Physical and Spiritual Deaths in William Golding's *Pincher Martin*:

The Two Deaths and the Two Opportunities of Christopher Martin

During the mid-20th century, there emerged a group of writers, authors, and thinkers concerned with the horrors of World War II. Known as postmodernists, they were appalled by the cruelty of human nature. They looked to theorists of the past and “[attempted] to rethink a number of concepts held dear by Enlightenment humanism” (Felluga). Amongst those members was British writer William Golding who brought his own experience as a lieutenant in the Royal Navy into his work. His third novel, *Pincher Martin* (1956), expresses his concerns with contemporary man's “guilt and greed,” “consciousness,” and “the necessity of religious belief” (Tiger 102). The protagonist in Golding's novel is a character who exemplifies these human shortcomings that were the popular subject of 20th century literature.

Christopher Hadley Martin, a British naval lieutenant, is blown from the bridge of his naval ship by a torpedo and is cast away onto a craggy rock in the North Atlantic Ocean. The next thirteen chapters of the novel present Martin's plight for survival. Christopher must fulfill his basic needs for food, shelter and sleep. The needs of the body clash with the needs of his spirit as he must also cope with flashbacks of his sinful past. The ending chapter reveals a coda, or plot twist, Christopher “didn't even have time to kick off his sea boots” (Golding 185). What the reader believes to be a story about a man's physical struggle for survival is actually an examination of conscience and a struggle of the soul.
Christopher is physically dead throughout the text but his spirit lives on to invent a rock—a creative space for his mind to exist. The vitality of the spirit is given a second chance to come to terms with its self-absorbed past. This paper argues that the opportunity given between the physical and spiritual deaths reveals an unrepentant man who clings to the pleasures of a narcissistic lifestyle.

The alternative, English title of the text, *The Two Deaths of Christopher Martin*, reveals Christopher’s dual demise. However, this concept still leaves readers confused about how he is deceased for thirteen chapters of the text. Golding’s plot twist technique engages the reader in a re-evaluation of the text. Given that Golding establishes this concept of two deaths, it is imperative to re-define these deaths in the context of the plot. The scientific view of death is that “[people] terminate as individual psychological beings at the moment of bodily death” (Volk 10). This definition recognizes that there are both physical and spiritual components of dying. According to scientist Tyler Volk, “dualists” believe that “the brain and at least some aspect of the mind as independent entities [detaches] at death” (Volk 42). The detachment of the mind creates a space between life and death. Psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan theorizes that the space between the two deaths is a “space of pure death drive without desire, between symbolic death and actual death” (Felluga). It is noted by psychologist Kazushige Shingu that “Lacan did not accept the conventional order, in which somatic death comes first” (Shingu 263). Therefore Lacan’s theory of “between the two deaths” serves as a theoretical framework that explains Christopher Martin's actions. Caught between life and death, Christopher acts upon the death drive, his physical instinct to remain dormant, as a means of clinging onto not just his life, but his identity (Felluga).

Since Christopher cannot save his body from the grip of death, his spirit triggers the primal instinct of survival. Before this instinct can take over, the mind must fully detach from the body. At first, “He was struggling in every direction, he was the centre of the writhering and kicking knot of his own body” (Golding 7). Christopher's death drive has been activated as he battles for survival
against the elements of water and wreckage. It is when his body cannot fight anymore that the detachment of the mind occurs: “But the man lay suspended behind the whole commotion, detached from his jerking body” (Golding 8). The separation of body and spirit is seen in this moment as Golding describes the “man” laying suspended while the “body” is left detached and jerking in the ocean. Although there is no exact moment of physical death, Golding's use of bodily description depicts the dying narrator as “lying limply” and “[taking] air in gulps between moments of burial” (Golding 10). Because Golding does not announce Christopher's death, he seizes this undefined intermediary space as an opportunity for creativity. Author of the article “Pincher Martin's Afterlife,” Leon Surette uses Golding's own words to interpret why Christopher's spirit lives on: “Ostensibly and rationally he is a survivor from a torpedoed destroyer: but deep down he knows the truth. He is not fighting for bodily survival but for his continuing identity in face of what will smash it and sweep it away” (Surette 207). The nature of this fictional opportunity is a technique Golding uses to examine Christopher's self-absorbed identity. The spirituality of his identity has never been given the opportunity for self-reflection. This opportunity does not occur until “Eternity, inseparable from pain, was there to be examined and experienced” (Golding 13). Christopher's body must die in order for his spirit to be given the chance at reconciliation.

Golding maintains that Christopher's “greed for life” is what keeps his spirit alive (Surette 207). Psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud's theory of narcissism explains Christopher's greed for spiritual vitality. To Freud, narcissism “[denotes] the attitude of a person who treats his own body in the same way in which the body of a sexual object is ordinarily treated—who looks at it, that is to say, strokes it and fondles it until he obtains complete satisfaction through these activities” (“On Narcissism: An Introduction,” 545). Before becoming a soldier, Christopher took pleasure in acting. His theatre manager describes him best when he states that “This painted bastard here takes anything he can lay his hands on. He takes the best part, the best seat, the most money, the best notice, the best woman. He was
born with his mouth open and his flies open and both hands out to grab” (Golding 106). This commentary from the manager describes Christopher's narcissistic lifestyle—his need to please his body by any means possible. Because his body can no longer be pleased, his spiritual being evolves to accommodate these self-loving needs of the flesh. Christopher believes that the rock accommodates this need. It is a place where he can anchor himself in the physical—a place he thinks he understands.

Narcissism can be used to explain how Christopher acts upon the pleasure principle. As theorized by Freud, this principle states that the id, or one's instincts and desires, must “[gain] control over the demands of the instincts, by deciding whether they are to be allowed satisfaction, by postponing that satisfaction to times and circumstances favorable in the external world or by suppressing their excitations entirely (“The Ego and the Id,” 3). In other words, this idea claims that the tensions created by the external realm trigger a fight or flight response; if tensions are heightened, they are unpleasurable and if they are weakened, they are desirable. This principle drives Christopher to seek pleasure and avoid pain. Specifically, Christopher seeks sexual pleasures of the flesh and evades anything or anyone that gets in the way of his desire. This is apparent when thinking back to his past life, Christopher remembers “[stealing] another man's woman and [inviting] the former to watch her in his own bed” (Tiger 105). Christopher thinks that people are just all pieces that he can manipulate in his own game. He has no regard for the reactions or feelings of others. Tiger supports this by saying, “The only value in the world is his own personality; that which does not serve him, he tries to dominate” (Tiger 105). Christopher's narcissism defines his personality, his desires, and his physical struggles in life and in death.

Christopher's narcissism also dictates how he perceives his own actions. His resistance towards the unpleasurable shows that he has not fully matured into someone capable of “[learning] the need to endure pain and to defer gratification because of the exigencies and obstacles of reality” (Felluga). Christopher realizes this internal conflict between desirable and undesirable, ego and id: “I know my
stuff just sexual images from the unconscious, the libido, or is it the id? All explained and known. Just sexual stuff what can you expect? Sensation, all tunnels and wells and drops of water. All old stuff, you can't tell me. I know” (Golding 129). Given this opportunity on the rock to understand his immature, narcissistic behavior, he sticks to what he knows best. Blinded by his behavior, he doesn't realize that he really doesn't know his unconscious. Christopher rationalizes his pleasure-driven behavior by dismissing his own actions. He reconfirms the ideas of the unconscious and id as factual information but he does not apply these terms to himself; instead he distances himself from the truth when he states, “you can't tell me. I know” (Golding 129). This is because Christopher's ego, or in other words the desires of his body, have always been in charge of his actions. His body has never given his id, or spirit, a chance. In other words, “the ego represents and enforces the reality-principle whereas the id is concerned only with the pleasure-principle” (Felluga). Christopher's narcissistic concern with pleasure blinds him from recognizing his own pleasure-driven reality.

Narcissism can also be used to interpret Christopher's physical actions on the rock. Once Christopher's mind is separated from his body and has created a space for itself to physically exist and he must keep his spirit alive through physical measures. These measures exist in a series of physical survival needs such as food. For Christopher, “Hunger contracted under his clothes like a pair of hands” (Golding 56). Hunger, a natural instinct of the body’s need for food, relates back to the only thing he understand—the physical. Hands are used to grab, take, steal, and snatch, much like the name “Pincher” suggests. In Samuel Hynes study on Pincher Martin he notes that “‘Pincher’ is a nickname habitually attached to sea-going Martins...The grabbing hands, which are imagined in the novel as lobsters, are the last part of Pincher to disappear at the end” (Hynes 129). Other critical approaches to Pincher Martin have attested to Golding's craft that “It is a clever emblematic invention as all Martins in the British Navy are called Pincher” (Tiger 103). Golding links the instinct of hunger and the image of the outstretched lobster hands to exemplify how Christopher must always reach out for more in order
to please himself. He will always be a “Pincher”; even in death he cannot separate the needs and desires of the flesh from the core of his spiritual vitality.

One of Christopher's first physical struggles on the rock is finding food. Christopher takes pleasure in the limpets he devours. What is interesting is that the limpets are tiny mollusks “noted for the way [they] cling tightly to rocks” (“Limpets”). What better creature to devour than a creature that exemplifies himself? As Christopher clings to life he must suffice his need for food; his food source also clings onto life, specifically the rock. Even in death, Christopher must devour anything that suffices his pleasure—even the tiniest of creatures are subjects surrendered to his desire. Christopher also describes how “The whole business of eating was peculiarly significant. They made a ritual of it on every level, the Fascists as a punishment, the religious as a rite, the cannibal either as a ritual or as medicine or as a superbly direct declaration of conquest” (Golding 79). Christopher believes he is using his intelligence to reveal the purpose of consumption. However, he is actually revealing where he fits into “the whole business of eating” (Golding 79). For Christopher, whether he eats for survival or for pleasure, he does so like a cannibal “as a superbly direct declaration of conquest” (Golding 79).

Christopher and the limpets are one in the same therefore eating them is an act of cannibalism. Again, the only way he knows how to sustain his needs are through narcissist pleasures: “I must keep this body going. I must give it drink and food. When I do that it does not matter whether the job is well done...So long as the thread of life is unbroken it will connect a future with the past for all this ghastly interlude” (Golding 73). For Christopher, it doesn't matter what he consumes or by what measures he takes so long as he is alive. This thinking reflects his narcissism; it does not matter what he must do or how he must obtain pleasure so long as it pleases himself. Instead of using this opportunity for reconciliation of the soul, Christopher has utilized this space as a means of pleasure through survival.

Christopher identifies that to survive on this rock; he must obtain a safe space: “Shelter. Must have shelter. Die if I don’t” (Golding 39). Christopher realizes that his “shelter” on the rock is an
intermediate space because he understands that he would “die” without it. It is important to note that Christopher calls this space a shelter and not a home. The difference between these two places is in its temporality; a shelter is “a place giving temporary protection from danger” (“Shelter”). Christopher also professes that he will cease to live if he cannot find a safe space for surviving. It is not his body seeking shelter but the remnants of his spiritual existence clinging onto the temporary space between life and death. Christopher finds that “the trenches were full of darkness for down by the shelter for some reason there was no dirty white” (Golding 42). The dirty white refers to the “splashes of [bird] dung” visible on the rocks above the trench. This place of safety is a place of complete darkness and isolation—where everything ceases to exist but the vitality of Christopher's own surviving spirit. The nature of this shelter however, is that it is not a place that will keep him safe from pain. In fact Christopher finds this space in the first place after falling from a cliff on the rock: “I have tumbled in a trench. My head is jammed against the farther side and my neck is twisted” (Golding 37). Just as his body struggled in the sea once before, his body again “immediately...convulsed and [struggled]” on the rock (Golding 37). Although Christopher seeks a space free from pain, “The pain could not be avoided” (Golding 38). Essentially there is no shelter on this rock. There is no place where Christopher can hide from his fate; he must endure the physical pain on the rock because this space is the only place of existence.

Another means of survival for Christopher's spirit comes in the physical need for sleep. It seems ironic that Christopher yearns for sleep—a sensation closest to the experience of death. He yearns to rest, but what disrupts this process are repressed flashbacks resurfacing to his thoughts. Freud believed that “Before the repressed has become strong enough to push itself up into waking life as a delusion, it may easily have won its first success under the more favorable conditions of sleep, in the form of a dream whose effects lingers on” (Dreams and Delusions 86). Sleep is where his mind can wander to places unexplored in consciousness. However, Christopher realizes that some aspects of his thoughts
are better left alone: “Sleep is where [he touches] what is better left unexamined...There the carefully hoarded and enjoyed personality, [his] only treasure and at the same time [his] only defense, must die into the ultimate truth of things” (Golding 82).

The need for physical sleep is deferred by his spirit's incapability to reconcile with its internal conflicts. While trying to talk himself into sleeping, Christopher tells himself to “Think about women then or eating. Think about eating women, eating men, crunching up Alfred, that other girl” (Golding 81). While trying to sleep, he thinks that dreaming of physical pleasures such as food and sex will put his mind at ease. Since these physical pleasures worked to put his mind at ease when there was a physical body to act upon them. Now that “sleep time was divorced from the straight line so that Alfred and Sybil were on the rock with him and that boy with the sniveling blubbered face” Christopher cannot escape these thoughts in sleep but realizes that they are a part of him that he must reconcile (Golding 82). This opportunity for reconciliation is wasted time and time again as he misses his chance. It is his innate human fear of the repressed material that his spirit cannot endure. His answer to his own question of why he cannot sleep comes with a stark realization that “[he is] afraid to” (Golding 82).

Sleep presents an opportunity for the spirit to face with repressed flashbacks of what pleases his body. However, the opportunity is dismissed by his innate human fear of recognizing his own narcissistic, immoral character.

Christopher Martin cannot understand death so he must put it in physical terms. This physicality exists not only as the purpose of the rock, but as an opportunity to reconcile with his past. The second death is Christopher's spiritual death. These are instances where his mind interjects in the physical, imaginary realm of the rock. The purpose of the spiritual death can be related to the Greek mythological story of Prometheus. When Christopher cries out, “I am Prometheus” it is understood that
“he is a man trapped on a barren rock, defying the fate that put him there” (Hynes 126). Christopher, much like Prometheus, endures his punishment in a space that fits his crime. This format fits Golding's own beliefs in that “[people] live in two worlds. There is this physical one, which is coherent, and there is a spiritual one” (Surette 211). For Christopher, the physical embodies his crime and the spiritual expresses his punishment. His body has been a hindrance to self-examination. Once his body is gone, all that he has in this intermediary space before his second death is his spirit. The death of the body is a necessary gateway for Christopher to reconcile with his spirit. However, even given the second opportunity, his does not experience remorse or repentance. In fact, through these actions of the mind, Christopher's true immoral and unsaved spirit is revealed.

The first image to emerge from the depths of Christopher's unconscious is one of a jam jar. This jam jar is a glass jar with a human figurine suspended inside of it in water: “The jar was nearly full of clear water and a tiny glass figure floated upright in it. The top of the jar was covered with a thin membrane—white rubber” (Golding 8). The little figure floats in the middle at equilibrium but when someone outside the jar tips it over, the figure moves between the realms of water and the white rubber. This faded memory of the jam jar is a repressed image brought to life by Christopher's struggle for survival. Repression is a psychoanalytical term known by Freud as “a dynamic expression which takes into consideration the play of psychic forces and denotes that there is present an effort to express all psychic activities, but also a counter-force which is able to prevent a part of these psychic activities of becoming conscious” (Dreams and Delusions, 70). Repression in and of itself represents the very image of the jam jar. Memories of the unconscious resurface into consciousness when one's jar has been tipped. What is important about this image is that Christopher reflects it back on himself and feels like the figure within the jar: “The delicate balance of the glass figure related itself to his body. In a

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1 Author Sohana Manzoor describes the mythological tale: “Originally, Prometheus was a titan, a pre-Hellenic fire god later replaced by Hephaestus. He stole fire from Zeus and presented it to mankind. As punishment for this crime along with other offences, Zeus, the supreme god had him tied on the highest peak of Caucasus” (Manzoor 105).
moment of wordless realization he saw himself touching the surface of the sea with just a dangerous
stability, poised between floating and going down” (Golding 9). At the center of himself are these
images from the inner and outer realms of his reality that he is trying to keep at equilibrium. This
struggle is something that Christopher endured in his past life, when pleasures of the flesh dictated his
lifestyle. However, much like the figurine in the jar, the outside force of nature has tipped his inner jar
over, causing him to slide back and forth between consciousness and unconsciousness—self-
preservation and self-awareness.

The most significant symbol that emerges in Christopher's consciousness is through the imagery
and description of the maggot. Freud describes a symbol as “elements in the world that have come to
hold specific, if repressed, sexual meaning for the human species” (Felluga). The image of the maggot
brings to Christopher's mind thoughts of sexual pleasure: “She's the producer’s wife, old man. Fat.
White. Like a maggot with tiny black eyes. I should like to eat you. I should love to play Danny. I
should love to eat you. I should love to put you in a play. How can I put you anywhere if I haven't eaten
you? He's a queer. He'd love to eat you. And I should love to eat you too. You're not a person, my
sweet, you're an instrument of pleasure” (Golding 85). The producer’s wife is compared to a maggot
and Christopher desires to play the part of the cast member, Danny, who gets to “eat her.” He has
dehumanized the “producer’s wife” into an “instrument of pleasure” (Golding 85). For Christopher,
eating is more than just the physical need to sustain the body through food. Eating is an instrument of
pleasure and helps to sustain his physical and sexual desires. It is not enough to say that the maggot is
in and of itself a symbol of consumption when that is the very nature of the maggot. This symbol must
also represent something bigger than itself. Critic Samuel Hynes theorizes that the symbol of the
maggot also reflects greed: “This supreme greed is expressed in the novel in the Parable of the Chinese
Box. One of Pincher's victims describes how the Chinese, when they wish to prepare a rare dish, bury a
fish in a tin box. Maggots eat the fish, and then one another, until finally “where there was a fish is
now one huge successful maggot. Rare dish” (Hynes 129). The maggot's consumptive nature is what emulates greed. All of his life, Christopher has believed that “[he is the] bigger maggot” (Golding 120). Self-identification is skewed by Christopher’s needs of self-preservation; it is again a battle between the body and spirit. Even given the opportunity on the rock, he must act out of his narcissistic greed for his own life and his own identity.

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What the reader knows of Christopher's past choices comes only from the series of flashbacks that alternate throughout the text with his struggles on the rock. These flashbacks unfold as a series of repressed symbols and images that are vitally connected to his physical being. Before these can be explicated it is first important to note that “Memory can be biased. This skewing of memory occurs in the cognitive unconscious, which then brings the altered memory into consciousness” (Volk 45-46). The nature of flashbacks is that they are incomplete and out of order which creates discontinuity and confusion not only for Christopher but for the reader. The nature and function of flashbacks lies from the fact that they are repetitive. Paul Moyaert interprets repetition differently than Freud. Moyaert claims that repetition in and of itself “[is] a realm beyond the pleasure principle because repetition of unpleasurable contents cannot be motivated by the pleasure principle” (Moyaert 103). His argument suggests that Christopher's repetitive flashbacks do not exist because of a principle in which “repetition functions like an autonomous [machine] because it is not concerned with pleasure or unpleasure; it acts beyond [this and has] no sense or rhythm or time” (Moyaert 103). Christopher ironically hints at this when he states that there is “Plenty to do on a rock. Never a dull moment” (Golding 103). The need to reconcile with these repressed symbols and images, displeasing or unpleasurable, forces its way into action as he tries to keep a grasp on life.

Christopher’s identity is his narcissistic lifestyle. Nathaniel is a reoccurring character in Christopher's memory that represents a foil of his identity: “Nathaniel is the opposite of Pincher; he can
love selflessly and without thought, and he therefore wins the love of Mary, the girl for whom Pincher feels an obsessive lust” (Hynes 131). Because “Loss of love and failure leave behind a permanent injury to self-regard in the form of a narcissistic scar” defeating Nathaniel is the only means of healing for Christopher. (Freud 603). Christopher's final action before his death was a command to “Hard a-starboard,” or turn the ship (Kinkead-Weeks 129). As Nathaniel stands by the railing in prayer, this was in an attempt to kill his friend and foe: “Good-bye, Nat, I loved you and it is not in my nature to love much. But what can the last maggot do? Lose his identity?” (Golding 163). Had this command happened seconds earlier for the purpose of saving the ship against the enemy's torpedo, Christopher would be alive and his friend would be dead. Golding seizes Christopher's moment of decision and utilizes the rock as a space for Christopher to endure the burden of his choice.

Christopher's rock unifies both his physical and spiritual realms. Critic Virginia Tiger states that “Pincher Martin is a report of a soul in Purgatory, not the tale of a shipwrecked sailor on a solitary rock” (Tiger 111). However, the purpose of the rock is to bring both the “report of a soul in Purgatory” and “the tale of a shipwrecked sailor” together. The rock is where we see the web of these two plots tangled together. There is the present Christopher Martin who is the lone survivor on a barren rock in the mid-Atlantic. This Christopher struggles with physical needs of food, shelter and sleep. There is also the coda, plot twist Christopher Martin who's spirit survives to invent a creative space for his soul to reap what it has sown. The coda brings the past and future together; the unsaved and sinful man he has been all along is what he will continue to be for the rest of eternity. The rock is a physical place where Christopher's spirit defies death. Freud agreed with Schopenhauer's philosophy of death by stating that “death is the 'true result and to that extent the purpose of life', while the sexual instinct is the embodiment of the will to live” (Freud 618). Christopher is not ready to accept his fate, therefore his spirit embodies the will to live. The rock is a necessary and specific setting to the particular crisis plaguing Christopher's second death.
The rock is presented as his first hope at life. It is a physical space to cling to, to avoid death, and to await rescue. As he swims away from the wreckage: “He glimpsed at the riven rock face with trees of spray and growing up it and the sight of this rock floating in the mid-Atlantic was so dreadful that he wasted his air by screaming as if it had been a wild beast” (Golding 20). Christopher's body is like this first image of the rock. His body is “floating in the mid-Atlantic.” Also, his body “wasted air” and “screamed” moments before he died or in this case, turned into a “wild beast.” Christopher, unsure of the intermediary space between physical and spiritual death, tries to save himself by anchoring the unknown into physical, tangible terms. However, the dual nature of the rock is evident in its physical description. Christopher reflects on this duality when he wakes up after being washed up the rock's layers of pebbles: “The pattern was white and black but mostly white. It existed in two layers, one behind the other, one for each eye” (Golding 22). The first layer is seen through the “eye” of the body where Christopher sees and feels the pebbles. The second layer is seen through the “eye” of his spirit as repressed images resurface and take shape like the grainy pebbles. As he feels the rock's pebbles against his skin, he also reflects on how these tiny pieces of stone emulate the pictures occurring in his thoughts: “The individual pebbles were no bigger than the pictures. Sometimes a pebble would be occupied entirely by a picture as though it were a window, a spy-hole into a different world or a different dimension” (Golding 24). The physical element of the pebbles reflects the spiritual element of the pictures or flashbacks that Christopher must face.

The physicality of the rock also embodies a flashback to an image of teeth—specifically Christopher's memory of a bad toothache. At first, Christopher “looked solemnly at the line of rocks and found himself thinking of them as teeth” (Golding 78). Christopher understands the rock because it is a physical space that represents his own being. However, “Pincher himself creates the rock out of the memory of an aching and now missing tooth, and gropes to control what is in fact an illusion of his mind” (Tiger 111). His physical, pleasure-driven body is missing like the tooth. All that is left are the
“illusions of his mind.” This image of the rock as teeth haunts Christopher until he realizes that it truly represents himself: “He started at the sea and saw nothing. His tongue was remembering. It pried the gap between the teeth and re-created the old, aching shape. [He] understood what was so hauntingly familiar and painful about the isolated and decaying rock in the middle of the sea” (Golding 174). However, what also seems to haunt Christopher is the idea that this rock could consume him in the way that he enjoys consuming others. Unfortunately for Christopher, “to lie on a row of teeth in the middle of the sea—” would mean to be dead. (Golding 91).

Everything that Christopher faces while in his survival mode is made out to be a struggle he must overcome. These struggles challenge his mental competency and intelligence: “Think you bloody fool, think!” (Golding 28). Martin first struggles to figure out the surroundings on the rock. The rock isn't just something Christopher must become familiarized with; it is something that he must conquer: “For seven consecutive days Pincher struggles to survive; struggles to maintain his sanity and his health; struggles to tame the barren rock” (Tiger 104). Christopher has a past of conquering people around them in order to use and manipulate them. In order to conquer the rock, he must also make it a place he can manipulate: “I am netting down this rock with names and taming it... If this rock tries to adapt me to its ways I will refuse and adapt it to mine” (Golding 86). In order to tame the “wild beast” that is known as the rock, Christopher decides that he must identify each physical feature: “He proceeds to civilize the landscape; a prominent ledge he calls Lookout, a lower ledge, Safety Rock; where he finds mussels to eat he calls Food Cliff” (Tiger 104). “Netting down,” “taming” and “[adapting]” these places on the rock is a wasted opportunity. Christopher wastes the opportunity to “net down” and “tame” the spiritual “wild beast” he has created in himself by squandering his energy on an imaginary obstacle. Again, Christopher only knows how to fulfill the needs of the physical and neglects to see the vital needs of the spirit.

Christopher Martin's fictional story is a warning from William Golding: “Just to be Pincher is
Purgatory; to be Pincher for eternity is Hell” (Tiger 109). Even given the second opportunity at life, Christopher defies reconciliation until the very end of his spiritual demise. Critic Virginia Tiger describes Christopher as incapable of “[achieving] salvation, therefore [he] is an excessive warning on contemporary man's inability to achieve any kind of spiritual vision’” (Tiger 109). During the mid-20th century, authors, writers, and thinkers were concerned with salvation as they witnessed the horrors and cruelty of World War II. Golding himself states that “To achieve salvation, the persona must be destroyed. But suppose a man is nothing but greed? His original spirit is hopelessly obscured by his thirst for separate individual life. What can he do but refuse to be destroyed?” (Surette 206).

Christopher's persona refuses to be destroyed: “I have a right to live if I can!...I spit on your compassion!...I shit on your heaven!” (Golding 174-178). Spiritual restoration could give Christopher life, compassion, and even heaven. Instead, he refuses salvation to save his own “thread of life” (Golding 174). His last battle-cry against death makes the ending coda all the more significant. When Mr. Campbell asks, “whether [Christopher] suffered or not,” he comes to realization that Christopher is more than just a dead body (Golding 185). Each spiritual and physical chance at restoration of his soul is denied, leaving his bloated, empty carcass left to suffer for eternity (Virginia 110). Because Christopher had no vision he was left to perish (Virginia 111). Golding warns us that one must have a spiritual vision prior to physical death, in order for the spirit to achieve recognition and reconciliation. The importance of spiritual vision, or a system of beliefs, is vital for man's soul in the space between life and death.
Works Cited


Bleeding Colors

An Examination of the Portrayal of Sin in The Picture of Dorian Grey

Writing in defense of The Picture of Dorian Gray in the Scots Observer, Oscar Wilde downplayed the existence of a moral objective in his novel by noting that “no one” could identify “what Dorian Gray’s sins [were]” (Wilde qtd. in Cauti 241). To the dismay of his critics, Wilde continually declined endorsing whether the novel either advocated or critiqued the concept of morality. Instead, he often promoted the aesthetic ideal that art exists only for pleasure and not for didactic purposes. Rather than simply serving as an aesthetic manifesto, however, Wilde’s novel illustrates the danger that occurs when morality disintegrates. The corrupt behavior of the character Dorian Gray attributes a function to the novel separate to the aesthetic appeal of enjoyment. Through his use of the binaries of hot and cold, and their symbolic colors, Wilde illustrates that his novel The Picture of Dorian Gray has a moral purpose in its exposé of the hideousness of human sin.

The aesthetic movement of late 19th century Europe was characterized by its valuing of art only for its visual and artistic qualities rather than for any moral function the art could serve. Deriving from the Greek word aisthēta, meaning “things perceived by the senses,” the term aesthetic first became applied to a movement with the introduction of works by German authors during the Romantic period (Cuddon 11). German writers like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Immanuel Kant highly valued the artist as well as advocated for artistic freedom. It was not until the latter part of the 1800s; however, that aestheticism reached its height with Oscar Wilde serving as one of the movement’s foremost writers (Cuddon 11-13). Known for their emphasis
Turner

on beauty and the senses, aesthetes “insisted on the separation of art from morality” and “maintain[ed] that art need not be moral to have a purpose” (Murfin and Ray 6). Walter Pater, author of the 1873 novel *The Renaissance*, greatly impacted Wilde with his credo that life itself “should be treated in the spirit of art” (18). Praising the “spirit of rebellion and revolt against the moral and religious ideas of the time,” Pater viewed the “medieval Renaissance” as an embodiment of the triumph of the senses and beauty over didactical or religious doctrine (18). Pater’s conception of “search[ing] after the pleasures of the senses and the imagination” became an ideal pursued frequently in the works of aesthetic authors, including Wilde himself (18).

Wilde weaves the aesthetic values, especially those expressed by Pater, into *The Picture of Dorian Grey*. The novel’s preface carefully adheres to the aesthetic attitude of “love for art for its own sake” and the “desire for beauty” as being the highest ideals of the movement (Pater 88). Within the first line of the novel, Wilde establishes the artist as the “creator of beautiful things” rather than as one meant to educate or persuade their audience to adopt a particular ideology (1). Further aligning himself with Pater and other aesthetics, Wilde states that art is meant to be artificially examined only at surface level, with no deeper meanings attached to the piece. According to Wilde, individuals “who go beneath the surface” act at their own “peril” (2). However, those who find a piece of art as beautiful are considered to be sophisticated. In addition to the preface, the character of Lord Henry Wotton serves as a mouthpiece for Wilde’s aesthetic ideals through his constant utterance of aphorisms. Wotton frequently praises beauty as he disparages intelligence. In stating that “real beauty ends where intellectual expression begins,” Wotton conveys that beauty and intelligence are two irreconcilable ideals (Wilde 5). Tapping into Pater’s call for rebellion against moral order, Wotton persuades Dorian Gray to “yield to
temptation” because the “highest of all duties” is the duty “that one owes to oneself” (Wilde 20). The aesthetic teachings of Wotton serve as a corrupting force within the novel. In his article “‘A Malady of Dreaming,’” Paul Sheehan argues that aestheticism itself is tied to criminality. Sheehan notes that art and life are blended together during the scenes involving Grey’s romance with the actress Sybil Vane. By blending these two elements, however, the shallow and artificial focus on art championed by aesthetes becomes colored with deeper implications. In the novel, Dorian Grey courts Vane because he is fascinated by her ability to embody multiple identities as a Shakespearean actress. Like an aesthetic, he values the artificiality and art of her nature shown through her acting rather than her real self. After Vane expresses that she can no longer maintain the facade of acting, Grey callously abandons her and Vane decides to commit suicide. Reflecting on her death, Lord Wotton tells Grey that a tragedy becomes a “vulgarity” if it occurs in an “inartistic” manner that “lack[s]... style” (Wilde qtd. in Sheehan 334). However, both Wotton and Grey conclude that her death is reflective of the aesthetic ideal of beauty. According to Sheehan, this scene “implies that ‘vulgarity’ and ‘beauty’ are not just parts of an aesthetic vocabulary but can be applied to the most significant human concerns, to matters of life and death” (334). Thus, the perpetration of certain sinful acts can be justified among aesthetes as long as the act reflects aesthetic ideals. This, in turn, leads to aestheticism being “enmeshed in violent crime” (Sheehan 336). Not only is life and art blended in Wilde’s novel, but also aesthetics and morality.

In The Picture of Dorian Grey, a moral purpose can be detected against the backdrop of Dorian Grey’s sins. As scholar Michael Buma notes in his article “The Picture of Dorian Grey, or, The Embarrassing Orthodoxy of Oscar Wilde,” Wilde presented a moral to his novel in an 1890 publication of the St. James Gazette. Speaking specifically on The Picture of Dorian Grey,
Wilde states that the moral of the tale is that “all excess as well as renunciation, brings its own punishment” (Wilde qtd. in Buma 19). Viewing Lord Wotton as symbolic of the serpent in the Garden of Eden, Buma states that Wotton works to impose his perception of sin as a “forbidden pleasure” or as a means to “pepper the dullness of life” unto Grey (20). In a garden containing the toxic clematis flower, Grey essentially becomes poisoned with Wotton’s values that praise youth and the pursuit of passions over moral behavior. Feeling that Wotton’s words in the garden “touched some secret cord” that left him “vibrating and throbbing to curious pulses,” Grey rashly pledges to give his soul in order to remain young and beautiful (Wilde 21). Having been corrupted by Wotton to sin, Grey’s sins increase in their excess of evilness to the point where they can no longer be viewed as being mere distractions to the boredom of everyday life. Grey’s wickedness leads to the act of murder, a crime that Lord Wotton himself could not perceive Grey as committing.

Rather than seeking forgiveness for his excess of sins, however, Grey neglects his resolutions to be good. Assessing Grey’s failed resolutions, Buma identifies Grey’s “failed love for Sybil Vane” and “his cold indifference to her death” as the first two scenes in which Grey fails to be good and his abandonment of the peasant girl Hetty as the being the final instance of his failed resolutions (23-24). According to Buma, Grey’s three attempts are reflective of “the number of times Jesus was tempted in the desert, the number of days before he rose from the dead, and the number of times Peter denies Jesus” (23). While Christ is able to resist temptation and evil, Dorian Grey succumbs to it, establishing him as the “reverse Christ figure” within the novel (Buma 24). Not only is Grey culpable for Basil Hallward’s death, but also he is responsible for either the disgrace or death, including suicide, of nearly all those who are acquainted to him. The intemperance of Grey’s destruction towards others as well as his inability to repent for his actions
strongly suggests that the Wilde intended for the novel to warn against overindulgence and denial, particularly in regard to sin.

Wilde often uses the element of heat to further illustrate the destructiveness of sin. Throughout The Picture of Dorian Grey sinful behavior is often linked to fire or burning. One of the first references in the novel to burning occurs when Lord Wotton indoctrinates Grey in the garden. Speaking of the necessity for one to give in to their desires, Wotton advocates for individuals’ to “burn with [their] natural passions” (Wilde 20). Upon hearing Wotton’s corrupting speech, Grey immediately begins to view life in a different light. Shaking off his innocent and boyish perception of the world, he feels as if “life [had] suddenly [become] fiery-colored to him” (Wilde 21-22). Rather than producing a restorative influence on Grey, the perception of life being aglow causes Grey’s feelings of morality to deteriorate. Shortly after gaining this new perspective on life, Grey makes his unholy pact to give his soul for youth and beauty. Once this pact is made, Grey commences on his path of destructive behavior.

The imagery of fire is juxtaposed with imagery conveying innocence within the scenes leading up to the suicide of Sybil Vane, the first of Grey’s great sins. When observing Grey’s infatuated behavior towards Vane, Lord Wotton depicts Grey as being changed from the innocent and timid youth that he had first met at Hallward’s studio. Noting “hectic spots of red burn[ing] on [Grey’s] cheeks,” Wotton likens Grey to a flower possessing “blossoms of scarlet flame” (Wilde 59). Rather than only conveying Grey’s passionate feelings towards Vane, this imagery also suggests the existence of a hell fire building up within Dorian Grey’s soul. Wilde stresses this dual understanding of Wotton’s observations through Grey’s likening of Vane to a flower as well. While Grey is compared to a blazing scarlet flower, Vane is compared to a “white narcissus” (Wilde 80). The color white is symbolic of innocence. By likening Vane to a white
flower, Wilde further associates the imagery of flames and the color red to Grey’s innate evil. This imagery reappears in the scene where Sybil meets her brother in the park before he departs for Australia. While talking, the siblings observe a “tulip-bed across the road [that] flamed like throbbing rings of fire” and “a white dust... [that] hung in the panting air” (Wilde 72). In this passage, the words “throbbing” and “panting” convey a heightened level of emotion (Wilde 72). By employing this word choice, Wilde foreshadows the fury of emotions that the abandoned Sybil feels before committing suicide. In terms of symbolism, when considering Grey’s ability to obliterate Vane, the white dust becomes emblematic of the doomed actress while the fiery red tulip becomes symbolic of Grey and his evil.

While fire becomes representative of Dorian Grey’s evil in the scenes regarding Sybil, the scenes preceding Grey’s murder of Hallward uses the imagery of ice to convey Grey’s heartlessness. In the scenes leading up to the death of Sybil Vane, Grey’s sins are mainly associated with fire and the color red. However, as the novel progresses, Grey’s evil becomes associated with iciness as well. This shift illustrates that as Grey becomes more corrupt in his relishing of sinful behavior, he also becomes more hardened and pitiless of others. Michael Buma identifies Grey’s “cold indifference to Sybil's death” as the circumstance that “leads [Grey] back down Lord Henry’s [corrupt] path” (22). Refusing to amend his ways, Grey pledges at this point to have “eternal youth, infinite passion, pleasures subtle and secret, wild joys and wilder sins” (Wilde qtd. in Buma 22). Grey’s decision, however, to have the deformed portrait of himself carry the “burden” and “shame” of his sins causes the downturn in Grey’s behavior (Wilde qtd. in Buma 22). When Grey feels threatened by Basil Hallward’s desire to see the hidden portrait that conveys his sins, his fury becomes mingled with a strong degree of callousness. In this scene, Grey is described as being “pallid with rage” and his eyes are likened
to “disks of blue fire” (Wilde 114). This combination of fury and the coldness that arises from Grey’s lacking of shame and remorse results in the death of the artist Basil Hallward.

In the moments before Grey brutally murders Hallward, Wilde utilizes the imagery of fire and ice to conversely convey both the hellishness and frigidity of Grey’s soul. In the midst of Grey’s final encounter with Basil Hallward, Grey’s attention shifts to the fireplace. Wilde describes the fireplace as containing “burning logs with ... frostlike ashes” and having “throbbing cores of flame” (Wilde 157). Not only do these lines highlight the inner rage escalating within Grey, but also they convey the cold indifference in which he regards his murder of Hallward by the mentioning of the wintry ashes. After the murder, Grey even dehumanizes his former devotee by viewing his corpse as a mere “silent thing” (Wilde 177). Recalling the image of the tulip’s “throbbing rings of fire” witnessed by Sibyl Vane earlier, the “throbbing cores of flame” foreshadow the approaching of another death caused by Grey’s inner fury and indifference for human life (Wilde 72, 157). If the white dust discussed earlier is symbolic of Vane, then the ashes of the fireplace become symbolic of Hallward in their close association to death. Both the white dust and the “frostlike ashes” remind the reader of Grey’s capacity to destroy others (Wilde 157).

The use of the colors of white and scarlet to illustrate innocence and guilt continue to permeate throughout the novel and haunt Grey. Realizing the enormity of Grey’s sins after looking at his mutilated portrait, Hallward makes a final plea for Grey to redeem himself. Adopting a biblical phrase, Hallward tells Grey that “[a]though [his] sins be as scarlet,” he can still “make them white as snow” (Wilde 162). The image of white snow is indicative of the innocence that was harbored by Grey before he became corrupted by Lord Henry. Upon hearing Hallward’s biblical reference, Grey truly establishes himself as the anti-Christ figure by his
subsequent action. Rather than being pacified by this quotation, Grey becomes incensed, which causes him to rashly stab Hallward to death. After Hallward’s murder, Grey becomes plagued by the dynamics of scarlet and white. Finally realizing the weight of his sins, Grey becomes pale as he visualizes the personified “shadows of crime” tormenting him with their “icy fingers” (Wilde 206). In addition, “the image of his sins” appears “swathed in scarlet” during his vision, provoking Grey to feel some guilt for the excess of his crime against Hallward (Wilde 206). Rather than helping Grey receive sympathy, however, these tormenting images work to magnify rather than to mitigate the extent of Grey’s guilt to the reader when one considers the heartless nature of his crime. Meeting later with Lord Wotton in the country, Grey observes the images of Wotton’s “white fingers” dipping into a “red copper bowl” and his placing of a “crimson pyramid of seeded strawberries” on his plate with “snowed with snow white sugar upon them” (Wilde 215). The imagery in this passage mirrors Hallward’s biblical line spoken to Grey before his murder with its references both to the color red and to snow. Here, the imagery conveying innocence, the white and the snow, is linked to Grey’s original corrupter, Lord Wotton. By doing so, Wilde essentially mocks Grey for his sins and illustrates that he is beyond salvation.

The close association of sin to beauty in *The Picture of Dorian Grey* suggests that art, including literature, cannot be fully separated from morality. Rather than adhering to the aesthetic values established in the prologue, Wilde’s novel works to contradict his claim that art needs no moral purpose. By integrating morality into his novel through his treatment of sin, Wilde damages the validity of the aesthetic principles as one of the movement’s prominent promoters. In this way, Wilde suggests that aestheticism is limited in its application and appeal.
Works Cited


Tales from the Sea:  
David Rubadiri’s “African Thunderstorm”

A storm is brewing. There is no escaping the unstoppable power of this storm that will reshape the entire countryside. Through word choice a poem has the ability to introduce the reader to this type of event, meanwhile, using the same poem as a platform for another event. When studying a work of literature, it is possible the selection can provide varied approaches as to the intentions of the author. This is certainly the situation in David Rubadiri’s poem, “African Thunderstorm”. The power and intensity of the poem draws readers in and leaps off the page as though the thunderstorm is crashing around them. Likewise, he successfully creates his poem to express his thoughts on events going on in Africa. Rubadiri uses his vivid descriptions of an African thunderstorm to express the unrelenting western movement into the African countryside.

The initial reading of “African Thunderstorm” is a literal depiction of a thunderstorm. Yet, once the readers are introduced to the oncoming storm, and continue through the following stanzas, they will begin to understand there is more going on than a thunderstorm: “from the west clouds come hurrying with the wind,” creating the image of what is coming across the land (line 1). The realization materializes that this is no little rain shower Rubadiri is discussing. He wants the readers to experience the “turning, sharply, plague of locusts, whirling, tossing, madman” of a storm, which is about to overtake the African people (3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9). Rubadiri so vividly describes the storm so it grabs hold of the readers’ attention. Not only are his choice of words full of imagery for expressing this storm, his decision to employ the short choppy lines to bring life to the storm is an example of literary realism by depicting this experience as it happened, in small doses, until it becomes a full-fledged thunderstorm. Furthermore, as the storm
“rides stately on” the “pregnant clouds,” there is an element of respect for the arrival of such a force (10, 11). The readers can almost see the arrival, just as if they were watching crowned royalty riding as a dignified power in a parade or watching a woman in the final stage of pregnancy entering a room, with her enormous belly, ready to burst.

Contrary to a typical storm, which provides moisture to the African countryside, Rubadiri writes of how the storm is “gathering to perch on hills like dark sinister wings” (12, 13). The storm is given the physical ability or personification to “perch,” much as a crow sits on the hillside waiting and watching. The use of the words “dark” and “sinister” add to the ominous aspect of the approaching storm. As the storm arrives, the “wind whistles” and the “trees bend,” coming with force stronger than a typical rain storm (14, 15). Consequently, the people are caught up in the thunderstorm, illustrated by Rubadiri’s description of, “screams” being heard and “women-babies clinging on their backs-dart about” (17, 20-22). No longer delighted children and women hanging clothes, these activities have been disturbed by the approaching storm. They are now “madly” moving around as the storm surrounds their village (24). The sanity and calmness of the village is no longer there, and the security of their homes is diminishing. The impending chaos is racing through their minds as these women “madly” show emotion for what is coming toward them (24). It is simple to picture the scene change from a typical day, to one of anxiety caused by the storm. After all, this westward storm will impact the weak and fragile inhabitants.

The change of intensity is quickly noticed as Rubadiri repeats words to emphasize the significance of how the storm continues to grow in strength. As “the wind whistles by”, and “trees bend” a second time, the reader immediately senses the force has increased over the initial hurrying wind at the beginning (25, 26). The poem continues but now it is intermingled with the
village inhabitants in a blur. The fury of the thunderstorm has control of the delighted children, as now their “clothes wave like tattered flags flying off”, becoming part of the storm. (27,28).

Rubadiri further expresses the point of domination over the women when the storm is able to “expose dangling breasts,” leaving the readers to picture the most intimate parts of these villagers unprotected from the strength of the storm (29). To enhance the thunderstorm, Rubadiri stimulates the majority of the readers’ senses with his description. First, he adds, “jiggered blinding flashes” to throw off any visual sense of normality and order (30). Then he provides audible noises of “rumble, tremble, and crack,” to fully immerse the readers into the storm (31). The “smell of fired smoke” brings the sense of smell into the poem as a way to make the storm even less desirable with a non-inviting smoke smell (32). Finally, the sense of touch is included as the, “pelting march of the storm” slams against the villagers (33). Rubadiri does not want the readers to just read the poem; he wants them to experience it and be frightened by it.

Simultaneously to describing a fierce act of nature, Rubadiri is addressing a very human occurrence that is sweeping across Africa with a powerful force. Metaphorically, he is capturing the unstoppable movement of western influence upon Africa. In this case, the poem can be approached is such a way that Rubadiri fully expresses this movement as vividly as he describes the thunderstorm. In reading each stanza from this viewpoint, the readers are able to uncover the alternate objective of “African Thunderstorm”.

This figurative way of reading “African Thunderstorm” allows the readers to discover the “clouds come hurrying with the wind” is actually the influence from the people of western society (2). Rubadiri is using this thunderstorm as a depiction of the colonialization of Africa, as a way of dominating the country and its inhabitants. These westerners are just as visible as the approaching storm and just as hard to stop. To Rubadiri these people are harmful, “turning,
sharply here and there,” to the inhabitants of this African village (3, 4, 5). He must have felt the western movement was “like a plague of locust,” stripping Africa of anything it could touch (6). The overpowering western influence appears indifferent to what it is doing, as it is described as, “tossing up things”, “like a madman chasing nothing” (8, 9). The readers can feel the anxiety expressed by Rubadiri’s words and see the gradual movement of this invasion by his choice of word placement. Just as the short choppy words helped create a storm, they also help depict the slow, sporadic western movement upon this country.

Moving on to the next stanza, Rubadiri interprets the western movement’s expansion across Africa. The “pregnant clouds” express the inevitable multiplication of these outsiders who “ride stately on its back” (10, 11). These people are not slumping into Africa; instead, they are riding prestigiously, maintaining their power over the inhabitants. They “gather” and “perch on hills”, “like dark sinister wings”, exposing the formation of groups of these undesirable westerners who come together and look over the African people in a negative way (12, 13). Finally, as the stanza ends, Rubadiri contends that although “the wind whistles by” or the western influence move in; the “trees bend to let it pass”, much as the villagers seemingly allow this influx of foreigners into their lives and country without a lot of fuss (14, 15).

Consequently, just as the poem describes the village filled with “screams of delighted children” as a picture of innocent happiness, so too does Rubadiri see these children, as innocent, before the onslaught of western influence (17). Children with no cares, playing unblemished within the confines of the village will feel the consequences of this western colonialism. He expresses this concept with, “din of the whirling wind” or the westerners, entering into the picture, exposing the children to something negative (19). He further states that the “women-babies clinging on their backs” realize this invasive influence (20, 21). Now these mothers begin
to “dart about” trying to avoid exposure (22). Just as a mother would move “in and out”, “madly” to protect her young from a wild animal, so too does Rubadiri expect the mothers to do so when protecting their young from the westerners (23, 24). Literally, Rubadiri must have been frustrated as he repeats the lines, “The wind whistles by, whilst trees bend to let it pass” (25, 26). He must be questioning the reasoning of why do the African people allow this storm, of western influence, to enter their country without so much as a raised fist or thought?

Finally, in the last stanza, Rubadiri, creates the raw image as “clothes wave like tattered flags,” his view of African tradition and way of life, being tattered by the western influence (27). It takes a bit of time for something to become “tattered” just as it took time for this influence to create a problem within Africa. His symbol of a “tattered flag” demonstrates the western colonization upon this country not just on the people (27). This “flag” indicates a sense of unity for a country; it is their identity, and this colonization is destroying it by spreading western political ideas. This slow, wearing away is not the case when he describes the “flying off to expose dangling breasts”; this action is swift and invasive exposing the very roots of the African people (29). Rubadiri is not trying to speak gently about his concerns; instead, he wants to grab the attention of the readers by his use of explicit language. He wants to leave an impression upon the readers as he ends the poem with highly descriptive lines, revealing the aftermath of destruction. The readers can see the “blinding flashes”, not that of lightening, but of what is happening so fast it has a blinding effect of the people of Africa (30). Furthermore, he suggests this movement of westerners should not be going unnoticed as it is creating noises of, “rumble, tremble, and crack” across the country (31). Just as a burnt meal or a burning structure is offensive, Rubadiri believes the influx of westerners is noticeably offensive to the African people as described by the “smell of fired smoke” (32). Finally, he leaves the reader to feel this is a
“pelting march of the storm”, or in this situation is a serious western influence coming into Africa (33). “Pelting” creates an understanding that the westerners are not just raining down; they are accosting the African countryside with force and chaos. Further, they are not moving in slowly at this point, they are systematically marching as soldiers move, a much more organized way of influencing the people of Africa.

Indeed, the thunderstorm in Africa, as described by Rubadiri, can be equally felt, whether caused by a natural occurrence or as the result of human influence. He creates a sensory description of a thunderstorm to enlighten the readers about the western movement into Africa. This taking over of the African people and countryside for the purpose of colonization is at the very core, destructive to Africa. As this continent is still dealing with the cruel storm of colonialism, Rubadiri’s powerful poem is a tool for entertaining the readers as well as educating them to the underlying problems experienced by the African people.

http://seabell.wordpress.com/2006/12/21/sfrican-thunderstorm/. 