WILLIAM GOLDING'S DEFINITION OF THE IRRATIONAL: A STUDY OF THEMES AND IMAGES

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Julianne Fowler

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PREFACE

It is the purpose of this thesis to analyze and explicate William Golding's first five novels in an effort to clarify his philosophic views and to extricate these novels from the mass of mediocre criticism which has literally buried four of the novels published after Lord of the Flies. It is not the aim of this thesis to place Golding at the top of the ranks of the modern novelists; it is, however, the aim to evaluate Golding's first five works in an attempt to place these novels in their proper sphere.

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J. F.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROLOGUE

Within the framework of fable and through a compressed, poetic style, William Golding successfully defines, illustrates, and emphasizes the irrational as an existing and motivating force within man. Golding completes this definition by his effective use of point of view, characterization, and symbolism and imagery. An examination of Golding's first five novels in their chronological order of appearance--Lord of the Flies (1954), The Inheritors (1955), Pincher Martin (1956), Free Fall (1959) and The Spire (1964)--will reveal the unique, experimental style and the strangely familiar, yet unidentifiable, view of man which ranks Golding as one of the most applauded, criticized, misunderstood, and underrated novelists of this century.

It is precisely the scholarly criticism of Golding and his works which, in all of its plot summary and confusion, misconstrues Golding's style and philosophy. Golding criticism is certainly unique; there are innumerable articles on the novelist, yet the majority of these are singularly lacking in any worthwhile interpretation of the man or his method. This criticism may be categorized as book reviews and plot summaries, attacks on the "gimmick" ending of the

novels, discussions of narrative sources, or intense arguments for or against Golding's philosophic thesis.

Golding's novels invite philosophic speculation; however, the problem for the critics is that of finding a neat, exclusive label for his particular view of man and the universe. The most common and, possibly, the most narrow-minded view is that which declares Golding a Christian moralist; critics who adhere to this belief define Golding's position as that of a pessimistic Calvinist who relentlessly reminds man of Original Sin and whose theme and method are also the re-enactment of the Fall.[1] That there are traces of this view in Golding's novels is undebatable. That this view is an all-encompassing and satisfactory explanation for each of the novels is highly questionable.

Some critics dismiss Golding's philosophy to concern themselves with his adaptation of Ballantyne's Coral Island, Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, H. G. Wells' Outline of History,

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[1]E. C. Bufkin, "Lord of the Flies: An Analysis," GaR XIX (1965), 40-57; C. B. Cox, "Lord of the Flies," CritQ, II (Summer, 1960), 113; Vernard Eller, "Depravity or Sin?" Christian Century, LXXX (November 20, 1963), 1440; Millar MacLure, "Allegories of Innocence," DR, XL (Summer, 1960), 149; Kenneth Rexroth, "William Golding," Atlantic Monthly, CCXV (May, 1965), 98; "Salinger and Golding," America, CVIII (February 23, 1963), 244; and Walter Sullivan, "William Golding: The Fables and The Art," SR, LXXI (1963), 661.

Dorling's Taffrail, Camus' The Fall, Hughes' High Wind in Jamaica, Euripides' The Bacchae, and several other suggested parallels.[2] The critical exercise, here, seems to be the unveiling of all possible narratives, characters, place names, or similar situations with which to confront Golding. Amazingly enough, after this depth of research and comparison, these critics are left holding parallels of plot or reversals of plot and can make no practical critical application of their startling discoveries. Again, there is a narrow and evasive approach to the Golding novels as a unity, a gestalt.

Freudian interpretation, too, has not failed to analyze Golding's works. For example, Claire Rosenfield's "'Men of a Smaller Growth': A Psychological Analysis of William Golding's Lord of the Flies" and Sanford Sternlicht's two

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[2]James R. Baker, William Golding: A Critical Study, p. 7; Ian Blake, "Pincher Martin: William Golding and Taffrail," N&Q, IX (August, 1962), 309; John Bowen, "Bending over Backwards," TLS, October 23, 1959, p. 608; Kirby L. Duncan, "William Golding and Vardis Fisher: A Study in Parallels and Extensions," CE, XXVII (December, 1965), 232; David Lodge, "William Golding," Spectator, CCXII (April 10, 1964), 489; Bernard S. Oldsey and Stanley Weintraub, The Art of William Golding, pp. 17, 49-56, 138-141; Anthony Pearson, "H. G. Wells and Pincher Martin," N&Q, XII (July, 1965), 276; Rexroth, op. cit., p. 97; and Margaret Walters, "Two Fabulists: Golding and Camus," Melbourne Critical Review, IV (1961), 18-29.

articles on Pincher Martin and The Spire are typical of this psychological approach to an interpretation of the novels.[3] Providing useful insights and valid interpretations to certain parts of a particular novel, this approach, nevertheless, does not withstand total application. Golding's five novels do not slip easily into the Freudian niche.[4]

Criticism of Golding's style is equally confusing. Generally, critics hail Lord of the Flies as the most exciting and most lucid of the novels; the story, critics agree, is dramatic and spine-tingling. However, they say with scholarly reservation, the method is too explicit. The allegory or fable is artificial and didactic.[5] The criticism

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[3]Rosenfield, L&P, XI (Autumn, 1961), 93-101; Sternlicht, "Pincher Martin: A Freudian Crusoe," English Record, XV (April, 1965), 2-4; and "The Sin of Pride in Golding's The Spire," MinnR, V (1965), 59-60.

[4]Bernard F. Dick, "'The Novelist is a Displaced Person'" An Interview with William Golding," CE, XXVI (March, 1965), 481; Walter Sullivan, "The Long Chronicle of Guilt: William Golding's The Spire," The Hollins Critics, I (1964), 6; and William Wasserstrom, "Reason and Reverence in Art and Science," L&P, XII (1962), 2-5.

[5]Walter Allen, "New Novels," New Statesman, XLVIII (September 25, 1954), 370; Frederick R. Karl, "The Novel as Moral Allegory: The Fiction of William Golding, Iris Murdoch, Rex Warner, and P. H. Newby," The Contemporary English Novel, p. 259; Francis E. Kearns, "Salinger and Golding: Conflict on the Campus," America, CVIII (January 26, 1963), 139; and Walters, op. cit., p. 23.

of the later works, however, is quite opposite in tone. After Lord of the Flies, critical chaos reigns. Cries of "obscurity, paranoia, monotony, and strain" fill the reviews of The Inheritors, Pincher Martin, Free Fall, and The Spire.[6] The experimental methods of each of the novels, plus Golding's refusal to restrict himself to one style, have only added to the fire of distraught critics.[7] Accusations of "anti-novel" are not uncommon. The problem, then, is the inability of critics to pin Golding to one theme, one style, one narrative method;[8] the criticism of obscurity in the later works, especially Free Fall, may be partially valid;[9] but, the accumulation of bad or inept criticism of the early works is the basis for the bad criticism of the later novels.

Truly, there are a few scholars whose articles on

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[6]Baker, op. cit., p. 73; Irving Malin, "The Elements of William Golding," Contemporary British Novelists, p. 37; and V. S. Pritchett, "God's Folly," New Statesman, LXVII (April 10, 1964), 562.

[7]Baker, op. cit., pp. xvi, 92; Bowen, op. cit., p. 608; and Rexroth, op. cit., p. 97.

[8]Neville Braybrooke, "Two William Golding Novels: Two Aspects of His Work," QQ, LXXVI (September, 1969), 94; Dick, op. cit., p. 481; and Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., pp. 16-28.

[9]Graham Hough, "Fables after the Fall," SatR, XLVIII (July 31, 1965), 17; and Pritchett, op. cit., p. 562.

Golding are valuable insights into the controversial man and his method.[10] These noted few are critics who realize the uniqueness of Golding's changing style, the poetic compression of his language, the "new" novel as Golding views it, and, most importantly, the conflict of the rational and irrational as a prevailing theme in all five novels.[11] Some of these critics associate Golding with the existentialists of the day, particularly Camus; [12] other critics, notably

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[10]Walter Allen, The Modern Novel, p. 288; Kingsley Amis, New Maps of Hell, p. 152; Baker, op. cit.; Frank MacShane, "The Novels of William Golding," DR, XLII (1962), 171; John Peter, "The Fables of William Golding," KR, XIX (Autumn, 1957), 592; V. S. Pritchett, "Pain and William Golding," The Living Novel & Later Appreciations, p. 315; and Walter Sullivan, "William Golding: The Fables and The Art," p. 660.

[11]Howard S. Babb, "Four Passages from William Golding's Fiction," MinnR, V (1965), 50; Baker, op. cit., p. 74; George Clark, "An Illiberal Education: William Golding's Pedagogy," Seven Contemporary Authors, p. 83; "Behind the Vogue, a Rigorous Understanding," New York Herald Tribune Weekly Book Review, XXIX (November 4, 1962), 3; George C. Herndl, "Golding and Salinger: A Clear Choice," Wiseman Review, CCXXXVIII (1964), 311; Samuel Hynes, William Golding, p. 6; Lodge, op. cit., p. 489; Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 34; Peter, op. cit., p. 583; George Steiner, "Building a Monument," Language and Silence, p. 292; Oliver Warner, "Mr. Golding and Marryat's Little Savage," REL, V (1964), 54; and Robert J. White, "Butterfly and Beast in Lord of the Flies," MFS, X (Summer, 1964), 164.

[12]Walters, op. cit., pp. 18-29.

James Baker, trace Golding's methods and philosophies to the plays of Euripides.[13] All of the scholars refer in some way or another to the conflict that occurs when rational man encounters the chaos that is also a part of the Self.

This conflict, the controlling theme within and between the five Golding novels, can best be understood as the existential encounter with the Self, the existential encounter with the absurd, the existential encounter with Nothingness. It will be seen that Golding deals continually and most thoroughly with the encounter with the Self; his novels, however, stop short of the existential "leap." His reluctance to (or resolution not to) complete the existential cycle does not invalidate his placement within the existential system; on the contrary, it emphasizes the frightening and absurd experience of "Self-encounter."

The faceless and anonymous hero of modern literature is the perfect image of a being confronted with Nothingness.[14] The estrangement of man, the sense of the basic fragility of human life, ". . . the impotence of reason when confronted with the depths of existence, the threat of Nothingness, the

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[13]Baker, op. cit., p. 7.

[14]William Barrett, Irrational Man, p. 61.

solitary and unsheltered condition of man before this threat"[15]--these themes are the existential expressions found in twentieth-century art. These are the themes found in the novels of William Golding. The novels are tragedies of man's inability to cope with the irrational side of his nature and his inability to cope alone with the nakedness, the finitude of his being.

Because man sees himself as a rational creature, he projects this illusion and subsequent illusions of his own creation on other people and things. In each of Golding's novels, the illusions of the ego or the illusions of so-called civilized, rational man are slowly and mercilessly stripped away, revealing the horrible reality of the Self. In each of the novels, this reality of the Self is the reality of a void--a void that is without the spiritual side of nature only because rational man chose to eliminate that side. Therefore, Golding's conflicts are existential in the sense that his protagonists exist; they encounter the absurd when they confront the irrational in their nature; they meet anxiety when they go further to meet the nothingness of the "centre." Yet, like the characters in Sartre's

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[15] Ibid., p. 36.

No Exit, Golding's characters, once they encounter the irrational Self, cannot act to authenticate their existence. None of his protagonists makes an existential "leap;" none takes the will to action within the scope of the novel. But the encounter of the hero with Self is a frightening experience that can only be heightened by Golding's approach to the irrational, and the approach differs with each encounter.

CHAPTER I

LORD OF THE FLIES: "WHY IT'S NO GO"

Lord of the Flies, Golding's first novel, is generally acclaimed as his most popular and best work.[16] Behind this popularity and favorable critical reception lies the exciting narrative, the enthralling story element, which is the base of the novel.[17] A group of boys, ranging in age from six to twelve, are evacuated from the Home Counties of England to escape the destruction of the raging atomic war against the "Reds." En route to an unidentified destination, the plane carrying the boys is destroyed by a bomb; the "tube" full of boys is ejected, and it crashes on a small island leaving a deep scar across the island paradise.

> "That's where we landed."
> Beyond falls and cliffs there was a gash visible in the trees; there were the splintered trunks and

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[16]Walter Allen, The Modern Novel, p. 289; "The Art of Darkness," Time, LXXXIII (April 24, 1964), 104; Babb, op. cit., p. 50; Douglas Hewitt, "New Novels," The Manchester Guardian, LXXI (September 23, 1954), 4; Frank Kermode, "The Novels of William Golding," ILA, III (1961), 11; Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 32; V. S. Pritchett, "Pain and William Golding," p. 313; and Kenneth Watson, "Reading of Lord of the Flies," English, XV (Spring, 1964), 2.

[17]"The Art of Darkness," p. 104; and Babb, op. cit., p. 52.

> then the drag, leaving only a fringe of palm between the scar and the sea.[18]

The scar is symbolic of the destruction brought by man, and it leaves the island much less than an Eden.[19]

On the island, isolated from the world of civilization and the world of grownups, the boys attempt to construct their own society, eventually divide into two hostile tribes, and, until their rescue by an armed cruiser, the boys-turned-savages hunt, feast, and murder. The total degeneration of children is appalling, yet the vividness of their struggles makes a compelling story.

> "It's like in a book."
> At once there was a clamor.
> "Treasure Island--"
> "Swallows and Amazons--"
> "Coral Island--"[20]

It is the paradoxical and ironical connection between Lord of the Flies and Ballantyne's Coral Island (1858) which is often the beginning point for much criticism of Golding's novel.[21] The island adventure in the Victorian novel is a

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[18]William Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 25.

[19]Watson, op. cit., p. 3; and White, op. cit., p. 164.

[20]Golding, op. cit., p. 30.

[21]The standard article discussing the parallels between Ballantyne's novel and Golding's is the following: Carl Niemeyer, "The Coral Island Revisited," CE, XXII (January, 1961), 241-245.

story of stranded boys who make the best of their glamorous isolation. The three main characters, Ralph, Jack, and Peterkin, correspond to Golding's Ralph, Jack, and Piggy. However, the similarities between the two novels end here; Ballantyne's island is a good island--it is the island which Golding's protagonists see in the beginning: "'. . . this is a good island.' 'Like icing . . . on a pink cake.'"[22] Everything good on Coral Island is "English, Christian, and jolly."[23] Totally antagonistic to this view of perfection is Golding's island, an island haunted by the Beast, an island petrified by an unknown fear:

> "I mean the way things are. They dream. You can hear 'em. Have you been awake at night?"
>
> "They talk and scream. The littleuns. Even some of the others. As if--"
> "As if it wasn't a good island."[24]

The slow, painful realization that the island is not a good place, the realization that the Beast which haunts mountain and jungle alike is the Beast within man, is the bitter epiphany that is the thematic core of Golding's novel.[25]

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[22]Golding, op. cit., pp. 30, 22.

[23]Hynes, op. cit., p. 7.

[24]Golding, op. cit., p. 47.

[25]Baker, op. cit., p. 95.

The theme, then, of Lord of the Flies, as it is expressed by Golding, ". . . is an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature."[26] The defect of human nature is the irrational, and the irrational exists in all men.[27] This is the truth that the mystic Simon realizes but cannot express. "'Maybe,' he said hesitantly, 'maybe there is a beast.' 'What I mean is . . . maybe it's only us.'"[28] The symbolism of the Beast in addition to the characterizations constitute the major fusion of form and content in Lord of the Flies. The development and parallel explanation of the Beast as part of man is revealed in the symbols and images used to describe the unknown terror.[29]

Notably, the first mention of a beast is made by the "littleun" with a mulberry-colored birthmark. He is the first to tell of his fear, and he is the first fatality on the island. His death is scarcely noted, but the effect of his tearful speech to the assembly has violent repercussions:

"He wants to know what you're going to do about

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[26]E. L. Epstein, "Notes on Lord of the Flies," Lord of the Flies, William Golding, p. 189.

[27]White, op. cit., pp. 163-164.

[28]Golding, op. cit., p. 82.

[29]Bernard F. Dick, William Golding, p. 27.

> the snake-thing."
> "A snake-thing. Ever so big. He saw it."
> "He says the beastie came in the dark."
> "He says he saw the beastie, the snake-thing, and will it come back tonight?"
> "He says in the morning it turned into them things like ropes in the trees and hung in the branches. He says will it come back tonight?"[30]

From this moment on, the irrational fear takes over the attempted rational order of the island.[31] The threat of the irrational becomes overt, and the Beast appears in many shapes to haunt the boys in daylight and in darkness.[32] To protect themselves from the Beast at night and to have smoke with which to signal passing ships, the boys build a fire. It is the job of Jack and his choir to keep the fire burning constantly, since the smoke is their only hope for rescue. Intent on hunting and consumed by blood lust, Jack neglects the fire. When it goes out, Ralph realizes that there is something false in the initial response that "this is a good island."[33] At the assembly, called "to put things straight," the fear of the Beast again becomes the topic of discussion.[34]

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[30]Golding, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

[31]Baker, op. cit., p. 10.

[32]Rosenfield, op. cit., p. 95.

[33]Clark, op. cit., p. 81.

[34]Golding, op. cit., p. 73.

What was the snake-thing, the beastie, is now described by Simon in devastating, though ineffective, terms. "Simon became inarticulate in his effort to express mankind's essential illness. Inspiration came to him. 'What's the dirtiest thing there is?'"[35] The beast is feces; evil is excrement. This symbol, though the cause of laughter among the boys, is carried throughout the novel from Piggy's "ass-mar," to the fecal trail of the littleuns who eat too much ripe fruit, to the Lord of the Flies, the lord of dung.[36] The beast, now animal, now filth, is becoming more real to the boys' imaginations.

In their desperate uncertainty and fear, the boys wish for a sign from the grownup world. Ironically, only another Beast appears.[37] Connecting the evil on the island with the evil in the world, the sign drifts down. The "beast from air" is a dead parachuter; his corpse is imprisoned by the parachute, and his rotting body settles down on the mountain of the island to rule over the boys. At times, the wind

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[35]Ibid., p. 82.

[36]Dick, William Golding, p. 28; John M. Egan, "Golding's View of Man," America, CVIII (January 26, 1963), 140-141; and Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 30.

[37]William Golding, "Fable," The Hot Gates and Other Occasional Pieces, p. 94.

catches the folds of the parachute, and the decaying figure bows and seems to sink toward the island below:

> Before them, something like a great ape was sitting asleep with its head between its knees. Then the wind roared in the forest, there was confusion in the darkness and the creature lifted its head, holding toward them the ruin of a face.[38]

This Beast, a rotting figure plagued by flies, is still only the partial figure of the horrible truth; the Beast is now identified with man, but he is yet to be identified with the worst in man.[39]

The final confrontation with the Beast, the Beast in all of its horrible glory, is Simon's encounter with the Lord of the Flies. In his secret refuge in the jungle, Simon meets the grinning pig's head which is planted on a stick as a placating sacrifice to the Beast. Blood, guts, and flies surround the Beast. Yet Simon, the mystic seer, recognizes through ". . . his inward sight the picture of a human at once heroic and sick."[40] The recognition is the awareness of irrational man, an awareness given only to Simon and

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[38]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 114.

[39]Baker, op. cit., p. 13.

[40]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 96; and Dan Wickenden, "First Idyll, Then Nightmare," New York Herald Tribune Weekly Book Review, XXXII (October 23, 1955), 6.

Ralph. It is an awareness that

> "There isn't anyone to help you. Only me. And I'm the Beast."[41]

> "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?"[42]

The Beast is man-made, and it is, also, man; it comes from superstition, ignorance, and darkness.[43] The bloody, grinning mouth is a symbol of the irrational, greedy, insatiable nature of man.[44] More than Beelzebub, more than the Christian devil, the Lord of the Flies is an uncontrollable force; it is the fundamental darkness within man.[45]

Further establishing the identification of the Beast with man are Golding's four main characters--Ralph, Jack, Piggy, and Simon. Each character is symbolic of a part of man's nature or a portion of society's nature.[46] For example,

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[41]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 132.

[42]Ibid., p. 133.

[43]Bufkin, op. cit., p. 55.

[44]Epstein, op. cit., p. 192.

[45]Ibid., p. 190.

[46]Bufkin, op. cit., p. 54; Thomas M. Coskren, "Is Golding Calvinistic?" America, CIX (July 6, 1963), 19; Cox, op. cit., p. 112; Dick, William Golding, p. 22; Lodge, op. cit., p. 489; Charles Mitchell, "The Lord of the Flies and the Escape from Freedom," ArQ, XXII (Spring, 1966), 32; and E. D. Pendry, "William Golding and 'Mankind's Essential Illness," MSpr, LV (1961), 2.

Piggy reflects the rational, scientific, social part of man's nature, while Simon is the spiritual outsider.[47] The characters are, however, much more complex than this surface stereotype first suggests. There is more to Jack than just his evil, irrational nature; and, it is one of Golding's major tasks within the novel to fully portray the characters as complementary yet antipathetic personalities. This natural antipathy is most obvious in the conflict between Ralph and Jack, but Simon and Piggy, too, play important parts.

Piggy, the fat, asthmatic, myopic, lethargic boy, is the voice of reason and the scientific mind.[48] To Ralph and the others he seems petulant and stupid; yet, as the novel progresses, both the reader and Ralph recognize the value of Piggy's rationality, his ability to think. Piggy's adult mind is the only one that can see the threats of isolation. He confronts Ralph about rescue, and Ralph

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[47]Niemeyer, op. cit., p. 243; J. D. O'Hara, "Mute Choirboys and Angelic Pigs: The Fable in Lord of the Flies," TSLL, VII (Winter, 1966), 415; and Henri Talon, "Irony in Lord of the Flies," EIC, XVIII (July, 1968), 305.

[48]Bufkin, op. cit., p. 54; Cox, op. cit., p. 112; Niemeyer, op. cit., p. 243; and Harry H. Taylor, "The Case Against William Golding's Simon-Piggy," Contemporary Review, CCIX (September, 1966), 160.

nonchalantly says that his Daddy will come to rescue them. Only Piggy realizes that no one knows the boys are on the island:

> "Didn't you hear what the pilot said? About the atom bomb? They're all dead."
> "They're all dead . . . an' this is an island. Nobody don't know we're here. We may stay here till we die."[49]

In order to be rescued, Piggy realizes, the boys must build a signal fire and keep it burning. To work effectively, the boys must have a leader and the power of free speech. The symbol of power, free speech, and parliamentary order is the conch which Piggy discovers and Ralph takes.

As Piggy is the only one to realize the total isolation of the boys, so is he the only one to notice the disappearance of the mulberry-faced boy. This single acknowledgment of the littleun's death supports the earlier concern--despair and disgust--which Piggy holds for the rest of the boys. "'Like kids!' he said scornfully. 'Acting like a crowd of kids!'"[50]

As valuable as Piggy's reasoning mind is, it has a serious and fatal limitation. Piggy can think, but that is

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[49]Golding, Lord of the Flies, pp. 11-12.

[50]Ibid., p. 34.

all; he explains all with the confidence of the grownup world, but he cannot accept anything outside that scientific realm.[51] The Beast does not exist for Piggy. "'Cos things wouldn't make sense. Houses an' streets, an'--TV--they wouldn't work.'"[52] This complete reliance on civilization and rational action makes Piggy a pathetic figure:

> Piggy was a bore; his fat, his ass-mar and his matter-of-fact ideas were dull, but there was always a little pleasure to be got out of pulling his leg, even if one did it by accident.[53]

He misinterprets Ralph's teasing as friendliness; and, although his judgments are usually right, his physical attributes make him a ready target for cruel, childish torments.

Ironically, it is Piggy, the butt of scorn and ridicule, who holds the hope of rescue, his "specs." Piggy's glasses are the only means of fire on the island, and a signal fire is the only hope for salvation. Yet even Piggy's "specs" are mistreated. They are stolen and partially smashed by Jack, and their loss renders Piggy helpless.[54]

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[51]Arthur T. Broes, "The Two Worlds of William Golding," Lectures on Modern Novelists, p. 3; and Taylor, op. cit., p. 159.

[52]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 85.

[53]Ibid., p. 59.

[54]Richard H. Lederer, "Student Reactions to Lord of the Flies," EJ, LIII (1964), 577.

Furious and impotent without his "specs," Piggy, for the first time, plans an open confrontation with his enemy, Jack:

> "I'm going to him with this conch in my hands. I'm going to hold it out. Look, I'm goin' to say, you're stronger than I am and you haven't got asthma. You can see, I'm goin' to say, and with both eyes. But I don't ask for my glasses back, not as a favor. I don't ask you to be a sport, I'll say, not because you're strong, but because what's right's right. Give me my glasses, I'm going to say--you got to!"[55]

Momentarily, Piggy is admirable; however, he cannot act. Without his glasses, he is a sniveling creature. He is dehumanized. With this complete destruction of identity, Piggy is destroyed:

> Piggy fell forty feet and landed on his back across that square red rock in the sea. His head opened and stuff came out and turned red. Piggy's arms and legs twitched a bit, like a pig's after it has been killed. Then the sea breathed again in a long, slow sigh, the water boiled white and pink over the rock; and when it went, sucking back again, the body of Piggy was gone.[56]

Ironically, at this same moment, the conch too is destroyed. Rational man, Piggy, and rational order, the conch, are destroyed in a single moment. Like the sacrificial animal,

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[55]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 158; italics mine.

[56]Ibid., p. 167.

like the Lord of the Flies, Piggy has been murdered by the Beast he refused to recognize.

Although Simon acknowledges the Beast within man, he, too, is murdered by the savage boys, because he is unable to communicate the truth about the Beast.[57] Simon is the mystic, the prophet, the saint, the Christ figure, the epileptic visionary.[58] His knowledge is intuitive, and he is set off from the other boys.[59] Yet, despite his unique personality, Simon also represents the spiritual, the good, or the religious impulse possible to man. Ralph emphasizes this "difference yet belonging" when he says to Jack, "'If Simon walks in the middle of us . . . then we could talk over his head.'"[60] It is important that Simon is included between the two leaders. As a member of Jack's choir, Simon

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[57]Juliet Mitchell, "Concepts and Technique in William Golding," New Left Review, XV (May-June, 1962), 65.

[58]Bufkin, op. cit., p. 53; Coskren, op. cit., p. 18; Dick, William Golding, p. 23; Golding, "Fable," p. 99; Hynes, op. cit., p. 11; Frank Kermode and William Golding, "The Meaning of It All," Books and Bookmen, V (October, 1959), 9; Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 24; Taylor, op. cit., p. 155; Watson, op. cit., p. 6; and White, op. cit., p. 168.

[59]Watson, op. cit., p. 6.

[60]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 21.

is a link between the ". . . two continents of experience and feeling who are unable to communicate."[61]

Yet, as Ralph fails to see Piggy's pragmatism as valuable until too late, so Ralph cannot see the value of Simon's prophecies. To the boys, Simon is "queer, funny, batty."[62] He is helpful, but he is different. While the others play and swim, Simon retreats to a private sanctuary in the jungle filled with butterflies, candlebuds, and "honey-colored sunlight."[63] The jungle is not the foreboding darkness to Simon that it is to the others, and his fatal identification with the Beast comes, ironically, because Simon sees the Beast for what it is and, therefore, has no fear for the jungle: he alone goes through the jungle at night to tell Piggy that the boys will be back soon; he alone goes through the jungle at night to tell the boys that the Beast on the mountain is only a dead airman.

Simon's lack of fear is bolstered by his prophetic assurance.[64] He tells Ralph, "'You'll get back to where you

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[61] Ibid., p. 49.

[62] Loc. cit.

[63] Ibid., p. 51.

[64] Watson, op. cit., p. 7.

came from.'" Unbelieving and bitter, Ralph retorts, "'You're batty.' Simon shook his head violently. . . . 'No I'm not. I just think you'll get back all right.'"[65] Similarly, Simon offers the only practical solution about the Beast. Deserted by Jack and the hunters, Ralph and Piggy bicker about "what's to be done." Frustrated and forlorn, Ralph denies all hope while Piggy half-heartedly tries to think. Simon

> . . . turned half toward him, clutching the conch to his brown chest. "I think we ought to climb the mountain." Simon broke off and turned to Piggy who was looking at him with an expression of derisive incomprehension.
> "What's the good of climbing up to this here beast when Ralph and the other two couldn't do nothing?" Simon whispered his answer.
> "What else is there to do?"[66]

The incomprehension of the boys is a fatal gap for Simon.

Having faced the Beast in the jungle, Simon goes to face the Beast on the mountain. By releasing the rotting corpse from its own imprisonment, Simon "saves" the boys. He hurries through the jungle to release the boys from the fears which imprison them, to tell them the Beast is not real. Yet, like Piggy in his moment of encounter, he, too,

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[65]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 103.

[66]Ibid., p. 119.

becomes dehumanized. In their frenzy for blood, the savages mistake Simon for the Beast.

> The sticks fell and the mouth of the new circle crunched and screamed. The beast was on its knees in the center, its arms folded over its face. It was crying out against the abominable noise something about a body on the hill. The beast struggled forward, broke the ring and fell over the steep edge of the rock to the sand by the water. At once the crowd surged after it, poured down the rock, leapt on to the beast, screamed, struck, bit, tore. There were no words, and no movements but the tearing of teeth and claws.[67]

Simon, like Piggy, is murdered by the Beast, man. But Simon's death is more glorious than Piggy's; Simon is resurrected.[68]

After the murder, the boys slink away while the thunder and rain partially atone for the crime. During the night, the sea carefully and gently encloses the body:

> The water rose farther and dressed Simon's coarse hair with brightness. The line of his cheek silvered and the turn of his shoulder became sculptured marble. . . . Softly, surrounded by a fringe of inquisitive bright creatures, itself a silver shape beneath the steadfast constellations, Simon's dead body moved out toward the open sea.[69]

Simon is carried away from those he could not save, from Ralph, Piggy, and Jack.

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[67] Ibid., p. 141.

[68] Coskren, op. cit., p. 20.

[69] Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 142.

Jack, the most irrational major character of the novel, first appears on the beach as "a black, bat-like creature."[70] His choir follows dressed in black cloaks and black caps with silver badges. The military character of the group is at once evident, and this small dictatorship grows increasingly powerful as the adventure progresses.[71] Jack is a natural leader, but he cannot share his power. When Ralph is elected chief, Jack is mortified. Ralph is quick to perceive Jack's power, however, and includes him in major plans at first. The choir is given the responsibility for keeping the signal fire. The choir always remains under Jack's direction, and the choir-turned-hunters ultimately defy Ralph and the conch.

The conflict arises when Jack not only acknowledges the darker forces within himself but lets these forces gain control. On the hunt, his eyes mirror the destructive impulse of his being. "They were bright blue, eyes that in this frustration seemed bolting and nearly mad."[72] Jack tries to explain this drive to Ralph, but the gap is already

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[70]Ibid., p. 16.

[71]Clark, op. cit., p. 80.

[72]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 43.

there. "They looked at each other, baffled in love and hate."[73]

To rid himself of all rational consciousness, Jack must hide behind a mask of paint and long hair.[74] Free from civilized drives, Jack the boy becomes a "bloodthirsty . . . mask . . . a thing on its own. . . ."[75] His single drive is to kill. Forgetting the signal fire, Jack and the hunters plunge into the forest to satisfy themselves with blood. Totally controlled by his darker side, Jack loses all contact with Ralph. The fire goes out, and a passing ship does not stop. The agony of the separation caused by Jack's pulsing drive is too much for Piggy, who cries, "'You and your blood, Jack Merridew! You and your hunting! We might have gone home--'"[76] The boyish face streaked with paint and blood has silently declared war on the boy with the conch:

> The two boys faced each other. There was the brilliant world of hunting, tactics, fierce

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[73]Ibid., p. 50.

[74]Lederer, op. cit., p. 578.

[75]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 58.

[76]Ibid., p. 65.

> exhilaration, skill; and there was the world of longing and baffled common-sense.[77]

Ralph and Jack, Everyman and irrational man, are unsworn enemies, and still neither one knows why.[78] What had begun as fun and games has turned to bitter enmity. Jack tries to usurp Ralph's place as chief, but is shamefully rejected. In a heat of anger and tears, Jack renounces the adventure. "'I'm not going to play any longer. Not with you.'"[79] The game is over, and only the nettling, undefinable link remains between the boys. The connection between the boys is the irrational, but Ralph has yet to realize this part of man's condition; and, Jack, though he is mastered by the force, does not recognize it--he simply follows the pulsating blood lust.

The triumph of Jack's drive is the killing of the sow. Having formed his own tribe, Jack and the hunters track the pig by the trail of dung. The killing is brutal, and the act is driven by lust as an act of sexual intercourse:[80]

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[77] Loc. cit.

[78] Broes, op. cit., p. 5; and Golding, "Fable," p. 89.

[79] Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 118.

[80] Epstein, op. cit., p. 191; and White, op. cit., p. 167.

> Roger found a lodgment for his point and began to push till he was leaning with his whole weight. The spear moved forward inch by inch and the terrified squealing became a high-pitched scream. Then Jack found the throat and the hot blood spouted over his hands. The sow collapsed under them and they were heavy and fulfilled upon her.[81]

The drive for blood has been momentarily satisfied.

The thirst for power, however, has now turned to a merciless tyranny. Supported by the sadistic Roger, Jack rules his tribe through fear.[82] He beats Wilfred for no reason, and becomes a symbol of "irresponsible authority."[83] Yet even Jack is not the symbol of the worst in man. Quietly but surely, Roger emerges as the ultimate fiend.[84] The captured twins, Samneric, warn Ralph that Roger has sharpened a stick at both ends. "Sam spoke in a strangled voice. 'You don't know Roger. He's a terror.'"[85] Roger, the instrument of Piggy's death, even poses a frightening threat to Jack:[86]

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[81]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 125.

[82]Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 23.

[83]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 147.

[84]Peter, op. cit., p. 582.

[85]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 175.

[86]O'Hara, op. cit., p. 413.

> Roger edged past the chief, only just avoiding pushing him with his shoulder. The yelling ceased, and Samneric lay looking up in quiet terror. Roger advanced upon them as one wielding a nameless authority.[87]

Roger, the henchman, is the living figure of a totally irrational man. He is the ultimate threat to Ralph's life.

Ralph, "the boy with fair hair" whose "eyes . . . proclaimed no devil,"[88] is one of us. Lord of the Flies is really Ralph's story.[89] What begins as a boy's delightful discovery that he is stranded on an island with no grownups ends with a barbarous hunt in a jungle with Ralph as the prey. The novel is a slow, painful realization of the truth of man's nature. This truth, that man is both a rational and an irrational creature whose duality must be acknowledged and coped with, is the bitter epiphany of the ending. "Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy."[90] Ralph's development in the novel is a process of maturity: he grows from a twelve-year-old boy,

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[87]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 168.

[88]Ibid., p. 8.

[89]Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 21; and White, op. cit., p. 165.

[90]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 187.

happy in his new freedom, to a baffled leader, thwarted by forces he does not understand, to the small adult who has encountered the reality of the Self and found the encounter the cause of anxiety.[91] Unanimously chosen chief and given custody of the conch, the symbol of order and authority, Ralph proclaims the original aims of the newborn island society.[92] "'We want to have fun. And we want to be rescued.'"[93] Rescue is taken for granted, and it is only too late that Ralph realizes his mistake in placing fun first. In the beginning, Ralph is just a part of the jolly group; soon he becomes the troubled chief who finds his tribe mutinous.

The first decisive clash comes when the fire goes out and Ralph sees the smoke of a passing ship. Not knowing whether to run back for Piggy's glasses so as to start the fire or run to the mountain to signal ". . . balanced on a high peak of need, agonized by indecision, Ralph cries out: 'Oh God, oh God!'"[94] Simon is there to help. But two small

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[91]Clark, op. cit., p. 76.

[92]Lederer, op. cit., p. 577.

[93]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 33.

[94]Ibid., p. 62.

boys are not enough. The blame is on Jack and the hunters. For the first time, Ralph is openly antagonized by his opponent.

The gulf between Ralph and Jack gets wider. At the assembly "to put things straight," the two forces meet in a furious battle. Ralph, having urged the need to keep the fire going and the need to abide by the rules, is shouted down by Jack who cries for the hunt and the dance. "Ralph summoned his wits. '. . . the rules are the only thing we've got!'"[95] Ralph now realizes that he must attempt to control the wilder side of man. The fear of the Beast and the screams and laughter of the hunters as they dance away to the beach enforce the bitter feelings between the two boys. When the two meet again to climb the mountain in search of the Beast, Ralph speaks ". . . despairingly, out of the new understanding that Piggy had given him. 'Why do you hate me?'"[96] The uneasiness has turned to hostility, and Ralph is soon to be hunted in the jungle by his enemy.

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[95]Douglas M. Davis, "Golding, the Optimist, Belies His Somber Pictures and Fiction," National Observer, I (September 17, 1962), 17; and Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 84.

[96]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 109.

In his hiding place in the jungle, he remembers the incidents of the island adventure. He tries to see the savages as boys, but he knows that they are creatures led by the heart and not by "common sense, their daylight sanity."[97] He realizes the truth of the irrational as a motivating force:

> . . . then the fatal unreasoning knowledge came to him again. The breaking of the conch and the deaths of Piggy and Simon lay over the island like a vapor. These painted savages would go further and further. Then there was that indefinable connection between himself and Jack; who therefore would never let him alone; never.[98]

Jack, irrational man, is a part of Ralph, inescapable and real.

The grim irony of Ralph's epiphany is fully realized by the switch in point of view at the end of the novel. Finding himself at the feet of a naval officer, Ralph looks into the face of his rescuer. The officer looked around and saw

> a semicircle of little boys, their bodies streaked with colored clay, sharp sticks in their hands, [who] were standing on the beach making no noise at all. "Fun and games," said the officer.[99]

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[97] Ibid., p. 170.

[98] Loc. cit.

[99] Ibid., p. 185.

The ironical twist of Coral Island visions is the culmination of Golding's thought. By disentangling the reader from the horror of the chase with the change of viewpoint, Golding succeeds in a total re-evaluation of Lord of the Flies.[100] The little boys are not rescued; they are merely transported to a bigger island, the world of civilization, where the savage forces of the naval officer and his armed cruiser patrol the troubled waters. The boys do not go into the civilized world into an authentic existence; they merely enter another world of illusion. Ralph encounters the Self, but his "exit" from the savagery of the island is not an "exit" into authentic existence. He has not made the existential "leap."

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[100]Bufkin, op. cit., p. 57; Clark, op. cit., p. 75. Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 33; and White, op. cit., p. 170.

CHAPTER II

THE INHERITORS: "THE LINE OF DARKNESS"

Golding's ironical twist of point of view at the end of Lord of the Flies becomes his sole stylistic device in the second novel, The Inheritors. With the exception of the last chapter, the entire novel is seen from the viewpoint of a Homo primigenius, the Neanderthal. Not only is this creature less accomplished in skills and more ape-like than his successor, Homo sapiens, but the Neanderthal is unable to think as modern, rational man thinks. The Neanderthal thinks in terms of "pictures," and the thought process is not only an individual experience but also a communal experience. Lok's People are able to share pictures without verbalizing the meaning.[101] Naturally, this unique point of view poses some new problems for the reader; however, with a small amount of effort, one can readily follow the action of the novel.

The novel is not, as some critics have labelled it, obscure, confusing, or artificial.[102] The problem is merely

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[101]Golding capitalizes People when referring to Lok's tribe. This capitalization distinguishes the Neanderthal from man.

[102]MacShane, op. cit., p. 174; Pendry, op. cit., p. 3; Sullivan, "William Golding: The Fables and The Art," p. 661; John Wain, "Lord of the Agonies," Aspect, I (April, 1963), 59; Walters, op. cit., p. 24; and Wayland Young, "Letter from London," KR, XIX (Summer, 1957), 479.

one of an adjustment to a new stylistic technique and a totally alien manner of thought. Once the adjustment is made, one can appreciate Golding's successful novel as a unity.[103] With the deeper understanding of The Inheritors, one can understand why Golding has chosen it as his best work.[104] Both theme and structure provide a unique approach to the novel, although most critics have, unfortunately, disparaged the structure and concerned themselves only with the source of the theme.[105]

The theme of The Inheritors is a theme of irrational, perverted heritage. It is an ironic denial of the beatitude, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Golding takes the evolutionary approach of H. G. Wells' An Outline of History--an approach which equates progress with the passage of time, an approach which champions the fittest--

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[103]Hynes, op. cit., p. 16; Frank Kermode, "Coral Islands," Spectator, CCI (August 22, 1958), 257; Kermode, "The Novels of William Golding," p. 21; Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 71; and Peter, op. cit., p. 587.

[104]Dick, "'The Novelist is a Displaced Person': An Interview with William Golding," p. 481.

[105]Bowen, op. cit., p. 608; Duncan, op. cit., p. 232; Lodge, op. cit., p. 489; and Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 49.

and reverses it.[106] This reversal of science, religion, and history presents a picture of the Neanderthal as a more sympathetic, more kind, more "human" creature than modern man. The lineage of mankind, then, is malignant and absurd. To develop this theme of inheritance, Golding relies on point of view and destructive action. The point of view is not only a controlling structural device for the novel, but a major thematic key, as well. The problem of such a point of view and the author's handling of such a problem constitute a subtle artistic device that carefully and slowly reveals to the reader a heritage of irrational decay, destruction, and death. Completing the image of a decaying heritage is the actual destruction that occurs in the novel; this destruction is physical, mental, and social. The overt actions within the plot re-emphasize and restate the decadence and irrationality that pervade the story of the Neanderthal.

The surviving members of the Neanderthals--Mal, the old woman, Ha, Nil, Lok, Fa, Liku, and the new one--move to the summer grounds. The move, however, is an event full of foreboding actions; the log that bridges the river--the

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[106] Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 49.

log that has always been the bridge--is gone. In the air is the smell of "other," the new people. The rotten log that replaces the old bridge not only symbolizes the decay within the Neanderthal tribe, but also adumbrates the total destruction of the eight ape-like creatures. One by one the tribe is extinguished, and the successors, modern man, inherit the earth. The narrative, then, is simple; the enriching part of the novel is the development of a sub-rational consciousness and the parallel destruction of that rationalism through the contact between man and Neanderthal. Effecting this growth-into-destruction is the carefully controlled point of view of Lok, the Neanderthal, and the ironic switch in viewpoint at the end of the novel to the mind of Tuami, modern man.

In the handling of Lok's point of view, Golding depends heavily upon two concepts: the concept of thought and the concept of the sense of smell.[107] Lok, a Neanderthal cave man, has "very few pictures;" he thinks rarely, but he does have one or two ideas. Lok lives in full awareness of his own chronology; he is merely witless. Like Faulkner's Benjy, Lok relates events with and lives by his sense of

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[107]Babb, op. cit., p. 52.

smell. He is characterized, then, not as human, but as an animal who cannot think.

The concept of thought in The Inheritors is a unique concept of "pictures." To explain, to question, to remember--all aspects of thought are preceded by the statement, "I have a picture," or "Here is a picture." To add depth to this idea, the People have the ability to share pictures without speaking:

> Quite without warning, all the people shared a picture inside their heads. . . . They saw not only Mal's body but the slow pictures that were waxing and waning in his head. One above all was displacing the others, dawning through the cloudy arguments and doubts and conjectures until they knew what it was he was thinking with such dull conviction.[108]

Communal thinking unites the People, and it also tends to dehumanize them; they blend identity into a wholeness instead of a "one-ness."[109]

Lok's viewpoint is narrower than that of the rest of the People, because he has ". . . a picture, almost the only one he had, and they knew it as well as he did."[110] Lok's picture is the memory of the day that he found the little

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[108]William Golding, The Inheritors, p. 39.

[109]Hynes, op. cit., p. 19.

[110]Golding, The Inheritors, p. 33.

Oa, the twisted root that has the shape of a great-bellied woman, the natural replica of Oa, the mother goddess. This single picture is significant as Lok relates it to everything else, directly and indirectly, consciously and unconsciously. Oa is the life force that gave birth to the earth, gave birth to woman, and, therefore, gave birth to the People. Lok's concept of Oa is a naïvely happy one; Oa is the life-giving, feminine force who receives her People back into her womb when they die. That Lok cannot see Oa as the destructive force which brings terror and death to his People is part of the irony of his heritage.[111]

One example of Lok's dangerously limited viewpoint is the episode of the poison arrow. While he is searching for the kidnapped Liku, Lok meets "the other," one of the new people, face to face:

> The man turned sideways in the bushes and looked at Lok along his shoulder. A stick rose upright and there was a lump of bone in the middle. . . . Suddenly Lok understood that the man was holding the stick out to him but neither he nor Lok could reach across the river.[112]

When the enemy shoots the poisoned arrow at Lok, Lok thinks

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[111]Baker, op. cit., p. 25.

[112]Golding, The Inheritors, p. 106.

the "twig" is a gift; he cannot perceive the evil nature of the "rational" new people who have all kinds of tools and magic. The new people are a source of fascination for Lok,[113] but the horror which they bring is only fully realized by Fa.

When Lok and Fa are hiding in the tree, waiting for a chance to steal back Liku and the new one, Lok watches one of the most terrifying displays of demoniacal cruelty, lust, and irrationality. Tuami's tribe, driven by famine, are celebrating an orgy in the clearing below. Lok turns away, but Fa continues to watch. The filthy, orgiastic scene turns into one of utmost horror as Liku is burned and her flesh eaten by the drunken men. Lok does not know what has happened; he cannot imagine such a terrible thing. He cannot "think" it:

> A kind of half-knowledge, terrible in its very formlessness, filtered into Lok as though he were sharing a picture with her but had no eyes inside his head and could not see it. The knowledge was something like that sense of extreme peril that outside-Lok had shared with her earlier; but this was for inside-Lok and he had no room for it.[114]

Lok's limitation is also his isolation; he is alienated

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[113]Hynes, op. cit., p. 20.

[114]Golding, The Inheritors, p. 173.

from his Self--"inside-Lok" and "outside-Lok" are not one.

The lack of perception in Lok is an agonizing source of frustration for Fa, who grasps the dangerous threat of the new people. Fa is able to connect the deaths of the rest of her tribe with the coming of the new people, while Lok's head is empty. But, for one solitary moment, Lok gains a new point of view; he is initiated into manhood and becomes Mal. This more important moment in Lok's development is his discovery of "like:"

> He had used likeness all his life without being aware of it. Likeness could grasp the white-faced hunters with a hand, could put them into the world where they were thinkable and not a random and unrelated irruption.[115]

The discovery of the simile gives Lok a valid frame of reference, and he begins to understand the nature of man.

The figurative conclusions about the new people are, ironically, truths. The new people are no longer friendly strangers with magic and gifts; they are dangerous enemies who are destroying a land and a People:

> "The people are like a famished wolf in the hollow of a tree."
> "The people are like honey trickling from a crevice in the rock."
> "The people are like honey in the round stones, the

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[115] Ibid., p. 194.

> new honey that smells of dead things and fire."
> "They are like the river and the fall, they are a people of the fall."
> "They are like Oa."[116]

By comparing the new people to the new honey, Lok relates man to the intoxicating mead that corrupted the minds of the new people and led them to the cannibalistic murder of Liku; by comparing the people to the river and the waterfall, Lok foreshadows Fa's death and also connects the deaths of the old woman and Nil with the invaders. The tragedy is that Lok, before he is able to understand these pictures with the eyes of Mal, becomes Lok, again. The terror and danger are gone; only the false glitter of new weapons and tools remains. There is no more a picture of Oa as a destructive, deadly force; she is, once again, the fruitful womb of the People. Lok remains with his single picture.

This mental point of view is increased by the physical point of view, Lok's sense of smell. Lok has a keenly sensitive nose and uses it to search for Liku, to search for Ha, to track down the "other," and to discover death. He stalks the earth like an animal's seeking out friend and foe. The ironic tragedy is, that, like his mental point of

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[116] Ibid., p. 195.

view, Lok's sense of smell is sensitive, but it does not give him insight. His point of view is, again, limited; the distorted picture, which is the result, is absurdly innocent and corrupted. He says of Ha's death at the hands of the new people, "'They have changed words or shared a picture. Ha will tell us and I will go after him' He looked round at them. 'People understand each other.'"[117] Lok's naíve confidence is tragic.

Having established the theme of decaying heritage by the use of a sub-rational point of view, Golding completes the image of decay and destruction, the image of a crumbling heritage, by direct physical action. This destructive element operates on three levels: upon the land to be inherited, upon the sacred temple of the land, and upon the People themselves. The destruction is, then, physical, social, and mental. The cause of destruction is man, both Neanderthal and Homo sapiens.[118] When man forces his illusions on people and objects around him, he will be caught in his illusory prison. By denying the evil in the new people, Lok eventually falls into the hands of that evil.

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[117] Ibid., p. 72.

[118] Baker, op. cit., p. 24.

Similarly, by denying the innocence or goodness of the Neanderthals, the new people project an illusion of darkness on the failing tribe and this darkness soon engulfs all.[119]

The land becomes a shadow in the darkness when it is destroyed by Oa and the new people. By bringing forth the new people, the Homo sapiens, Oa has brought evil into the once innocent and virgin land. Tuami's people destroy the country of the Neanderthal with logs, fires, and savagery. The temple of the ice women--caverns of ice which are sacred and dangerous--falls in a most symbolic moment. The temple falls upon the inheritor of the Neanderthal People, Lok.

The other People of Lok's tribe also represent destruction and decay. Mal, the leader of the People, is a deteriorating old man with a chronic and fatal cough. He remembers a picture when there were many People and the land was a paradise, but that time is no more. Now there are only eight People left, and these eight live in an incestuous, thus, decadent manner.[120] Their innocence is malignant.

The old woman, Nil, Ha, Fa, and Liku are horribly and

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[119] Loc. cit.

[120] Loc. cit.

senselessly murdered by the new people. Lok and Fa inherit the leadership of Mal and the old woman, and they lose this heritage almost immediately. The new one, the "devil," is carried away with the new people. Fa dies in the water. Only Lok remains.

At the moment of Fa's death, Lok becomes "the red creature." He is now seen through the scientific mind of Wellsian history, but the remembrance of Lok's humanity makes the ape-like creature the object of sympathy.[121] He returns to the tribal cave and assumes the fetal burial position. Here, he awaits death and the return to Oa's womb. Death comes when the ice women melt and fall.[122]

Out on the water, the new people sail away from "the darkness under the trees."[123] Peering across the horizon, Tuami tries to see what lies at the end of their journey, but ". . . he could not see if the line of darkness had an ending."[124] The illusions of an unknown evil have become inescapable and real; man looks into the face of his

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[121]Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 64.

[122]Baker, op. cit., p. 27.

[123]Golding, The Inheritors, p. 233.

[124]Loc. cit.

predecessor and sees only the image of his own darkness, his own irrationality. Like Ralph and the boys in Lord of the Flies, Tuami's tribe sail into merely another world of illusion. Had Tuami been able to see the end of the darkness, he would have been able to go into an authentic existence. The darkness is there, however, and no existential "leap" is accomplished.

CHAPTER III

PINCHER MARTIN: "THE RAVENOUS EGO"

Recent criticism has ranked Pincher Martin, Golding's third novel, as his best work.[125] Golding combines the "gimmick" ending or switch in viewpoint of the first two novels with an intricate symbol system that reinforces and integrates the themes and structure of the novel.[126] For the first time, Golding works exclusively with the consciousness of a single protagonist; this omniscient view of a dead man makes the second death of Christopher Martin ironically real.[127] And it is the convincing realism of Pincher's struggle on Rockall that makes the novel successful.

The Wildebeeste, the ship guided by Lieutenant Christopher Hadley Martin,[128] is struck by a torpedo and sinks into

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[125]Hynes, op. cit., pp. 23, 32; Pendry, op. cit., p. 4; and Peter, op. cit., p. 590.

[126]Hynes, op. cit., p. 27.

[127]Young, op. cit., p. 480.

[128]Christopher H. Martin is also called Pincher Martin. Pincher is simply the nickname given to all Martin's in the Navy; however, the relation between Pincher and Christopher's greedy nature is obvious. The name Pincher is used in this study in discussions of Martin's greed, while the name Christopher is used in the scenes which seemingly place Martin in a heroic position.

the Atlantic. Christopher survives and is washed up on a small island called Rockall.[129] Here, surrounded by the threatening sea, Christopher Martin makes a valiant effort to stay alive. Battered by the sea, food poisoning, and hallucinations, he faces his existence for seven days, until he finally goes insane and dies.

The twist of the narrative, however, appears in the final chapter in which the reader discovers that Christopher Martin died almost instantly when he was thrown into the sea. The struggle on Rockall, then, is the struggle of Pincher's ego in defiance of death. This ending, however, is not a mere "gimmick."[130] Pincher Martin's second death is as real, if not more so, than his first physical death. Christopher's encounter on Rockall is the symbolic encounter of the nothingness of existence. The absurdity of this "Self-encounter" is further emphasized by the symbolism which develops Pincher's greedy character through a series of disconnected but related flashbacks.

The controlling symbol in Pincher Martin is the snarling

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[129] Clark, op. cit., p. 91.

[130] Baker, op. cit., p. 37.

mouth.[131] This symbol appears as the embodiment of Pincher Martin after his first death; the distinction between the real mouth and the one projected by the ego is clearly made. "There was no face but there was a snarl."[132] The symbolic emphasis on the mouth is extended throughout the novel with continual symbols and references to eating. This characteristic of Pincher's greed is applied to all phases of his experience--acting, sex, and, most importantly, dying. Golding describes Pincher's voracious "appetite" when he says,

> The greed for life which had been the mainspring of his nature forced him to refuse the selfless act of dying. He continued to exist separately in a world composed of his own murderous nature. His drowned body lies rolling in the Atlantic, but the ravenous ego invents a rock for him to endure on.[133]

The irony of Pincher's greed is that, as he consumed or destroyed everyone around him, so he is ultimately "eaten" by the memories of his victims. "His mouth was clever,"[134] but it was not his salvation.

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[131]Michael Quinn, "An Unheroic Hero: William Golding's 'Pincher Martin,'" CritQ, IV (Autumn, 1962), 250.

[132]William Golding, Pincher Martin, p. 8.

[133]William Golding, "Pincher Martin," Radio Times, CXXXVIII (March 21, 1958), 8.

[134]Golding, Pincher Martin, p. 10.

The supporting symbols of greed are developed in fragments as isolated memories or hallucinations. This method heightens the realization of Christopher Martin's true character: Christopher is not the sympathetic hero struggling for survival against destructive elements;[135] he is a despicable man, the "pincher," who seduces the producer's wife, cuckolds his friend Alfred, rapes the fiancé of his best friend, experiments with homosexuality, and, ultimately, plans the murder of Nathaniel:

> 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 open and both hands out to grab. He's a cosmic case of the bugger who gets his penny and someone else's bun.[136]

Pincher Martin, then, is Greed. The casting of Pincher Martin as one of the Seven Deadly Sins is perfect type-casting. The producer, Pete, has been cuckolded by Pincher, and his casting of Christopher is more than chance. Pete is the nervous, drunk, loud-talking producer, who is one of Martin's "victims." Pete's exchange of the man for the mask seems accidental. "'Think you can play Martin, Greed?'"[137]

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[135]Baker, op. cit., p. 38; and Clark, op. cit., p. 88.

[136]Golding, Pincher Martin, p. 106.

[137]Loc. cit.

But this exchange emphasizes Pincher's absolute personification of that sin.

Besides giving the most complete, compact explanation of Pincher's ravenous character, Pete also introduces the symbol of the Chinese box. This symbol is the most perfect single expression of Pincher's way of life.[138] The Chinese bury a fish in a tin box; when the fish is decayed, the maggots eat the fish. When the fish is gone, the maggots eat each other.

> "The little ones eat the tiny ones. The middle-sized ones eat the little ones. The big ones eat the middle-sized ones. Then the big ones eat each other. Then there are two and then one and where there was a fish there is now one huge, successful maggot. Rare dish."[139]

Christopher Martin is struggling to be the last successful maggot. He eats all the other maggots, but, ironically, in the end, he is eaten slowly away on the "hauntingly familiar" rock.

The slow realization that the rock is only the memory of an aching tooth adds to Christopher's suppressed awareness of his own death. When his tongue explores the cavity

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[138]Quinn, op. cit., p. 254.

[139]Golding, Pincher Martin, p. 120.

of the mouth, all of Christopher's illusions momentarily fall. "He stared at the sea and saw nothing."[140] At this realization, he is threatened with insanity. He knows man is finite and surrounded by nothingness. Christopher is isolated in the middle of an imaginary sea, stranded in the mouth of his own nature.

Enforcing the terror of this isolation are two memories from Christopher's childhood, e.g. the jam jar figure and the nighmare of the cellar. The first symbol, the jam jar, is introduced as the first memory in the "mind" of the ego. The jar is a microcosm which ". . . was quite separate but which one could control."[141] The idea of control is the primary clue to the significance of the jar. A tiny glass figure floats in the water which is sealed in the jar by a thin membrane.

> The pleasure of the jar lay in the fact that the little glass figure was so delicately balanced between opposing forces. . . . By varying the pressure on the membrane you could do anything you liked with the glass figure which was wholly in your power.[142]

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[140] Ibid., p. 153; italics mine.

[141] Ibid., p. 8.

[142] Ibid., p. 9.

Christopher is the figure in the jar, a symbol of the womb, but he is trying to dictate his own birth, death, or survival by exerting his own power. By repressing all knowledge of his death--a knowledge which he has from the instant of re-creation--Christopher's ego becomes "delicately balanced" between life and death.[143]

Threatening this delicate balance is the memory of the cellar. When Christopher was a child, he had a recurring dream of an unknown terror in the cellar. As if drawn by magnets, his mind would walk from his bedroom

> . . . and go down three stories defenceless, down the dark stairs past the tall, haunted clock, through the whining door, down the terrible steps to where the coffin ends were crushed in the walls of the cellar. . . .[144]

The terror of the cellar is the nothingness of Christopher's existence.[145] He feels stalked by its darkness, and he feels his identity extinguished in the face of this darkness.

To assert his identity is the main task of Martin's ego.[146] He constantly re-assures himself that he is alive.

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[143]Neville Braybrooke, "The Return of Pincher Martin," Commonweal, LXXXIX (October 25, 1968), 115; Clark, op. cit., p. 89; and Peter, op. cit., p. 590.

[144]Golding, Pincher Martin, p. 122.

[145]Clark, op. cit., p. 94.

[146]Hynes, op. cit., p. 28.

The blurred picture on his identification card, the information on his dog tags, and the pains of a body help reconstruct Christopher Hadley Martin. To aid this establishment of identity, Martin names the places on Rockall.[147]

> What is given a name is given a seal, a chain. If this rock tries to adapt me to its ways I will refuse and adapt it to mine. I will impose my routine on it, my geography. I will tie it down with names.[148]

By naming the various spots on Rockall, Christopher attempts to impose an order on something essentially patternless.[149] He is ordering unreality, and he is attempting to order his self-created universe.

Another pattern of order is Christopher's spelling of S. O. S. with seaweed stretched across the rock. He reasons that anyone who observes the sign from the air will realize that man must have made it: man must have created the meaningful pattern in the meaningless universe. "'Men make patterns.'"[150] Man and patterns are identity.

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[147]Braybrooke, "The Return of Pincher Martin," p. 115; Clark, op. cit., p. 94; Ralph Freedman, "The New Realism: The Fancy of William Golding," Perspective, X (Summer-Autumn, 1958), 122; and Quinn, op. cit., p. 251.

[148]Golding, Pincher Martin, p. 79.

[149]Baker, op. cit., p. 43; Quinn, op. cit., p. 252; and Owen Webster, "Living with Chaos," Books and Art, I (March, 1958), 16.

[150]Golding, Pincher Martin, p. 97.

Yet, Pincher never fully re-creates his own identity. He has no mirror to give him a full reflection; he has no people around to complete his identity. In life, Pincher asserted himself by conquering others; in "life-in-death," Pincher is "'. . . in danger of losing definition.'"[151] On Rockall, Pincher has only his Self to conquer, and when this Self-destruction comes, Martin is faced with only blackness.

Another attempt to be rescued from this darkness is Christopher's construction of the dwarf. By placing various sizes of stones on top of each other, Christopher makes a miniature symbol of man; the dwarf stands in place all day and night as a signal to passing ships. To attract more attention, Christopher ties a piece of foil from a candy bar wrapper around the head of the three-foot man. The dwarf, however, becomes only one more image to haunt Christopher and remind him of death. In the midst of one of his vocal performances to an unknown audience, Christopher slips into the memory that he is dead, and his painted, cardboard world begins to fade. He grips the pile of stones, but the only comfort becomes a terror as the head of the dwarf falls off and rolls down the cliff. This dramatic touch frightens

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[151] Ibid., p. 117.

Christopher, and his performance is briefly interrupted.

Yet Christopher, the actor, does not let the occasional glimpses into reality upset his performance very often. Christopher is Prometheus, Atlas, Tom the Bedlamite, and God.[152] By imagining himself to be on stage, Christopher continually asserts his identity, one that is fragmented and absurd. To become Prometheus or Atlas, he strikes the appropriate pose of the moment and declaims. Yet, Christopher is not the mythical hero.[153] His heroic act is his self-induced enema. It is an act symbolic of his self-love as it is also a symbolic act of masturbation. Described metaphorically as the performance of an orchestra, this scene is ridiculously dramatic and absurd. "Spasm after spasm with massive chords and sparkling arpeggios, the cadenza took of his strength till he lay straining and empty on the rock and the orchestra was gone."[154] Golding again, as in Lord of the Flies, identifies excrement with man and

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[152]Baker, op. cit., p. 44; Clark, op. cit., p. 88; Bernard F. Dick, William Golding, p. 58; and Hynes, op. cit., p. 29.

[153]Baker, op. cit., p. 38.

[154]Golding, Pincher Martin, p. 146.

"mankind's essential illness."[155] Christopher emerges triumphant for a moment, but he is soon haunted by two victims returned to conquer him.

The two people who are the "loves" of Christopher's "life," and the two who are, paradoxically, Martin's victims, are Nathaniel and Mary. Nathaniel is Christopher's closest friend and dearest enemy. Philosophical and unselfish Nathaniel gives Christopher a lecture on dying in an attempt to prepare him for his purgatorial experience on Rockall.[156] Like Simon in Lord of the Flies, Nathaniel is a Christ figure with intuitive knowledge.[157] But this theological approach is completely denied by Christopher's parody of the Creation and his existential rejection of the negation which is heaven. Nevertheless, Nathaniel's lecture on "the technique of dying" foreshadows Martin's defiance in the face of death. Nathaniel says, "'Take us as we are now and heaven would be sheer negation. Without form and void. You see? A sort of black lightning destroying everything

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[155]Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 82.

[156]Baker, op. cit., p. 40; Clark, op. cit., p. 85; and Dick, William Golding, pp. 50, 55.

[157]Broes, op. cit., p. 11; and Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 80.

we call life.'"[158] The black lightning or ultimate darkness or void is the ultimate threat to the illusions projected by Christopher's ego. Yet Nathaniel acknowledges the power of Christopher's ego when he says, "'You have an extraordinary capacity to endure.'"[159] But Christopher cannot endure forever. He is haunted by the memory of Nathaniel, the friend he plotted to kill in an effort to gain Mary.

Mary, like her husband Nathaniel, is a religious figure; she is the Madonna.[160] She is raped by Pincher. Pincher is attracted by her plainness and her refusal. He threatens to kill them both in a speeding car if she does not succumb. The irony of Mary's surrender is that ". . . confounded in her pretences and evasion, [she was] forced to admit her own crude, human body [could come] to life under the summer lightning. . . ."[161] The religious symbol becomes perverted. As Christopher acts to destroy Nathaniel, his rape of Mary "destroys" her. He loves and hates them both, but he is

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[158]Golding, Pincher Martin, p. 62.

[159]Ibid., p. 63.

[160]Dick, William Golding, p. 52; and Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 80.

[161]Golding, Pincher Martin, p. 134.

eventually "eaten" by their memories. "Killed and eaten. And of course eating with the mouth was only the gross expression of what was a universal process."[162] Christopher is the conqueror and the victim; and, through all, Martin is "eaten" by the fear of the black lightning of nothingness.

Golding's subtle but continual revelation throughout the novel that Martin is dead and suspended in nothingness is a unifying and artistic accomplishment scarcely noted during the first reading. The instant Christopher Martin drowns, he is dehumanized; he becomes the snarl, "it."[163] Slowly "it" re-creates a world out of darkness; however, his actions take place only in the suspended mind. The recurrent references to the dead body and the illusory world of the rock constantly remind Pincher that his hold on "life" is tenuous. He bolsters himself with "weapons"--intelligence, education, will, consciousness, and sanity.[164] But his weapons disintegrate as his world slowly fades. "Sanity . . , the ability to appreciate reality,"[165] finds itself

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[162] Ibid., p. 79.

[163] Ibid., p. 8.

[164] Ibid., p. 144.

[165] Loc. cit.

destroyed by that reality which is death and the void.

The two immediate events that destroy Pincher's sanity are his realization that guano is insoluble and his seeing a red lobster swimming in the sea.[166] Knowing that only boiled lobsters are red, Christopher falls into a "gap of not-being."[167] And, ". . . if guano is insoluble, then the water in the upper trench could not be a slimy wetness . . . ."[168] If guano is insoluble, there is no trench, no rock, no Christopher Martin. These two denials of Pincher's world re-affirm the reality of his first death. He abandons reality and sanity and retreats to insanity. "There was still a part that could be played--there was the Bedlamite, Poor Tom, protected from knowledge of the sign of the black lightning."[169]

Christopher acts the part from King Lear, but even this performance cannot save him from his second death:

> There is no centre of sanity in madness. Nothing like this "I" sitting in here, staving off the time that must come. The last repeat of the pattern. Then the black lightning.[170]

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[166]Hynes, op. cit., p. 25.

[167]Golding, Pincher Martin, p. 149.

[168]Ibid., p. 153.

[169]Ibid., p. 157.

[170]Ibid., p. 160.

The centre of Pincher's existence encounters the voice, and he cries out, "'I'm so alone! Christ! I'm so alone!'"[171]

Despite Christopher's parodies, his attempt to be his own god fails. "'On the sixth day he created God. . . . In his own image created he Him.'"[172] The hallucination of the sailor in Christopher's own image confronts Martin. Yet Pincher still refuses to die. He acknowledges that he chose this "life-in-death;" but, he also acknowledges that this choice is merely the illusion of choice. He is given the chance to give in to reality, but Pincher prefers the rock. The black lightning threatens a second death, and Pincher Martin faces a heaven of sheer negation. His centre screams ". . . into the pit of nothing voicelessly, wordlessly, 'I shit on your heaven!'"[173] Christopher defies the nothingness, but he is slowly consumed by its henchman, the black lightning.

In the last second of his second life, Pincher Martin is reduced to a pair of red lobster claws.[174] Even the mouth is gone. The black lightning rips away the painted

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[171]Loc. cit.

[172]Ibid., p. 174.

[173]Ibid., p. 178.

[174]Ironically, Pincher Martin becomes what Eliot's Prufrock wished to be. "I should have been a pair of ragged claws / Scuttling across the floors of silent seas." T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock."

rock and sea, and the red claws are left ". . . outlined like a night sign against the absolute nothingness."[175] Pincher Martin is dead. He finds himself a victim of the existential illusion of choice, and the encounter with Nothingness destroys his existence.

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[175]Golding, Pincher Martin, p. 179.

CHAPTER IV

FREE FALL: "HERE?"

Free Fall, Golding's fourth novel, is easily the most complex in structure of the first five works. Golding abandons the switch in viewpoint of the first three novels, but retains, according to a few critics, something similar to the "gimmick" ending.[176] For the first time, Golding writes in first person; the use of point of view not only becomes and interior monologue, but at points the structure is reminiscent of Joyce's Ulysses on a smaller scale. This stream of consciousness technique makes the novel almost unintelligible for a single reading, and the critics have attacked this obscurity quite justly.[177] Not all of the adverse criticism, however, is valid. Free Fall is difficult to decipher in places, but a close second reading will explain most of the novel. Actually, the confusion is a re-inforcement of a major theme: man lives in a chaotic universe, and his efforts to impose patterns on that universe

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[176]Karl, op. cit., p. 256; and MacShane, op. cit., p. 182.

[177]Hynes, op. cit., p. 39; Juliet Mitchell, op. cit., p. 70; and Wain, op. cit., p. 66.

will ultimately fail.[178] The chaotic structure of the novel, then, is an artistic attempt to illustrate the theory of the universe within the novel.[179]

This theory is more than a symbolic interpretation of the Fall of man.[180] As the title implies, man falls freely in space; or, man's Fall is a matter of free choice.[181] Both of these interpretations are partially valid, but neither is the sole answer to Golding's novel. The religious parallel of the Fall certainly exists in Free Fall--up to a point; however, the question of choice becomes, instead, an encounter with the absurd, an encounter with Self.[182] Free Fall, then, may begin ostensibly on a religious parallel, but its ending is definitely an existential encounter.[183] The encounter, like that in each of the previous Golding novels, is not the complete existential "leap"

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[178]Baker, op. cit., pp. 56-58; and Hynes, op. cit., p. 35.

[179]Webster, op. cit., p. 15.

[180]Karl, op. cit., p. 255.

[181]Hynes, op. cit., p. 36.

[182]Ted E. Boyle, "The Denial of Spirit: An Explication of William Golding's Free Fall," WascanaR, I (1966), 9.

[183]Ibid., p. 10; and Dick, William Golding, p. 76.

to an authentic existence. However, the ending of Free Fall does come closer to this "leap," and the possibility of authentication exists, thought it is not carried out within the novel's structure.[184]

Free Fall also differs from the first three novels in its social scope.[185] The protagonist, Sammy Mountjoy, searches his life for the moment when he lost his freedom. "Here?"[186] This search moves from the London slums of Rotten Row, to the house of a paranoid, homosexual priest, to a small apartment where Sammy lives as a student, to a Nazi prisoner of war camp, to a mental institution. This vast exploration of the social world is quite a contrast to the isolation of a tropical island, or a pre-historic jungle, or a small rock in the Atlantic. Yet it is vital that Sammy retrace his life within such a wide social view; within each level of society, Sammy is influenced by two people.[187] Sammy is always torn between two worlds, and this tension or pull renders his final "choice" absurd. He remains throughout the novel a victim of these tensions.

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[184]Boyle, op. cit., p. 9.

[185]Bowen, op. cit., p. 608; and Hynes, op. cit., p. 33.

[186]William Golding, Free Fall, p. 69.

[187]Dick, William Golding, p. 69.

The first paragraph of the novel is an emblem of the novel itself and reflects the tensions:[188]

> I have walked by stalls in the market-place where books, dog-eared and faded from their purple, have burst with a white hosanna. I have seen people crowned with a double crown, holding in either hand the crook and flail, the power and the glory. I have understood how the scar becomes a star, I have felt the flake of fire fall, miraculous and pentecostal. My yesterdays walk with me. They keep step, they are grey faces that peer over my shoulder. I live on Paradise Hill, ten minutes from the station, thirty seconds from the shops and the local. Yet I am a burning amateur, torn by the irrational and incoherent, violently searching and self-condemned.[189]

The paragraph, full of religious symbols, colors, and allusions, also reveals the irony that perverts the religious view. Sammy Mountjoy lives on Paradise Hill, but this does not signify a complete religious experience ending in redemption. Sammy's attainment, Beatrice, becomes his "mount of joy," and on Paradise Hill there is no complete fire of rebirth and forgiveness.[190] Instead, Sammy is always "torn by the irrational" and this tension brings Sammy to

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[188]Babb, op. cit., p. 58; and Ian Gregor and Mark Kinkead-Weekes, "The Strange Case of Mr. Golding and His Critics," TC, CLXVII (February, 1960), 118.

[189]Golding, Free Fall, p. 1.

[190]Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes, op. cit., p. 119.

an encounter with not the religious but the existential Self.[191]

Looking back on his life, Sammy first returns to his childhood home in the slums of Rotten Row. Sammy is a bastard, and his father's identity is a matter of fanciful speculation between the child and his mother, Ma. Sometimes Sammy's father is the Prince of Wales, sometimes a parson, and sometimes a soldier. Whoever he is, Sammy's father is unimportant. Sammy dismisses his blighted ancestry and firmly decides, "I tick. I exist."[192] This existential declaration of existence prepares the reader for the search through the illusion of choice which constitutes the novel. Whatever meaning Sammy finds in his life is found in the face of existence, not essence.

Complicating Sammy's early existence are the two poles of Ma and Evie. Ma is an amateur whore, but she fills a necessary place in Sammy's life. Ma is a comfort, a placid refuge between Sammy and the world:

> She terrifies but she does not frighten.
> She neglects but she does not warp or exploit.
> She is violent without malice or cruelty.

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[191]Boyle, op. cit., p. 6.

[192]Golding, Free Fall, p. 6.

> She is adult without patronage or condescension.
> She is warm without possessiveness.
> But, above all, she is there.[193]

Ma is the amoral norm in Sammy's childhood world. She is the solid comfort in contrast to Evie.

Evie, as her name implies, is Sammy's childhood temptress. She tells fabulous lies and has a responsive audience in Sammy. Evie, too, is the first character in Sammy's life whose view of sex is perverted. This perversion increases with subsequent characters--Miss Pringle, Father Watts-Watt, but most of all Sammy himself--but the beginning is with Evie. "She was, she confided to me, she was sometimes a boy."[194] Evie's desire to be bisexual terrifies Sammy, who thinks that Evie is the salvation and control of the world. Evie gleefully says, ". . . when she changed she could pee higher up the wall than any of the boys in our Row, see?"[195] This emphasis on urination is continued through the novel, and it contains the same significance as the other excremental symbols in Golding's first three novels: excrement is a symbol of the worst in man. Evie,

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[193] Ibid., p. 11.

[194] Ibid., p. 25.

[195] Loc. cit.

"a congenital liar," soon tires of her audience, but her brief presence links Sammy's first world with a second; it links the home with school.

At school, Sammy is influenced by two new friends, Johnny Spragg and Philip Arnold. Johnny replaces Evie's hold over Sammy by his expert knowledge of aviation and his quest for adventure. Philip, on the other hand, exerts a quiet, but terrifying influence. Like the silent Roger of Lord of the Flies, Philip is sadistic and brutal. "He liked to inflict pain and a catastrophe was his orgasm."[196] Neither a hero nor a bully, "Philip is a living example of natural selection."[197] He avoids bringing trouble on himself by having a vulnerable scapegoat, Sammy. Philip understands political psychology, and he manipulates Sammy. ". . . I was his fool, his clay. He might be bad at fighting but he knew something that none of the rest of us knew. He knew about people."[198]

This special insight of Philip's is connected with Sammy's later experience in a Nazi concentration camp.

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[196] Ibid., p. 41.

[197] Loc. cit.

[198] Ibid., p. 42.

Tortured by solitary confinement with his own Self, Sammy cracks under the mental encounter. But the confinement is not satisfactory as far as the camp psychologist is concerned as he is singly convinced that Sammy is withholding military information. However, the encounter is real enough for Sammy, and his release by the commandant is a blessing. Unlike Philip, Dr. Halde, the psychologist, fails because "the Herr Doctor does not know about peoples."[199] The lack of insight into personalities hinders the Doctor as it hinders Sammy throughout his life.

The two personalities who unknowingly guide Sammy to his final moment of "choice" are Miss Rowena Pringle and Nick Shales, teachers in the grammar school. Miss Pringle teaches Scriptures, a subject which fascinates Sammy for a while. But, like Philip Roth's Ozzie Freedman, Sammy is thwarted in any sincere religious understanding by the petty tyranny of a single personality, Miss Pringle. The sexually frustrated old maid persecutes the child and conjures up accusations whenever possible. For example, she finds a landscape sketch in Sammy's rough workbook, and, by turning the page at all unnatural angles, she imagines

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[199] Ibid., p. 230.

a lewd design that simply is not there. Her delight in this discovery gives her fuel to admonish Sammy cruelly in one moment and to describe the Crucifixion in the same tone a few moments later. Sammy sensitively realizes the paradox when he says, "I can understand how she hated, but not how she kept on such apparent terms of intimacy with heaven."[200] The taint Miss Pringle's actions give to the spiritual world drive Sammy to seek consolation in the rational.

Scientific, thoroughly rational, and kind is Miss Pringle's "rival" for Sammy, Nick Shales. Nick, as his name implies, is viewed by some critics as the fatal tempter of Sammy.[201] But Nick's nature and attitude argue strongly against this view. It is true that Sammy chooses Nick's rational world to some degree, but the choice is based more on Sammy's own selfish desires and limited insight than it is on any overt plea by Nick. Given a choice between the cruel, twisted world of Miss Pringle and the kind, understanding, educational world of Nick, the choice seems easy. Nick is devoted to teaching, and he respects his

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[200] Ibid., p. 189.

[201] Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes, op. cit., p. 122.

students; Nick and Sammy communicate. The universe for Nick is completely rational and scientifically explicable. Yet even Sammy realizes that "neither was this world of Nick's a real thing."[202] Nick, like Piggy in Lord of the Flies, denies the irrational in man, ". . . and consequently the cosmos played a huge practical joke on him."[203] Nick is compassionate and naturally draws people; yet, his denial of anything outside the realm of the rational isolates him from a complete existence.

The conflict between Miss Pringle and Nick becomes, then, the conflict between the rational and the spiritual.[204] Miss Pringle hates Nick ". . . because he found it easy to be good:"[205]

> Perhaps she half understood how flimsy a virtue her accidental virginity was, perhaps sometimes in a grey light before the first bird she saw herself as in a mirror and knew she was powerless to alter. But to Nick the rationalist, the atheist, all things were possible.[206]

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[202]Golding, Free Fall, p. 191.

[203]Ibid., p. 192.

[204]Baker, op. cit., p. 63; and Boyle, op. cit., p. 4.

[205]Golding, Free Fall, p. 193.

[206]Loc. cit.

The possibility of attaining the unattainable is the clue to Sammy's choice between the two spheres. His choice, however, is not rational.[207] Nick even explains or warns Sammy. "'You can't have your penny and your bun.'"[208] Yet these words, so reminiscent of Pincher Martin, are the real motives for Sammy; he strives to get both "his penny and his bun" and fails. But all of the time, Sammy realizes what his motive is:

> The beauty of Miss Pringle's cosmos was vitiated because she was a bitch. Nick's stunted universe was irradiated by his love of people. Sex thrust me strongly to choose and know.[209]

Sammy's choice is definite. He wants Beatrice Ifor, and he is willing to sacrifice anything to have her.

Beatrice, unlike her namesake from Dante, does not remain the beautiful and unattainable. Sammy's desire for her at first seems guided by a vision of a lovely soul who could guide one to the gates of heaven. However, like Evie, Beatrice becomes a perverted creature, and the religious parallel ironically fails. It is Beatrice's last name, Ifor,

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[207] Broes, op. cit., p. 13; and Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes, op. cit., p. 121.

[208] Golding, Free Fall, p. 195.

[209] Ibid., p. 204.

that sums up Sammy's desire.[210] He wants to possess her completely, he wants to become Beatrice; he is fanatically possessed and, consequently, disappointed:

> "I said I loved you. Oh God, don't you know what that means? I want you, I want all of you, not just cold kisses and walks--I want to be with you and in you and on you and round you--I want fusion and identity--I want to understand and be understood--oh God, Beatrice, Beatrice, I love you--I want to be you!"[211]

The fatal flaw is Sammy's selfish approach. He only takes. Guided solely by the promise of sexual union, Sammy ignores Beatrice as a person: he ignores "what it is to be Beatrice."[212]

The irony in Sammy's eventual conquest is Beatrice's impotence. Her frigidity further convinces Sammy that Beatrice has nothing to offer. He exploits her selfishly, and rationalizes his exploitation by blaming any lack on Beatrice. Soon, she holds no fascination for Sammy, only disgust. Years later, Sammy remembers ". . . what the hidden face looked like; how after my act and my self-contempt

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[210]Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes, op. cit., p. 122.

[211]Golding, Free Fall, p. 94.

[212]Boyle, op. cit., p. 4; and Kermode, "The Novels of William Golding," p. 27.

she lay, looking out of the window as though she had been blessed."[213] Sammy has sacrificed to attain, but it is only later that he remembers the advice from the headmaster:

> If you want something enough, you can always get it provided you are willing to make the appropriate sacrifice. Something, anything. But what you get is never quite what you thought; and sooner or later the sacrifice is always regretted.[214]

The sacrifice for Sammy is his "freedom of choice," but for Beatrice it is sanity. The search is destructive, and the search is almost complete.

Within the chaotic (not chronological) structure of events in the novel, the search is merely another reflection of the patternless state of the universe. Yet the whole aim of the novel, the whole aim of Sammy's journey into his Self, is a forced ordering and chronological integration of events to attempt to find some meaning or order in the scattered memories. The final connection between the worlds of Ma and Evie, Johnny and Philip, Miss Pringle and Nick Shales, Beatrice and Sammy is only an illusory one. Yet the reader and Sammy must view the events in chronological sequence in order to understand the ultimate futility of this attempt,

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[213]Golding, Free Fall, p. 110.

[214]Ibid., p. 212.

the ultimate futility of choice which is the theme of the novel. Therefore, the chronological approach of this study to the events in Sammy's life is a necessary re-ordering of the novel to emphasize the failure of man's ordering of the chaotic universe. The fragmented memories of Free Fall are not significant metaphors as are the images in Pincher Martin; rather, the incidents in Free Fall are important only as they form a slow connection in Sammy's mind of possible places where he lost his freedom of choice. After each remembered incident, Sammy asks, "Here?" and after all incidents except one, the answer is "Not here." The final attempt to re-order his universe, the final confrontation of Sammy with the past's seemingly disconnected events occurs in Sammy's isolation in a dark cell of a Nazi concentration camp. It is in this cell that Sammy makes the mental link between his conquest of Beatrice and his choice for the rational world of Nick Shales. Only after the mental link is made does Sammy ask, "Here?"--there is no answer. Here, Sammy encounters the Self.

In the dark cell (that turns out to be a broom closet) Sammy huddles against the wall clutching at his pants. Imagining all kinds of nameless terrors, Sammy can see only darkness. ". . . what else was there in this thick,

impenetrable cosmos?"[215] The cell becomes an emblem of the universe, and the void which engulfs Sammy is a terror. Sammy's terror becomes a performance much like Pincher Martin's. "A solo performance, look no eyes, No one to see a man turning into a jelly by the threat of the darkness."[216] With a nihilistic view, Sammy suddenly devises the terror in the centre. Superficially, he means the middle of the cell; but, like all of Golding's protagonists, Sammy is on his journey into the centre which is the Self. The centre is the Beast, the creature of the trees, the cellar. For Sammy, the centre is a piece of castrated human flesh, a phallus.[217] Unable to live with the self-created torments, unable to face the Self, Sammy cries out for help.[218] The door opens. Sammy is free to leave, but can he make the "exit"?

When Sammy leaves the broom closet (and the wet mop in the middle of the floor), he has a new point of view. Where he saw ugliness, Sammy now sees a pentecostal beauty. Yet

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[215] Ibid., p. 152.

[216] Ibid., p. 153.

[217] Dick, William Golding, p. 70; Gregor and Kindead-Weekes, op. cit., p. 120; Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 118; and Wain, op. cit., p. 67.

[218] Baker, op. cit., p. 65.

Sammy is not "a man resurrected" as he first thinks.[219] This beauty of the moment is not total redemption. Sammy remembers, and he turns to the Self. ". . . when the eyes of Sammy turned in on myself with that same stripped and dead objectivity, what they saw was not beautiful but fearsome."[220] With "fear and trembling" Sammy returns to the core of his choice.

Sammy returns to Nick Shales, Miss Pringle, and Beatrice. Beatrice is in a mental institution, but the worlds of Nick and Miss Pringle are in tact. Sammy suddenly understands that what seemed his choice and his freedom are only illusions. He feels his "own nothingness," and he re-examines the universe.[221] "Her world was real, both worlds are real. There is no bridge."[222] Sammy encounters the absurd, and finds a void. He realizes that to authenticate his existence, he must make a "leap." The possibility of bridging the gap remains.[223]

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[219]Golding, Free Fall, p. 167.

[220]Ibid., p. 171.

[221]Ibid., p. 228.

[222]Ibid., p. 230.

[223]Boyle, op. cit., p. 9.

CHAPTER V

THE SPIRE: "CELLARAGE AND ALL?"

Perhaps, realizing the communication failure of Free Fall, Golding reverts back to the techniques of the three earlier novels in his fifth work, The Spire. Most critics hopefully view The Spire as a major peak or turning point in Golding's career, and many are disappointed.[224] It is true that Golding goes back to the random yet related imagery of Pincher Martin and the seeming destruction of innocence of Lord of the Flies and The Inheritors; yet, although Golding integrates all of the themes and structures of the early works into his fifth novel, the work is merely adequate in total effect. It is not as stirring or as totally artistic as Pincher Martin. However, The Spire, as it appears in relation to Golding's latest novel, The Pyramid, is the summary of theme and structure of the first five novels; it is adequately well written and has no major flaw, but it

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[224]Baker, op. cit., p. 71; William Barrett, "Reader's Choice," Atlantic Monthly, CCXIII (May, 1964), 135; Dick, William Golding, p. 77; Hynes, op. cit., p. 40; Pritchett, "God's Folly,", p. 562; Steiner, op. cit., pp. 292-293; and George H. Thomson, "The Real World of William Golding," Alphabet, IX (November, 1964), 31.

simply has no single over-whelming statement or dramatic encounter like that of the ravenous ego in Pincher Martin. The imagery of The Spire is the major, notable accomplishment.[225] Considered in its fullest application, the imagery follows three important lines: a developing symbolic definition of the spire; a symbolic parallel of the deterioration of Jocelin, both the man and the mind; and, a symbolic parallel of the deterioration and destruction of the four "pillars" of Jocelin's mental cathedral--Roger Mason, the master builder; Rachel Mason, his wife; Pangall, the church's impotent custodian; and, Goody Pangall, his wife. Surrounding and uniting all characters is the growing threat of the four hundred foot spire.

The setting of The Spire is fourteenth-century England in the Cathedral Church of the Virgin Mary.[226] Obsessed by a vision of a spire and obsessed by a feeling that he is chosen by God to build that spire, Jocelin, Dean of the Cathedral, immolates all to that single vision. During the years of building, all church services are stopped, men are

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[225]Hynes, op. cit., p. 41.

[226]The historical site of Golding's setting is Salisbury Cathedral.

murdered, Jocelin does not go to confession, the church is filled with lewd songs and lewd men--"'Murderers, cutthroats, rowdies, brawlers, rapers, notorious fornicators, sodomites, atheists, or worse.'"[227]--and, most importantly, Jocelin sacrifices the lives of four people as mere "building costs."[228] Ironically, Jocelin dies, but the spire which is built on a foundation of creeping mud stands.[229]

The destruction begins from the moment of Jocelin's first vision of the spire. "'I had seen the whole building as an image of living, praying man. But inside it was a richly written book to instruct that man.'"[230] At first, then, the spire is a vision of a prayer. And attempting to keep this vision in perspective, Jocelin carefully reminds himself that the church must go on as usual. "And I must remember that the spire isn't everything!"[231] From the beginning, however, Jocelin forgets. This strictly religious

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[227]William Golding, The Spire, p. 161.

[228]Bernard F. Dick and Raymond J. Porter, "Jocelin and Oedipus," Cithara, VI (November, 1966), 46.

[229]Ibid., p. 48; and Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 130.

[230]Golding, The Spire, p. 185.

[231]Ibid., p. 5.

vision, then, soon develops as a perverted symbol.[232] It is a mast of a ship, a stone hammer waiting to strike, and, symbolically pervading all, the spire is a phallus:

> The model was like a man lying on his back. The nave was his legs placed together, the transepts on either side were his arms outspread. The choir was his body; and the Lady Chapel, where now the services would be held, was his head. And now also, springing, projecting, bursting, erupting from the heart of the building, there was its crown and majesty, the new spire.[233]

Throughout the novel, the spire is an erect phallic symbol. At first, Jocelin is unaware of this outward manifestation of his sublimation;[234] but, as he continually sacrifices lives, he slowly realizes that the vision is an obsession:[235] it is not a holy vision of prayer but a vision of his sexual desire for Goody Pangall:

> . . . Jocelin stopped by the model, to encourage himself. He detached the spire with difficulty, because the wood was swollen, and held the thing devoutly, like a relic. He caressed it gently, cradling it in his arms, and looking at it all over, as a mother might examine her baby.[236]

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[232]Hynes, op. cit., p. 50; and Lodge, op. cit., p. 490.

[233]Golding, The Spire, p. 4.

[234]"The Art of Darkness," op. cit., p. 104; Dick and Porter, op. cit., p. 44; and Oldsey and Weintraub, op. cit., p. 136.

[235]Dick and Porter, op. cit., p. 45.

[236]Golding, The Spire, pp. 50-51.

The imagery of erection and masturbation are obvious, yet at this point in the novel Jocelin himself fails to realize the true nature of his vision. Jocelin feels protected from any evil by his guardian angel who visits him to give him spiritual strength. Soon, however, the angel of fire--and that paradox is obvious in its implication of a devil in disguise--is joined by a devil. Slowly Jocelin becomes a victim of his own perverted vision. The angel of strength is only a momentary comfort and warning, and the devil is a constant persecution ". . . by a meaningless and hopeless dream:"[237]

> It seemed to Jocelin that he lay on his back in the bed; and then he was lying on his back in the marshes, crucified, and his arms were the transepts. . . . Only Satan himself, rising out of the west, clad in nothing but blazing hair stood over his nave and worked at the building, tormenting him so that he writhed on the marsh in the warm water, and cried out aloud. He woke in the darkness, full of loathing.[238]

This imagery of a nocturnal emission haunts Jocelin, and night after night he is tormented by this devil.

Eventually, the dreams reach down further in Jocelin's Self, and he begins to imagine scenes of actual intercourse

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[237] Ibid., p. 59.

[238] Ibid., p. 59-60.

with Goody Pangall, his "daughter in God." He rationalizes his lustful thoughts about Goody by blaming witchcraft, but he knows this is only a false hope. The only escape for Jocelin is a mental escape into the irrational, the "uncountry:"

> In this uncountry there was a blue sky and light, consent and no sin. She came towards him naked in her red hair. She was smiling and humming from an empty mouth. He knew the sound explained everything, removed all hurt and all concealment, for this was the nature of the uncountry. He could not see the devil's face, for this was the nature of the uncountry too; but he knew she was there, and moving towards him totally as he was moving towards her. Then there was a wave of ineffable good sweetness, wave after wave, and an atonement.
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> And then there was nothing.[239]

Jocelin reaches an imaginary sexual fulfillment, only to realize that the reality surrounding all is nothing. This existential encounter of the Self is terrifying to a man who claims to be a chosen tool of God; yet, as will be shown later, it is the aspect of choice which is the foundation of all Jocelin's illusions. He cannot pray any longer, because the place of prayer has become a part of the nothingness. "He would say to himself: I must offer all this up! And then, wordlessly, without his volition, he

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[239] Ibid., p. 171.

would find that his mind was making itself into nothing but a question: To where?"[240] Jocelin is "nowhere," and he realizes that all of his visions have been engendered in a man's mind--"cellarage and all."[241]

The vision of the spire had begun so simply and innocently. "But then the complications began. A single green shoot at first, then clinging tendrils, then branches . . . ."[242] This plant image develops in Jocelin's mind as he remembers the concessions and sacrifices made for the cost of the building. What begins as a bloom of pure fragrance (or so Jocelin thinks) becomes the "'growth of a plant with strange flowers and fruit, complex, twining, engulfing, destroying, strangling.'"[243] And the major victim who is strangled is Jocelin. The cellar image is reminiscent of Pincher Martin's mental cellar of darkness and horror, and its empty vision of nothingness is the epitome of the developing symbols of "Jocelin's Folly."[244]

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[240] Ibid., p. 122.

[241] Ibid., p. 205.

[242] Ibid., p. 162.

[243] Ibid., p. 187.

[244] Baker, op. cit., p. 84.

Parallel with the developing imagery of the spire is the imagery which suggests the deterioration of Jocelin. This personal imagery is practically inextricable from the spire imagery, yet a few of the images definitely point to the physical and mental decay of the priest. The first adumbration of the real nature of Jocelin is the image carved in stone by the dumb man--an image of Jocelin which will be part of the spire, an image, ostensibly, of a man singing praises to the heavens. Ironically, the dumb man catches the Self of Jocelin in the image with ". . . the gaunt, lifted cheekbones, the open mouth, the nostrils strained wide as if they were giving lift to the beak, like a pair of wings, the wide, blind eyes."[245] This emphasis on the blind eyes is continued throughout the novel; Jocelin feels that his vision is complete and that others are blind. The truth is quite the opposite. "At the moment of vision, the eyes see nothing."[246] Jocelin cannot see reality until it is too late.

The ultimate encounter with reality, the encounter with the Self occurs, ironically, when Jocelin is climbing the

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[245]Golding, The Spire, p. 20.

[246]Loc. cit.

shaking wooden stairs that wind toward the spire. The image that stares back from the metal sheet is hideous:

> He examined his eyes, deep in sockets over which the skin was dragged--dragged too over the cheekbones, then sucked in. He examined the nose like a beak and now nearly as sharp, the deep grooves in the face, the gleam of teeth.[247]

The carved image has come to life, and Jocelin's predatory nature, like that of the eagle, is reality.[248]

Jocelin's encounter with the absurd, the Self, is an existential encounter that is eternally symbolized in the stone image on his tomb. Like the gargoyles which represent the ever-present horrors of existence to Jocelin, and like the stone image on the spire, Jocelin's tomb image is carved in a similar ghastly form: "himself without ornament, lying stripped in death of clothing and flesh, a prone skeleton lapped in skin, head fallen back, mouth open."[249] This is no supreme vision of a man praying to his Maker. It is, instead, the vision of a man who has encountered the void through an illusion of choice and, in this encounter, has found the despair of a Self destroyed by Self.

Jocelin's other prey are Roger and Rachel Mason,

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[247]Ibid., p. 149.

[248]Baker, op. cit., p. 82.

Pangall, and Goody Pangall. These four are ". . . like four pillars at the crossways of the building."[250] They are the four pillars at the center of the cathedral, and the spire pierces the middle of them. Like the rest of the church and surrounding village, however, the four people are sacrificed by Jocelin as "building costs." Jocelin calls them tools or instruments of God, but they are tools or instruments of Jocelin. "But like a good general, he saw how they needed help; for even to him, his instruments, these people he had to use, seemed little more than apes now that clambered about the building."[251] Working from the basic illusion that he and the others are chosen tools of God, Jocelin willfully dehumanizes these people to accomplish his selfish, perverted mission.

The first of Jocelin's victims is Pangall, the church custodian. Unlike Dean Jocelin, Pangall is a man of strong faith and common sense. He realizes that the building of the spire will destroy the church, spiritually if not physically; and, he knows he will be dead or gone from the church before the work is finished. Pangall's life and home are

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[250] Ibid., p. 57.

[251] Ibid., p. 50; italics mine.

constantly threatened by the workers who purposely torment the impotent man and eventually run him off.

> He saw men who tormented Pangall, having him at broom's end. In an apocalyptic glimpse of seeing, he caught how a man danced forward to Pangall, the model of the spire projecting obscenely from between his legs. . . .[252]

The phallic symbols of the broom and the spire are torturous reminders of sterility to Pangall and, ironically, to Jocelin. Knowing that Pangall is "lame," Jocelin arranges the marriage between Pangall and Goody to "save" Goody's virginity for himself.[253] The painful irony is Jocelin's eventual destruction of Goody through his victimizing of Roger, Rachel, and Pangall as mere "costs."

Beautiful, red-haired Goody is Jocelin's "daughter in God." He rationalizes his love for her as a spiritual love until his lust becomes a driving force in nightly dreams. Goody is not, however, protected by Jocelin's perverse love. She is, perhaps, the worst sacrifice of all. Goody and Roger, the master builder, are trapped in a symbolic tent of love, desire, and adultery. Both of their marriages are barren, and their union seems inevitable. "He saw they

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[252] Ibid., p. 84.

[253] Baker, op. cit., p. 84.

were in some sort of tent that shut them off from all other people, and he saw how they feared the tent, both of them, but were helpless."[254] Goody and Roger are imprisoned by Jocelin's obsession, and Jocelin's selfish, though agonizing, reaction is the thought, "'She will keep him here.'"[255] Therefore, despite Goody's cherished presence in Jocelin's heart and mind, he purposely sacrifices her to ensure the presence of the builders and thus to ensure the completion of the spire.[256] Goody is, like the others, simply part of "the cost of building material."[257]

This dehumanization of Goody becomes a major torment to Jocelin, especially when he realizes she is pregnant. He catches a glimpse of her one day, and the anxiety and despair that he sees in her eyes and in the returned glance of Roger haunt him ever after:

> Her hair had come out into the light. It hung down; on this side splayed over her breast in a tattered cloud of red; on that, in a tangled plait which doubled on itself, and draggled with green ribbon half-undone. . . . Her head was turned this way,

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[254]Golding, The Spire, p. 52.

[255]Ibid., p. 59.

[256]"The Art of Darkness," p. 104.

[257]Golding, The Spire, p. 121.

> and always, till the end of time, he would know what she was looking at. From the moment of the tent there could nothing else for her to look at--nowhere else she could turn that white, contracted mouth, but towards Roger on this side of the pit, his arms spread from his sides in anguish and appeal, in acknowledgement of consent and defeat.[258]

This passionate red and green vision of Goody re-appears to Jocelin intermittently, slowly revealing to him the real nature of his love and the horrible truth of the sacrifice. The culmination of Jocelin's destruction of Goody is his appearance at the bloody birth scene:

> "She was on the floor. When she looked up, she saw me in the doorway, all dressed up, dean, priest, the accuser. I only wanted to help, but it [his look] killed her. I killed her as surely as if I'd cut her throat."[259]

From this moment on, Jocelin rationalizes his actions and Goody's death as bewitchment. He admits the responsibility for her death, yet he never totally accepts that self-accusation. "'So after she died, she haunted me, she bewitched me. To have prayer blinded by hair. A dead woman. That's a good joke, isn't it?'"[260] The horrible truth, however, is no joke; and, Jocelin painfully realizes

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[258] Ibid., p. 85.

[259] Ibid., p. 206.

[260] Loc. cit.

the full extent of his self-created hell. He has completely and selfishly destroyed four people to build an eternal reminder not of prayer but of his obsessive desire, his perverted Self.

Roger and Rachel Mason are the two other pillars who crumble under Jocelin's will. Their relationship at the beginning of the novel is not especially spiritual or loving, but it is not a sinister or decadent relationship:

> Not only were they inseparable, but alike in appearance; more like brother and sister than man and wife, dark, sturdy, red-lipped. They were islanded and their life was a pattern of its own. . . . They revolved round each other in a way which people found incomprehensible.[261]

Roger and Rachel, then, have at least a mutually agreeable relationship; they understand each other, and, if Rachel becomes interferring, Roger simply ignores her. But there is not an aura of hate or distrust. The marriage simply exists, barren and uneventful.

In the beginning, the only lack or perversity within the Mason marriage is Rachel's barrenness. She is not, however physically sterile. The problem is, she tells Jocelin, that "when she and Roger went together, at the most

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[261] Ibid., p. 39.

inappropriate moment she began to laugh--had to laugh . . . ."[262] At the moment of revelation, Jocelin is merely disgusted with the indecency of the violation of private affairs. Only when he overhears Goody whisper to Roger, "'But I didn't laugh--did I?'"[263] does the full impact of the decaying, four-sided interrelationship overcome Jocelin. With Jocelin's "help," the marriage turns to a prison or a zoo. The change in Roger and Rachel's relationship after Goody's death and Rachel's knowledge of the adultery is the most extreme example of dehumanization in the novel:

> They kept together, but they no longer revolved round each other. And watching them both with his new eyes, he saw the iron collar round Roger Mason's neck, and could follow the slack chain back from it to her right hand. If Roger climbed, she would stand there below, the chain in her hand, waiting to lock it on again.[264]

Roger is a kept animal. He has lost all human qualities. Rachel turns from a bothersome woman to a warden or zoo-keeper. Nevertheless, Jocelin clings selfishly to his obsession to build; he views Roger's brutish condition only as a good way to keep building. "'Now, if I told him to build a

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[262] Ibid., p. 54.

[263] Ibid., p. 120.

[264] Ibid., p. 134.

thousand feet high, he would do it. I've got what I wanted.'"[265] Jocelin has succeeded in controlling the master builder as a mere tool, but his success is not his satisfaction.

The mental torment and physical persecution of his own Self soon bring Jocelin to the realization that his vision is corrupt. The crowning point of knowledge is the discovery that he is not the chosen tool of God; Jocelin learns that he received his high appointment through the influence of the king as a post-coital gift to his mistress, Jocelin's aunt.[266] The full absurdity and folly, the hideous truth of destruction, the illusion of choice all strike Jocelin.[267] On his death bed even the thought of heaven holds no hope, for heaven is the void. Jocelin knows that he "traded a stone hammer for four people."[268] Pangall has been run off from the church and his wife; Goody commits adultery, is discovered, and dies in childbirth; Roger becomes an alcoholic, tries unsuccessfully to hang himself; and, Rachel is

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[265] Loc. cit.

[266] Baker, op. cit., p. 86.

[267] "The Art of Darkness," p. 104.

[268] Golding, The Spire, p. 214.

left to tend the mentally and physically crippled man--these are the "costs" of building material. Jocelin's Folly is more than the sin of Pride; it is more than a simple Freudian obsession; it is both of these coupled with a horrifying existential encounter with the Self which proves to be nothing.[269]

With the abandonment of the church, with the perversion of a man's obsession, Jocelin dies facing his own empty existence. "He would speak wordlessly to himself above the body. Where was I then? And always, the answer would come, wordlessly. Nowhere."[270] This final revelation illuminates the issue of choice which is the basis of Golding's novel. Jocelin chooses to be an instrument of his vision, and he chooses others to be his instruments. The illusion of choice is two-fold: Jocelin discovers he was not chosen by God but by man; man chooses because man is alone; perhaps there is no God.[271] The Spire is a view of existential man not damned by God not saved by God; it is a view of man damned by his

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[269]Stanley E. Hyman, "The Spire of Babel," Standards: A Chronicle of Books for Our Time, p. 221; and Sternlicht, "The Sin of Pride in Golding's The Spire," p. 60.

[270]Golding, The Spire, p. 209.

[271]"The Art of Darkness," p. 104.

own Self and his illusion of choice. It is man damned by man. It is not necessarily a Calvinistic damnation, then, but an existential encounter with no existential "leap" to an authentic existence.

EPILOGUE

Although William Golding's first five novels show no progression in structure or similar form, and although there is no progression in the apparent success or failure of the novels, still, Golding's five novels are five variations on one theme: man's attempt to define his life in face of the absurdities of a patternless existence is the cause of his anxiety. Thus, each of Golding's novels is a search for identity or self-definition. During this trial, this attempt of man to impose his definitive illusions on the universe and on others, man discovers the impotence of reason alone to conclude this search. The attempt to define the image of rational man, then, ends in an encounter with the "whole man," rational and irrational man; it ends in an existential encounter with the Self, and this encounter is that of a being confronted with his own Nothingness.

The form of the Self-encounter varies with each of the five novels. Golding's protagonists encounter the Self on an island populated by boys, in a pre-historic forest, on a rock somewhere in the Atlantic, in a Nazi concentration camp, and in a fourteenth-century English cathedral. This variety of situation suggests the universality of Golding's

thesis: the inability of man to cope with the irrational part of his nature is the cause of his anxiety and despair. This universal despair is further heightened by the illusion of choice, the illusion that man can choose to act (or not to act) to find a meaningful place in the universe. That none of Golding's novels ends with the "leap" to an authentic existence states the ultimate futility and ultimate despair of the Self.

By writing five consecutive novels on the despair of the irrational, the despair of Nothingness, Golding has emphasized his limitation as a novelist. The unfavorable criticism of all five novels--good and bad--reflects Golding's failure. Lord of the Flies will probably remain the popular Golding work because it is an exciting story; Pincher Martin, his artistic and thematic masterpiece, may eventually receive its due praise. However, the general obscurity surrounding Golding's works indicates the probably end of the novels--forgotten or rejected. Golding's techniques, in their novelty and total effect, are unique; but, his failure to apply these techniques to different themes renders his novels stale and predictable in their statement. Unless Golding channels his technique into new philosophic fields,

he is doomed to literary failure. The world of William Golding is simply too small.

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