MYTH AND WILLIAM GOLDING

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is original and has not been submitted or published partially or fully for any other diploma or degree at any university.

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MYTH AND WILLIAM GOLDING

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ABSTRACT

The principal aim of this paper is to throw light on various mythical aspects of some selected novels of William Golding. This dissertation focuses on the recurring mythical motifs used in his works. Unlike many of the previous works done on the author, it deals, not with each individual novel separately, but detailed discussion on these motifs running through his novels. So, the first chapter concentrates on Golding's treatment of the myth of the Fall. Subverting the orthodox view of the innocence of man and his first sin, Golding's novels present the idea of the fallen nature of man, and thus assesses an age-old idea in new perspectives. Chapter II scrutinizes the myth of Prometheus, which I cross-examined in the light of Golding's view of the modern world. Chapter III evaluates Apocalypse in a post-War world as viewed by Golding. This study concludes with an assessment of Golding's success as a writer of mythopoeic tradition.

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Introduction

The word 'myth' has its origin in the Greek word 'mythos', which has a range of meanings. Often it means "word", but sometimes, when used as a verb, it implies "saying". Mythos also suggests "story" and "fiction". Similarly, the content and meaning of the word 'myth' has varied over the ages. In everyday life when something is referred to as a myth, something unreal is implied, something that cannot be found in real life. Yet every race has its own myth, handed down through generations. Thus myth is a record of different cultures and religions. However, different students of a myth tend to look at it differently. Nevertheless, most people would probably accept the conception of myth that is articulated by Alan W. Watts in *Myth and Ritual in Christianity* (1953):

> Myth is to be defined as a complex of stories– some no doubt fact, and some fantasy—which for various reasons, human beings regard as demonstrations of the inner meaning of the universe and of human life (7).

In human history and literature myth always has had a prominent place. From the historical point of view myths record the rise and fall of civilizations and for literature they have been a great source of interpretations of human life. In any literature, whether it is English or continental, it can be seen that poets or novelists of different ages use myths to deal with social and political issues of their time.

One great writer of our age, who chose to use myths to explore difficult questions posed by contemporary life, is William Golding (1911—93). Much influenced by the horrors of the two World Wars, he began his literary career as a novelist during the second half of the twentieth century. In myths he discovered anew the story of human civilization and questions and riddles always faced in human existence.

Golding's preoccupation with myth and interest in a mythical world is, of course, not unique. Ancient men too looked upon mythical stories as explanations for different natural phenomena. Then there came a time when these stories were accepted as literally true. To the ancient Greeks, for example, the incredible adventures of Zeus, Apollo, Heracles and Perseus were real events. Philosophers like Aristotle and the Epicureans questioned the credibility of these tales. During the 4th century BC a historical dimension was given to myth. By that time the gods were seen as people who were originally kings and heroes. This was the case with Alexander the Great who became a living god to the people of his time.

Hebrew and Christian theologians of later ages were ready to interpret their own religious narratives allegorically as well as literally, but treated pagan myths as incredible and grotesque narratives. During the second European Renaissance, however, myth in Europe became a source of art and literature. By then, of course, it did not have to compete with established religions. Actually, in some ways pagan myths even became incorporated into Christianity and other religions. So in many of the sculptures from these

periods, one can see the Roman god Cupid beaming over the Babe in the Manger. In literature too, classical myths got entwined with tales and characters from the Gospel.

The systematic study of myth began during the second European Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. Myth then started to be viewed in rational and historical contexts. At the end of the nineteenth century, Sigmund Freud took recourse to psychology to solve classic mythical dilemmas. Following Freud, the Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung came forward with the theory of the archetype and collective unconsciousness. This theory suggests that the human mind has the tendency to shelter well-known motifs, and that similar images and symbols recur in myths, fairy tales and dreams all over the world. At the beginning of the twentieth century, many scholars thought of myths in their earliest forms as accounts of social customs and values. For example, *The Golden Bough* (1915) of James Frazer has shown how human society developed in stages—from the magical through the religious to the scientific—and how myths and rituals bear witness to archaic modes of thought.

In the twentieth century, varied light has been shed on the significance of myth. Literary figures like W.B.Yeats, T.S.Eliot and James Joyce have viewed myth as the repository of the foundation narratives of human existence. Yeats experimented with Celtic classical mythology, and even proceeded to create his own myths. In his critical study *W.B.Yeats*, Stan Smith notes that Cleanth Brooks pronounced the work of Yeats as "the most ambitious attempt made by any poet of the twentieth century to set up a myth"(12). Indeed, it would not be wrong to say that Yeats had a mythopoeic

imagination, for he invented new myths or used old ones in different contexts and imbued them with new significance. Yeats would have surely agreed with Franz Boas whom the famous structuralist anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss quotes in his essay, 'The Structural Study of Myth', as saying, "It would seem that mythological worlds have been built up only to be shattered again, and that new worlds were built from the fragments" (85). By fragments the author possibly alludes to the fragments of the older mythical worlds. This process of rebuilding was taken up later, initially by T.S. Eliot and James Joyce in their work, and then among others, by the English novelist William Golding.

While commenting on the mythic writings of the twentieth century, these three writers must be referred to. James Joyce first used in his work what Eliot named the 'mythical method.' In a famous review titled '*Ulysses*, Order and Myth', Eliot hails the method as one that involved "manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity; to give a shape and significance to the intense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history"(424). Decades later, voicing his concern for humanity, Golding builds up his mythical world from the same mythological elements that Joyce and Eliot used. Like them he dramatizes anew many mythical situations. In particular, he focuses on the loss of primal innocence, the crucifixion of Christ-like saints and the Promethean sufferings of man.

In many ways, however, Golding stands quite apart both from his previous generations and from his contemporaries in using ancient myths in modern contexts. Golding's interest in myth derives from his interest in human history. In his fiction,

Golding attempts to show not only how man survives to live in this world, but also how he ought to live by often making use of traditional mythical motifs. He does not leave or take history and myth for granted or as something that cannot be questioned. He puts his characters in mythical situations and visualizes human history itself through myths. Golding's use of myth to depict human existence reminds us of Levi-Strauss' understanding of myth. In 'The Structural Study of Myth' Levi- Strauss had commented, "What gives myth an operative value is that the specific pattern described is everlasting; it explains the present and the past as well as the future" (85). Many myths or quasi-myths are primitive explanations of the natural order of things. As such, Golding's concern about man's relationship with his creator and his interest in explaining the way things are naturally made him look for such mythic patterns. He also seems to believe in a natural order or pattern of things which shows how present, past and future are linked together.

Not surprisingly, Golding's fictional ventures into myth have attracted the attention of many scholars. Arnold Johnston in *Of Earth and Darkness* (1980) and B.F. Dick in *William Golding* (1986) have discussed Golding's intense interest in various aspects of myth. Samuel Hynes in 'Pincher Martin' (1985), Ian Gregor in ' "He Wondered": The Religious Imagination of William Golding' (1986) and Mark Kinkead-Weekes in 'The Visual and the Visionary in Golding' (1986) have highlighted certain mythical aspects and situations in some of Golding's novels, showing how Golding attempts to present a systematic pattern in the universe.

Most of Golding's critics, however, tend to place him either with the ancient Greeks and see him as a pagan philosopher, or with the Christian moralists. Oldsey and Weintraub in *The Art of William Golding* (1965) for example, attempt to establish Golding as a Christian moralist, whereas B.F. Dick finds him an ardent follower of Greek classics. Arnold Johnston considers Golding to be partial to Egyptian myths. A few critics like Ian Gregor find Golding's mythical writings as part of his relentless attempt to find form in human existence. For examples, he refers to Ralph's vision of the sea (*Lord of the Flies*), Jocelin's view of the falling spire as an apple tree (*The Spire*), and Matty walking out of the fire (*Darkness Visible*) as evidence of Golding's ambivalent attitude towards life and nature. The perspective of Mark Kinkead-Weekes is somewhat similar to Ian Gregor's, as the former points out the author's interest in seeing inside things. Both Ian Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes would like to look upon Golding as a visionary, who, like Prometheus, has fore and after knowledge about his own race.

This dissertation, however, attempts to present Golding as an original mythopoeic writer who does not discriminate between Christian and other myths, but continues to look at the world from the viewpoint of an all-embracing cosmologist. The motifs that have been chosen for this dissertation are the myth of the Fall, the Prometheus myth, and the Apocalypse myth. It may be noted that two of these motifs have been taken up from the Bible while the remaining one is from Greek mythology. In the fictional world of William Golding myths from different cultures and religions are linked together to make the happenings of the modern world appear more meaningful and to give them greater significance.

Golding's use of the story of the myth of the Fall is the first motif this dissertation will explore. It is a very old motif, and is found among the myths of all the primary religions of the world. Golding has looked upon this myth from various angles. Sometimes he views human beings as intruders in Eden (*The Inheritors*), at other times he sees man as an irredeemable fallen creature (*Lord of the Flies* and *Free Fall*). On the whole, for Golding the myth of the Fall becomes a tale of the fallen who can never be redeemed (*Pincher Martin* and 'Envoy Extraordinary').

The second myth utilized by Golding to be analyzed in this dissertation is that of the Greek pagan myth of Prometheus. The mythical Prometheus was a hero among great heroes who went through terrible sufferings for the welfare of mankind. The chapter entitled 'Prometheus Myth in the Works of William Golding' shows how in characters such as Piggy (*Lord of the Flies*), Pincher Martin (*Pincher Martin*), or Ionides (The Double Tongue) Golding presents modern Prometheuses in everyday life. But he also shows how their mythic status has been diminished by contemporary existence.

The last chapter on Apocalypse is largely based on this writer's reading of an essay by Mark Kinkead Weekes, 'William Golding: the Vision and the Visionary', and by her own understanding of the novelist's comprehension of an apocalyptic world seen in the context of human history as a whole. Most of Golding's well-known novels, such as, *Lord of the Flies*, *Free Fall*, *The Spire*, *The Pyramid* and *Darkness Visible* revolve

around the myth of apocalypse. The third chapter will thus attempt to indicate the relevance of the story of Apocalypse to Golding's narratives.

The novels of Golding that have been analyzed for this study are *Lord of the Flies* (1954), *The Inheritors* (1955), *Pincher Martin* (1956), *Free Fall* (1959), *The Spire* (1964), *The Pyramid* (1967), *Darkness Visible* (1979) and *The Double Tongue* (1995). These are the books where Golding has used the myth of Fall, Prometheus and Apocalypse distinctively to blend mythical and modern elements. The short novel 'Envoy Extraordinary' (1971) has also been considered as well as Golding's books of essays and reviews, *The Hot Gates and Other Occasional Pieces* (1965) and *A Moving Target.* These, along with *The Egyptian Journal* (1990), have often been referred to in analyzing Golding's motifs. However, the famous sea saga *To the Ends of the Earth* has not been studied because the motifs that have been chosen are not prominent in it. Two other short novels, namely, 'The Scorpion God' and 'Clonk, Clonk' have been left out for the same reason.

It is interesting to note that Golding is quite flexible while dealing with myths,. He took whatever he considered suitable for his purpose in assessing the various dimensions of the modern world. His use of myths sometimes concentrates on pagan Greek idealism and shows how man strives to go beyond the gods and denies destiny. Sometimes his motives are derived from the Bible, although his interpretation of them is not always very Christian. In fact, and as we shall see in this dissertation, his mythic world turns out to be a unique blend of Christian and pagan mythic elements. And in the

following chapters this is what we will assess elaborately in the context of a world where religion, morality, faith and creed have lost much of their importance.

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William Golding and the Myth of the Fall

The fall of man from Eden has been a central theme for literature for a long, long time. Philosophers, thinkers and writers of different ages have attempted to define and explain this tale narrated in the *Genesis* from various angles. The Biblical story of the Fall is about the first man and woman, their sin and its consequences. According to the Bible, God created Adam and Eve and asked all angels to bow down before them. The archangel Lucifer refused to do so and therefore was banished from heaven. God let Adam and Eve roam about happily in Eden, but forbade them to eat the fruit of knowledge. Lucifer, who contrived to throw them out of their blissful home, managed to make them devour the fruit. Earlier, the man and the woman had been innocent but ignorant; now the fruit of knowledge opened their eyes and they became aware of the complexity of things around them. They were guilty of disobedience and God turned them out from Eden to earth, while throwing Lucifer down in hell.

The story of the Fall has several versions, and has been narrated in one form or the other in the principal religious myths of the world. However, the main element is the same. Since the Fall, human beings were supposed to have been trying to regain the status they had lost. And Lucifer, who had become Satan, was supposed to have been trying to make man commit the same mistake again and again. According to Christian theology, Christ is the one man who through his sufferings and death has freed mankind forever. Whosoever follows the path of Christ will be relieved of his sins. In other words, man has the ability to redeem himself by embracing Christ and his teaching.

For modern writers and thinkers, however, the entire conception of the Fall is a much more complex one. For instance, William Golding, one of the foremost novelists of the twentieth century, treats the theme of the Fall in a very subtle way. Golding does not think that the man has in any way improved himself since the Fall. On the contrary, he firmly believes that man, who claims to be the noblest creature under the sun, is not really that noble. It is man's own nature rather than any alien force that had banished him from heaven in the first place. Golding holds out a reductive vision of humanity, and shows how man's capacity for evil overwhelms his will to do good. He also points out that human civilization, which claims to have come a long way since its beginning, has actually made little progress, as man's nature has failed to improve.

While studying Golding, one has to remember that Golding is not a writer concerned with social problems. He ponders more on the relationship of the individual to God or the universe. He does not question whether there is an ultimate existence but rather expresses his firm belief in a Supreme Being. But while the moral framework of his novels is constructed in terms of traditional Christian symbolism, his ideas are not essentially Christian. Nevertheless, his first two books, namely, *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors* are concerned with man's primal loss of innocence and the Fall.

Published in 1954, *Lord of the Flies*, the first of Golding's novels, is still the best known of his work. The book can be called a twentieth century response to *The Coral Island* (1857) of R.M. Ballantyne. Both stories deal with the theme of a group of British boys and their activities on a lonely island. But whereas *The Coral Island* is a

romantic and idealistic account of civilized life, *Lord of the Flies* is concerned with the hard facts of real life. Golding is not a nineteenth century romantic, nor a self-elated Victorian who thinks that everything connected with Britain is the best, and all outside England barbaric. After all, he was writing from an age of confusion, rage, hopelessness, pain and sufferings.

As a schoolteacher too Golding knew what boys are capable of, and how they imitate their elders. Like other modern novelists he was aware of the complex nature of children. Aldous Huxley in *Point Counter Point* (1928), Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Jerzy Kosinski in *The Painted Bird* (1965) have been able to point out a number of qualities not found in previous accounts of childhood. The horrors inflicted on the world by the twentieth century experience of totalitarianism were not something entirely new. Human history has always been characterized by the sufferings of innocents. The difference of these novelists from earlier generations writers, observes Philip Thody in *Twentieth Century Literature* (1996), lies in their "readiness to show that exposures to war, social oppression, cruel treatment, violence and horrors of this kind can make children capable of behaving with exactly the same wickedness as adults"(36). Golding's theme is thus at a remove from that of the Victorian novelists. In the Victorian age, the expectation of the reader was that while children might suffer abominably from wickedness, they would not behave in the same way themselves. *Lord of the Flies*, on the other hand, is not just an adventure story of a group of boys aged from four to twelve, but a portrayal of children capable of great evil, and of repenting the experience of the Fall of man.

The opening of the novel *Lord of the Flies* shows a group of boys stranded and scattered on a lonely tropical island as the result of the crash-landing of an aircraft. Though the name, date, or the exact position of the island is not mentioned, one can understand that the setting is sometime in the near future, when an atomic war is going on. The island seems like a paradise to the boys, and they decide to make the best use of all they have around them. They elect Ralph, who gathered them together by blowing a conch, as their leader. Ralph decides to have a signal fire on top of the mountain, and starts building shelters. But his plans fail to work as Jack, once a choir leader and now the leader of the pig-hunters, presents the picture of a more glamorous life before the boys than that offered by Ralph. Most of the bigger boys leave their duties to join him in hunting, and naturally a breach is created among the boys.

The hunters hunt pigs and perform a sort of ritual dance like savages. During one such performance, they kill a boy called Simon, and Ralph finds himself in deep trouble and with very few allies. Jack's savages brutally kill Ralph's advisor Piggy. In the end Ralph finds himself being hunted down throughout the island, only to be saved by the timely arrival of a British naval ship.

At the beginning of the novel the island seems like paradise to the boys. To the readers however, the Edenic ambience is deceptive, as they are aware that the boys have arrived on the island because of a war. Thus one sees Ralph playfully machinegun his friend Piggy mimicking sounds such as, "sche-aa-ow!"(16) The three boys Ralph, Simon, and the still innocent Jack, make similar sounds and comments while exploring the island

to express their excitement: "Wacco." "Wizard." "Like a bomb"(35). Without any apparent reason they roll a large rock down a hilltop, which crashes into the forest below making a great noise. All these events indicate that while the boys might be away from civilization, they carry its destructive seeds in their bones. Being on an isolated island does not make them forget that they belong to a world of war and destruction.

Through these boys Golding introduces the central theme of his novels, which is that evil dwells in human hearts, the same evil, according to him, that caused the first Fall. There were no outer forces to disturb these boys on that lonely island. Yet, one of the smallest boys complains about a "beastie"(46) he had seen in the dead of night. The description of the activities of the "littluns" in the chapter called 'Painted Faces and Long Hair' explains much of their hidden nature, and thus gives an indication of another fall. The little boys enjoy torturing each other by throwing sands into one another's eyes. Henry, a tiny person, takes immense pleasure in disturbing and controlling insects. The memories of rules and regulations of their civilized life still restrict them, but soon these will be stripped off, and then their fallen nature will be revealed.

The episodes of the mock-hunts clearly indicate that instead of following the rules the boys are succumbing to their primitive selves. In an early episode of the novel, Ralph is more ready to hurt a pig than Jack. But Jack learns quickly and with the help of his group of hunters kills a pig and provides meat for the boys. Unfortunately, this hunting will not be restricted to the killing of pigs. During one of their dancing rituals, a boy named Robert feigns to be a pig and the others attack him chanting: "Kill the pig!

Cut his throat! Kill the pig! Bash him in"! (142) Even Ralph too feels an urge to join them: "The desire to squeeze and hurt was over mastering"(142). After their beast-hunting by the sea, Jack and his mates are called "savages"(198) by the narrator, as they choose to live and act like savages, and even start worshipping a savage god. In short, the boys act bestially, and remind us in all sorts of ways that we have succumbed to the lore of the devil by giving in to our instincts.

Simon's visionary encounter with the Lord of the Flies embodied in the pig's head stuck in the jungle is a climax in the novel. Of all the boys, Simon is the only one who recognizes the true nature of the evil in the island. Earlier, he had suggested that maybe what they were afraid of was their own selves. Now when he sees the pig's head stuck in the ground by Jack and his hunters who were offering it to the beast, we understand that the abode of this beast is the human heart:

> "Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!"said the head...."You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are?"(177)

In other words, it is man who creates his own hell, his own devils. The evil is lurking in man, as it was in the mind of the first man paving his way to the Fall. John Peter puts it thus in his essay, 'The Fables of William Golding': "Beelzebub, Lord of the Flies, is Roger and Jack and you and I, ready to declare himself as soon as we permit him to"(37). Conrad's Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* became evil incarnate as soon as he let the darkness

in his soul take over his consciousness. Similarly, when the boys of Golding fail to show restraint, they become the 'beast' they were afraid of.

Simon sees and understands the nature of evil, and in spite of having knowledge about the debased and fallen nature of man, frees the body of the dead parachutist stuck in the rocks on top of the hill to free the boys of their fear. Some of the boys had earlier seen this dead body and got frightened without understanding what it was. However, when Simon comes to tell his mates about his newly gained knowledge, he is killed in a brutal frenzy. Through his death Golding seems to imply that man cherishes his own guilt, fears and taboos, and will sacrifice any redeemer who offers to relieve him of his burden. Had Simon been able to reveal the truth about the beast on the mountaintop, many of the problems on the island would have been solved. But Jack and his group of hunters refuse to pay attention to his appeals, and continue with their attempt to establish savage rituals in the island.

After Simon's death Ralph becomes fully aware of the situation around him. As an average human being he might have had many faults, but he does not shrink away from his share of responsibility in the death of Simon. With his sense of reason and rationality, Piggy deems the episode as an accident, while Jack puts the entire blame on Simon's peculiar character. All of this shows that man's own nature is the cause of his downfall, and all his reason and intellect, of which he is so proud of, cannot save him from the ultimate fall. If Golding had been a writer believing in happy endings, he might have made a great leader of Ralph who destroys evil. But he chooses to remain true to the

realistic world, and therefore near the ending, it is Ralph who becomes the 'beast', and is hunted down throughout the island. The hunters set the island on fire to flush out their victim, in the process, putting their own lives in danger.

The timely arrival of the naval officer reminds the reader that these boys are only children. Ralph is saved because of his arrival, but the boy's days of innocence are over. He has witnessed the terrible death of his friends and knows that human beings are doomed. He might be just a boy, but his knowledge about the human race is much more profound than the officer who rescues them. He realizes with an intense sense of regret and despair that there is no one to save humanity from savagery, barbarism, sadism and all the other violently destructive impulses. And however far man claims to have come from his barbaric ancestors, the savage stands only a few feet away from him because of Original Sin, and the devil's imprint in us.

Just like Eden, the setting where man committed his First Sin, the island of *Lord of the Flies* was in every way free from the war troubles that went on at that time. It was a spot of tropical beauty where butterflies danced over the flowers. Thus in many ways this island resembles Eden, where Adam and Eve, the first man and woman roamed about, as it is described in *Paradise Lost:*

> Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow
> All trees of noble kind for sight, smell, taste;
> And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
> .... and next to life

Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by.

[*Paradise Lost*, Book IV]

Like Milton, Golding too presents in the beginning a heaven, and just as it is in Miltonic Eden, evil and death in Golding's island take over at a latter stage. So the boy with the birthmark on his face is lost in the fire that was supposed to rescue them from the island. These boys bring the seed of original sin with them and turn the entire place into a slaughterhouse and battlefield where flies buzz around. They were given paradise to live in, but they completely fail to retain that bliss, and make a hell out of heaven. The inner evil in man destroyed the first heaven and probably as Golding suggests, all succeeding ones.

Critics such as Oldsey and Weintraub have often bracketed *Lord of the Flies* and Golding's second novel, *The Inheritors* (1955), and have commented on Golding's fascination for the primitive and for his exploration of Man's Original Sin through his depiction of primitive behaviour in these books. *The Inheritors,* too, is indeed in some ways the story of man's primal sin retold, as it also shows how evil lies in the very nature of man. The technique of the story is striking as it is told from the viewpoint of Neanderthal Men, the same race that H.G. Wells describes in his *The Outline of History* (1920) as ugly, monstrous and cannibalistic. But Golding's Neanderthalers are small in size, very friendly, and utterly devoid of malice. The book recounts their encounter with the Homo sapiens, who out of inborn cruelty and distrust destroy the other race.

The story of *The Inheritors* is narrated from the viewpoint of Lok, a Neanderthaler who becomes the head of his pack after the death of Mal, their previous leader. Along with the other Neanderthalers, Lok observes the strange secretive activities of the Homo Sapiens who appear in their domain. The Homo Sapiens cause the death of Mal by removing the log that members of the older race used to cross a brook. The New Men attack the Neanderthalers on several occasions, and cause a number of deaths. Lok alone is left at the end of the story to mourn the death of his mates, while the Homo Sapiens leave the land with an abducted child of the Neanderthalers.

In *The Inheritors*, Golding seems once more to refuse the idea of man's innocence. He even appears to imply that while the inferior Neanderthalers were blessed with primal innocence, the predecessors of man introduced guilt. To put it somewhat differently, *The Inheritors* is another retelling of the tale of the Fall, but one told from an absolutely different angle from the *Genesis*.

To the dismay of some orthodox Christian critics, Golding seems to imply that it was the evil in man and not some outside agency that destroyed Eden. In the persons of the two Neanderthalers Lok and Fa, Adam and Eve can be identified. They roam about their Eden until the arrival of the New Men. In this new version of the story of the Fall, the Homo Sapiens themselves take the role of the serpent, as in return of the friendly gesture of the other race, they kill their predecessors, abduct their children, and even devour one of them. By the time the newcomers leave the island, it is completely

destroyed. Instead of leaving in triumph and joy, the new race quit the island furtively and with a heavy burden of guilt.

Mankind's sense of guilt is the chief idea of many of Golding's novels. In the essay 'Golding's Intellectual Economy' (1962), Professor Kermode has summed up this major theme admirably: "... human consciousness is a biological asset purchased at a price; the price is the knowledge of evil... the intellectual superiority of man over his simian victims is precisely measured by the cruelty and guilt which dominate his life and are relatively absent from his predecessors" (58). The corruption on the part of these New Men is so great that it even infects the older people. When Lok and Fa drink the rotten honey carried by the Homo Sapiens, their minds get dizzy and they behave as badly as the newcomers. Later, the memory of their lasciviousness leaves them confused and ashamed. When all is destroyed, Lok stands on the shore, on the point of being engulfed by an avalanche, weeping for the same reason for which Ralph wept– for the loss of unblemished innocence. That the New Men leave with one of the Neanderthal children may point to a new beginning, but the world of innocence is forever lost. And this innocence is lost not only to Lok, but for the remaining Neanderthal child as well, as it would be raised among people burdened with guilt.

Golding, however, allows the precursors of man a chance. At the end he shifts the viewpoint of the story and we are able to understand the thoughts of the new race. Tuami, the craftsman of these people, cries out in anguish: "What else could we have done?"(227) And then, "If we had not we should have died"(228). Tuami feels guilty as

he ponders over the killings committed by his people. Out of a sense of unreasoning and overwhelming fear they crush an incompetent and innocent rival. Only at the very end do they fully realize the extent of their crime. And this realization gives them the license to carry on with life.

Through the presentation of guilty humanity Golding reminds readers of the notion of William Blake expressed in his *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. According to Blake, without experience the human race cannot move on. Not to know evil is to know nothing. The Neanderthalers are absolutely innocent because they are not human. The Homo Sapiens carry the legacy of guilt and suffering, and it is their responsibility to establish a meaningful existence on this earth.

The idea of the extinction of an incompetent race seems to allude to Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest. Just to be virtuous does not make one fully qualified to survive in this world. It is only the intelligent and the cunning that will thrive. Golding also appears to believe that human nature is set to destroy and diminish everything that seems incomprehensible to it. So the New Men set out to erase the older race from the face of the earth. At one point they draw a beastly figure on the ground as Jack in *Lord of the Flies* created a beast with the pig's head as a symbol of evil, without realizing that this devil is not the Neanderthalers, but one that lives within their own selves. Thus by recreating an episode in the history of mankind, Golding seems to point out that the conquests man boasts of are utterly hollow. There has never been a blissful victory for humanity, for human history has always recorded oppression, murder, brutality and

extinction of other races. And thus the history of mankind records too many falls, falls that have occurred often in spite of man's best intentions.

For Golding the theme of Fall has gained a new dimension as he has entangled scientific and technological advancement with it. He believes that among many of the faculties that has depraved modern men, science and technology are two major ones. In 'On the Crest of the Wave', Golding comments that there are three cultures abroad these days, that of the humanities, that of pure science or natural philosophy, and that of technology. According to Golding, it is this last culture that threatens to overwhelm everything and everybody. Oldsey and Weintraub record in their book *The Art of William Golding* the extent of the author's regret:

> Our humanity rests in the capacity to make value judgements, unscientific assessments, the power to decide that this is right, that wrong, this ugly, that beautiful, this just, that unjust. Yet these are precisely the question which 'science' is not qualified to answer with its measurement and analysis (164).

It is however not science itself that Golding rejects, but man's inhuman use of science. He thinks that the baser instincts in human nature enforce man to use science for his own debasement and descent from a higher level to a lower one. He considers technocracy and the dehumanizing power of things as the source of modern evil. In all the major work of Golding we can feel this rejection of scientific technology that has helped in condemning man rather than helping him in any substantial sense.

Golding's negative view towards science is perhaps most explicitly brought out in his play *The Brass Butterfly* (1956). This play and the novella 'Envoy Extraordinary' published in the book *The Scorpion God* (1971), are closely linked together, as the later is the prose version of the play. Different only in minor details, the play's central theme pinpoints the novelist's central concern -science, human progress and man's Fall. There are several conversations that take place between the wise Caesar of Rome and the scientist Phanocles on science and its use by man. Phanocles thinks that with his inventions he can change the world. But the Emperor knows better about human nature:

> (Phanocles) "...Without your help I must starve. With it I can change the universe..."
>
> (Caesar) "Will you improve it?"(130)

Phanocles further proclaims that someday his inventions would be welcomed when men around the world would no more be slaves. The Caesar however replies:

> "...There will always be slaves though the names may change. What is slavery but the domination of the weak by the strong? How can you make them equal? Or are you fool enough to think that men are born equal?"(176)

Golding knows that man's nature makes him either a lord or a slave. It is the baser elements in men that make them destroy their own kinds and others. Buoyed up by the genius and the enthusiasm of a creator, inventors like Phanocles produce surprising gifts for their fellowmen, little aware of human nature, and of the ultimate consequences

of bestowing such gifts on these men. The wise Emperor, however, understands that there will always be men like Posthumus, who inspired by greed and fear would cause disaster for mankind. Talking in an apparently unsympathetic tone the Caesar reveals the darkest truth about humanity that man's nature is the root of all evil. And through his comments Golding implies that man's best intentions are led astray by his own fallen nature. In an earlier age Jonathan Swift ridiculed man's pride and explored his smallness. Golding points to those same features in his novels though in a more serious and sympathetic tone and rather austere style.

Critics like Oldsey and Weintraub think that this pessimistic attitude of Golding towards man's depraved nature in his early work is somewhat tuned down in many of his later work. In *Free Fall*, they insist that Golding for the first time asks boldly whether man's fall was an act of choice. The novel itself is a kind of memoir of an artist called Sammy Mountjoy. It is also the search of a depraved man trying to understand the nature and reason of his fall.

Sammy knows that at one point of his life he was innocent, as he says that he had lived on Paradise Hill. He examines different episodes of his life to find out the exact moment of his fall. Through these episodes we are able to visualize Sammy's entire life—how he spent his early days with his a mother who was looked down upon for her dissolute life, his childhood adventures, the death of his mother, his adoption by a priest, his school days and artistic endeavours, his infatuation for a beautiful girl named Beatrice Ifor, his seduction and desertion of Beatrice, his marriage to Taffy, the days he spent in a

German prison camp, his visit to Beatrice in a mental institution, and some other incidents. Like all men, his life has had its ups and downs, and he has had bitter and sweet experiences. But Sammy realizes that his will to sacrifice 'everything' to possess Beatrice had brought his fall. As Peter Green notes in 'The World of William Golding,' the narrator felt that while Dante with his coherent cosmos was able to achieve artistic greatness through Beatrice, "Sammy's confused cosmos ended by putting her through the whole mill of seduction- –a scientific, rationalistic approach, so to speak, so that Beatrice who took Dante up to the vision of God becomes a clog to Sammy and a skeleton in his cupboard" (93-94).

Confined in a dark cell in prison camp, Sammy sums up the tale of his debasement thus: "Once upon a time I was not frightened of the dark, but later on I was" (165). This passage reminds one of *The Inheritors*, which portrays the innocent Neanderthalers living happily in the dark, while the not so innocent Homo Sapiens cluster around the fire because they are afraid of darkness. Similarly, Sammy could roam about in the dark without fear when he was innocent. But when he falls from that state of innocence he is afraid of darkness. This darkness is actually the darkness of his heart, where he had put his God in trying to ignore His existence. Man's fear of darkness thus, can be linked to his fear of his spiritual self, which knows the true nature of a man. Ignorant man is proud to bear the long history of his rationality and rotten civilization, unable to understand his own fallen nature.

The question however, remains whether Sammy's fall was the result of his own free will or not. The answer is at once yes and no. To understand the full implication of this answer one has to go back to that one basic theme of Golding's novels—the fallen nature of man. Sammy explains it thus: "I had lost my power to choose... I cannot be blamed for the mechanical and helpless reaction of my nature. What I was, I had become" (131). Man may think that what he does is done out of his own choice. Yet things are not so simple because he is forced or compelled by his nature. So it is not from a spirit of reconciliation and the Christian idea of forgiveness that Golding wrote *Free Fall.* In this novel he reveals a grim viewpoint on the theme of the Fall. The only satisfaction man can get amidst this chaos ensues from his understanding of his own true self and knowledge of the cross of guilt he has to bear.

The theme of choice in one's fall is developed farther by Golding in his next novel *The Spire* (1964). The central character of *The Spire* is Dean Jocelin, who in his obsession with building a spire on his cathedral ignores everything and everybody around him. He considers himself chosen by God, and in order to build the spire, he even allows murder, blasphemy and adultery to take place in his church. However, when he realizes that he has risen to his position not through the will of God but his immoral aunt, a mistress of the late King, he is mortified: "I beg you. No forgiveness for this or that, for this candle or that insult. Forgive me for being what I am"(203). Jocelin begins to doubt his vocation and acknowledges all the irreligious activities he had inspired during the building of his precious spire. Like Sammy, he also seeks forgiveness, but it would be a little too optimistic for anyone studying Golding to expect that either of them would be

forgiven so easily as Golding's world is one of intense suffering and continuous purgation. All his protagonists go through this process.

Many critics have interpreted Jocelin's vision of the apple tree in Jocelin's deathbed as an indication of fulfillment. But the apple tree also refers to the Edenic apple tree, that age-old emblem of the Fall. The spire has been for Jocelin the apple tree that has allowed him to gain knowledge. In *The Art of William Golding*, Oldsey and Weintraub interpret this apple tree as a complex metaphor:

> *"It's like the apple tree"* seems primarily a reference to the fact that the great spire, like the trunk of a tree thrusts grandly upward, but also thrusts in many other directions, many—like the mixed nature of man's motives and works (132).

In his book *The Moral Vision of William Golding* (1990), Dr. K. Rezaur Rahman interprets Jocelin's image of the apple tree as "a remarkable vision of beauty connecting heaven and earth like the rainbow that appears as a hope for spiritual regeneration in D.H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow*" (104). But the rainbow that Ursula sees at the end of Lawrence's novel is not exactly a symbol of spiritual rebirth. It signifies more a hope for a new life on earth. Moreover, Golding's hopes are never so radiant. So it would be more appropriate to see the apple tree as a symbol of Jocelin's life and work, and also his final perception how good and evil, beauty and ugliness blend together in life. He is after all a fallen man, and in the world of William Golding there is no easy way to heaven. Like Sammy Jocelin only gains a purgatorial stay.

Golding's vision of man's fallen nature is possibly most pointedly expressed in his great work *Darkness Visible* (1979). Deriving its title from *Paradise Lost,* it reminds one of hell—the abode of the fallen angels. The story of the novel, however, is not about hell, but about post-war western society. Yet while reading the novel we remember Mephistopheles in *Doctor Faustus*:

> "Hell hath no limits, nor is it circumscribed
> In one safe place, but where we are is hell,
> And where hell is there we must ever be...."

With the inner evil in him man makes this world his own hell. The twin sisters Toni and Sophy in this novel are reminder of such beings in hell. They are raised by their father, who is careless and philosophical in his attitude towards them. They grow almost by themselves, and though they are possessive, they do not even love one another. They appear beautiful and charming to those around them, but the author has not allowed one redeeming feature in their characters. They are absolutely fallen and irredeemable.

On the other hand there is Matty, the central character of the novel, who, in spite of having a benevolent nature, appear repulsive because of his maimed face and awkward movements. Through the presentation of these three characters Golding ventures to say that people tend to become what they actually are. All three of them had had troubled childhoods. Toni and Sophy are fallen by nature, and as a result they cannot fathom anything that is good. Matty, on the other hand, craves for love and is always ready to be kind and loving. The myth of the Fall in this novel thus takes on a new

interpretation that human beings are fallen by nature, but it rests on human beings at the same time to restore whatever they have lost through their debased nature.

Each literary era introduces new perspectives, and the myth of the Fall became a much debated idea in the early twentieth century. A popular trend of the twentieth century has been the search for a new kind of hero, whom Shaw introduced in the beginning as the anti-hero through the figure of Bluntschli in *Arms and the Man.* Reversing the tale of the *Genesis*, writers such as Aldous Huxley, Oscar Wilde, William Faulkner and John Steinbeck have even imbued demonic qualities in their protagonists. Golding however, does not seem much attracted to this line of writing, though, a few critics would like to cite at least characters like the boys in *Lord of the Flies* and Pincher Martin as examples of demonic characters. But Golding himself has asserted that it is man and his ignorance that has been the centre of his focus:

> "I am very serious. I believe that man suffers from an appalling ignorance of his own nature. I produce my own view, in the belief that it may be something like the truth..."(1964 Interview, reprinted in *The World of William Golding*).

According to Golding, when a person acquires self-knowledge, he can understand the course of his life better than his ignorant fellow-mates. Men in general behave as Yeats portrayed them in 'Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen,' as "weasels fighting in a hole." In order to have comfort, luxury and momentary happiness in life, very often human beings fail to care about their activities and whereabouts. As a

conscientious novelist, Golding is intensely drawn to these heedless human beings and their fallen nature. He preaches in his own way to make them better. His depictions are of absolutely fallen men, but he also shows that most of them can elevate themselves from a fallen to a higher stage, if not to heaven. Through characters such as Sammy and Jocelin Golding shows that suffering and repentance make people better men than they would otherwise be.

William Golding has often been referred to as a pessimistic writer because of the suggestion in his work that suffering and penitence are not enough for ultimate salvation. Indeed, Golding saw the baser elements in man's nature as inborn and incurable. Yet, he wants to see men at war against all that is considered evil. This reminds us of Norse myths concerning Asgard and the great Nordic epic Beowulf. According to those mythic tales, man must fight against evil at all costs. Even Asgard, the heaven of the Norse heroes, lies in continuous danger of being invaded by the evil giants. Golding also seems to think that the greatest achievement a man can have is to have full knowledge about his depraved instincts, to be aware of the reasons behind his Fall, and to seize his chances to resist evil within his own self.

Ralph in *Lord of the Flies* wondered what had gone wrong with the boys. Lok and Fa in *The Inheritors* could not fathom the reason behind the cruel behaviour of the Homo Sapiens, and it was Tuami who realized too late the enormity of the crime they have committed against an innocent people. In *The Brass Butterfly* Phanocles asked Caesar what was wrong with man. Both Sammy and Jocelin realize that there was

something definitely wrong with human beings. Golding himself identifies the fault as man's fallen nature, for which man is naturally attracted to evil. He also points out that the history of human civilization that man had prided himself on so, is virtually a record of the many rash and gross mistakes made by mankind. Real progress occurred only when man had acknowledged his fallen nature and when he repented or attempted to make the best of what was left in ruins. Thus for Golding the myth of the Fall is not a thing of the remote past, but an event in the life of every man. Each and every one of us has to face it one way or the other, and by becoming aware of our own nature we can understand the implications of life better, and also get the chance to elevate our petty selves to a higher sphere.

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Prometheus Myth in the Works of William Golding

According to Greek mythology, Prometheus is one of the Titans, a pre-Hellenic fire-god, who was replaced later by Hephaestus. The literal meaning of his name is fore-thinker and the word emphasizes the intellectual side of his nature. He developed into a master craftsman, and he was therefore associated with fire and the creation of man. Greek myths narrate his creation of man from clay. He taught them arts, science, and all the means of survival. He stole fire from the gods and gave it to mankind and this act lessened human misery. For stealing fire and for his other cunning acts, he was punished by the chief god Zeus who had Prometheus chained on a peak of the Caucasus, and who sent an eagle every day to devour his immortal liver which replenished itself through the night. According to some other myths, Zeus came to acknowledge his greatness and in the end allowed him to be freed by Heracles, the great Greek hero born in the line of men Prometheus himself had created.

The Prometheus myth has come to mean much in the field of literature. Many authors and poets have taken up this fascinating and romantic tale. Aeschylus, the great dramatist of ancient Greece, immortalized Prometheus in his *Prometheus Bound* as the introducer of fire and civilization to man. In Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), the chained and tormented Prometheus is a symbol of afflicted humanity. He was considered, among other things, the creator of mankind, the fire-bringer, a skilled craftsman, a wise seer, a befriender of man, and a rebel against the gods. In time, he became the hero of humanistic, liberal and suffering man. In his essay, 'On Pincher Martin' Samuel Hynes defines Prometheus as "an indestructible life-worshipping identity whose very existence

gives meaning to his suffering, and whose suffering gives meaning to his existence"(130). Commenting on the essential sufferings of human life, Hynes actually points out that a central theme of Golding's novels is that the sufferings of human beings arise from their lack of understanding of their own nature and the world around them. And these men are the Prometheuses of the modern, confused world.

The world of modern men is one of intense suffering and anxiety. The disbelief and lack of faith in religious dogma reflected in English literature that started at the end of the Victorian Age and deepened with the World Wars continued even after the Second World War. The literature of the modern age thus reflects a profound sense of frustration. In the work of Yeats, Eliot, Conrad, Greene and Joyce, this depression can be felt acutely.

In the middle of the twentieth century William Golding, one of the most religious novelists of this age, began to write. His voice, however, was not that of a traditional or orthodox Christian. As a modern man, he could not afford to be a follower of any established religion, though he has made liberal use of Christian symbols, ideas and motifs in his work. In 'The World of William Golding', Peter Green calls him a "spiritual cosmologist", as he has taken scraps of ideas concerning religion from all over the world, especially from pagan myths. Golding has also been termed a 'Deist' in the same essay, because he seems to believe unquestioningly in an ultimate existence, although this belief is not based upon one distinct religion but on a firm faith in God.

Golding's novels reflect a deep interest in mankind. He seems, however, not so much concerned about the redeeming features of human nature, but concentrates on its depraved side. In his work, the fallen or the debased aspects of man and his intense sufferings are inter-linked, since his fallen nature goads man to commit sin and sin leads to sufferings. This aspect of man's fallen nature and its consequences have been discussed in the previous chapter. Yet Golding does not necessarily follow the traditional formula of sin—suffering—redemption. There is no perfect redemption in Golding's world, as he describes the complex world of modern men. These men suffer without knowing the reason for their suffering, and sometimes their whole lives are spent thus. Even if they know why, they cannot always help it. A faithless, God-defying utilitarian—that is how modern man is, as portrayed by Golding through characters such as Pincher Martin in *Pincher Martin*, Sammy Mountjoy in *Free Fall*, or Wilfred Barclay in *The Paper Men*.

Golding's men are either born in or have deliberately chosen a safe atheistic creed that does not demand religious practices. But this belief can scarcely sustain them. Whenever they are dragged out of their puny shells to confront things beyond their comprehension, they collapse. Those that survive often turn into half-crazy monomaniacs like Barclay or groveling creatures like Jocelin in *The Spire*. A very few like Sammy can hope for a purgatorial existence. Nevertheless, Golding's world is a bleak one; one may spend one's entire life searching for a speck of light in this world without ever finding it.

To enhance the significance of this purgatorial suffering, Golding has brought in the myth of Prometheus. He has shown how man the maker, the inventor, and the builder, must also suffer for his knowledge, which is to say, he must suffer for being what he is. The mythical Prometheus had fore and hindsight, but the sufferings he went through were imposed upon him. In contrast, ordinary men do not have self-knowledge, and therefore, often embark on ventures that bring disaster for mankind.

The myth of Prometheus is thus used as a central theme in Golding's novels. In *Lord of the Flies* one comes across Piggy, the fat, asthmatic and myopic friend of Ralph, the protagonist. Although outwardly a most unheroic figure, Piggy is Golding's version of Prometheus as it is with the thick lens of his spectacles that fire is lighted on the lonesome island. He is the voice of sanity and reason that Ralph slowly comes to recognize. It is always Piggy who talks about returning home, civilization, rules and regulations. In spite of being harassed and ridiculed by his friends, he always tries to help them. In the end, like Prometheus, he too embraces a terrible fate while trying to induce reason in his 'savage' companions.

A modern Prometheus, however, cannot be flawless. Piggy thus has his faults. He is hated by Ralph's rival Jack and his hunters. Unfortunately, he is unable to oppose them effectively. On the contrary, he asks for his share in the pig he did not hunt. He is wise, but his wisdom is tinted with fear, greed, and irresponsibility. He adamantly refuses to acknowledge his or Ralph's share of responsibility in the death of Simon:

> "It was an accident," said Piggy suddenly, "that's what it was. An accident." His voice was shrill again. "Coming in the dark—he hadn't no business crawling like that out of the dark. He was batty. He asked for it" (193).

Piggy is afraid of the hunters, and knows about their attitude towards him. But he never fully realizes that he is hated for his sanity, and for his logical turn of mind. In a world of darkness and confusion, where man is deliberately committed to evil, Prometheuses like Piggy cannot survive. He depends too much on intellect, and therefore has become emotionally sterile. And intellect and logic alone cannot solve the problems he is faced with. He wants to return to a civilization that is incapable of protecting itself. So at first he is blinded and then reduced to futility when the hunters steal his glasses. In the end he is killed brutally by Jack and his hunters.

In his second book, *The Inheritors*, Golding does not introduce any distinct Promethean figure, but he makes deliberate references in it to the link between knowledge and evil, and indicates in the novel how they came upon man and led to his sufferings. One of the two groups of men depicted in the novel, the Neanderthalers, lived in absolute peace and harmony until the arrival of the other group. These new men with their superior knowledge and craftsmanship however sought to destroy the older race. In this intricately woven story Golding shows how man with greater knowledge and ability has a tendency to destroy things and not to create.

In the course of the story Golding makes us note how the two innocent Neanderthalers called Lok and Fa come to taste the rotten honey procured by the new men. In the process they partake in the vision of a world seen through the eyes of the new race. In the earlier novel, Piggy had stolen fire from heaven; In this one Lok and Fa eat the forbidden fruit. Naturally, as punishment they are expelled from their respective Edens. Of all the boys in *Lord of the Flies*, Piggy with his rational approach was possibly the most grown up person in the island world, always dwelling in a world beyond childhood ignorance. In *The Inheritors* after his weird experience with the rotten honey, Lok loses his innocence. With a guilty feeling he realizes that the world that lies beyond him is not as simple as he had considered it to be. For Golding, however, this casting away from heaven is only a beginning. As Peter Green suggests, this expulsion "leads by slow degrees to the purgatorial Caucasian rocks, the eagle tearing endlessly at his vitals. So the scene is set for the third Aeschylean novel: *Pincher Martin*" (89). Indeed the setting of *Pincher Martin* is Aeschylean as from the very beginning one can sense an inevitable fate maneuvering the life of the protagonist.

Pincher Martin is a tale with an extraordinary setting. In the beginning it appears to be like a typical adventure story set in the tradition of sagas about men against the sea. But soon one begins to notice the strange half-mythic nightmare-like qualities of the struggle of the man called Christopher Martin. Ultimately, one realizes that none of the happenings associated with him had taken place in reality. They had been visualized in Martin's sub-conscious mind and had registered there in the space of a few moments. Pincher Martin is actually the story of a man who died twice. Golding's American

publishers had published the book under the title *The Two Deaths of Christopher Martin.* Indeed, Martin is a man who has always desperately clung to life, and therefore, refuses to die when the moment comes, and goes through tremendous metaphysical suffering.

Through a series of flashbacks Martin's character is shown to be opposite to the heroic and mythic Prometheus. Martin is an unscrupulous egotist who had stopped at no depravity, no betrayal of love and friendship to fulfill his own ego. One of his victims portrays his depraved character with precision thus:

> "He takes the best part, the best seat, the most money, the best notice, the best woman. He was born with his mouth and his flies wide open and both hands out to grab. He's a cosmic case of the bugger who gets his penny and someone else's bun" (120).

From the memory of an aching tooth Pincher fabricates his survival on a rock shaped like his own teeth (30). As he himself mutters in his struggles, he clings to life "like a limpet"(36). Like the seaweed, mussels, and shells cleaving to a rock, he lives and breathes. He takes these lowest forms of lives as food to sustain himself and he boasts that he can defeat nature. Here one has to agree with Samuel Hynes who in his essay, 'On Pincher Martin' suggests that the qualities that keep Martin alive in the hostile atmosphere of the rock are also possibly the qualities that make him repulsive. He thus forces us reconsider the question whether the qualities with which man survives are equally repulsive.

In his agony, Pincher begins to identify himself with mythical characters such as Prometheus, Atlas and Ajax. As Prometheus made man out of clay, Pincher makes a 'Dwarf' in the shape of an old woman with rocks, and hopes to be spotted by some ship. He has led a godless life in the past, and continues to do so on the rock. He refuses to die and grunts, "I'm damned if I'll die!"(72) This assertion is ironic, because by refusing to die, and by declining to commit himself to a selfless act, he chooses damnation. He visualizes himself as a mythic hero tormented alone on a rock, exposed to sun, rain, and all sorts of natural calamities. Like Odysseus, he is thrown on a rock by the sea; like Ajax, he is deprived of his ship; like Atlas he is made to stand with the weight of the sky overhead, and like Prometheus he is tormented on a barren rock. Indeed, he cries out: "I am Atlas. I am Prometheus"(164). Here he indeed becomes the symbol of suffering humanity defying fate.

But the figure of Pincher lacks the heroic stature of Prometheus and of the other mythical heroes he compares himself to. He does not, for example, fight the gods as Atlas did. Not being a hero like Ajax, Pincher joined the Navy only when driven to do so, and his intelligence was not used in heroic causes as Odysseus' was. And whereas Prometheus was conniving for the welfare of mankind in general, Pincher is selfish for his own personal gains. Though critics like Peter Green see Pincher Martin as a Promethean figure, as one who "sums up every quality that distinguishes man from the beasts"(90), he reminds one more of Loki—the mischievous giant-god of Nordic myths. Loki was originally a giant who was allowed by the gods to live with them. He was later tied down to a rock for contriving the death of another god, Balder, and for his other

misdeeds. There he continues to suffer under drops of venom, which keeps falling from a serpent's mouth, until Ragnarok, the final battle between the gods and the monsters. As a professional actor, Pincher may play the role of Prometheus or any other hero, but his 'Dwarf' fails to save him whereas Prometheus's man ultimately set him free from his purgatorial existence.

Nevertheless, in Pincher one can identify Campbell's version of a Modern Prometheus, portrayed in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) as the self-centred hero who "instead of submitting to all of the initiatory tests, has like Prometheus, simply darted to his goal (by violence, quick device, or luck) and plucked the boon for the world that he intended, then the powers that he has unbalanced may react so sharply that he will be blasted from within or without—crucified, like Prometheus, on the rock of his own violated unconscious" (37). Pincher has always taken anything that caught his fancy, done everything a man would do to pacify his own ego, and has been an epitome of selfishness throughout his life. And so at the end of it he has to suffer, though he refuses to accept any of it.

Modern men are puny creatures absorbed in the triviality of everyday life. Samuel Hynes mentions in his essay that Golding himself had once said about the mythical aspect of Pincher that he was "a fallen man… Very much fallen—he's fallen more than most" (132). Furthermore, the author had added that he had tried to make Pincher as unpleasant and nasty as he could, and was interested to note how critics identified their own selves in him. Therefore, it becomes very clear that modern men would not accept a great heroic

Prometheus as their spokesman, but a dwarfed one who would be very like themselves, or someone like Eliot's Phlebas the Phoenician in *The Wasteland*, whom Pincher sees in himself:

> ... I was young and strong and handsome with an eagle profile and wavy hair; I was brilliantly clever and I went out to fight your enemies. I endured in water, I fought the whole sea ... Now I am thin and weak ... my hair is white with salt and suffering. My eyes are dull stones—(188).

At the end, however, Pincher is denied even a purgatorial stay. As Golding himself comments in an interview which is quoted by Kermode in his essay, "Golding's Intellectual Economy"(1962):

> He is not fighting for bodily survival but for his continuing identity in the face of what will smash it and sweep it away—the black lightning, the compassion of God. For Christopher, the Christ-bearer has become Pincher Martin who is little but greed. Just to be Pincher is purgatory; to be Pincher for eternity is hell (60).

The mythic Prometheus was redeemed for his humane qualities. Though he flouted the gods, he was compassionate toward humanity. He created and nursed something that was able to relieve him of his sufferings. On the other hand, Pincher nursed and nourished his own arrogantly proud self. The only heaven or freedom it could provide him with was that rock. It is rather interesting to note that the last portion of Pincher's body that is destroyed are his claw-like hands. To escape his insignificant existence, Eliot's protagonist in 'The Love Song of J.Alfred Prufrock' wanted to become

"a pair of ragged claws scuttling across the floors of the silent seas." Pincher, as if to justify his borrowed name, and not his real name, truly becomes so. After all, he has been a 'pincher' throughout his life, and with his claw-like hands he never built anything fruitful, but always tried to take what had belonged to others.

Pincher refuses God's compassion and the promise of heaven for his unsubstantial rock. When he has a vision of God in the guise of a fisherman, at first he tries to deny him. Even when he realizes that his selfish ego can provide him with nothing but that one rock in a hostile sea, Pincher refuses to accept God. Through his refusals to accept heaven and death he opts for perpetual hell. He reminds one of Milton's Satan:

> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a heav'n of hell, a hell of heav'n.
> What matter where if I be still the same,
> And what I should be, all but less than he
> Whom thunder hath made greater...
>
> (Book I. *Paradise Lost.*)

Pincher's mind is hell itself, and therefore like Milton's Satan he fails to accept God's offering of heaven, and chooses to go through eternal suffering.

Through the figure of Pincher Martin Golding commits himself to criticizing man's capacity to reason. Pincher thinks that with his intellect, reason, and sanity he can survive. But the author notes pointedly that in man's battle for salvation much more is

needed than these qualities. Love, faith and selfless actions, for instance, seem more effective to Golding in this case. And these are precisely the qualities absent in Pincher's character. It seems that he willfully blocks his way to salvation. In their book, *The World of William Golding*, Oldsey and Weintraub comment that there are no redeemers in Golding's theology. That the modern Prometheus must continue suffering without redemption appears to be the ultimate message of *Pincher Martin*.

Golding was unable to treat the Prometheus myth successfully in the novels he wrote after *Pincher Martin*. Yet the single play Golding has written, *The Brass Butterfly*, later published as a novella under the title 'Envoy Extraordinary,' presents a very fascinating Promethean figure in the character of Phanocles. Phanocles is a scientist and inventor who brings several astounding gifts for the Emperor of Rome. He claims that through these epoch-making inventions, which consist of a pressure cooker, a steam engine, explosives, and the technique of printing, he can make man advanced in technology and change the world. The Caesar accepts the pressure cooker enthusiastically, calling it the most Promethean invention of all. The inventions of steam engine and explosives prove to be disastrous as foretold by the Emperor when he first set his eyes upon them. He also refuses to do anything with the method of printing. The farsighted Emperor explains that people were ready to accept a small change, like cooking in a pressure cooker, but they were not yet prepared for a revolution.

The mythic Prometheus had given man fire and that brought a revolutionary change in the life of pre-historic man. But as a realist Golding knows that the receiver of

the gift must also be ready and willing as well to have the gift. Phanocles, says Oldsey and Weintraub in *The Art of William Golding*, "sees no limits to what man can do with his universe, but cannot comprehend the danger of playing Prometheus" (153). He is able to see only the good side of technological advancement, and is completely blind to the baser instincts of human nature Golding attributes to original sin (see chapter 2). He is much like Frankenstein, whom Mary Shelley herself had called the "modern Prometheus", in trying to unlock the secret of creation. Frankenstein thought that by bringing the dead back to life he would change human history. But what he created turned into a monster. Somewhat like him, Phanocles wants to play the part of Prometheus by bestowing his notable gifts on common men who shrink away from them. The Roman soldiers, whom he wants to present with the gift of gunpowder, prefer hand-to-hand combat. The gully slaves do not like steam engines as they fear that for the new mechanism they will cease to have any meaning for their masters. Now at least they have a life, however miserable that might be. If engines take away their work, they will simply be annihilated. So the wonderful gifts of Promethean Phanocles are refused on the ground that they are dangerous and self-destructive.

Perhaps what Golding wants to suggest is that human beings have never been quite ready to accept all that modern technology has offered them. And the situation has not altered much since Caesar's time, although that was some two thousand years back. Far from utilizing the power put into his hands, man is using it wildly to destroy his own world. Thus Golding makes us ponder whether man can get anywhere despite the Promethean gifts bestowed upon him.

Darkness Visible, considered by many to be the most powerful and ambitious work of the author, presents farther significant aspects of the Prometheus myth. As it has been presented above, originally, Prometheus was linked with fire. Matty, the central character of *Darkness Visible*, is also intimately associated with that element. The beginning of the novel portrays a firestorm in the London Blitz, out of which Matty walks out, a child maimed by fire. According to both eastern and western myths, none but the innocent can pass through a barrier of fire. By coming out of that fire, Matty establishes himself as one with a mythic heritage of innocence. Moreover, his origins remain unknown to the reader—a fact that farther deepens the mystery about his character and role.

Unattractive in his looks, Matty is hardly loved by anyone. Apparently, Fate has stamped him out to be different. He has to learn adult emotions at an early age. At heart he craves love, and he gives away love unasked. He too is a Prometheus in his understanding and wisdom and in his love for fellow humans. From time to time Matty tries to reach out and help those around him. In his attempt to help a half-witted aborigine in Australia he hurts his own self. From the bottom of his heart he pities Pedigree, the teacher who caused Matty only misery. He even considers the idea of helping Sophy, but realizes that this was something beyond him. And in the end he gives away his own life to save a child from the clutch of a group of kidnappers.

In the character of Matty, Golding actually blends the figure of Prometheus with that of Christ. Like Prometheus, Christ too is perceived as a symbol of suffering. Christ suffered to free man from sin, while Prometheus surrendered his own freedom and embraced insufferable pain for the welfare of mankind. In other words, they share the same philosophy of sacrifice for universal good. Indeed, Prometheus has often been identified as a pagan Christ. Matty, with his love for humanity and profound understanding of human sins, becomes a symbol like them. His compassionate knowledge of evil in man's heart and his own sense of duty make him a sort of prophet in the tradition of Eliot's Tiresias (*The Wasteland)*:

> I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs
>
> Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest-
>
> I too awaited the expected guest.
>
> (*The Wasteland*: The Fire Sermon)

Like the old prophet Tiresias Matty feels the pain and agony of Pedigree and all those around him. He even sympathizes with those that hurt him.

However, saints and redeemers are never easily accepted. They are condemned by fate or their fellow men. So Matty is always made fun of, pushed around, neglected, or regarded as a fool. Here we can recall Piggy, Golding's first Prometheus, who was also a butt of jokes for his friends. Also, just as Christ was betrayed by his own people, Prometheus was punished by the angry immortals. An embodiment of modern Christ and Prometheus, Matty too is appreciated to some extent only after his death.

The last of Golding's Promethean figures is Ionides Peisistratides in *The Double Tongue* (1994), the incomplete novel that was published after his death. Ionides is possibly one of the most truthful representations of modern characters portrayed by Golding. He is shown to be an Athenian and interpreter in the oracle of Delphi during a time when Greece was under Roman rule. His friends called him Ion, and this is significant since according to Greek myths, Ion was a son and priest of the god Apollo. Although he appears be a devotee of Apollo, Golding's Ion is virtually an atheist. He does not believe in the existence of divinities, but accepts their necessity. For him gods are the creation of a class of people who intend to use them to rule the mob. He himself uses the oracle chiefly for espionage.

Ion resembles Golding's earlier creation Pincher Martin. Like Martin he believes too fervently in his own identity. But he is not a greedy 'pinch-all' like the protagonist of the earlier novel. Ion is a learned person and considers himself to be a wise man. He is a firm believer in, and dreamer of an independent Greece. He chooses Arieka, a simple rural girl, to be a seeress in the temple of Delphi and uses her partly to conceal his own spying activities.

Golding gives to Ion the rhetoric of a modern Prometheus—one who would use gods for the profit of man:

> (Arieka): "Surely the god doesn't need to be told what is happening?"
>
> (Ionides): "Reminded, shall we say. It's a good theological point. What does the god need to know? After all he needs to know what the question

> is. Therefore he needs to know something. Therefore there is no reason why he should not need to know what is happening in Asia, or Africa, or Achaia.... or Rome" (63).

Ionides cannot bring himself to believe in the gods or a supreme existence. He is also shown to be a homosexual. For Golding, this is a person cultivating unnatural practices. He is someone who has never faced dishonour until almost at the very end. Reminiscent of Piggy and Pincher, Ionides is a flawed Prometheus in his search for something his reason and intellect cannot provide him.

The close and compassionate relationship between Ion and Arieka and Ion's fondness for his slave Perseus apparently makes him a more likable and redeemable character than Pincher Martin. Nevertheless, like Golding's other Promethean characters, Ion too leans too much on his own beliefs. He considers himself a steady and sturdy freedom fighter although his country Greece seems quite content under the Roman Empire. When the Romans let him free as an ineffective conspirator, he is robbed of his identity, honour, and lifelong beliefs. That is something he cannot take and as a result he loses his sanity. Although the novel is an unfinished one, Golding does enough to suggest the pitiful destination of Ionides fully and superbly by relating it from the standpoint of Arieka:

> He did become silly, not in the way he always had been at times, but a silliness without any wisdom in it. There was oblivion and presently his body died. I did not suffer with him as so often in these cases of extreme age, he had really died a long time before (164).

Somewhat like Pincher, he too has to face death twice. Whereas Pincher's subconscious mind continued to struggle even after death, Ion's body continued to live after his mind had succumbed to death. The nature of the problems of these two men is the same. When they fully realize the loss of their identity, they have to accept death. Although Pincher appears to be the more egotistic of the two men, to a modern reader Pincher seems more appealing and more acceptable as a modern Prometheus. He grabs whatever he can lay his hands on. He cheats, he lies and does all the unspeakable things a man can do. He also suffers terribly, but unlike Prometheus, and like the suffering millions of the modern world, he does not know why he suffers. Yet, he is accepted by the readers as a modern Prometheus because he is a creation of the world they themselves belong to. And like Pincher, too, they do not know the reason behind their sufferings that the modern life-style has inflicted them.

In the last part of their book, *The Art of William Golding*, Oldsey and Weintraub mention William Faulkner who said that the only kind of literature worth writing is that in which the human heart is in conflict with itself (169). Indeed, the theme lying at the centre of modern literature is the suffering of the human mind, and the soul struggling with itself. That is why the figure of Prometheus—the archetypal symbol of suffering humanity, has always been so attractive to writers and critics of all ages. Twentieth century men often pride themselves on their sense of privacy, and of the progress they have made in the field of communication. But what they have achieved amount only to screens that have shut off their thoughts and feelings. They have managed to lock themselves up in their purgatories, with only occasional social calls made at each

other's drawing rooms. They are, as writers such as Eliot, Conrad, Greene have suggested, afraid of one another and of human relationships, and thus they identify themselves with Prometheus in their sufferings.

Golding was a theologist with an aversion to the theories practiced by Darwin, Marx and Freud. In the last chapter of *The Art of William Golding*, Oldsey and Weintraub note that Golding did not consider it proper to look for a pattern in every field of life. He particularly disliked Freud's various theories of psychological conflicts and interpretations. However, if one pursues him closely enough, one will find that throughout his life Golding looked for some kind of design in his search for truth, and he himself set patterns while drawing and sketching his characters. For example, his Promethean characters very often have borrowed identities. We never come to know the real name of Piggy. Christopher Martin becomes Pincher Martin when he joins the navy. Little is known about Matty's parentage and Ionides is mostly known by the name Ion, the mythical son of Apollo. Fools and simpletons in his novels come closest to the real state of things. Similarly, through his Promethean figures, he attempts to throw light on man's suffering from different perspectives.

A critic of the lack of morality in modern men, Golding nevertheless follows the footsteps of his subjects closely and sympathetically. He knows the intensity of man's sufferings and pains too well. He shows that in a world such as ours, no redeemer can be perfect. With the exception of perhaps Matty, his Prometheuses are all defective. Even Matty cannot be reconciled with sinful men because of his saintliness. In view of all these

ideas. Golding's visions have often been termed pessimistic. The figure of Prometheus however, stands as a saviour of mankind. By bringing back this redeeming symbol from time to time, Golding perhaps wants to indicate that there is always a lighted path somewhere, which men can find if they fervently want to.

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Golding's Vision of Apocalypse

The Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary provides three definitions for the word 'apocalypse'. The first is revelation, especially about the future of the world. The word also refers to the last book of the Bible, which contains the revelations of St. John about the end of the world. In typical cryptic language, Revelation describes strange figures appearing in the sky—a woman clothed with the sun and with a crown of stars, about to give birth to a child, and a great red dragon poised to devour her child. The red dragon is identified with the Devil or Satan, whereas the child is to be the saviour of the world. There would be a final battle between the emissaries of good and evil, before which the world would receive various signs of doom from nature. Four horsemen would come heralding famine, pestilence, war and death, and the waters of rivers would turn into blood. So the third meaning of apocalypse relates to events of great significance or violence similar to the ones depicted in Apocalypse. Apocalyptic literature therefore is the literature that deals with the final period of world history, and depicts the final confrontation between the powers of good and evil. This conflict frequently culminates in a world catastrophe; sometimes a messianic figure is responsible for the ultimate triumph of good over evil.

Many authors have recounted history up to their own time in symbolic form, and then have given a vision of the salvation to be brought by God at the end of the world. Classic examples are the narratives woven by the authors of the Books of Daniel and the Revelation. Apart from cataclysmic events like floods, wars and famines, apocalypse is supposed to herald the temporary rule of Satan. There are then signs that originate from

the heavens. At the end, God intervenes dramatically in human affairs. All religious myths of the world more or less describe such endings. Norse, Greek as well as Hindu myths thus describe the ending of the world as a time when evil overwhelms everything, or as a time of confrontation between good and evil. There are also sometimes indications of the rise of a new world from the ruins of the old one, the promise of a new civilization for the faithful as a reward for their commitment. In the words of Robert H. Mounce, a significant role of apocalypse is "to explain why the righteous suffered and why the kingdom of God delayed" (2). Almost all apocalyptic writers look upon their own time as the worst period of history—filled with suffering and pain for the believers.

In the west, the two World Wars were often viewed as apocalyptic by people who saw it as bringing to an end the peaceful, harmonious life of Europe. England was particularly affected because at the end of the second of these wars it lost control over half the world, and was reduced from being an immensely influential power to a nominal superpower. There arose great chaos in every sphere of society. The Industrial Revolution, war devastations, the decline of traditional religion, technological advancement, flourishing neuroses, political propaganda, sexual frustrations, the images of the ruins of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the horrors of concentration camps, and the continual threats of atomic war led many Englishmen to visualize an apocalypse in their own time or in the very near future.

Twentieth-century writers and thinkers have, not surprisingly then, been greatly interested in the theme of apocalypse. W.B.Yeats warned us eloquently about the coming

of a demonic age in poems such as 'Leda and the Swan', or 'The Second Coming', foretelling of a kingdom, the ruling authority of which would be monstrous and terrifying. In *The Wasteland*, too, T.S. Eliot presented a morbid world and men and women who have become soulless and immoral. The fiction of the twentieth century too reflects, in general, men isolated in private cells and dungeons, who have failed to revive the spiritual sides of their nature. Novelists like Conrad and Lawrence showed how inner as well as social problems bar the way to mutual understanding between people and how men-women relationships have ceased to be meaningful. The science fictions of Aldous Huxley generally depicted new worlds where all types of social and moral values are debased, and the extinction of humanity seems imminent. Perhaps not surprisingly, William Golding has encapsulated all these tendencies together in his works. Beginning with *Lord of the Flies*, this great writer of the second half of the twentieth century has produced a series of powerful novels describing a world that Frank Kermode describes in his seminal essay 'Golding's Intellectual Economy' as one "enormously altered by new knowledge"(53).

The mind of modern man works in a way that is different in many aspects from that of his predecessors. According to Golding, men possessed a dark side in their nature from the beginning of time. The war devastations of the last century have opened their eyes to this aspect of their nature to some extent. To attain salvation, however, it is necessary to redeem one's own nature completely. Golding's novels scrutinize several themes such as man's bestial nature, the possibility of salvation despite it, freedom on man's part in making choices, the inevitable ravages of time, order and disorder.

Kermode suggests that in Golding's world progress has failed us while the ideas of necessary evil and universal guilt have returned without bringing God along with them. That is why, Kermode argues, his saints and saviours often appear comical and strange. Golding, it seems, cannot afford to provide spiritual attires for them in a materialistic and debased world.

Each of Golding's novels examines various aspects of our moral world. As a visionary, Golding was able to peer into the past and the future simultaneously. He thinks that evil can spring up from any place at any time. He makes us feel a compelling desire on man's part to create some kind of tool for use against the darkness, against the universal fear that man seems to have for coming generations. The fragments of his apocalyptic vision, when put together, create a world of imagination and myth. T.S.Eliot once characterized Joyce's technique in '*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth' many decades ago as something involving, "manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, to give a shape and significance to the intense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history"(424); this description will serve for Golding as well. Art requires mythical thinking, and Golding's fusion of myth with images from contemporary world has provided new dimensions for the fictionalization of the myths of apocalypse.

When one ventures to examine Golding's works in the context of apocalyptic literature, one has to keep in mind that for Golding apocalypse is not just a revelation of the future world. In his novels apocalypse also suggests a deeper understanding of every thing around us. It connects fragments of things together, and forms a visionary world

that enables one to comprehend fully the universe in which one lives. In the essay 'Lawrence and the Apocalyptic Types' (1968), Frank Kermode observes that the events of a selected series cease to look random once one assimilates them to another selected series which have been identified and classified. Looked at separately, several scattered episodes may seem pointless and insignificant. But when they are considered in a sequence they may suggest some idea of immense importance. Golding seems to pursue such a sequence, for although built on scattered events each makes a whole when seen in a larger perspective.

Many novels of William Golding are retold tales of other writers. *Lord of the Flies* (1954), *The Inheritors* (1955), *Pincher Martin* (1956), *Free Fall* (1959) and *The Spire* (1964) are thus books, as critics have pointed out, bent on reversing tales told by some other writers. Golding has of course given some distinctive twists to the previous stories by setting them in new worlds, or by providing them with the benefit of ingenious ideas and attitudes. Thus a simple adventure story of schoolboys leads to a devastating vision of apocalypse at the end of *Lord of the Flies*, and one man's story of his life seems to hold out an apocalyptic vision of life in *The Spire*. Certainly, Golding is not a writer who simply sees or describes things. According to Mark Kinkead-Weekes he is one of those who believe that sight is nothing without insight. Kinkead-Weeks also suggests in 'The Vision and the Visionary' that when the physical side is "made quiet" by some deeper kind of perception, one can for a moment see into the real state of things. So images and symbols in Golding's novels very often amount to a revelation of the apocalyptic conditions awaiting us.

Lord of the Flies is possibly Golding's most solidly constructed tale and is the most complete presentation of his vision of the apocalypse. A novel replete with symbols, *Lord of the Flies* presents an apocalyptic world of symbolism and visions. For its author this is the beginning of a mythical presentation of life. The conch in this novel for instance, is a very important apocalyptic symbol:

> In colour the shell was deep cream, touched here and there with fading pink. Between the point, worn away into a little hole, and the pink lips of the mouth, lay eighteen inches of shell with a slight spiral twist and covered with a delicate embossed pattern. Ralph shook sand out of the deep tube (22).

Introduced in the very first chapter of the book, the shell or the conch which Ralph used to gather the first assembly is an intricate symbol. In the beginning, it represents democratic rights, for the boys make a rule that whoever holds the conch has the right to speak. Thus in that lonesome island it becomes a reminder of the civilized world the boys have left behind. This however, is only a primary interpretation. The conch is also a gift from nature that Kinkead-Weekes describes as "embossed by an art other than human"(66). But this beautiful conch produces a harsh sound when blown by a human being. When Ralph blows the conch the peaceful life of the island is shattered forever. Thus the conch becomes the first apocalyptic sign indicating that life on the island may not turn out to be as hopeful and happy as the boys expect it to be.

Through the conch and its destruction Golding shows how the most beautiful things of this world are often destroyed with deliberate brutality. In other words, the

conch leads us ultimately to a revelation of Golding's apocalyptic vision, for in the shattering of the shell towards the end of the novel one sees the image of the destruction of life itself. Life has much possibility, as did the conch when we first saw its beauty, but men with their whimsical and perverse disposition tend to destroy it completely.

The candle-buds of Simon point to another apocalyptic theme. The three boys—Ralph, Jack and Simon – discover them together during their first expedition in the island. It is Simon who responds naturally to the beauty of nature and names them candle buds. Ralph fails to find any practical use for them whereas Jack slashes at one with his knife and comments contemptuously that they were not edible. This episode indicates that man's natural inclination towards beauty and spiritualism will be replaced by utilitarian and materialistic thoughts. This incident is reminiscent of the Biblical Apocalypse when all men except a chosen few will follow the 'Beast' and indulge themselves in all sorts of bestial activities. Jack therefore, is to become the follower of the Beast, Ralph, the average human being, and Simon, an apostle who will defy the Beast.

Golding's apocalyptic vision is further demonstrated in the chapters 'Shadows and Tall Trees' and 'A View to a Death'. In these two chapters two opposite visions of nature are presented. The first one, seen through the eyes of Ralph, emphasizes the indifferent and insouciant attitude of nature towards human beings:

> Here, on the other side of the island, the view was utterly different. The filmy enchantments of mirage could not endure the cold ocean water

> and the horizon was hard, clipped blue. Ralph wandered down to the rocks. Down here, almost on a level with the sea, you could follow with your eye the ceaseless, bulging passage of the deep sea waves. They were miles wide, apparently not breakers or the banked ridges of shallow water... Wave after wave, Ralph followed the rise and fall until something of the remoteness of the sea numbed his brain (136-137).

Ralph is numbed by the indifferent attitude of the ocean and its vastness. He feels helpless as he realizes that their hope of going back home is just wishful thinking. Simon's words to Ralph right after his observation of the sea, is a revelation of the author's apocalyptic idea:

> Simon was speaking almost in his ear... "You'll get back where you came from." Simon nodded as he spoke (137).

Though Ralph feels almost sure that he will never go back home, Simon prophesies that he (Ralph) will go back to where he came from. According to the Biblical Apocalypse, during the last days of the world only those who have faith will be saved. Though Ralph is just an average human being, he is promised salvation by Simon—the messiah of Golding, who told Ralph that he would return home safely.

The ocean that seemed indifferent to Ralph is revealed as something quite different on the night of Simon's death. As the waves creep towards the body of the brutally murdered boy beneath the moonlight, the brilliantly realistic description of the advancing tide represent all the beauty of the world with its promise of eternal reward to those who suffer:

> ...Along the shoreward edge of the shallows the advancing clearness was full of strange, moonbeam-bodied creatures with fiery eyes. Here and there a larger pebble clung to its own air and was covered with a coat of pearls. The tide swelled in over the rain-pitted sand and smoothed everything with a layer of silver. Now it touched the first of the stains that seeped from the body and the creatures made a moving patch of light as they gathered at the edge. The water rose further and dressed Simon's coarse hair with brightness. The line of his cheek silvered and the turn of his shoulder became sculptured marble...(190).

Simon is a potential saviour in Golding's apocalyptic world. And although his attempts fail in a universe of rage and confusion, as his creator, Golding could not let go of him unadorned. So Simon is given a grand reception as he enters through the gates of death or immortality. Here Golding does not reintroduce any ancient myth but creates his own, basing his symbols on the actual wonders of life itself. Not one of the boys really cared for Simon, who sacrifices himself for his love for them. But when his body is carried out to the ocean it is adorned by nature; it seems simply impossible then to believe that his death has been a waste.

It seems that for Golding every aspect of nature has two opposite ends. Through Ralph's vision of the indifferent sea, and the sea taking care of Simon, he presents the idea of a system that is simultaneously concerned about human welfare and indifferent to man's destination. The notion is rather disturbing, but this view is indicative of Golding's apocalyptic vision of God and the Universe and is central to modern man's idea of Fate

and freedom. Golding believed that God has given man the will to choose, and because of his free will man is free to do whatever he wishes on this earth. God does not interfere in every single event of a man's life. However, when a man steps out from his petty little life into the world beyond mortal life, he is again in the hands of eternity. Simon is one of Golding's prophetic characters, and through him the author chooses to reveal his own vision of an apocalyptic world where only inner strength and self-knowledge can sustain one against the overwhelming powers of evil. Though Simon dies as a saint, he paves the way to salvation for Everyman as he did for Ralph.

On the other hand, through the figure of the dead parachutist, Golding creates a feeling of fear among the boys. But for his readers, the dead man suggests something uncanny. The boys imagine him to be a beast that lives on the top of the mountain, although the fact is it is the dead parachutist who had dropped into the island from the air as the result of a dogfight. He is the only grown up man one finds in the book apart from the naval officer who would come to rescue the children at the end. The presence of this adult person, however, fails to provide any feeling of security for them. The boys had sought desperately for some sign of help from the adult world, but the sign that arrives on the island only arouses fear and terror in their hearts. Several times they speed away after being confronted by this corpse. Through the figure of the parachutist Golding suggests that in a world of apocalyptic devastations older generation have nothing to offer to posterity except war, decay, and a nameless horror.

The confrontation between Simon with the Lord of the Flies or Beelzebub, personified in the pig-head stuck on a stick by Jack in the forest, is indeed one of the most terrifying experiences recounted in Golding's fiction. That evil or the beast resides in the human heart is graphically depicted in this episode:

> "Fancy thinking the beast was something you could hunt and kill!" said the head. For a moment or two the forest and all other dimly appreciated places echoed with the parody of laughter. "You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are!" (177)

Beelzebub is supposed to be the prince of Hell, and therefore Simon's encounter with him in the pig-head confirms the evil residing in the human heart, that is to say, the evil that comes out through human thoughts and actions. The words of the Lord of the Flies reveal what Simon was already aware of. This incident introduces us to Golding's central theme of the fallen nature of man, and indicates how man's quest for salvation and consistency must result in a voyage through all the contradictory possibilities he finds within himself. According to the tales of the Biblical Apocalypse, man must go through a series of trials in order to come out victorious in his confrontation with the 'Beast' or Satan Incarnate. Very few men will have the power to resist the 'Beast'. In the apocalyptic world of Golding, the beast is a creation of man himself. And he must take great care and go through insufferable pains to be successful in his mission.

In his next two novels too, namely, *The Inheritors* and *Pincher Martin,* Golding concerns himself with the myth of the Fall and Prometheus. In his fourth novel *Free Fall*

he once again turns to the visionary aspects of the apocalypse. The story itself is about the search of its protagonist Sammy Mountjoy for the reasons behind his fall. In a way it is a Faustian story, as it explores at what point and for what reason this human soul was given over to Satan. In the suggestion that he lived on "Paradise Hill, ten minutes from the station, thirty seconds from the shops and the local"(5), Sammy reveals that he was once innocent and had led a blissful life. Like all children, his early life was full of pranks and small adventures, although none of them were responsible for his downfall. The nocturnal adventure in the prohibited grounds of an ill-reputed hunter-general had the attraction of something forbidden for Sammy and his boyhood friends. But the adventure of Sammy and Johnny was quite innocent and boyish. The scene seen through his eyes during this expedition is almost Wordsworthian and reminiscent of the *Prelude*:

> The moon was flowering. She had a kind of sanctuary of light round her, sapphire. All the garden was black and white. There was one tree between me and the lawns, the stillest tree that ever grew when no one was looking. The trunk was huge and each branch splayed up to a given level; and there, the black leaves floated out like a level of oil on water... Later, I should have called the tree a cedar and passed on, but then, it was an apocalypse (45-46).

Like the ten years old boy in 'The Prelude', an ordinary scene becomes magical and mysterious for Sammy. One summer evening, while rowing a boat the boy poet of 'The Prelude' had a vision of a huge black peak rising from behind a craggy steep. The grim shape filled his mind with thoughts of wisdom and the spirit of the universe, and

taught him of the high objects of life and nature. Sammy's vision described above, is similar, as for him this is the first taste of the wonder and mystery of life. In the supposed world of the Apocalypse, men would not understand the spiritual aspects of life. So, in spite of hovering on the verge of penetrating the mystery beyond the physical world, Sammy fails to comprehend the full significance of the vision he has had through the cedar tree. And the story of his life shows that though he enjoyed beautiful things, his thoughts never centred on creating beautiful works or a beautiful world. On the twisted uneven path of life Sammy forgets the compelling intensity of that one apocalyptic scene until late in life he is confronted by another similar vision as he comes out from prison.

During the Second World War Sammy was taken to a Nazi concentration camp as a prisoner of war. On coming out of the concentration camp, Sammy realizes the full significance of the events of his life. When he looks around, the apocalyptic vision he had during that childhood expedition is finally seen in its true significance:

> Huge tears were dropping from my face into dust; and this dust was a universe of brilliant and fantastic crystals, that miracles instantly supported their being. I looked up beyond the huts and the wire, I raised my dead eyes, desiring nothing, accepting all things and giving all created things away. The paper wrappings of use and language dropped from me. Those crowded shapes extending up into the air and down into the rich earth, those deeds of far space and deep earth were aflame at the surface and daunting by right of their own natures though a day before I should have disguised them as trees (186).

For the first time in his life Sammy is able to bridge the material world and the spiritual one. Tears which have sprung because of the terrible insight he has had into his own being has washed away his blindness and has made him see beyond innocence and experience. He is able to see the happenings of his past life in a new light and understands their meaning for the first time. He comes to recognize the God he had locked away in a dark cellar of his mind. The agonizing suffering in a cupboard, which he mistook for a cell, has cured him of his egotistic problems. In a moment of apocalyptic vision enhanced by war and his own sufferings, he realizes that there is a world beyond the everyday one. Tears of intense grief transfigure ordinary things for him and he sees for the first time that the key to the spiritual world was always there; only he had never had a glimpse of it.

Sammy lost his soul, so to speak, to possess Beatrice Ifor, the girl he had sketched in one of the art classes, even though he had given the credit for the sketch to somebody else. But afterwards he discovers, as did Doctor Faustus, and as his wise headmaster had foretold, that what he wanted and got was not quite what he had expected. In a fit of frustration and anguish he uses and degrades Beatrice totally. In the end, he leaves her for another girl. After his experience in the war camp, he realizes the extent of his crime, and then goes back to see her, only to find her in a mental institution at an incurable stage. Sammy accepts the burden of his folly with the understanding that not all mistakes can be amended as he realizes that man is not an innocent creature, and must not expect to reach heaven all at once. For Sammy this is a moment of apocalyptic revelation since it is

recorded in the Book of Revelation that man must go through a period of suffering and pain before he gets to his final destination:

> And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them [Bible: Revelation. Chapter 11]

Free Fall is thus a record of Golding's view of life seen from the eyes and felt by the mind of a repentant sinner. But since this sinner is 'Everyman', his account can be taken as the story of modern man. The entire episode of Sammy's life and vision is apocalyptic because through them we visualize the true state of things in the modern world. Little Sammy was an innocent boy. He was first corrupted by his friend Phillip, next by teachers like Miss Pringle and Nick Shale, and then by the materialistic and trying life of the thirties that ultimately resulted in the Second World War. Through Sammy Golding actually presents that world which in the eyes of many thinkers was being destroyed by wars, and thus it is a presentation of Apocalypse.

Through Sammy's thoughts, actions, and sufferings one realizes that life for modern man has become very difficult, as he has to struggle continuously between his physical world and the spiritual one. For him the ideas of truth, morality, sin, damnation and all similar conceptions have grown more complex than they ever were before. Man now is not even sure of the existence of heaven and hell. So Golding's heroes suffer unspeakably as they move between two worlds, neither believing in God nor denying His existence.

Like *Free Fall,* Golding's next novel *The Spire* (1964) can be seen as a narrative of a sinner's apocalypse. It relates a story similar to Sammy Mountjoy's. Here one comes across a monomaniac, a man very much like Melville's Captain Ahab, in the character of Jocelin, the Dean of a fourteenth century cathedral. He considers himself inspired and is intent on building a spire over his cathedral. Since he believes himself to be a visionary, he thinks that God had prompted him to erect the spire. Although it is discovered by the workers that the spire has no foundation, he goes on with his construction work against the advice of everyone, including the chief mason. Jocelin forces all those around him to bend their wills to have what he wants. The pagan workmen foul the church with deeds such as murder and adultery, and fool about with the model of the spire between their legs. But Jocelin ignores all these acts of desecration as his mind focuses only on one object—the building of the spire.

Jocelin's problems are similar to those of other heroes of Golding, as he does not know who he is. It is not that the Dean is unaware of the things happening around him. He is quite aware of them, but like Sammy in *Free Fall*, he is intent on gaining his one object, even at the cost of his entire self. When he began his work, he had not realized that it would come to mean sacrificing everything and all that he loved. The horror of his situation is revealed in the fourth chapter, when a sort of sacrificial ritual takes place among the pagan workmen who are forced to continue with the construction of the spire against their will:

> ...The mass moved and swirled and its noise defiled the holy air... He knew this was some nightmare; since things happened and stuck in the eye

> as if seen by flashes of lightning. He saw men who tormented Pangall [the husband of Goody, the girl Jocelin liked] having him at the broom's end. In an apocalyptic glimpse of seeing, he caught how a man danced forward to Pangall, the model of the spire projected obscenely from between his legs—then the swirl and the noise ... something else that he had seen was printed on his eyes for ever ... it would always be Goody Pangall on the surround of the south west pillar .... Her hair had come out into the light (89-90).

Just as the Revelation is the most important chapter of the Bible, this chaotic scene is the central event in Jocelin's life, though he does not realize its significance at that moment. In spite of being a churchman, he had felt attracted to Goody. Unaware of his own feelings, he had married her off to Pangall, an impotent church-servant, seemingly for safe-keeping. Pangall is killed in the above-mentioned frenzy. But Jocelin fails to understand that incident as he is prevented from watching the terror of it all. Yet, somehow the entire scene appealed to him as a significant vision of turmoil and horror. It is only much later that Jocelin realizes what had happened to Pangal and Goody and how the married life of Roger and Rachel is destroyed. These people are parts of his life and he likes them and realizes his loss too late.

In his obsession, Jocelin forgot church prayers and all about lighting the candles. But unlike Pincher Martin and like Sammy he seeks help in the end. He begs forgiveness from his cold-hearted fellow mate Anselm whom he had always considered inferior to

him in all respects: "I beg you. No forgiveness for this or that, for this candle or that insult. Forgive me for being what I am"(203). His realization that his spire had little to do with true devotion to God makes him see everything differently. From his earlier confident and conceited self he changes into a humble being: "If I could go back, I would take God as lying between people and to be found there"(220).

At the moment of his death, Jocelin sees the spire "rushing upward to some point at the sky's end"(223). He dies "in the tide, flying like a bluebird, struggling, shouting, screaming to leave behind the words of magic and incomprehension—*It's like the apple tree!*"(223) Throughout the last years of his life, the spire had been central to Jocelin's life, work and thought. In a manner, it had resembled Jocelin's aspirations. Though he committed a number of mistakes, many of which are beyond amendment, his spire cannot necessarily be called evil. For a devout Christian the Bible is the centre of life, and the Revelation is the most important chapter in the Bible. Similarly, for Jocelin the church is his Bible in stone and the spire becomes the apocalypse or revelation of his entire life. The spire is indeed central to his life, but apart from that, during its construction it reveals the most important fact to Jocelin about his life – fact that Sammy (*Free Fall*) learnt through tears of grief and self-knowledge – the value of relationships with fellow beings.

The meaning of the word 'apocalypse', therefore, not only manifests chaos in the physical world, but also in psychological and spiritual ones as well. Golding's apocalyptic vision is possibly most explicitly brought out in the novel *Darkness Visible*, published in 1979. In this book, the novelist fuses reality and myth together and creates

his own myth of the Apocalypse. The opening scene of the London Blitz evokes all mythical devastations caused by fire—from Biblical to Roman and Greek. The fearful description of the Blitz reminds one most strongly of the Biblical descriptions of the Apocalypse, of the time when the world will be engulfed by fiery devastations. Golding's description of the London Blitz shows the intensity of destruction caused by human ingenuity and the way a living city can be transformed into an inferno.

This scene of utmost disaster, presented in the very first chapter of the novel, throws light on a favourite theme of the author—the indifference of nature to the world and fate of human beings:

> ... High above the glare and visible now for the first time between two pillars of lighted smoke was the steady and untouched round full moon— the lover's, hunter's, poet's moon; and now— an ancient and severe goddess credited with a new function and a new title— the bomber's moon. She was Artemis of the bombers, more pitiless than ever before (13).

Against this apocalyptic setting, a more apocalyptic vision is presented through the appearance of Matty, a child, who though burnt horribly, totters out of the fire. To the fire workers the scene seems to be something beyond this world and they watch the boy as if dumbfounded. Though they take the child to safety, the moment of his appearance is unforgettable for them: "Was it the Apocalypse? Nothing could be more apocalyptic than a world so ferociously consumed"(15). The boy Matty becomes for the moment the Son of Man mentioned in Revelation who would come to save mankind:

His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself [Bible: Revelation, Chapter 19]. He is also every child, marked by war. Bernard F Dick calls him in his book *William Golding*: "...war's burnt offering and a lesson for the survivors"(100). "Born from the sheer agony of a burning city"(20), as will be seen later, Matty indeed tries to enlighten the human heart through love and goodwill.

The early life of Matty shows him to be a thoughtful, self-contained, and high-minded boy, traits that make him immensely unpopular among his mates. Like Simon in *Lord of the Flies* he prefers to keep his own company; but like Simon, too, his love for his fellow humans is deep, and he himself seems to be craving for love. Actually, the figure of Simon has been resurrected in Matty. The voice that remained unheard in *Lord of the Flies* is the voice brought back to in *Darkness Visible*. Unlike Simon, though, Matty is able to leave a few disciples behind, and is able to save the life of a little boy and the soul of a sinner.

Unlike Golding's other heroes, self-knowledge grasps Matty early in life. One day, while visiting a bookshop, he sees a strange vision in a glass ball that was kept for decoration. Though the day was cloudy he finds the sun reflecting brightly from the ball into his eyes. A pragmatic silence unfolds in his mind, though he is unable to grasp its meaning fully. Then while visiting a parish church, he is suddenly faced with questions such as "Who are you? What do you want?" from a church official. Though he is not the one being addressed, these questions affect him. For quite some time Matty had been

thinking about a girl he had seen in a flower shop. The strange vision in the glass ball and his perception about his place in the world suddenly makes him aware of many things around him and of his own self:

> Before the balance with its two scales, the one with a man's face, the other with a fire of anticipation and enticement, he had a time that was made of pure, white hot anguish.... He knew, and it never occurred to him to doubt that knowledge, or worse, accept it and be proud of it, that he had chosen, not as a donkey between carrots of unequal size but rather as the awareness that suffered (49).

Though Matty accepts the knowledge that he has to follow a path different from other men, Matty cries and sheds tears. He realizes that no woman will ever love him, and begins to have the visions that will finally lead him to a life of sacrifice. With an anguished heart he accepts the fact that he is different from other men. This is actually the beginning of his prophetic visions that finally lead him to a life of sacrifice. Even when he is subjected to a mock-crucifixion by an aborigine in the suburb of Melbourne and made permanently impotent, he takes the event as God's intervention in his life aimed at leading him to the kind of vocation expected of him.

This vision of the sacrificial self is opposed by the one observed by Sophy, another principal character of the novel. At a very early age, she had been watching some water birds swimming in a stream. She observed them intently as if hypnotized by them:

> They came out into the water, mother and chicks all ten on a string. They moved on with the brook and Sophy went right out into her eyes, she was nothing but seeing, seeing, seeing! It was like reaching out and laying hold with your eyes. It was like having the top part of your head drawn forward. It was a kind of absorbing, a kind of drinking, a kind of (107-108).

Sophy becomes one with the scene, but unlike Matty and like the little boys in *Lord of the Flies*, she feels compelled to destroy the birds. Mark Kinkead-Weekes notes that this is a vision of evil, or an evil kind of seeing which is completed when "Sophy finds a stone fitted to her hand and the perfect destructive arc" (73). Golding makes the two scenes symbolic by placing them at two opposite ends of a system. Throughout the rest of the novel, Sophy uses her evil perception to gratify her evil instincts. The visions she has throughout the novel are perverse, destructive, and horrid in nature. And all the while Matty goes on denouncing the darker self of his nature, always on the lookout to save people from the grasp of evil. For Golding these two episodes have apocalyptic significance as they suggest the confrontation between the powers of evil and the powers of good. And according to the Bible, during the last days of the world a messiah is going to take a stand against the 'Beast', the emissary of Devil or Satan:

> And I saw the beast, and the kings on the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army [Bible: Revelation, Chapter 19].

In *Darkness Visible* Golding thus creates two opposite worlds that confront each other through the figures of Matty and Sophy. The world of the twin sisters Tony and Sophy is actually one of decay and corruption. The sense of destructiveness that develops in their nature is due mostly to the environment they grew up in. Early in their lives, their mother left their father, who then more or less ignored his daughters. Sophy and Tony were thrown into each other's company, but never got to love each other. The confrontation between Sophy and her father during her visit from London reveals several dreadful facts. Sophy has failed to develop any sustaining relationship with any man because of her incestuous attraction for her father. In an earlier novel *The Pyramid*, Golding had presented social degradation through his depiction of the sordid sexuality. Here it has become more repulsive, because a daughter has grown unnatural through her wishes to become sexually involved with her own father. Somewhere early in her life, Sophy felt rejected by her father, and all along, she has been carrying that feeling of rejection inside her heart. Consequently, her attitude towards the world is of resentment. It seems that through the twins and their world, Golding tries to depict a corrupt world that might lead to the climactic conclusion between good and evil, at which all myths and scriptures gesture through apocalyptic signs.

The last appearance of Matty is similar to his first entrance, because he poses as a being of another world. He had been intent on guarding a boy at the school he worked. Instinctively, he senses the evil intentions of Sophy, and as a result, appears as a saviour to the boy when the latter is kidnapped. Although overwhelmed by the shock of a bomb

thrown by the terrorists, he is able to show some resistance. Matty's fiery arrival scares Gerry, Sophy's boy-friend:

> ... The flaming tide made him take a curving run, and as he did so, a strange thing happened in the fire. It seemed to organize itself into a shape of flame that rushed out of the garage door and whirled round and round. It made as if on purpose for the man and his burden.... It came so close to the man and it was so monstrous he dropped the bundle and a boy leapt out of it and ran away (248).

However, the confrontation between good and evil becomes evident only to three persons—Edwin Bell, Sim Goodchild and Sebastian Pedigree. The first two get entangled in a sordid tale of sexual scandal and terrorism because of their involvement with Matty and Sophy; only in private can these two men discuss the apocalyptic significance of the happenings and the vision they had had about Matty. They cannot reveal it to the outer world, because they are afraid that their deepest understanding will become a subject of mockery.

The problem of Sebastian Pedigree is of another level. Throughout his life he has wrongly blamed Matty for many things—for being thrown out of job, and for being imprisoned. Matty, however, has always pitied the poor, miserable man for his incurable problem of homosexuality. Now, several days after Matty's death, Pedigree has a vision of Matty while sitting in the park. He has come to help his old friend get out of the darkness:

> For the golden immediacy of the wind altered at his heart and began first to drift upwards, then swirl upwards then rush upward round Matty. The gold grew fierce and burned. Sebastian watched in terror as the man before him consumed, melted, vanished like a guy in a bonfire; and the face was no longer two-tone but gold as the fire and stern and everywhere there was a sense of the peacock eyes of great feathers and the smile round the lips was loving and terrible. This being drew Sebastian toward him so that the horror of the golden lips jerked a cry out of him—
>
> 'Why? Why?'
>
> The face looming over him seemed to speak or sing but not in human speech.
>
> *Freedom* (265).

Pedigree had cried out like Sammy for help, yet cannot bear like Pincher to let go, and therefore clutches closer the multi coloured ball, that is his life, and his own self. The being Matty brought with him, however, reaches out and frees him of his squalid situation. Only through death can Pedigree be cured of his malady. The last of the many visions recorded by Golding in *Darkness Visible* is the one seen through Pedigree's eyes. Through it the author's idea of the Apocalypse seen in the context of contemporary world, takes on a newer and greater significance. The power that Matty exorcises is of love, and the being that Matty brings to cure Pedigree seems to be the messiah who is supposed to save humanity during the apocalyptic days described in the Bible:

> And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God [Bible: Revelation, Chap 19].

Though Pedigree cannot hope to thrive happily in this world, Matty promises him freedom in the world to come, for nothing according to Golding is considered base or sordid in the land of eternity. The idea indicates the novelist's own leaning towards theology and metaphysics, and *Darkness Visible* is his dynamic attempt to fuse myth and reality together.

However, the most realistic depiction of myth and the apocalyptic world can be found in Golding's tenth novel *The Paper Men*. At the same time it is possibly the most socially realistic of his novels. It is also a portrayal of sterile relationships, lonely godless men, and rootless vagabonds of the modern world. In *The Paper Men,* the central character Wilfred Barclay is a well-known writer who is continuously pursued by Rick L. Tucker, a critic who wants to be his biographer. Barclay declines his proposal, and through a series of comical and ridiculous events, the other man follows him wherever he goes. The novel throws light on a world where literature and learning are nothing but mere paper chases.

Both the writer and the biographer want to exploit each other. Barclay leads the life of a vagabond and is separated from his wife and daughter. He has money enough, and secretly enjoys the sufferings of Tucker. Tucker, on the other hand, does everything

to have a contract signed by the writer. In the beginning of the novel he is a dustbin monger looking for Barclay's old scripts. And at one point, like a dog he licks up drink from a saucer placed on the floor just to amuse the author. Barclay's ex-wife correctly comments that the two of them were destroying each other.

Wilf Barclay is possibly the most convincing sketch of modern man done by William Golding. He claims to be an atheist, but the vision he has of Christ in a cathedral of Sicily is more powerful than any other vision observed in Golding's novels:

> It was a solid silver statue of Christ but somehow the silver looked like steel, had that frightening suggestion of blue. It was taller than I am, broad shouldered and striding forward like an archaic Greek statue. It was crowned and its eyes were rubies or garnets or carbuncles of plain red glass that flared like the heat in my chest (123).

It might just be a simple old statue dug out from old caves, but for Barclay it appears as a message from his own sub-conscious self. Like Sammy Mountjoy in *Free Fall*, Barclay had confined his God to a cellar, and had never looked at it. Now he realizes with a jolt that he had always believed in God. For Golding's characters, it is a typical moment of revelation. Simon had fainted after his meeting with the Lord of the Flies, Lok had felt dizzy after he had drunk the rotten honey of wisdom, and Sammy had lost consciousness during his sufferings in the cupboard. Jocelin too had fainted after realizing fully the extent of the disaster he had brought upon people, while Sophy and Matty, at the climactic moments of their visions, had swooned away. In this book it is Barclay who falls victim to that prophetic weakness.

The stories of holy people, prophets, or seers contain moments when they have their epileptic fits while having prophetic visions. By making his characters suffer similar fits, Golding provides for them a kind of prophetic apparel. Indeed, they are the visionaries of the modern world. With Wilf Barclay, however, the vision is not fully effective. He is after all, an intellectual who has until the moment of that vision kept God out of his life. While lying in hospital bed, he summarizes the dictum of modern men:

> ... knowing that we did not, I repeat did not, invent ourselves and that now in this eternal fix it is not what we do that will help, it is what we are that matters and what we are is not in our hands (215).

Where he differs from his creator, as Mark Kinkead-Weeks suggests, is that "not even a knowledge of a transforming power, not even tears and the desire for the destruction of the self, can finally open Barclay's eyes so that all things can come together" (82). He is a perfect man of the paper world, and up to the end he is only concerned with papers and words and self, until another Worldly Wiseman like himself in the figure of Rick Tucker puts an end to his life. Barclay is indeed an up to date creation of the Biblical apocalyptic world, where men are supposed to deny God even after verifying His existence.

There are novelists who have presented the Biblical Apocalypse in such naive and straightforward ways that they seem too open, too easily recognizable. Their novels are stimulating, but their interpretations of the holy books appear too simple. Major writers like Yeats, Eliot, Hardy and Lawrence recognized this fact, and in their work one discovers the apocalypse as a 'pause of finality' as Kermode explains in his essay

'Lawrence and the Apocalyptic Types' (1968). According to Kermode, Apocalypse is not an end, but the moment of transition, out of which will come another age, which the Holy Scriptures term as the 'Time of the Blessed.' For simplification we can say that in the context of modern literature, apocalypse is a term used to denote the end of the contemporary world brought about first by the practice of evil throughout the world, and then by the confrontation between good and evil. Golding's vision of the apocalypse is more complex than his predecessors because he does not merely see it as an event occurring in the social surroundings, but in every sphere of human world. He has broadened the connotation of the word 'apocalypse', and thus has immersed himself in man's psychological world.

Considered separately, Golding's novels make one feel that human beings are irredeemable creatures (*Lord of the Flies*), that they have destroyed the innocent, and are pursuing a sinful heritage (*The Inheritors*). They are absolutely fallen and godless creatures (*Pincher Martin*), and have chosen damnation out of their own free will (*Free Fall*). They have become slaves to science, which will quicken their own destruction ('Envoy Extraordinary'). Theirs is an ignorant race, given to pervert practices (*The Pyramid* and *Darkness Visible*). For Golding these accusations are only partly true, because as he himself has pointed out in *The Spire*, just as an apple tree has many branches, so has life. Like a tree, life will look different when viewed from different angles. He has treated the basic problems of man from various standpoints, and has shown how like seeing the world in a grain of sand, the human mind is able to see and

comprehend apocalyptic visions in ordinary situations around them. The experiences of life enable one to understand life and one's own self better.

So the apocalyptic narratives of William Golding are not random descriptions of cataclysmic events, nor just depiction of social and moral decay as presented by other post-war novelists. His novels of course, are rooted in all these, but as a visionary, Golding imparted to his work something of even greater significance. In his fiction the unreal, mythic inventions are brought down to earth. One sees thus in his fiction apocalypse in a modern city devastated by bombs. Evil is observed in the hearts of small children and in their apparently innocent games. Similarly, the figure of the messiah is depicted through characters such as Simon, Nathaniel (*Pincher Martin*), and Matty, who are not looked upon as heroes, but people jeered at by their fellow men. This realistic treatment of mythic ideas often makes it difficult for readers to recognize them at first glance. For the same reason however, Golding's vision of the apocalypse in the contemporary world can be more readily accepted by us, who with all their worldly, materialistic concerns, have a romantic leaning for the unreal hidden somewhere in our hearts.

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Conclusion

Since the publication of his first novel in 1954, critics around the world have been trying to determine the exact nature of Golding's novels. That he is much concerned with the theological aspects of human life is beyond debate. But whether he is a practitioner of Christian ideas or an upholder of pagan ideology is still much discussed. Golding himself refrained from making any kind of clear comment in this regard, though Arnold Johnston notes in *Of Earth and Darkness* (1980) that in an interview with Frank Kermode in 1959 Golding saw himself as a myth-maker, and had proclaimed myth as "something which comes out from the roots of things in the ancient sense of being the key to existence, the whole meaning of life, and experience as a whole" (6). For Golding therefore, myth is something synonymous to life itself, life that stands out of time, and events that have been repeated over and over in human history. His novels, therefore, can be seen as mythical dramas of human life seen from a twentieth-century perspective.

The foregoing chapters of this dissertation attempted to understand the exact nature of the mythical aspects of Golding's novels through a study of his use of these mythical motifs in them. From time to time critics and even Golding himself, have asserted that his novels indeed have mythical implications. This dissertation ventures to show how Golding has tried to recreate the world of myth in his fictions. It shows how by placing his characters in widely different settings he has explored the condition of man carefully and shown how human beings in their actions and follies revive to the doomsday scenario depicted in the oldest of myths.

The myth of the Fall, for example, is one of the oldest myths of human history. The first chapter of this dissertation analyses how man's own debased nature, from the beginning of time, has led to many falls. It is not any outer evil that induced man to commit his first sin, but the evil in human heart. A central theme of Golding's novels is this myth of Fall attached with the so-called idea of 'progress' through civilizations, which according to Golding, is no real progress at all. He thinks that man actually has not been able to move away from his barbaric ancestors. All the wars, destructions, rise and fall of countless civilizations, recorded or not in the history of mankind, only point to that one factor—man is guilty at heart. The very nature of man makes him commit sins, and thus human history records the many aspects of the Fall of man in an endless cycle. Golding's first novel, *Lord of the Flies* (1954) is thus a parable of human history in miniature. Even in a most blissful environment, the evil at man's heart can emerge to destroy paradise. Golding's second novel *The Inheritors* (1955) can be looked upon as a novel presenting the same theme in a different background. It is also a tale of the destruction of innocence and its replacement by experience. In the succeeding novels of William Golding, the myth of the Fall and a debased human nature and the loss of innocence are recurrent themes entwined.

Along with the theme of the Fall is merged that of Prometheus. The second chapter of this paper shows how Golding sees the story of Prometheus being enacted in a debased world. Golding's world and men are fallen to such an extent that even heroes such as Prometheus fail to help. On the contrary, Prometheus becomes puny and

grotesque in stature, and sometimes even ineffective and helpless in action. The heroes of the mythic age seem to have lost their greatness in the world of Golding.

The third chapter of this dissertation concentrates on a recurring theme in the literature of myth—the Apocalypse. Apocalyptic literature usually refers to the kind of writing that deals with destructive events that have occurred at the end of the world, as mentioned in the last chapter of the Bible. Many writers of the twentieth century saw apocalypse in the world wars and in contemporary political unrest. Golding's apocalyptic world is presented not only through disastrous happenings and images, but also through a total disintegration of all kinds of values in the social sphere and relationships in a post-war world.

When Golding first started to write, there were many who marked him only as a writer writing pessimistic stories about small boys. But a long time has passed since then. Golding may not have been a very prolific writer considering the fact that he produced only fifteen books, thirteen of which were novels, although he was over eighty when he died. But he has produced some of the most thought provoking novels of his time. At the centre of his novels there is always the presence and action of man. And he is always more concerned about man and his inner world, rather than the physical world. He has also been fascinated by man's psychological and spiritual reaction against all that happens in the outer world. So, in a sense, Golding's novels can be interpreted as man's deepest responses to everyday events. They can also be termed as spiritual odyssey of human consciousness. Possibly, this is one of the chief reasons why readers choose to go

back to his books from time to time, and critics identify even in Pincher Martin, the vilest of Golding's characters, re embodiment of modern men.

In spite of all the accolades he has received from literary critics, Golding has never had a huge number of readers, except for *Lord of the Flies*. He has often been considered too British and austere in his style and outlook. Golding himself never tried to hide the fact that he was very British. But Golding is not as austere or pessimistic in his writing as he has been often described. He only tried to present life as he saw it and attempted to interpret it in a mythical context. The earlier chapters of this dissertation have attempted to explain some of these myths used by Golding in his books. Though critics have referred to his use of myths often, there has not been many books or articles explaining these mythical motifs and literary implications fully.

It has been a decade since William Golding has died. Though critics around the world have given Golding a venerable place, not too many books about him have been written. That he worked on an intricate system of myth, is however, accepted by most of his readers and critics alike. The implication of Golding's mythical creations and their significance has been dealt at some length in this dissertation. Nevertheless, it is important to remind ourselves that he attempted to find some meaning and significance of the chaotic situation that surrounds us, and that he tried to give a name to the void we live in and consider as life.

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