

# Matty's Burn Trauma in William Golding's *Darkness Visible*

Joyanta Dangar

Assistant Professor of English, M.U.C. Women's College, West Bengal.

Email: [joyengsimlapal@gmail.com](mailto:joyengsimlapal@gmail.com)

---

Received May 15, 2017; Revised July 15, 2017; Accepted July 17, 2017; Published August 08, 2017

## Abstract

William Golding's novel, *Darkness Visible* (1979), centers on Matty, an orphan, who was terribly burned in a bomb explosion during the London Blitz. For the horrible scars on his face caused by the burn accident, he became the object of mockery and stigmatising behaviour in his school, in social gatherings, and in his workplaces. Besides experiencing the common symptoms of burn trauma such as PTSD, sadness, diminished self-concern, search for meaning, social withdrawal, spiritual confusion, etc., Matty had been maintaining a dream journal that recorded his encounters with a blue spirit and a red one for long three years in his later life. It may be seen as the very key issue in his long-term, post-burn psychological adjustment. The article is thus intended to investigate *Darkness Visible* as a trauma text in terms of the findings of the trauma psychologists and researchers like Markus A. Landolt et al., Frederick J. Stoddard et al., Nichola Rumsey and Diana Harcourt, and Judith Herman.

**Key Words:** *the London Blitz, burn injury, social stigmatization, social withdrawal, hallucinations, "survivor mission"*

## 1. Introduction

Most of the critical responses William Golding's novel *Darkness Visible* received, after its publication in 1979, were favourable; but among the voices of dissent Christopher Booker (qtd in Carey,<sup>i</sup> 2009) in *Now! Magazine* looked it upon as "a rather unpleasant, disordered, and not particularly well-written nightmare which Mr Golding might have done better to take to his psycho-analyst rather than to his publisher" (p. 385). What Mr Booker failed to realize was that William Golding, though a novelist, must have been well-read in human psychology—better say trauma psychology—especially in the post-World-War-II and post-Vietnam-War world. The narrative of *Darkness Visible* focuses mainly on Matty who received serious burn injuries in a bomb explosion during the London Blitz and became a butt of mockery for his horrible face in the rest of his life. A careful reading of the text reveals that Matty's life is characterized by psychological aberrations, the chief of them being his strange experiences of dreams and visions/hallucinations. When Ulrich Broich (1984) treated *Darkness Visible* as religious metafiction (p. 325), and Glorie Tebbutt (1939) as "a novel about judgement" (p. 47), Stephen G. Hardy, though inadequately, attempted to trace Matty's "psychological derangement" to his "social isolation and physical malformity" (p. 78). The present article, however, is intended to investigate the impact of Matty's burn injury and the entailing trauma on his life in *Darkness Visible* in terms of the findings of the trauma psychologists and researchers like Markus A. Landolt et al., Frederick J. Stoddard et al., Nichola Rumsey and Diana Harcourt, and Judith Herman.

## 2. What is Burn Trauma?

Burn trauma is the outcome of not only human vulnerability in the elemental world but also the colossal capacity for evil in human nature. Burns can be distressing both physically and psychologically. Unlike many other victims of accident, burn survivors wear the marks of their dermal damage for the world to see. “Compared to other forms of traumatic injury, burns,” as Harcourt (2005) observes, “have a greater propensity to cause widespread damage, dysfunction and disfigurement and the sudden and rapid changes to appearance resulting from burn injury present a number of unique challenges” (p. 110). Both the older adolescents and adults with acute burns often, as Stoddard et al. (2001) observe, “manifest agitated nightmares, flashbacks, florid deliria, and can be a potential danger to self and others” (p. 31). Among the common emotional responses in case of a burn victim are sadness, diminished self-concern, search for meaning, social withdrawal, spiritual confusion, etc. A review of the literature regarding outcomes of paediatric burn survivors, as done by Markus A. Landolt and his co-researchers (2009), shows contradictory findings regarding the occurrence of psychopathology. Whereas some studies report that children and adolescents who experienced burns adjust well, other studies point out that 20-50% of the burn survivors may experience long-term psychological maladjustment (p. 14). A burn accident often conforms to the definition of a psychological trauma as per *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders IV (DSM-IV)*. Several studies have indicated noticeably high rates of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in adults after burns. These studies have also shown that PTSD can result in significant psychosocial damages, including failure of early return to work, increased economic burden, and social withdrawal. Findings of Stoddard et al. (2001, p. 42) also clearly confirm this observation and suggest an increased social vulnerability of the burned child.

## 3. The London Blitz and Matty’s Burn Accident

Unlike *Lord of the Flies* (1954), Golding’s *Darkness Visible* opens with rather an explicit reference to wartime evacuation. Golding (1979) begins the novel with a description of an area east of the Isle of Dogs in London that was being continuously bombarded during the Blitz: “The barrage balloons were all that the searchlights discovered in the sky, and the bombs came down, it seemed, mysteriously out of emptiness. They fell in or round the great fire” (p. 9). In a likely way, the entire area had been evacuated officially, and even a burning ship after an attack attracted few onlookers. Whereas *Lord of the Flies* is concerned with a group of British schoolboys evacuated from London during the Blitz, *Darkness Visible* centers on an orphan who was unfortunately missed out by the so called government-sponsored scheme of wartime evacuation (within Britain as well as overseas) and terribly burned in a fire caused by bomb explosion. Although “children have been first to be evacuated” from the area (Golding 1979, p. 13), the government project of evacuation, far from being all inclusive, must have been full of loopholes. Jessica Mann<sup>ii</sup> (2006) in her book *Out of Harm’s Way: The Wartime Evacuation of Children from Britain*, for example, records that Children’s Overseas Reception Board (CORB), which was established by the beginning of June 1940 after some kind of approval by the Parliament, very soon received over 210,000 applications from the schools for evacuation. Although children from poor families and the designated evacuation areas under serious threat from enemy bombing were supposed to get priority, many of those selected hailed from perfectly secure areas and affluent backgrounds. To quote Mann,

The scheme had specifically excluded war orphans from institutions and the children of German or Allied refugees, and on 2 July Shakespeare [Geoffrey Shakespeare, Member of

Parliament from Norwich] assured CORB's advisory council that 'care would be taken to prevent the inclusion of an undue proportion of Jews'. Australia, having decided to restrict the scheme to British children, specified that at most 10 percent of them might be Jewish. South Africa wanted none at all, for fear of 'racial difficulties' and 'potential spies'. These conditions were never admitted, but few Jews, Catholics, non-white or disabled children passed the test. (p. 63)

Perhaps these loopholes of the government project allowed Golding, who was a close observer of the war, to frame his narrative of burn trauma in *Darkness Visible*. The trauma to which the child (Matty) here is subjected is not then the consequence of natural calamities or God's wrath rather perpetrated by human design.

#### 4. Matty's Burn Injury and Hospitalization

Immediately after the mishap Matty was rescued by the captain of a fire crew at work in the city and taken to the burn unit of a government hospital, where he underwent some surgical operations required. Since his name now could not be traced out, he was called "number seven": "After the kind of holding operations that had to be performed while he recovered from shock, number seven was the first present he got from the world outside him" (Golding 1979, pp. 16-17). Furthermore, his burn injury impaired his speech production system. "[T]he anguish of speaking" the child underwent is worth noting here:

As the various aids to recovery were removed from him and he began to speak more, it was discovered that his relationship to language was unusual. He mouthed. Not only did he clench his fists with the effort of speaking, he squinted. Some words were jagged and these became awful passage of pain and struggle that made other children laugh. Patience and silence seemed the greater part of his nature. (Golding 1979, pp. 17-18)

Even smiling now became an occasional episode in his life. Always unbalanced and closed, his mouth made the smile "unchildlike" and "a wicked one if indulged in often." Golding notes also the sordid misery in which Matty passed his days:

Matty was now fixed in a different position so that skin could be transferred from one part of his body to the other. It was condition of some absurdity and the other children in the burns hospital, none of whom had much to laugh at, enjoyed his plight" (Golding 1979, p. 19).

The burn of his left side had contracted the sinews so badly that he limped. He had hair on the right side of his skull but the left side was an appalling white, giving him the appearance more of an adult. The hospital authorities tried to probe his background further but without result; the narrator thinks that he might have been born from "the sheer agony of a burning city" (Golding 1979, p. 20).

#### 5. Symptoms of Matty's Burn Trauma

The present section seeks to diagnose the cause(s) of psychological aberrations and corollary anomalies in Matty's life: the method employed here is close examination of his symptoms such as PTSD (?), social stigmatization, sadness, diminished self-concern, search for meaning, social withdrawal, spiritual confusion, hallucinations, etc.

### 5.1. PTSD and Factor of Maternal Presence

Matty had been recovering from his burn injury without developing immediate PTSD that is very common in case of burned children. As it has been observed by Landolt et al. (2009),

maternal presence at the place of accident could have a protective influence with regard to HRQOL [Higher Quality of Life] and the development of PTSD. . . . The immediate presence of the mother may have a calming and reassuring influence on the child and thus may help him or her to cope with the trauma. (p. 19)

Notably, though Matty was an orphan, the nurse, who used to take care of him in the burn ward, can be taken as a substitute for his mother:

Thus the nurse who squeezed him with her arms, knowing just where his body could bear the contact, found the relatively good, relatively undamaged side of his head burrowing against her breast in wordless communication. Being, it seemed, touched being. . . . [S]he, more than the other nurses, now knew the Matty-ness of Matty. (Golding 1979, p. 18)

The nurse's comforting presence presumably prevented the child from experiencing symptoms of immediate PTSD—nightmare and hallucination—exactly repeating the scene of burn accident.

### 5.2. Social Stigmatization

Concerning the typical problems faced by burned children in social spaces after their release from hospital, Stoddard et al. (2001) note:

The stages of recovery may be traumatic. Grief over body image alteration or loss is gradually experienced. . . . Discharge may ultimately mean social stigmatization (and narcissistic injury). Out of the hospital, children may mourn the loss of special treatment; at the same time, home and school are now sites where they may have to cope with rejection over disfigurement and functional impairment. (p. 42)

For the horrible scars on his face Matty experienced stigmatising behaviour in his school, and subsequently in his workplaces. Being homeless, he, however, was spared of the troubles at home.

#### 5.2.1. Stigmatising Behaviour on Matty in School

Matty, after his release from the burn hospital, became a ward of the state and was put into Foundlings School at Greenfield. In this Catholic boarding school, he was abandoned by the other children and sexually abused by one of his teachers, Mr Pedigree, who had homoerotic leanings. He used to get teased about his appearance:

His limp, his two-toned face and ghastly ear hardly concealed by black hair swept over the baldness of his skull made him a natural butt. This may have contributed to his development of a faculty—to give it a name—which was to increase throughout his life. He could disappear. He could become unnoticeable like an animal. (Golding 1979, p. 22)

For example, one day the student pranksters of the school concocted a story that a beautiful girl named Angy, belonging to the neighbouring Convent School of Saint Cecilia past the narrow lane, had fallen in love with him; it became a great source of amusement and laughter for them. Even, once the Headmaster of the school, appalled by “the white obscenity of his scalp” (Golding 1979, p. 26), involuntarily closed his eyes. However, Matty's mates might have forgiven or forgotten his appearance, but his “high-mindedness” ultimately made him “an outcast” (Golding 1979, p. 29). After the accidental death of Henderson, Mr Pedigree expressed his abhorrence for Matty, whom he allowed to his room only to hide his love for the beautiful child (Henderson): “That horrible,

ugly boy! I wouldn't touch him if he were the last one left on earth!" (Golding 1979, p. 36) Matty was held responsible for Henderson's death since his gym shoe was found near the body; and the Headmaster of the school took Matty to Frankley's the Ironmongers at the end of High Street, where he was employed as a Boy.

### 5.2.2. Stigmatising Behaviour on Matty in Work Places

John W. Lawrence et al. (2006) point out that burn victims experience such stigmatising behaviours in their daily life as staring, double takes, whispering, teasing, bullying, or even more subtle ones like avoidance of eye contact, ignoring, walking faster when approaching. Rumsey and Harcourt (2005) hold that the burn victims may feel that "their altered appearance will affect their job situation through reducing their desire to do public-facing-jobs. . ." (p. 112). Matty, after having migrated to Australia leaving his position at Frankley's, started experiencing stigmatising behaviours in his work places. Reaching Australia, he found himself with a job with ironmongers in Melbourne. Then he changed his work and joined a bookshop. Mr Sweet who ran it was too short-sighted and unthinking to understand "what a handicap Matty's face would be" (Golding 1979, p. 52). Despite his hard-working, scrupulously honest and absolutely truthful character, for which Mr Sweet sometimes offered him some extra money, Matty was never accepted by Mrs Sweet by heart. When Matty left the job, especially to keep him off the blonde beauty of Mrs Sweet's widowed sister, Mrs Sweet went into the kitchen and danced a few steps "in sheer relief" (Golding 1979, p. 57). After leaving the Sweets, Matty worked for more than a year for a fencing company near Sydney as it was lucrative and not a public-facing-job: "It got him some more money and kept him away from people for most of the time" (Golding 1979, p. 57). In Brisbane he took the job of a porter in a sweet factory; but the female workers there, who had repulsed his appearance, demanded his dismissal alleging that he kept looking at them. In fact, the ladies would keep looking at him, and often whisper, "'No wonder that lot of cream went sour'" (Golding 1979, p. 58). When the manager was about to dismiss Matty from his job, Mr Hanrahan, the owner of the factory, arrived in the place, and found in Matty just the man he had been looking for. He took Matty to his house uphill as he needed a man in his place where there were too many females—his seven daughters besides his wife. On seeing Matty, Mrs Hanrahan remarked, "'Oh the poor man with his mended face!'" (Golding 1979, p. 59) When the seven girls, standing in semicircle, stared at him, Matty instinctively tried to put his hand on the scarred side of face so that the girls might not be frightened. However, appalled by the mesmerizing look of Mary Michel (the eldest girl), he left the Hanrahans at the instant, giving a wild cry and chanting the verses from the Bible. Thus work places also are the sites where Matty had to cope with discriminating behaviour over disfigurement and functional impairment.

### 5.3. Sadness and Diminished Self-Concern

At Frankley's he felt attracted to the flower girl, Miss Aylen. One day, while loitering in the streets, Matty came across the Greenfield Parish Church that he entered immediately, seeking spiritual solace. He began to utter the Lord's Prayer but stopped soon, for the words seemed to be meaningless. He continued his stay there, "kneeling, bewildered and sorrowful"; and as he knelt the painful but wonderful memories of the flower girl surged up: "He cried out silently to nowhere. Silence reverberated in silence" (Golding 1979, p. 49). Very soon he came to realize the fate of his desire for her:

The white-hot anguish continued to burn. In it was consumed a whole rising future that centred on the artificials and the hair, it had sunk away from the still-possible to the might-have-been. Because he had become aware he saw too how his unattractive appearance would have made an approach to the girl into a farce and humiliation; and

thought, as he saw, that it would be so with any woman. He began to weep adult tears, wounded right in the centre of his nature, wept for a vanished prospect as he might have wept for a dead friend. (Golding 1979, pp. 49-50)

Matty thus gradually experienced the consequences of body image disfigurement on his future course of life.

#### 5.4. Search for Meaning and Social Withdrawal

Other two common symptoms of burn trauma—search for meaning and social withdrawal—are also experienced by Matty. It is in Melbourne where Matty’s “vague feelings of bewilderment” coalesced into a sharp question somewhere in his head: ““Who am I?”” To this, the only answer from within was something like this:

You came out of nowhere and this is where you are going. You have injured your only friend; and you must offer up marriage, sex, love, because, because, *because!* On a cooler view of the situation, no one would have you, anyway. That is who you are. (Golding 1979, p. 51)

And Australia transformed him into the man in black also; first, he purchased a black hat and then started dressing entirely in black. “Piece by piece—jacket, trousers, shoes, socks, roll-neck sweater, pull over—he became the man in black, silent, distant, with the unsolved question waiting on him” (Golding 1979, p. 53). Commenting on Matty’s “sartorial transformation,” Stephen G. Hardy (2003) writes: “Dressed in black, Matty mourns his newly understood banishment from conventional social life, from “marriage, sex, loves, because, because . . .” (pp. 59-60). Vulnerability and isolation are the core experiences of psychological trauma. Here Matty, to avoid the scrutinizing glances of the people, never took his hat off in public places, and this led to rumours in the village that he slept in it. In fact, the rumours were baseless: “It was not the kind of hat he could sleep in it, being broad-brimmed, as everyone knew very well; but the story suited him, matched his withdrawal” (Golding 1979, p. 54). When, leaving the Hanrahans in Brisbane Matty reached the city of Gladstone and found work as a grave-digger there, the pattern repeated itself—the question returning and the restlessness and the need to move on to some place where all things would be made plain: “*Are all men like this?* Then there was added to that thought; *No. For the two sides of their face are equal.*” He further questioned himself: “Then; *Am I only different from them in face?*” (Golding 1979, p. 60) His social withdrawal eventually took the shape of movement or itinerancy, which perhaps allowed him a life that was less probed by the scrutinizing glances, less rumoured, less painful, and less traumatizing. Another form of Matty’s social withdrawal is his mutism. The longest sentence Matty had spoken for years was as follows: ““They all look the same to me.”” Common people took him for a preacher. But those who came in contact with him were bewildered by such “a man of so few words” (Golding 1979, p. 67). His face was awfully grave, but it did not seem to have opinions or a purpose. Yet still inside him the question pressed, altering now and becoming more urgent:

It had been *who I*, then become *what am I*; and now through the force of his cruciforce or crucifiction by the black man leaping on him out of the sky it changed again and was a burning question.

*What am I for?* (Golding 1979, pp. 67-68)

Search for meaning and social withdrawal are obviously the chief markers of Matty’s burn trauma.

### 5.5. Traumatic Dreams

It is also worth mentioning that the burned patients, especially immediately after the accident, experience traumatic dreams in most cases. Stoddard et al. (2001) also give much importance to the dreams that a burn patient experiences after the accident.<sup>iii</sup> Though no references to Matty's dreams repeating the exact traumatic situation are made in course of the novel, Matty dreamed a "burning question" with regard to his post-burn identity night after night:

It was the time when the question seemed to get warmer and warmer under the surface of his mind and his feelings, and then hotter and hotter until he dreamed it night after night. Three nights running he dreamed that Mr Pedigree repeated his awful words and then asked for help. Only Matty was dumb three nights running, struggling under the bedsheet and in his mouth trying to explain--*How can I help until I know what I am?* (Golding 1979, p. 56)

Matty's dreams here seem to be triggered by both his moral pain caused by shameful association with Mr Pedigree and his search for identity after the burn accident.

### 5.6. Spiritual Confusion: Dreams, Visions, Hallucinations

Following in the footsteps of Ronnie-Jannoff-Bulman, Sandra L. Bloom and Michael Reichert (1998) in their work *Bearing Witness: Violence and Collective Responsibility* maintain that

the experience of trauma shatters—often irrevocably—some very basic assumptions about our world, our relationship to others, and our basic sense of identity and place in the world. A sense of meaning and purpose for being alive is shaken. (p. 144)

Commenting on the inescapability of spiritual dimension in life of a trauma victim, Bloom and Reichert (2014) also subscribe Judith Herman's notion of sublimating the negative impact of violence: "Confrontation with the spiritual, philosophical, and /or religious context—and conflicts—of human experience is impossible to avoid if recovery is to be assured" (p. 147). Here Matty, since his school days, was a devoted listener, and attracted toward religion. He knew large portions of the Old Testament and small portions of the New Testament by heart. Subsequently he became a Bible freak. And the key thing in Matty's postburn psychological adjustment is his dream diary that is quasi-religious in nature. When, leaving Australia for England, Matty docked in Cornwall and found work as an ironmonger, two spirits—one in blue and the other in red with their hats on—had been visiting him for almost two years. Matty decided to keep a diary as a record of their visitations. These diary entries, almost all of which deserve mention and need closer examination, seem to be the key issue in Matty's post-burn psychological adjustment.

The red and blue spirits that visit him in his waking state may be seen as either memory distortions or hallucinations. Stoddard et al. (2001) have suggested that "post-traumatic images, including dreams, may persist and become elaborated in many different forms—such as repetitive memories, memory elaborations and distortions, hallucinations, and intrusions and extrusions of memory—with the potential for enormous alterations and fixations in personality development" (pp. 42-43). Matty's hallucinations also exist alongside of conscious cerebral control. He realizes their existence at the time of their development; he memorizes them and is able to give a detailed account of them. He is also capable of analyzing his hallucinations. Initially he does not attribute to them any serious meaning; he suspects them to be "a warning" against "something undone" in his life. For him, the only plausible explanation for them may be his "great and terrible sin" (Golding 1979, pp. 86-87) that he would like to undo if he knew how to do. Looked at from this perspective, Matty's hallucinations have their origin in his past—they are the products of the

pricks of conscience caused by his failure to mend his spiritual face that got terribly scarred by association with Mr Pedigree the paedophile. However, it may be said that Matty's obsession with the spirits gradually takes the shape of what Gordon (1917-18, p. 425 ) calls "obsessive hallucinations."<sup>iv</sup> Such hallucinations (Gordon 1917-18, p. 425) often take the shape of delusion as well. Matty gradually accepts his hallucinations as inevitable phenomena. Instead of offering resistance to them he rather waits for the spirits to come. He becomes "accustomed to them" (Golding 1979, p. 238) and does not get frightened or go cold when they come. And Matty's attempts to interpret his obsessive hallucinations over the years ultimately make him a delusive character.

Matty's encounter with the "good spirits (angels)" (Golding 1979, p. 102)—the red spirit and the blue one—inevitably raises the question of psychomachy also. Are the spirits Matty sees angels or "ministering spirits" (Hebrews 1:14)? They remind us of Michael, "an angel of the Lord" (Luke 1:11),<sup>vi</sup> who tends to wear red, and of Gabriel who typically wears blue or white garments. Why do the spirits, if be good ones, then ask Matty to throw away his Bible? Matty himself doubts the intention of them: "Satan may appear as an angel of light so much more easily as a red or blue spirit with hats" (Golding 1979, p. 92). Some of the dualities<sup>vii</sup> of psychomachy are quite obvious in Matty's character. Traces of conflict between Faith and Idolatry, for example, may be found in the following diary entry regarding his occult practices:

Great and terrible things are afoot. I thought that only me and Ezekiel had been given the way of showing things to those people who can see (as with matchboxes, thorns, shards, and marrying a wicked woman etc.) because it. . . . (Golding 1979, p. 235)

The duality of Chastity and Lust may be another cause of Matty's moral pain. Matty lusts, as recorded in his journal entry dated 13/6/78, for Miss Stanhope, who is engaged to Mr Masterman, the PT master, and who is very attractive and jovial. As a consequence of this, in his dream or vision "the woman in the Apocalypse" appeared "in terrible glory" and tormented him because of his "bad thoughts about Miss Stanhope" (Golding 1979, p. 236). Matty again doubts the vey identity of the woman in his vision: "Is she then disguised as an angel of light or is she a good spirit" (Golding 1979, p. 237). As we see in the third and final part of the novel, Matty's visions/hallucinations and dreams reappear in 1978. The diary entry, dated 12/6/78, further reveals Matty's obsession with the occult and his efforts of spiritual healing.

Then, does Matty's moral suffering alone trigger his hallucinations like that of Jocelin in *The Spire*? Or does Matty's burn trauma compounded with moral suffering give birth to his hallucinations? In fact, Matty, finding the inadequacy of his repaired face in life and society, escapes into the spiritual world, and his obsession with his spiritual healing makes him a hallucinatory and delusive character. Modern psychologists have looked upon religion itself as delusion; and, for an individual like Matty, who is never accepted by the so called natural human world for his "mended face," and who perhaps finds the Bible inadequate to heal his "spiritual face," the paranormal or occult or quasi-religious one is the only resort he can take to.

## 6. Matty's "Survivor Mission"

Matty ultimately sacrificed his life to rescue a boy (the son of an oil sheik) whom Sophy planned to kidnap from the Wandicott School where he (Matty) was employed as a handyman. His sacrifice may be seen from the perspective of trauma theorist Judith Herman's (1992) premise of "survivor mission":



Most survivors seek the resolution of their traumatic experience within the confines of their personal lives. But a significant minority, as a result of the trauma, feel called upon to engage in a wider world. These survivors recognize a political or religious dimension in their misfortune and discover that they can transform the meaning of their personal tragedy by engaging himself. While there is no way to compensate for an atrocity, there is a way to transcend it, by making it a gift to others. The trauma is redeemed only when it becomes the source of a survivor mission. (p. 207)

Matty's dream diary testifies to the fact that he did recognize a religious dimension in his burn accident; and he ultimately translated the significance of his personal misfortune by making it the basis for societal activities. As there was no way to compensate for his dermal disfigurement caused by the perpetrators of war, he transcended it, by making himself "a burnt offering" (Golding 1979, p. 238) for the child he had been protecting. When his face could not be mended in the world of perpetrators and passive bystanders, he attempted to mend the world in his own ways.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus it may be said that Matty was a victim of not only World War II but also a society that always discriminates the Other. His burn accident subsequently compounded by psychomachy meets the criteria for the definition of a psychological trauma (Type I). Matty, however, put an end to his traumatic experiences by liberating himself from his preserved confinement of personal life. William Golding's *Darkness Visible* (1979), far from being a mere fiction, is then an authentic case study of burn trauma also.

## Notes

---

<sup>i</sup> John Carey is the first biographer of William Golding.

<sup>ii</sup> Drawing on original accounts from many former evacuees and archival materials as well, Jessica Mann, herself a wartime evacuee, in her *Out of Harm's Way: The Wartime Evacuation of Children from Britain* unravels the distresses of thousands of British children who evacuated to the countryside and overseas (Australia, New Zealand, the U.S.A., Canada, and South Africa) during the Second World War.

<sup>iii</sup> Frederik J. Stoddard et al. further note here: "Trauma as reflected in dreams or the lack of recall may signal the way in which the development of the child's personality will be affected. In discussing their twenty-year follow-up of children who survived the Buffalo Creek disaster, Honig and colleagues (1993, p. 351) write: "The particular way in which the individual's coping response to the trauma consolidates or does not consolidate appears to influence the ultimate resiliency or rigidity or the adult personality, the response to subsequent trauma, and the sense of meaning or purpose derived from life." . . . It may be that the structure of the post-traumatic dreams of burned children shapes the subsequent strength and development of defenses such as regression, denial, avoidance, and reaction formation. These efforts to defend against the feelings associated with the trauma may alter personality development." (p. 43.)

<sup>iv</sup> As Gordon defines, "When the hallucinations reach such a state of tenacity that they persist in spite of the patient's efforts to remove them, they play the same role as obsessive ideas." (p. 425)

<sup>v</sup> *Authorized King James Version*.

<sup>vi</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>vii</sup> For better explanation see Michel Foucault's (2001) *Madness and Civilization*. London: Routledge Classics.: "The Middle Ages had given madness a place in the hierarchy of vices. Beginning with the thirteenth century, it is customarily ranked among the wicked soldiers of the psychomachy. It figures, at Paris as at Amiens, among the evil soldiery, and is among the twelve [Sic.] dualities that dispute the sovereignty of the human soul: Faith and Idolatry, Hope and Despair, Charity and Avarice, Chastity and Lust, Prudence and Folly, Patience and Anger, Indulgence and Harshness, Concord and Discord, Obedience and Rebellion, Perseverance and Inconstancy." (p. 21)

### Works Cited

- Bloom, S. L., & Michael Reichert. (2014). *Bearing Witness: Violence and Collective Responsibility*. New York: Routledge.
- Broich, Ulrich (1984). William Golding and the Religious Function of Literature. In Ulrich Broich, Theo Stemmler, and Gerd Stratmann (Eds), *Functions of Literature: Essays Presented for Erwin Wolff on his Sixtieth Birthday* (pp. 305-26). Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Carey, J. (2009). *William Golding: The Man Who Wrote Lord of the Flies*. London: Faber.
- Golding, W. (1979). *Darkness Visible*. London: Faber.
- Gordon, A. (1917-18). Obsessive Hallucinations and Psychoanalysis. *The Journal of Social and Abnormal Psychology*, 12, 423-30.
- Rumsey, N. , & Diana Harcourt. (2005). *The Psychology of Appearance*. Berkshire, New York: Open University Press.
- Hardy, S. G. (2003). *The Death of William Golding: Authorship and Creativity in Darkness Visible and The Paper Men*. (Durham University) Retrieved December 16 , 2014, from <<http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/4091/>>.
- Herman, J. L. (1992). *Trauma and Recovery* . New York: Basic Books .
- Lawrence. J. W. , Leslie J. Heinberg, James A. Fauerbach, Marion Doctor, & Brett D. Thombs. ( 2006 ). The Reliability and Validity of the Perceived Stigmatization Questionnaire (PSQ) and the Social Comfort Questionnaire (SCQ) Among an Adult Burn Survivor Sample. *Psychological Assessment* , 18 ( 1).
- Landolt, M. A. et al. (2009). Brief Report: Quality of Life Is Impaired in Pediatric Burn Survivors with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology* , 1 (34), 14-21.
- Mann, J. (2006). *Out of Harm's Way: The Wartime Evacuation of Children from Britain*. London: Headline.
- Stoddard, F. J., David S. Chedekel, & Laura Shakun. (2001). Dreams and Nightmares of Burned Children. In D. Barrett (Ed.), *Trauma and Dreams* (pp. 25-45). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Tebbutt, Glorie (1939). Reading and Righting: Metafiction and Metaphysics in William Golding's *Darkness Visible*. *Twentieth Century Literature*. 39 (1). 47-58. Retrieved December 5 , 2016, from JSTOR.

---

Joyanta Dargar teaches at M.U.C. Women's College (A Constituent College of the University of Burdwan, West Bengal, India). He is also actively engaged in his doctoral work on William Golding's trauma novels. Besides, he is interested in creative writing and translation work.

---