

From Human Language to Spiritual Language : William Golding's *Darkness Visible*

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The general critical opinion on William Golding's *Darkness Visible* is that the protagonists, Matty Windrove and Sophy Stanhope, represent good and evil, respectively. A close analysis of the plot, however, reveals that their characterization is not fixed throughout the novel. On the contrary, at the outset they are quite alike in that they are both capable of entering the spiritual dimension of life, which is characterized by "silence."

In spite of this similarity, however, Matty's and Sophy's developments take quite the opposite directions. Sophy, who suffers from a loveless childhood and is exposed to various forms of human evil, awakens to evil and determines to pursue it after she manages to rationalize her desire for sadism and dictatorship by taking advantage of ethical relativism and the scientific concept of entropy. As a result, she is banished from the dimension of "silence" and becomes entrapped in human language. On the other hand, Matty is free from ethical relativism because he has a sense of guilt deeply rooted in his mind after being involved with the death of his classmate Henderson. Moreover, Matty makes "heave-offering" of his speech and forbids himself to speak. This enables him to move further into the region of silence and finally acquire spiritual language. In the last stage of his spiritual development, Matty achieves complete spiritual revelation when he accepts his own physical self, while such a revelation is denied to Sophy because she hates her own body and uses it merely as a bait to entrap men. Just after his spiritual revelation, Matty is killed as a "burnt offering" in an attempt to obstruct Sophy's kidnapping plan, but he appears before Pedigree as a spirit and redeems him spiritually, delivering the spiritual word "freedom." Here, "freedom" means freedom from Pedigree's obsession with pedophilia.

Matty's spiritual power also influences Sim Goodchild, a typically ordinary man of the novel in that he is incapable of entering the spiritual dimension. At a seance with Matty, Sim hears a spiritual word, though momentarily, and dimly awakens to the hope of breaking through what he calls partitions that stand between people. Although he is again thrown into despair after being made a laughing stock of the town concerning a scandal caused by the kidnapping plan, he feels hopeful at the news that Matty's journal was found. This episode shows that even though human language often isolates people from each other, still it can also help to kindle light of hope in their hearts that some day spiritual language will be brought to them, and this very message must be what Golding wanted to give to us readers through *Darkness Visible*, as Matty gave it to Sim.

I

Because it was published after eight years' silence and was soon followed by *Rites of Passage* (1980) and *The Paper Men* (1984), *Darkness Visible* (1979) (referred to as *DV* hereafter) is often regarded as marking the beginning of the latter part of William Golding's career as a novelist. That *DV* is also regarded as the most inscrutable and difficult of all his fiction is partly due to Golding's refusal to give any clue whatsoever as to the understanding of the novel. One general agreement, though, is that Matty Windrove¹⁾ represents good, while Sophy Stanhope represents evil, and accordingly, these two characters are "the reverse"²⁾ of each other. Some critics allow for Matty's potential evil; for example, Bernard F. Dick, while stating that the two are "polar opposites,"³⁾ admits that Matty's "capacity for destruction" could be as great a threat to society as Sophy's.⁴⁾ But no one has questioned that Sophy represents evil, with the exception of Kevin McCarron.

As the most important aspect of the novel, McCarron singles out that Matty and Sophy are far more alike than different, and argues that Golding attempts to deny not only the distinctions between the two but also the dichotomy of good and evil itself: "the novel seems to imply that 'good' and 'evil' are evaluations primarily based on perception, rather than absolute moral values."⁵⁾ I agree with him that the similarities between the two are far greater than are generally believed and must be considered fully in order to acquire a proper understanding of this difficult novel. However, I disagree

that this is to obscure the distinction itself between the ideas of good and evil. Overcoming evil through being good remained one of Golding's major concerns throughout his career. Only one year after the publication of *DV*, Golding said in an interview, "I do feel that questions of good and evil, or how to live in society without exploiting anybody else, are more immediate than anything else."⁶⁾ That he thinks of good as a separate entity as opposed to evil is also obvious in his remark, "I also believe that we have a great capacity for love and self-sacrifice, but we can't refuse to recognize that there is active human evil."⁷⁾ One can see clearly from the above statements that relativism concerning good and evil, which McCarron claims is the theme of *DV*, was stoically shunned by Golding.

What McCarron and other critics regarding Matty and Sophy as opposites fail to include in their discussions, is that Sophy is not the embodiment of evil from beginning to end, nor is Matty the embodiment of good. Both Matty and Sophy undergo considerable spiritual changes—the former for better and the latter for worse—over the course of their growth. At the outset Matty and Sophy, in spite of their totally different appearances, are similar in that they both attempt to transcend day-to-day existence and enter the region of spirituality, which is represented by silence as the antithesis of noise, which includes even human speech. In *DV*, Golding openly expresses the limitations of human language for the first time. This is quite remarkable, considering that in his earlier novels Golding invariably gave full play to figurative language, especially metaphors, to

convey his themes, thus unhesitatingly expressing his absolute reliance on the power of language.

That both Matty and Sophy are different from ordinary people because of their exceptional spirituality is evident from what Matty's spirits tell him : "Many years ago we called her [Sophy] before us but she did not come."⁴¹ Both Matty and Sophy are among the "chosen" few. The spirits' summons somehow fails to be recognized and accordingly is ignored by Sophy. Another conspicuous sign of Matty's and Sophy's rare spirituality is their psychic powers. When Sophy is ten, she sees a string of dabchicks with their mother in the lead swimming along a brook. Just then, as if foreordained, she finds a stone to hand ; she experiences a feeling of inevitability and casually throws the stone at one of the dabchicks, which dies as though obeying her will. Matty experiences the same kind of sensation when he sees a scrying glass in Sim Goodchild's bookshop window : "It was as if he laid colours and shapes over pictures and events ; and this was... like wishing things and then seeing them happen ; or even having to wish something and then seeing it happen" (48).

Don Crompton points out that the dabchick and Henderson episodes both imply that Matty and Sophy possess psychic powers.⁴² No evidence of Matty's psychic power is shown in the text, whereas Sophy is assured of hers ("she could swim in numbers when she wanted") (131). However, it is faintly hinted that Matty caused Henderson, his classmate, to fall from the leads attached to the schoolhouse using his psychic power. He put

a primitive curse derived from the Old Testament : "Over Edom have I cast out my shoe." The literal-minded Matty thought that Henderson was harassing Mr. Pedigree, their teacher who called Henderson "ghastly" (31) and Matty himself, "treasure" (28). He wanted to get rid of Henderson for the benefit of his beloved Mr. Pedigree. Of course it is possible that these killings are not the results of their psychic powers but just coincidence ; they think their powers caused the deaths, but actually it may be nothing more than their imagination. The point is not so much the truths of the matters as the fact that on those occasions they enter the spiritual dimension of life, which is expressed later by Edwin Bell as entering "*a still dimension of otherness*" (48) (Italics Golding's). Here the word "still" deserves attention ; in *DV*, stillness and silence are metaphors of high spirituality.

Likewise, Sophy's high spirituality is implied by the fact that the stables where Sophy and her twin sister Toni used to live in childhood are a "pool of something, a pool, one could only say, of quiet" (227), as Sim Goodchild puts it. As he is descending to the stables at the end of Stanhope's garden, where a seance with Matty is to be held, he feels as if he were entering another mode of being. He compares that experience to "going under water ; but not, as with water, an instant transition from up here to down there, a breaking of a perfect surface, a boundary" (227).

As is clear from the previous comparison, Matty's and Sophy's starting points are more or less the same : they are capable of entering the spiritual dimension of life. This

is what Sim Goodchild, a typically ordinary man, tries to do in vain. He attempts to think about "First Things" but never succeeds because of the "town-racket"(193). In *DV*, noise is a metaphor of modern times when various ideologies and religions exist, reducing each other to an ideology or religion of relative value. Asked about transcendental philosophy by Toni, Sim replies, "Transcendental Philosophy, my dear, ... might on the one hand be called a book full of hot air. On the other hand it might be considered the ultimate wisdom. You pays your money as they used to say and you takes your choice"(122). Not only transcendentalism but almost every thought is subject to relativity. Greenfield, a provincial town in the suburbs of London, where most of the action in *DV* takes place, is a microcosm of the modern English society, where massive immigration of foreigners has caused the disruption of traditional values and simple faith in Christianity. Christianity is no longer the one and only religion of Greenfield ; the parish church has been turned into a community center, and mosques are built next to the Seventh-Day Adventist church. The transept of the church is now being used for a rehearsal of Sartre's *In Camera*. Edwin Bell, another ordinary man of *DV*, is a seeker after "the ultimate wisdom," who wanders from Theosophy, Scientism, the Mahatma, to the Dalai Lama, but is disappointed every time. Sim and Edwin are not exceptional; in this age, with everything thus reduced to relativity, people find it very difficult to commit themselves to any particular ideology. Like Sim and Edwin, most people take up one ideology after another and fail to find permanent value in any of them.

In light of today's spiritual chaos, where people are drowned in ideologies, Matty's and Sophy's abilities to enter the spiritual dimension represented by silence is unique and rare, anticipating that in the future they will become spiritual leaders of the world. However, their developments take completely opposite directions : while Matty finally becomes a kind of prophet, Sophy morally degenerates and turns into a criminal. In order to see why this occurs, I will analyze the plot closely, especially in terms of Matty's and Sophy's attitudes towards language. The novel consists of three parts : Part I Matty, Part II Sophy, and Part III One is one. To make my points easier to follow, I would like to analyze Sophy's process of moral degeneration first, and then discuss Matty, and finally Sim.

II

In spite of her high spirituality, there is no denying that Sophy has an innate propensity for evil. At the age of ten, she realizes that there is a dark tunnel inside her head. In her mind, good and evil are seen in metaphors of "daylight" and "a dark tunnel," respectively. The dabchick episode reveals not only her psychic power but also her latent desire for evil. After killing the dabchick, Sophy dimly awakens to sadism and dictatorship—"a sort of silent *do as I tell you*" (109) (Italics Golding's). What gratifies her most is the fact that she has made the dabchick subject to her will.

However, this episode also shows her loneliness as a result of her mother's elopement to New Zealand and her father's neglect.

The fact that Sophy's target was a baby bird is worthy of attention in that the victim was not alone but was accompanied by its mother. Considering that the word "mother" appears several times ("...*mother* and chicks all ten on a string.... The *mother* was swimming away.... the *mother* and chicks paddling busily...") (107-8) (Italics mine), it is indisputable that motherless Sophy is unconsciously jealous of the dabchicks. There is another episode concerning birds, which shows another instance of Sophy's desolateness. When her father announces his remarriage to Winnie, an au-pair from Australia, Sophy takes revenge on them by leaving a rotten duck egg in a drawer at their bedside. This egg, which was left long ago without being attended by its parents, is clearly a symbol of her loveless childhood. Her incestuous desire for her father, which the grown-up Sophy inadvertently reveals when she questions him about his sex life, is often regarded by Golding critics simply as another expression of her evil, but this desire may be a perverted form of her hunger for fatherly love.

Another point worth attention concerning the dabchick episode is that Sophy intuitively perceives the limitations of language : "Sophy felt she understood all this and more ; yet knew that words were useless things when it came to conveying that "More," sharing it, explaining it" (109). One of the outstanding characteristics of *DV* is a postulation that one's spirituality is known by one's ability to recognize the limitations of language and the significance of silence. The dabchick episode reveals not only Sophy's propensity for evil but also her rare spirituality, and at

this point, how her spirituality will develop is still an open question.

With her distinguished spirituality, Sophy could have become a kind of prophetess like Matty by overcoming her propensity for evil, if only she had been cherished by her parents. At one time, when she felt that her potential evil was beginning to manifest itself, "She felt a strange kind of shiver that shot through her body and made her want to escape from it into daylight and be like everybody else ; but there was no daylight" (113). Sophy is obviously frightened of her own potential evil and wants to escape from it, but there is "no daylight" or no one to guide her to good.

Sophy is "taught" vice by through adults, too. Sim's obsequious treatment of her twin sister Toni and herself reveals his pedophilic inclinations to Sophy, who gains "a naked realization of her own power should she care to exercise it, to do anything she liked with Mr Goodchild" (119-20), thus further stimulating her potential desire for power. Moreover, Sophy and Toni witness Pedigree's shoplifting of a book, which incites them to shoplift sweets. At the Paki's sweetshop where they try to steal, they are not only shown another example of pedophilia ("the older Krishna... said the shop was theirs"), but also ugly racial discrimination. ("Now you go off you black fellow. We are not wanting your custom") (124). Sophy and Toni do not carry out their plan of stealing after all, but it is not because it is bad but because it is boring and not "new" : "Worst of all, they [Sophy and Toni] found there was a group of kids at their school who were doing the same thing only on a larger

scale, *really* stealing and sometimes breaking in and then selling the loot to those children who could afford to buy it" (124) (Italics Golding's). These instances of vice, together with Sophy's innate propensity for evil, serve to "open her eyes" to human evil (Sophy actually exclaims, "I've got eyes in the back of my head!" [134]).

Shortly before her eleventh birthday, Sophy experiences the moment of choice between good and evil. She reasons as follows:

You could choose to belong to people the way the Goodchilds and Bells and Mrs Hugeson [i.e. Sophy's teacher] did by being good, by doing what they said was right. Or you could choose what was real and what you knew was real—your own self sitting inside with its own wishes and rules at the mouth of the tunnel.... Sophy saw that stealing was wrong or right according to the way you thought.... it was as if right and wrong and boring were numbers you could add and subtract. (123-4)

Here, it is easy to detect the idea of relativism in Sophy's reasoning, and one is reminded of Sammy Mountjoy in *Free Fall* (1959). Sammy is free to make moral choices at first. But later, when he decides to give up everything in order to possess Beatrice Ifor sexually, he loses his freedom. Like Pedigree, Sammy is obsessed with the desire to exploit his beloved person sexually in order to achieve his identity. Once determined, he is no longer his own master but a slave to his obsessive desire.

His vindication of allowing himself to be manipulated by his obsession is that good

and evil are relative: "Nick's [i.e. Sammy's science teacher's] universe of cause and effect, his soulless universe fitted like a glove.... I saw that if man is the highest, is his own creator, then good and evil is decided by majority vote. Conduct is not good or bad, but discovered or got away with."¹⁰ Like Sammy, when pressed to choose between the daylight world and her own inclinations, Sophy chooses the latter by taking advantage of the idea of ethical relativism. Once she has convinced herself of relativism ("stealing was wrong or right according to the way you thought"), Sophy's moral degradation is well under way.

Her decision to commit herself actively to her emerging evil is made shortly thereafter, on her eleventh birthday, when her father announces his remarriage. Feeling betrayed, she feels strong hatred toward him and his fiancée, thus bringing herself even closer to the dark tunnel. Encouraged by her hatred, her evil begins to assert its own identity. She realizes it as "not Sophy but this" (124). "This... brandished or manipulated the Sophy-creature like a complicated doll" or she feels as if "[s]omething pushed her, shoved her, craved" (132). She even chooses to "disrupt the placid normalities of the daylight world" (134) in order to establish her identity as a dark power. Once she decides to put herself at the mercy of "her real self," her hunger for both sadism and dictatorship begins to sharpen. She recognizes her own sadism when she experiences orgasm for the first time in her life after stabbing Roland, her first boyfriend, in a momentary rage. Sophy is also driven by a compulsive obsession for power: for example, when she

sees Pedigree go inside a public lavatory, she "will[s] him to stay in the dirty place" (132). She takes pleasure in finding that her power is mightier than others'—"*My will is stronger than his*" (162) (Italics Golding's).

Around this time, Sophy discovers a convenient scientific theory that helps to justify her intuitive recognition that the universe is "running down." She learns it from a radio talk about entropy: "One [talk] was about the universe running down and she understood that she had always known that" (131). To her, "being good is just another tangle," and the only meaningful deed is to help the world run down until it reaches the complete stop, the state of ultimate "simplicity": "Go on with the disentangling that will happen in any case and take what you can take on the way" (167).

Sophy reaches the point of no return immediately after her confrontation with her father, when she reveals her incestuous desire. She urges her father to say "love." It is worthy of notice concerning her attitude towards language here because it shows Sophy's greater reliance on human language than ever. Here she seems to believe she can change reality for herself as well as for her father by making him say "love," thus implying less access to "silence." Even then, Sophy could have stayed clear of evil, if only she could have made her father say "love." "Love" is the word Sophy herself cannot bring herself to utter. She says "the many-splendoured" thing, quoting the title of a famous film but not "love" directly. Even when she becomes infatuated with Gerry, she says to herself that she must not use this

word: "No indeed, they [Sophy and Gerry] did not, must not use that four-letter word, the many-splendoured" (154). When her father blares out, "This, this romantic stuff, this, this—," Sophy urges, "Go on. Use the word." By making her father say "love," she probably wishes to ascertain that he is capable of love, even if it is not directed at herself, so that she in turn can reclaim her faith in human love. However, her father lets her down; he just goes on, "It's like stinking treacle. It swallows, drowns, binds, enslaves—that—" (185). In this way, he won't admit to his love even for his ex-wife or ex-fiancée.

As McCarron points out, in this scene evil is represented not so much by Sophy as by her father, who defiantly admits to his daughter his indulgence in masturbation. He is an image of a completely closed system, rejecting any kind of love and thus severing all connections with others.¹³ At this, Sophy's "outside girl," or her daylight self, endeavors for the last time to assert itself against her evil being: "She stood there; and for once the presence at the mouth of the tunnel was not able to make itself felt. There was too much of outside girl" (187). After her father's rejection, "the outside girl" or her good self finally disappears, and "the interior, nameless thing," her inner evil, wins her over: "the interior, nameless thing was there again.... Now, for an aeon at the mouth of its tunnel it stared out and was aware, too, of that black angle, direction behind that stretched, widening, as far as there was to stretch" (188).

Sophy's moral degeneration is completed when she is not only entrapped by human

language but commits herself to false words. Toward the end of the novel, when her kidnapping plan fails because of Toni and Gerry's betrayal, she pictures a trial scene in her mind and produces false word after word that would put all the blame on her once-beloved father, alleging him as a Russian spy: "He wanted us out of the stables my lord, said he wanted to use them for something else. No my lord that was after he had been to a chess meeting in Russia...." (254). In contrast to the word "love," which she urged her father to utter, we notice how hollow and venomous words have become. It is evident that Sophy is now damned to the wickedest form of human language.

The process of Sophy's moral degeneration examined thus far shows that it was not necessarily Sophy's evil, complete from the first, just coming to surface. Rather, Sophy's potential evil, which might have remained latent all her life, was substantiated and developed mainly because she was unloved and was shown various forms of evil by people around her. Therefore, to regard Sophy just as a personification of evil would be too simple a way of reading the novel. Although she has propensity for evil from the first, Sophy is also a child of this loveless age, when instances of perverted sexuality and crimes prevail and people cannot find any absolute moral wisdom.

Sophy's twin sister Toni is another child of this age and her characterization requires a close analysis for the better understanding of the novel. It is ironical that Sophy, who at first intuitively knows the limitations of language, ends up being used and humiliated

by terrorist Toni, a slave to empty slogans like "freedom" and "justice." Toni is an important character because she resembles Matty and Sophy in different respects. That Toni possesses high spirituality like Matty and Sophy is deducible from Sophy's occasional remarks that Toni's essence stays away from her body; "she [Sophy] knew that when the essential Toni was seated, perhaps a yard above her head and offset to the right.... It might be flitting agilely among the boughs of invisible trees in the invisible forest of which Toni was the ranger" (111). When Sophy exclaims, "I've got eyes in the back of my head!" (134), Toni is not surprised in the least probably because she also has eyes in the back of her head, and has similar psychic power to Sophy's.

Moreover, Toni resembles Matty in that she takes to religion, but unlike Matty, she does not abandon human language. On the contrary, she attempts to refashion the world according to ideologies that are nothing but medley of empty words. Toni's purpose might be the same as Matty's, namely, to save the world; but her ideas of "freedom" and "justice" are nothing but self-righteous. As an illustration, she does not suffer from guilty conscience about using and then betraying her twin sister, who thinks Toni and herself are "everything to each other" (190).

Another difference between Toni and Matty is that while Matty gladly accepts his physicality in the end, Toni never reconciles her spirituality with her physicality. As for the hatred of her own body, Sophy is the same. For example, when periods happen, Sophy is hurt and enraged, while Toni "seem[s]

indifferent to them, as if she could leave her body to get on with its job and be away somewhere herself, out of the whole business of feeling" (130). As a result of neglecting or hating their own bodies, both Sophy and Toni end up using their bodies as a bait to entrap and use men. When one neglects or hates one's own body, one gradually loses footholds to the reality around oneself. I will discuss this in connection with Matty's spiritual development in the next chapter.

III

Matty proceeds through four stages before he achieves true revelation and celebration by spirits. A survivor of the Blitz, Matty has no background. He is miraculously rescued from a fire, is sent to the hospital and begins his life anew there. Because the left side of his face is severely burned, he has difficulty moving his mouth at first. Matty does not speak but conducts "wordless communication" with a young nurse who dotes on Matty in spite of his ugly appearances: "Being, it seemed, touched being" (18). Most likely, she is experiencing spiritual communication with Matty. But she forgets it and does not remember "until middle age overwhelm[s] her" (19), just as it overwhelms Sim with trivialities.

Matty also loses contact with spirituality. After the wordless communication stage, he proceeds to the literal stage, in which he takes every word at its face value. The disastrous consequence of this is Henderson's death. Both Matty and Pedigree are thrown out of the school because of the scandal. The principal is also forced to leave the

school, and later when he comes across a phrase, "Over Edom have I cast out my shoe" in the Old Testament, he has a transient revelation as to the meaning of "Edom," the only word Matty uttered when questioned by the police concerning Henderson's fall from the leads. For a moment he suspects that Matty put a primitive curse on his classmate. But he dismisses his guess immediately, saying, "Oh, yes, to *say* is one thing : but to *do* is quite another matter" (37) (Italics Golding's). But for the literal-minded Matty, to say and to do are the same thing.

Matty's awareness of guilt, however, saves him from any further moral degeneration. Like Sophy, Matty originally has a moral weakness that might have turned him to evil. Just as Sammy and Sophy are vulnerable to their obsessive desires, so Matty is vulnerable to female beauty and sexuality: "His sexuality... was in direct proportion to his unattractiveness" (22). After leaving school, Matty is given a job at Frankley's, a hardware store, where he meets a beautiful salesclerk. He becomes infatuated with her and is pressed to make a moral choice, as were Sophy and Sammy. However, the choice given to Matty is far more severe than Sophy's, because what he must give up is not just this particular girl but his own sexuality altogether. Nevertheless, the choice is given to him. He feels he cannot choose like "carrots of unequal sizes"; his sense of guilt over Pedigree's accusation makes him choose anguish. Pedigree's cry, "It's all your fault!" haunts Matty forever.

Before the balance with its two scales, the one with a man's face, the other with a fire of anticipation and enticement, he

had a time that was made of pure, white-hot anguish. It was the first exercise of his untried will. He knew, and it never occurred to him to doubt the knowledge, or worse, accept it and be proud of it, that he had chosen, not as a donkey between carrots of unequal size but rather as the awareness that suffered. (49)

The pseudoethic of relativism as welcomed by Sophy and Sammy is alien to Matty. As a result of a tragic accident in which Matty is somehow involved, a painful sense of guilt takes root deep in Matty's mind, never to be removed. Matty's stabbing his own palm because of anguish over his guilt presents a striking contrast to Sophy's stabbing Roland resulting in her first experience of orgasm.

Moreover, Matty gradually ceases to rely on language and awakens to the significance of silence, even though at this point it is not so much an aspiration after silence as an escape from the words of accusation and seduction: "It might be possible to go down into silence, sink down through all noises and all words, down through the words, the knives and swords such as *it's all your fault* and *ta* with a piercing sweetness, down, down into silence—" (47) (Italics Golding's).

When Matty realizes that he must sacrifice his sexuality altogether because of his sin, he decides to put the greatest possible distance between the beautiful salesclerk and himself; he flies to Australia, where he reaches the third stage: renunciation of human speech. He decides to make a "heave-offering" of speech and becomes completely mute. Moreover, just as Ezekiel the prophet laid tiles and destroyed them to show people the fate of

Jerusalem, Matty does some mysterious performances such as building matchboxes silently in front of people and tries to awaken them to the approach of the Judgment Day.

Like Sophy, Matty seeks to establish his identity. He always asks himself, "Who am I?" This question gradually changes into "What am I?", then, "What am I for?" Matty returns to England and has the extraordinary experience of being visited by two spirits, who strictly prohibit Matty from uttering even a single word: "the spirit dressed in red... showed: Your tongue was bound so that in the time of the promise which is to come you shall speak words like a sword going out of your mouth" (94). (I will discuss "words like a sword" later.) He obeys their instructions and goes to Wandicott House School, where he begins working as a janitor in order to guard a child, whom the spirits place in Matty's care.

Matty's final revelation, the last stage of his progress, is achieved when he confronts his own sinful nature for the last time and accepts it willingly. It is interesting that Sophy also plays a part in this final step. They meet at Wandicott House School, Matty as a janitor and Sophy as the fiancée of Mr. Masterman, a PE teacher. Sophy is secretly plotting to kidnap an oil sheik's son from the boarding school and has been engaged to Masterman to pump him for information. When Matty sees Sophy, he perceives her wickedness and is afraid to be tempted by her sexual charm: "the woman in the Apocalypse put on Miss Stanhope's face and laughing and caused me to defile

myself with much pain" (236). He is once again aware of his sexuality after the encounter with Sophy, but unlike his Frankley days, he no longer suffers from it. On the contrary, he is glad to discover that he still possesses reproductive faculty : "I am a man I could have a son" (237). He tries to be ashamed but cannot. The illumination through "[t]he finding I [Matty] can sin like other men" fills him with pure joy : "It is like going over from black-and-white to colour" (237). When the students have gone to music appreciation, Matty leaves his work, goes after them and dances for sheer joy outside the music department window. For Matty, leaving work is extraordinary because previously he has always been honest, true to his word, and obeyed every order he is given. (Matty italicizes the sentence in his journal, "*I left my work.*") Moreover, in response to a remark by the principal's wife, Matty casually replies in spite of his heave-offering of speech. Here he simply delights in living and is no longer afraid of being defiled. He is no longer bound by his oath to forbid himself use of human speech ; he does not have to make conscious efforts to abandon human language because he is now beyond it : "I remembered then my vow of silence and it seemed very small" (237). He is not bound by sheer spirituality, either ; he knows he is an ordinary sinner like everyone else and can accept his sexuality by admitting the charm evoked by Sophy completely and with gladness. He perceives divinity in each human being, including himself.

What good is not directly breathed into the world by the holy spirit must come down by and through the nature of men.

I saw them, small, wizened, some of them with faces like mine, some crippled, some broken. Behind each was a spirit like the rising of the sun. It was a sight beyond joy and beyond dancing. (237-8)

It is immediately after this revelation that the spirits allow him to take food with them, acknowledging that he is one of them. This shows that ultimate spiritual enlightenment is not possible until you not only acquire spiritual language but also accept your physical self. In this novel as well as in his previous ones, Golding gives a warning that if one loses hold of the awareness of one's physical self, one tends to be blinded by ideologies.¹³

The very night that Matty achieves spiritual revelation, the spirits bring their "friend" to Matty. This "friend" is "dressed all in white and with the circle of the sun round his head" (239). He is probably Jesus Christ himself. Matty says, "the sword proceeded out of his mouth and struck me through the heart with a terrible pain" (239), and the same kind of statement is found in the Revelation of John in the New Testament : "from his [Christ's] mouth there issued a sharp, two-edged sword" (John 1 : 16-17). The spirits tell Matty that this "friend" is "the spiritual being who shall stand behind the child you [Matty] are guarding. That child shall bring *the spiritual language* into the world and nation shall speak it unto nation"(239) (Italics mine). Spiritual language surpasses human language and is spoken by only those who have achieved spiritual revelation. After a long ascetic discipline guided by the two spirits, Matty

finally succeeds in acquiring spiritual language, as the spirits promised him earlier. When Matty as a spirit saves Pedigree in the final scene of *DV*, he does not use human speech but spiritual language: "The face looming over him [Pedigree] seemed to speak or sing but not in human speech. *Freedom*" (265) (*Italics Golding's*).

This word "freedom" is significant because it is a keyword of *Free Fall*, which means freedom from obsession and compulsion, such as the one from which Sammy and Pedigree are suffering. Just as Sammy is controlled by his obsession, Pedigree is controlled by his pederasty. He calls it "rhythm" and tries in vain to resist it: "He watched it approach or found himself compelled to approach it" (85). When he last sees Matty, he cries out, "help me!" (265). It is obvious that the word "freedom" means spiritual salvation to Pedigree.

IV

Finally I would like to discuss Sim Goodchild, an ordinary man in every sense of the word—he possesses no psychic power nor can transcend day-to-day existence because he suffers from noise and triviality, the symbols of modern society where people cannot easily enter the dimension of spirituality, namely, silence. Unlike Matty and Sophy, Sim is always conscious of the noise of "the jets soughing down every minute to London airport and the monstrous continental trucks doing their best to break down the Old Bridge" and trivial thoughts "on the fact that he was too fat, also as bald as bald and with a cut at the left corner of the chin,

acquired in the process that morning of shaving a jowl" (193). Moreover, Sim shares a little of each of the other characters' propensities. He regards himself as "a committee" (225); one of his committee members is "an unruly member" (226) and possesses pedophilic inclinations like Pedigree and Sophy. He also resembles Sophy in that he is sometimes swayed by "the diabolical *thing* down there" (194) (*Italics Golding's*) and causes mischief to his friends on the spur of the moment; for instance, he hinders Rupert Hazing, his bookseller friend, from getting a good buy at a second-hand book auction out of sheer wantonness. At another time, he hurts Edwin's feelings by carelessly joking about his and his wife Edwina's rumoured perverted sexuality. Immediately afterward, he regrets it and cries out, "Why do I do it, Edwin? Why in the name of God must I do it?" (198)

These similarities between Sim and Sophy invite the reader to the idea of omnipresence of evil, though in Sim's case evil is not pursued thoroughly any more than good is. Sim knows that noise, including human speech, isolates people from each other, but he does nothing, can do nothing but complain. He deplores as follows:

High walls, less penetrable than brick... lay everywhere between everything and everything. Mouths opened and spoke and nothing came back but an echo from the wall. It was a fact so profound and agonizing, the wonder is there was no concert of screaming from the people who lived with the fact and did not know that they endured it. (83)

Human language is no means of communication

but lonely soliloquy, and yet people do not so much as notice it. It is not a mere coincidence that Sim is a bookseller, and Edwin a schoolmaster, both of whom "depend on language more than anything else for their existence" (199). When Edwin comes to Sim to talk about Matty, he goes on talking and talking about, ironically, the significance of silence. Edwin says about his first encounter with Matty, "I experienced more than words can say" (204). Nevertheless, he must put this experience into words to make Sim understand, and ironically, the more he talks, the more suspicious Sim becomes: "Edwin talking more and more like a character in one of Huxley's less successful novels!" (200) Edwin's words are no more than noise to Sim.

While most people are thus entrapped in human language, those chosen few who speak a spiritual language can break down the "partitions" that isolate people from each other. Fortunately, Sim is entitled to hear the spiritual language, if only momentarily, owing to the silence of the stables and Matty's spiritual power. At first, Sim is, as usual, preoccupied with trivialities; he finds his nose itchy and cannot resist it. But after releasing his itch by rubbing it directly on the tabletop (he could not scratch it with his hand because both his hands were held tight by Matty and Edwin), he becomes sensitive to the spirituality and finally, the silence of the stables and Matty's spiritual power enable Sim to hear a voiceless voice, a spiritual word: "Edwin spoke above his head. Or not Edwin and not speech. Music. Song. It was a single note, golden, radiant, like no singer that ever was.... It began,

continued, ceased. It had been a word" (232-3). This "spiritual word" was undoubtedly what Pedigree heard when Matty sent the word "freedom."

Matty's influence over Sim and Edwin nearly fades after Matty's death. Being ridiculed everywhere after the broadcast of his testimony that he did not fall in trance but just wanted to scratch his nose, Sim is thrown back into the despair of breaking through the partitions. He bitterly says to Edwin, "We're wrapped in illusions, delusions, confusions about the penetrability of partitions, we're all mad and in solitary confinement" (261). But when they hear on TV that Matty's journal was found and that "it may throw some *light*" (Italics mine) on the matter, they feel as if it might also throw some light on their lives too: "The two men looked at each other and smiled. There would be news of Matty—almost a meeting with him. Somehow and for no reason that he could find, Sim felt heartened by the idea of Matty's journal—happy almost, for the moment" (261). We know that in the journal is written the promise that the child behind whom Jesus Christ stands will bring the spiritual language to the world.

As Edwin says, when we "[t]hink of the mess, the ruckus, the tumultuous, ridiculous, savage complications that language has made for us and we have made for language" (199), we almost feel despair. Human language may not be qualified for spiritual communication; on the contrary, in many cases it may lead to isolation from each other. Still, we have seen in this novel that human language could also help to kindle the light of hope in people's hearts that some day spiritual

language will be brought to them. I think Golding wanted to give that very message to us readers through *Darkness Visible* as it was given to Sim.

Notes

- 1) Matty's real name is not certain. "Matthew Septimus Windrove" given toward the end of the novel is probably his real name (247). Matty is also called "Wildword," "Windwood" (36), "Woodrave" (212), "Wildwave" (229), "Windgrove" (230), "Windrave" (231) and "Windrow" (232). This uncertainty is deliberately posed as an antithesis to Sim Goodchild's reliance on language: "What's his name? I like to have a name to hold on to" (199).
- 2) Arnold Johnston, *Of Earth and Darkness: The Novels of William Golding* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1980), p.104.
- 3) Bernard F. Dick, *William Golding*, rev. ed. (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), p.96.
- 4) Dick, p.106.
- 5) Kevin McCarron, *William Golding* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1994), p.41. See also Kevin McCarron, *The Coincidence of Opposites: William Golding's Later Fiction* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).
- 6) John Haffenden, *Novelists in Interview* (London: Methuen, 1985), p.119.
- 7) Haffenden, p.113.
- 8) William Golding, *Darkness Visible* (1979; London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p.238. Further references will be made parenthetically in the text.
- 9) Don Crompton, *A View from the Spire: William Golding's Later Novels* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p.104.
- 10) William Golding, *Free Fall* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), p.218.
- 11) McCarron, *The Coincidence*, p.53.
- 12) Kazunari Miyahara, "Nikutai • Busshitsu no Chikara to Golding Sakuhi no Shinwasei," *William Golding no Shisen* (Tokyo: Kaibunsha Shuppan, 1998), pp.335-51. (in Japanese)

「人間の言語」から「霊の言語」へ
 — William Golding の *Darkness Visible* 論 —

高本孝子

William Goldingの*Darkness Visible*の中心人物Matty WindroveとSophy Stanhopeは、それぞれ善と悪を体現する両極的な人物であると言われるが、その人物造形は必ずしも初めから固定されているものではない。むしろ、最初の時点においては2人とも日常生活の次元を超えて霊的な次元に入り得ることが示されており、実は同類の人間なのだということがわかる。(この小説において、霊的な次元はしばしば「静寂」(“silence”, “quiet”, “stillness”)というメタファーで表されており、一方、人間の話し言葉を含めた「騒音」(“noise”)は、乱立するために相対的な価値しか持ち得なくなったさまざまな宗教的・哲学的思想を指している。)同じ出発点に立った2人が両極に分かれて行くことになった原因を探り、そこにこの小説のテーマを見出すことが本論の目的である。

母親から捨てられ、父親からは顧みられず、周囲の人々からさまざまなタイプの悪を見せつけられて成長するソーフィは、いわば時代の申し子である。彼女は相対化されたさまざまな思想を目の当たりにし、善と悪を相対的な価値のものとして捉えることを覚える。また、エントロピーという科学的概念を援用することによって、己のサディズムと支配欲を正当化してしまう。結果として彼女は己の中の潜在的悪を顕現させ、のみならず、進んでそれに身をまかせていくのであり、結局は「静寂」から追放され、人間の言葉に絡め取られていく。一方、マティは級友Hendersonの墜落死に関連して深い罪悪感を背負い込んだために、善と悪を相対化するという似非倫理観を免れる。また「挙祭」としてしゃべることを一切自分自身に禁じることにより、「静寂」の次元により深く入り込むことができ、ついには霊の言葉を獲得する。さらに、いったんは否定した自分のセクシュアリティ、すなわち自分の肉体をいま一度全面的に受け入れることにより、精霊の仲間として迎えられる。ソーフィによる誘拐計画を阻止し、その際に「燔祭」となって命を落とすものの、精霊となって恩師Pedigreeの前に現れ、霊の言葉“freedom”を発し、彼を小児性愛のオブセッションから「解放」し、その魂を救済する。

マティの霊力はSim Goodchildにも及ぶ。シムは霊的な次元に入ることができず、どの思想にも相対的な価値しか見い出せないという点で、この作品においてごく普通の人間を代表している。マティとの降霊会において彼は霊の言葉を耳にし、現代人が置かれている孤独地獄を解消する可能性に思いを馳せる。その後マティが焼死し、無垢の象徴だと思っていたソーフィの本性を突きつけられ、さらに、誘拐未遂事件に関連するスキャンダルのために町中の笑い物になったシムは、またも厭世的な気分になる。だがマティの日記が見つかったと聞き、「ほとんど彼に会うのと同じだ」と新たに希望を抱く。このことからわかるように、人間の言葉は霊的交流には不十分であるばかりか、しばしば「騒音」となって霊的交流を邪魔し、個々の人間を孤立化させるものではあるが、マティの日記がシムに希望を与えるように、霊の言語が人間にもたらせられる日が来ること、その時霊的交流の可能性が開けてくるのだということを教えてくれもする。そして、マティの日記がシムに希望をもたらしてくれるように、*Darkness Visible*は読者に希望をもたらしてくれる、それこそがゴールディングがこの作品を執筆した目的だと思われる。