely my pet ! I could eat you !*" (DV 176)<sup>4</sup>. She is a sinner like Pedigree, but, unlike Pedigree, she is not afraid of being one. In fact, she is more than willing.

Sophy's obsession begins with a pivotal event which happens to her at the age of almost ten. She visits Rosevear and sees a dabchick family swimming in a row in the brook. The moment she sees the youngest baby chick, she feels a sudden urge to throw a stone at it and kill it. Strangely, she knows before she does it that the killing process is all going to work out successfully as if "foreordained from the beginning" (109). And actually Sophy does kill the chick in what she calls an "'Of course' way" (108). To some extent this crucial event destines her life's path. As Tebbutt insists, Sophy is a metafictional character who is conscious that she is a victim of somebody who controls her behavior and thought, and she makes "a conscious choice" to be that victim (52-53, 55).

After killing the chick, she learns to be "Weird" (DV 126) and "simple" (108) enough to follow the "Of course" way spell-bindedly and makes up her mind to help the universe "run down", for the universe seems to be sliding "out of itself bit by bit towards something that's simpler and simpler—and we can help it" (167). In order to hasten the running-down process, she begins to commit outrages. She shoplifts, prostitutes herself, and robs shops with her lover, Gerry. Gradually, she progresses to more serious crimes and sins, such as kidnapping and the incestuous seduction of her father. And, finally, she realizes that her ultimate desire has been to commit infanticide, the crime which Pedigree calls "the thing I shall be scared into doing if I live long enough".

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4) Bernard F. Dick has pointed out the similarity between Sophy and Pincher: "one should picture the 'inner' Sophy as a giant mouth within the tunnel of the self; she is a female Pincher Martin, who also metamorphosed into pure mouth" (106).

In order to fulfil this ultimate outrage, Sophy goes back to Greenfield. Her reappearance as a sensual, sexually-overripe and sexually-perversed woman completely shatters the illusional image Sim has had of her as an angelic pretty little girl.

To Sim Toni Stanhope turns out to be a more disappointing as “a prospective redeemer” than Sophy because, on a close examination, we find a lot of similarities between Toni and the redeemer Matty. Toni is a delicate, spiritual creature with almost transparent skin and hair, who stands in stark contrast to Sophy, a “*healthy, outdoor, winning, inviting*” (133) girl, who reminds us of Evie Babbacombe the disturber of the established order in *The Pyramid*. According to Sophy, Toni does “not live entirely inside the head at the top, but loosely, in association with her thin body”, and she can drift “away from herself like smoke” (105). So, it is not by mere coincidence that Toni, not yet eleven years old, is intrigued in Sim Goodchild’s bookstore by a book which deals with “*Tran-scend-en-tal Phil-os-oph-y*” (122). Sophy keeps on inquiring into “the Toni-ness of Toni” (111)<sup>5</sup>:

... when the essential Toni was seated, perhaps a yard above her head and offset to the right, it was not always doing nothing or sliding into sleep or coma or sheer nothingness.... The Toni up there might be without thought; but then, it might equally be altering the shape of the world into the nature it required. It might, for example, be taking shapes from the page of a book and turning them into solid shapes. It might be examining with a kind of remote curiosity the nature of a ball made from a circle, a box from a square or that other thing from a triangle.(111)

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5) In Part One of the novel, the quintessence of Matty is described with a very similar phrase: “Matty-ness of Matty” (18). This may also support my argument that there is an essential similarity between Toni and Matty.

Are we not reminded here of Matty, who “mouths” words as if they were golf balls (18)? Can we not also see in Toni a similarity to Matty when he tries hard to embody three-dimensionally what is two-dimensionally described in the Bible by casting his shoe over Henderson (35-37) or by putting the bloody number 666 on his forehead and transforming himself into the beast in the Apocalypse (89)?

There is still more in common between the Holy Man Matty and Toni: for example, their religious enthusiasm and high-mindedness. As stated earlier, Matty is a fanatic about Christianity. Toni, too, has been carried away by religion, as Sophy testifies in Chapter Nine: “She [Toni] had a religious thing. Jesus and all that. It was *so* funny” (143). While Matty sticks to his Christian beliefs to the very end, Toni gradually goes beyond a spiritual religion and gets into anti-imperialism and terrorism. Donald W. Crompton in “Biblical and Classical Metaphor” avers that Toni is “as transparent as her lint-white hair, and hollow inside—an easy prey for empty causes” (208), but he is not doing Toni justice. Just like Matty, Toni is equally devoted to her ideals and try fanatically to change the present state of the world to make it better. And, just as Matty has to roam about in England and Australia in order to understand what mission he has been given, so too does Toni wander from London to Afghanistan, Cuba, and Arabia. They are pilgrims—each looking for different answers to the same question: “What am I for?”

Maybe we can guess what Toni is for. The reason for her existence is to act as a neutralizer for Sophy’s outrages. In their childhood, Toni, with her prosaic rationalism, often “dogs” Sophy, when she tries to become “simple” and “weird”.

For example, when Sophy sees how the dabchicks suddenly disappear into the water and then unexpectedly show up again on the surface and thinks that she has found out the mystic, elusive nature of dabchicks, Toni just sneers, “Silly.... They wouldn’t be called dabchicks if they didn’t [dab off] ” (110). She does not just let Sophy be a *simple* believer in “weird” mysticism, and this irritates Sophy:

[Toni] would *bring things together* that no one else would have thought of, and there you were with something decided, or even more irritating, something seen to be obvious....

After Toni had pointed out the connection between the behaviour of the dabchicks and their name, Sophy felt cheated and annoyed. The magic disappeared. (111; italics mine)

On another occasion, when their father declares that he will marry their new *au pair*, Winnie, Sophy begins to ponder what “weird” and “‘Of course’ way” she should adopt to prevent the marriage. She pictures herself gliding into his bedroom through the locked door, making a mess of his sidetable drawers, and giving Winnie a nightmare so as to wake her up in panic. While Sophy is indulging in her fanciful plan, Toni takes rational action. She uncovers Winnie’s infidelity to her father, making it unnecessary for Sophy to unleash her “weird” power. Just as “rhythm”-driven Pedegree is prevented by Matty from growing harmfully sinful, so Sophy, who is controlled by the “Of course” way, is hindered in her outrages by Toni.

Toni’s power as antagonist peaks when Sophy moves toward the ultimate crime of infanticide. Just as Pedegree needed Matty to facilitate his secret love affair with Henderson, so Sophy feels the need to use Toni in order to fulfill her murderous pedophilic desire. Although at the early stage of her kidnapping plan she thinks that she is doing it for money, Sophy gradually realizes that whether or not they actually get the ransom has not mattered much to her from the beginning. She daydreams of a beautiful boy tied up on the seat of the loo—thus reminding us of Pedegree’s attempts to commit pederasty (and, if his urges should continue to escalate, infanticide) in public lavatories. Sophy goes into a state of ecstasy at the vision of her fingering “his tiny wet cock” and slowly thrusting a knife through the boy’s smooth skin and into his heart (252). But, once again, Toni ruins her plans. Toni enchants Gerry with her magical gaze, makes him give up the kidnapping plan, and wins him over to her

own plan of political guerrilla activity.

Sophy goes raving mad after her infanticide is prevented by Toni but soon calms down and begins to rehearse a court scene where she is cunningly going to play the part of an innocent girl who has accidentally gotten involved in the terroristic conspiracy planned by Toni's gang, which includes her lost boyfriend Gerry and the twin's father (253-54). Sophy's wickedness seems to have survived the interference from Toni.

However, while she is rehearsing, Sophy walks "along the towpath, where there [is] now nothing visible but darkness" (253)—a scene reminiscent of the opening song of Dante's *Inferno* (Canto 1, lines 1-3):

Midway the journey of this life I was 'ware  
That I had strayed into a dark forest,  
And the right path appeared not anywhere.

But Sophy is now walking in a new darkness; a darkness without the presence of "the Sophy thing" (*DV* 131), which has for so long been leading her into acting "simple" and committing outrages. So, if we agree with Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes's argument that this darkness "no longer holds a triumphant sense of cosmic Evil—only emptiness, nothing" ("The Later Golding" 126), then we can well assume that Toni does have a redemptive force upon Sophy and that there is a good chance that someday Toni may bring final redemption and salvation to Sophy the way Matty does to Pedigree. The despairing stray poet of *Inferno* wanders around the dark forest for a while, but before long he looks up to see the "planet's [the sun's] light / Which guideth men on all roads without fail" (*Inf.* 1. 17-18).<sup>6</sup> The chance that the same thing might happen to Sophy cannot be entirely dismiss-

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6) These translated quotations are from *Dante's Inferno*, trans. Laurence Binyon, (London: Macmillan, 1933) 3.

ed; Wilf Barclay, “one of the, or perhaps the only, predestinate damned” in *The Paper Men* (*The Paper Man* 124) whose “commitment to the intolerance and to the evil” Julia Briggs rightly compares with Sophy’s commitment to outrage, receives “the blessed vision”, or “the hopeful possibilities that his way of life had repeatedly denied”, toward the end of his life (Briggs 178, 183, 183). Golding appears to be more or less in two minds about giving salvation to Sophy, though.

While Sophy’s kidnapping plan is taking this unexpected turn, Sim Goodchild accidentally gets involved in Toni’s plot, plays the fool in front of a hidden camera which is supposed to spy on the dangerous extremist Toni, and eventually makes himself a nation-wide laughing stock. So, to the aforementioned question “What is Toni for?”, we certainly have another answer: whatever else she may be for, Toni is not meant for Sim’s consolation.

Sim fails to gain consolation—or redemption—from either Matty or the Stanhope twins. Naturally, Sim grows more and more pessimistic and makes up his mind to lock himself up inside his “partitions”.

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However, although Sim cannot be redeemed by Matty, Matty does save Sim from his decision to shut out humanity. Even after he has become an adult, Matty certainly has the power to penetrate the inter-human partitions with “*Ursprache*” (DV 204), or “communal telepathy”,<sup>7)</sup> which he had in childhood. Of the two witnesses to Matty’s mystic power in adulthood, Edwin Bell may not be very

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7) Mark Kinkead-Weekes uses this phrase to define Lok’s extrasensory means of communication depicted in *The Inheritors* (“The Visual” 67). I believe that Matty has the same ability as Lok and the Neanderthal people had. Matty belongs to Lok’s primitive tribe, not to the modern, language-ridden human race which started with Tuami’s group of New People. Compare this with Toni’s enchanting power to make people “soppy” with a mere glance at them (DV 105).

reliable because, given to enthusiasm about everything, he has been an easy prey for bogus wonder-workers. As he himself admits, “[his] swans were always geese” (197). But, even the skeptic Sim experiences a wondrous, revelatory moment while Matty is reading his palm: the palm shines and becomes holy. Later, when Edwin feverishly says, “We broke a barrier, broke down a partition. Didn’t we now?”, Sim owns, “Perhaps we did” (234). Even after he learns that he has been ignorantly playing a comical part in Toni’s terrorist conspiracy and becomes enraged, Sim refuses to think that the moment of revelation that Matty gave him was an illusion. He stares intently into his own palm, feeling “heartened” and “happy almost” (261). This certainly cannot be called salvation or redemption, but, at least, it is some kind of awakening—an awakening to the fact that we still can live in hope of salvation.

Salvation does not come to Sim in the way that he has been hoping, that is, from Sophy or Toni Stanhope. Nor does it come from Matty, for Matty is supposed to be the redeemer exclusively for Pedigree. But Matty, with his power to give a secondary influence to the peripherals to some extent, shows Sim that perhaps someday a redeemer created to save no one else but him will come to break down Sim’s partitions. That is good news.

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In this world of *Darkness Visible*, redemption is a one-in-a-million encounter that can take place only when the right person comes to you piercing the walls—the partitions—at the right time, just like Matty comes to Pedigree. Even if you think you have encountered a redeemer and cry “Ecco homo” (196), even if he actually is a redeemer, it is quite likely that you are not this redeemer’s exclusive responsibility and, therefore, that this redeemer cannot give you redemption. Thus, the moral to be drawn from the episode in Part Three featuring Edwin Bell and Sim Goodchild is: beware of false

prophets, as St. Matthew's gospel 24. 9-13 warns (see Boyd 133); don't go on a spree like Edwin does when he mistakes Matty for the redeemer who is going to save "the whole damned race". For, in this world made up of isolated individuals, each person will have his/her one special, predestined redeemer.

This is not pantheism, though it may seem so at first glance. Golding acknowledges one Absolute Being who transcends each sinner and each redeemer, as the passage quoted below, in which Sim and Edwin unexpectedly meet Sophy in the Stanhopes' "stables", symbolically shows :

The single, naked bulb made a black shadow under each nose. Even Sophy looked monstrous, huge, black eye-hollows and the Hitlerian moustache of shadow caught by the light under her nostrils....

Quickly she moved about the room, switched on a table lamp ... [and] flicked off the single, naked bulb and the hideous shadows were wiped from her face to be replaced by a rosy and upward glow ....

"There ! My goodness me ! That dreadful top light ! Toni used to call it—...." (243)<sup>8)</sup>

Notice that it is not only Sophy who has a dark shadow under her nose; this "dreadful top light" produces shadows on everyone's faces. Although Sophy does not tell us clearly, it is not hard to imagine what the religious maniac Toni used to call this "dreadful top light", which exists transcendently over every single person, making his/her darkness visible. This "dreadful top light"—which we might now

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8) Compare this passage with a scene in *Lord of the Flies* where Ralph reaches a half-perception of the truth that there are always more ways than one to see a thing: "If faces were different when lit from above or below—what was a face? What was anything?" (85).



call “the Absolute Being”—sees through into a darkness inside every “unwholesome” human being.

Here we can see the reflection of Golding’s stance as a writer. While he is deeply interested in switching and multiplying viewpoints, what he most wants to know is the final viewpoint, “an overview” or “the eye of heaven”, which includes all the other viewpoints (Carey 185-86). In this sense, Golding can be defined as a Christian writer and *Darkness Visible* a Christian novel, in its basic belief in monotheism and the prospect of salvation.

As Crompton speculates, Golding might have felt the need to present a new gospel to such a blasphemous, loveless world (*A View* 126). But Golding can no longer count on the coming of one omnipotent Redeemer. He introduces, instead, a new concept of salvation for a new world—one redeemer for each sufferer. What Golding tries to do in this *roman à thèse* is to make full use of Christian idioms to create a new guidebook for life—or, a new New Testament—which can meet the demands of the times, where “one is one and all alone and ever more shall be so”. And, while “a universal pessimist” might think like the park keeper that “the filthy old thing [Pedigree] would never be cured” (*DV* 265), a cosmically optimistic reader will perceive the bountiful store of redeemers like Matty and see that “[b]ehind each [is] a spirit like the rising of the sun” (238).

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