8-1968

The Fall Motif in the Novels of William Golding

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1968

THE FALL MOTIF IN THE NOVELS OF WILLIAM GOLDING

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of English

Western Kentucky University

Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

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August 1968

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to express gratitude to his wife, Susan, for her painstaking assistance, criticisms, suggestions, and patience.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is the intent of this thesis to describe and analyze the various aspects of the fall motif in five novels of William Golding: Lord of the Flies,[1] The Inheritors,[2] Pincher Martin,[3] Free Fall,[4] and The Spire.[5] The fall motif shall be defined, in part, to mean an allusion to a lapse of mankind from innocence or goodness into a state of innate sinfulness through willingly succumbing to temptation--symbolic of the Biblical fall from the Garden of Eden.

This aspect of the fall of man is, of course, not new to literary works. Ovid's The Metamorphoses relates the story of the fall from grace in pre-Christian mythology; however, subsequent literature dealing with the theme of the

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[1]William Golding, Lord of the Flies (London: Faber & Faber, 1954).

[2]William Golding, The Inheritors (London: Faber & Faber, 1955).

[3]William Golding, Pincher Martin (London: Faber & Faber, 1956).

[4]William Golding, Free Fall,(London: Faber & Faber, 1959).

[5]William Golding, The Spire (London: Faber & Faber, 1964).

fall finds its referent in Genesis 3:1-24 of the Bible. This Biblical account also portrays the bitter consequences of eating the fruit from the forbidden tree: the loss of primitive innocence, the initiation of misery and death, and the realization of self-consciousness.

Milton's Paradise Lost expands allegorically the account of the Biblical fall, emphasizing the role of Satan, evil personified, as the tempting serpent, and the role of Eve in the downfall of Adam. Significantly, in Milton's account, Satan's revolt against God, his expulsion from heaven, and subsequent fall into Pandemonium precede the Edenic story. Through the ages, Christian theology, as Walter Sullivan notes, has considered Satan's revolt the "only act of pure evil ever performed," since Satan "was free of outside temptation and all social influences." Justifying Golding's use of allusions to the Edenic fall, Sullivan adds that since Satan's sin "precedes the human condition, the next best thing for the novelist out after original sin is to find some parallel to the story of Adam and Eve."[1]

Nathaniel Hawthorne used this parallel by "taking as a profoundly instructive myth what to his ancestors had seemed literal history." He then "translated the myth into personal and psychological terms and saw each of us as

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[1]Walter Sullivan, "The Long Chronicle of Guilt: William Golding's The Spire," Hollins Critic, I (June, 1964), 3. (Hereinafter referred to as "The Long Chronicle of Guilt.")

inevitably reenacting the Fall."[1] In the same tradition, Francis E. Kearns finds Herman Melville dealing with the myth of the fall in Billy Budd, a story about "the inevitable destruction of youthful innocence in a world where the evil side of man's nature is dominant." In addition, Kearns finds this a recurrent theme in Leslie Fiedler's Love and Death in the American Novel, and also in Denis de Rougemont's Love in the Western World. The latter pursues "medieval courtly love poetry to its roots in the Albigensian heresy and that heresy's brooding sense of evil and the depravity of human flesh."[2]

But Golding's application of the fall motif goes beyond what these writers accomplished. In addition to Biblical allusions, he expands the fall motif to include a physical fall--an act of dropping from a higher to a lower place or position; a mortal fall--death; and a moral fall--a sin.

Even this complexity of meaning for the term is not new with Golding, since an example of each may be found in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher." There one encounters Roderick Usher and his sister, Madeline, in an incestuous relationship (a moral fall), the death of the Ushers (mortal falls), and the destruction of the Usher

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[1]Charles R. Anderson, ed., American Literary Masters (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), 1, 149.

[2]Francis E. Kearns, "Salinger and Golding: Conflict on the Campus," America, January 26, 1963, p. 138. (Hereinafter referred to as "Salinger and Golding.")

mansion (a physical fall). This multiplicity of meaning may also be found, as will be discussed later, in Albert Camus's novel The Fall.

Still, Golding's use of the fall motif surpasses even that of these writers. He constantly reinforces the meaning of his novels in a number of ways, signaling significant events at both the literal story level and the higher symbolic levels, each amplifying the idea of a fall.

As will be evidenced in this study, Golding himself often offers critical comments relevant to his works. These comments, unlike those of some comtemporary writers, are always of great value in better understanding the author and his works. Specifically, by studying Golding's philosophies, one gains insight into the reasons behind his fall motif.

For example, Golding has stated some basic beliefs on the nature of modern society. He writes:

> Before the Second World War I believed in the perfectibility of social man; that a correct structure of society would produce goodwill; and that therefore you could remove all social ills by a reorganization of society. . . . but after the war I did not [believe so] because I was unable to. I had discovered what one man could do to another. I am not talking of one man killing another with a gun, or dropping a bomb on him or blowing him up or torpedoing him. I am thinking of the vileness beyond all words that went on, year after year, in the totalitarian states. It is bad enough to say that so many Jews were exterminated in this way and that, so many people liquidated--lovely, elegant word--but there were things done during that period from which I still have to avert my mind lest I could be physically sick. They were not done by head-hunters of New Guinea, or by some primitive in the Amazon. They were done, skilfully, coldly, by

> educated men, doctors, lawyers, by men with a tradition of civilization behind them, to beings of their own kind.[1]

Writing about his view of mankind, Golding states that he believes "man suffers from an appalling ignorance of his own nature."[2] Elsewhere, to illustrate his meaning, Golding draws an analogy from social behavior:

> We are commonly dressed, and commonly behave as if we had no genitalia. Taboos and prohibitions have grown up round that very necessary part of the human anatomy. But in sickness, the whole structure of man must be exhibited to the doctor. When the occasion is important enough, we admit to what we have. It seems to me that in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century society of the West, similar taboos grew up round the nature of man. He was supposed not to have in him the sad fact of his own cruelty and lust. When these capacities emerged into action they were thought aberrant. Social systems, political systems were composed, detached from the real nature of man. They were what one might call political symphonies. They would perfect most men, and at the least, reduce aberrance.[3]

When one questions how society first produced aberrances, Golding maintains that the people who try to answer the question are "looking at the system rather than the people." It seems to him that "man's capacity for greed, his innate cruelty and selfishness, was being hidden behind a kind of pair of political pants."[4]

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[1]William Golding, The Hot Gates and Other Occasional Pieces (New York: Pocket Books, 1967), p. 85. This collection of essays, articles, and lecture notes offers a wealth of interesting--and important--information to the Golding reader. (Hereinafter referred to as Hot Gates.)

[2]William Golding, "The Writer in His Age," London Magazine, IV (May, 1957), 46.

[3]Hot Gates, pp. 85-86.

[4]Ibid., p. 86.

Feeling that the "true business" of the novelist concerns "the basic human condition," Golding believes that if a novelist "has a serious, an Aeschylean, preoccupation with the human tragedy, . . . he is committed to looking for the root of the disease instead of describing the symptoms."[1]

As a writer, Golding admits he is "very serious." He adds, "I produce my own view in the belief that it may be something like the truth. I am fully engaged to the human dilemma."[2] Simply stated, Golding believes "Man is a fallen being. He is gripped by original sin. His nature is sinful and his state perilous"; therefore Golding gives himself the task of pursuing in his novels "the connection between his [man's] diseased nature and the . . . mess he gets himself into."[3]

That Golding frequently alludes to the Edenic myth is obvious; many critics have commented on it. James R. Baker finds that "Golding has dedicated his art" to dealing with this myth.[4] Baker, while conscious of Golding's allusions to Eden, treats them only casually and by no means offers a thorough analysis. Bernard S. Oldsey and Stanley

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[1]"The Writer in His Age," p. 45.

[2]Ibid., p. 46.

[3]Hot Gates, p. 86.

[4]James R. Baker, William Golding: A Critical Study (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 95. (Hereinafter referred to as William Golding.)

Weintraub[1] also point out obvious Edenic allusions in the novels. In addition, these critics offer helpful treatment of the allusions in The Inheritors and in Free Fall (comparing the latter with Camus's The Fall). Ernest Claude Bufkin's study,[2] although an important work, does not treat Golding's allusions with any continuity. Bufkin does offer, however, a useful bibliography. Sullivan (by way of preface to his main topic, The Spire) discusses briefly the themes of Golding's novels, and concludes that the novels are related in thematic design to the Edenic myth. Perceptive in his analysis, Sullivan notes a "twofold" fall motif[3] in The Inheritors, but does not develop it.

This thesis, then, seeks to go beyond the works cited and initiate a descriptive and analytical study of the multiplicity of Golding's fall motif. Following the order of publication (Lord of the Flies, The Inheritors, Pincher Martin, Free Fall, and The Spire), this study will present for each novel[4] a descriptive account designed to

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[1]Bernard S. Oldsey and Stanley Weintraub, The Art of William Golding (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965).

[2]Ernest Claude Bufkin, Jr., "The Novels of William Golding: A Descriptive and Analytic Study" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1964). (Hereinafter referred to as "Study.")

[3]"The Long Chronicle of Guilt," p. 3.

[4]It should be noted that Golding's sixth novel, The Pyramid (London: Faber & Faber, 1967) is in a different style, relating a semi-autobiographical story. For this reason, it does not lend itself to the analysis to be given here, and is not included.

inform the unfamiliar reader of essential actions, and to support the general idea of the thesis. Further, this study shall draw from relevant existing criticism, and--substantiated by close attention to textual matter--suggest some new points of view. Then, by analyzing each occurrence of Golding's application of the fall motif, this study shall seek to reveal that (1) each fall indicates a significant event; (2) a consistent, and therefore unifying, relationship exists between the novels; and (3) Golding's fall motif at its highest realization constitutes a unique literary contribution.

CHAPTER II

LORD OF THE FLIES

It is generally agreed that Lord of the Flies,[1] Golding's first novel, established his literary reputation, although his other works are gaining in recognition, thus allowing in-depth criticism of author, style, and content. Oldsey and Weintraub find the book has "captured a large segment of the popular and academic imagination" and, in that aspect, has replaced J. D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye.[2]

Because of the wide ranging interpretations applicable to the Lord of the Flies, it is fitting that a summary be offered. The novel narrates the adventures of a group of young English boys who, while being air-evacuated during a future war, are ejected from the disabled craft in some sort of cabin module, landing on a lush tropical island. Ralph, one of the four main characters, is described as fair haired, with "a mildness about his mouth and eyes that proclaimed no devil." Piggy an important figure who is

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[1]Due to the wide availability of various editions of Golding's works, quotations from this novel and each subsequent novel will be cited in the text by frequent chapter references.

[2]The Art of William Golding, p. 15.

fat, asthmatic, and bespectacled, but the most intelligent boy on the island, befriends Ralph. Because of his physical limitations, Piggy immediately becomes the butt of much ridicule at the hands of the other boys.

Shortly after Ralph and Piggy meet, they find a large conch shell on the beach, and Ralph uses it as a trumpet to call the scattered survivors to their first meeting. As the boys gather, they realize they are without adults, and decide to elect a leader. Ralph is chosen but not without opposition from Jack Merridew, who, as a token of appeasement, is made leader of a hunting party.

In subsequent passages the boys explore the island; wild pigs are discovered; the conch becomes a symbol of authority (granting recognition to its holder during meetings); and duties are delegated to various boys. Because one of the small boys in the group suffers a vivid nightmare, marked by a "beastie," the boys become afraid, and this first hint of a monster-beast urgently precipitates plans to man a rescue signal fire to alert any passing ship.

An argument develops between Ralph and Jack when it is discovered that a ship has been sighted, but the signal fire--a duty specifically delegated to Jack and the hunters--has not been burning. The boys call a meeting, attempting to reestablish order and purposefulness to the small society; this assembly, however, only leads to a lengthy discussion of whether a beast dwells on the island. Somehow the mere discussion of such a topic seems to lend credulity to the

idea, and, finally, as if it would help, the boys vote on the existence of a beast. With the silent affirmative answer Ralph realized that "the world, that understandable and lawful world, was slipping away."

Simon, the fourth important character, offers the other boys a sort of mysterious explanation of the beast, saying: "Maybe it's only us." During this incident (as well as others to follow), Simon finds himself "inarticulate in his effort to express mankind's essential illness." Although he clearly shows this comprehension, his inability to communicate will be a factor in causing his death.

The meeting ends abruptly as Jack leads the boys in their hunting chant and dance. Ralph, sensing a crisis, pleads to a higher power, "get a message to us, . . . send us something grown-up . . . a sign or something." In Chapter Six, his plea is answered after all the boys fall asleep in the moonlight:

> There were other lights in the sky, that moved fast, winked, or went out, though not even a faint popping came down from the battle fought at ten miles' height. But a sign came down from the world of grownups, though at the time there was no child awake to read it. There was a sudden bright explosion and a corkscrew trail across the sky; then darkness again and stars. There was a speck above the island, a figure dropping swiftly beneath a parachute, a figure that hung with dangling limbs. The changing winds of various altitudes took the figure where they would. . . . The figure fell and crumpled among the blue flowers of the mountain-side, but now there was a gentle breeze at this height too and the parachute flopped and banged and pulled. . . . till it lay huddled among the shattered rocks of the mountain-top. Here the breeze was fitful and allowed the strings of the parachute to tangle and festoon; . . . When the breeze blew, the lines would strain taut and some accident of this pull lifted the head and chest

> upright so that the figure seemed to peer across the brow of the mountain. Then, each time the wind dropped, the lines would slacken and the figure bow forward again, sinking its head between its knees. So as the stars moved across the sky, the figure sat on the mountain-top and bowed and sank and bowed again.

The next morning the twins Sam and Eric, while tending the signal fire, see the dead airman (still enveloped by his flight suit, helmet, and parachute shrouds) and think he is the beast. Fleeing down the mountain, they report to Ralph, who decides that he, Jack, and the hunters will scour the island hunting the beast.

Reflecting their consistency in not pursuing a goal to its end, the boys delay the search for the beast with a pig hunt and the playful exploration of a rock formation the boys refer to as "Castle Rock." Although Ralph wonders how far the group will deteriorate, he is also aware that he is retrogressing with them and comments to himself: "Be sucking my thumb next."[1]

Although the beast hunt is nearly abandoned, the three boys--Ralph, Jack, and Roger (Jack's lieutenant)--decide to continue the search on the mountain. Through the darkness and gusty wind Jack is the first to see the airman, and then they all do. For them, the beast exists because they do not recognize the grotesque, decaying airman for what he is.

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[1]Ralph's obvious implication here is that the boys will revert (or retrogress) to infantile behavior; ironically, the retrogression is not to infantile but rather to primitive behavior.

As the boys flee wildly down the mountain, their fear grows, and thus the deterioration or retrogression to a native state symbolically gains momentum. A faction develops in the small community as Jack challenges Ralph's leadership, revolts, and, in his exit, takes with him all of the boys but four. Jack's followers become preoccupied with wildly painting themselves as savages, and hunting wild pigs. Although Jack tells his hunters that they are going to forget about the beast, he nonetheless offers it a sacrifice--a pig's head impaled on a stick sharpened at both ends--each time game is killed. Near the end of the novel, he intends a similar fate for Ralph.

In Chapter Eight, Simon (who has remained loyal to Ralph), discovers one such sacrificed head, now infested with flies:

> The Lord of the Flies hung on his stick and grinned. At last Simon gave up and looked back; saw the white teeth and dim eyes, the blood--and his gaze was held by that ancient, inescapable recognition. In Simon's right temple, a pulse began to beat on the brain.

A few pages further Simon mystically engages the Lord of the Flies in conversation:

> "What are you doing out here all alone? Aren't you afraid of me?"
> Simon shook.
> "There isn't anyone to help you. Only me. And I'm the Beast."
> Simon's mouth labored, brought forth audible words.
> "Pig's head on a stick."
> "Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill! . . . 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?"[1]

At the height of this encounter, Simon loses consciousness. When he recovers, he senses he should climb to the mountaintop to investigate the beast the resides there. He finds the dead flier still snared by the parachute lines, and, more important, he understands what it is--a fallen airman. Simon frees the entangled shrouds (an act which permits an expectant thunderstorm to blow the body out to sea), and hurries to inform the others of his discovery. Simon inopportunely finds the others at a celebration given by Jack and the hunters. In the wild frenzy of their hunting chant and dance, the hunters mistake Simon for the beast and brutally kill him as he noisily emerges from the edge of the thick undergrowth.

After Jack has attacked the other camp to steal Piggy's fire-creating spectacles, Ralph and Piggy go to Jack's camp to plead for the return of the glasses. They are hostilely affronted, words and then punches are exchanged, and a huge boulder near the slanting entrance to the fort is dislodged, hitting Piggy, and knocking him over a forty foot

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[1]E. L. Epstein, Notes to Lord of the Flies (New York: Capricorn Books, 1959), p. 190. From this passage the novel takes its title. Epstein's afterword to the novel offers more information: "Lord of the flies is a translation of the Hebrew Ba'alzevuv (Beelzebub in Greek). It has been suggested that it was a mistranslation of a mistransliterated word which gave us this pungent and suggestive name for the Devil, a devil whose name suggests that he is devoted to decay, destruction, demoralization, hysteria, and panic, and who therefore fits in very well with Golding's theme."

cliff to his death. When it hits Piggy, the boulder also crushes the conch "into a thousand white fragments."

Ralph manages to escape the pursuing tribe by hiding in the dense underbrush. The next morning Jack and his hunters systematically search the island, finally setting fire to the hillside to flush Ralph out of the dense underbrush. Their plan is successful; however, the smoke from the fire has attracted a passing naval vessel, a cruiser, and a shore party has come to the island. Their presence stops the hunt from going to its inevitable end.

The officer from the cruiser at first believes the boys to be playing, and jokingly he asks, "Nobody killed, I hope? Any dead bodies?" When the answer comes back "Only two. And they've gone," the officer does not understand how a group of boys--even without adults--could treat each other the way they did. Then, as if to allow the boys a chance to become boys again, the officer allows "his eyes to rest on the trim cruiser in the distance." Meanwhile Ralph weeps "for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy."

Expanding the old saw "the child is father of the man," Golding describes the theme of Lord of the Flies as "an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature."[1] That is, while he was still considering

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[1]"Lord of the Campus," Time, June 22, 1962, p. 64.

the structure his novel should take, he found:

> Convenient form . . . in the play of children. I was well situated for this, since at this time I was teaching them. Moreover, I am a son, brother, and father. I have lived for many years with small boys, and understand and know them with awful precision. I decided to take the literary convention of boys on an island, only make them real boys instead of paper cutouts with no life in them; and try to show how the shape of the society they evolved would be conditioned by their diseased, their fallen nature.[1]

Open to various methods of investigation, Lord of the Flies may, first of all, be seen as the fall into chaos of the boys' make-shift society. They retrogress in definite stages from well-mannered youngsters, thoroughly conditioned in the social mores of civilized culture, to wild, painted savages, responsible only to barbaric instincts. The fact that these boys are totally isolated from adult authority with its vast restrictions undoubtedly suggests to them that they may do as they wish. To Golding, this means they will not maintain the former civilized attitudes, but rather they will work out their own: survival of the fittest.

On a higher level of consideration, one may view the island society as representative of Golding's view of contemporary society in general. Golding's adoption of this literary convention easily places him among the ranks of those who attempt to study a culture by searching for an unspoiled and yet representative--sample; however, one must first establish the validity of Golding's island community as accurately portraying modern society, and then examine its value.

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[1]Hot Gates, p. 86.

C. B. Cox finds that "the idea of placing boys alone on an island, and letting them work out archetypal patterns of human society, is a brilliant technical device, with a simple coherence which is easily understood by a modern audience."[1] John Peter concurs, finding that "the boys' society represents, in embryo, the society of the adult world, their impulses and convictions are those of adults incisively abridged."[2] V. S. Pritchett agrees that the island society is representative by stating that "the childre. . . . simply reenact the adult, communal drama and by their easy access to the primitive, show how adult communities can break up."[3] Clair Rosenfield explains that because the boys are without "the sustaining and repressing authority of parents, church, and state, they form a new culture reflecting that of the genuine primitive society, evolving in gods and demons (its myths), its rituals and taboos (its social norms)."[4] Rosenfield, then, not only accepts the boys' community as a valid representation of our larger one, but she also views the retrogressive state as

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[1]C. B. Cox, "Lord of the Flies," Critical Quarterly, II (1960), 112.

[2]John Peter, "The Fables of William Golding," Kenyon Review, XIX (Autumn, 1957), 583.

[3]V.S. Pritchett, "Secret Parables," New Statesman, August 2, 1958, p. 146.

[4]Clair Rosenfield, "Men of a Smaller Growth: A Psychological Analysis of William Golding's Lord of the Flies," Literature and Psychology, XI (Autumn, 1961), 93. (Hereinafter referred to as "Men of a Smaller Growth.")

an accurate portrayal of primitive society in general. This conclusion leads one to realize that Golding has given in his novel a sort of history in reverse, showing the fall of a cultured world to an aboriginal state--primarily due to the loss of a higher authority (adults in the boys' society but presumably law and order in the world society).

The magnification, inspection, and acceptance of the island group as a representative population is of significant importance; therefore, to be fully aware of the significance and all the subtle implications of Golding's fall motif, it is necessary at this time to present a rather lengthy and detailed study of how Golding artistically interweaves physical objects, incidents, and characters, allowing each to effectively function at different symbolic levels in his overall scheme.

For instance, Ralph, as Rosenfield correctly points out, is "a projection of man's good impulses from which we derive the authority figures--whether god, king, or father. . . . Ralph is every man . . . and his body becomes the battle-ground where reason and instinct struggle, each to assert itself."[1] Because of Ralph's elected position and his association with the conch (the symbol of authority), he is a manifestation, as Thomas Marcellus Coskren describes it, "of the decent, sensible parliamentarian." Examining Ralph on a higher level of interpretation, Coskren sees the

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[1] Ibid.

boy to be "the figure of an idea: the abstract concept of democratic government."[1] According to John M. Egan, "Ralph's obsession with maintaining a fire is symbolic of man's illusion that civilization will bring salvation. . . . Civilization, however, is merely a momentary veneer which ill conceals man's essential nature."[2]

Carl Niemeyer indicates that to view Ralph as representative of "purely civil authority" is to see Jack as "naked ruthless power, the police force or the military force acting without restraint and gradually absorbing the whole state into itself and annihilating what it cannot absorb."[3] Coskren, again on two levels, finds that "Jack is at once the dictator and the concept of dictatorship."[4] On still another level of interpretation, Niemeyer suggests that the physical description of Jack, as ugly and red-headed, parallels the mythical description of the devil.[5] Rosenfield offers supporting evidence of this parallel by referring to Jack's first meeting Ralph with the sun at Ralph's back: Jack "is symbolically, sunblinded. These two

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[1] Thomas Marcellus Coskren, "Is Golding Calvinistic?" America, July 6, 1963, p. 19.

[2] John M. Egan, "Golding's View of Man," America, January 26, 1963, p. 140.

[3] Carl Niemeyer, "The Coral Island Revisited," College English, XXII (January, 1961), 244.

[4] "Is Golding Calvinistic?" p. 19.

[5] "The Coral Island Revisited," p. 244.

are very obviously intended to recall God and the Devil, whose confrontation, in the history of Western religions, establishes the moral basis for all action." For Rosenfield, "Jack becomes an externalization of the evil instinctual forces."[1] Or as Niemeyer sees it: Jack is "a personification of absolute evil."[2]

Analysis of Ralph and Jack as symbolic of Good and Evil should include the role of Piggy, who "constantly berates the others for behaving 'like a pack of kids.'"[3] Because of his physical limitations and appearance, Piggy receives harsh treatment from the other boys. Piggy's appearance, however, is not all that distinguishes him from the other boys; his role constantly calls to mind what Rosenfield describes as "the stereotype image of the old man who has more-than-human wisdom."[4] Drew finds that"Piggy typifies thoughtfulness and intelligence, the advanced side of man's mind which has made for human survival and material development."[5] Coskren, in agreement with this thought, declares that "Piggy is the intellectual, with all his powers and deficiencies, and representative of the Enlightenment or

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[1]"Men of a Smaller Growth," p. 93.

[2]"The Coral Island Revisited," p. 244.

[3]Margaret Walters, "Two Fabulists: Golding and Camus," Melbourne Critical Review, IV (1961), 21. Quoting Lord of the Flies, p. 40.

[4]"Men of a Smaller Growth," p. 94.

[5]Phillip Drew, "Second Reading," Cambridge Review, LXXVIII (1956), 80.

scientific method."[1] Tracing this symbolic representation of the Enlightenment to a mythical source, Peter Green declares Piggy to be "the voice of sanity personified, a Promethean symbol. It is his thick-lensed spectacles which are used to light the vital signal fires, and are later stolen by the hunters."[2] Undoubtedly the most intelligent boy on the island, Piggy nonetheless would be an ineffectual leader. Instead of leading, Piggy best serves in the role of an advisor to Ralph.

Of Simon--the only boy on the island who seeks the truth and understands it for what it is--Golding has written: "For reasons it is not necessary to specify, I included a Christ-figure in my fable. Simon, solitary, stammering, a lover of mankind, a visionary, who reaches common-sense attitudes not by reason but by intuition."[3] Coskren, readily seeing this, makes this comment:

> Simon is the carpenter who continues building the shelters after the other boys have abandoned the work; Simon feeds the "littluns"; Simon encounters the beast in all its loathsomeness and does not succumb to the beast's temptation to despair. This encounter is the boy's Gethsemane: he comes face to face with evil, recognizes it for what it is, and, despite the agony and horror of the meeting, he is neither defeated nor intimidated by it. . . . Like the One in whose place he stands symbolically, Simon is murdered during a religious

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[1] "Is Golding Calvinistic?" p. 19.

[2] Peter Green, "The World of William Golding," Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Literature, XXXII (1963), 43.

[3] Hot Gates, p. 97.

> festival--the diabolical liturgy of the pig. His death occurs while the island world cowers under the lash of a gigantic storm.[1]

Simon's encounter with the "Lord of the Flies" may be considered the harbinger of an epileptic seizure. But Rosenfield believes that Simon mystically senses the startling discovery soon to be made, and that the statement "Simon was inside the mouth" has particular salience:

> Literally, this image presents the hallucinations of a sensitive child about to lose control of his rational faculties. Metaphorically, it suggests the ritual quest in which the hero is swallowed by a serpent or dragon or beast whose is the underworld, undergoes a symbolic death in order to gain the elixir to revitalize his stricken society, and returns with his knowledge to the timed world as a redeemer.[2]

The "elixir" to which Rosenfield refers is the information the Lord of the Flies imparts to Simon, "I'm part of you. . . . I'm the reason why it's no go." This realization that the "beast" is part of the boys--and all mankind--stimulates Simon to seek out the object of fear on the mountain.

Simon discovers the "beast," the evil thing which terrifies each of the boys, is only a dead airman, mortally fallen. In this symbolically laden scene, Simon, the abstract representation of the Savior, frees fallen man. Then he attempts to inform the other boys, to free them from their fear and the evil they believe present on the island. Francis E. Kearns illustrates with acute

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[1] "Is Golding Calvinistic?" p. 20.

[2] "Men of a Smaller Growth," p. 98.

awareness that Simon is "slain by those he intended to save before he can deliver the truth. . . . [and] represents that deprevity which is inevitable in mankind and which makes futile all human attempts at justice and order." Kearns finds this a valid "pronouncement on human nature."[1] Green offers a similar interpretation of Golding's view of man. Golding, he suggests, finds that man "cherishes his guilt, his fears, his taboos, and will crucify any saint or redeemer who offers to relieve him of his burden by telling the simple truth." Continuing, Green believes "there is a horrible symbolic appropriateness about the corpse itself; the nameless devil and its victims are identical."[2] Rosenfield points out that both the corpse and Simon "are identified with beasts by the children, who do see the truth--that all men are bestial--but do not understand it."[3]

Golding's own comments on the dead parachutist are of particular interest at this point:

> It is perhaps worth noticing that this figure which is dead but won't lie down, falls on the very place where the children are making their one constructive attempt to get themselves helped. It dominates the mountaintop and so prevents them keeping a fire alight there as a signal. To take an actual historical example, the fire is perhaps like the long defunct but once much hoped-over League of Nations. That great effort at international sanity fell before the pressures of nationalism which were founded in ignorance, jealousy, greed--

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[1] "Salinger and Golding," p. 138.

[2] "The World of William Golding," pp. 44-45.

[3] "Men of a Smaller Growth," p. 100.

before the pressures of off-campus history which was dead but would not lie down.[1]

Drawing the relationship between "off-campus history" and the dead airman, Golding writes of each, respectively:

> It is a cloak of national prestige which the uneducated pull round their shoulders to keep off the wind of personal self-knowledge. . . . It is a monstrous creature descending to us from our ancestors, producing nothing but disunity, chaos. War and disorder prolong in it the ghastly and ironic semblance of life. All the marching and countermarching, the flags, the heroism and cruelty are galvanic twitches induced in its slaves and subjects by that hideous, parody thing.[2]

In an interview with Frank Kermode, Golding further expands his ideas on the parachutist:

> Now that is not God being dead, as some people have said, that is history. He's dead, but he won't lie down. All that we can give our children is to pass on to them this distressing business of a United States of Europe, which won't work, because we all grin at each other across borders and so on and so forth. And if you turn round to your parents and say, "Please help me," they are really part of the old structure, the old system, the old world, which ought to be good but at the moment is making the world and the air more and more radioactive.[3]

Kermode asserts that this airman who is "dead but won't lie down" is "an ugly emblem of war and decay that broods over the paradise and provides the only objective equivalent for the beasts the boys imagine."[4] Green refines part of Kermode's

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[1] Hot Gates, pp. 95-96.

[2] Ibid., p. 93.

[3] Frank Kermode, "The Meaning of It All," Books and Bookmen, V (October, 1959), 10.

[4] Frank Kermode, "The Novels of Willaim Golding," International Literary Annual, III (1961), 19.

statement by adding that "the Beast, to begin with, is nothing more than a focal point for the boys' vague, inarticulate, archaic fears. . . . In other words, it is man who created his own hell, his own devils; the evil is in him."[1]

This discussion then, concurs with Golding's statement about the theme of the novel ("an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature") and the fall motif, by showing how man's inherent evil--stemming from the original sin--can conquer bad men or good men alike; it overpowers the democratic leader, the dictator, the scientist, and the clergyman; it undermines democratic and totalitarian state alike; it has riddled our history and hovers forebodingly in our future; and it is capable of devastating our existence.

It appears that Golding has a firm hold on a vital pressure point of our society. He does. To bring this into sharp--almost too sharp--focus, Golding uses an interesting device at the end of this novel. Although some critics might find this device an obvious "gimmick,"[2] or even an awkward

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[1] "World of William Golding," pp. 43-44.

[2] James Gindin, "'Gimmick' and Metaphor in the Novels of William Golding," Postwar British Fiction (Berkeley, California: University of Californa Press, 1962), pp. 196-206, et passim. (Hereinafter referred to as Postwar British Fiction.) Gindin, the strongest opponent of Golding's "gimmick" endings, comments: "The 'gimmicks,' precisely because they are 'gimmicks,' fail to define or to articulate fully just how Golding's metaphors are to be qualified, directed, shaped in contemporary and meaningful terms. The 'gimmicks' tend to simplify and to palliate, rather than to enrich and intensify the experience of the novels" (pp. 205-206).

deus ex machina, it must be admitted that it effectively achieves its purpose; therefore, it merits closer attention.

The device in question is the introduction of the naval officer who, spotting the fire set to kill Ralph, comes ashore at the correct moment to keep Ralph from being killed. It will be remembered that the boys had almost religiously asked for word or sign from the absent adult world; the sign came in the form of a dead airman killed in battle ten miles above the island refuge. Now in a second answer--as if a second coming--another warrior arrives, this one to rescue the boys and take them to safety in the adult world. Niemeyer finds the arrival of the officer "less theatrical than logically necessary to make Golding's point" that "civilization defeats the beast," causing it to crawl "back into the jungle as the boys creep out to be rescued."[1] Niemeyer overlooks the most ominous implication of the naval officer; Cox, however, points out that the officer's "trim cruiser, the submachine gun, his white drill, epaulettes, revolver and row of gilt buttons, are only more sophisticated substitutes" for Jack's war-paint, spears, and fire. Cox adds that the officer is, ironically, hunting and "chasing men in order to kill, and the dirty children mock the absurd civilised attempt to hide the power of evil."[2]

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[1]"The Coral Island Revisited," p. 245.

[2]"Lord of the Flies," p. 117.

To realize Golding's employment of theme fully, one must ask: "Who will save the naval officer and his crew?" The answer is lost in profound silence. If one enlarges the symbolic role of the officer as a Savior, it still remains that the savior himself is from a war-torn society where basic conflicts may be reduced to their lowest common denominator--that of inherent evil.

As discussed earlier, Golding effectively creates and maintains his theme of fallen man in a number of ways, each signaling a significant event at both the literal story level and the echelon of symbolic levels. For instance, before Golding even starts the story, he has the children fall from the sky in a disabled aircraft. This is an effective and plausible device for isolating his small subjects from outside contamination. Although it seems that most of the children escape unhurt, all of the adults aboard the aircraft are killed--they physically fall to their deaths, a mortal fall. If the event of the aircraft crash with no adult survivors sounds like Golding is playing each of his cards in the best possible way, perhaps he is, but recalling the traditional naval code of conduct (presumably the aerial code too), rescue has always been conducted on a "women and children first" basis.

The next fall encountered is that of the dead airman's body as it drifts toward the island in a parachute. Ironically the parachute is designed to prevent death by falling, but in

this instance Golding's airman is dead before the man-made device has a chance to save him from his mortal fall.

Golding weaves another example into the story at the rock castle when the boys amuse themselves by dislodging rocks and allowing them to fall down the slope. Although this is seemingly innocent fun, Golding is in reality foreshadowing a more serious event with rolling boulders. The next falling creature is the sow killed by Jack and his hunters. The killing of a mere pig, an apparently natural incident, also portends the hunt and intended mortal fall of Ralph; the fate of the pig's head being impaled on a stick, was also to be Ralph's fate.

Golding provides reinforcement for his fall motif in a rough, somewhat satanic parallel to the fall from grace at the garden of Eden: Jack's faction goes to rock castle and thus excludes Ralph from the savages' "Edenic" society. The parallel is not complete since, as Rosenfield point out, Ralph is "Eveless."[1]

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[1]"Men of a Smaller Growth," p. 93. Time, in the article "Lord of the Campus," p. 64, gives Golding's reason for no girls in the story. He does not believe "sex has anything to do with humanity at this level." However, Epstein in his Notes on Lord of the Flies, pp. 191-92, finds latent sexuality in the killing of the sow (Chapter Eight), "accomplished in terms of sexual intercourse, . . . The entire incident "forms a horrid parody of an Oedipal wedding night; these emotions, the sensations aroused by murder and death, and the overpowering and unaccustomed emotions of sexual love experienced by the half-grown boys, plus their own irrational fears and blind terrors, release the forces of death and the devil on the island."

In the scene where Simon discovers the dead airman, Golding gives double significance to the fact that the boy frees not only a man who has physically fallen from the sky but also a man who has fallen mortally. This lends support to the interpretation of Simon as a Savior--a Savior who officiates at the last rites. Then Simon goes to his own mortal fall, at the hands of his island companions. This, too, Golding goves double importance: Simon was killed because the boys mistook him for the beast which Simon knew to be inherent in all mankind.

Very soon after Simon's death Piggy is killed when Ralph leads him in search of his stolen glasses. This event actually contains a number of falls all linked together in a chain-reaction. First, the reader will remember that while Relph and Jack argue, Piggy holds the conch. Then Roger lets fall a huge boulder which hits Piggy and the conch. The result is the smashing to fine bits of the conch and Piggy's falling over a cliff to his death. All at once the evil symbolized by Jack over powers the symbols of wisdom and of order, causing both to fall to ruin.

An interesting device which Golding uses throughout the book is the parallelism between Jack and evil, between evil and the beast, and between the beast and Satan. As a result, they all are linked to Satan who mortally fell from the grace of God and physically fell from heaven to chaos.

The ending of Lord of the Flies finds Golding still using falls to stress his theme. With the apparent rescue

of the boys by the naval officer comes the decline and fall of Jack's society; the boys are reduced to dirty, tattered children, no longer brave hunters. Then, also with the arrival of the naval officer, Ralph weeps as he realizes the"end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart." His knowledge is a fall from innocence. Finally, the fall of the island society, its conflicts unresolved, is overshadowed by the adult world at war with itself, its conflicts also unresolved, about to suffer nuclear holocaust, and fall.

CHAPTER III

THE INHERITORS

Golding's second novel, The Inheritors, followed Lord of the Flies by less than one year. According to Baker, the novel is "complex, different in form and style from the fiction of most contemporary novelists, and is burdened with a philosophical significance quite alien to the modern temper."[1] This appears particularly profound since the characters in this novel have "an I. Q. of about 8."[2] They are the last surviving members of a tribe of ape-men destroyed by the coming of a new, advanced breed.

The strangeness of style in The Inheritors is intensified because the modern reader must dismiss sophisticated twentiety-century thought processes, vocabulary, and reasoning abilities, and accept Golding's challenge to view everything from the perspective of uneducated Neanderthal man. William James Smith sees this feat of using a vocabulary and imagery constant to this primitive mentality as "obviously impossible in any strict terms," but Golding, he adds,

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[1] William Golding, p. xvi.

[2] Terry Southern, "Books and the Arts," Nation, November 17, 1962, p. 332.

"succeeds to a degree that is astonishing at times in suggesting the way that minds scarcely capable of words might have operated."[1]

Mal, the leader of the Neanderthal family (but not the protagonist of the story) may be thought of as a wise, old man. His female counterpart is referred to only as the old woman. Lok, the protagonist, is a male adult, and his female counterpart is Fa. The remaining characters are Ha, another male adult; Nil, mother of the "new one"; Liku, a young female; and the"others."

The story begins with the return of Mal's people from a winter stay in a warmer area. In route, they discover that a log which has spanned a stream is missing. Because of their intense fear of water, this is a distressing event. Luckily, Mal remembers from his past that a fallen tree can be utilized in lieu of the accustomed log. The replacement is not as thick or as strong as the older one, and Mal, his footing unsure in his old age, slips into the rushing spring water. When the group reaches its home, it is apparent that Mal is ill, his condition having worsened since his exposure to the cold water.

Near the camp is an island, formed at the bottom of a tremendous waterfall, in the middle of a rapidly running river. This waterfall, providing an awesome proclamation of

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[1]William James Smith, "A Hopeless Struggle Against Homo Sapiens," Commonweal, September 28, 1962, p. 19.

the mother-spirit Oa, dominates the campsite. Also near the cliff dwelling is an "ice woman," a physical representation in ice of the group's naturalistic religion.

The people are not aggressive, and their only weapons are those strictly for defense against the hyenas and big-tooth cats. Because the people believe that all life came from the belly of Oa, they neither hunt nor kill other creatures unless emergency dictates; they live off the fungi, grubs, honey, and tree buds found in the area.

While on a search for food, the people notice that Ha is missing. Lok's keen sense of smell traces Ha's trail to the edge of a cliff opposite the island. But a strange new scent arises, one which the animal instincts of Lok's smell cannot describe or place. For him "there is nothing in life as a point of reference"; the smell was "a smell without a picture." Lok tells the people that "Ha has found another. . . . Ha has fallen in the water."

The rest of the group do not understand, feeling that Ha is probably overdue because he has wandered far in his search for food; moreover, their concern has turned to Mal who has died. While Lok digs the grave, the new one "over-balanced into it and scrambled mewing in the soft earth by Lok's hands. He extracted himself arse-upward and fled back to Nil and crouched in her lap."

The people agree that Lok and Fa should seek out the "other" to speak with him. While they are searching, the

camp is attacked, and Lok hears Liku scream as if she were threatened by "the slow advance of a snake."

Back in the camp Fa tells Lok that invaders from the island have killed the old woman and Nil by throwing them over the cliff into the water and have taken Liku and the new one captive. Lok and Fa climb a tree in order to better observe the "other" people who decide to pitch their camp directly under the tree where Lok and Fa are now hiding.

From their leafy perch Lok and Fa see strange, uncomprehendable things: the new people step out of their "skins," they sacrifice a finger to a totem stag drawn in the dirt with colored sand, and they symbolically slay the stag with "twigs" (arrows). Although Fa had made a food offering to the ice woman when Mal was ill, Lok observes but does not comprehend the human flesh sacrifice, nor does he realize the offering is made to protect the people from the "red demons"--Lok's own people.

With the building of a fire, the new people start to drink, and soon they feast. They eat Liku. Although Fa watches, she cannot allow Lok to do so, and he remains ignorant of Liku's fate. Lok's sense of smell tells him of the mead that the people drink: "It was a bee-water, smelling of honey and wax and decay, it drew toward and repelled, it frightened and excited." After the people eat and become drunk, all but two of them retire to their "caves" (tents). These two go to the tree, and, beneath it, conduct a fiercely animated sexual encounter. After the two have their passionate

lusty intercourse and go to sleep, Lok and Fa climb down the tree, but are unable to rescue the new one because Lok, in his search for Liku, arouses the people.

Fearing for their lives at the appearance of the "red demons," the invaders hastily break camp and decide to portage their canoes up the face of the cliff by the waterfall in order to paddle upstream. In their fearful state, they leave much of their equipment and supplies behind. Curiously Lok and Fa examine the abandoned articles. In particular they are drawn to the pot containing the mead, and in sampling it they both become highly intoxicated. While in this state Lok suddenly "discovered the power of the new people in him. He was one of them, there was nothing he could not do." Lok and Fa quickly become sick and pass out. In spite of their painful hangover, they sense upon awaking that the "other" people will soon be gone, so they plan a last attempt to rescue the new one. The plan (a brilliant one considering the Neanderthal mentality), calls for Fa to create a diversion while Lok recovers the small child. While attempting the plan, they find out that the "other" people have once again drawn the stag totem on the ground, this time piercing its heart with a sturdy spear; for a sacrifice they have left behind a small child of their own--alive--securely tied to the spear. Reaching the child, Lok feels no hostility towards it, and frees it. Attempting to kill Lok, an invader leaps to attack, but he travels "through the air past Lok . . . over the cliff."

In the confusion of finding the "other" child, untying her, and warding off the rushing attack, Lok inadvertently allows the other people to escape with the new one. Above the waterfall now, the other people dislodge the log that Lok and Fa used to cross the river. The branches of that log, in the swift water, snare Fa, taking her to her death over the waterfall.

At this point the story switches from Lok's point of view to that of an objective observer. Lok becomes "the red creature" who paces along the river bank, finally returning to the area of the terrace where it assumes the burial position. The melting ice woman destroys the red creature in a glacial avalanche.

Now the narrative assumes the point of view of one of the Homo sapiens invaders sitting in a canoe in the middle of the river. This shift in the narrative perspective allows the reader to see that the picture of humanity is not a flattering one. One of the men gives up sharpening the knife he intends to use on one of his companions and in despair comments: "What was the use of sharpening it against a man? Who would sharpen a point against the darkness of the world?"

Golding observes that although there is no value in sharpening weapons to use against man, man nonetheless continues to make war with all its cruelties. Man, who has very possibly inherited the earth in the manner that Golding describes, continues constantly to exhibit his innate evil. According to Baker:

> Both Lord of the Flies and The Inheritors attack the pride of modern man who fancies that he is a rational creature in control of his own destiny; and both employ the same device, the clash of two tribes, as a means of illustrating the folly and danger of this illusion.[1]

One critic accurately suggests that this clash "provides almost a conscious echo" of Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach":

> And we are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept by confused alarms of struggle and of flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.[2]

It becomes apparent that Golding intended Lord of the Flies and The Inheritors to complement each other and, therefore, be read as companion pieces. Drew finds that Golding "has devised in both books an opposite and original microcosm of humanity, a vehicle admirably fitted to bear the grave tenor of his philosophy."[3]

The Inheritors is, from start to finish as Peter notes, heavily ironical because "all doubt as to who are monsters and who not is soon dispelled."[4] The reader realizes that the title refers not to the Neanderthal creatures but rather to Homo sapiens who have inherited the earth. The irony in the title is obvious when the entire Beatitude is recalled: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5); for Golding, the human inheritors are anything but meek. The Neanderthals are no match for the invaders.

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[1] William Golding, p. 19.

[2] "False Dawn," Time, July 27, 1962, p. 70.

[3] "Second Reading," p. 83.

[4] "The Fables of William Golding," p. 586.

The point that Golding allows the reader to understand is, according to Oldsey and Weintraub, that "primitive man is in a way still our contemporary. We carry him with us as a tree does rings. . . . the psychic life of the primitive holds peculiar interest for us, since in it we find an early stage of our own." The implied thesis is that "civilization does not necessarily gurantee civilized acts,"[1] a fact Golding observed in World War II. In addition, Oldsey and Weintraub find that the theme shared by The Inheritors and Lord of the Flies may be expressed something like this: "Man's climb up the ladder of evolution may or may not be the same thing as a climb up the chain of being, but in either case the attempted rise can lead to a long, long, immemorably long fall." This seems to be a contradiction since Golding, in The Inheritors, allows the civilized Homo sapiens to triumph and thus become the inheritors of the earth; however the contradiction is only illusory. Although the Homo sapiens appear "to represent a step forward in man's climb, they are eventually revealed as being more savage in their vicious, lusting nature than are Lok's sub-sapien folk." The youthful members of Lord of the Flies slide backward through their own bedevilment, towards perdition; the Neanderthals of The Inheritors "hunch forward--given a push by early-day Homo sapiens--toward the same perdition." In terms of evolution, Golding's universe, as described in these two

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[1]The Art of William Golding, p. 51.

novels, "allows for precious little slippage, in either direction. Retrogression (Lord of the Flies) and progression (The Inheritors) meet and lead to the same fall."[1]

Drew finds the isolated worlds of the island in Lord of the Flies and the domain of The Inheritors "acceptable as symbolic theaters of human experience." In each case a small group is "faced with extinction as a symbol of civilization and humanity." In Lord of the Flies Golding describes "the precariousness of our superiority to beasts and savages, the superficiality of our civilization, and the impotence of good will and the forms of democracy against the instinctive savage of man." In The Inheritors, Drew believes Golding looks to the past to see "how little man has advanced beyond the barbarity of his ancestors."[2]

Since The Inheritors is constructed to parallel the meaning found in Lord of the Flies, one may expect to find a similar treatment of the fall motif. This is exactly the case. As the novel starts, the band of Neanderthals approach the usual place where they cross the stream, and find the customary log to be missing. One may suspect that it has fallen into the stream because it blocked the passage of the Homo sapiens' boats. This log is important since it triggers a linked set of events. First, a new fallen tree must be secured and jockeyed into position. Then Mal, the older

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[1] Ibid., pp. 44-45.

[2] "Second Reading," pp. 81-83.

man, falls from the log into the cold, early spring water. The eventual effect of this is to increase his already weakened condition, thus bringing a premature death.

At Mal's burial, while Lok digs the grave, the new one slips and falls into the hole. The antics of the new one are described throughtout the book as being playful, shy, and almost kittenish; however, the new one takes on greater symbolic importance when he tumbles into Mal's open grave. Besides the more obvious pagan and Christian ceremonies occurring at springtime represented in this scene, the new one also becomes identified with Mal in the role of potential leader and savior. That is, Mal's death removes the wisest and most experienced member from the tribe; if he had survived, Mal could have led the Neanderthals to safer ground where the race could have continued and even thrived. His physical fall represents symbolically a loss of hope to the Neanderthals. Similarly, the new one also represents hope--hope that is always present in the promise of a new generation. Lok and Fa realize this, perhaps instinctively, and thus they attempt many times to rescue Liku as well as the new one. The loss of the new one is as much a forfeiture of hope for the future as Mal's death had been.

Before Mal's death, Ha had encountered the "other" people. Probably they had stalked him (as a hunter would stalk a deer or similar game), to the edge of the cliff near the waterfall, and then shot him with bow and arrow. If the missile did not kill Ha, the fall from the cliff into the feared water below would.

A similar fate befalls Nil and the old woman. They are at their cave when the invaders attack. Because Nil and the old woman are not by nature aggressive, they become easy prey for the more advanced race. Lok observes the old woman's body floating in the river, indicating that either dead or alive she fell from their terrace cliff-dwelling into the river. Although Lok does not see Nil, Fa reports her death was the same as the old woman's; she fell into the water.

Golding also allows the Homo sapiens to contribute to the fall theme, but in a rather symbolic manner. The invaders are a totem worshiping group; their totem is in the likeness of the running stag. The ceremony centering around the stag includes a member dressed in hide and antlers, making pictures of the stag with colored sand, and a human blood sacrifice. On one occasion a member of the group loses a finger which is placed on the colored picture of the stag. Then arrows are shot into the drawing of the stag; the stag is symbolically felled. Again, when the invaders are fleeing frantically from Lok and Fa, they sacrifice one of their own young children by tying her to a spear driven deep into a hastily drawn picture of the stag.

Sigmund Freud has theorized that the totem ceremony is "perhaps mankind's earliest festival." He notes that the totem ceremony is almost always occasioned by the "cruel slaughter of its totem animal," an act usually taboo. But, because the totem animal is hunted, killed, and devoured by the group, they must always mourn for the fallen animal.

Freud traces this festival back to its origin, through psycho-analysis, finding that the "totem animal is in reality a substitute for the father." He theorizes that in some "primal horde" a band of outcast orcthers organized to overthrow a particularly domineering father, slew him, and, in attempt to identify with him, devoured him. Thus each obtained "a portion of his strength," and the "dead father became stronger than the living one had been." Because of their "filial sense of guilt," the brothers then renounced the deed by "forbidding the killing of the totem, the substitute for their father." In view of Freud's theories, the symbolic slaying of the totem stag actually represents the slaughter and devouring of the paternal figure, creating one of the "repressed wishes of the Oedipus complex."[1] The fallen stag represents the fallen father.

The next creature who falls is the child Liku. When she is cannibalized as mentioned, she represents a loss of hope for the Neanderthals since she too carries the promise of the new generation. Her fall (although not a physical one, certainly just as important) is similar to a fall encountered in wartime; she falls into enemy hands, and there meets her death, a mortal fall.

The Inheritors more closely parallels the Biblical fall than does Lord of the Flies. Obviously Lok and Fa are

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[1]Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works, trans, by James Strachey, XIII (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), 140-43.

not the Adam and Eve of the Garden of Eden, but there is a strong analogy. The intrusion of the Homo sapiens brings to the innocent Neanderthals the notions of offensive (rather than defensive) killing, lust, alcoholic drink, and self-awareness. Lok's people would not eat any animal unless it had been killed by some wild animal. The Neanderthals did not know sex as a lusting power; for them, their instincts dictated sex acts. The introduction of mead produces profound effects on their mental facilities. For example, while intoxicated Lok finds "the power of the new people in him. He was one of them, there was nothing he could not do." Before he becomes sick, the identification becomes complete as he finds "I am one of the new people."

Certainly one may liken the Neanderthal's observance of evil, vile manners to a form of temptation--a temptation which they cannot resist. Although the fermented honey is not the forbidden apple, it is, as Oldsey and Weintraub observe, the "applejack, as it were, that accounts for their fall: they come to see as true men do; they achieve sophistication and perdition in one swift orgy." These critics add that "modern man, or at least his early representative, is the villain, the devil."[1]

Baker sees a similarity between the Edenic tree of knowledge and the tree from which Lok and Fa secretly observe

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[1]The Art of William Golding, p. 66.

the Homo sapiens; the latter being a "tree of bitter knowledge."[1] Green states that by spying on the new people, Lok and Fa "are corrupted," since "experience breeds awareness."[2]

Sam Hynes stresses the fall from innocence in the sense that for Lok's people, "pre-human, . . . essentially instinctual," any association of innocence and evil is sure to corrupt the former.[3] Using similar reasoning, Kermode adds that the Neanderthals "know the world with senses like an animal; they depend much upon involuntary reflexes--keen scent, night vision, acuteness of ear; they are not men at all, and that is why they are innocent."[4]

The interesting part of the analogy between Lok and Fa as Adam and Eve is the introduction of evil in the respective stories. Biblically, Adam and Eve are tempted by a serpent. In Milton's version Satan, disguised in the form of a serpent, tempts the Edenic couple. In The Inheritors, however, as Peter Green notes, it is "Man himself who Golding identifies with the Serpent." Although most critics have not seemed to appreciate this "blazingly heretical version of the legend of Paradise, . . . its latent effect

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[1] William Golding, p. 26.

[2] "The World of William Golding," p. 47.

[3] Sam Hynes, "Novels of a Religious Man," Commonweal, March 18, 1960, p. 674.

[4] "The Novels of William Golding," pp. 20-21.

. . . is considerable."[1] This interpretation of the role of Homo sapiens in the fall of the Neanderthals is quite in keeping with Golding's overall theme. As discussed in the analysis of Lord of the Flies, the evil was in man himself, acquired at the time of his own fall; therefore, the irony of finding man an analogue of abstract evil personified is a forceful stroke designed to show man something of his own nature.

The fall of the invader over the edge of the cliffs, while he was attacking Lok, (ironically where Ha, Nil, and the old woman also fell) follows the fall of Lok and Fa. As in Piggy's case, a physical fall becomes a mortal fall.

It is proper at this point to note that Golding uses another meaning of the word fall in a significant manner. Once again Golding combines a series of events all related to one precipitating fall, the waterfall. One will recall that this fall dominates the Neanderthal tribal campsite. Since it is early springtime, the rivers are swollen with water from the spring thaw; the heavy waters carry much debris that a normal flow would not budge. This combination of natural causes sets the stage for Fa to be swept into the river by the branches of a newly fallen tree. Both she and the floating tree are dropped over the fall. In this, a physical fall over a waterfall, one also sees the final decline and fall of the Neanderthal race. As Fa

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[1] "The World of William Golding," pp. 46-47.

encounters her mortal fall all hope is lost for Lok's tribe; Fa was the last female alive, and so the race must also fall.

Seeing Fa perish in the deadly (to Neanderthals) water, Lok returns to the tribal cave, assumes the burial position, and awaits death. It comes when the "ice woman," slowly melting as summer approaches, becomes dislodged and falls, engulfing Lok in the avalanche. With the physical fall of the "ice woman" (perhaps symbolic of a fallen god) comes the mortal fall of the last member of the race. The Neanderthals have fallen extinct.

According to Oldsey and Weintraub, the last chapter, distinguished in part by its shift in point of view, "accomplishes in respect to the life and problems of Tuami's tribe what the first two hundred-odd pages do for Lok's tribe." To clarify, the critics continue:

> Chapter 12 represents in effect "Book II." In "Book I" emphasis is placed from the first paragraph on Lok, engaged in his method of getting from the winter place to the summer place. . . . In the last chapter, we concentrate on . . . Homo sapiens problems of getting from the river and falls to the upper reaches of a lake. Only five or six days have elapsed since the beginning of the novel but ages have passed by with respect to man's problems.[1]

In essence, the novel relates the fall of innocence, the physical fall, and the mortal fall of the Neanderthals, but the shift at the end, in effect, extends the Neanderthal's fall into the Homo sapiens Edenic fall symbolically, perhaps foreshadowing their own decline and fall under the next inheritors.

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[1]The Art of William Golding, p. 65.

CHAPTER IV

PINCHER MARTIN

Pincher Martin, Golding's third novel, is rather short, compared to his other works. This brevity is, however consistent in style with what Bufkin correctly calls "Golding's most experimental and most complex novel."[1] In this work Golding has, in effect, reduced the pertinent microcosm to one man, one difinite period of time, and one very specific geographic location. The protagonist, Christopher Hadley (Pincher) Martin, is an officer on watch aboard a British destroyer which a German U-boat torpedoes. Pincher is blown into the sea:

> He felt a weight pulling him down. The snarl came back with a picture of heavy seaboots and he began to move his legs. He got one toe over the other and shoved but the boot would not come off. . . . He got his right leg across his left thigh and heaved with sodden hands. The seaboot slipped down his calf and he kicked it free. Once the rubber top had left his toes he felt it touch him once and then it was gone utterly. He forced his left leg up, wrestled with the second boot and got it free. Both boots had left him.

After kicking off the seaboots, Pincher manages to inflate his Mae West. He searches for other survivors, but there are none as, apparently, the ship and all the crew aboard went down.

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[1] "Study," p. 185.

Pincher's ordeal in the mid-Atlantic quickly exhausts him; however, he is eventually washed up on a rock formation, or, as he describes it, "a single point of rock, peak of a mountain range, one tooth set in the ancient jaw of a sunken world, projecting through the inconceivable vastness of the whole ocean." This is not the tropical island of Lord of the Flies, nor the invader's island of The Inheritors; it is in fact a barren, uninhabited rocky outcrop, strewn only with bits of seaweed, guano, and sea anemones.

Feeling "like a dead man," Pincher sustains himself by finding a suitable water supply, limpets, snails, mussels, and anemones. Also, he attempts to facilitate his rescue by building what he calls the "Dwarf," a stack of stones roughly resembling a seated human being. Pincher contemplates his predicament; he is pleased when "knowledge and memory" come "back in orderly succession."

Pincher gradually projects himself back into various scenes from his past. He remembers his best (and only) friend, Nathaniel, and what he had remarked about death: "Take us as we are now and heaven would be sheer negation. Without form and void. You see?" In his memory Pincher answers, "I don't see and I don't much care. . . . I'm not really interested in heaven." Nat explains his thoughts towards Pincher: "You have an extraordinary capacity to endure" in order "to achieve heaven."

Pincher, startled from his reverie, recalls his present situation and cries "I'll be damned if I'll die!" Here

Pincher asserts his indefatigable will to live; here he believes his "health and education and intelligence" can enable him to beat death. Ironically, he does not realize that his remark can be inverted to mean: if he dies, he will be damned.

Using his intelligence, Pincher predicts, in Chapter Six, he will encounter sickness, rain storms, and hallucinations. Eventually these come to pass. In a psychological effort to dominate the rock, he gives several of its physical features names he had known in London. But even these mental activities do not prevent him from thinking about the Chinese box (one of several extended metaphors to be discussed at a later point) or, again, how much the rock looks like a tooth.

Intelligently Pincher knows he must save his strength and sleep, but sleep does not come:

> Sleep was a consenting to die, to go into complete unconsciousness, the personality defeated, acknowledging too frankly what is implicit in mortality that we are temporary structures patched up and unable to stand the pace without a daily respite from what we most think ours.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Sleep is where we touch what is better left unexamined.

When he wonders why he cannot sleep (a question which disturbs him deeply), he admits finally, "I'm afraid to."

Another of Pincher's flashbacks, in Chapter Eight, reveals significant details of his personality. He had been an actor in civilian life, and in order to get a better part, he had entered into an affair with the producer's wife. The producer, realizing this, offered Pincher a bit part as one

of the seven deadly sins; the problem was to decide which one suited Pincher best. He asked Pincher, "What about pride?" or "a spot of lechery?" Finally he decided Greed suited Pincher best, and in mock dramatic tones introduced the mask of Greed to Pincher:

> "Let me make you two better acquainted. This painted bastard here takes anything he can lay his hands on. Not food, Chris, that's far too simple. 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 to grab. He's a cosmic case of the bugger who gets his penny and someone else's bun."

Here the flashback shifts to the topic of the Chinese box, brought out in detail in Chapter Nine. While drunk, one of Pincher's companions relates the story to him:

> "Y'see when the Chinese want to prepare a very rare dish they bury a fish in a tin box. Presently all the lil' maggots peep out and start to eat. Presently no fish. Only maggots. It's no bloody joke being a maggot. . . .
> . . . . . .
> " . . . It's a lousy job crawling round the inside of a tin box . . . . Well, when they've finished the fish, Chris, they start on 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."

When asked how the Chinese know when to dig up the tin box, the narrator remarks, "They know. They got x-ray eyes. Have you ever heard a spade knocking on the side of a tin box, Chris? Boom! Boom! Just like thunder." As Pincher returns from his daydream, he finds himself sick. The rock seems "larger than the world, times when it was a tin box so huge that a spade knocking at the side sounded like distant thunder."

In the same chapter Pincher recalls a cellar from his childhood; he believes his illness is:

> "Like those nights when I was a kid, lying awake thinking the darkness would go on forever, And I couldn't go back to sleep because of the dream of the whatever it was in the cellar coming out of the corner. I'd lie in the hot, rumpled bed, hot burning hot, trying to shut myself away and know that there were three eternities before the dawn. . . . I'd think of anything because if I didn't go on thinking I'd remember whatever it was in the cellar down there, and my mind would go walking away from my body and go down three stories defenseless, 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."[1]

Repeatedly throughout the novel, Pincher likens his stay on the rock to his childhood fears of the dark cellar.

Other important metaphors are found in Chapter Eleven as Pincher proclaims, "I am poisoned. I am in servitude to a coiled tube the length of a cricket pitch. . . . Why drag in good and evil when the serpent lies coiled in my own body?" Pincher uses his intelligence to give himself an enema improvised from the Mae West.

When Pincher sees a grotesque, loathsome, red lobster swimming in the sea, he feels as if "something was taken away. For an instant he felt himself falling." All of the different problems confronting Pincher make him think that something in his brain "was coming up to the surface. I was uncertain of its identity because it had forgotten its name. It was

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[1]Compare this passage with Golding's own remarks about his childhood fears in Hot Gates, pp. 172-74. Golding's childhood home adjoined a cemetary with a row of graves close to the cellar wall. Golding discovered that the foot of the coffins were just inches on the other side of the cellar wall.

disorganized in pieces. It struggled to get these pieces together then it would know what it was."

Conditions grow worse as Pincher encounters mysterious "black lightning" during a rain squall. He recalls Nat once again and the conversation they had about "the sort of heaven we invent for ourselves after death, if we aren't ready for the real one." He thinks about his plans to kill Nat, and about "the cellar door swinging to behind a small child who must go down, down in his sleep to meet the thing he turned from when he was created."

Pincher encounters his most accomplished hallucination when he imagines he sees the Old Man of the Sea dressed in seaboots, pullover, and oilskin. Pincher tries to banish the vision, saying "You are a projection of my mind." The illusion answers, "You are a projection of my mind," and it asks Pincher, "Have you had enough, Christopher?" As Pincher senses he is going mad, he retorts, "on the sixth day he created God. . . . In his own image created he Him." When asked to consider if he has "had enough" of "surviving," Pincher exclaims "I will not consider! I have created you and I can create my own heaven." To which the vision replies, "You have created it."

Bewildered, Pincher senses his body changing to another form controlled by a "centre"; he attacks the vision with curses, hearing only "the sound of a spade against the tin box." Then Pincher's transformation is complete; he

becomes "nothing but the centre and the claws,"eroding "in a compassion that was timeless and without mercy."

Characteristically, Golding relates the last chapter from a different point of view. This chapter introduces two men, one an islander, the other a government official who inspects and cares for any drowner who washes ashore. The first man asks the official if the sailor (unquestionably identified as Pincher Martin) "suffered or not." The answer comes back: no, "he didn't even have time to kick off his seaboots."

The impact of this statement--the last in the book--causes one to quickly re-read the first chapter's detailed account of Pincher's difficulty in getting rid of the heavy seaboots. If Pincher had died before removing the boots, as the last chapter asserts, then, the reader has been reading of events which took place in split seconds, solely in Pincher's own mind.[1] As Bufkin correctly states it, the novel is "the story of a man's death by drowning, his experiences in purgatory, his final judgment before God, and his ultimate damnation in hell."[2]

Then Pincher Martin is the story of the mortal fall of a man, and the spiritual fall of his soul to damnation. Golding himself has given this clue when, in an interview

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[1]This device is not new with Golding; see Ambrose Bierce's story of a Civil War hanging, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," and Ernest Hemingway's "Snows of Killimanjaro."

[2]"Study," p. 187.

with Frank Kermode, he admits Pincher Martin is "very much fallen--he's fallen more than most." Golding significantly adds, "I went out of my way to damn Pincher as much as I could by making him the most unpleasant, the nastiest type I could think of."[1]

The various flashbacks which occur throughout the novel reveal Martin, according to Peter, as "obsessively selfish, a thief, a cheat in examinations and in personal relationships, an adulterer, a rapist, and (in intention at least) a murderer too."[2] Wayland Young astutely observes that "Martin has not been a good man--Man has not been a good man either--and the memory of his little sins and pleasures . . . impose profundity on the chaotic content of all our lives."[3] Each of these "little sins" to which Young refers is a small, but nonetheless significant, moral fall; the sum is Golding's fallen man.

Pincher's profound greed (symbolized by the red pincher claws of a lobster) completely dominates the man, and various extended metaphors illustrate this.

For example, since Pincher is self-centered, he would very much wish to avoid pain; however pain and suffering pursue him as doggedly as avenging Furies. The rock on

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[1]"The Meaning of It All," p. 10.

[2]"The Fables of William Golding," p. 588.

[3]Wayland Young, "Letter from London," Kenyon Review, XIX (Summer, 1957), 480.

which he stays for approximately six days reminds him of a painful, decaying tooth because it is a materialization of that tooth. The comparison of the rock to the Chinese box containing that final surviving maggot is appropriate because Martin is himself as greedy as that same maggot. The remembered horrors of a dark cellar visit Pincher, making his ordeal a childhood nightmare. Similarly, the lobster which Pincher becomes is just as loathsome to him as he (Pincher) is to other people. Pincher shuns Nathaniel's theory (if one is not properly prepared, heaven will be a negation), and in that unprepared state Pincher finally finds himself--fallen. These seemingly unrelated topics serve to point out that all the happenings on the rock (and the rock itself) are manifestations of what Pincher, because of his greedy nature, subconsciously fears most: pain, death, and damnation.

Pincher's fall is self-induced and clarified in a passage from Milton's Paradise Lost: "The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven."[1] As Oldsey and Weintraub aptly state it: "Martin, a Satanic type, prefers to reign in his own hellish world rather than acknowledge a power beyond and above the limits of his own nature."[2]

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[1] Milton Paradise Lost i. 254-5.

[2] The Art of William Golding, p. 40.

Martin futilely attempts to establish control over the rock by giving it familiar names, but to no avail. Comprehending Pincher's actions, Ralph Freedman finds that "memory and awareness produce the identity through which guilt [a product of the Biblical fall] in human beings . . . is fixed and identified."[1] Freedman continues, "Awareness of objects and naming through association with the familiar is part of the process whereby the struggle between intelligence and unreason proceeds."[2] The battle between intelligence and the seemingly mystic incidents Martin encounters gives him only two choices: he is either insane, or he is dead. Because of greed, his deadly sin, he would rather believe anything than face the fact that he is mortally fallen.

Like Lord of the Flies and The Inheritors, this novel begins with a physical fall: Pincher is blown from the ship and falls into the ocean. Although the reader is led to believe Martin survives this, he does not; therefore, his physical fall becomes his mortal fall.

Occurring concomitantly with Pincher's physical fall, the rest of the crew members also suffer physical and mortal falls: the explosion of the torpedo leaves no survivors, and the ship sinks, or falls, to the ocean floor.

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[1]Ralph Freedman, "The New Realism: The Fancy of William Golding," Perspective, X (Summer-Autumn, 1958), 125-26.

[2]Ibid., p. 122.

Next, to lighten himself Martin kicks off his sea-boots, and they fall to the ocean floor. As mentioned, this passage is a significant one, since any interpretation of the novel rests upon understanding that at no time did Pincher's boots come off.

Another fall, perhaps less significant, occurs as Pincher accurately predicts through "intelligence and education" that he will fall sick. This illness however, leads to a more important example: when Pincher does fall sick, he alludes to his maligned intestines as a coiled serpent inside his body. The meaning, at the literal level, suggests that the illness is in his bowels; however, the choice of the words "serpent" and "coiled" makes a much stronger reference to the evil-infested serpent from the Biblical fall. This suits Golding's theme well since the evil that is inside man is a product of that Biblical fall. Unwittingly Pincher agrees with Simon in Lord of the Flies who believes the evil is "only us."

As Pincher attempts to fall asleep in Chapter Six, he finds he cannot because "sleep is where we touch what is better left unexamined." Awareness of the novel's conclusion can put this statement in a different light. Since Martin selfishly fears death, his mind avoids any semblance of it--even though he is dying.

Martin's greed contributes to the moral fall of others, including his producer's wife, through adultery. At another point, he threatens to wreck the speeding car in

which he and a young girl are riding--if she will not let him make love to her. Thus, he leads another girl to a moral fall.

John Bowen perceptively associates Pincher with another fallen figure: Prometheus. Bowen finds that in the "struggle for survival <u>against</u> God, Pincher becomes Prometheus, becomes an incarnation of fallible, torturing and tortured, ordinary man, fighting his individual, courageous, haphazard, improvising fight against God." In his remarks, Bowen also compares Martin to "fallible . . . , ordinary man"[1]--a point which one may suspect Golding intended. Gindin significantly enlarges Golding's microcosm, finding:

> The rock is constantly compared with a tooth of the world; the struggles taking place on the rock are a mirror of the struggles taking place all over the world. Martin's battle for survival is imagistically made the battle of all men for salvation, a battle in which reason, sanity, and careful order are not enough.[2]

That is, Pincher's mortal and spiritual falls are symbolically accurate representations of Golding's philosophy for the falls of all men.

Whe the vision of the Old Man of the Sea confronts Pincher, one cannot help viewing this as the judgment of Everyman before God. Pincher, deserted by his intelligence, his education, and his health, stands alone without his

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[1]John Bowen, "Bending Over Backwards," <u>Times Literary Supplement</u>, October 23, 1959, p. 608.

[2]<u>Postwar British Fiction</u>, p. 200.

good deeds because his overbearing greed has not allowed for any good deeds. The fall of intelligence, education, and health leave him with no comfort.

Even now, his greed prevents him from seeing God; he sees only a tattered seaman whom he rebukes. Then a transformation befalls Pincher, and he becomes two red lobster claws. When his physical form falls, he is transformed into that for which he stands--pincher claws.[1] With this, Martin's soul spiritually falls--he meets his damnation.

Golding summarily states:

> Christopher Hadley Martin had no belief in anything but the importance of his own life, no God. Because he was created in the image of God he had a freedom of choice which he used to centre the world on himself. He did not believe in purgatory and therefore when he died it was not presented to him in overtly theological terms. 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. It is the memory of an aching tooth. Ostensibly and rationally he is a survivor from a torpedoed destroyer: but deep down he knows the truth. He is not fighting for bodily survival but for his continuing identity in face of what will smash it and sweep it away--the black lightning, the compassion of God. For Christopher, the Christ-bearer, has become Pincher Martin who is little but greed. Just to be Pincher is purgatory; to be Pincher for eternity is hell.[2]

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[1]One may recall similar fates befalling Ovid's Narcissus, Arachne, and Niobe--who were all changed into symbolic forms: a flower, a spider, and a stone statue.

[2]William Golding, "Pincher Martin," Radio Times, March 21, 1958, p. 8.

CHAPTER V

FREE FALL

Although very much a departure from Golding's usual style, his fourth novel, Free Fall, is as Baker suggests "at one and the same time the most engaging and the most difficult of Golding's works."[1] Unlike all the others, this novel is told in the first person. The narrator--protagonist is the successful painter Samuel Mountjoy who embarks on a mission of introspection to find at what point in his past he lost his freedom. He reveals his story by presenting a complex series of non-chronological incidents in the time-shift technique. Opening the novel in a superbly condensed summary of his search, Mountjoy says:

> 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.

One discovers that Samuel was a bastard child, and that in his youth he lived in an area called "Rotten Row."

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[1] William Golding, p. 55.

The two greatest influences on his fatherless childhood were his mother, "as near a whore as makes not matter," and Evie, "a congenital liar." Although Sam regarded his childhood as "days of terrible and irresponsible innocence," he still realized that he "had progressed from Eden."

Chapter Two finds Sammy "wandering in paradise" among his grade school classmates. One of his friends entices him to defile the altar of a church, but at the crucial moment, Sammy can only spit on it. A watchman rewards his act:

> The universe exploded from the right-hand side. My right ear roared. There were rockets, cascades of light, catherine-wheels; and I was fumbling round on stone. A bright light shone down on me from a single eye.
>
> "You little devil!"
>
> I tried mechanically to get my body on its feet but they slithered under me and I fell down again.

The death of Sammy's mother places him in the custody of Father Watts-Watt, pastor of the church Sammy had tried to defile. As he reflects over this period, he concludes that he "was innocent of guilt, unconscious of innocence; happy, therefore, and unconscious of happiness." Searching for the place in time that he lost his innocence and freedom, Samuel asks himself, "Here?" He answers, "Not here."

Next, Samuel recalls his adventures in art school where he became a member of the Communist Party, and met Beatrice Ifor. Here he realizes that he "was not entirely free. Almost but not quite." Samuel enters, for a while, into an obsessive but unrequited love affair with Beatrice,

but she remains aloof and elusive. Finally, she gives in to Sammy's sexual advances, but he finds that "from the moment she let me take her virginity the change began between us." She no longer held the revered place; instead, she began "to depend, to cling, to be an inferior."

Sammy exploits Beatrice for over two years until he meets Taffy at a party meeting. The problem now becomes: what to do about Beatrice? Sammy does "nothing"; he promptly abandons Beatrice--"the image of a betrayed woman, of outraged and helpless innocence"--and marries Taffy. He knows that by this time he "had lost . . . power to choose. . . . has given away . . . freedom." Again comes the query "Here, then? No. Not here."

Continuing his search, Samuel remembers his interrogation by a German psychologist while in a P.O.W. camp. The psychologist, Dr. Halde, seeking information about an expected break from the camp, believes Captain Mountjoy the most likely prisoner to reveal information. Dr. Halde, typical of a psychologist, does not resort to physical torture; instead, he attempts to appeal to Mountjoy's "intellectual ideas," but Sammy cannot tell what he does not know. Finally, the Gestapo blindfold Sammy and lead him to a "special" cell.

Samuel's detention in the special cell causes him to envision in the total darkness diabolical devices set by Dr. Halde to torture him: acid, a deadly snake, an "ant-lion's funnel," "harrow-high jaws of steel," and a descending ceiling; however, by exploring the perimeter

of the cell, Sammy discovers it to be only bare concrete, roughly square, and empty. Trying to outguess Halde, Sammy finally decides that the torture device is in the exact center of the room (still unexplored) because the room is just small enough that he could lie down only diagonally. His weakening psychological fortitude slowly allows for discovery in Chapter Nine:

> The thing was cold. The thing was soft. The thing was slimy. The thing was like an enormous dead slug--dead because where the softness gave way under the searching tips it did not come back again.

The scene shifts abruptly, finding Sammy once again in grade school. There he suffers much humiliation from Miss Pringle, an instructor, who assails him because he has become Father Watts-Watt's ward, thus removing her from romantic contention for the priest. Reflecting his innocence, Sammy does not know how she could "crucify a small boy," and keep "on such apparent terms of intimacy with heaven."

Nick Shales, another of his teachers, equally impresses young Mountjoy. Old Nick's rational description of the physical universe is diametrically opposed to Miss Pringle's interpretations of religious dogmas since Nick "denied the spirit behind creation."

Scandal touches Sammy's school life, in Chapter Twelve, when a married coach is caught in adultery with an unmarried French teacher. For the young children, the lovers are "Adam and Eve . . . sex itself." Sammy observes an extended leg of the French teacher, and calls it "the silken

snake." Also, he recognizes "the fallen angel" when Nick tells him "if the Devil had invented man he couldn't have played him a dirtier, wickeder, a more shameful trick than when he gave him sex!"

On the day Samuel prepares to leave this school, he reflects on his future:

> Forward to the world of the lads, where Mercutio was, where Valentine and Claudio and for this guilt found occasion to invent a crime that fitted the punishment. Guilty am I; therefore wicked I will be. If I cannot find the brilliant crimes to commit then at least I will claim to have committed them. Guilt comes before the crime and can cause it.

On his departure, the headmaster offers what he thinks to be important advice:

> "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."

With these thoughts in mind, Sammy takes a long solitary stroll:

> There must have been a very considerable battle round me that evening. Every dog has his day and at last I see that this was mine. For the spices of the forest were taken away from me, I found myself hot and sticky, coming out below the weir where the pebbles shake under water year out and the moored lilies tug and duck and sidle. So that there should be no doubt, I now see, the angel of the gate of paradise held his sword between me and the spices. He breathed like his maker on the water below the weir and it seemed to me that the water was waiting for me. I stripped off and plunged in and I experienced my skin, from head to foot firm, smooth confinement of all my treasures. Now I knew the weight and the shape of a man, his temperature, his darknesses. I knew myself to shoot the glances of my eye, to stand firm, to sow my seed from the base of the strong spine. Dressed and cooled, contained as an untouched girl I moved away from the

providential waters and . . . hill-side. . . . I sat . . . between the earth and the sky, between cloister and street. . . .

What is important to you?

"Beatrice Ifor."

She thinks you depraved already. She dislikes you.

"If I want something enough I can always get it provided I am willing to make the appropriate sacrifice.

What will you sacrifice?

"Everything."

Again comes the repeated question, "Here?" But this time there is no denial.

Mountjoy visits a mental institution, in Chapter Thirteen, where Beatrice, no longer in control of her mental or physical functions, is an inmate. In a moment of condemnation he inquires if he was the cause of her condition. The attendant tells him:

> "You probably tipped her over. But perhaps she would have tipped over anyway. Perhaps she would have tipped over a year earlier if you hadn't been there to give her something to think about. You may have given her an extra year of sanity and--whatever you did give her. You may have taken a lifetime of happiness away from her. Now you know the chances as accurately as a specialist."

The last chapter does not contain Golding's usual "gimmick" change in point of view; instead, it reveals Sammy returning to see his childhood instructors, Miss Pringle and Nick Shales--his "spiritual parents." He rehearses a speech for each, but finding Nick near death, Sammy leaves without disturbing him. Likewise, his speech for Miss Pringle goes unsaid; however, it is important to note his intended lines:

> You were forced to torture me. You lost your freedom somewhere and after that you had to do to me what you did. You see? The consequence was perhaps Beatrice in the

> looney bin, our joint work, my work, the world's work. Do you not see how our imperfections force us to torture each other? . . . But we are neither the innocent nor the wicked. We are the guilty. We fall down. We crawl on hands and knees. We weep and tear each other.
>
> Therefore I have come back--since we are both adults and live in two worlds at once--to offer forgiveness with both hands. Somewhere the awful line of descent must be broken. You did that and I forgive it wholly, take the spears into me.

The very last scene returns to Samuel's emergence from the Gestapo "special" cell. Apparently Dr. Halde was using methods unapproved by the camp commandant who apologizes, allowing Sammy to inspect the cell:

> They were putting the buckets back, piles of them, were throwing back the damp floorcloths. I could see that they had forgotten one, or perhaps left it deliberately, when they emptied the cupboard for me. It still lay damply in the centre of the floor. Then a soldier shut the buckets and the floorcloths away with an ordinary cupboard door.

Golding's work strikes a familiar chord, echoing another contemporary piece of fiction, the French novel by Albert Camus, The Fall. Oldsey and Weintraub are very quick to point out that "there is much more similarity involved than the obvious connection of the titles." They suggest that since The Fall was published in 1956 and Free Fall was published in 1959, more than likely Golding "worked in reaction" to Camus's novel; moreover, they cite certain points as partial proof:

> Both novels are confessions, or récits, both told quite naturally in the first person singular (Golding's only work done in this manner), both concerned with very able and egregious protagonists, both full of sensuality and seductivity, both concerned with the question of how grace or freedom of will has been lost, both theological in allusion and implication,

but each reaching a quite different answer through different fictional and moral emphases.[1]

The protagonist of The Fall, Jean Baptiste, traces his fall, or guilt, to his inability (or unwillingness) to save the life of another human being. That person, a young woman, falls from a bridge into a river and drowns. Jean could have attempted rescue, but he felt that he was perhaps too far away and--since he was returning from his mistress's house at a late hour--that he had better not involve himself in an incident which would certainly bring out all the facts. So, here, too, a writer unites a moral fall from grace with a mortal fall, resulting from a physical fall.

Samuel Mountjoy's first knowledge of his moral status accompanies his childhood association with mother, a fallen woman. As a child, he cannot understand the complexities of this situation (as the reader does), but he does understand somehow that he "had progressed from Eden."

In his later childhood, Sammy has his first encounter with formal religion when he attempts to defile the church altar. He knows this is wrong, but a young companion teases and tempts him. When the watchman intrudes, slaps Sammy, forcibly removes him from the sacred place, and brings him before the head of the church, the actions roughly parallel ejection from the Edenic garden. The young friend (a satanic figure) escapes unscathed as did the Edenic serpent. In

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[1]The Art of William Golding, pp. 104-105.

the act of being half-dragged, half-carried from the altar, Sammy attempts to use his feet, but--in allusion to his own identification with the serpent--finds that his feet "slithered" away, and he falls down "before the angry eye" of the watchman, the guardian of the Edenic garden.

Shortly after this, his mother unexpectedly dies (a mortal fall), making Sammy the ward of Father Watts-Watt. Thereafter, Miss Pringle constantly badgers the youth and unjustifiably berates him in front of his classmates, a fate Sammy likens to being publicly "crucified"--symbolic of the mortal fall of Jesus.

Although Sammy is unduly punished by Miss Pringle, he nonetheless thinks of her as one of his "spiritual parents" because she gives the class faithfully dogmatic interpretations of the Bible. To Sammy, the Biblical stories become the documented history of creation and all life; to him, the stories become reality, his world.

One can imagine the shock young Sammy feels when he leaves Miss Pringle's class and enters the hard-facts-only world of Nick Shale, the physics instructor. Nick's teachings are strictly scientific cause and effect. As the other member of Sammy's "spiritual parents," Nick offers a materialistic, irreligious, and logical point of view. Partially because Nick is friendly and easy-going, and partially because of the humiliation and discomfort administered by Miss Pringle, Sammy chooses to rely more upon the teachings of Nick, but he is never able to bring these diametrically opposed

philosophies (or theologies) into resolution; therefore, while he recognizes the presence of these two different worlds of thought, he is unable to become an exclusive member of either world and must live, as Martin Price puts it, "in a divided world without denying its whole range."[1] Bufkin finds that since Sammy is "dictated by . . . preference for Nick," his choice is one which defines right and wrong as relative and nominal with no absolutes.[2] Since Sammy does lean more to old Nick's philosophy, and since that choice makes Sammy the fallen victim, Nick's teachings must account (at least partially) for the present fallen situation. Slowly comes the realization that the name "Old Nick" is a slang synonym for "Devil": the fallen angel, the serpent of the fall.

The allusions to the Biblical fall continue with the incident between the coach and the French teacher. The scandal becomes the topic of discussion for the students and teachers alike. In fact, Sammy reports that he considers the careless lovers to be Adam and Eve; moreover, he again refers to feet and legs as emblematic of the Edenic serpent by calling the French teacher's leg a "silken snake."

Sammy's enthusiastic departure from the school, heralded by his formulation of his philosophy of guilt ("Guilt comes before the crime and can cause it "), easily

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[1]Martin Price, "New Books in Review," Yale Review, XLIX (Summer, 1960), 624.

[2]"Study," p. 240.

makes him susceptible to a false interpretation of his headmaster's parting advice, although it had been intended as an admonishment. Here then, chronologically, comes the crux of Sammy's search: his awareness-instilling swim. In his memory, Samuel now recalls seeing "the angel of the gate of paradise [who] held his sword between me and the spices." He recalls acquiring knowledge of "the weight . . . shape . . . temperature . . . darknesses" of a man in the "providential waters." With his decision to possess Beatrice sexually, Samuel Mountjoy suffers his moral fall, not with the actual physical seduction of the girl. As Sammy himself said: "Guilt comes before the crime and can cause it."

Bufkin describes the scene of Sammy's fall as "a total immersion . . . a profane and ironic parody of the act of baptism as a sign of regeneration and new birth, an act that promises forgiveness of sin and adoption as a son of God."[1] Certainly the plunge into the water is a "profane and ironic parody" since Sammy here does not acquire the forgiveness of God, but rather encounters a fall from the grace of God--a moral fall brought about by a plunge, or physical fall, into the water.

Sammy's physical plunge into the pond results in the premeditated seduction, or moral fall, of Beatrice, whose innocent face he describes as "the radiance of the unending morning of paradise"; however, Beatrice does not attain any

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[1] Ibid., p. 262.

Edenic garden. Ironically, however, she is an inmate of an insane asylum built on the very grounds of the Edenic-garden playground from Sammy's childhood. Samuel's physical fall causes his moral fall that in turn causes Beatrice's moral fall, which contributes to her final demise--her psychic, or mental, fall.

The point of origin for Samuel Mountjoy's search is, as one might suspect, his confinement in the "special" cell of the psychologist, Dr. Halde. Mountjoy's interrogation by Halde is described by Frank Kermode as "on the pattern of Christ's temptation in the desert."[1] Through both the interrogation and the detention in the cell, Sammy comes to realize that he is a fallen man but that he was not always thus: here he initiates his search to know himself and the conditions which have made him what he is.

That Sammy compares his cell to a coffin is particularly significant inasmuch as he recognizes his incarceration as the death of the old Sammy. When he emerges, he characterizes the cell as a womb, having given birth to a new Sammy who will attempt to seek out and understand himself. When in the "coffin," Samuel symbolically sees it as his death, a mortal fall normally completed by burial--a physical fall. R. W. B. Lewis suggests that in Samuel's symbolic death "a part of him died--became dead to the world

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[1]Frank Kermode, "Adam's Image," Spectator, October 23, 1959, p. 564.

of cleverness and science; and though, at the novel's end, he is not yet alive in the moral world, he knows again that it exists, and what it is like."[1] In his egress, Mary Renault suggests he "comes from his cell like Lazarus from the tomb, seeking infinity in a grain of sand and eternity in an hour."[2] But rather than seeing the exit as a return from the dead, it is symbolically more significant to describe it as Sammy's birth--a physical fall from the womb.

The effectiveness of the empty torture cell cannot be overstressed. In it, Sammy encounters what he mistakenly believes to be a dismembered sex organ (actually a damp floorcloth). Golding pictures the encounter slowly and painstakingly, making it a profoundly effective and traumatic experience for Mountjoy. The ultimate effect is Sammy's identification with the universal fate of mankind. The reader cannot help being swept along with Sammy in his horrifying discovery. Sammy's awareness of his own fallen plight becomes more significant to the reader as one discovers the initial instrument of that realization: Dr. Halde's name in German means slope or hillside--a natural object which can lead down to a physical fall.

Yet this slope or hillside may also lead in the other direction: upwards--symbolic of salvation. The same is true

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[1]R. W. B. Lewis, "Golding's Original Searching Novel," Herald Tribune Book Review, February 14, 1960, p. 5.

[2]Mary Renault, "To See What Men Might Be," Saturday Review, March 19, 1960, p. 21.

of Samuel's "rebirth" from the detention cell--it may be seen as his salvation from death, thus giving him at least hope for a resolved future. At least in this novel, Golding does not condemn man beyond the possible redemption of divine grace. This marked innovation for Golding perhaps suggests that mankind through interaction of its members can hopefully produce "a burning amateur, torn by the irrational and incoherent, violently searching and self-condemned." Again, Golding stresses emphatically that only self-awareness of the universal depravity of mankind can lead to, at best, an uphill struggle to recover fallen grace.

With the selection of the title Free Fall, Golding goes one step beyond Camus's The Fall, and openly acknowledges the compound meaning behind the term "fall." In the case of Samuel Mountjoy, it first suggests a moral fall from grace. This Sammy himself admits, and the specific time and conditions of his fall are the objects of his introspective search; however, with the particularly specific choice of the term free, the fall takes on additional meanings. Bowen finds that

> Sammy's "fall" is free, just as Adam did not have to . . . eat the apple, and just as the fall was free and had to be paid for, so a return to grace could be freely made by confession and the admission of the error.[1]

Oldsey and Weintraub's comments upon the title Free Fall are of particular help:

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[1]"Bending Over Backwards," p. 608.

> Not only does Golding's title remind us more clearly than Camus's of the freedom of will involved in Adam's choice (and all men's), but also of the state of free fall in which man in a condition of neutralized gravitational pull in space is beyond the control of his own direction and acceleration--unless he chooses to apply the techniques available to him to regain that control. The scientific reference emphasizes man's freedom of choice, his freedom of will, his responsibility for his acts.[1]

Thus Samuel Mountjoy, in a suspended state of free fall (in scientific terms, zero-G), is torn between the theologies of his "spiritual parents," Miss Pringle and Nick Shales. The inability to resolve these two totally different worlds of thought not only prepares Samuel for his moral fall from grace, but also, if uninterrupted, would symbolically keep him in a perpetual state of physical free fall--a perplexing condition described by space scientists as an endless fall. But hope exists for Sammy when he realizes his zero-G fall is synonymous with a zero-God fall.

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[1]The Art of William Golding, p. 105.

CHAPTER VI

THE SPIRE

The Spire, Golding's fifth book, bears a thematic resemblance to Free Fall, according to George Steiner, who sees both novels developing extensive "metaphors of height and vertigo, of free will and imperiled grace."[1] Like Pincher Martin, this novel also presents parallel treatmert of pride and greed. Yet The Spire remains totally different from the others and totally in keeping with Golding's general theme.

The main character of the story is Father Jocelin, Lord Dean of a fourteenth-century English Cathedral.[2] The Reverend Father Jocelin envisions erecting a 400 foot steeple ("a diagram of prayer") atop the church, although everyone knows the existing foundations will not support the additional weight. To accomplish this daring feat,

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[1]George Steiner, "Building a Monument," Reporter, May 7, 1964, p. 38.

[2]Paul Elmen, "The Matter of a Dream," Christian Century, June 3, 1964, p. 740. It is very probable, as Elmen suggests, that Golding has fashioned his literary cathedral after an actual one near Salisbury, Golding's current home. Although Elmen cites Golding's denial of any intended resemblance, he goes on to point out that both cathedrals are 400 feet tall, both are built on swamp land, and the Salisbury Cathedral (erected in 1330) is the burial place for a Bishop Jocelin.

Jocelin enlists an army of workmen led by the "master builder" Roger Mason. To allay increasing expenses, Jocelin accepts huge amounts of money from his wealthy Aunt Alison who, in spite of her earthly "traffic with an earthly king," wishes to have a tomb inside the cathedral.

In his obsession, Jocelin totally disregards all pleas from his fellows who, fearing for the safety of the church property, do not share Jocelin's vision that the spire will enhance the community. Likewise, Jocelin is deaf to the complaints of Pangall, the lineal church caretaker, who--along with his wife, Goody Pangall--suffers much harassment from the mass of workers. Jocelin can proudly take refuge from his critics because he feels encouragement from his invisible "guardian angel" standing behind him, warming his back, and thus allowing him to concern himself with the model of the spire. In Chapter One, as he admires the model, he finds it like:

> 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.

As the novel progresses, Jocelin appears in a different light. No longer the unworldly priest, he becomes a monomaniac, conveniently averting his eyes from (and thus condoning) numerous sacrilegious acts. As the building progresses, the various functions of the church break down and then halt completely. The near-pagan workers, described

in Chapter Nine as infidels, blasphemers, "murderers, cutthroats, rowdies, brawlers, rapers, notorious fornicators, sodomites, atheists, or worse," desecrate the sanctity of the church. Jocelin observes the debasement and murder of Pangall at the hands of the disgruntled workers, and Jocelin himself uses Goody Pangall as bait to keep Roger Mason from quitting the job. Eventually Goody Pangall is seduced (once high in the steeple as Jocelin watches), becomes pregnant, is raped by the workers, and dies from a miscarriage. A workman, forced to his physical limit, falls from the steeple to his death; a drunker worker beats a villager to death; and the chancellor of the church, no longer able to withstand the disruptive activities, goes insane and soon thereafter dies.

Repeatedly Jocelin is informed that the foundation will not hold the weight of such a high steeple; in fact, on one occasion, in Chapter Four, he sees the foundations directly beneath the steeple:

> He saw a pebble drop with two clods of earth; and immediately a patch perhaps a yard square fell out of the side below him. . . . But as he watched them and waited for them to settle, the hair rose on the nape of his neck; for they never settled completely. He saw one stir, as with a sudden restlessness; and then he saw that they were all moving . . . , with a slow stirring, . . . The earth was moving . . . , urging them this way and that, . . .
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> . . . . . .
>
> "What is it, Roger? What is it?"
>
> Some form of life; that which ought not to be seen or touched, the darkness under the earth, turning, seething, coming to the boil.
>
> "What is it? Tell me!"
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Doomsday coming up; or the roof of hell down there. Perhaps the damned stirring, or the noiseless men turning over and thrusting up; or the living, pagan earth unbound at last and waking, Dia Mater.

Disregarding the architectural maxim that "there has to be as much weight under a building as there is over it," the workmen quickly fill the pit with debris, and the work continues. Crisis by crisis, the spire rises. Mason must employ new methods totally unheard of to reduce weight without losing strength.

For two years the spire rises, but the effect is devastating. Jocelin becomes completely estranged from the other members of the church order. To compensate for this alienation, he tucks his frock between his legs and under his belt (permitting him to ascend the scaffolding) and helps with the work. Many of the workers, believing the job too risky, if not impossible, simply walk out. Roger Mason becomes a manic-depressive alcoholic; his wife, a domineering shrew. Adding to the pressure is the constant fear of the workers (and the reader) that the very next brick put into place will be the one to bring the entire cathedral falling to rubble.

Climatically, on the day the spire is completed, Jocelin is put on trial by his superiors. After examining the objective evidence of neglecting church functions, the various deaths, and the obscene antics of the workers, they unhesitatingly decide to defrock Jocelin, thus relieving him of all authority. Jocelin suffers further anguish when his aunt informs him that she has earned the money used to erect the spire by her sexual experiences with the king. Equally painful is the disclosure that his rapid rise through

the ranks of the church stems not from his own talent but solely from the king's desire to "drop a plum in his [Jocelin's] mouth." With the rapid exposure of these details, Jocelin senses an initial awareness of his true nature:

> His spirit threw itself down an interior gulf, down, throw away, offer, destroy utterly, build me in with the rest of them; and as he did this he threw his physical body down too, knees, face, chest, smashing on the stone.
>
> Then his angel put away the two wings from the cloven hoof and struck him from arse to the head with a white hot flail.

Disillusioned, Jocelin wanders about and sees "a cloud of angels flashing . . . pink and gold and white," leading him to an apple tree with "clear leaves, and among the leaves a long, black springing thing." He understands now that "there was more to the apple tree than one branch."

In an attempt to explain that he had been honest in his intentions (the spire would be a monument to prayer), Jocelin seeks out Roger Mason, finding him in a drunken stupor, his workmen, health, and nerve gone. Jocelin confesses to him:

> "Once you said I was the devil himself. It isn't true. I'm a fool. Also I think--I'm a building with a vast cellerage where the rats live; and there's some kind of blight on my hands. I injure everyone I touch, particularly those I love. Now I've come in pain and shame, to ask you to forgive me."

When Jocelin returns to the church, a mob of angry villagers gathers and beats him. When they tear his clothes from him, they discover "a wasting, a consumption of the back and spine," and leave him in the gutters. Jocelin realizes his utter depravity and resigns himself to death.

Before dying he learns of Mason's fate: an unsuccessful attempt to hang himself has reduced him to a mindless vegetable.

At several stages of his decline, Jocelin asks if the spire has fallen yet. Each time the answer comes back: no, not yet. He realizes "he was like a building about to fall," and dies. And the reader realizes that the spire does not fall--it is standing at this moment, six centuries later.

The Spire lends itself very well to several avenues of interpretation, each congruent to Golding's fall motif. Perhaps the most obvious interpretation applies the Freudian theory which finds the spire representing the human phallus. Considerable evidence given directly in the text supports this theory. For example, consider the scene in which Jocelin compares the model of the completed cathedral to a "man lying on his back . . . ," or a seemingly small incident where a workman detaches the spire part from the rest of the model, and gestures with it between his legs. Although several critics[1] allude to the phallic symbol, only P. N. Furbank perceptively brings out its full significance. He says that the vision of the spire, its model, and the

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[1]George Steiner, "Building a Monument," p. 38, was the first to point out that Golding's original choice of title, The Erection, was discarded by his English publishers as too "graphic."

actual spire "represent imperfect sexual sublimation"[2] of Jocelin's forbidden desires for Goody Pangall. Because of his avowed celibacy, normal expression of his desires is consciously repressed, only to find sub-conscious expression in his preoccupation with building the spire. Since Jocelin's primary goal of seducing Goody Pangall would be totally inappropriate, he substitutes a lesser goal (with the same power to satisfy) and at her death this becomes primary. Thus, Jocelin's adulterous desires--in themselves a moral fall from grace--actually cause Goody's moral fall (although the physical agent is Roger Mason, not the priest). Her moral fall further results in her death, a mortal fall. Although the exact circumstances surrounding the miscarriage are hidden from the reader, it is known that Mason's wife precipitates the situation. The reader sees only Goody Pangall lying in a disheveled state on the floor of her cottage. One may logically deduce that Mason's wife, discovering the lovers, has thrown Goody Pangall to the floor, and thus a physical fall has both preceded and causes Goody's mortal fall.

Another analysis of Jocelin's actions suggests that he is to be considered a tragic hero suffering from <u>hubris</u>. The fact that Jocelin considers himself the recipient of a divine vision (thus making the building of the spire God's work) allows him to feel superior to his peers, thus

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[1] P. N. Furbank, "Golding's Spire," <u>Encounter</u>, XXII (May, 1964), 59-61.

hastening his downfall. As the spire grows, Jocelin identifies with it, suggesting that the steeple monumentally portrays his own stature in the ranks of the church. R. W. B. Lewis supports this theory saying, "Jocelin's crises of body and spirit correspond precisely to those of the building."[1] Richard P. Brickner observes that "the spire's completion marks the beginning of Jocelin's own knowledge of his end."[2] Walter Sullivan perceptively sees Jocelin's tragic fall as "the eradication of pride . . . the denouement of the book."[3]

Recalling how Golding's earlier novels have had an overpowering impulse to convey universal application, one may easily see how The Spire, instead of representing only one man's folly, can also symbolize the attempt "to deny the inherent sinfulness and continuing guilt of all mankind."[4]

The novel, then, takes on familiar overtones as it represents mankind's decline and fall caused by the innate evil contracted at the time of the Edenic fall. Just as the story painstakingly depicts the "master builder's" discovery that the church's trusted ancestors--supposedly expert architects--have foolishly constructed the cathedral

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[1]R. W. B. Lewis, "The High Cost of Piety," Herald Tribune Book Week, April 26, 1964, p. 9.

[2]Richard P. Brickner, "Golding's Leaning Tower," New Republic, May 23, 1964, p. 18.

[3]"The Long Chronicle of Guilt," p. 10.

[4]Ibid., p. 11

not only in the middle of a marsh but also with little or no foundation, so does Golding, according to William Barrett, "make powerfully clear that all faith rests on a quagmire, that our inheritance from the past is always imperfect, and that holy purposes have, in the way of the world, to do with corruption and evil."[1]

Paul Pickrel draws the important analogy between the spire and mankind, finding that the violation of the "medieval engineering principle that a building must go down into the earth as far as it rises above it," has a "corresponding psychological principle" which "cannot be violated: to create, man must go as far down in his own weak and sinful nature as he hopes to rise above it."[2] Furbank claims that with the horrifying discovery of the boiling darkness in the pit beneath the cathedral, Golding "has never found a better symbol than this seething hell-mouth for his vision of the underside of civilization."[3]

The weight of these various interpretations of the significance of the spire is tremendously enhanced by a device not unlike the waterfall dominating the lives of Lok and Fa, or the complicated titular denotations and connotations of Free Fall. Sensing this, Lewis can only

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[1]William Barrett, "Reader's Choice," Atlantic Monthly, May, 1964, p. 136.

[2]Paul Pickrel, "The New Books," Harper's, May, 1964, p. 119.

[3]"Golding's Spire," p. 60.

comment that "the book has a somewhat forbidding character, as though it wanted to hold the reader at bay. There is no doubt that this quality is deliberate."[1] It is Steiner who correctly discovers Golding's artistic method of driving home the totally dominant mood: "every page of the novel bears the stress of mutinous stone."[2] Golding subtly provokes the reader to wince at each critical stage of the construction, and expecting collapse, the reader becomes thoroughly immersed in the groaning, swaying obsession of Dean Jocelin.

Additionally, Steiner notes that Golding allows the reader to see how "the steeple infects all who pass under its shadow."[3] Dissension among the clergy of the church causes the tempers of normally sanctimonious men to flare, alienating them from one another and making them useless to themselves, the community, and the church. Because of the intense fear that the cathedral will fall, all church functions are neglected and fall in to complete disuse--to be replaced by the pagan debasement of the workers. As a result of physical and mental strain, the chancellor of the church suffers a mental, or psychic, fall, which leads to death--his mortal fall. In a like manner, one of Mason's workers encounters his mortal fall as the direct

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[1] "The High Cost of Piety," p. 10.

[2] "Building a Monument," p. 38.

[3] Ibid.

result of physically falling from the heights of the spire. A villager mortally falls in a fight with a drunken worker.

Contributing also to the sustained fall motif, are the related falls of Roger Mason who, it will be remembered, enters into an illicit love affair, a moral fall made doubly condemning as he conducts it in the sacred surroundings of the cathedral; he attempts to hang himself which normally would result in a fatal physical fall; and finally he suffers a mental demise when the rafter from which he attempts to hang himself breaks. Ironically, his lapse into a vegetable state--a mental fall--occurs because he miscalculates the stress factor of the rafter, and physically falls, injuring his head.

Predictably, the analysis of the fall theme reaches its highest complexity in the character of Father Jocelin. As discussed, the symbolic implications between Jocelin and the spire are many, and, as Oldsey and Weintraub suggest, it is uncertain whether Jocelin's so-called divine inspiration is caused "by a true vision, by worldly vanity, or by witchcraft of the flesh."[1] Believing the vision to be God-sent Jocelin explains to Mason, in Chapter Six:

> The folly isn't mine. It's God's Folly. Even in the old days He never asked men to do what was reasonable. Men can do that for themselves. They can buy and sell, heal and govern. But then out of some deep place comes the command to do what makes no sense at all--to build a ship on dry land; to sit among the dunghill; to

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[1] The Art of William Golding, p. 137.

> marry a whore; to set their son on the altar of sacrifice.

This affirmation of faith is unquestionably admirable, but even before this occasion, Jocelin is a fallen man. The end of the novel reveals that his rapid rise through different levels of the church staff to the foremost position would never have taken place without behind-the-scenes intervention by the king. It is also apparent, by the end of the novel, that Jocelin lacks the proper ability to express his innermost thoughts and can only operate effectively by disregarding the conventional means of achieving his goal. Jocelin's totally merciless unconcern for the sanctity of the church, the physical welfare and safety of the church members, and the performance of his duties only make his awareness of his fall that much more debilitating when it comes. Instead of the spire crashing to the earth, and destroying the little community, as feared, it is Jocelin's own moral fall which very nearly destroys the community--and does destroy him.

Amid the building, demise, and death, Golding still finds occasion to allude effectively to man's expulsion from Eden. One of Jocelin's colleagues, for example, is named Father Adam. Although Father Adam is clearly identified in the opening chapters of the book, Jocelin continually persists in referring to him as Father Anonymous--perhaps in an attempt to disavow religiously the concept of man's innate sin.

Another allusion to Eden is in the phraseology of the king's wanting to drop a "plum" in Jocelin's mouth. He offers the plum--perhaps high rank in the church--to Jocelin who takes it and meets his ruin in the eventual forms of expulsion for the holy order of priests, self-awareness, and death.

Finally, the strongest reference to the Biblical fall centers on an apple tree which appears in Chapter Eleven. The apple tree, although surrounded by a visionary host of angels, still contains "a long, black springing thing": the serpent. The full realization of the tree's significance occurs in Chapter Twelve, where Jocelin on his death bed, suddenly discovers that the spire is "_like that apple tree_!" The reader first remembers a passage in Chapter Ten where Jocelin equates his obsession to build the spire with the "growth of a plant with strange flowers and fruit, complex, twining, engulfing, destroying, strangling." Then the statement comes to mean that the spire is like the Edenic tree which bore the forbidden fruit. Perhaps Baker offers the best explanation, saying that the spire, like that Edenic tree, having more than one branch, "holds the fruit of good and evil," and that Jocelin sampled "both of them as the first man did, as all men do."[1]

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[1] _William Golding_, p. 87.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Golding's novels have met with some unfavorable criticism. R. C. Townsend bluntly states that he believes Golding's success can be attributed to students' and teachers' "willingness to be taken in by false profundity."[1] Gindin views Golding's work as "unique" and "striking" but then concludes that "Golding has not yet worked out a novelistic form adequate for the full tonal and doctrinal range of his perception."[2] Martin Green finds that "Golding is not importantly original in thought and feeling." Green further denounces Golding by saying he is "not a significant artist."[3] Green states that although Golding's "prose bears the mark of a scrupulous craftsman, . . . it is not the prose of a successful artist."[4]

These unappreciative critics are very much in a minority. Upon close examination their criticism usually

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[1]R. C. Townsend, "Lord of the Flies: Fool's Gold?" Journal of General Education, XVI (July, 1964), 153.

[2]Postwar British Fiction, p. 206.

[3]Martin Green, "Distaste for the Contemporary," The Nation, CXC (May 21, 1960), 451.

[4]Ibid., p. 452.

reveals a flaw in their reasoning, showing that either they have not read Golding's work closely or that they are biased in support of a specific thesis.

The more scholarly criticism on Golding has been unanimously in his favor, affirming that Golding has unquestionably earned a prominent position in twentiety-century literature. The final limits of Golding's prominence cannot be established with certainty. Golding's distinguished career is only fourteen years old, and, since he is still writing, one may expect he will receive even higher esteem during his lifetime.

Golding's novels offer to the reader a unified concept of the nature of man. As Golding himself has said, "Man is a fallen being. . . . gripped by original sin." The novels overwhelmingly bear out Golding's philosophy. Each of his novels contains numerous references to the Garden of Eden, and these references, by themselves, successfully illustrate the novels' correspondence with Golding's philosophy.

To reinforce these Edenic allusions (and his basic theme), Golding skillfully utilizes other meanings for the word "fall," such as a physical fall, moral fall, and mortal fall. These applications, in turn, are almost imperceptively extended to include a waterfall, free fall, to fall extinct, to fall asleep, to sink, to plunge, and others. Whether used singly or in a linked series, these falls are significant events, serving to advance Golding's plots significantly.

One wonders if this fall motif is mere coincidence, and if not, to what ultimate achievement the fall motif strives.

The use of words and incidents corresponding to the various meanings of the word "fall" occurs with such high frequency that it definitely rules out mere coincidence. Golding's use of the fall motif serves to show the precarious position man has created for himself in the world community. Here Golding is moralizing, trying to illuminate man's flaw of an instinctively corrupt nature.

If man does possess this instinctive nature, it would be apparent in culturally isolated communities. Each of Golding's novels depicts some form of an isolated microcosm. The lush tropical island, the immediate area near the Neanderthal's camp, the barren rock in mid-Atlantic (or if one prefers, the confines of a dying mind), the dark unknown of a Gestapo cell, and the cloistered halls of an early English cathedral represent microcosmic stages for the scenes of the human predicament. In each case, the instinctively corrupt nature of man comes forth of its own accord, without inducement from outside sources.

To illustrate this point of instinctual behavior, W. H. Thorpe reports an experiment in psychology which showed that newly born geese, in isolation from mature geese, "gave the warning call and took avoiding action instinctively when a model resembling a bird of prey was drawn on wires over the enclosure in which they were kept." Thorpe concludes that "some animals have precise instinctive responses to the

appearance of that particular species or kind of predator which is most dangerous to them."[1]

For Golding, man's instinctively evil nature operates even in the isolated microcosms of his novels. Possibly Golding's fall motif barrage--because of the wide use of the term "fall"--refers to the archetypal Edenic myth in each example. This would be a supremely subtle manner of constantly keeping the allusions to Eden before the eyes of the reader.

It is obvious that Golding often lets the reader himself determine the meaning implied in the "fall." The clearest examples of this come from The Inheritors, Chapter Ten, when Lok and Fa are intoxicated by the mead: "They were weeping and laughing at each other and the fall was roaring. . . . " Again this occurs: "The fall was roaring in the clearing, inside Lok's head." And still again it occurs: "All at once there was nothing but sunlight and the voice of woodpigeons over the drone of the fall." On the literal story level, these references are to the nearby waterfall, but Golding does not explicitly say "waterfall"; he only says "the fall."

Another realization of the significance of the fall motif draws on the research of the famous behavioral psychologist John B. Watson. Watson sought to answer the following questions concerning instinctual behavior in

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[1] W. H. Thorpe, Learning and Instinct in Animals (London; Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1963), p. 69.

humans: "What stimulus apart from all training will call out fear responses; what are these responses, and how early may they be called out?" Watson concludes that "the principal situation" which provokes fear responses is "to suddenly remove from the infant all means of support, as when one drops it. . . . "[1]

Then, at each example of the fall motif, Golding gives the visual stimulus (the written word "fall" or a synonym with its multiplex meanings) which releases the instinctual fear-response, present even in infants. No wonder that Lewis senses in Golding's work a "deliberate" quality, a "somewhat forbidding character as though it wanted to hold the reader at bay."[2] Predictably, Lewis cannot identify this "forbidding" quality, since Golding introduces it first under the guise of Edenic allusions. He then evokes and maintains what amounts to a subliminal effect, caused by the rapid and multi-level usage of a word with high emotional content: fall. Because of this unconscious symbolism, the reader is not aware of a specific fear-response every time he encounters the fall motif.

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[1] John B. Watson, Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1929), p. 229. The second most powerful stimulus, according to Watson is "loud sounds." He states two other lesser stimuli but adds that they "may be looked upon as belonging under (1)"--loss of support, p. 230.

[2] "The High Cost of Piety," p. 10. Lewis says this with specific reference to The Spire; however, upon first hand reading, one will agree that the comment aptly fits all the novels.

Instead, the reader (like Lewis) is only aware of a "forbidding" quality which permeates each novel. This may partially explain why a reader, after finishing a Golding novel, feels a profound effect, but is unable to define that effect satisfactorily.

In his fall motif, Golding has used a stimulus, which is effective in the written form because his readers have a sophisticated intelligence. If his audience were less intelligent, Golding would have to describe graphically the physical sensations of falling in order to elicit an appropriate response.

The ultimate achievement of the fall motif combines the subliminal effect of the various "fall" references with the numerous allusions to the Edenic fall. This combination tends to underscore the significance of the Edenic fall and, therefore, emphasize man's innate sinfulness.

To Golding, this state is without remedy. But one sees in the characters of Simon, Samuel Mountjoy (after his search), and Dean Jocelin that Golding simply offers recognition of the fallen nature of mankind as a possible saving grace. According to Golding, recognition, understanding, and, finally, universal acceptance of man's innate flaw must precede all endeavors, before man can hope to improve himself.

To convey his philosophy, Golding has united his talents to produce a unique and penetrating literary style. His stories are noteworthy even if taken only on the literal level. In addition, Golding's constant concern

for the spiritual dilemma of mankind is a most praiseworthy endeavor. Golding has stated that he has always sought to write what he describes as "Significant Literature."[1] One may judge by the existing display of Golding's ability that he has achieved his desire.

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[1]Hot Gates, p. 128.

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