

The Inheritors and the Pursuit of Form

Dr. Sabbar Sa'adoon Sultan

Al-Isra University, Jordan

ABSTRACT

The present paper is an attempt to read Golding's *The Inheritors* with a particular reference to its formal and narrative aspects. If we bear in mind that most of the characters in this novel are premen and sentient men who represent the polar opposites, the problem of narrative technique and linguistic difficulty becomes all the more urgent and ultimately indispensable in any serious consideration of this novel and its position in contemporary fiction.

Thus the points that will receive the most attention here are those related to narration, point of view and linguistic rendering of very different mentalities. The paper draws upon the findings of formalists, new critics and structuralists in shedding light on Golding's novel and its rich resources. The method followed throughout is basically technical, linguistic and aesthetic in that the emphasis is laid on the images, perceptions, view points and the author's interpretation of those inheritors of the title.

الورثة والبحث عن الشكل

ملخص

فيما يلي قراءة لرواية غولدنك "الورثة" تحصر اهتمامها بالنواحي الشكلية والسردية للرواية. وإذا ما أخذنا بعين الاعتبار بأن معظم الشخصيات في هذه الرواية سبقت وجود الإنسان الياندرتال وأخرى تمثل الإنسان العاقل وهي في حالة تضاد تام، فإن مشكلة التكنيك للرواية والصعوبة اللغوية تصبح أكثر إلحاحاً وبالتالي تعد أمراً أساسياً ولا غنى عنه بالنسبة لأية دراسة لهذه الرواية وموقعها في الأدب الروائي المعاصر. ومن هنا فإن المسائل التي ستحظى بالاهتمام الأكبر هنا ستكون متصلة بالسرد ووجهة النظر والإبراز اللغوي لعقليات مختلفة جداً. وتستفيد الدراسة من طروحات النقاد الشكلانيين والنقاد الجدد والبنويين في تسليط الضوء على رواية غولدنك وإمكاناتها الثرة. والمنهج الذي نعتمده في البحث لغوي وفني ونعني بذلك أن التركيز منصب على الأخيلة الفنية والتصورات ووجهات النظر وتأويل الكاتب لمواقف الورثة الذين يتصدرون عنوان الكتاب.

Creative Writing: Practice and Theory

I

Ever since its publication in 1955, William Golding's *The Inheritors* has aroused much critical controversy as regards its topics, the author's perspective and the narrative devices employed or the technical flaws it suffers from. This is not surprising if we remember that Golding in this novel that followed the publication of his feat, *Lord of the Flies* (1954), embarks upon a very ambitious enterprise. It is simply the extermination of the Neanderthals by the "inheritors" of the title, i.e., the homo sapiens, the "new men" and the concomitant traditional Goldinesque issues of sin, fall and pathetic loss of innocence. The critical dispute centres on a host of axes: the authenticity or credibility of the writer's account of this extraordinary event; the extent of his success in alienating himself from his virtual environment (the modern world of the homo sapiens) and identifying himself with those people, or, if you will, creatures of prehistory - the Neanderthal's mode of thinking, speaking and living. Also the writer's objective behind explaining the reasons, both natural and man-made, that eventually led to their total effacement, is a further controversial issue. This is because Golding mainly concentrates on his own personal vision of that historical situation. He mythologizes history, as it were, and invests it with a highly personal touch. What is more, the narrative technique is problematic, if we take into consideration the nature of the material presented.

Obviously Golding's fiction, *The Inheritors* in particular, represents a problematic issue whether in terms of topics raised or technical devices employed. This novel begins with a quotation from Wells's negative account of the Neanderthal in his *Outline of History* (1920). It describes him as manifesting "an extreme hairiness, an ugliness, or repulsive strangeness in his appearance over and above his low forehead The dim racial remembrance

of such gorilla-like monsters, with cunning brains, shambling gait, hairy bodies, strong teeth, and possibly cannibalistic tendencies, may be the germ of the ogre in folklore"(Golding, 9). Golding uses this as a starting-point for not only stultifying it, but also for superimposing his philosophical and meta-physical stand on this matter. Golding's concept of man and the universe is almost reiterated in any of his novels. It is marked by a great extent of gloom and pessimism. The contradictions in human nature and the inherent futility of human endeavor have already been summed up by the poet Fulke Greville. The novelist Huxley finds this stanza of his poetry as expressive enough of the human predicament: the incompatible claims of heart and intellect:

*Oh, wearisome condition of humanity,
Born under one law, to another bound,
Vainly begot and yet forbidden vanity,
Created sick, commanded to be sound.*

*What meanth nature by these diverse laws,
Passion and reason, self-division's cause ? (Huxley, 1)*

There is some discontent among critics and readers as regards Golding's achievement and significance. This is due in part to the fact that his artistic orientation veers from the mainstream of twentieth-century novelists. An unusual interest in what is occult and mysterious in human experience leads him to portray a group of youngsters lost in an unpopulated island which they eventually burn and destroy (*Lord of the Flies*, 1954); a British mariner whose warship is torpedoed has to fend for survival by gigantic efforts in the Atlantic Ocean (*Pincher Martin*, 1956) and so on. *The Inheritors* similarly shifts the reader beyond history to the days when man, the inheritor of the Neanderthal, showed himself as fit and capable of escaping the devastating effects of his hostile environment. The last Neanderthal represented by Lok and Fa, is given a vantage-point of witnessing his life and family being destroyed by natural elements (water) as a result of the thawing ice in collabo-

ration with the humans, Tuami's new men and their terrifying practices.

The formal and narrative aspects of *The Inheritors* which constitute the crux of the matter here inevitably raise questions pertaining to the type of writing Golding typifies. He has often been categorized as an allegorist, a writer of parables with the exception of *The Paper Men* (1984) and its unmistakable metafictional overtones. As such, his novels carry metaphoric and symbolic density which demands a careful reading and sorting things out. It is helpful in this regard to recall Golding's concept of his own writing and the best approach to be adopted. He labels himself as a fabulist and finds that "By the nature of his craft, the fabulist is didactic, desires to inculcate a moral lesson" (Tiger, 25). He specifies the task of the novelist in his comment to Owen Webster, a journalist, as simply to "show the irrational where it exists ... he must offer a recognizable picture of the mystery" (p.2) What is striking in this statement is the "recognizable picture of the mystery." Golding's fictional worlds are virtually those of "darkness visible" as he entitles one of his novels (1979). This is not merely the physical darkness of his irrational worlds, but also the darkness that lies deep within the human ego and consciousness. In one of his statements about his writing and craft, his tone appears almost semi-religious "look out... the evil is in us all" (Lambert, 17).

As for the reception and critical responses to such uncommon novels, the author's own philosophical and metaphysical perspective arouses various and even contradictory judgments. First of all, the difficulty of these novels turns them into a fertile field for academic analyses, particularly "the problems of exegesis" (Massie, 4). In some instances, the entire text is stripped of any artistic significance. Burgess (himself a successful novelist) finds that it is hardly called a novel. Rather it deserves to be categorized "as an anthropological essay," (Burgess, 113), dramatizing factual and historical views. Such a negative judgment by his detractors presumably springs from the incongruity between form and content or that the narrative and technical devices do not receive the same emphasis laid on content. His style, as Patricia Waugh

reminds us, is "grotesque and obscuranist"(Waugh, p.104). The serious objection against the discourse of *The Inheritors* in particular is that it is "strange to us, and sometimes extremely obscure," as seen in his excessive shunning of the abstract (Hynes, 187). Apart from these stylish awkwardnesses commonly attributed to his fiction, there are further objections raised against his type of characterization, particularly the implication(s) of the character rather than the character as a self-contained entity standing in its own right. This point has been specified as one of Golding's "most disabling defects"(Kemp, 259). Thus, in his pursuit of clarifying the underlying metaphorical and philosophical content behind this cult of the mythological past, Golding violates what Tzvetan Todorov calls "the law of verisimilitude with which all of the characters' words and actions must agree"(Todorov, 54). Equally in the same vein is the thematic level of his writings which causes much discontent even among the most sympathetic and perceptive critics of his fiction, Frank Kermode. He finds that not only *The Inheritors* but also all Golding's fiction as "violent, fiercely odd, even old-fashioned"(Kermode, 1968, 186). Above all, Golding's view of the best approach of viewing his fiction is apt to stir a lot of controversy, given the tremendous amount of dispute about the nature of the reading process and the disparate expectations of both author and reader alike. Writing in the last decades of the twentieth century when literary theory was at its zenith, Golding does not hesitate to recommend the "only" true reading of a novel as the one "the author knows best, and takes up on himself the responsibility of ensuring that a good reader can read in that way"(p. 187).

Without involving oneself in the infinite and heated controversy about meaning and "intention" and the "fallacies"(Wimsatt, 334) associated with it which the formalists or new critics have elaborated in detail, it is necessary to recall two important views here. Percy Lubbock, for instance, finds that the reader is "another novelist, the maker of the book he reads"(Lubbock, 18). Indeed this is exactly the situation where different levels of meaning are giv-

en simultaneously. The contemporary critic and novelist, David Lodge, following the Derridean lead, stresses "the indeterminacy of meaning"((Lodge, 144) in the sense that it is in a ceaseless process of deferring and differing, not necessarily following the preconceived intentions set by the creator.

If we add to the forementioned reservations and strictures another important factor, i.e., the change in sensibility and perception of the literary text so that the critic Fredrick R. Karl concludes "the contemporary novel is clearly no longer modern"(Karl, 42), the particularity of Golding's fiction gets all the more evident. If T.S. Eliot congratulates James Joyce for subverting and digging the grave of the Victorian novel, the postmodernistic fiction opts for another type, i.e., parody or pastiche or indeed the futility of the whole enterprise of writing a novel per se. In short Golding is seriously pursuing what Kermode calls "sophisticated mythology"(Kermode, 1964, p.367) in a world totally objectified and devoid of visions. The modern author has to recognize the validity of Fiedler's image that his "Muse is more like the Daimon of Socrates who appeared only to say No!"(Fiedler, 313).

Given all the elements of controversy already stated whether in terms of content, style or characterization, it becomes very essential to point out that the present paper focuses on a specific aspect of this novel, i.e., the extent of the author's success in representing or dramatizing the Neanderthal's point of view and perception of his crumbling world. This technical side of the novel has not received due attention and it is hoped that the following pages will show how Golding manipulated different narrative devices and means to achieve his artistic objective.

II

As a whole, Golding's *The Inheritors* maintains a reasonable distance between historical facts (the end of Glacial Age and the replacement of the Neanderthal by the Cro-Magnon) and the technical matter which keeps in line with Golding's artistic and intellectual interests. The end of this era is

suggested by the final lines of Chapter Eleven where that panoramic scene is pictorially evoked:

*The sky over the sea turned to pink and then to gold.
Light and colour came back ... The water from the ice
increased in volume, sparkling out in to the gap in a
long curved fall ... The ice crowns of the mountains
were a-glitter. They welcomed the sun. There was a
sudden tremendous noise that set the hyneas shivering
back to the cliff. It was a noise that engulfed the water
noises, rolled along the mountains, boomed from cliff
to cliff and spreading a tangle of vibrations over the
sunny forests and out towards the sea. (pp. 221-2)*

The main lines of the novel can be epitomized as follows. The first ten chapters elaborate the daily life and routine of the "people", the solidarity and altruism of a matriarchal society where Oa, the mother-goddess is awed and obeyed and to whom offerings are given. It traces the last days of the "people" where they arrive at the terrace after having spent the winter near the sea. Their type of life is that of the nomadic hunters at a great transitional juncture - the collapse of the ice and the intimidating force of the river, and fall where the last members of the Neanderthal face their end. The few survivors of this race gradually perish without having the necessary cognitive power of realizing what is going on. Conversely, the last two chapters represent some sort of coda since these people represented by Lok and Fa are seen and judged by the "new men," the homo sapiens who finish off the last survivors of that natural calamity. This is a stage where the two lines converge in the novel. When the people encounter the new men, the book hints at the harmful and subversive effects of the inheritors. It is their menacing practices and rituals that render Lok self-disgusted. After drinking the "honey" left by the new men, Lok's behaviour undergoes a fundamental transformation "Lok and Fa flung themselves at the pieces, squatted, each licking and turn-

ing a piece over to find where the honey had gone. The fall was roaring in the clearing, inside Lok's head. The trees were moving faster. He sprang to his feet and found that the ground was as perilous as a log ... All at once Lok discovered the power of the new people in him. He was one of them, there was nothing he could not do." (p. 202)

Golding sets a very interesting juxtaposition between the two types of life, showing that the intellectual superiority of the new men implies an irreplaceable loss of innocence. This is achieved by means of a careful narrative technique. Definitely Golding is one of the few writers who have resorted to such a technique, the skilful device of presenting the same material from more than one angle. The relativity of things and indeterminacy of having a final and absolute judgement has been pivotal in fiction. The Russian Fyodor Dostoevsky, to choose an early example, dabbled in this issue in his, *The Idiot*, where the allegory of heavenly love is contrasted with earthly love for the soul of Beauty. The idiot of the title is simply the views of the "other", while Myshkin thinks of himself differently

*Myshkin himself is well aware how he is misguided
by those who surround him. He frequently thinks to
himself Here they are thinking of me as an idiot;
but I am, for all that, intelligent, and they don't
suspect it (Dostoevsky, 112).*

The American William Faulkner presents the inner mental disorder of the retarded Benjy in his symphonic masterpiece, *The Sound and the Fury* (1927). Here the three voices of the Compsons, the retarded Benjy, the idealist Quentin and the ruthless materialist Jason are commingled with the author's own voice to illuminate those dim and chaotic spots in Benjy's mind and fondness of his fallen sister, Candace (Caddy). The British Lawrence Durrell again follows the same line initiated by writers like Golding and others in that he seeks in *The Alexandria Quartet* to write "a four dimensional dance, a relativity poem ... a four card trick in the form of a novel" (Durrell,

7). The four sequels of the Quartet (Justine, (1957), Balthazar (1958), Moun-tolive (1958) and Clea (1960) mirror the same narrative material, but each is tinged with an idiosyncratic touch. The result of this polyphonic technique is the reader's perception of "the action as it filters through one of the characters involved,, yet it is perceived "directly"(Freidman, 113). In contrast, the postmodernist John Fowles in his deliberate attempt to undermine all types of fictionality and conventions, gives himself the freedom to pop in the text from time to time and address the reader about the particularity of his own fiction. As a practitioner of metafictional novels, Fowles can only tell the reader that:

I dont know. This story is all imagination... if I have pretended until now to know my character's minds and innermost thoughts, it is because I am writing in a convention universally accepted at the time of my story: that the novelist stands next to God. But I live in the age of Allain Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes. If this is anovel, it can not be a novel in the modern sense of the word (p.97).

The multiple endings Fowles offers at the end of this book are only a means of putting in practice his existential views about the freedom of his characters as well as the readers.

The Inheritors makes full use of the narrative potentialities opened up by traditional, modernistic and postmodernistic novels. It follows certain limited narrative devices to make Golding's odd fictional matter accessible. One of these strategies is his attempt to dispense with what Doris Lessing calls the guide-reader, i.e., the "mediator or the envoy who can translate the meaning of an alien world into recognizable terms"(Burn, 131). The reason behind such a move is that neither Lok nor Tuami is a reliable narrator for either physical or moral reasons. Lok is too naïve and simple-minded to realize and analyze what is going on while Tuami is so evil and mean that he is practically unfit for such a task. Instead the author himself undertakes the task of narrating and explicating the subject in question. Hence the many authorial

discursions, digressions and interpolations. The point of view followed here is the "internalized point of view in that the material, though written in the third person, actually reports the character's point of view"(Sanger, 38). The predominant point of view in *The Inheritors* is that of Lok, the preman (in the first ten chapters) while the coda (the last two chapters) shifts it to Tuami, Lok's antagonist.

Lok's entire experience draws upon sense data and "pictures" and pathetic failure to grasp any abstract thing. This state of innocence is the most striking feature of Lok's view point. The limited range of his mind is suggested by many situations and descriptions. For instance, when Ha disappears (later it turns out that he has been drowned), Lok can only ask the river for an answer to his dilemma:

*Lok began to call out
Ha! Where are you ...
The river did not answer. Lok called again and
waited while the picture of Ha became dim and
disappeared. (p. 67)*

Undoubtedly this tone here is that of showing, dramatizing what sort of subhuman or preman Lok is. The same holds true to the situation where Mal's role as the sage of the tribe and its memory is suggested by a series of pictorial descriptions. In a scenic mode of writing, Golding offers the reader this highly moving situation where the communal life and solidarity of the "people" is vividly presented:

*He choked and coughed. He went on and on, the
coughs seeming to come out of his chest without
warning or consultation ...
The old woman spoke.
"This is the cold of the weather where the log was."
She came and knelt by him and rubbed his chest with
her hands and kneaded the muscles of his neck. She*

took his head on her knees and shielded it from the wind till his coughing was done and he lay still, shivering slightly. (p. 34)

Lok's visions or "pictures" which are strikingly recurrent is a means of emphasizing Lok's point of view as he witnesses the last days in Mal's life. The great awe and respect the "people" have towards him are due to the fact that his insights are true "Lok is coming back to the fall. He runs along the side of the mountain. He carries a deer. A cat has killed the deer and sucked its blood..."(p.37)

The direct authorial voice sometimes seems acceptable and necessary in situations where the moral and philosophical content of the book has to be foregrounded. Instances abound here. But one example about the different stands toward food will do. Obviously the people are mostly vegetarians and refrain from killing animals. But if they come across animals already killed they eat their meat. Moreover their self- satisfaction is a focal point here which contrasts sharply with the new men's greed and avarice. "The people were silent. life was fulfilled, there was no need to look farther for food, tomorrow was secure and the day after that so remote that no one would bother to think of it." (p.61)

Apart from Lok's and Mal's ruminations and half-articulated thoughts, the author's unmistakable espousing the people's norms and innocent perception drives him to repeat almost the same narrative technique and diction. The old woman in the novel speaks in a tone very similar to the other "people's" "I see Ha running up towards the cliff. He is running after something. He looks back and he is glad and then he is frightened and glad - so! Then I cannot see him anymore" (p. 66). Perhaps the similarity of linguistic images and visualizings is one of the clues or tricks employed by the author to hint at the communal or collective quality of their life and thinking. In other words, the dialogues here are teleological in that they are geared to one task only. It is the clarification of the people's view point and way of thinking.

The aforementioned excerpts from the text provide sufficient evidence about the way the narrative technique is employed, a way that aims to be as close as possible to the character in question. But this merit or advantage sometimes turns into a serious drawback or limitation. This is clear in the situations where the author encroaches on the integrity of the text, so to speak, and obliterates the distance that ought to be maintained between the fictional persona and the author, between the fictive and factual. Take the following example where Golding puts in Fa's mouth a discourse that is apt to shift the interest from the character to the author himself. A scene of this sort shows an unwelcome presence on the part of the author. The versimilitude is sacrificed here by the act of doubling or overlapping between the two voices. Fa is supposed to be speaking, but virtually it is Golding who comments and even preaches:

I was sick and you would not wake up. I went to see the new people. Their hollow logs have made up the slope. The new people are frightened. They stand and move like people who are frightened. They leave and sweat and watch the forest over their backs. But there is no danger in the forest. They are frightened of the air where there is nothing. (p. 206)

The beauty of this paragraph should not prevent us from detecting its lack of proportion and inconsistency with the main line of thinking known about these premen. If the implied author thinks and argues here instead of the character "Ha", the same holds true to the situation where the sexual life of the people is casually hinted at. Again Golding in his zest for showing their moral superiority superimposes a preconceived idea or pattern on the narration though at the expense of plausibility. Here the principle of the willing suspension of disbelief on the part of the reader is of virtual help and use. These people, so runs the book's argument, are decent enough to practice sex only in privacy. Also we infer that sex for them is not associated with vio-

lence and sense of guilt. It is simply a state of prelapsarian innocence "I dreamed. Ha lay with me and me with Fa. Lok lay with Fa and Fa with me." (p. 95) Such promiscuous and instinctive drives remain only at the level of dreams and wishful thinking and are not given space to come to the fore. In practice their rituals are arranged according to a very strict discipline. It is only left for anthropologists to verify or reject the authenticity of such claims. What matters, however, is the sharp contrast the people represent when it comes to questions of mating and sex. The new men or, for that matter, the fallen men have to accept the fact that their sexual joy is inseparable from abhorrence, bestiality and even murder. The authorial description assuming Tuami's point of view presents Vivani, the woman in the new men's camp, as a destructive, Hellen-like figure. Her presence triggers all types of evil thoughts "Vivani lay curled on the useless skin ... She was covered with a magnificent skin, the cave-bear skin that had cost two lives to get and was the price her first man paid for her. What a sail, thought Tuami bitterly, when Vivani wanted to be comfortable ? What a fool Marlan was, at his age, to have run off with her for her great heart and wit, her laughter and her white incredible body." (pp. 25-6)

In his seminal article "Technique as Discovery," Schorer argues that technique means "the uses to which language as language, is put to express the quality of the experience in question and the uses of point of view"(Schorer, 389). The technique manipulated here satisfies this demand in that it not only elaborates the fictional matter to the reader but also it accentuates the perspective of the perceiver and how he/she thinks. The narrative method here traces the actions and gestures of the characters (a couple of new men) without any attempt to find a coherent, meaningful link between them. And this is precisely the mind of the viewer, Lok:

*She was coming towards the tree, holding on Tuami,
and she staggered and screeched with laughter so
that he could see her teeth. They were not broad and*

*useful for eating and grinding ...
The fat woman made for the water but Tuami caught
her arm and pulled her round ... She laughed up at
Taumi and stuck her tongue out while he spoke quickly
to her. Suddenly he grabbed her with both hands
and pulled her against his chest and they wrestled,
gasping without speech. Tuami shifted his grip, got
her by a hank of long hair and dragged it down till
her face lifted, contorted with pain. She stuck the
nails of her right hand into his shoulders and dragged
down as her hair was dragged. (pp. 173-4)*

The two narrative lines (PP. 11-225) of the first ten chapters (Lok's viewpoint which is too inadequate to relate and classify) along with the author's interpolations give way to another narrative device. In the final two chapters, the same situations and people are viewed by Tuami and his new men. Again such narrative shifts stir contradictory judgments of its sustaining or crippling effects. The broadening of narrative perspectives so that there is no room anymore for one particular "narrative voice that knows and is prepared to tell all" (Alexander, 45) is indicative of modernistic tendencies. In contrast, James Gordin in an earlier study of Golding's fiction finds that this narrative shift or "gimmick" as he calls it "seems to work against the novels, to contradict or to limit the range of reference and meaning that Golding has already established metaphorically" (P. 196). The view adopted here is that this significant narrative shift is not simply a gratuitous trick for the sake of forcing the reader to reshuffle his views and judgments. A traditional author as he is, Golding nevertheless pays a great care to these formal questions and their effect in enhancing the meanings he is after.

The duality of perspective in *The Inheritors* is a merit in that it offers the reader the chance to view the events from the perspective of the "people", first and then assess or review them from the new men's. Therefore, Virginia

Tiger is absolutely right in her appraisal of this narrative shift when she states that these different perspectives are to be "complementary, not contradictory ... the bridge between the two perspectives is there to be built by the reader"(Tiger, 17). The only thing one can add here is that the reader's task is not that baffling as, say, in modernistic or postmodernistic novels where he is obliged to "fill the gaps between word and world"(Davis, 127). The narrative coda is a last attempt on the part of the author to reduce the keen sense of alienation gathering momentum throughout the whole book. The author is, after all, one of the new men the novel has sought to indict and berate. Moreover, such a move can be considered liberal in that both narrator and narratee are given a chance (though unequal) of stating their judgments and reactions. Seen from the perspective of the Cro-Magnon, the "people" who have won our sympathy appear as they virtually are. Lok in the last two chapters is rendered as a red creature that moves faster on the terrace "It ran to the far end where the water was coming down from the ice in a cascade. It turned, came back, and crept on all fours into the hollow where the other figure was. The creature wrestled with a rock that was lying on a mound of earth but was too weak to move it. At last it gave up and crawled round the hollow by the remains of a fire. It came close to the ashes and lay on its side" (p.221). A statement of this sort represents a different type of discourse when compared with the prevalent ones in the earlier chapters, when Lok has been the main viewer of and participant in the events as a son, husband and member of a dwindling community. As viewed by Tuami and his men, Lok and his people appear as fiendish creatures or, at best, immature people who are out of place. They are the alien "other" that has to be wiped out ruthlessly. Herein lies the necessity of bringing together these two contrasting perspectives so that the thematic aspects of the book can be disclosed:

The devils do not like water.

That was true, that was comfort. The water was miles wide and bright. Tuami looked imploringly

at Marlan out of his pool. He forgot the dagger that was so neatly ground to a point. "If we had not, we should have died. (p. 228)

III

It has become evident by now that the full impact of *The Inheritors* hinges on the narrative technique employed, particularly the skilful manipulation of the point of view in conveying the topics of the book. As suggested by the last passage, Golding relies on description and narration and to a less extent, on dialogue in presenting his subject. As far as dialogue is concerned, the deliberate dialogic grammatical mistakes and inconsistencies put in vogue by Henry Fielding or Charles Dickens are not present in *The Inheritors*. Golding is not concerned with the superficial linguistic level. The emphasis here is on the innocent speech acts and thinking and how the language can serve as a guide in showing us the range of different minds.

In the first ten chapters the emphasis is mainly laid on description, particularly the sense data. The dialogue is minimized to a great extent and there are artistic reasons and justifications behind this. If the "people" lack the necessary cognitive power, their dialogue should be cast in such a mold as to suggest this particular point. Their dialogues are generally marked by immediacy, repetition and brevity. But when the "new men" are introduced and the details of their thinking and living are given, the dialogue tends to be longer and there is a tendency to use pauses, silences, interruptions and insinuations. Consciousness entails a specific type of discourse, so the novel seems to argue. The following is a good example of this state where the striking repetition of "if" has a lot to suggest about the character's wishful thinking and the harm inflicted on the ego and the others:

If she had been what she was, if Marlan, if her man, if she had saved her baby in the storm on the salt water

*"My breasts are paining me."
If she had not wanted the child as a play thing, if I
had not saved the other as a joke ...
Twal lifted her face towards him and it was twisted
with grief and hate. (pp. 228-9)*

The language of *The Inheritors* is a pivotal point that endows the novel with its characteristic density and richness, if not magnetic power. The "anthromorphic" quality of the "people's" thinking and how everything is animated invests "the whole environment with humanity (Kinkead, 72). As in any extended poem, objects like the river, trees or terrace appear here to have a life of their own, sharing the "people" their perceptions, interests and fears. They represent some sort of objective correlative to their thinking. Here is a good example of the reciprocal relation between the people and their environment. The trees and their branches can be an intimidating force to Fa "Fa was sitting by the water holding her head. The branches took her. She was moving with them out into the water and the hollow log was free of the rock and drawing away ... lok ran up and down on the terrace. The tree would not be cajoled or persuaded." (p. 216).

The factual and symbolic lines of the novel are interlocked in one inextricable synthesis from which certain dualities stem: ignorance and innocence (the people) vs. consciousness but accompanying sense of guilt and remorse; organization and primitive system in work vs. anarchy and destruction; simplicity and naivety vs. cunning and malice mounting at times to murder. Here is another example of the situation where the authorial description is put at the service of showing or embodying the character's sensations. The individual is seen to be part and parcel of the group:

*Lok was running. The scent of the other was pursuing
him and he could not get away. It was night and the
scent had paws and a cat's teeth ... He was running
along the bank, knowing that presently he would drop*

from exhaustion and the other would have him. He fell and there was an eternity of struggle. But the strings that bound him to the people were still there. Pulled by his desperate need they were coming, walking, running easily over the water, borne inevitably by necessity ... they drove in until they were being joined to him body to body. They shared a body as they shared a picture. Lok was safe (p. 93)

Interestingly, most of the "people" face their end in the watery terrain whereas none of the new men has a similar fate. The Darwinian principle of survival for the fittest which is the underlying philosophical view here betrays another duality. Reason is put at the service of base instincts and destructive drives. Or could it be that the growth of reason and thinking is often coupled with the inevitable cost of losing innate innocence, once and for all? Such conclusions and suggestions can be considered as the by-product of a very rich text. If we recognize that "the discourse is a concrete manifestation of the language" (Scholes, 212), as Todorov puts it, then the predominant one in the book (with the exception of the last two chapters) is that of the Neanderthal. His words do not match his good and admirable actions. Herein lies the particularity and newness of *The Inheritors* where the usual formula is turned up side down. What readers commonly expect is to see the past reflected, assimilated or perceived from the perspective of the present. But here Golding offers a fresh topic which, in Bradbury's statement, "contemplates modern sentiment through the eyes of his predecessor" (Bradbury, 342). Clearly Golding is excavating man's history to find parallels and contrasts between his mythical past and technological present. Although the language in all the ruminations, recollections, visualizings and dialogues of the people is stylistically flawless, it observes a careful plan to trace the mechanism of thinking and consequently their sensations and perceptions. The "people's" language here is not an innocent act. The success in representing

those half-articulated sensations and ideas, particularly in the last scenes where Lok is terrified to the quick of his being drives two of Golding's critics to label it as "one of the most tragic moments in contemporary fiction" (Kinkead, 112). Such an enthusiastic appreciation is justified if we recall that Lok, the perceiver and participant in the events, is too muddle-headed to realize the extent of pain being inflicted. Nevertheless the author endows him with a faculty of visualizing and estimating the agony his mate (Fa) has undergone before she is killed. Once again the author's interest in highlighting the thematic side (man's inherent evil and destructive drives) materializes at the cost of plausibility. Lok appears here to be imagining what is unimaginable. His ruminations and half-conscious thoughts do not go in line with the range of his mind already set and later elaborated by Tuami and his followers:

Lok let himself down to the ground, found Fa's tracks once more and ran along them. Her steps were full of terror so that his own hair rose in sympathy. He came to a place where the hunters had stopped and he could see how one of them had stood sideways till his toeless feet made deep marks in the earth. He saw the gap between steps where Fa had leapt in the air and then her blood, dropping thickly, leading in an uneven curve back from the forest to the swamp where the tree trunk had been ... He saw where her feet like his own had plunged terribly in the mud and left an open hole that was filling now with stagnant water ... Even the scum and the weed and clustering frog's spawn had drifted back and lay motionless ... The steps and the blood came thus far, there was the scent of Fa and her terror; and after that, nothing.

(my italics) (pp. 187-8)

The irony of the title becomes evident when we finally realize that it is "the rootless predators, the new men who are doomed to inherit the earth" (O'Conner, 2). Seen from such an angle, this sinister inheritance is invariably tinged with many religious and metaphysical tones, not least of which is the keen sense of the primal sin, guilt and misery. As for the monosyllabic names of the people (Mal, Ha, Fa, Lok ... etc), one could argue here that there is an artistic pupose behind such a choice. One of the basic facts of the history of literature is that in old days "language was restricted to a mere handful of monosyllables, aided by a great deal of pantomime"(Vivian, p.3). Such names are merely labels to aid the reader differentiate people who are, by disposition and perception and perhaps role, indistinguishable. They share not only the same interests and hopes and fears, but also the same "pictures" of the strange twists in their fate. Only in the minute details can one observe differences among the "people". If the collective is the distinguishing quality of their existence and daily routines, the "new men's" mode of living is individualistic, egotistic and even treacherous. The healthy type of life - simplicity, benevolence and disinterestedness is contrasted with the new men's inclinations to violence, drunkenness and destruction. Thus the skilful use of the language and the vast horizons of meaning and signification it can open up compensates the striking loss of action and plot in *The Inheritors*. Consider the final paragraph of the novel where the metaphoric overtones of the word "darkness" highlight its symbolic or rather thematic plane "Holding the ivory firmly in his hands, feeling the onset of sleep, Tuami looked at the line of darkness, it was far away and there was plenty of water in between. He peered forward past the sail to see what lay at the other end of the lake, but it was so long, and there was such a flashing from the water that he could not see if the line of darkness had an ending." (p. 233) Although it is an anthropological and ecological novel in that it traces a memorable epoch in the history of mankind and global transits, its linguistic references are so con-

densed that the book lends itself to more than one reading. The present one has sought to be a formal and linguistic one. If the options open before the novelist rest in the choice between dialogue and narrative or descriptive prose as Norman Page argues (P.21), Golding's is that of narrative and descriptive one while the dialogue serves a subsidiary role.

As we have seen, the limited omnipresence, authorial description and dialogues are all cast in a highly metaphoric and poetic language that states the thing and suggests another simultaneously. If the novel, any novel is "one complex pattern or Gestalt"(Van Ghnet, 117), this is what we encounter in *The Inheritors*. The book successfully overcomes the dilemma of coining a different type of discourse that fits his remote world as seen in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of The Rings* (1954) with its dwarfs, hobbits and elves. In this novel the discourse is split into two distinct types in accordance with their moral role, i.e., the beauty and hideousness of the kingdom of Souron and that of the Orcs"(Medcalf, 669).

Finally one can forcibly argue that although *The Inheritors* draws upon anthropological data, the fictional elements - language, narrative technique, characterization, setting ... etc. are equally highlighted so that they become eligible for addressing twentieth - century readers steeped in literary theory and hermeneutics of the text and the various meanings that can be generated or inferred from it.

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