

## *The Double Tongue,* **the Double Vision, and the Double Doubles**

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### **Abstract**

William Golding's unfinished swan song, *The Double Tongue*, recapitulates his life-long obsession with the double vision: the rational and the spiritual reconciled with each other. The heroine Arieka's double tongue speaks in the same breath the mortal language and the divine language, the natural truth and the spiritual truth. She is expected to live on two levels at once, mediating between the physical universe and the spiritual cosmos.

And Arieka is not the only character whose consciousness spans two worlds. The hero Ionides, who commands her to straddle the boundary while choosing to remain on the rational level himself, is forced to share part of her vision. Since both characters are double-visioned, together they become doubly-doubled and resemble the doubly-doubled key to the double doors in the Delphic adytum. The double visions thus multiply into a fourfold vision like that of William Blake in the poem quoted by Northrop Frye in his posthumous *Double Vision*.

Though Ionides fails to complete his rite of passage, while Arieka crosses the boundary into the province of the

initiated, the hero still serves as the heroine's double, like many other characters in Golding's earlier novels who help complete the protagonist's spiritual journey. Whereas the ancient heroes are preponderantly male and generally require the Jungian "anima" for an integrated self, in Golding's last story it is the heroine who penetrates the world of the "other" and comes out the fuller grown of the two. On the other hand, Arieka survives Ionides almost supernaturally as his immortal double. And unlike most modern doubles, such as those in Golding's other stories, Arieka's "other" is more supportive than sinister, hence closer in kin to the ancient second selves like Gilgamesh's Enkidu and Achilles' Patroclus. It is a central argument of this paper that Golding derives inspiration for doubling mostly from mythology and Greek drama rather than from Freud's interpretation of the suppressed self.

**Key Words:** William Golding, *The Double Tongue*, Double vision, the Double, the Second self

*I doubt if any married couple ever approaches the  
intimacy  
of thought and feeling that we sometimes  
enjoyed—  
or, and I must make the qualification—  
that I for my part felt we enjoyed.*  
Arieka, *The Double Tongue*

*For double the vision my Eyes do see,  
And a double vision is always with me:  
With my inward Eye 'tis an old Man grey;  
With my outward, a Thistle across my way.*

*Now I a fourfold vision see,  
And a fourfold vision is given to me;  
'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight,  
And threefold in soft Beulah's night,  
And twofold Always. May God us keep  
From Single vision & Newton's sleep!*  
William Blake, "Letter to Thomas Butts, 22 Nov., 1802"

## I. A Double Introduction

William Golding's *Double Tongue* (1995), a draft barely completed before his sudden death in 1993 and published only posthumously, features a Cassandra of the first century BC, another favorite-plus-victim of Apollo. Arieka ("little barbarian") is Golding's first—and also his last—first-person female narrator, inscribing her memoirs on stone tablets about a life of over 80 years in Greece under Roman rule, when even Julius Caesar consulted the Delphic oracle regarding his political career. As Pythia, Arieka speaks with a double tongue, which

calls to mind the almost ubiquitous double images in Golding's previous novels—the two voices of the stream (and the two faces of Professor Tucker) in *The Paper Men* (1984), the hull and the deck on board the unnamed ship in *Rites of Passage* (1980), the two sides of Matty's face plus the "inside"/"outside" Sophy in *Darkness Visible* (1979), and the upward/downward thrust of the cathedral tower in *The Spire* (1964), to name a few prominent examples. Of course there is also the famous juxtaposition of "the ladder and the tree" in the author's autobiographical essay of that title, the ladder embodying the scientific, rational understanding and the tree expressing the spiritual insight. Part of the paradox engendered by Arieka's double tongue also arises from the seeming incompatibility between these two dimensions.

Compiling a casebook edition for *Lord of the Flies* in 1964, Baker and Ziegler, Jr. observed that this "basic dialectic"—the conflict between the rational and the irrational elements in man's nature—had been dramatized in all of Golding's novels (226). And it is through such a preoccupation that frictions between the two dimensions resurface in all of Golding's later novels—his "double view" of the Marlborough town, for instance, transformed into the doubled-sensed "Stilbourne" of *The Pyramid* (1967). But the contrasting worlds often slide into one, blurring the dividing line, such as the white one between the afterdeck and the forecastle on the ship in *Rites of Passage*, and the opposing views often end up in a paradoxical parallel, as attested to by some of the titles. What kind of darkness can be made visible? How does Matty introduce the "spiritual language" through silence? Why do his achievements seem both real and illusive to us at the same time? Similarly, the strikingly

vivid title of *The Double Tongue* expresses the coexistence of two apparently contradictory principles. Despite her torn mouth, and precisely because of her torn mouth, Arieka's double tongue speaks the mortal language and the divine language, the literal sense and the metaphorical sense, the natural truth and the spiritual truth. As Golding protests in the 1988 video interview presented by Melvyn Bragg, "We've tended to split things up. . . . But essentially it's all one. It's a wholeness. It's the act of living, and the divisions are artificial."

Half a century before *The Double Tongue*, another student of the human heart, in a nearly completed book that he had always intended to be his last—and published only posthumously—addressed this same issue in a much more urgent tone. For Otto Rank, "the deepest human problem" is no other than "the clash between the two worlds in which man attempts to live simultaneously, the natural world and the man-made world" (13). His study of human behavior indicates that "civilized man does not act only upon the rational guidance of his intellectual ego nor is he driven blindly by the mere elemental forces of his instinctual self." In their place, there is a "third principle, which combines the rational and irrational elements in a world-view based on the conception of the supernatural" (62). The supernatural is exactly what Golding's last published book tries to attain, at least for its heroine. Though it's typical of the novelist, especially after *Rites of Passage*, to implicate the highest spiritual tragedy in the lowest earthly farce, as if he were embarrassed by the introduction of the numinous, one cannot but admit that Arieka is destined to traverse more than one realm. As Rank exclaims in his preface to *Beyond Psychology*, "it is not sufficient to see the importance

of the irrational element in human life and point it out in *rational* terms! On the contrary, it is necessary actually to live it" (14). By the irrational element Rank means the simultaneous expression of two opposing principles in the living psychology of the people, in contradistinction to the rationalist system of psychology that tries to provide an absolute criterion and easily develops into an ideology. Only a few individuals in every epoch seem to be capable of living beyond the deliberate ideologies. Rank classifies these exceptional people under the heroic type, and not the creative type, to which distinction we will come back in the last section of this paper on Doubles. But in Arieka we certainly have a hero who tackles "the deepest human problem" in her own unique way.

Attempting to penetrate Golding's vision (usually of "darkness") in his fiction before 1974, Virginia Tiger focuses on the novelist's effort at bridgebuilding between the physical world and the spiritual world. She perceives what she calls the "ideographic structure" in the five early novels, its first feature being the two-narrative movements in each novel. This is a truly prophetic insight because the novels after 1974, including the major ones like *Darkness Visible*, *Rites of Passage—The Paper Men* in a sense—and even the incomplete *Double Tongue*, all proceed along double narratives. And the narratives carry two different perspectives that, as Tiger has pointed out, are turned in on the same situation. Tiger believes "Golding intends that the two perspectives are to be complementary, not contradictory." He even forces the reader to accept "—at least in the imaginative realm—paradoxes of existence which the novel's characters are represented as being unable to perceive or accept" (Tiger, 16-17).

Not every character is equally imperceptive or unassailable, however. Simon, face to face with the Lord of the Flies, Jocelin with his vision of the apple tree, Matty contemplating the wordless glass ball, and Arieka all through her life—these are characters whose consciousness spans both worlds. We shall see how Arieka learns to see the universe with a double vision, the rational and the spiritual compromised with each other, though on the spiritual level there seems to be a conflict for her between the male deities and the “Old Religion” that is woman’s. Through the eyes (and heart) of Arieka we see (and feel) the consequences of a critical moment of human history “when the light and rational, divisive functions, under the sign of the Heroic Male, overcame the fascination of the dark mystery of the deeper levels of the soul,” as summarized by Joseph Campbell (80). It is true that the conflict seems to more or less resolve itself in Golding’s story, at least on the human level, through the androgynous heroine and the sexless hero. But the male protagonist, who in this case is the High Priest of Apollo with the resounding name of Ionides Peisistratides, still plays the rationalist, while little Arieka is merely the distrusted mantic used by the gods. What’s exceptional is that the mantic does manage to see the (preponderantly male) Olympian gods from a rational perspective. Her studies in the Delphic bookroom lead to suspicions about the nature and origin of the gods: “Nobody seemed to know precisely who the Olympians were and whether Apollo had originally been one of them” (157). Arieka does not dismiss their reality out of hand, however. Even though she has had a more real and dear relationship with a household goddess, her final words in the memoirs acknowledge the existence of an unknown god. She

knows there is this god, but she knows not this god—she knows and she knows not.

Campbell harks back to an early mythological phase of matriarchal order when daylight reality was derived out of the same “non-dual state” as were myth and dream. “But in the new mythology of the great gods,” he laments, “the plane of attention has been shifted to the foreground figures of duality and combat, power, profit and loss.” Attention has been focused on action in the field of time, “where the subject and object are indeed two, separate and not the same—as A is not B, as death is not life, virtue is not vice, and the slayer is not the slain. It is all so simple, sunny, and straightforward” (78). Yes, sunny and straightforward like the title figure of Euripides’ *Ion*, eponym of Ionia, who starts out an Apollonian purist, but even this priest of Apollo is forced to see that purity and pollution may give rise to each other and even derive from the same source. In Golding’s fiction there is no lack of sunny and straightforward characters either, such as the likable science teacher Nick Shales in *Free Fall* (1959), who dwells in the glorious world beckoning to Billy the kid from the top of the ladder that the child’s rationalistic scientist father has built for him.

And yet, most of the time the kid is musing in the tree. The fact is, from the bacchantic *Lord of the Flies* on, there has always been a complex, dark, and implicit suggestion of the “non-dual state” in which binary opposites coexist and interpenetrate. M. L. Grimes has noticed how the Good Mother and the Terrible Mother symbol canons make up the Great Mother archetype in Golding’s early novels up to *The Pyramid*. According to Grimes’ study of Jung, a primordial

archetype contains a union of opposites, combining both positive and negative attributes, and the archetypal process is “one in which conflict of opposites results in the achieving of a new reality” (18; 36). The “new reality” may not materialize as readily as a theorist would wish, but the novelist has succeeded in conveying the inevitable marriage of heaven and hell. Thus, the possibility of innocence and perfectibility versus the certainty of darkness and evil, not only in opposition but also in symbiosis and interchange, runs through Golding’s first published novel, causing endless speculation and debate over the years. The clarion call of Ralph’s conch alone does not save the boys, not even the signal fire they keep up; it takes death’s head to show them what they are. Similarly, Jocelin’s spire does not go up simply because of his spiritual power; as a master builder puts it, “a spire goes down as far as it goes up” (39). It involves not just faith and vision, but all the vaults, the cellarage of one’s mind, however dark, deep, and rat-ridden it is. “There is no innocent work,” muses Jocelin on the point of death, having been torn between heaven and hell, the divinely inspired and the devilishly motivated, and eventually claiming to know nothing at all (214-15). In the Melvyn Bragg video interview Golding even insists that he does not see that much distinction between spiritual power and self will. Saying the spire is kept up by man’s will is equal to calling it a great spiritual deed in a sense. It is not a surprise then, is it, to find ourselves caught between the mantic and the pragmatic, the starry-eyed and the hardheaded in *The Double Tongue*.

How does a little tongue encompass what appear to be incompatible entities? In his 1980 address on “Belief and Creativity,” Golding called himself “a universal pessimist but a

cosmic optimist" (*Moving Target* 201), which means he was a pessimist when considering the world from the scientist's perspective, but an optimist when the scope was expanded to include the spiritual dimension. Golding alluded to this distinction in his Nobel lecture (1983) before going on to quote himself from *Free Fall*, whose protagonist Sammy Mountjoy decides that there is no bridge between these two worlds. By the time he gave the lecture, however, Golding had realized that of course there was a bridge, for both the "scientific intellect" and the "religious intellect" now believed in miracles, be it inside a black hole or outside it. The bridge had been thrust out from the side that least expected it, subatomic physics and quantum theory having upset the extreme spirit/matter dualism in Newton's mechanistic worldview. The Nobel laureate even admitted that we had always *known* of the dialogue between the scientist and the mystic. (Hadn't Fritjof Capra been able to trace the parallels between modern physics and Eastern mysticism?) It is only when the novelist tried to put the *difference* between the rational and the spiritual experience in the mind of Sammy that he made a mess of it ("Nobel Lecture" in Baker, *Critical Essays* 150). So we've known all along, have we not, that, for example, *Lord of the Flies* (1954) is not just a clash between the conscious will and the involuntary instincts, that Ralph as Everyman follows both, and only by so doing could he survive Piggy and surpass Jack in moral awareness. Matty Windrove of *Darkness Visible*, on the other hand, shuttles back and forth between the physical and the spiritual worlds, administering consolation to those with single visions and even sacrificing himself for a child who will usher in a "spiritual language." (But even Sammy enters the world of a

higher order of language, if only momentarily, like Matty's.) And now double-tongued Arieka must live "quintessentially" on two levels at once, mediating between the physical universe and the spiritual cosmos. This may be why Ionides calls her the freest woman in Hellas, even in the whole world, since she need not be bogged down by rational explanations (83-84).

This may also be what William Blake calls his constant double vision, or "twofold" vision, a contrast to the single vision enfolded in "Newton's sleep," in the separation of humans as conscious subject from nature as consciousnessless object. Blake's phrase is borrowed by Northrop Frye for the title of his last book, which was published shortly after its author's death in January 1991. Like Golding, Frye began and concluded his writing career endorsing the double vision: *Fearful Symmetry* (1947) first zooms in on this feature in Blake's poetry, while *The Double Vision* distinguishes the double or spiritual vision of language, space, time, and God from the single or natural one. Spiritual language insists that the true literal meaning in religion is the metaphorical literal, while natural language means by the literal a sign system that describes an objective natural order. For Frye, the spiritual language (not of the letter, but of the spirit) is the language of Love, in the sense of *agape* or *caritas*, "God's love for humanity reflected in the human love for God and for one's neighbor," which definition sheds considerable light on what semi-Messianic Matty, among other selfless characters of Golding, is trying to achieve. The natural vision of space and time, like the natural language, "is founded on the subject-object split," while Blake's double vision reminds us that "the conscious subject is not really perceiving until it recognizes itself as part of what it perceives" (Frye, 40; 23). From the

double vision Blake goes on up to the triple, which takes us into Beulah, the state of innocence. What the fourfold vision is like Frye refuses to explicate, but it seems to correspond to the doubly-doubled relationship between Arieka and Ionides—symbolized, I believe, by the doubly-doubled key he passes on to her near the end of his own career.

Johan Aitken recommends *The Double Vision*—Frye calls it the “small book”—as either a prologue or an epilogue to the scholar’s more massive texts, including *The Great Code*, its sequel *Words with Power*, and even the earlier *Anatomy of Criticism* (*Double Vision* xii). In this sense *The Double Tongue* is also the book that devoted readers of Golding have always expected. (My heart missed a beat when I first saw this title on the bookshelf: *he* had owed us this one!) Though left incomplete by its author’s death and thus keeping the readers wondering—not without titillating pleasure—what he could have done at various points to “finish” this little swan song, *The Double Tongue* still provides an apt coda to Golding’s oeuvre for a number of reasons. Not the least of which is that one finally sets foot on the Hellenic soil, where Golding said the meat is. Arieka is even placed at the “navel” of the world, where among other things she gets to see Euripides’ *Ion* staged, a play in which Apollo, majestically mysterious and yet callously capricious, is said to have forced his will on a woman, not unlike the Apollo whom Cassandra addresses as her destroyer near the end of Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, where she even associates the young god’s repeated violence to “Rape of the Earth,” Mother Earth (line 1075). Arieka can surely understand what it is like to be “raped” by the god; we shall see later that, more than Creusa, Apollo’s victim in *Ion*, Arieka

identifies herself with the Mother Goddess and plays out the tug of war between the older goddesses and the younger gods. But eventually she accepts the adulterant and yet mysterious nature of the gods in an all-embracing gesture.

Embedded in the structure of *The Double Tongue* is an *agon* resembling that between Antigone and Creon, for example, or between the Furies and Apollo, where opposing characters represent conflicting principles to be reconciled—or *not* to be reconciled, depending on where you come from. In almost every Greek tragedy that we know today, the main characters also play a double role by changing place with each other. Think of the majestic Oedipus sentencing Creon to banishment in the beginning of *Oedipus Tyrannus* and the triumphant Creon dismissing Oedipus at the end; think of an equally majestic Creon accusing Antigone of having inherited her father's hubris and then getting punished himself for precisely the same *hamartia*. Similarly, a masculine, overbearing Pentheus rules over an effeminate Dionysus in the opening of *The Bacchae*, but in the end an effeminate Pentheus is vanquished by his cousin, the all-powerful Dionysus. (The attitude toward Dionysus in this play is no less ambivalent than Arieka and Ionides' attitude toward Apollo—and to the gods in general. The play was composed in Euripides' last years and produced, also posthumously, in 406 BC.) Usually the party that reaches an *anagnorisis* comes to recognize traits of the opponent in him/her/themselves and learns to embrace them, the way Oedipus *tyrannos* learns to live with Oedipus *patroctonos* and Oedipus *anosios*. Sophocles' dramatic presentation of the story of this multifaceted hero wins Aristotle's admiration partly because the hero's recognition "is accompanied by a reversal,"

thus meeting the requirement of the ideal complex plot (*Poetics* 1452a). One cannot fail to notice how naturally the reversal occurs (“in conformance with probability or necessity,” as Aristotle puts it) because the hero has played contrary roles all his life: sower and seed, alien and native, sage and fool. And just as he ascends the long-desired throne of the *basileus* (legitimate king) from the uncomfortable position of the *tyrannos* (usurper), he also turns from relentless hunter to helpless prey—no, he is still both, for the hunter relentlessly punishes the prey on whom Apollo has ordained suffering by gouging out his eyes. Not quite as many readers/playgoers have studied the equally abundant paradoxes in Euripides’ *Ion*. But Froma I. Zeitlin summarizes the themes of the play as “pollution and purity, violation and salvation—which are played out in the critical interchange between the roles of victims and victimizers.” For her it is one of Euripides’ most dazzling plays, “[p]oised on the boundary between the sacred and the skeptical, the mysterious and the mundane, the mythic and the realistic, and . . . between the tragic and the comic” (286; 285).

Golding’s Ionides seems cut out for paradoxes, but it is Arieka who lives—and not just plays—with them. She embraces Ionides once she’s “seen round” him, who starts out a cynic, an atheistic contriver, while Arieka, arriving in Delphi at the age of 14, believes in the Olympians, “all twelve of them” (136). But then their roles are reversed: Arieka finds herself disbelieving after years of hearing Ionides inventing speeches for her, while Ionides, self-contradictory as he is, ends up relying on the gods’ will (130). Knowing his paradoxical nature inside out, Arieka can understand how he turns to the gods—in fact he could turn

to any thing—for the sake of his Hellenic Cause: the rationalist's irrational passion for Hellas. She also comes to acknowledge the gods' existence without claiming to know them. Her humility and tolerance add to her understanding and penetration; vice versa, understanding and vision enhance her largess and humbleness. Following the failure of his scheme for Hellenic Independence, however, Ionides wills himself to death, escaping into the void, "not-god, not-man—nothingness" (163). Arieka has been confronted with the void as well, yet strangely she feels there is a "tenderness" in it. She finds herself as dark as the dark she has been afraid of, and therefore capable of standing firm in its face without giving in.

Frye interprets Blake's double vision where the inward eye sees "an old man grey" and the outward eye nothing but "a Thistle across [the] way" as a humanizing perception because the "old man grey" is seen to be an aspect of Blake himself, "and stands for the fact that whatever we perceive is a part of us and forms an identity with us" (*Double Vision* 23). This perception seems to me to explain the pairs of complementary characters with interlocked destinies who crop up in every single novel by Golding, even if the sense of identity is often felt only one-sidedly: Ralph and Jack, Lok and Tuami, Pincher Martin and Nathaniel Walteson, Sammy Mountjoy and Beatrice Ifor, Jocelin and Roger plus Roger and Rachel, Oliver and Evie, Matty and Sophy plus Sophy and Toni, Talbot and Colley, Barclay and Tucker, and of course, Arieka and Ionides. Again they resemble the pairs of opponents repelling as well as attracting each other in front of the *skene* at the Great Dionysia. Rene Girard, in *Violence and the Sacred*, defines the art of tragedy by calling attention to one of its most characteristic

traits: “the opposition of symmetrical elements.” Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides all convey “symmetry, identity, reciprocity.” Discussing the tragic agon, Girard notices how “the resemblance between the combatants grows ever stronger until each presents a mirror image of the other” (44-47). That is, they become doubles of each other in a very real sense, though references to the double, to duality, to double vision in many ancient and modern literary texts have been disregarded (162).

It cannot be denied that closely linked pairs of characters have stood out in the mythoi prior to the Athenian tragedy: Achilles and Hector among others in *The Iliad*, and even Gilgamesh and Enkidu in the 1600 BC Mesopotamian epic. The ancient epic unmistakably presents Enkidu as an *alter ego* of the hero Gilgamesh, a feature that has not gone entirely unnoticed. In the year that Girard’s *La violence et le sacré* (1972) appeared in Paris, Carl Keppler came up with *The Literature of the Second Self*, including *The Epic of Gilgamesh* in his survey. Thomas Van Nortwick then went on to *The Iliad* and *The Aeneid* in *Somewhere I Have Never Travelled: The Second Self and the Hero’s Journey in Ancient Epic* (1992). But most students of the double literature, Keppler included, direct their attention to the abundance of double stories after the Romantic Movement, generally attributing the phenomenon to the Romantic interest in psychology. Many scholars believe the stories either predict or reflect Freud’s unveiling of the unconscious. Those who do trace the idea of the double to the primitives tend to see irrational, anti-social tendencies in this figure (Rosenfield, 311). And Rank, who concludes from his study of the primitives that they saw the double as one’s immortal soul, decides that the modern double is often seen as a

harbinger of death (66).

Van Nortwick also notes how “[e]xtended studies of the second self from a more literary perspective have . . . been restricted mostly to modern literature, and have emphasized dark qualities [like those of the Jungian shadow]” (190). He chooses the term “second self” after Keppler because “double” seems to him too exclusively literary and “alter ego” too clinical (5). What he calls “studies of the second self from a more literary perspective,” therefore, should be close to what I call studies of the double. And I choose the word double because it can better describe the reciprocal relationship between the two main actors in a tragic agon, which is often reproduced in Golding’s tales, without making a clear distinction between the first self in the foreground of the reader’s attention and the second self as intruder from the background of shadows (Keppler, 3; 11). Keppler’s generalization that the second self “is much more likely to have knowledge of his foreground counterpart than the latter of him” does not apply to Ionides and Arieka, nor to several other pairs of Golding’s doubles to be discussed in this paper. But the major features of Keppler’s “true second self” are to find fairly faithful reflections in John Herdman’s “true double” or “quasi-double,” against the latter of which Golding’s interlocked pairs of characters will be examined in the last part of this study.

There is one point on which I concur with Van Nortwick: we both find Jung’s map of the self more congenial than Freud’s, though we have also spotted rather more benign “other selves” than the generally dark and threatening shadow in Jungian analyses. Furthermore, it is my contention that Golding owes his doubles mostly to his bent toward the metaphorical

language and to the Greek sense of theatre rather than to the Freudian “discovery” of the unconscious. Probing the mysteries of identity in Euripides’ *Ion*, Zeitlin identifies “role playing, reenactment, doubling, repetition, and reversal” as the key activities of the Dionysia (315). Ionides, like Talbot of *Rites of Passage* and a number of other characters put on by Golding, shows an unmistakable propensity for drama, for the theatrical, which seems to me to explain Golding’s staging of doubling and reversal much more sensibly than Freud’s rationalistic system can do, since the latter can only see the irrational forces in the suppressed self as the cause for neurosis. Can it be a coincidence that Rank, who finds fault with Darwin, Marx, and Freud for being equally deterministic, and Golding, who calls the same trio “the three most crashing bores of the Western world” for their being reductionist, both show interest in character doubling? (See Golding, *Moving Target* 186-87 and Rank, 34-38.)

The following section of this paper will examine the two forks of the double tongue in relation to the doubly-doubled key, which derives its shape from a Goddess Worship symbol. It is my argument that the doubly-doubled key facilitates Arieka’s confrontation with her own “Being” as well as with the mysterious nature of the gods. The final section studies Golding’s double vision in relation to the abundance of twins and doubles, or at least quasi-doubles, in his earlier novels for illustration of the Arieka/Ionides pair. Like Matty and Sophy of *Darkness Visible*, both Arieka and Ionides know themselves “dual,” but while Matty dies as martyr in the fire set by Sophy, Ionides dies in humiliation, like Enkidu in the Sumerian epic, so that the education of their double (Arieka and Gilgamesh)

might be complete. An echo of the sacrifice of one twin for the founding of a city may be heard in these incidents as well as in the death of Colley in *Rites of Passage*. While his biographer (or mortographer?), Talbot, has to learn to appreciate the apparently antithetical “other” in Colley to become a compassionate student of the human heart, there are characters who refuse to internalize the “other.” The novelist Barclay and the critic Tucker in *The Paper Men*, who destroy each other, seem to underline the destructive nature of the modern doubles. But I believe that by implicating the novelist along with the critic, instead of exalting the one at the expense of the other, Golding would go along with Frye’s double vision through which the critic does not judge works of art but works with the writer in judging the human condition (38). In Golding’s own words, the truth produced by the storytellers is to be sought for “in that extended co-operation that must go on between the novelist and his reader” (*Moving Target* 197). In this sense we are doubles to Golding, since “[t]o enter into a work of fiction is in a sense to transform the Other into the Double: to discover in the apparent foreignness of another person the lineaments of one’s own aspirations and hopes” (Coates, 1). In this sense too, Ionides (the critic with his prose interpretation of Arieka’s oracle) and Arieka (the artist, if there is such a thing as a mantic artist) work together in interpreting the human condition. They may approach the gods through different avenues and for utterly divergent goals, yet they have contributed to each other’s understanding of the universe, cosmos, whatever you call it, and ultimately of themselves as if in a mirror, if not in a double mirror.

## II. The Double Tongue and the

## Doubly-doubled Key

A female Python, Arieka is supposed to be endowed with a double tongue, the tongue of two forks that Apollo inherited from the huge snake he killed at Delphi (8). Before her ascension to the throne of the Pythia at around the age of fifteen, Arieka has understood the two forks of the tongue to speak respectively of the literal and the figurative. But the figurative is notoriously evasive, and what the literal refers to one often has to interpret figuratively. There's really no disentangling the two forks of the tongue and we end up with the celebrated cryptic oracle with multiple possibilities of interpretation.<sup>1</sup> Among the various explanations for this

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<sup>1</sup> Arieka has given the example of a former Pythia who cried "Fire, fire, fire!" in response to the Phocians' request to take over the college of priests from the Delphians. The outcry had been conveniently explained away by a few fires started in Delphi at the time. But Arieka believes "the other fork of the tongue" meant the ravages and conquest by the Macedonians, for the year the Phocians took over the Delphi was also the year in which "the God Alexander the Great" was born (8). When the literal meaning was arbitrary to say the least, the figurative was of course more than uncertain. One recalls the cryptic injunction given to Aegeus, king of Athens in Euripides' *Medea*, to not loosen the hanging foot of his wine-skin until he returns to his hearth and house (Rex Warner's translation. Is it a coincidence that a photograph of the engraving on the Themis vase featuring "Aegeus consulting the Pythia at Delphi" is used as the cover illustration of Golding's *Double Tongue*?) Of course there were also the type of inescapable oracles like the one given to Oedipus. Arieka has heard her father say that "Once a man was told he would die by the fall of a house. So he stayed out of doors until one day an eagle dropped a tortoise on his bald head." The oracle seems as strangely unambiguous as that for Oedipus, which according to Arieka's family had been given before the Pythia lost her authenticity, though for this type it is the *literal* interpretation that might catch anyone. The "house" is that of a tortoise, while in Oedipus' case the parents he should shun are, quite unknown to him at the time, Laius and Jocasta, not Polybus and Merope. Arieka would use the "fall of a house" oracle as an example of the god's voice speaking through the

ambiguity is what Ionides calls the Escape Clause: “There was always something in the answer which could be interpreted in different ways.” Transmitting the commonly unintelligible “mouthing” of the Pythia to the suppliants in somewhat plainer language, Ionides knows how to alter them subtly, “toning down the positive and implying an alternative” (126). So here we are: a riddling oracle surrounded by contradictions; diametrically opposite options are implied in the same breath, and one could never catch the Pythia offering the wrong solution.

The moment she descends to the oracular seat in the grotto for her *début*, however, Arieka enters the spiritual world. She comes to believe, or rather feels she *knows* “there was something connected with the hidden centre of existence that lay there and sometimes spoke” (99). As Ionides has warned her, she would have to live on two levels, to mediate between the physical universe and the spiritual cosmos (84; 70). At first Arieka is not sure this is an enviable position to be in; she calls the god’s visitation a “rape” down there in the “underworld,” where there is “nothing but other.” The yells and rolling, rollicking laughter she gives forth beside herself—the god’s voice, in other words—tear her mouth so forcefully it bleeds. Then that same mouth pleads in her own voice and ends up shouting “one mouth or the other!”—as if she had two mouths

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Pythia (101, quoted on page 540-541 of this paper). But Golding also makes it possible for Arieka to see the Euripidean *Ion* staged at Delphi. The title figure, we remember, receives a deliberately misleading oracle from the very god he serves—who is also his true father. The male protagonist of *The Double Tongue*, Ionides, is not descended from Ion, though they hold the same job. How should we expect Ionides to regard the oracle?

(87-88). Arieka's subsequent guess is that "[p]erhaps part of an utterance was always stained by the blood of the Pythia, unavoidably corrupted by her mortality so that the immortal god could only use her in her measure as a flute can only be used in its compass" (101-102). Therefore divine utterance is always contaminated, one drop of the Gorgon's blood by the other, so to speak, because the blood from her left side is used for healing and that from her right for killing (Campbell, 25). Creusa, the mortal woman through whom Apollo has his son Ion, keeps the poisonous and the fostering drops of the Gorgon's blood apart from each other in the golden chain passed down from her autochthonous forebears. Her reason is simple: "good and evil do not mingle" (*Ion* 1107). But both mother and son will see how not only good and evil, but true and deceptive, issue from Apollo's shrine. (The temple contains the world's center, "flanked by Gorgons.") Even Creusa plays the double roles of life-giver and destroyer of Ion (who in his turn plays both victim and victimizer of Creusa). This doubling seems to be a common feature of the goddesses. The representative Gorgon is the fruit of parthenogenesis on the part of Gaia. And Mother Earth has long been known for her dual capacity as the womb and the tomb. If there's joy in springing out of the womb, there's also contentment in being taken back. Her votaries say there is no need for resistance. But Arieka feels all the pain of the tear in her mouth, as she has already felt grief for women "as instruments to be played on by gods or men" (68). She cannot keep silent because she identifies herself with "[t]he raped Creusa raging against the god who had raped her and begotten Ion to be priest of his temple" (119).

Arieka's self-contradictoriness is further confirmed by her

conscious efforts to deliver oracles in hexameters with an eye to enhancing their credibility; of course this is possible only after lengthy studies in the bookroom and continual practice with Ionides, who insists on doing things in the manner of the ancient Pythias'. When she studies the ancient hexameters, she could not fail to notice their duplicity as well:

As prophecy they were double-tongued, there was no doubt about that. Either the god would have his rollicking laughter, 'the fall of a house', or so subtle an interpretation that it might catch anyone. (See footnote one on p. 538)  
All that was agreed. No one expected the oracle to be anything else but riddling. (101)

On the one hand we have the "rollicking laughter," the god's voice forcing its way through the Pythia's body, but not meant to be grasped by anyone; and on the other hand we have the subtle interpretation facilitated by what Ionides dubs the "escape clause," to escape commitment in any way. There is the numinous, divine level, and there is the physical, practical level—or, in the case of Ionides, the cynical level.

Ionides has chosen Arieka for Delphi partly because of her reputed power to see and to heal even as a little girl. Though in a period of extreme distress she has once seen the gods turn their backs on her and expose her to the "void," she starts her Delphic career believing in the gods, or believing that she believes in the gods. And the gods do come to her, both Apollo and Dionysus, even if Ionides thinks it's just so much mumbo-jumbo. Nevertheless, after years of hearing Ionides inventing speeches for her, and after years of inventing them herself, she comes to ask herself how much she could still

believe in the gods (136). All she could see is their “back-parts,” and it even dawns on her that it is she who as a little girl has turned their backs for them, like turning a favorite idol facing away so it couldn’t see what we are up to. Looking back across so many years, things change and she now sees the little Arieka as an unbeliever who hasn’t had “much *use* for the Olympians” (125). The little girl seems to have had a more tangible experience with the figurine of a goddess, a “charm” she could carry with her probably the way Liku carries her Oa figure in *The Inheritors*. She may not have dared to doubt the Olympians, but she has managed to hide from them. Besides turning the gods’ backs for them, for a few days each month when she is thought to be unclean and therefore untouchable, she could have any thoughts she wants without the gods taking any notice of them, because the thoughts are also untouchable (17). This mystery is, for the pubescent Arieka, the only consolation of being a girl, and it is certainly a very paradoxical mystery. Without knowing who the gods are, Arieka can become untouchable to the supernaturals through her greatest cultural disadvantage.

For most of her life, Arieka does not just oscillate between belief and disbelief, she is often believer and unbeliever in one. Unable to opt for either belief or disbelief even as a Pythia, and constrained by her position to take the problem to anyone but herself, Arieka is driven to the idea of consulting the oracle about its own authenticity. Isn’t this a truly brilliant notion for a woman who constantly describes herself as “muddled”?

Ask the oracle on your own behalf! Ask the oracle if it existed? What nonsense was that? A Paradox, was that what they would call it? The void then. (126)

Is the paradox of the oracle similar to what Pincher Martin discovers in himself: “a thing—that which was so nakedly the centre of everything that it could not even examine itself” (*Pincher Martin* 40)? Golding compares the situation to the eye not being able to see itself without a mirror because it is actually doing the job (Biles, 74). Sammy Mountjoy, despite his experience of seeing a fourth dimension with “the eye of innocence or death,” when he turns his eyes in on himself still encounters the “black, central patch which cannot examine itself,” “the unnameable, unfathomable and invisible darkness” that is “always awake, always different from what you believe it to be, always thinking and feeling what you can never know it thinks and feels, that hopes hopelessly to understand and to be understood.” (*Free Fall* 142-144; 81; 7)

And yet Arieka penetrates the void by being both mortal and super-mortal at the same time. After an escapade on the part of Ionides, Arieka has to watch him dwindle away, and she consults the oracle:

I asked the god if it was possible for him to live. And I knew what the god’s answer was, for it was the same as my own. I had taken, indeed, not to addressing an Apollo out there—somewhere in the empyrean it may be—but that woman’s image, as a child would.<sup>2</sup> So I suppose that at last the Pythia did indeed answer herself. (163)

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<sup>2</sup> Arieka has referred to her childhood when “you couldn’t be sure of any god being on your side unless it was small and personal as a good-luck charm” (58). Having pored over volumes in the Delphic bookroom, she comes upon the legend that “the Old Religion was woman’s” (78). Arieka is perhaps referring to this “woman” here. The Eleusinian *phasmata* may also be figures, statues, or apparitions, though no one claims to know their true nature and identity (see Zeitlin, 307, note 62). Could Arieka’s figurine be an image of Demeter?

Another paradox, wouldn't they call it? When the Pythia answers herself, it is as if she splits in two, the one advising the other like a *Doppelgänger*. It is as if the imminent death of Ionides necessitates Arieka's elevation to the divine status, even to equation with the goddess she has turned to since childhood. It is as if she would go on living forever like the Pythia before her, the ancient First Lady of untold age. And even when the Lady dies, the Pythia lives on in the people's mind who think there is only one Pythia after all and the priestesses are merely her copies (118).

While Arieka becomes both goddess and woman, Ionides eventually plunges into the void, "where at last there is the peace of not-god, not-man—nothingness—" (163). Contrary to Arieka, he starts out claiming to be an unbeliever (57). When Arieka reports the visitations by Apollo and Dionysus at her debut, Ionides finds it simply comic. For him Dionysus is just "the fellow up the hill" whose business in the three winter months concerns no one in the Pythion. He puts the Pythia "on" a few days a month and her trance, if it does occur, occurs but for show. He admits frankly to Arieka that he is "prone sometimes to drama which becomes melodrama" (85).

Ionides says he speaks with the tongues of men, while Arieka should speak with the tongues of the Holy Messengers (84). Old legends do not conceal profound religious truths but bluntly state to him the great human truths which may be as valuable (116). Though he has once expressed the wish to "break out of the sad rational world," consciously he chooses to stay in the physical universe. Still, he is just as paradoxical as Arieka; it takes someone like-minded to even begin to understand him:

Most of his mind was a kind of shell of opinions and brittle quips. Inside the shell was a mind made up and closed to change because it was a prime tenet of his that *he knew*. In the shell itself were contradictory opinions which he produced together with their opposites so that he was secure from having to believe in any of them. (99)

Indeed he plays with contrary ideas like a juggler with his balls. To Arieka's accusation of blasphemy he replies, "Almost anything we do concerned with gods is blasphemy if you must use that word. *One god's truth is another god's blasphemy*" (97, italics mine). He is self-consciously self-contradictory: "I suppose I am an old fraud—or you could say a really honest man who understands what he is doing and"—here Arieka notices how he suddenly injects passion into the contrary argument and opinion—"and realizes that the only thing that matters is the oracle, the oracle, the oracle! Preserve that and all is preserved" (102).

What Ionides means by his passionate remark is, contrary to what it apparently indicates, that the oracle should be used to preserve Hellas. The Delphic oracle, or any other oracle for that matter, is only the means, not the end. As his resounding family name Peisistratides suggests, he is proud of his Athenian descent from Peisistratus, and his real love is Hellas, not the revival of any god's oracle. In his patriotism he is as naïve as little Arieka: the grown Arieka sees him as a fool, a self-deceiver. She finds it preposterous to see anything wrong with the Roman rule of law and peace, which was giving Greece what she had never been able to give herself due to hundreds of years' tricky and treacherous and savage civil wars (158-159). (One recalls Hippias, son of Peisistratus, who was with the

Persians at Marathon. Does Golding intend an irony by Ionides' last name? But even a Persian conquest, had they conquered Greece the way the Romans did, would have helped her avoid two hundred years' bickering, Arieka reflects.)

Ionides' first name is equally suggestive as well as misleading: of course it denotes his real love, Greece, yet it also recalls the aetiological myth popularized by Euripides. Ionides explains to Arieka that he is not descended from Ion; they just hold the same job. Yet Ion's passion for safeguarding the purity of Apollo's cult in the beginning of his story could only be equaled by Ionides' passion for Hellenic purity. Ion ends up disillusioned, though he does not vilify the god who turns out to be his father. The lad who, on hearing of Apollo's rape and betrayal of Creusa's "friend," determines to confront the god with his wrongs, eventually leaves Delphi pretending to believe the oracle about him being Xuthus' son - while sharing Creusa's knowledge that he is actually her child through Apollo. He has picked up the art of deception, the art of double-dealing. Is this the price of human growth? Ion's complete separation from the Athenian community over all those years at Delphi and the subsequent reintegration into his "motherland" seem to signify his coming of age, an important rite of passage. What about Ionides? Why is he saved for the job of Apollo's servant? Is his Athenian descent another cover story, though not necessarily as Emyrean as the one offered for Ion's parentage? The only time Ionides is isolated from his community as we know it is when a Roman officer takes him into custody for alleged treason, but it lasts not nearly long enough for a martyr's pride. Instead of heroic death, all he receives at the hand of the officer is the message that the Movement for Hellenic Independence has all

along been under Roman surveillance and that it poses no greater threat to the local government than a storm in a tea cup. What Ionides goes through seems more like a failed initiation, his isolation ending in mockery rather than vindication and reintegration.

As might be expected, though, Ionides changes along the way too, if barely perceptible to any one but Arieka. He has been able to quip on anything for a laugh, but the Olympians *when considered as a Greek thing* are nothing to be laughed at. He would not show his disbelief to any barbarians, (Is Arieka the little barbarian a barbarian or not?) and little by little he seems to think that being a priest is “something real” too (126). In the end Arieka has to exclaim in disbelief that “Ionides, cynic, atheist, contriver, liar, believed in god!” (136).

It is at this point that Arieka begins to question her own belief in the gods. Together the two servants of Apollo seem to draw a cross with one line going up (or down?) from disbelief to belief and the other line traveling diagonally. Or perhaps they resemble the mysterious key that Ionides passes to Arieka while he is in Roman custody: “It was a silver key, but of an extraordinary shape. The two ends were each shaped as a labrys, the Cretan double axe. But this was doubly-doubled” (160). The Pythia and the Priest are a labrys each, an axe with a double tongue, and one couldn’t even tell which end of the key is which. The two axes are joined in one when Arieka sees Ionides as her husband, no, “more than a husband, that quicksilver, quicksand, learned mountebank of the gods!” (162). Arieka believes they enjoy an intimacy of thought and feeling hardly approached by any married couple—though Ionides may not be aware of this intimacy; he does not experience the

bonding with the double and excludes Arieka from his secret plans. Nevertheless, the couple still resembles the married or divorced couples in other stories by Golding who ought to have been relatives, even brother and sister, because they are “always connected no matter what” (*Paper Men* 174). Of course Arieka and Ionides are a special pair because they are both sexually neutral, neither male nor female.

This neutral couple enjoys a most complicated relationship. Ionides adopts Arieka and becomes her guardian in the hope of training her for the oracular seat, what for her reputed power of healing, and what for her great potential of remaining a virgin. She has so much boy in her that she is “neither one thing nor the other” (53). Ionides has no healing or prophetic power, but like Arieka he remains a virgin. She senses his repulsion for physical contact with women and very quickly adopts him as her man: “if Ionides was anyone’s man it was mine” (62). She dares claim this because Ionides does not have a boy lover either; he seems to be repulsed by any physical contact, even with a man. (In this aspect he resembles the adolescent Ion, the purist Ion who holds mating doves in disdain and disgust. But then Apollo, before indirectly admitting to having forced his will on Creusa, indicates that Xuthus has sired Ion through an unknown Bacchante. What a stride the lad has to take to accept his own identity, to face his “hidden” self!) Ionides prefers women for friends, and in Arieka he finds a soul mate, whether he is aware of it or not. She also becomes his guardian with the approach of his death. Ionides has said he would be responsible for her as her guardian; now she watches over him as a mother would over a sick child. In fact, Ionides sees his own weakness behind the masculine façade against the strength in Arieka’s

girlish build even in her first year as Pythia: "I am a flimsy creature, not solid like you" (83). And yet few married couples become as interdependent as our Pythia and Priest. Arieka gets so used to Ionides' presence that she supplies it unconsciously even when he is not there with her; in a way she has learned to live for Ionides, whom she comes to call Ion in her later years. When Ionides dies, the oracle loses meaning for Arieka: "with Ion the oracle died" (164), meaning both the Apolline oracle and Arieka herself, for she steps down right away.

The special relationship between Arieka and Ionides is best explained by that between the Goddess and her god-son who then becomes her consort (Gaea and Uranus, for example). Arieka compares herself to the Goddess; she also regards Ionides as her husband, but then she watches over him as a mother would watch her son. Though Ionides starts out acting as her "guardian" and calls her "child," the situation reminds us of Zeus fathering Athena without the aid of a nursing woman or goddess. But the supreme god is himself son of a goddess, generally believed to be Rhea. He may also have been introduced by the Achaeans into Crete at the end of the Bronze Age, and took over part of the Goddess's sovereignty. Hence the Cretan Zeus was always "Zeus of the Double Axe." According to D. J. Conway, the double axe used to be the holiest of Goddess symbols in the Minoan world ("Battle Axe" 1). And since Hera is one of the descendants of the Goddess, her marriage to Zeus seems to indicate the subjugation of a native race to Achaean invaders. B. Walker has also observed that the labrys, meaning "lip," was perhaps originally a battle axe, but then became a ceremonial scepter in Crete and at the Goddess's oldest adopted shrine, Delphi ("Battle Axe" 2). We

learn from the Pythia in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* that the prophetic site of Delphi has been passed on to Apollo by Mother Earth. But other versions say Apollo has fought and slain the great serpent Python to gain possession. Could the peaceful succession story be a cover-up for the forceful take-over because Python was traditionally the child of Gaea (Earth) who had an oracle at Delphi before Apollo turned up? Her descendants still possess the oracular seat, all of them copies of the IDEA of the Pythia according to a learned but jocular Ionides (118). Arieka borrows his expression and calls herself the slave of god "or the idea of god," yes, the Platonic idea (139).

What makes Arieka stand out against the goddesses is that she tries to, so to speak, complete a circle with Ionides. Is that why she is entitled to the doubly-doubled axe? Archaeological studies in Crete show that sometimes the double axe appeared without having any sacred meaning at all; the bipennis could have been the emblem of a distinguished class, so the labrys was a symbol of the power of the Goddess and of the king. One half of the silver key, then, represents double-tongued Arieka, and the other half represents paradoxical Ionides, who plays such a rationalist he refuses to become aware of the intimacy of thought and feeling he has enjoyed with Arieka. While Arieka is mortal and divine at the same time, Ionides escapes into the void, the nothingness—not the nothingness of Job convinced by God's omnipotence, but a nothingness of man and god canceling out each other. He simply draws "into and away from himself" in the last days of his life (163).

When Arieka opens the double doors in the adytum, she sees facing her "the solid, impenetrable rock of the mountain

behind them” (165). Is there no way around or through the solid rock for Arieka? The answer is yes and no. For right after she opens the double doors Arieka receives a letter from the Archon of Athens offering to erect a stone image of her among the altars on the Field of Mars. Remembering the void, “and feeling strangely that there was a kind of tenderness in it” that she could explain to nobody, Arieka writes back to ask that rather than an image of her they should erect a simple altar and inscribe there: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD (165, end of draft). Whether she is aware of it or not, Arieka is making a double declaration, and the double declaration implies a double gesture. On the one hand, the Pythia effaces herself by acknowledging the superior being as well as her own ignorance. On the other hand, she implies her identification with the god. The image of the Pythia and the altar to the god are equivalent; only the Pythia SAYS that the place should be graciously given to the mysterious god. After all, the Pythia herself is mysterious enough to feel a tenderness for the void, the “not-god, not-man—nothingness” that Ionides is enjoying now. The first time she goes near the curtains before the double door, she tells herself she is the Pythia faced with the temptation of uncovering the most holy place in the world, but the other fork of the tongue has something different to say: “No, I was Arieka, the little barbarian afraid of the dark. But dark herself, oh yes” (161). She encounters her own Being behind the curtains, just as Simon cannot resist identifying with the evil symbolized by the Lord of the Flies. And just as Simon frees himself from evil by acknowledging his identity with it, Arieka frees herself from the male god by acknowledging her identity with him: the little barbarian girl, the distrusted female, is just as dark, as

paradoxical as the male god.

The Apostle Paul had marveled at the Athenian altar with the inscription "To the Unknown God." Golding must have been possessed by the same wonder, but unlike St. Paul, who was inspired with the answer, Golding as novelist could only proceed to provide the circumstances that had led to the inscription. His motivation may have been similar to that for the writing of the story of *Rites of Passage*, about whose origin Golding was always ready to offer the explanation. He said he had somehow to find "the sort of circumstances" that could account for a man dying of shame, and if the peculiar situation remained unaccountable, then he was left uneasy. There Golding felt he should make a statement:

I think this finding possible reasons for action, admitting, as I think one must, often, *that there are no possible reasons, that one ends with the mystery as one began with it, but at least one's made the effort.* All these are part of the apparatus that the storyteller must bring along with him.

(Melvyn Bragg, *William Golding*, italics mine)

The storyteller undoubtedly brought his apparatus with him for the coda. We realize that Ionides is another character of Golding's who dies of shame, but the mystery lies also with the unloved woman who lives on in glory but with a sense of humility. Arieka crosses the "line" like Talbot in their extended rites of passage. It is fitting that Golding should have ended (or open-ended, since this is an unfinished draft?) his oeuvre with the double-tongued phrase about the unknown god. Like Arieka working on her memoirs, Golding was also in his eighties while working on this draft, and he had described himself as an incorrigibly pessimistic optimist, a persistently realistic mystic:

he was often religious and blasphemous in the same breath, and he could be serious and hilarious at one and the same moment. As Ionides is quick to remark: “One god’s truth is another god’s blasphemy.” After all, hadn’t Golding insisted that there must be an infinite number of universes, “some ugly, some beautiful, some sad, joyous,” and most surely somewhat like our own (*Moving Target* 201)?

### III. The Double Vision and the Doubly-doubled Characterization

We have seen how Arieka and Ionides resemble the closely linked pairs of characters among the *dramatis personae* of the Great Dionysia. Most of these pairs seem to be comprised of polar opposites that clash head-on in terms of both personality and the cause they each stand for—the way exuberant Antigone’s divine law comes into clash with rigid Kreon’s state law, or Dionysus’ demand for liberty challenges Pentheus’ hold on order. Yet, in fact, they point up less a motif of conflict than a vision of dual reality. The Olympians who replace the Furies’ tribal law with judicial law need not stamp them out altogether, as suggested by Apollo; instead Athena embraces the spirit of justice behind the Furies’ law of retribution and integrates them into the Olympian system. Athens thus enjoys the best of two worlds thanks to the wisdom of Aeschylus. Similarly, Golding is large-hearted enough to see the act of living as all embracing and non-divisive. From the Bacchic *Lord of the Flies* to the Delphic *Double Tongue*, we witness an almost unbroken continuum of dual consciousness: the longing for security plus the yearning for aggression, the skeptical and suave mingled with the entranced and naïve. While in *Lord of the Flies* it is

Ralph who acknowledges his instinct for aggression side by side with the need for security and emerges the fuller grown hero than Jack Merridew, in *The Double Tongue* it is the naïve Arieka who can comprehend Ionides' skepticism and comes out the better developed, more comprehensive character.

It has to be admitted, as John Herdman observes, that opposite or even congruent characters "are bound to crop up in the work of even the most naturalistic novelists, since all characterization involves an element of dialectic"—as does all consciousness, language, and philosophy. Golding's pairs of characters do not automatically make *doubles*, for, to quote Herdman once more, "characters may testify to duality without in the least being doubles" (15). For him, the true double, or *Doppelgänger*, "is a second self, or *alter ego*, which appears as a distinct and separate being apprehensible by the physical senses (or at least, by *some* of them), but exists in a dependent relation to the original." Defining the double in nineteenth-century fiction, Herdman qualifies the subject's relationship to his true double:

Often, but not always, the subject and his double are physically similar, often to the point of absolute identity. Brothers (sisters are a rarity in this literature), and especially twins, may be doubles, but where this is the case there is always an element, whether overtly supernatural, numinous or otherwise extraordinary, which goes beyond the merely natural relationship. (14)

All of Golding's prominent pairs—Ralph and Jack, Lok and Tuami, Jocelin and Roger, Matty and Sophy, Talbot and Colley, Barclay and Tucker, and finally Arieka and

Ionides—enjoy an extraordinary relationship that goes beyond the merely natural. But only Sam’n’Eric, the identical twins who spy the “beast” first on the island of the Lord of the Flies, are physically similar “to the point of absolute identity.” Sophy and her fraternal twin Toni, on the contrary, are as different as night and day. Even the curious couple Roger and Rachel Mason of *The Spire* are closer in appearance than the twin sisters “who were everything to each other and hated it” (*Darkness Visible* 105). Dean Jocelin muses over the Masons: “Not only were they inseparable, but alike in appearance; more like brother and sister than man and wife, dark, sturdy, red-lipped. They were islanded, and their life was a pattern of its own” (39).

To come to terms with the vast number of dual characters who do not qualify as true doubles, Herdman accepts the findings of Joseph Frank in his study of Dostoevsky’s novels (which, Herdman allows, “furnish examples of almost every kind of double”), and admits a second kind of double which Frank categorizes as “quasi-doubles.” Quasi-doubles are “characters who exist in their own right, but reflect some internal aspect of another character in a strengthened form” (Frank, 311). Herdman’s elaboration on the relationship between the subject and the quasi-double throws valuable light on Golding’s pairs:

Quasi-doubles may also . . . be complementary opposites, whether Platonic soul-mates or, more often, characters whose unlikenesses and contradictions reflect hostility and conflict, yet at the same time mutual dependence and interlocked destinies. (14-15)

For Keppler too, the first and second selves are not identical, but complementary, and they enjoy “a certain strange and special affinity between them” (11-12). Thus the fair Ralph is not always repulsed but often drawn by the hunters led by the ugly, red-haired Jack. He partakes of Jack’s roast pork just like most other boys. There are also Edwin and Edwina Bell from *Darkness Visible*, whose names alone suggest their function as the male and female aspects of one single being (like the perfect being in Plato’s myth). But Matty and Sophy, like Sophy and Toni, are the typical pair whose unlikenesses reflect hostility as well as interlocked destinies. *Darkness Visible* has to proceed by double narratives like so many other novels by Golding, *Rites of Passage* being one of the most conspicuous as well as successful. Comparing “Matty’s book” (Chapter One of *Darkness Visible*) with “Sophy’s book” (Chapter Two), Ian Gregor and Mark Kinkead-Weekes instantly descry their congruence behind the apparent divergence:

Sophy’s book is apparently the opposite of Matty’s, but follows the same process, from seeing to skrying to vision. . . . He may be a kind of idiot, but is loving, sacrificing, faithful, saintly. She is highly intelligent, but cynical, nihilist, sadistic, deadly. *Yet the apparent opposites of “good” and “evil,” on deeper inspection, turn out to be more alike than either is like “ordinary humanity.”* After loveless and traumatic childhoods both long to be accepted but are rejected again and again. Both know themselves dual (the two sides of Matty’s face; “inside” and “outside” Sophy) and aware from childhood of forces beyond them acting through them. Both are “seers,” forced themselves and forcing us to see deeper into the nature and working of things. And as soon as we attempt to recall the

significant moments of the two stories we detect how remarkably they are parallel, *contrasting modalities of the same process of discovery*. (283-284, italics mine)

True, Matty seems to represent the innocent martyr who dies in the flames of devilish Sophy, as fair-haired Ralph nearly dies in the forest fire set by red-haired Jack. It takes a Simon to show the evil in everyman's heart—and also his innocence. In *Darkness Visible* it is the lovelorn pederast Pedigree who highlights the one thing everyone shares in common: all we need is to love and to be loved. At heart Matty and Sophy are just children deprived of parental love; they are both unwanted. Both foreshadow Arieka, rejected by her parents and potential fiance, forced to live a secluded life as seer because that is the fate of “little Arieka whom nobody loved.” (Arieka is born with a lopsided face and aware of being “uneven” in the face.) Sophy takes vengeance by hurting both herself and those who cross her path. But Matty compensates by offering love and protection; the spiritual language he tries to reintroduce should be the language of Love that Frye believes is the highest we can go by breaking out of the rational, physical world through a double vision. The third (and final) chapter of *Darkness Visible* has “One is One” for its heading. Though Sophy's neighbor Sim Goodchild misquotes this line from the “Dilly Song” to prove to himself how partitions remain partitions: “One is one and all alone and ever more shall be so” (225), the “One” in the original Cornish song in fact refers to God. Unity is still possible after the double narratives. For Matty rescues a child by sacrificing himself in Sophy's fire, thus marrying the wicked

woman in a sense.<sup>3</sup> When Sophy claims the fire that devours Matty to be her own fire, “an outrage, a triumph,” she does not

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<sup>3</sup> Matty thinks only he and Ezekiel have been empowered to show things to those who can see, “as with matchboxes, thorns, shards, and marrying a wicked woman etc.” In Australia he has tried everything on the list, only short of marrying a wicked woman. Years later, back in England, he recognizes Sophy as the Great Whore of Apocalypse, who, we note, sits on seven mountains. Seven is the symbolic number of Matty. Even his middle name, Septimus, reflects his only identity, number seven, in the hospitals which have served as his childhood home. When the school teacher Bell sees him in the park, Bell speaks “the innocent language of the spirit,” “the language of paradise,” in seven words, and comes away with nothing but a memory of “sevenness.” Sophy also sees symbolic meanings in numbers, especially the date 7, 7, 77. Thus the number that represents the infinite perfection of the Spirit in *Revelation* could also symbolize inverted holiness or evil. My article on “The Music That Frays and Breaks the String: Spiritual Language in *Darkness Visible*” observes that, in this novel, numbers seem to convey more meaning and feeling than words, and that among the troops of doubles that march through Golding’s books, Matty and Sophy are the only pair linked by a symbolic number (130). The article also notes a tongue image that looks suspiciously like an anachronistic parody of Arieka’s double tongue: the bookstore owner Goodchild reminds Bell that they are both born with “tongues hung in the middle that wag both ends,” a faithful image of a jingling bell. Ironically, Bell approves of the image because he sees himself at one end of the wagging tongue and Matty at the other end, which constitutes perfect mutual understanding. But Matty abhors the “endless cackle of men” as not only futile but even sinful. He has his tongue bound so that at a future time he shall speak words like a sword going out of his mouth—as the white spirit does who visits him before his death. The reference is to *Revelation* 1:16, where a sharp two-edged sword issues out of the mouth of the son of man. *Hebrews* 4:12 compares the two-edged sword to the living and active word of God “piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Revised Standard Version). Perhaps the two edges also imply the divine and the mortal, for the rest of Chapter 4 highlights Jesus, the Son of God, as a high priest “who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” To make expiation for the sins of the people, the Son of God partakes of their nature, so Chapter 2 expounds. Of course Matty is no Christ; he is trying to expiate for his own sin and heal his “spiritual face.”

realize that it is also Matty's triumph, Matty's apocalypse. Ihab Hassan, in "The Literature of Silence," identifies outrage and apocalypse as mirror images of the contemporary imagination. Outrage is a response to the void, but it may also serve as an appeal to being, and thus beget its opposite, an invocation of apocalypse. Both share a degree of silence, for "the human tongue is speechless in fright and ecstasy" (4; 6). Matty has his tongue bound, and Sophy is unable to put her weird feelings in words.

The dual hero and heroine (or anti-hero and anti-heroine?) of *Darkness Visible* mirror the equally dual androgynes of *The Double Tongue*. But while there is only a glimmer of hope for Sophy to rise to Matty's beatific vision from her theory, no, experience, of entropy, Arieka survives the much older Ionides like the immortal soul of the primitive man. Claire Rosenfield believes with Otto Rank that the Double in the primitive world was a guardian angel insuring against the destruction of the self, while in modern literature it is projected into the outside world as the Devil (321). This distinction may explain the intimacy and maternal care Arieka feels for Ionides as well as the enmity and fear that the modern paper man Barclay feels for the other paper man Tucker, though the latter pair also go through what Philip Redpath calls "rôle-swapping" (190), predicting the kind of doubly-doubled characterization so salient in *The Double Tongue*.

Barclay calls his unfinished autobiography, which is none other than *The Paper Men* itself, a "duet" featuring himself and Tucker who trade life for life—physical life and life recorded on paper. In exchange for the exclusive right to write *The Life of Barclay*, Tucker must give a clear account of the time when he

has offered his wife to Barclay and then sold her to a billionaire (152). Indeed Barclay describes himself and Tucker as “image and original”: if the scholar is guilty of brazen intrusion and pandering, the author has been guilty of possible murder and literary plagiarism. Since the academic is trying to pin down the artist like a butterfly for the billionaire’s collection, Barclay runs from him for dear life. But later he determines to turn from prey into hunter—and turn Tucker from hunter into prey. Just when he hits on some “theologically witty” scheme and baits Tucker to the Weisswald for the scheme to proceed, he realizes how he himself has long fallen prey to a theologically witty scheme devised by Tucker. The writer who shoots at the scholar with an air gun at their first meeting is shot down by the scholar in their last encounter. Of course the murderer will very probably pay with his life for the crime. Man bites dog and dog bites man; the hunter and the slain are indistinguishable. We are back on the island of Ralph and Jack where everyone becomes the double of everyone else.

Barclay himself is not deluded by the apparent contrasts between himself and Tucker. Barely able to resist Tucker’s tacit offer of his wife, Barclay reflects to himself: “Neither of us, critic and author, we knew nothing about people or not enough. We knew about paper, that was all. The poor girl was the human one” (76). This realization puts the author and the critic in an unreal world of their own. The suggestion that he and Tucker could have anything in common may at first be repellent to Barclay, but he cannot but admit that they may have been made for each other—and for the destruction of each other. Both have played Mephistophiles to each other’s Faust. Mephistophiles being the demonic forces within Faust,

according to Rosenfield he is a double of Faust (314). And “[f]ear of the Double is fear of self-knowledge,” observes Paul Coates (3). It is ironic but revealing that Barclay has always resented Tucker’s cleft chin, pondering from time to time whether it is a sign of weakness or of a divided nature. But later we learn from a friend of Barclay’s that the most outstanding feature in the famous author is his beard with an incipient fork in it (107).

The fact is both critic and author are divided against themselves. Barclay once notices how Tucker has two faces: “I had an idiotic thought that he probably kept a different expression in each face, which was why when you merged them they cancelled each other out” (58). He also realizes that Tucker is not as obtuse as he imagines; in fact the academic has a finer ear for music and the voices of nature than the storyteller. Tucker can discern two voices in the stream while hiking on the Weisswald: one light, and the other deep. “Two voices are there: one is of the deep;” he recites the nineteenth-century poet J. K. Stephen’s obscure sonnet on Wordsworth which mocks the uninspired portions of the Romantic poet’s rhymes. Perhaps Tucker is the one to tell the truly imaginative novels of Barclay apart from his sensational best sellers, though Barclay rationalizes his retreat from invention by maintaining that the “mantic moments, certainties,” and “whole episodes that had blazed, hurt, been suffered for” have been wasted on his readers (24-25). But when Barclay returns to the Weisswald alone there is only the top voice in the stream: the writer has settled for the sensational, easy writing and the scholar has sold his talent for fame and power. The two men eventually destroy each other because

both are unwilling to give free play to the creative force in themselves.

It is debatable whether we should see in Barclay a “thinly disguised persona” for Golding, or a “shadow self,” to borrow the terms from Bernard F. Dick (133; 139). Golding is not Barclay, and to regard *The Paper Men* as Golding’s autobiography would detract from a number of important issues, as Redpath has rightly argued (182), yet it so happens that many features of Golding may be traced in Barclay, and we cannot discount the degree to which every character is “a distorted reflection, aligned in a fairground mirror maze, of the author himself” (Coates, 3). In creating Tucker, then, Golding is creating a double of a double of himself. Yet while this scandalously voyeuristic double pries shamelessly into Barclay’s privacy, the reader is practicing a sanctioned piece of voyeurism at the same time. And we become a double of a double (the critic) of a double (the writer) of the author (who may or may not be a double of the man himself—or is there a “self” to speak of when Roland Barthes has seen the author as no more than a paper-author and the “I” which writes the text as no more than a paper-“I”?) In fact the reader’s voyeurism, no less than the author’s exhibitionism, gives life to the literary work. If the writer contemplates the mystery of the cosmos in myth and poetry, (Tiger calls Golding’s work “religious mythopoeia”) the reader is also trying to understand the world, perhaps mainly in prose. When the author exposes the world of his self, he puts himself in danger of prosecution, but when the reader looks into another man’s world, he risks turning himself into a double. Golding is aware of invading the reader “with his, the writer’s own, universe” (Baker, “Interview” 151). But only

when the writer's universe brushes with the reader's, especially when they penetrate each other, can there be any understanding. (I too had a rationalist father who said there was a logical explanation for everything as long as I looked hard enough. But I, too, burn to know and would endure knowing what man *is*, whatever man is under the eye of heaven, the way Golding declares in "Belief and Creativity.") A writer's work can never be wholly innocent. But the readers, whom Rosenfield calls the writer's second selves, cannot but share his guilt (331).

When Edwin Bell and Sim Goodchild hear of Matty's journal from the news, they exult with an inexpressible hope. When Talbot discovers Colley's journal and incorporates it in his own, a spiritual dimension is added to his universe. In *The Double Tongue* we are allowed to share Arieka's double-leveled, or double-sided, experience from beginning to end. What she achieves beyond Ionides or the other characters, be they writers or readers of journals, is that she embraces the double. Like the Sophoclean Oedipus who acknowledges the sins that the young Oedipus has committed perhaps unawares, (Antigone says in *Oedipus at Colonus* that they have been done unconsciously) Arieka accepts Ionides as her other self. After all, Arieka may be the self that Ionides could have been, the young dreamer who dares to make her difference known, and Ionides may be the self that Arieka might have been, the old believer who can will himself to death for the sake of dignity. Should Oedipus refuse to take in the unruly, apparently anti-social self, he would kill himself like Jocasta and forfeit the opportunity to grow into a sound human being, if not a super man. Perhaps Ionides is a stunted Oedipus while Arieka fulfills her potentials, mortal and super mortal, by acquiring the double vision or doubly-doubled

vision. Through this vision she respects a dark mystery as a dark mystery (herself being as dark), and not a polar opposite to light, rational understanding. She can admit, like Golding the storyteller, that often “there are no possible reasons, that one ends with the mystery as one began with it” (Melvyn Bragg, *William Golding*).

Rank believes that in early Greek civilization “the true artist type may be thought of as the hero’s spiritual double, who told in immortal works of art what the other had done and thus preserved the memory of it and himself for posterity” (97). What Arieka achieves as hero cannot be merely mortal, but what about the artist who expresses artistically his own creative self “shaped after the heroic type of action”? Could we possibly deny his own vital experience—in religious terms, his revelation? In his 1977 lecture titled “Rough Magic,” Golding dares to perform a trick “never done before . . . on any stage” and “get novelists and saints into the ring together.” Though novelists may linger in a curious region below the “purer vision, perception, of the saint”—that of the occult, of psychokinesis, extrasensory perception, second sight and so on. But below this area again there are in us all “hints and . . . sometimes sparks of the inexplicable, fleeting suggestions that of all things the human mind, its whole volume of mentation still remains the mystery of mysteries.” The greatest writers, confronting the mystery in a way that others can only admire and not comprehend, may not be able to explain or even understand their own art either. At their height they come to abandon the rough magic of their creativity and require after that, “music, a solemn air, nothing but music,” which the readers may supply in their own hearts by remembering some high moments,

leaving the artist the “easier task of providing the necessary silence” (*Moving Target* 144; 146).

In this silence the artist must be able to feel with Arieka, as Ionides probably cannot, the intimacy of thought and feeling with her double. And being Golding’s hero, Arieka can even feel a tenderness for the void presented by the god, who is “nothing but other” the first time she goes down into the adytum.

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## 《雙舌》，雙重視界與互為他我

鄭秀瑕

### 摘 要

高爾丁的天鵝之歌《雙舌》重述他一生嚮往的雙重視界：理性與靈性兼容並蓄。女主角亞麗卡是西元前一世紀阿波羅神廟的祭司，身處物理世界與靈性天地之間；她的雙舌既通人語也通天語，既合人理又合天理。

亞麗卡並非唯一身處兩界的人物。男主角埃歐奈迪思是神廟的最高祭司，他要求亞麗卡調和折衷於兩界之間，自己則選擇理性世界，利用職位之便鼓動希臘各城邦脫離羅馬獨立。但他終究無從遁形於靈性天地，必須折服於眾神意志之下。

埃歐奈迪思雖較亞麗卡年長許多，卻未完成其成年禮。他成為亞麗卡的「他我」，幫助亞麗卡更加認識自我，不斷成長。而亞麗卡則幾近羽化，化為埃歐奈迪思之「不朽的他我」。兩人所扮演的角色有別於大多數現代小說中負面的「他我」，較接近古代史詩中英雄摯友所扮演的「第二我」角色。本文作者相信高爾丁作品中「他我」的靈感來自神話和希臘悲劇，與佛洛伊德所謂壓抑的自我並無淵源。

關鍵詞：高爾丁、《雙舌》、雙重視界、他我、第二我