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Construction of Identity/World and ‘Symbolic Death’: A Lacanian Approach to William Golding’s *Pincher Martin*

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Abstract: William Golding’s *Pincher Martin* is about the problem of maintaining one’s identity in the face of death/non-existence. To give himself an illusion of being alive, Martin, who died at the beginning of the novel, creates a fictitious world of a rock, to which he clings for metaphysical survival. The rock where his survival is staged is, in a metaphorical sense, Lacanian symbolic order which is created to give Martin a sense of identity, while protecting him against Lacanian real, his non-existence. Martin, however, would not admit the fictionality of his world which also implies the fictitiousness of his own identity. At the end of the novel, the black lightening, Lacanian real as “unquestionable nothingness” (Golding 1956/2013: 95), reveals the fictionality of Martin’s symbolic order, and erases the rock as well as Martin himself whose identity is constructed on his fictional world, as if they were words written on the paper. This is Martin’s second death as the Žižekian ‘symbolic death’ which exposes the fictionality of the symbolic order and human identity.

Key terms: fictionality, identity, Lacanian real, nothingness, second death, symbolic order/Other

I

“[A] moving target”, William Golding had called himself.¹ Elsewhere he said, “I don’t think there’s any point in writing two books that are like each other” and “I

¹ Golding described himself as “a moving target” in a lecture given in 1976 (qtd. in White 1982: 25). It later became the title of a collection of occasional pieces by him, published in 1982. In the title

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see, or bring myself to see, a certain set of circumstances in a particular way” (qtd. in Bowen 1963: 55). His employment of a wide variety of time settings from the prehistoric ages to the Middle Ages, the Second World War, and some unspecified time in the future, and diverse perspectives such as that of children, Neanderthals, a medieval priest, and a dead navy officer, thus, can be seen as his refusal to be pinned down in terms of styles and subjects of his writings. Golding, however, has been tied down to the image of a religious, particularly a Christian, writer.

The possible reason why critics associate Golding with Christianity may be found in the theme of human evil which most of his works have rendered largely through Christian allegories. As human evilness which he had witnessed during the Second World War prompted him toward writing, and the Bible was “a vital part of [Golding’s] education”², Golding persistently explored the theme of human evil from his first novel, *Lord of the Flies* (1954) to his later novel, *The Paper Man* (1984), employing Christian symbols with which he was familiar. His consistent focus on human evilness, thus, made his artistic domain seem to be fixed in the world of Christianity.

His self-description as “a moving target” is, however, not inadequate in that his works are too complex to be definitely categorized even in terms of a religion. For instance, the ‘beast’ in *Lord of the Flies* to which a slaughtered pig’s head is offered calls to our mind the Christian figure of Beelzebub whose name is a literal translation of “the lord of the flies” in Hebrew, as well as Zeus, the king of Greek gods “sometimes referred to as a ‘god of flies and death’” (Oldsey 1983: 122) or Dionysus referred to as a “lord of beasts” (Baker 1965: 9) in *The Bacchae*, a work Golding was familiar with.

In a similar way, the figure of the Christian God in *Pincher Martin* (1956) is associated with Zeus because the God makes his appearance in the form of the black lightening, just like Zeus, and Martin who defies the black lightening identifies himself with Atlas and Prometheus who rebel against Zeus. Thus, we cannot pin Golding down as a Christian writer even when we approach his work in terms of a religion, because his work embraces Christian allegories as well as pagan ones.

essay of this collection, he confessed that his artistic responses to various experiences and circumstances had been ceaselessly changing.

² In an interview with Paul Bidwell in 1984, Golding explained the relationship of his works to the Bible: “I think it’s true to say that the Bible stands – not so much behind my books – the Bible stands behind me. It has been a vital part of my education – my self-education. I suppose my formal education too, in that it was crammed down our throats, rather” (Golding 1985: 42).

The prevailing image of Golding as a traditional, conventional writer can be also challenged. Those who view Golding as a traditional and realist writer with some Bunyanian features emphasize as the basis of their view the fact that his works are characterized by vivid and detailed descriptions, and convey religious ideas in a form of allegory, a conventional literary form religious fiction has adopted (Hynes 1963: 71). Golding, however, does not resort only to conventional literary devices, as manifested by his frequent use of "gimmick" (Gindin 1960: 145) endings, which forces readers to reinterpret what has happened in a new perspective, sometimes to their great dismay.

Such a "gimmick" ending in *Lord of the Flies* brings about a sudden switch from boys' viewpoint to that of a naval officer who finds Ralph hunted by Jack and his pack. With this abrupt shift in narrative viewpoint, Jack and his pack's hunting for Ralph is reduced to mere "fun and games", a definition given by the naval officer, and we readers who have witnessed the boys' cruelty and evilness suddenly come to realize that they are actually only "little boys" or "tiny tots" who "needed a bath, a haircut, a nose-wipe and a good deal of ointment" (Golding 1954/2012: 214), just as the officer thinks. The officer's final description of the boys' "fun and games" as "[j]olly good show" (Golding 1954/2012: 215) also discloses his ignorance of the nature of the boys' actual life on the island. But his description paradoxically catches the essence of what happened on the island, because the boys' life on the island is, in a larger perspective, a mere '(war) game' in which the adult officer also engages. In this way, Golding's "gimmick" ending makes readers re-examine their own lives rendered through the boys' (war) game, while bringing into question our long-held view of Golding as a conventional, traditional writer.

Such complexity of Golding's works makes it hard to categorize his works, as Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor observe, because "Golding's fiction has been too complex and many-sided to be reducible to a thesis and a conclusion" (1984: 64). Previous study of Golding, however, has been conducted in such a way that it confines his works to a particular set of ideas such as Christianity or morality, which ultimately leads us to regard him as a traditional or realist novelist.

The criticism of *Pincher Martin* also has been chiefly approached in terms of Christianity or morality based on Christianity, a major frame for its critical study.³

³ Previous critical analyses of the novel are conducted in terms of either Christianity or morality, or both. Leon Surette regards *Pincher Martin* as a work which "express[es] the power of the numinous" (1994: 209), and Bernard F. Dick, focusing his critical attention on two deaths of Martin, that is, the death of "soul and body" (1987: 52), argues that Martin's spiritual death is the "real death" (1987: 54) which leads him to a place where he truly desires to be, that is, hell. And E. C. Bufkin, who regards "'greed', 'cruelty', and 'selfishness'" as Golding's common subjects, suggests that the novel should

Pincher Martin, however, is not a traditional or conventional novel which embraces only Christian themes. On the contrary, it is an experimental work which, though considered as a minor work, is instrumental in understanding Golding's view of life/reality as a game or a construct, because its "gimmick" ending reveals the life of Martin, protagonist of the novel, to be his construct/fiction. *Pincher Martin*, thus, shows Golding's aspect as a postmodern writer, embedding in it the fictionality of life/reality, the postmodern tenet subtly suggested in *Lord of the Flies*, but largely obscured by his literary manifesto as a Christian or moralistic writer.

The postmodern tenet of life/reality as a construct is suggested by the subtitle of the novel, "*The Two Deaths of Christopher Martin*", which foregrounds the problem of Martin's survival and death as the interpretational clue of the novel. The novel, however, is not a traditional survival narrative like *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe, in that Martin meets his (physical) death at the beginning of the novel. In spite of being dead, Martin, however, insists on his existence and identity, making his own reality and identity, which is completely disintegrated at Martin's second death/metaphysical death. This shows that Martin's metaphysical survival and death should be basically examined in terms of the construction and destruction of his reality and identity. *Pincher Martin* which, like a postmodern novel, takes "fictionality as a theme to be explored" (Waugh 1984/1996: 18), is thus about the existential condition of a man who should construct his reality/identity to have a sense of existence in the face of death/non-existence, which ultimately annihilates his metaphysical existence/identity, as shown at the end of the novel.

To give himself an illusion of being alive, "he [Martin] *invents* a world in which the ego he will not relinquish can continue to exist" (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 1984: 132; original emphasis). That world is the rock which Martin creates in the belief that it can provide him with a sense (or rather illusion) of existence. On this rock, Martin, as if for his (physical) survival, eats mussels and sips rain-water gathered in a small pool. And when the sea threatens him, he even squeezes himself into a crevice between rocks to prevent himself from being swept away. Furthermore, Martin seeks a solid proof of his existence and identity, especially

be viewed as an "adaptation of the morality play" which enacts greed, one of the Seven Deadly Sins, because such subjects are treated "more forcefully" (1969: 5) in *Pincher Martin* than in any of his other works. Such critical trend is facilitated by the writer's own suggested interpretation of the novel, and thus has some validation: "Just to be Pincher is purgatory; to be Pincher for eternity is hell" (qtd. in Oldsey and Weintraub 1968: 94). Golding's use of Christian terms, however, should be carefully interpreted, and we should also keep in mind that "in Golding's case", as Samuel Hynes appropriately observes, "the novels tend to expand and live beyond his programs" (1985: 129).

from the Dwarf, a pile of stones, constructed by himself. This rock is, in short, a locus where what he would do in a real life takes place. In this sense, the invented rock to which Martin gives the names of several London places is the micro-scale version of London, and his life on this rock is an extension of his past real life.

Martin's pursuit of his existence/identity on this created rock can be examined in terms of Lacanian symbolic order, because only "what is integrated in the symbolic order fully 'exists'" (Evans 1996: 58), and Martin's life on the rock represents the human life in a symbolic order/society, that is, so-called 'everyday reality'. Lacanian symbolic order can adequately account for the nature of Martin's existence/identity as well as his constructed world of 'reality'. It is by providing names that the symbolic order gives its subjects the sense of existence and identity, while confirming their existence/identity as the (Lacanian) Other.

II

A Name, according to Lacan, is essential to the formation of identity. By providing its subjects with names (-of-the-father),⁴ the symbolic order places its subjects within it, thus giving them identities, because the position/place in the symbolic order determines its subjects' identity. The name, consequently, is an equivalent of the subject's identity: "It is the name itself, the signifier, which supports the identity of the object [subject]" (Žižek 1989/2008: 104). Martin is also aware of the significance of the name in connection with identity. So, when he is dubious about his (non)existence, he looks at his name engraved on his identity disc, because his name as the equivalent of his identity, he believes, can give confirmation of his being 'alive'. For this reason, he repetitively shouts his name, and carefully observes his photo on which his signature, another proof of his identity, is written.

Another function of the name is revealed in Martin's confrontation with the black lightening. When the black lightening makes its appearance at the end of the novel to obliterate his identity, or rather, reduce him to his original status, non-existence, Martin holds out his identity disc, and shouts, "I spit on your compassion" (Golding 1956/2013: 213).⁵ The identity disc is presumably the only re-

⁴ Here, the name given by the symbolic order corresponds to the name given by the father or father's name. That is, the name of the father refers to father's name (family name) as well as name given by the father. The 'Name-of-the-Father' also functions as the law of the symbolic order which forbids the child's desire to be the object of its mother's desire. The child's acceptance of the 'Name-of-the-Father' makes possible the emergence of the subject.

⁵ Henceforth, William Golding's *Pincher Martin* will be referred to as *PM* within parenthetical references.

maining object left with him, since he, just before this confrontation, stripped himself in order to play a madman. But it is not a mere coincidence that he wields it against the black lightening at this critical moment when his identity/existence is threatened. The identity disc with his name on it is a means of asserting his identity as well as a kind of shield to protect his identity.

There is another reason why Martin is so obsessed with the name. After surveying the rock onto which he climbed, the first thing he does is to give names to some parts of the rock.

I am busy surviving. I am netting down this rock with names and taming it. Some people would be incapable of understanding the importance of that. 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. (*PM*: 90)

The names which Martin gives to the various parts of the rock consist of common nouns, coined words, and proper nouns related to London such as “Look-out” (87), “Food Cliff” (88), “Gull Cliff” (88), “Red Lion” (88), “Piccadilly” (*PM*: 89), and so on. At first glance, the purpose of Martin’s naming seems to be mere fun. As suggested by his admission that “I [Martin] am busy surviving”, however, his act of naming is related to the problem of his survival. The connection between the naming and survival is strongly indicated by the word “taming” which Martin almost identifies with the naming.

Naming is to give an object a name with which the object is defined and identified by a name-giver. Naming is, thus, a symbolical act of subjugating and “taming” its object to the namer’s will. In the face of the strange rock which seems senseless/purposeless, and uncontrollable, thus, threatening, Martin feels the need to make the rock something familiar and meaningful, and thus, controllable. So, he provides the various parts of the rock with familiar names (identities) as a means of “imposing purpose on the senseless rock” (*PM*: 136), as an attempt to tame and render the rock controllable. With Martin, naming is the first step to take for his survival.

According to Lacan, a subject emerges when it enters the symbolic order, and “to exist is to have a place within the symbolic register” (Fink 1995: 113), that is, symbolic order. The symbolic order, which gives its subject an identity and existence by providing names (-of-the- father), however, consists of language. That is, the symbolic order is itself a (world of) language. The rock created by Martin’s naming is in this respect a miniature of the symbolic order in that it is a world of language, and all of its proper names come from the places in London, Martin’s symbolic order. In short, Martin, through his naming, creates and transforms the rock into the symbolic order which can give him the sense of identity and existence.

The aspect of the rock as Lacanian symbolic order is reinforced by the fact that it is created to fight against Martin's death/non-existence in whose form Lacanian real represents itself. The rock is, in short, Lacanian symbolic order constructed against Lacanian real of death/non-existence, a fact which can be deduced from the way in which the rock is constructed. The rock is created around a cleft/gap, just as the symbolic order is "structured around a hole" (Žižek 1996: 398), Lacanian real, which manifests itself as a void or lack/absence in the symbolic order. To be more specific, the rock is created out of the gap/void between teeth in the form of Martin's rotten tooth. So, whenever he looks at the rock, which evokes some feeling of familiarity derived from its resemblance with his rotten tooth, Martin experiences "generalized terror" (26), "sudden pain" (80), and "deep shudders" (*PM*: 94), all of which are in fact brought about by his unwilling suspicion that the rock may not be real.

The rock, as Golding explained in a BBC interview, is "nothing but the memory of an aching tooth-ache" (qtd. in Oldsey and Weintraub 1968: 83). Martin, however, could not admit that the rock is created out of absence or rather his rotten/absent tooth, in order to ensure his sense of existence/identity, just as he would not accept his physical death/non-existence. It is because he has such a strong will to live that he abhors non-existence or absence, which is synonymous with death. Martin's abhorrence or fear of non-existence is revealed in his attitude toward Nathaniel.

Nathaniel defines heaven as "sheer negation", a world of non-existence, and believes that the merciful God would destroy "everything that we call life" with a sort of black lightning that will lead us to heaven, a world "without form and void" (*PM*: 71), that is, Lacanian real before language/the symbolic order. Therefore, emphasizing the importance of "the technique of dying into heaven" (*PM*: 72), he urges Martin to accept the ego-destroying black lightning, and return to non-existence, Lacanian real, because, as Frank Kermode observes, he believes that "only in the abandonment of the beloved self" (1985: 62) there shall be a way to heaven. Hence Martin harbors uncontrollable hatred for Nathaniel whose doctrine of "sheer negation"/Lacanian real is a fatal threat to Martin's symbolic order built on his strong sense of existence/identity.

The nature of the heaven, a realm of Lacanian real represented by "sheer negation", is revealed, when Nathaniel is about to talk about Martin's death and heaven, "you could say that I [Nathaniel] know it is important for you [Martin] personally to understand about heaven – about dying – because in only a few years –" (*PM*: 73). Before Nathaniel finishes his words, Martin feels such a terrible shock that he immediately falls "flat on the floor" (*PM*: 73). The shock Martin receives at this moment is derived from his fear of a world of "nothingness" (*PM*: 215) with which he will be brought into contact by heaven/Lacanian real. The

heaven/Lacanian real is, in this sense, a world of death on the part of Martin, while the black lightening which leads Martin to Nathaniel's heaven is a death-bringer.

With Martin, as Samuel Hynes points out, "death is the end of identity" (1985: 132) as well as Martin's symbolic order, because death as Lacanian real reveals the fictitiousness of Martin's identity and his symbolic world, the source of Martin's identity. Hence, Martin as the upholder of the symbolic order/language seems incompatible with Nathaniel, a messenger of absolute "nothingness", the world before language, that is, Lacanian real. So, he wishes to get rid of Nathaniel for the fear of loss of his identity which the ultimate nothingness represented by Nathaniel threatens to destroy.

Martin's relationship with Mary can be examined in a similar way. Mary, according to Martin, is a "mystery" (*PM*: 105) who can make anything related to herself extraordinary. So, as Martin says, "the things she [Mary] did became important, though they were trivial", and "the very onyx she wore became a talisman", and "a thread from her tweed skirt", presumably mass-manufactured, "was magicked into power by association" (*PM*: 158). Her extraordinariness, Martin believes, is mainly derived from her eyes, which "were wise with a wisdom that never reached the surface to be expressed in speech" (*PM*: 157). For Martin, Mary with those eyes is beyond the reach of his understanding, just like mysterious and unfathomable Nathaniel who penetrates into the nothingness of life. Martin, therefore, remains silent and fearful before her.

The main reason why Mary's eyes make Martin fearful, however, lies in the fact that "they brought back the nights of childhood" (158), the time when he "couldn't go back to sleep because of the dream of the whatever it was in the cellar coming out of the corner" (*PM*: 147). Martin is afraid of sleep since sleep, "a relaxation of the conscious guard", leads to a dream/"complete unconsciousness" (95) in which he is "forced to go down [to the cellar] to meet the thing I [Martin] turned my back on" (*PM*: 190), such as a crushed coffin head. Sleep is, in this respect, "a consenting to die", and "what is better left unexamined" which his dream obliges him to meet is Lacanian real, "the ultimate truth of things, the black lightning that splits and destroys all, the positive, unquestionable nothingness" (*PM*: 95).

Mary's connection with Lacanian real is also suggested by the lightening. Martin is so frustrated with Mary whose mystery "interrupted the pattern coming at random, obeying no law of life" (108) that he attempts to rape Mary as an effort to "conquer and break" (*PM*: 158) her. At this very moment, Martin, however, witnesses "the summer lightening over a white face with two staring eyes" (*PM*: 161–162), which brings into our mind Nathaniel's black lightening, Lacanian real as a destroyer of the illusion of life. In short, Martin is afraid of the mysterious

Mary('s eyes) because Mary reminds him of Lacanian real, an unknowable world of nothingness and death represented by the cellar and lightening.

Martin as a 'speaking subject'⁶ inevitably feels hostility toward Nathaniel and Mary who represent unsymbolizable Lacanian real, the world of the unknown, "a place where I [Martin] can't get" (*PM*: 105). He, however, simultaneously feels affection for Nathaniel, to his dismay, as revealed by his confession that "there was amazement that to love and to hate were now one thing and one emotion" (*PM*: 108). So, on the rock, he wishes that Nathaniel were alive with him, continuously evoking Nathaniel's image in his mind, though he wanted to get rid of Nathaniel before his ship was torpedoed. Martin himself is also aware of his contradictory feelings toward Nathaniel, "I [Martin] do not want him [Nathaniel] to die!" The sorrow and hate bit deep, went on biting. He cried out with his proper voice. 'Does no one understand how I feel?'" (*PM*: 110).

The clue to Martin's contradictory feelings toward Nathaniel can be found in Nathaniel's own statement that "there's a connection between us. Something will happen to us or perhaps we were meant to work together" (*PM*: 72). In spite of his cognizance of his fundamental difference from Martin whose egoistic world and identity is opposed to Nathaniel's heaven as "sheer negation"/nothingness, Nathaniel knows they are inseparable and bound together by a common destiny. Likewise, Martin, though aware of their incompatibility, intuitively feels that the inextricable correlation exists between them. In a word, though Martin feels threatened by Nathaniel's principle of non-existence or death, he perceives that his principle of existence/life cannot be maintained without its opposite principle upheld by Nathaniel, just as a world of language/symbolic order, where "every element has value through being opposed to another" (Lacan 1993/1997: 9), cannot be constructed without its opposite, the unsymbolizable world/Lacanian real. Martin's contradictory feelings toward Nathaniel spring from such paradoxical relation between them. They cannot stand alone without each other.

What Martin on the rock needs urgently is other(s) who/which can have his existence/identity confirmed, just as the symbolic order, also represented as Other, confers (the sense of) identity on its subject. According to Lacan, a child achieves a sense of wholeness for the first time, and forms its ego by identifying 'its' image reflected in the mirror with itself/its self. The image mediated by the

⁶ According to Lacan, a subject is solely an effect of language/signifier: "the subject defined as the subject who speaks" is "grounded and determined in a signifying effect" (2013: 57); the "subject is what the signifier represents" (2006: 835). This Lacanian subject as 'an effect of language' is also referred to as the 'speaking subject' because it should speak the language of the symbolic order to which it is subjugated.

mirror/specular object, however, is fundamentally others' image⁷ in that it is involved with other(s), or Other/symbolic order. In a word, though the mirror image does not reflect the child, but o(O)thers' views or ways of seeing the child, the child misrecognizes the mirror image as its own, even its self. This misrecognition, however, is essential to the formation of the ego⁸, because it leads the child to have a sense of self or ego for the first time. Likewise, the subject-to-be can emerge as a subject only when it identifies itself with something that is essentially different from itself, that is, o(O)ther.

The reason why Martin, after climbing the rock, keeps thinking about Nathaniel is not just that he feels guilty about the death of Nathaniel whom he attempted to kill, but that he needs other(s) whose recognition, he believes, confirms his identity. His shouting into an echoing hole on the rock, in this sense, should be understood as his attempt to hear his own words as other because the echoing sound places its speaker in the position of other. If he can hear his own voice in others' position, or rather, as other(s), Martin believes he can have his existence proved. Martin, however, hears only parts of his echoing voices which fail to satisfy his sense of being/existence, as shown in the scene where he says, "[p]lenty of identity in here, Ladies and Gentlemen", "[i]t will rain", and "[h]ow are you?", but gets to hear only fragments of the last words, "-men-", "-ain", and "-u" (PM: 90), respectively. Thus, the echoing voice as other fails to be a "proof of identity" (PM: 84).

Another prospective other which can confirm Martin's existence is Martin's photo, a kind of Lacanian mirror image, which allows Martin to see himself in the position of other(s). So, Martin, who is anxious to find the proof of his existence, laments the lack of his photographs which he believes can have his existence verified.

7 Bruce Fink explains the significance of others in the formation of ego as follows: "In human beings, the mirror image may, as in chimpanzees, be of some interest at a certain age, but it does not become formative of the ego, of a sense of self, unless it is *ratified* by a person of importance to the child. Lacan associates this ratification with what Freud calls the ego-ideal (*Ichideal*): a child internalizes its parents' ideals [...] and judges itself in accordance with those ideals. Indeed, a child brings its parents' (perceived) view of the child into itself, and comes to see itself as its parents do. Its actions become seen as its parents see them, judged as worthy of esteem or scorn as its parents would (the child believes) judge them" (1997/1999: 88; original emphasis).

8 Though the child's identification with its mirror image is misrecognition, without it, the child cannot achieve a sense of wholeness which is a foundation for the formation of the ego. Sean Homer emphasizes the importance of misrecognition: "This identification [infant's identification with its image] is crucial, as without it [...] the infant would never get to the stage of perceiving him/herself as a complete or whole being" (2005: 25).

How can I have a complete identity without a mirror? [...] Once I was a man with twenty photographs of myself – myself as this and that with the signature scrawled across the bottom right-hand corner as a stamp and seal. Even when I was in the Navy there was that photograph in my identity card so that every now and then I could look and see who I was. Or perhaps I did not even need to look, but was content to wear the card next to my heart, secure in the knowledge that it was there, proof of me in the round. [...] I could [...] spy myself from the side or back in the reflected mirror as though I were watching a stranger. I could spy myself and assess the impact of Christopher Hadley Martin on the world. I could find assurance of my solidity in the bodies of other people by warmth and caresses and triumphant flesh. [...] But now I am this thing in here, [...] I am in danger of losing definition. (PM: 140–141)

As his name serves as a “seal” standing in for him, his “identity card” with his photo on it, Martin believes, can make him feel “secure” by the mere fact that he carries it. His sense of security in connection with his existence originates from his firm belief that his photo is his image seen by other(s), that is, an objective proof of his identity/existence. The role of other(s)/Other in having one’s identity confirmed is also indicated by a sense of triumph and warmth which Martin experiences through his bodily contact with “other people”, because the physical contact with others along with its derivative feelings can give “assurance of my [Martin’s] solidity”.

The Dwarf which Martin builds can be also examined in terms of other(s). By piling rocks, Martin builds a manlike figure which he names ‘Dwarf’. Martin, at first, intends the Dwarf to be his surrogate: “I [Martin] must make a man to stand here for me. If they see anything like a man they will come closer” (PM: 60). So, he attaches a foil on the head of the Dwarf in the hope that the foil with its reflection of the sun will attract the attention of an approaching rescue team. The foil, however, is not attached on the head of the Dwarf for a prospective rescue team to see. It is actually meant to reflect Martin’s own image, so “he [Martin] went close to the Dwarf and looked down at the head to see if he could find his face reflected there” (PM: 112). In short, Martin puts a foil on the Dwarf’s head to secure his image, an objective proof of his existence.

The significance of the Dwarf in connection with Martin’s identity, however, is not confined to its function of reflecting Martin’s image. Martin makes the Dwarf as a figure of physical and metaphorical other, because he, as Biles and Kropf claim, needs “external assurances of existence” (1969: 32). The action which he does after putting a foil is suggestive of his ultimate purpose in making the Dwarf.

He [Martin] forced the foil to lie smoothly against the head and bound it in place with the string. He put the silver head back on the Dwarf, went to the southern end of the Look-out, and stared at the blank face. The sun bounced at him from the paper. He bent his knees until

he was looking into the paper at eye-level and still he saw a distorted sun. [...] He took the silver head off the Dwarf again, polished the silver on his seaboot stockings and put it back. The sun winked at him. (*PM*: 102–103)

If the rocks piled in the shape of a man is equivalent to a man, the foil on its head which reflects the sunlight corresponds to a man's eye. Martin's bending of "his knees until he was looking into the paper [foil] at eye-level", therefore, seems to have the purpose of securing his eye contact with the Dwarf. His attempt to make eye contact with the Dwarf, however, is not confined to this occasion. After making the Dwarf, Martin frequently looks at its eye/foil, hoping that the Dwarf may return its gaze, "he [Martin] heaved himself round and looked at the Dwarf who winked at him with a silver eye" (*PM*: 133). Martin's attempts spring from his conviction that the Dwarf's gaze at him can substantiate his existence/identity, because its gaze is tantamount to its recognition of Martin's existence/identity. The Dwarf's gaze is, in this sense, an objective proof of Martin's existence/identity, or rather, an objective correlative of other's recognition of his identity, and the Dwarf itself is an embodiment of other, who can verify his identity.

The dependence of Martin on the Dwarf is not restricted to the matter of identity. Whenever he needs to make a decision, Martin talks to the Dwarf as if he were seeking its advice. "He [Martin] put on his clothes, walked round the Dwarf then sat down again. 'I should like to turn in. But I mustn't as long as there's light. [...]' He hunched down by the Dwarf and waited" (*PM*: 123). Sometimes, he outspokenly asks for its help as if it were a real human being: "Get me off this rock!" (172), "I must have your help!" (*PM*: 189). Furthermore, he even asks the Dwarf for its approval of his plan, which he imagines the Dwarf gives by nodding its head gently.

Martin's entire dependence on the Dwarf is disclosed when he kneels down before the Dwarf, as if the Dwarf were his God. Martin himself admits that the Dwarf created by him becomes his God, "[o]n the sixth day he [Martin] created God. [...] In his own image created he Him" (*PM*: 209). The role of his God/Dwarf especially in the matter of his identity is the same with that of the symbolic order, since the Dwarf gives and validates his identity as other. In short, as the rock is Lacanian symbolic order in that it provides the (basis of) identity for Martin by placing him within it against the chaotic sea of the Lacanian real, the Dwarf is also Lacanian symbolic order in that it plays its role as the (big) Other, another name of Lacanian symbolic order, who/which can give and approve his identity. Martin creates both the rock and the Dwarf as Lacanian symbolic order to have his fictitious identity validated.

The rock whose name, Martin believes, is 'Rockall' seems to be a real rock in the Atlantic Ocean, and what Martin sees and experiences on the rock also seem

real, because his descriptions of them seem to be based on his thoughts, physiological phenomena, and various feelings and emotions felt through his five senses, such as "piercing sweetness" (*PM*: 86) from a grain of chocolate and great pain in his body. However, beside its inseparable connection with the memory of his rotten tooth out of which Martin constructs the rock, there is a more obvious proof that the rock is not a real thing, but a fiction created by Martin himself. It is the name of the rock, Rockall, which literally and blatantly suggests its non-existence, because Rockall is closely associated with the word 'fuckall', which means nothing⁹. Martin is from the beginning aware of the fictitiousness of the rock, though he consciously and desperately denies its fictionality as well as his death.

Martin, however, is reduced to the last extremity when he finds some errors in his created world. When he realizes that "a flying lizard" (173) and "a red lobster swimming in the sea" (190), which he believed to see, cannot exist, Martin, terribly shocked, feels himself falling, as if "something [which has maintained his fiction] was taken away" (*PM*: 178). At this critical moment, Martin falls into the dilemma of admitting all of what he describes to be imagined or created by himself. As his admission of its fictionality, however, implies the fictitiousness of his own identity/existence, Martin deliberately resorts to madness as the last resource, since he can at least preserve the illusion of his identity/existence by ascribing his observation of the impossible phenomena such as "a flying lizard" and "a red lobster swimming in the sea" to his madness. "A man must be mad when he sees a red lobster swimming in the sea. [...] A madman would see the gulls as flying lizards" (*PM*: 190). Martin, therefore, determines to play the role of a madman such as "Bedlamite" and "Poor Tom" (*PM*: 189)¹⁰, since the madness is the only defense and refuge left with him, which can protect Martin and his fictitious world against the truth, Lacanian real. "There is always madness, a refuge like a crevice in the rock. A man who has no more defence can always creep into madness [...] Madness would account for everything" (*PM*: 199).

⁹ The fact that he calls the rock Rockall implies that Martin, in fact, knows the rock actually does not exist, because the name of the rock Rockall rhymes with the word fuckall, which means nothing. Kermode points this fact out as follows: "Martin calls his rock 'Rockall' not only because that is a real rock, but because he remembers a poor joke turning on a word which is a bad rhyme for Rockall, and which is an obscene word for 'nothing'" (1985: 61). As a real rock, Rockall seems to provide his rock with substantiality. It, however, is basically a fiction created from nothing, as suggested by the hidden connotation of the word Rockall, that is, nothing.

¹⁰ In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Edgar, Earl of Gloucester's eldest son, disguises himself as a beggar, and pretends to be mad, calling himself 'Poor Tom', to save his life.

Though he goes even to the length of pretending madness to deny the fictionality of his world, Martin reaches the critical point where he is obliged to face the ‘reality’ of his world, seriously doubting its existence.

It was deeper than any living darkness because time had stopped or come to an end. It was a gap of not-being, a well opening out of the world [...] ‘*Then I was dead. That was death. I have been frightened to death. Now the pieces of me have come together and I am just alive.*’ (PM: 178; our emphasis)

For the first time, Martin admits that he is surrounded by the world of darkness where time comes to an end, that is, the world of death represented by “a gap of not-being”/non-existence. Then, he unwillingly confesses that he was dead, revealing his knowledge of the moment of his death. He, however, immediately contradicts his own statement by pretending he is “just alive”, still desperately holding onto his fiction/identity.

After this, however, Martin undergoes hallucination accompanied by the disintegration of his body, and falls into another decisive crisis which is ironically brought about by his own mouth, “a projection of my [Martin’s] mind” (PM: 208). Martin’s mouth which is detached from Martin admonishes and talks with Martin as follows: “‘Have you had enough, Christopher?’ [...] ‘Enough of what?’ ‘Surviving. Hanging on.’ [...] ‘I hadn’t considered.’ ‘Consider now’” (PM: 208–209). The mouth, a proxy of Martin’s ulterior mind, urges Martin to stop his hanging onto the fiction/his created world, and admit his death. Martin who cannot give up his belief in “the thread of my [Martin’s] life” (209), however, refuses its suggestion, and frantically plays the role of a “poor mad sailor on a rock” (PM: 211), as if to verify his madness. Martin runs about on the rock, “stumbling over scattered stones” (PM: 211), and then he flings himself on a square stone, and beats it with his heels as if he rode a horse. At this moment when Martin is at the climax of his madness, the black lightening predicted by Nathaniel makes its sudden appearance in front of Martin.

The black lightening as the embodiment of “positive, unquestionable nothingness” (PM: 95), as soon as it appears, reveals the true nature of the world created by Martin, thus making him confront its intrinsic nothingness/non-existence.

There were branches of the black lightening over the sky, there were noises. [...] The sea stopped moving, froze, became paper, painted paper that was torn by a black line. The rock was painted on the same paper. The whole of the painted sea was tilted but nothing ran downhill into the black crack which had opened in it. The crack was utter, was absolute, was three times real. (PM: 214)

The black lightening, a messenger of “ultimate truth” (PM: 95), discloses the sea and the rock to be mere painted things on the paper, or rather, written words on

the paper, thus ultimately revealing Martin's world to be a fiction composed of words, that is, Lacanian symbolic order. Martin's (created) world is, in this sense, like the rock, "a considerable book" with "a strange engraving in the white cover" (*PM*: 118).

After exposing its intrinsic fictionality/nothingness of the rock, the black lightening begins to obliterate Martin's world as well as Martin himself, the author of his world, whose identity/existence is wholly dependent on the language, Lacanian symbolic order, as if they were words written in erasable ink.

Now the lightening found reptiles floating and flying motionlessly and a tendril [of black lightening] ran to each. The reptiles resisted, changing shape a little, then they too, dropped out and were gone. [...] The sea twisted and disappeared. The fragments were not visible going away, they went into themselves, dried up, destroyed, erased like an error. [...] there was no more than an island of papery stuff round the claws [...] The rock between the claws was gone. (*PM*: 215)

The black lightening seeks its targets, as if it hunted animals. Its first target is flying reptiles, manifestations of his creative errors. The black lightening captures the reptiles with its tendril, and makes them disappear completely, in spite of their resistance. Its next target, the sea which is believed to surround the rock, also disappears after some convulsions. Lastly, the rock, "an island of papery stuff" to which Martin has clung with his claws to survive, is gone. All of them disappear completely as if they were "erased like an error" on the paper.

After his world is completely obliterated or disintegrated, Martin himself undergoes physical (actually metaphysical) disintegration. That is, parts of his body begin to disappear. His bodily disintegration begins with his mouth which admonished Martin not to hang onto his illusion of existence, and then Martin's eyes along with other parts of his body are gone one by one, so that there remains only Martin's center (consciousness). Martin's center, the author of his world/book, however, gives up its struggle, when it "perceived in some mode of sight without eyes that pieces of the sky between the branches of black lightening were replaced by pits of nothing" (*PM*: 214). Martin could no longer deny his already being in "pits of nothing", Lacanian real of "the absolute nothingness" (*PM*: 215), where any illusion of existence/identity is not possible. At this moment, the center, at last, is completely destroyed by "some of the lines [of the black lightening]" which "pointed to the center" (*PM*: 216).

III

As Bernard F. Dick appropriately puts it, "what has been manufactured can be dismantled" (1987: 52). Conversely, what can be dismantled has been manufac-

tured. In this sense, the destruction, or rather, disintegration of the rock as Lacanian symbolic order implies the constructiveness/fictitiousness of the symbolic order. Likewise, Martin's second death presented as the destruction of his identity also indicates the fictitiousness of his identity.

Martin's struggle for survival/existence amid the sea of the "absolute nothingness", Lacanian real, can be rendered as his attempt to construct Lacanian symbolic order, since the sense of identity/existence is given only by the symbolic order. His second death accompanied by the disintegration of the symbolic order, as Dick argues, does not lead him to hell in the traditional sense of the word, but to the hell of non-existence, the realm of Lacanian real. His second death is, in this respect, closely related to Lacanian 'second death'¹¹ which Lacan explains in *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*.

The 'second death', according to Lacan, refers to the symbolic death which those who are excluded from society, that is, Lacanian symbolic order, undergo. So, Antigone undergoes Lacanian second death which makes her feel "suspended in the zone between life and death" (Lacan 1992/1997: 280), when she resolves to bury her brother Polynices against the law decreed by King Creon (Lacanian symbolic order). The second death, however, also refers to the death/collapse of the symbolic order because, as shown in the case of Antigone, Antigone's transgression of the rule set by the symbolic order (Antigone's 'second death') itself is a proof that the symbolic order is already destroyed (death of the symbolic order). Lacanian second death as the death of the symbolic order, thus, indicates the incompleteness, thus, destructibility of the symbolic order.

Žižek, referring to Lacanian 'second death' as "absolute death" or "symbolic death" (1989/2008: 149), maintains that 'second death'/ "symbolic death" exposes the fictionality of the symbolic order because its incompleteness and destructibility is derived from its fictitiousness. Lacanian second death as the death of the symbolic order and Martin's second death brought about by the black lightning is, in this way, a kind of testimony that Martin's constructed world, that is, Lacanian symbolic order, is nothing but a fiction made of words, just as

¹¹ Dylan Evans defines the first and second death discussed in *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* as follows: "The first death is the physical death of the body, a death which ends one human life but which does not put an end to the cycles of corruption and regeneration. The second death is that which prevents the regeneration of the dead body, 'the point at which the very cycles of the transformations of nature are annihilated'" (Lacan 1992/1997: 248, qtd. in Evans 1996: 31). The first death, Evans suggests, is inseparably linked with the notion of the cyclical movement of death and regeneration, while the second death brings about the cessation or destruction of that cyclic movement. To put it another way, the first death is the precondition for the endless chain of signifiers, whereas the second death means the obliteration of such chain.

Martin himself whose existence and identity is wholly dependent upon the symbolic order is a mere word written on the paper.

Fictionality of the world, or rather life as a fiction suggested in *Pincher Martin*, adds another dimension to our previous understanding of Golding. It reveals some postmodern aspects of Golding's works which were believed to embrace only traditional and Christian views of the world manifested in Golding's famous statement that "human being [turns] away from God and into egotism, the darkness of egotism" (1982: 144). *Pincher Martin*, in this respect, is one of Golding's works which shows that Golding is not just a Christian, traditional writer, but a modern writer embracing postmodern worldviews, prefigured in *Lord of the Flies*, but largely overshadowed and neglected by his religious view of the world as evil. In short, Golding, through *Pincher Martin*, proves himself to be a "moving target", who cannot be categorized, because "Golding's world is", as James Gindin puts it, "wider, more complex, less easily contained by the orthodox implications of the metaphors, that seemed apparent at first" (1960: 152).

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