TIME AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE LATER WORKS OF WILLIAM GOLDING

TIME AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE LATER WORKS OF WILLIAM GOLDING

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PREFACE

Besides an early volume of poetry (Poems, 1934), numerous reviews for The Spectator and some radio scripts, William Golding's major works are: Lord of the Flies (1954), The Inheritors (1955), Pincher Martin (1956), The Brass Butterfly (1958), Free Fall (1959), The Spire (1964), The Hot Gates and other occasional pieces (1965), The Pyramid (1967) and The Scorpion God (1971). The last is described on the fly-leaf as "Three Short Novels" and is composed of "The Scorpion God", "Clonk Clonk" and "Envoy Extraordinary" (first published in Sometime Never, 1956).

Originally the scope of this thesis was intended to include all of Golding's fiction. Close analysis, however, has been limited to only five works: Free Fall, The Spire, The Pyramid, "The Scorpion God" and "Clonk Clonk". Sufficient critical material is available on the three earlier novels. In discussing the development of certain themes in the later works I have maintained the chronological boundary by placing "Envoy Extraordinary" in the category of works which will not be dealt with directly. The later works, on the other hand, have not received the same amount of critical consideration.

This is not to suggest that the earlier works will be ignored. They are cited to provide either parallel or contrasting situations pertinent to the particular work

being examined. Although there are strong connections between all of the works it is not my intention to suggest that Golding's canon forms an on-going cycle or group of works of the same nature as Ford's Parade's End, Proust's A la Recherche du temps perdu or Cabell's Biography of Manuel; rather each Golding work shares similar considerations, situations and themes with his other works but remains unique. The works, therefore, are considered in relation to each other. Their distinct uniqueness, which forces an individual consideration, was the final factor in my decision concerning the limit of this thesis. Attempted combinations of two or more works to be examined in a single chapter have proven difficult to establish and maintain. Such a rigorous scheme would be damaging to the works involved while more is gained by examining the later works in detail and considering their relation to the earlier novels.

The areas I have attempted to examine are complex regions of thought with which several twentieth-century artists have been concerned. Although the varying uses of time and the concept of knowledge seem to be apparent in all of Golding's work there has been singularly little notice of these two basic axes of his fiction. The majority of criticism has been restricted either to dealing with one or two of his works, or discussing and arguing about the use of gimmickry, metaphor, allegory, fable, irony or ambiguity. Several of these attempts are admirable but they do

not face the question to which Golding has directed himself. Nor do they attempt to place his work either in a literary tradition or to view the problems he deals with as being commonplace concerns which are extremely relevant to the twentieth century.[1]

Golding's use of time and his concern with knowledge revolve around the problems of morality, sex, the self, evil and most importantly, knowledge of all these concerns in light of an awareness of human limitations. The momentum for my examination of these recurrent problems throughout Golding's works occurs in the first published novel, Lord of the Flies, where Simon realizes that the Beast, who is responsible for these difficulties, is not external that - indeed, "maybe it's only us."

Finally, I would like to thank the supervisor of this thesis, Dr. Graham Roebuck, for his continuing assistance and perceptive advice throughout the preparation of the work. I am also indebted to Dr. Alan Bishop for his help during the initial stages, and to my friends Tony White and Martin Howley, for their readiness to discuss the subject of this thesis and for their useful suggestions and criticism.

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[1] John Peter suggests that "he can be taken as a diagnostic example, reflecting the interests of our time in several important ways." "The Fables of William Golding" in William Nelson, ed., William Golding's "Lord of the Flies": A Source Book, p. 25. (Originally Published Kenyon Review, XIX (1957).)

CHAPTER ONE

> If there is one gift more essential to a novelist than another it is the power of combination—the single vision.
>
> -Virginia Woolf, "The Novels of E.M. Forster" in Death of a Moth.

J.B. Priestley has observed that "though views of theories of Time are seldom the subjects of fictional or dramatic works, a writer's treatment of Time is always an essential element of his technique."[1] Although this may be a literary truism it is also a statement indicative of the twentieth-century obsession with time, which has appeared in both science and art. Wyndham Lewis was perhaps the first to indicate, and even attack, time as a predominant theme in modern literature and others have shared his opinions.[2]

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[1] Man and Time, p. 106.

[2] Time and Western Man (1928) consists of two books: "The Revolutionary Simpleton" and "An Analysis of the Philosophy of Time." All my examples are from chapters of the first book. In "Tests for Counterfeit in the Arts" Lewis discusses Gertrude Stein's work Composition as Explanation and says: "Still, what we can retain from that little affected treatise, is that Time is at the bottom of her mind, the treasured key to her technical experiments. And so she is working in the strictest conformity with all the other 'time'-doctinaires, who have gathered in such disciplined numbers, so fantatically disciplined,

In the case of Golding, however, we must consider his use of time very carefully as he employs it in diverse ways in an almost encyclopedic manner. While he seems to share certain concepts with his literary and philosophical predecessors, his notion of the function of time and its role as part of the novelist's art is very different. He is not involved in the esoteric speculations of philsophers such as Bergson, Dunne, Ouspensky or A.N. Whitehead. Nor, although he does arise from their tradition, is his literary employment of time like that of Joyce or Woolf.

John Henry Raleigh has drawn a distinction between the literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the area of time. Golding is a solid example of Raleigh's suggestion that

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as though to the beating of a ritualistic drum." (pp. 51-2) In another chapter, "An Analysis of the Mind of James Joyce", Lewis considers Joyce's work, stating that he regards Ulysses as a "time-book" by which he means "that it lays its emphasis upon, for choice manipulates, and in a doctrinaire manner, the self-conscious time-sense, that has now been erected into a universal philosophy." (p. 84) He finds that "Both Proust and Joyce exhibit, it is said, the exasperated time-sense of the contemporary man of the industrial age; which is undeniable, if the outward form of their respective work is alone considered." (p. 84) Prior to discussing Bergson, Einstein, Alexander and Whitehead, Lewis comments that "This psychological time, or duration, this mood that is as fixed as the matter accompanying it, is as romantic and picturesque as is 'local colour,' and usually as shallow a thing as that." (p. 85) A.A. Mendilow (Time and the Novel, p. 30) quotes from the work of Roy Campbell, one of Lewis' contemporaries: "Modern art reflects an obsession with time which is as ridiculous as that of the Victorians with morality." (Broken Record, 1934, p. 203)

> ...what appears, for us, to be absent in most Victorian novels - this despite the preoccupation of the nineteenth century with the past - is precisely an acute sense of history.[3]

It is not the purpose of this thesis to argue the validity of Raleigh's analysis in general terms but his description is certainly applicable to one facet of the work of Golding. From his first novel Golding has shown a marked concern with the history of both mankind and the individual yet few critics have noted this fact and only one has given it any significant mention:

> Surely no novelist writing today has been so reluctant to take his images from the modern world as William Golding. Even when he starts with the here and now - the recent past or the perhaps not too distant future - he immediately puts his characters beyond the far perimeter, where they can contend with themselves or each other undisturbed by contemporary affairs.[4]

Golding does employ other types of time besides the simple past: there is the seven-day creation myth employed in Pincher Martin, Jocelin's mystical vision in The Spire and the importance of time to music is so emphasized that it becomes the rhythm of The Pyramid.[5]

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[3] "The English Novel and the Three Kinds of Time", Sewanee Review, LXII (1954), 430.

[4] Walter Sullivan, "The Long Chronicle of Guilt: William Golding's The Spire", The Hollins Critic, I (1964), 1.

[5] The mystical vision is accompanied by a state

However, each work, no matter how frequently it employs other types of time, is placed distinctly in the past. The one apparent exception to this is Lord of the Flies. This novel begins in the future at a point in which the world is engaged in nuclear warfare but quickly moves into man's past because of the cultural and social regression of the children. This regression, together with the parallel

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which exists outside of the normal time-scheme and which Jocelin himself refers to as "nothing but an instant as the world measures." Golding is aware of the mystical tradition which consistently employs this concept of time and he makes use of it in this novel. One example is the mystical revelation of Julian of Norwich. For a fuller examination of this tradition see Aldous Huxley's The Perennial Philosophy, especially his chapter entitled "Time and Eternity". Golding's use of time, in general, is also found in the opening lines of T.S. Eliot's "Burnt Norton":

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past. (1-3)

Eliot also expresses, succintly, the state which accompanies the mystical vision:

> At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
> Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
> But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
> Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from past nor towards,
> Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
> There would be no dance, and there is only the dance. (62-6)

Jocelin's major vision, at the end of the novel, is, as we shall see, very similar to the more secular vision of Sammy Mountjoy in Free Fall.

with Nazi Germany, causes the futuristic aspect to be underplayed.

Golding's most experimental use of time is in Pincher Martin, which also marks the beginning of his use of the extended consciousness of the protagonist. This consciousness is different from that of Lok in The Inheritors who, although likeable, lacks higher intelligence, and different from that of Oliver in The Pyramid who refuses to recognize the significance of his earlier situations or actions. Pincher Martin may appear, initially, to be a work in the stream-of-consciousness tradition of Mrs. Dalloway or Ulysses but it has been amply demonstrated that this, in fact, is not the case. Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor have pointed out the "still-picture" quality of the narrative[6] while John Kenny Crane has illustrated that Pincher Martin arises from a much slimmer tradition - that of

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[6] "For the effect of the flashbacks is obviously calculated; and if there is a failure it must lie in the conception rather than the realization. Indeed the cliché term flashback is itself more accurate than usual, for Pincher makes continual photographic and cinematic reference to his memories as 'picture', 'glossy and illuminated scenes', 'snapshots', 'film trailers'. Golding clearly wants the memories to have only the same relation to real life as photography has: they must seem framed all round, artificially lit and polished, stills rather than motion pictures aiming at the illusion of reality, and, if they do move, giving the sense of being deliberately selected from a bigger film in order to provide an artificially heightened sense of the nature of the whole." William Golding: A Critical Study, p. 159.

"post-mortem consciousness" works. In a sense Golding retains his connection with the Joyce/Woolf tradition but Crane's work insists that there is a much stronger line which is traceable from Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" to Ernest Hemingway's "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" to Pincher Martin.[7] Crane makes a distinction between the motivations of the different authors and perceptively analyses their similarities in technique.

Pincher Martin is not Golding's only experimental work, for The Inheritors is also a structural and technical experiment. Most of Golding's work is experimental to him as he never repeats the same format twice. Pincher Martin is the only work which depends quite heavily on a psychological concept of time, although the external time-scheme of the seven days of creation does provide a fairly rigid structure. However, in employing the psycholog-

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[7] "Crossing the Bar Twice: Post-Mortem Consciousness in Bierce, Hemingway and Golding", Studies in Short Fiction, VI (1969), 361-76. The similarity between Bierce and Golding has been noticed by others but no one has mentioned the excellent film made of Bierce's story entitled "Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" (French, 1962, written and directed by Robert Enrico) which presents a very good visual interpretation of this technique although there may be certain basic differences. As George Bluestone notes in general terms: "The novel abides by, yet explores, the possibilities of psychological law: the film abides by, yet explores, the possibilites of optical law." "Time in Film and Fiction", Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, XIX (1961), 315. However, optics and psychology do over-lap considerably in the field of aesthetics.

ical concept Golding's motivation is essentially different from those of Woolf and Joyce for this is an emphatic method of focussing the attention of the reader upon an individual character. Pincher Martin serves to establish a vital thematic relationship between The Inheritors and the most seminal book in Golding's corpus, Free Fall, which, it appears, was already being thought of while Pincher Martin was being written.

Golding, then, views time as a tool to be utilized by the novelist in order to communicate his themes rather than as a concept to be explored in detail. Basic to this is Golding's belief that it is the present, the now which is important.[8] It is this point in time which is the concern of the novelist but it is not separated from either past or future and is an integral part of this trimordial scheme. Meyerhoff suggests that time "is particularly significant to man because it is inseparable from the concept of self. We are conscious of our own organic and psychological growth in time."[9] This concept is apparent in Golding's work but

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[8] Naturally this depends on how "now" is defined. In "The Scorpion God" the "Eternal Now" is death, which in a sense is a meaning not totally antagonistic to Golding's general view. Still, this work is a light farce in which commmon Golding themes are treated in a less serious tone.

[9] Time in Literature, p. 1.

the "self" he considers is not only that of the individual but also that of Western Man. The result of this expansion is that the audience is metamorphosed into the two-headed Janus figure in respect to time - conscious of the present with one face viewing the past in retrospect and the other viewing the future in anticipation. Consequently Golding's works rely heavily on the impact of revelation, that apocalyptic moment of truth which illuminates the present for his characters and then for his audience. At the same time Golding is conscious of the literary past and bases some of his novels upon earlier works of literature which present a different point of view of reality which may be historically interesting but not valid for the twentieth century.[10]

Time, then, although important as a novelist's tool,

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[10] The first two novels are strong critiques of earlier works: Lord of the Flies is based upon R.M. Ballantyne's Coral Island while The Inheritors is based upon H.G. Wells' "The Grisly Folk" and The Outline of History. Both of the Golding works take the concepts forwarded by Ballantyne and Wells and proceed to show exactly the opposite. Pincher Martin, in situation, is parallel to Robinson Crusoe while Pincher's ravings are reminiscent of the heath scene in King Lear. Free Fall is full of Biblical, Dantesque and Miltonic echoes but Golding is not criticizing the systems as much as showing that the world-views of the different periods and authors are attractive but of little use in the twentieth century. The Spire and The Pyramid are both set in the Barchester county of Trollope's novels. Jocelin's dual obsession, in the former, with the spire and with Goody Pangall has certain similarities to Matthew G. Lewis' The Monk.

is subordinated to the thematic concerns of the novels. The largest thematic area which Golding explores is that of knowledge. As Simon realized, evil comes from within man, is not produced by a system and is rather tenuously held in check by patterns or systems of thought. This internal source of evil is precisely the problem Sammy Mountjoy faces in Free Fall. Golding seeks to make both his audience and his characters aware of this fact and hence the emphasis on self-knowledge. Awareness is the initial step in achieving a state of knowledge which is an insight into the nature of many things including existence, experience, relationships with others and isolation. There is, however, a distinction to be made between intelligence and knowledge. The "people" in The Inheritors certainly have knowledge and even possess primitive taboos. What they lacked was the comprehension and the intelligence of the "inheritors".[11] Knowledge is a static faculty, as in the case of one of the "people" having knowledge of a stone or tree whereas intelligence is an operative faculty. Thus, it would seem that man is cursed

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[11] A visual example which is particularly approrriate is from Stanley Kubrick's and Arthur C. Clarke's "2001: A Space Odyssey" where an ape discovers that a bone may be used as a weapon. This is the distinct difference between the "people" and the "inheritors" for the latter comprehend objects as being used rather than just being accepted as part of the natural landscape which is exactly what Lok and his people do.

with this intelligence which turns knowledge into evil. For Golding this evil is manifested most frequently in exploitation of one kind or another.

In forcibly directing his audience's attention to the problem of evil Golding freely admits his didactic motivation and analyses his own position: "The fabulist is a moralist."[12] and "'I think I'm a moralist...'"[13] As in the case of many moralists Golding's vision often seems gloomy yet his intention is surely, as he formulated it in a review of World Prehistory by Grahame Clark, to force his audience to accept that "knowledge of his [man's] tragic past should render him less of a slave to the future."[14] Golding admits his pessimistic bent in his essay "On the Crest of a Wave"[15] and Jack I. Biles quotes Golding as saying that "No work of art can be motivated by hopelessness: the fact that people ask questions about hopelessness indicates that

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12 William Golding, "Fable" in The Hot Gates (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), p. 85. All further references are to this edition.

13 Jack I. Biles, Talk: Conversations With William Golding, p. 86.

14 Spectator (May 25, 1961), p. 768.

15 "I am by nature an optimist; but a defective logic - or a logic which I sometimes hope desperately is defective - makes a pessimist of me." The Hot Gates, p. 126.

there is hope."[16] Peter Green puts it more precisely when he suggests that "He [Golding] believes the only hope for humanity is self-knowledge, attained and practised by the individual."[17] Clearly Golding is hopeful that he will be able to make his audience aware of their precarious position, although he does not seek to exalt the "man of knowledge".[18]

Finally, before examining the four works of major importance to this thesis, it is valuable to first enumerate those qualities and thematic concerns which the earlier works share in common, and second to indicate the nature of the distinct connection in this progression between Pincher Martin and Free Fall.

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16 Biles, Talk, p. 101.

17 "The World of William Golding" in William Nelson, ed., William Golding's "Lord of the Flies": A Source Book, p. 172. (Originally published in Essays by Divers Hands, XXXII (1963).)

18 In the two instances where the stereotyped "man of knowledge" does appear, "The Scorpion God" and "Envoy Extraordinary", each is subtly attacked. Golding is not concern- with the "man of knowledge" per se, as is found in Buddhist teaching or in the rather esoteric works of Carlos Castenada: The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge, A Separate Reality, and Journey to Ixtlan which outline the steps a man must follow to achieve a state of knowledge. Rather Golding's concern with knowledge, as with his use of time, is pragmatic as opposed to the disciplined system which is put forth in pseudo-mystical works.

Each of Golding's works is pervaded by a sense of guilt; perhaps because Golding connects the operation of intelligence with one of the most basic of Christian myths: that of the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil by Adam and Eve and their subsequent fall. Certainly Golding has carefully insured that echoes of the Bible and other works of Christian literature are liberally introduced into the majority of his works.[19] In Lord of the Flies there is the seeming Edenic quality of the island and the name of the visionary child, Simon. Golding has taken the figure of Peterkin from Ballantyne's Coral Island and has split him into two figures: the rationalist Piggy and the visionary Simon, whose name is the only one in the work with Biblical echoes as it refers to one of the disciples, Simon called Peter. This is also the first introduction of two mutually exclusive systems, a concept which forms a large part of the themes of Free Fall, The Spire and The Pyramid. The Inheritors shares this Edenic quality and the loss of innocence; Pincher Martin revolves around the seven day creation myth, Pincher's real name is Christopher, ie. "Christ-bearèr", who was also, ironically, the patron saint of travellers and the name of the girl Pincher wants but his

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[19] The only exceptions to this are "The Scorpion God", "Envoy Extraordinary" and "Clonk Clonk" which, as already indicated, are light humourous farces.

friend Nat marries is Mary; Sammy Mountjoy, in Free Fall, lives on Paradise Hill and two of the girls in the book are named Evie, and, echoing Dante quite consciously, Beatrice. The title is a reference to Milton's Paradise Lost: "Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall." (III, 99) For Sammy this fall is continual from the moment he lost his freedom by exercising his free will wrongly until it is halted by his revelation. This reference also brings out another concept of time, although it is peripheral to Golding's work. This concept is that God, who is by definition omnipotent and omniscient, sees all of time at one given instant as for Him there is no past or future. The Spire, because of the period it is set in, needs no such indications for Golding can quite freely introduce angels, devils and fallen man as part of the natural fabric; in The Pyramid Oliver's first sexual experience is with a girl who is aptly named Evie. What this adds up to is that Golding admires and frequently condones several of the concepts of Christianity, while realizing that the rigid system is no longer valid. In all of his works he attempts to come to grips with the essential fallen nature of man while insisting upon the importance of the new dispensation of the Bible: that which Christ brought of love and mercy.[20] No

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[20] For a deeper examination of Golding's theological

strict theological system is employed although the undertones are present in the concern with the problems of sin and evil, which are a direct result of the combination of knowledge and intelligence. Such a combination is inescapable in Golding's work but the problems are, however, presented in a general, humanistic manner.

Another element connected to the Edenic myth in this secularized theology is the loss of innocence which accompanies the gaining of knowledge. Ralph, at the end of Lord of the Flies, weeps for this very reason, and the purpose of juxtaposing two different species of man in The Inheritors is to emphasize precisely this essential difference.[21] This emphasis is created by concentrating on Lok's point of view for the major portion of the work and then switching the point of view at the end.[22] The "people" are

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persuasion see Peter Green's "The World of William Golding", Review of English Literature (Leeds), I (1960), 62-72 and George H. Thomson's "William Golding: Between God-Darkness and God-Light", Cresset (Valparaiso University), XXXII (1969), 8-12.

21 Golding has been attacked for his lack of anthropological accuracy. However, Oldsey and Weintraub state that anthropologists of H.G. Wells' time, and The Inheritors is admittedly based upon Wells' work, felt that the two people may have conceivably met. See also Herbert V. Fackler's defence of Golding on this point: "Paleontology and Paradise Lost: A Study of Golding's Modification of Fact in The Inheritors", Ball State University Forum, X (1969), 64-6.

22 See James R. Hurt, "Grendel's Point of View: Beowulf and William Golding", Modern Fiction Studies, XIII

rather naïvely innocent because of their inability to "think", although they do have "pictures", and at one point Fa attempts to articulate the concept of a primitive system of irrigation. Lok and Fa are started on the road to corruption through experience when they get drunk on the "inheritors'" liquor. But this start is carried no further and only serves to emphasize, once again, the difference between the two species. An incomplete concept of evil does exist for the "people" in their primitivistic worship of nature wherein they abhor the murder of a beast and are not even aware of the idea of murdering one of their fellows. A prime example of this lack of comprehension is when Lok fails to understand the purpose of the arrow, thinking it to be a gift. The irony of the story arises from the insight we are given into the minds of the "people" and the direct Biblical reference of the title, for the reader becomes aware that it is not the meek who have inherited the earth.

Moving from Lord of the Flies where the basic nature of man is graphically and gloomily portrayed, for Ralph and company are not really "rescued" — they are only brought back to a civilization engaged in the more sophis-

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(1979), 264-5. The reversal of the point of view without the switch at the end has also been employed recently by John Gardner in his novel Grendel (New York: Ballantine Books, Inc., 1972).

ticated destruction of atomic warfare, to The Inheritors, which is one more examination of this basic nature, Golding leaps to Pincher Martin where the protagonist is the extreme culmination of all the bad traits of the "inheritors". Martin is greedy (he even plays the role of Greed in a Christian morality play), exploits any and everyone, and in his own existentialist world confronts and attempts to deny any God but himself.

Pincher's enormous ego creates a purgatory through which he must pass in an epic struggle.[23] Nevertheless the original importance of this book is that it is the only Golding work to bear the name of a single individual as its title. This marks the move from the concern with the general nature

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[23] Critical opinion is divided upon whether Martin's experience is to be viewed as one of purgatory or hell. Robert Harris calls it an "existentialist hell" ("Allegory and Symbol in the Novels of William Golding", M.A. Thesis, McMaster University, 1970, p. 51) and Kinkead-Weakes and Gregor maintain that "What he has constructed is hell." (William Golding, p. 141) Oldsey and Weintraub suggest that "Realistic as is the surface texture of the novel, beneath it is an allegory of purgatorial experience." (The Art of William Golding, p.92) while Peter Green says that "Pincher Martin ...explicitly concerns the suffering of a dead man who has created his own Purgatory." ("The World of William Golding, Review of English Literature, 173). The final world in this matter should be Golding's: "...I thought when they got round to the sea boots [at the end] then it would be perfectly obvious that Pincher's was a purgatorial experience." (Biles, Talk, p. 70). Also the American publishers, perhaps in the hope of avoiding this difficulty of mis-interpretation, renamed the book The Two Deaths of Pincher Martin suggesting that initially Martin dies into a world of his own creation and then is obliterated by, and into, the black lightning of God.

of man to the situation of the individual and as such is a prototype for Free Fall. Prior to this all three works portray man's state but it is Sammy Mountjoy who is the first, and perhaps only, protagonist to attempt to fathom how this has come about in both general and individual instances; in doing so he, like Pincher, eventually resides in a purgatorial state. He arrives at this position, as the title indicates, for "free fall" is a scientific term for a state in which there is no gravity and one's body merely floats about with the forces of either gravity of centrifuge exerting no ultimate claim. In visual terms this creates a picture for the audience of the fallen man ("free to fall") who resides in that nether space between heaven and hell.

Pincher's Mary Lovell, as Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor suggest, is a prelimary version of the character who appears as Beatrice in Free Fall.[24] Indeed the differences between the stories of Pincher and Sammy are not ones of quality as much as ones of quantity. Sammy is as guilty in his exploitation of Beatrice as Pincher was in his attempted seduction of Mary and his exploitation of the people around him.

Sammy is the first Golding protagonist to reside, at the time of the novel, in a complete society which is pres-

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[24] William Golding, p. 128.

ent throughout the work. He does, however, partake of the isolation which many of Golding's figures suffer: the boys in Lord of the Flies are physically isolated as is Pincher Martin; Lok, in The Inheritors, is isolated by being the last of his kind left alive, although his alienation from Fa begins earlier; Sammy is physcially isolated by Dr. Halde; Jocelin by his dedication to the vision becomes isolated; Oliver, in The Pyramid, is isolated while living in society; the Liar, in "The Scorpion God", is thrown into a pit; in "Envoy Extraordinary" the Emperor is isolated from those surrounding him because of his position and Phanocles is exiled to China; and Chimp, in "Clonk Clonk", suffers his period of isolation from the hunters. Nor is this the only element which several works share but which is expressed most forcefully in Free Fall. The visionary-mystic appears in Simon, Nathaniel and Jocelin (and, in a different sense, the Liar); the artist/creator in Tuami, Pincher Martin, who is not only an actor but who creates his own world; Sammy, the successful artist; Oliver, the frustrated artist; and the flute-playing Chimp.

The "dark centre" appears in Pincher Martin, Free Fall and The Spire. This is the part of the individual which refuses to be recognized until the advent of isolation combined with both physical and spiritual anguish. It is the ego which hides itself in a labyrinth and must be sought

after. This "dark centre" which appears in all of the three novels just mentioned is conspicuous by its absence in The Pyramid where Golding attempts to show us a failed protagonist, one who refused to face this "centre". Connected with this is the theme of insanity which pervades several of the works. We are first introduced to this in Pincher Martin, where Pincher attempts to employ it as an escape valve and the theme is continued in the characters of Beatrice and Father Watts-Watt in Free Fall, and the important figure of Bounce Dawlish in The Pyramid.

All of these common elements are merely evidence which indicates that Golding's focus, no matter what period of time, is the problem of knowledge. He is not content merely to portray this in abstract terms but fervently wishes to impart it to his audience:

> I believe that man suffers from an appalling ignorance of his own nature. I produce my view in the belief that it may be something like the truth.[25]

The first three novels examine what this nature is, but it is only in Free Fall that there is an attempt made to come to any sort of terms with these general problems on the individual level. The technique is to analyse the problems and to portray the process which lead to revelation, or in The

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[25] "The Writer and His Age: William Golding", London Magazine, IX (1957), 46. Quoted by George H. Thomson, "William Golding: Between God-Darkness and God-Light", 8.

Pyramid the lack thereof, and this is maintained throughout the later works.

CHAPTER TWO

> What men believe is a function of what they are; and what they are is in part what has happened to them.
> -Sammy Mountjoy, in Free Fall.

William Golding's fourth novel, Free Fall (1959), is more complex than the earlier works and marks a new approach to familiar concerns. The Miltonic and Dantesque echoes are the culmination of the Christian mythic elements previously employed. Similarly, Sammy is the full-blown figure of the artist whom we first encounter in Tuami in The Inheritors and which had a part in Pincher Martin's story. In this manner Sammy is the descendant of Pincher and the predecessor, in part, of Dean Jocelin in The Spire.

By the point at which Sammy Mountjoy makes his debut as a Golding protagonist one essential part of man has been explicated and examined - namely our fallen state. Lord of the Flies is an allegory of World War II[1], Pincher dies in this war and Sammy goes through it. In both Pincher

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[1] "...And take anybody's history, what it comes to is this: that Nazi Germany was a particular kind of boil which burst in 1939 or 1940 or whenever it was. That was only the same kind of inflamed spot we all of us suffer from, and so I took English boys and said, "Look, this could be you." This is really what that book comes to." Jack I. Biles, Talk: Conversations with William Golding, p. 4.

and Sammy's case the war is responsible for their illuminating isolation. This isolation is a main-stay in Golding's work. The first two novels move towards the gradual isolation of Ralph and Lok but the difference between the earlier incidents and that in Free Fall indicates in what manner the focus has shifted. In Lord of the Flies Simon is murdered as he attempts to impart his knowledge to the others, while Ralph's insight comes only as his traumatic experience is ended by the deus ex machina arrival of the naval officer which signals the close of the novel; Lok, finally isolated, dies in an ice avalanche, although it is Tuami who shows some insight into the essential nature of man, but this is partly as a result of his being a member of a fugitive splinter group; Pincher is both physically and spiritually isolated and, because of his ever-consuming ego, must die twice. Sammy Mountjoy marks an evolution from these characters as he is forced to continue to exist with his new self-knowledge while being able to articulate his emotions and insights from his point of view. For Sammy, unlike the earlier figures, the knowledge which was acquired did not come too late to be of value.

Ostensibly Free Fall employs a first person narrative common to twentieth century literature but not with the intent of portraying the life and time of Sammy Mountjoy. Against the general concept of free will the novel is concerned with the particular case of Sammy Mountjoy and his

search to determine at exactly what point he exercised his free will and lost his freedom. Pincher Martin is forced to relive incidents from his earlier life because of the intensity of his experience, whereas Sammy reviews his past voluntarily. In this review another distinction becomes apparent, for Sammy is a man who is still reacting within society and who has to cope with the problems, such as his exploitation of Beatrice and Endicott's feelings for Taffy, caused by this. This factor is one of which Mountjoy is fully conscious.

Consequently the narrative is not related from an omniscient vantage point but from Sammy's subjective point of view. We are quickly warned not to expect the chronologically linear plots of the earlier works, for in regard to the use of time Free Fall is another experiment for Golding:

> For time is not laid out endlessly like a row of bricks. That straight line from the first hiccup to the last gasp is a dead thing. Time is two modes. The one is an effortless perception native to us as water to the mackeral. The other is a memory, a sense of shuffle fold and coil, of that day nearer to that because more important, of that event mirroring this, or those lines set apart, exceptional and out of the straight line altogether. I put the day in the park first in my story not because I was young, a baby almost; but because freedom has become more and more precious to me as I taste the potato less and less often.[2]

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[2] Free Fall (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), pp. 5-6. All further references are to this edition. Note also

Sammy's mode will be that of selective biography in which certain events are carefully chosen because they are later reflected in other incidents, an example of which is the urination scenes with Minnie and Beatrice.[3] In fact, the structure of the novel does not radically upset the chronology with only one section coming out of place in the linear line.

We must expect from a confessional narrative of this sort a type of self-knowledge, as Sammy's isolation led to a consciousness of his self and an awareness of how terrifingly imprisoned he is in that self. Sammy's recognition is accompanied by a deep guilt as the quality of his earlier actions and the value of his irretrievable freedom becomes clear. This guilt is partially responsible for the meditation on the earlier part of his life.

As Frank Kermode once suggested to Golding

David Paul's comment that "This unifying faculty of memory tends to ignore the effect of time as duration. Two closely related events in the memory, however far apart in time they may have been, tend to become continuous with each other." "Time and the Novelist", Partisan Review, XXI (1954), 641.

[3] There is an attempt to discount any literary pretnesions as Sammy claims: "I should be literary if I shaped my story to show how those two pennies have lain on the dead eyes of my spiritual sight for I am clear of them." (p. 20) This, however, is a red herring. Free Fall has an intricate and complex structure which is employed so that the final revelation is put across to the audience with the maximum amount of impact.

> ...the man who meditates is a guilty man, that the power of meditation, in the sense in which we understand meditation, is an aspect of human guilt, and that human guilt is inseparable from a particular kind of human development.[4]

Filled with this guilt the narrative then becomes a racking anguished search in which Sammy is compelled to re-examine his life.

The knowledge of self gained in the Nazi prison camp, and we must remember that it seems that for Golding's protagonists knowledge has little value unless it comes from terror and fear - forces the attempt to pin-point exactly where the change in the character of the narrator occurred. As Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor suggest "Revelation and recognition of Being, then gives way to exploration, explanation, discovery of Becoming."[5] This is definitely not an external concept foisted on the novel, as Sammy makes perfectly clear:

> Perhaps reading my story through again I shall see the connexion between the little boy, clear as spring water, and the man like a stagnant pool. Somehow, the one became the other. (p. 8)

> I am not a man who was a boy looking at a tree. I am a man who remembers being a boy looking at a tree.

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[4] Quoted by John Bowen, "Bending Over Backwards", in William Nelson, ed., William Golding's "Lord of the Flies": A Source Book, p. 57. (Originally published in TLS, Oct. 23, 1959.)

[5] William Golding: A Critical Study, p. 165.

> It is the difference between time, the endless row of dead bricks, and time, the retake and coil. (p. 36)[6]

What Sammy has set out to isolate is the point at which the change from boy to man occurred, that change from innocence to experience, from ignorance to knowledge.[7]

In finding this point of transition a large part of Sammy's concern is with the Conradian "heart of darkness" with which earlier protagonists were familiar: "I am looking for the beginning of responsibility, the beginning of darkness, the point where I began." (p. 36) As revelation is a necessary prerequisite for self-knowledge so this confessional narrative is a product which is just as essential:

> The mind cannot hold more than so much; but understanding requires a sweep that takes in the whole of remembered time and then can pause. (p. 7)

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[6] Meyerhoff comments that "time is charged with significance for man because human life is lived under the shadow of time, because the question, what am I, makes sense only in terms of what I have become, that is in terms of the objective historical facts together with the pattern of significant associations constituting the biography or the identity of the self." Time in Literature, pp. 28-9.

[7] As a note on Golding's use of Sammy as narrator consider Laura Krey's general statement: "For the ability to describe anything - even a rock or a beetle, much less a man or an era in history - demands, as Darwin long ago noted, the most disciplined ability, not only to follow the evidence in front of one's eyes, but to judge how it came to be what it is." "Time and the English Novel", in William S. Knickerbocker, ed., Twentieth-Century English (New York: The Philosophical Library, Inc., 1946), p. 411.

This "sweep" and "pause" is the rhythmic technique of both Sammy Mountjoy and William Golding. The mind of a reader progresses throughout a novel gathering information and the "understanding", of which Sammy talks, comes only at the finish where Golding forces his readers to "pause" by introducing a deus ex machina, as in Lord of the Flies, or switching the point of view, as in The Inheritors or revealing a fact previously unknown, although hinted at, as in Pincher Martin. The case of Pincher Martin is the most dramatic for a reader who discovers only in the last few pages that the struggle which has been portrayed is that of a man already physically dead. This necessitates the "pause" in which all the incidents assume a different significance and must be re-evaluated. This technique is used very effectively in Free Fall where the reader must accompany Sammy in his memory and is made to examine every incident. Along the way the reader picks up a great deal of information which becomes more important with the revelation at the end of the novel. We see that Golding has carried this technique to the farthest possible extent - the initial revelation was Sammy's but Golding has manipulated his character's narrative so that the revelation occurs also for the audience.

Prior to an analysis of both structure and thematic pattern of the novel it is useful to explain the existence of this novel and its radical departure from the earlier works in Golding's canon. The shift in focus has been pre-

viously mentioned and in regard to that shift both Golding and his protagonist agree on the importance of communication:

> A BBC television interviewer for "Monitor" talked with Golding shortly after the publication of Free Fall. He quoted Sammy Mountjoy, "Art is partly communication, but only partly. The rest is discovery." Then he asked, "Do you see yourself as a communicator or a discoverer?" Golding replied: "Well, I'm living. Tomorrow I shall be a little different, as yesterday I was a little different. My views change, as long as I'm alive and aware. I just can't tell you what the balance is in any particular situation. It varies between the two. At one moment one may be making the effort to discover, and communication fades into the background. But I - this may seem strange to you - I do think that art that doesn't communicate is useless. Mind you, you may create it, but it remains useless if it doesn't communicate.[8]

Sammy admits to being aware of both these processes saying that "I am here as well as on canvas, a creature of discovery rather than communication." (p. 79) Communication, then, arises from discovery, but this same discovery is a process which continues throughout the novel and is the primary concern.

Unfortunately the BBC interviewer did not see fit to question Golding on the sentence which precedes the passage which he quoted: "If, like Philip and Diogenes, I had been looking for an honest man in my own particular racket I should have found him then and he would have been myself." (p. 79) This honesty is precisely the trait necessary for a useful examination of one's self, for "the main

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[8] Biles, Talk, p. 67.

responsibility of modern man is facing what he is."[9] What then is Sammy Mountjoy and how did he arrive at his present state?

Sammy's universe is one in which free will is an accepted fact. This, combined with symbolism and Christian echoes, makes the subject of the novel more explicitly religious than previous works, although the concept is secularized so that Golding examines the spiritual nature of man and his universe rather than presenting the detailed structure of a conventional theology. This religious basis is immediately apparent in the opening paragraph:

> 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 star becomes a star, I have felt the flakes 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. (p. 5)

Although Sammy has received his revelation, the past still weighs very heavily upon him during the progression of the novel, for he may understand his nature but he is only able to isolate his original fall after he has become aware, through his prison camp experiences, of the depth to which

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[9] Biles to Golding in Talk, p. 17. Golding agreed with the statement.

he has descended.

The ordering of the story is not quite as subjective as Sammy claims in the opening pages. This "confessional-novel" is carefully structured with not even memory being allowed to violate its chronology. The book is divisible into five sections: Chapters 1-3 record Sammy's childhood; Chapters 4-6 detail his courting and sexual conquest of Beatrice, while he is a young art student; Chapters 7-10 move to the war years where Sammy is now a man who undergoes interrogation by Dr. Halde and the solitary confinement in a broom closet where he receives his revelation; Chapters 11-12 present the only radical shift in the chronological movement of the novel as they are an account, once more, of Sammy's childhood, school experiences - including a description of the two teachers, Nick Shales and Rowena Pringle, who affect him greatly - his first view of Beatrice and his conscious pursuit of her; Chapters 13-14 occur mainly during Sammy's post-war present where he visits Beatrice in a mental institution, attempts to visit his two former teachers in order to communicate to them his new-found knowledge and then moves back in time to his release from solitary confinement. This last movement occurs at this point so that the emphasis will be placed on the commandant's puzzling words which provide a forceful ending.

The initial unit of the story serves to show Sammy

in his original state of guiltlessness for "he was innocent of guilt, unconscious of innocence; happy, therefore, and unconscious of happiness." (p. 60) Certainly Sammy engages in juvenile delinquent actions - including the incidents where he bullies the smaller lads in order to obtain more of his beloved "fag-crads" of the Pharoahs of Egypt and his defilement of the church altar. These actions were, however, committed under the influence of Philip Arnold - that strange boy who was "never a child" and who stood apart from the other school-children because of knowledge which he already, by that time, possessed: "He knew about people." (p. 38) Even in committing other "crimes" Sammy remains essentially innocent:

> I can call to mind a technical crime of this period, for I stole tuppence from the old man once - bought liquorice for which I still have a passion - and got clean away with it. But those were days of terrible and irresponsible innocence. (p. 20)

It is not only the progression from innocence to experience which differentiates the two selves of Sammy. As a child little Sammy possesses the child's sense of the miraculous in the world. The adult is now fully aware of time past, of his own history and that of man, but for the youngster awareness is of a more instinctive type:

> Yet my great, my apocalyptic memory is not of stretched-out time, but an instant. (p. 17)

> Time was inexorable then, hurrying on, driving irrestibly towards the point of madness and explosion. (p. 21)

I have a sense of timelessness in both places. (p. 54) Perhaps the fullest expression of this is when Sammy fetches his mother from a pub in order to tell her that "'The clock's stopped, Ma.'" (p. 21) She is ready to beat him when they arrive home but halts as she realizes that a clock has stopped - not the alarm-clock - but the rhythm of their lodger's life. Similarly when Johnny Spragg and Sammy invade the general's garden the dichotomy between adult and child is once again made clear: "Later, I should have called the tree a cedar and passed on, but then, it was an apocalypse." (p. 36)

In this initial chapter Sammy relates events and situations which are to accumulate significance through the progress of the narrative. His involvements tend to be with pairs of people; first his Ma and Evie who have an extremely profound effect on him:

> My mother was as near a whore as makes no matter and Evie was a congenital liar. Yet if they could only exist there was nothing more I wanted. I remember the quality of this relationship so vividly that I am almost tempted into an aphorism: love selflessly and you cannot come to harm. But then I remember some things that came after. (p. 26)

It is well that Sammy's exuberance from memory of these relationships did not cause him to be aphoristic for that would not only end the novel but would mean that Sammy would have tricked himself into avoiding the complexities of his problem. Johnny Spragg and Philip Arnold replace the earlier pair and even here a difference is noted: "There is a gap between the pictures of Sammy Mountjoy with Evie and

Sam Mountjoy with Johnny and Philip." (p. 37) Johnny and Philip are the first of the contrasting pairs and it is significant that the narrator notices that a subtle change has taken place for the childish name of Sammy has become the more adult Sam. The child Sammy could make little distinction between his Ma and Evie, both of whom are strongly presented as fantasizers, but Sam Mountjoy is perceptive enough to notice a great difference between his two school chums, Johnny and Philip. The primary innocence has been retained but the difference in perception is occasioned by the awakening of the ego - that "centre" which will be developed more fully and which will have to be probed in the Nazi concentration camp.

Eventually Sammy moves on, because of the death of his mother, and comes under the guardianship of Father Watts-Watt who seeks to purge himself of his homosexual inclinations by having Sammy there as a constant temptation. Father Watts-Watt seems to be without a counter-part so that he is not part of a pair, but he is the only one of the major characters to be un-paired, as we see Beatrice and Taffy as the women in Sammy's life and later, in the fourth section, the extremely influential pair of Nick Shales and Rowena Pringle.

At the opening of the second section the adolescent years have been passed over but somewhere in that period Sammy lost his freedom: "No. I was not entirely free.

Almost but not quite." (p. 61) This is pursued no farther as Sammy has found that he is in love with Beatrice Ifor. This is the consuming passion of this section and he sets out to achieve his goal of obtaining her. The concept of love which is put forward here is extremely naïve: "'Does everyone fall in love like this? Is so much of their love a desperation? Then love is nothing more than madness.'" (p. 63) This is a shallowness of perception caused by the strong sexual desire of a typical teen-ager rather than by a deep love. Following this proclamation on the nature of love Sammy adopts, what he feels is, a Dantesque attitude:

> And I do not want to hate her. Part of me could kneel down, could say as of Ma and Evie, that if she would only be and meward, if she would be by me and for me and for nothing else, I wanted to do nothing but adore her. (p. 63)

But this is not the spiritual adoration which Dante heaped on his Beatrice and is a strong condemnation of Sammy, his lack of knowledge and his awakening obsession with the physical aspect of a relationship.

Once Sammy has started down this path the process accelerates. In his obsession he torments Beatrice by suggesting, ironically, that he may be mad - a possibility which totally frightens Beatrice. The motivation is strong and there are no barriers which cannot be overcome in the push towards the objective: "Once a human being has lost freedom there is no end to the coils of cruelty." (p. 89) A dual explanation of the sexual obsession with Beatrice is

offered by Sammy:

> A young man certain of nothing but salt sex; certain that if there was a positive value in living it was this undeniable pleasure. Be frightened of the pleasure, condemn it, exalt it - but no one could deny that the pleasure was there. As for Art - did they not say - and youth with the resources of all human knowledge at its disposal lacks nothing but time to know everything - did they not say in the thick and unread text books that the root of art was sex? (p. 83)

The point is not to call into question the validity of this view of one of the causes of art, but rather to show how Sammy justifies his own attitude towards a basic force by attempting to put it upon a higher plane than it is for him. Being fairly candid Sammy admits:

> I loved her and was grateful. When you are young, you cannot believe that a human relationship is as pointless as it seems. You always think that tomorrow there will come the revelation. But in fact we had had our revelation of each other. There was nothing else to know. (p. 92)

The final revelation Sammy achieves in respect to this relationship was that "The lovemaking was becoming an exploitation." [10] (p. 92)

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[10] "Golding: Yes, but there is a point coming up here: that sexual sin is exploitation of one person by another.
Biles: You mean lust instead of love?
Golding: Well, I don't know whether that is true or not. When exploitation enters sex, it becomes sinful. Now it could possibly be, as I see it, that a homosexual love affair could have no exploitation; in which case, it would have no sin. Inescapably built into our society is that, at some point in heterosexual relationships, one person exploits the other; this, I think, is really true, and therefore it is sinful. It is the exploitation, not the sex." Biles, Talk, p. 111.

Once Sammy has obtained his objective with Beatrice he abandons her to marry Taffy, a girl he met during a riot at a local Young Communist Party meeting. In discussing the analogy between the screaming cat being dragged by a car and his own actions regarding Beatrice, Sammy's analysis of the situation is brief and terse:

> I had lost my power to choose. I had given away my freedom. I cannot be blamed for the mechanical and helpless reaction of my nature. What I was, I had become. (p. 100)

In sexual terms Sammy has sinned but the transition between selves had already been effected and the repeated rhetorical question, "Here?", is answered in the negative.

The third unit of division (Chapters 7-10) encompasses Sammy's interrogation in a Nazi prisoner of war camp, his solitary confinement in a closet, his attempt to discover when he first became afraid of the "dark" and his revelation. This revelation is forced upon Sammy because of physical incarceration: "In freedom I should never have acquired any capacity. Then was loss of freedom the price exacted, a necessary preliminary to a new mode of knowing?" (p. 101) This physical curtailment of his freedom of activity leaves Sammy only with the "dark" (or the centre) with which he must come face to face. He must experience both his guilty self and the terror emanating from such a confrontation. Prior to this experience is a realization of the forces which are responsible for the situation and Sammy's actions are

indicative:

> And he was right of course. I was not an ordinary man. I was at once more than most and less. I could see this war as the ghastly and ferocious play of children who having made a wrong choice or a whole series of them were so helplessly tormenting each other because a wrong use of freedom had lost them their freedom. (p. 114 Italics added.)

This slight hint of the parallel between Sammy's misuse of free will and that of the collective community of nations' misuse, although not fully expanded so as to become the major concern, widens the focus so that the search for the point at which Sammy lost his freedom reveals that in the misuse of freedom Sammy is representative of the chaotic state of the twentieth century world.

The examination in Chapter 8 of early childhood, in an attempt to isolate where the fear of darkness began, provides an account of Father Watts-Watt's increasing paranoia but is ultimately fruitless in deciding the issue:

> Now I have been back in these pages to find out why I am frightened of the dark and I cannot tell. Once upon a time I was not frightened of the dark and later on I was. (p. 126)

It is not strange that this point of transition is difficult to discover for the "dark" which Sammy experiences in solitary confinement is not only physical but, more importantly, spiritual. As he has found it hard to isolate that point at which Sammy, the child, turns into Sam, the adult, so he also finds it difficult to uncover the point at which this fear of the dark began for it is a different darkness of

which he is afraid as an adult. However, at this point in the earlier Sammy's progress it is too early for him to realize this, as he is attempting to remember his early life and has not progressed to his traumatic confrontation.

Ostensibly his next concern is the centre of room: "The centre was the secret - might be the centre." (p. 113) The unknown which resides there is a part of the Nazi Dr. Halde's torture technique: "but they knew you would add a torment to the discovery of the confinement, would add the torture of the centre." (p. 132) This area is, of course, the "dark centre" which Pincher Martin also had to confront, that place where identity resides and where Simon's vision placed the Beast - inside, the ego.

Sammy's experience quickly becomes more terrifying and his attempts to resist the struggle are useless:

> Accept what you have found and no more. Huddle into your corner, knees up to your chin, hands over the eyes to ward off the visible thing that never appears. The centre of the cell is a secret only a few inches away. The impalpable dark conceals it palpably. Be intelligent. Leave the centre alone. (p. 132)

If one were not bent on revelation of the self this would be sensible advice but it is useless for Sammy, and the movement towards confrontation widens the situation, once again, to include all humanity with its racial memories:

> My hand snatched itself back as though the snake had been coiled there, whipped back without my volition, a hand highly trained by the tragedies of a million years. (p. 136)

As the horror of Sammy's experience increases it becomes directly analagous to that of Pincher Martin:

> Darkness in the corner doubly dark, thing looming, feet tied, near, an unknown looming, an opening darkness, the heart and being of all imaginable terror. Pattern repeated from the beginning of time, approach of the unknown thing, a dark centre that turnd its back on the thing that created it and struggled to escape.[11]

Pincher's attempts to escape the horror of his own ego culminate in his conviction that he is mad, once he realizes the fallacies of the world desperately created by his ego in its attempt to survive: he sees a red lobster, which is unusual in the middle of the North Atlantic as lobsters only turn red when they are boiled, and the "slimy wetness" of the water is also untenable as guano is insoluble in water. Similarly Father Watts-Watt, the highly paranoid, latent homosexual, also employs such an escape mechanism: "He Father Watts-Watt and I Sammy at various crises in our lives pretended to others we were mad or going mad. He at least ended by convincing himself." (p. 123) Such a solution is denied to Sammy and he is made to face the consequences.

Reduced by horror to the position of an irrational animal Sammy cries out "Help me!" which is "the cry of the rat when the terrier shakes it." This is only an instinctive cry and help is not actually expected to arrive, for

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[11] Pincher Martin, (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 179.

the disintegration of Sammy's ego is both rational and moral, being caused by an awareness of his own pressing guilt:

> There was no escape from the place, and the snake, the rat struck again from the place away from now into time. It struck with full force backwards into time past, saw with the urgency of present need that time past held only balm for a quieter moment, turned therefore and lunged, uncoiled, struck at the future. (p. 140)

Sammy has realized the enormity of the human ego and desperately seeks refuge in anticipation; a refuge denied to him. He has, as Oldsey and Weintraub point out, "with his anguished, selfless cry...purchased release from hell's anteroom, and gained, if not "Paradise Hill," at least a purgatorial stay."[12] Sammy may not have graduated from purgatory but he has certainly progressed from hell.

The effect of the isolation experience is quite definite as Sammy once again regains a sense of the mystery of the universe which he previously had as a child:

> Everything is related to everything else and all relationship is either discord or harmony. The power of gravity, dimension and space, the movement of the earth and sun and unseen stars, these made what might be called music and I heard it. (p. 141)

The rejuvenated Sammy has become aware of the "music of the spheres". Encountering a fellow officer Sammy cries, and a difference in view-point is established as the lieutenant is only able to reply with Grade B movie dialogue: "'Sorry,

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[12] The Art of William Golding, p. 120.

Sammy. They're a lot of bloody murderers.'" (p. 142) while our protagonist is fully aware of the difference generated by his new consciousness: "So he wandered off, thinking I was round the bend, not comprehending my complete and luminous sanity." (p. 142) This sanity brings a proclamation which goes far beyond that aphorism which Sammy was tempted to put forth earlier, for while realizing his, and therefore man's essential nature, an understanding of the essence of the "pillars", upon which depend the "wonder" which "formed an order of things", has evolved:

> This substance was a kind of vital morality, not the relationship of a man to remote posterity nor even to a social system, but the relationship of individual man to individual man - once an irrelevance but now seen to be the forge in which all change, all value, all life is beaten out into a good or a bad shape. This live morality was, to change the metaphor, if not the gold, at least the silver of the new world. (pp. 143-4)

Following upon this comes a realization of the fullness of Beatrice's character, which certainly was not presented by the slanted view of the earlier parts of the novel, as "simple and loving and generous and humble." Yet even this insight does not come any closer to the resolution of the search for by the time of his involvement with Beatrice Sammy's fall had already occurred:

> And yet as I remembered myself as well as Beatrice I could find no moment when I was free to do as I would. In all that lamentable story of seduction I could not remember one moment when being what I was I could do other than I did. (p. 145)

Nevertheless at the end of this section Sammy is able to narrow to a more specific point that time when he "made a choice in freedom and lost my freedom." For a more precise calibration he has to return to his school-days and that influential pair: Nick Shales and Rowena Pringle.

The fourth unit of Free Fall is where Sammy finally isolates his fall. The initial examination is of his spiritual parents: Shale and Pringle, each of whom presents one system which excludes the other. Miss Pringle teaches her children religion and Nick Shales teaches them science. None of the children ever seeks to bring the world of religion into the science class-room until Sammy, talking to Nick after his disgracing by Miss Pringle, has an insight:

> Understanding came to me. His law spread. I saw it holding good at all times and in all places. That cool allaying rippled outward. The burning bush resisted and I understood instantly how we lived in a contradiction. (p. 64)[13]

This "contradiction" exists within the pair themselves for Nick is a descendant of the saintly Nathaniel of Pincher Martin; conversely Rowena Pringle is hardly the exemplar of the lessons she teaches. Frustrated both sexually and mentally she attacks Sammy because he has usurped the position she hoped for in the household of Father Watts-Watt.

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[13] Bernard F. Dick maintains that it is the separation of these two systems which is the problem: "Man, then, is in a state of free fall, suspended between a humanism without God and a religion without man." William Golding, p. 72.

Presented with these two systems Sammy must consider them in light of another force - the adolescent's growing awareness of sex. This becomes not just a vague feeling but is vividly portrayed in the uncovering of the activity of Miss Manning and Mr. Carew. The strong sexual urge is the dominant concern of the final part of this section (Chapter 12) and it is this which causes Sammy to make his choice:

> Sex, you say; and now we have said sex where are we? The beauty of Miss Pringle's cosmos was vitiated because she was a bitch. Nick's stunted universe was irradiated by his love of people. Sex thrust me strongly to choose and know. Yet I did not choose a materialistic belief, I chose Nick. For this reason truth seems unattainable. I know myself to be irrational because a rationalist belief dawned in me and I had no basis for it in logic or calm thought. People are the walls of our room, not philosophies. (p. 171)

Sammy had to choose one of the two systems as a world-view which would allow him to cope with sex. The one he did choose was picked because of its disciple rather than for its inherent qualities.

Nevertheless Sammy does not proceed to emulate Nick's precedent as a saintly type of person; rather he manipulates rationalism into a philosophy of moral relativism, which he can employ to justify his pursuit of Beatrice:

> I was more intelligent than Nick. I saw that if man is the highest, his own creator, then good and evil is decided by majority vote. Conduct is not good or bad, but discovered or got away with. (p. 165)

> My deductions from Nick's illogically adopted system were logical. There is no spirit, no absolute. Therefore right and wrong are a parliamentary decision like no betting slips or drinks after half past ten.

> But why should Sammy Mountjoy, sitting by his well, go with a majority decision? Why should not Sammy's good be what Sammy decides? (p. 171)

Sex itself is not being held up as particularly evil but is seen as the agent of temptation to which Sammy succumbs. The point of the fall is finally reached as the headmaster advises Sammy upon his departure from school: "If you want something enough, you can always get it provided you are willing to make the appropriate sacrifice." (p. 178) Sammy meditates upon this advice and when he finally decides what he will sacrifice the fall occurs, for his answer is "Everything." The recurring rhetorical question, "'Here?'", is emphatically left unanswered in order to strengthen the impact of the decision.

Unfortunately the early part of the headmaster's advice impressed Sammy more than the latter part, which he might well have heeded: "But what you get is never quite what you thought and sooner or later the sacrifice is always regretted." (p. 178) The desired object will not satisfy Sammy's needs completely but at this stage he is totally oblivious to such an idea. The decision is followed by actions which cause Sammy to lose sense of Beatrice as an individual in seeking to use her for personal gratification and this is the pitiful result of his obsession.

The transition between boy and man (innocence/ experience, ignorance/knowledge) is visually displayed in the two pictures of Beatrice which Sammy does. The first picture

we are exposed to is a nude portrait done "after the last and particularly degrading step of her exploitation" and as such is intended to reflect Sammy's obsession with her body, although she ends up "looking out of the window as though she had been blessed." The second picture, done earlier, is not examined until the twelfth chapter. Here the portrait has been quickly dashed off by Sammy for Philip Arnold to turn in during art class. This portrait of only "about two lines and a couple patches of offhand shading" has managed to capture a more spiritual side of Beatrice with "little miracles of implication" and "imagination".

The final unit of the novel occurs mainly in the post-war years and acts as a foot-note explaining the fall in little more detail. Sammy's visit to Beatrice is futile for she is beyond his reach - she has become like the idiot child Minnie; the change in Sammy's self is seen in the difference between his reactions towards a similar situation with each of these figures. In the first case, when Minnie urinated, he and the other children "were exalted to an eminence" whereas in Beatrice's case he is physically sickened. Sammy may not have been solely responsible for what Beatrice has become, in Endicott's opinion, - he may have even prolonged her sanity - but this does not alter his emotions: "Just that I tipped her over. Nothing can be repaired or changed. The innocent cannot forgive." (p. 188)

More important, however, is Endicott's confession

of his love for Taffy and, later, his envy of the life Sammy and Taffy lead together. When he asks Sammy for advice he is told that "Nothing of what you go through now will peer over your shoulder or kick you in the face." (p. 189) Endicott is ignorant of the full import of these words. Sammy's deliberate exploitation of Beatrice has been constantly in his consciousness and has imparted a deep sense of guilt. Endicott's "love" for Taffy may be of the same kind but he will never have the chance to find out.

Sammy reckons that he has two more visits to important figures in his past. The first is Nick Shales and in the analysis of Nick's rationalism the choice of this particular system is seen to be Nick's reaction to the Victorian concepts of God, morality and the British Empire. Essentially Nick, like Beatrice and Johnny Spragg, is an innocent for whom it is possible "to live in one world at a time." The prepared speech goes unspoken because Nick is dying and Sammy, in his last glimpse of the old teacher, is "awed". The nature of Nick's character leaves Sammy only with an awareness of his "own nothingness", which has arisen from his inability to be either an innocent or reside wholly in one world.

Turning to Rowena Pringle Sammy hopes that she, as another one of those who have lost their freedom and are therefore guilty, will understand what he has to say. Instead he finds an old spinster who would like to think that her

tutelage was "a teeny-weeny bit responsible for the things of beauty" Sammy creates. The prepared speech once again goes unspoken as Sammy comes to the shocking realization that Rowena Pringle has not accepted the responsibilities of one of the fallen: "For that woman had achieved an unexpected kind of victory; she had deceived herself completely and now she was living in only one world." (p. 191) Upon departure the dichotomy once more comes into focus: "Her world was real, both worlds are real. There is no bridge." (p. 192) Sammy's words do not apply to himself but to the others. The bridge cannot exist if its existence is either unknown, as in the case of Nick, or ignored, as in the case of Rowena Pringle.

The final climax of the book occurs at the moment Sammy is released in the Nazi camp. After he has, without hope, called out to be set free he is, almost miraculously, called forth. Instead of finding Dr. Halde, who is referred to as the "judge", waiting to pass sentence Sammy is confronted by the camp commandant who apologizes for the torture. Precisely why the commandant releases Sammy is ambiguous; perhaps he resents the Gestapo doctor's methods or perhaps he is a humane Nazi. At any rate he becomes the figure of humanity responding to a cry of distress.

The climax of the novel is aborted as it finishes with the commandant's "inscrutable words", over which both Sammy and the reader must puzzle: "'The Herr Doktor does not

know about peoples.'" (p. 192) This is one of the finest examples of Golding's use of ironic ambiguity. The commandant's grammatical error could indicate that he believes that Halde's point of view, although true in some instances, does not apply to mankind in general or simply that Halde is completely and totally wrong. Whatever the case the point is that the "Herr Doktor" certainly did know about Sammy and knew precisely the most effective method of breaking him. Still Halde may not have expected Sammy's spiritual revelation. If Sammy is to be seen as an example, the doctor's analysis of the psyche of the sensitive, guilty person is remarkably acute, although for humanity in general it may be erroneous. For Nick the innocent and Rowena the self-deceived this treatment would have had very little effect.

The doctor's actions, although subtler, have the same type of violent impulse which Rowena Pringle's did, while the commandant's actions are definitely like those of Nick. These two Germans form the final pair of the novel. Both are professional men but the doctor is an opportunist. It is he who creates the situation for Sammy's confrontation with the "dark centre" and consequent revelation, while it is the commandant who replies to Sammy's cry of terror. The almost totally opposite characters of these two figures only re-enforce the separation of the two systems and emphasize the difficulty of achieving a vision of unity.

So Sammy Mountjoy comes to an understanding of both human limitations and human ignorance. Although he has suggested that the two worlds cannot be bridged they do, in fact, meet in him: "Both worlds exist side by side. They meet in me." (p. 185) Sammy is a unique individual and his circumstances, as for most Golding protagonists, are extenuating. He is not, however, the same figure as Pincher Martin. There is a potential of Pincher in all of us even if we are not full-blown Pinchers. The Sammy Mountjoy potential may exist but it is one that has to be developed and one that will be realized if the individual is fortunate. Forced by isolation to engage in self-examination, which few do willingly, Sammy has followed the Socratic dictum to "Know thyself" and in combining two worlds has become a man, if not of knowledge, then certainly of awareness. In doing so he has developed the ability to create his own system which is to be regarded as more admirable than those previously presented.

Golding, in talking of another great man in one of his essays, says:

> ...knowledge displays no dichotomy at last, but is one. The intuition of Copernicus was the intuition common to all great poets and all great scientists; the need to simplify and deepen, until what seems diverse is seen to lie in the hollow of one hand.[14]

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[14] "Copernicus", The Hot Gates, p. 40.

This is the crux of Sammy's revelation for, while he may not be alone in his position, he is certainly unique in his awareness. His existence in a state of free fall, which is a paradoxical combination of the theoretically mutually exclusive scientific world of physics and the theological world of the Bible, is indicative. For Golding's narrator knowledge is purgatory and while heroic stature of sorts may be achieved for some of his characters, as in the case of Pincher Martin, both Aristotelean catharsis and Christian purgation are denied for Sammy who is still alive.

It has been suggested that

> Sammy cannot yet imagine Sisyphus happy, but his plight is not hopeless, for it is evident that he shall continue searching until he achieves the final existential discovery that in man's tormented ability to decide his own fate exists his victory.[15]

This may be a valid interpretation but one is reluctant to view Sammy as seeing this "ability" as any sort of "victory" instead of merely being part of man's nature. Boyle's view tends to make Golding a Catholic existentialist with heavy leanings towards Camus. Rather I suggest that in tracing Sammy's acquisition of knowledge Golding is being more of a moralist than an existentialist philosopher. In Pincher Martin there was no expectation that readers would have

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15 Ted E. Boyle, "The Denial of the Spirit: An Explication of William Golding's Free Fall", Wascana Review, I (1966), 10.

first-hand knowledge of attempting to exist on a tiny rock somewhere in the middle of the North Atlantic and, similarly, there is no expectation of a like experience in a Nazi concentration camp. There are definite affinities with existentialist thought but in attempting to create these situations Golding is trying to force his readers into a similar self-examination. Sammy has now come to exist in a purgatory complete with his guilt and his knowledge, which is terrible, and this is what Golding places the emphasis upon.

It is necessary to point out that Sammy is the first of Golding's protagonists who is consistently aware from the the beginning of the work what the climax and the focus are to be. This is a result of the first person narration and there is only one other in a like situation, Oliver in The Pyramid. More importantly Free Fall is the first Golding novel to analyze the process rather than the result. It is doubtful whether Sammy, or Golding, would see the ability to make a wrong choice, for the wrong reasons, which results in loss of freedom and a fall, and the decision to exploit other people for one's own ends, as any sort of "victory". Such a pseudo-metaphysical claim breaks down when one examines the setting of Sammy's revelation - a Nazi prisoner of war camp. The Naziis are indicative of man's inhumanity to man which could, and does, arise frequently and in several cultures; on a larger scale a massive decision involving free will with the horrific conse-

quences, of which all of Golding's readers must be aware, is difficult to view as any type of "victory". It is precisely this "tormented ability" which lost man his innocence, along with Eden, and threw him into a rather precarious spiritual position. This ability, together with knowledge of good and evil, theological overtones and the examination of the process, combine with the artist and his vision to lead directly to Dean Jocelin and The Spire.

CHAPTER THREE

> It comes back to Hitler, you see. I mean Germany would have been a mess anyway, but Hitler insured that it should be the boil that burst; similarly, a saint or a spiritual person can do a comparable thing. Of course, we may rapidly be moving towards the time when there aren't any more spiritual people; in which case, my opinion is we will simply sort of fade out then. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." I think that is literally true, literally true.
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> -William Golding to Jack I. Biles in Talk: Conversations with William Golding.

> But their great art, I cannot understand, only wonder at a wordless communication. It is not merely the size, the weight, the skill, the integrity. It is the ponderous movement forward on one line which is none the less a floating motionlessness. It is the vision. Beyond the reach of the dull method, of statistical investigation, it is the thumbprint of a mystery.
>
> -William Golding, "Egypt From My Inside" in The Hot Gates.

Chronologically Dean Jocelin precedes both Pincher Martin and Sammy Mountjoy by some six centuries but rather than being their ancestor he is most definitely their literary descendant. Elements of the situations in The Spire, some parts of the characterization and thematic focus come from the two earlier works. It seems almost mandatory to be aware of the earlier works in order to arrive at an understanding and to form an accurate evaluation of this novel.

Technically The Spire is not the experiment in narr-

ation which The Inheritors, Pincher Martin or Free Fall were. The structure is not as complex, as the narrative follows a chronologically straight line which portrays the changes which occur in Jocelin. There is, however, another, more structured time-scheme overlaid and employed so that

> ...the reader can indeed follow the growth of the tower, octagon after octagon, pinacle after pinacle, along the time-scale of the liturgical year at the beginning and the rhythm of the seasons when Jocelin has become the friend of the masons and has forgotten the liturgy.[1]

This shift from the rhythm of the liturgy to that of nature serves to emphasize Jocelin's movement from a strict form of worship to a reliance upon his vision, during which time he tunes in to a more basic rhythm which allows him to arrive at an understanding of both himself and other people.

In terms of Golding's use of the past The Spire is unique in being the only work in which emphasis is placed upon the atmosphere of a definite historical period. As becomes clear the period is mediaeval and if the reader is aware that the church is intended to be Salisbury Cathedral the historical time is narrowed even further to the fourteenth century. This is not to suggest that the work is

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[1] Jeanne Delbaere-Garant, "The Evil Plant in William Golding's The Spire", Revue des Langues Vivantes (Bruxelles), XXXV (1969), 623.

a pseudo-historical novel, such as those of Marchette Chute or Lady Antonia Fraser, nor does Golding seek to put forth a scholarly concept of this period, such as those of C.S. Lewis or D.W. Robertson, couched in a creative work. The Spire is totally fictitious and in it concepts forwarded in the earlier works are examined further with the intention of being relevant to the twentieth-century reader.

In changing the narrative style Golding assumes total authorial duties and responsibilities rather than employing a first-person narrator as in Free Fall or The Pyramid. As a result a voluntary search is not the theme of the story; the mode of The Spire connects it more closely, initially, with Pincher Martin. Both works describe the gradual growth of self-knowledge in the protagonist but in doing so this novel links with Free Fall and The Pyramid in the examination of the process by which the protagonist has arrived at the present state. The growth of self-knowledge is accompanied by a sense of guilt, of the Sammy Mountjoy variety, for Pincher Martin is hardly conscious of any guilt and Oliver's recognition, if any, is minimal. Dean Jocelin shares Sammy's predicament of being a man in society although, like Martin, he dies at the end of the novel and does not have to carry the burden which Sammy does. Jocelin's examination of his self may not be viewed in the structured retrospection employed by Sammy, but it nevertheless does occur and he receives the revelation which is his due as a

Golding protagonist. More important is the continuing concern with two systems,which are initially mutually exclusive, first presented to the audience by Sammy Mountjoy. The battle is once again between the physcial and the spiritual or, from a different point of view, between Reason, as embodied in Roger Mason, and Faith, championed by Jocelin. The tensions caused by this consistent schizophrenic division in mankind's world-view generates much of the power necessary to push forward the action of the novel and is manifested in the construction of the monument. Arising from this tension is the question of whether Jocelin, like Sammy, manages to reconcile these systems and in combining the spiritual with the secular, informed by his newly gained self-knowledge, create his own more valuable mutation.

The narrative progress measures not only the growth of the spire and the difficulties encountered in its construction but also the growth of Jocelin's obsession, both of which terminate in the completion of the pinnacle. The completion, together with the thunderstorm which buffets the construction, marks the beginning of Jocelin's progress from purgatory to heaven. Jocelin exists, as does Sammy, in the purgatorial free-fall state and this is portrayed very effectively in a visual manner. We see Jocelin viewing the pit the workmen have dug and his reaction to its convulsions provide us with an essential clue:

> Some form of life; that which ought not to be seen or touched, the darkness under the earth, turning, seething, coming to the boil.[2]
>
> Doomsday coming up; or the roof of hell down there. Perhaps the damned stirring, or the noseless men turning over and thrusting up; or the living, pagan earth, unbound at last and waking, Dia Mater. (p. 80)

Jocelin and his companions exist in a purgatory which is defined at one extreme by the hell-pit and at the other by the blue dome of the heavenly sky. The spire reaches towards this blue dome and in working for its completion Jocelin arrives at a state of self-knowledge, while encountering paganism and more "thrusting". The process by which this occurs is, for Jocelin, as for his ancestor Sammy, the most important aspect of the new state for it includes salvation in both the Christian world of the novel and in Golding's view.

The chronological setting of the novel allows Golding to dispense with many of the Biblical echoes which pervade earlier works because the period setting imbues the novel with concepts basic to Golding's work. With the religious system as a given, as a result of the nature of the subject matter, the tension between the two systems, Reason and Faith (secular/spiritual), is established in the opening pages where the description of the model of the church is

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[2] The Spire (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 79. All further references are to this edition.

deliberately physical:

> The model was like a man lying on his back. The nave was his legs placed together, the transepts on either side were his arms outspread. The choir was his body; and the Lady Chapel where now the services would be held, was his head. And now also, springing, projecting, bursting, erupting from the heart of the building, there was its crown and majesty, the new spire. (p. 8)

This passage introduces the obviously phallic nature of the spire, indicating the sublimated sexuality of Jocelin which is developed later in his thoughts on Goody Pangall. At this point it is an unsuspecting Jocelin who views the model in a manner almost totally oblivious to the physical as he is concerned only with the more spiritual side of the matter:

> They don't know, he thought, they can't know until I tell them of my vision! And laughing again for joy, he went out of the chapter house to where the sun piled into the open square of the cloisters. (p. 8)

The "vision" is what gives Jocelin the strength to proceed throughout the novel and it forms the basis of his rebuttal to the objections of his master builder, Roger Mason: "'It's a vision, Roger. I don't expect you to understand that-'" (p. 85)[3] Whether the "vision" is in fact derived

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[3] Jocelin makes several references to the "vision". In one case he talks of being chosen for the task: "The building is a diagram of prayer; and our spire will be a diagram of the highest prayer of all. God revealed it to me in a vision, his unprofitable servant. He chose me. He chooses you, to fill the diagram with glass and iron and stone, since the children of men require a thing to look at." (p. 120) Later he connects this task with figures from the Old Testament: "The net isn't mine, Roger and the folly

from God or merely the product of Jocelin's ego is more or less peripheral to Golding's intentions. He is not examining the cause, psychological or otherwise, of visions and The Spire is not intended to be a case-study of a typical visionary along the lines of Noah or other mediaeval Christian mystics. Initially the vision must be viewed as a beneficial token even though it also severely restricts Jocelin's insight concerning both his own nature and the import of the surrounding circumstances. Early in the novel he realizes this restrictive nature: "It is true. At the moment of vision, the eyes see nothing." (p. 24) With this "vision" consistently in front of him the field of sight narrows more and more as the obsession grows, even though Jocelin had vowed to maintain a contrary position earlier: "And I must remember that the spire isn't everything! I must do, as far as possible, exactly what I have always done." (pp. 8-9) Unfortunately frequent obstructions and the significance of his mission will not allow the Dean to retain his own normal way of life intact.

The elements of Jocelin's situation are connected to

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isn't mine. It's God's Folly. Even in the old days he never aked 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 the command to do what makes no sense at all - to build dunghills; to marry a whore; to set their son on the altar of sacrifice. Then, if men have faith, a new thing comes." (p. 121) Finally he looks to the "vision" to give him strength: "I musn't scream, or run, he thought. That would be unworthy of the vision." (p. 133-4)

those concepts which Samuel Hynes notes in Golding's works:

> The problems which are central in his novels are the eternal questions of the religious man: the nature of good and evil, guilt and responsibility, the mean- of death, and free will.[4]

Jocelin has, as do any of Golding's major figures, especially Sammy Mountjoy, the ability to exercise his free will and must take the consequent responsibility. The ideal operation of this ability does not occur because the motivation behind a choice is often that most dangerous of sins: pride. George H. Thomson, in his assertion of the essential orthodox Christian nature of Golding's works, produces this as a link with the earlier works:

> In the first three novels pride is shown to persist, unredeemed by the gift of heaven's light; in Free Fall the light of redemption comes at last; in The Spire heaven's light is present from the beginning, but the human capacity to receive it is bedevilled by instability and pride.[5]

This is quite aptly pointed out by E.R.A. Temple, although he limits its significance to The Spire in saying that Jocelin "knew himself to be imbued with the cardinal sin of Pride, from which he was praying to be delivered immediate-

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[4] "Novels of a Religious Man", in William Nelson, ed., William Golding's "Lord of the Flies": A Source Book, p. 70. (Originally published in Commonweal, LXXI (March 18, 1966).)

[5] "William Golding: Between God-Darkness and God-Light", Cresset (Valparaiso University), XXXII (1969), 11.

ly before receiving his "vision".[6] At least the pious Dean, unlike either Sammy or Pincher, was aware of one of his limitations. At the same time a situation was created which Jocelin was not totally aware of and his failure to realize the ramifications shows definitely that his state of ignorance is typical of mankind for "Not to know is man's limitation, and his tragedy, and to act is to risk being wrong."[7] This is the risk taken, for Jocelin cannot possibly hope to foresee the future and in his provincial way is quite limited in his knowledge of the workings of the world and its inhabitants. Whether he is justified in his dedicated obsession is left to Golding to decide and then show his audience. Golding works through the novel and forces his readers to the realization that Jocelin is one of those men of vision, mentioned in his conversation to Biles in the first head-note to this chapter, without whom, paradoxically, for these men often wreak havoc, we would eventually vanish. The monument which Jocelin succeeds in erecting is similar to the great art of the Egyptians, which goes further than "the dull method", portrayed in the figure of Roger Mason, and embodies that which is the mystery of the world and, to Jocelin at least, of God's creation.

The overwhelming obsession obscures Jocelin's aware-

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[6] "William Golding's The Spire: A Critique", Renascence, XX (1968), 171.

[7] Ibid., 173.

ness of the total effect the construction is having on the people around him. He is granted partial insights into circumstances but he lacks any unified picture until the end. He personally moves towards isolation from the church community, his congregation, his friends and finally from the workmen and Roger Mason. This is caused by Jocelin viewing those around him not as human beings but seeing them only in relation to the construction of the spire and what they may have to contribute to its completion.[8] As the descendant of Pincher Martin and Sammy Mountjoy, Jocelin enters into exploitation of others for his own purpose; although his exploitation is theoretically for a more spiritual reason it is also on a grander scale. The justification for this is simple: "'I am about my Father's business.'" (p. 67) and this forms a defensive barrier within Jocelin which impedes the growth of awareness.

The first minor revelation Jocelin receives is when he comes to understand the attraction of Roger and Goody for each other:

> Drawn by the terror, Jocelin looked where she was looking; and now time moved in jerks, or was no time

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[8] For example the scene where Roger pleads with Jocelin:

> "'Father, Father - for the love of God, let me go!'
> I do what I must do. He will never be the same again, not with me. He will never be the same man again. I've won, he's mine, my prisoner for this duty. At any moment now the lock will shut on him." (p. 88)

> at all. Therefore it was not surprising that he found himself knowing what she was looking at, even before he saw the master builder. (p. 57)

This relationship pleases Jocelin for he sees Goody as one way of insuring that Roger will stay to complete the spire. Similarly Jocelin comes to the realizations that Roger has taken to drink, that he is as afraid of heights as his wife and, more gradually, that Pangall was murdered by the pagan crowd. Pangall, in his description of the duty performed by his ancestor in stopping a fire before it could entirely consume the church, connects himself with the past. His death, in which Jocelin is made an accomplice by neglect of duty, "like Piggy's", means "the end of innocence."[9] After fully realizing the import of Pangall's death Jocelin returns to the ground from the height he had climbed and, like Sammy Mountjoy, realizes that there is a particular moment which marked a change in him but he also is unable to isolate this spot.

Jocelin comes to a partial understanding of his predicament at two points. When speaking to Roger he realizes what the total effect of his project will be: "'No. You and I were chosen to do this thing together. It's a great glory. I see now it'll destroy us of course.'" (p. 88) While meditating alone in the church Jocelin achieves a

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[9] Jeanne Delbaere-Garant, "The Evil Plant in William Golding's The Spire", 625.

similar realization when he fathoms the addictive nature of his dedication: "'When it's finished I shall be free.'" (p. 14) Still neither of these insights by themselves, or in combination , leads to a fuller self-knowledge. That task is left to the church dignitaries to whom Jocelin has to account for his actions.

Their questioning forces Jocelin into a state of knowledge as his answers come in a furious rush. Trying, in a confused way to justify his neglect of church duties, he combines the importance of his vision with Goody Pangall's influence upon him. Immediately afterwards he drives the nail into the spire, marking its completion and Jocelin's victory in his race with the devil. During Chapter Nine Jocelin recognizes that his guilt started when he caused Goody to marry the impotent Pangall merely in order to keep her by him. Goody realized this side of Jocelin's affection for her much earlier. She saw his attentions in a more sexual way than did the Dean and his presence during her death-throes was not only as a symbol of the accusing church but also as a man full of desire. The reconciliation between these two stances is left up to Jocelin to achieve in the final pages of the novel.

To the Visitor Jocelin admits that he might be mad; yet, like Sammy Mountjoy after his release from solitary confinement, Jocelin is about to gain total sanity.

Prior to this Jocelin has recognized the existence of that dark place which must be confronted in order to gain the important knowledge. He refers to "some deep place," "Some deep centre of awareness" and during the interrogation echoes Pincher Martin by talking of "the cellarage of my mind." Finally, as he proceeds through the last stages of his fatal illness "he remembered the cellarage and the rats in it and the panic of that flung him right back into the gasping body."[10] Jocelin's complete revelation is further hastened by the meeting with his Aunt Alison, who was the King's mistress and whose slightly tainted money paid for the erection of the spire. The largest shock, however, is when Jocelin learns that his rapid advance in the church was not due to his talents or qualities but was caused by the King as a sort of sweet-meat thrown to his mistress for good performance of her duties. Consequently any illusions Jocelin might have had concerning his position as one of the elect and the purity of his actions are consistently undermined. His guilt grows heavier until the final apocalyptic instant on his death-bed.

In the process towards completion of the spire and the subsequent attainment of self-knowledge, Jocelin recei-

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[10] "Also I think - I'm a building with a vast cellarage where the rats live; and there's some kind of blight on my hands." (p. 210)

ves a lesson at every level of building.[11] When he eventually perceives Goody's influence upon him he does not arrive at the obvious conclusion and instead accuses both her and Roger Mason of using sorcery to prevent his union with heaven: "'Witchcraft. It must be witchcraft; otherwise how could she and he come so flatly between me and heaven?'" (p. 196) At the same time the figures of the angel and the devil, which were seen at the beginning of the novel as separate, even opposing, forces, have been combined into the unified figure of "the dark angel".[12] Jocelin by this point

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[11] "Oh the lessons I have learned, he thought, the height and power and cost!" (p. 110) "'It's another lesson. The lesson for this height. Who could have forseen that this was part of the little scheme.'" (pp. 155-6)

[12] One example of this is after Jocelin has had a confrontation with Anselm: "That night, when he knelt by his bed to pray before sleeping, his angel returned and stood at his back in a cloud of warmth, to comfort him a little." (p. 50) A passage in which the angel and the devil appear explicitly, pp. 62-4, ends with: "He woke in the darkness, full of loathing. So he took a discipline and lashed himself hard, seven times, hard across the back in his pride of the angel, one time for each devil. After that, he slept a dreamless sleep." (p. 64) It is interesting to note that Jocelin's angel is six-winged: "With twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." (p. 22) Golding has used in the novel a modified version of a particular Christian symbol. Saint Bonaventura, in The Mind's Road to God (Itinerarium Mentis ad Deum), trans. George Boas (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1953) deals with St. Francis' vision "of the six-winged Seraph in the likeness of the Crucified" (p. 4) and explicates each of the wings. Bonaventura is involved in numerology, as were many of the Church Fathers, for example Augustine in On Christian Doc-

has started to understand that in the world of man there is no absolute division between good and evil in the motivations for actions.

This knowledge comes to Jocelin, as for all Golding protagonists, as a result of suffering, both physical and spiritual. Prior to his major revelation Jocelin has precisely the same insight into human beings and society as Sammy Mountjoy had: "God, thought Jocelin, as his mind saw things small, God? If I could go back, I would take God as lying between people and to be found there." (p. 220) Just previous to this insight the Dean stated the problem to Roger Mason:

> 'There ought to be some mode of life where all love is good, where one love can't compete with another but adds to it. What kind of a thing is a man's mind, Roger?' (p. 214)

For Jocelin 'God is love' but he does not mouth this plat-

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trine, and gives other examples of the appearance of the number six: "As a symbol of this we have the six steps to the throne of Solomon [III Kings, 10, 19]; the Seraphim whom Isaiah saw have six wings; after six days the Lord called Moses out of the midst of the cloud [Ex., 24, 16]; and Christ after six days as is said in Matthew [17, 1], brought His disciples up into a mountain and was therefore transfigured before them." (p. 9 All references are to the Douai Bible.) Interestingly enough Bonaventura speaks of the six stages of ascension and in doing so produces a formula which could easily, but not rigidly, be applied to Jocelin's progression: "Therefore, according to the six stages of ascension into God, there are six stages of the soul's powers by which we mount from the depths to the heights, from the external to the internal, from the temporal to the eternal-to wit, sense, imagination, reason, intellect, intelligence, and the apex of the mind, the illumination of conscience (Synteresis). (p. 9)

itude as does Rowena Pringle in Free Fall and he does not seek to teach the lesson in the same brutual fashion as Miss Pringle. He is conscious of his faults, and those of others, and is only able to wonder why they must end up destroying each other. He sees that love is good in the abstract but man's diseased mind and overwhelming ego twist it. God is manifested in the love between people and this is the only place where He can truly be found by man, although the discovery and the practise of this love are two different things.

From this Jocelin moves to his major revelation. On his death-bed he is urged by Father Adam to perform "some gesture of assent" to which Jocelin replies, out of a total clear unified vision: "It's like the apple-tree!" (p. 123) The spire has been transformed from a dead monument to a living organic symbol which is part of an integrated whole. Jocelin has become one with the world and in this process the visionary has joined with the vision.[13] More particularly

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[13] cf. Yeats in "Among School Children":

Labour is blossoming or dancing where
The body is not bruised to pleasure soul,
Nor beauty born out of its own despair,
Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil.
O chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance? (VIII, 57-62)

Jocelin has connected the miraculous universe, which Sammy had also perceived, with the erection of the spire. The apple-tree, although a symbol of the magnificence of God's creation, also echoes the fall of man in Eden. In doing so it recalls the manner in which man achieved knowledge of good and evil while symbolically combining two seemingly diverse concepts. With this unified vision Jocelin expires and Father Adam, interpreting the final death cry as "God! God! God!", lays "the Host on the dead man's tongue" in an act of charity. There can be little doubt that Jocelin has passed from purgatory into Heaven.[14] His cry was only interpreted as referring to the "Diety" by Father Adam, who did not realize that Jocelin had Goody in his mind immediately prior to death, whereas his final words unite both Goody and God - the secular and the religious. This unity of vision is only achieved on the death-bed and is occasioned by extreme physical pain. In Jocelin's actions the reader is intended to see that, as in the earlier works, "the beginning of hope lies in the recognition of our moral limitation."[15]

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[14] In The Mind's Road to God Bonaventura says that "Therefore the symbol of the six-winged Seraph signifies the six stages of illumination, which begin with God's creatures and lead up to God, to Whom no one can enter properly save through the Crucified." (p. 4) Surely the giving of the Host is intended to indicate that Jocelin has entered God.

[15] Walter Sullivan, "The Long Chronicle of Guilt:

We are not gods. Man is both condemned and saved by his nature and his limitations.

The final question is whether Jocelin's erection of the spire was justified. Charges of human ignorance and destruction of both community and individual lives may be levelled against Jocelin. Yet he is no more ignorant, and indeed is more likeable even in his obsession, than many of the other characters. He believed, whether we do or not is immaterial, that his vision came from God and was a divine mission. At the same time he also came to realize the enormity of his shortcomings and the consequences of his actions. As the man of knowledge he must suffer but he also receives the vision of unity which was the highlight of his life.

As Delbaere-Garant points out, it is precisely Jocelin's faith that allows him to succeed where reason would have failed and it is "his strong capacity for love", however poorly he may initially have understood all the ramifications, which "makes him finally embrace heaven and earth in their original unity."[16] The ambiguity of whether the

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William Golding's The Spire", The Hollins Critic, I (1964), 12. Wesley Kort suggests that "The protagonist is not saintly or heroic, on the one hand; nor is he simply pathetic, on the other. He suffers as a consequence of his own decisions of doing what he thinks he must. His flaw, his weakness, is not predominantly idolatrous pride or pathetic sickness but his own human ignorance and limitations." "The Groundless Glory of Golding's Spire", Renascence, XX (1968), 77.

[16] "The Evil Plant in William Golding's The Spire", 630.

spire stands is destroyed if the reader is aware that it is Salisbury Cathedral to which Golding is making reference. Without this knowledge all that is known is that at the close of the work, and not beyond that point, the spire, albeit not totally perpendicular, still stands.

Certain critics suggest that instead of entering heaven Jocelin has fallen farther.[17] This is a difficult judgement to maintain at the finish of the novel. George H. Thomson quite rightly continues the analogy between the model of the church and the body of a man which is established in the opening pages:

> Once the church as image of man is seen, Jocelin's apprehension of the notspace calling for a spire is a just apprehension. And his being likened at death to "a building about to fall" is a just comparison. The church and the spire do not fall, and Jocelin does not fall. Having once received the gift of heaven's light and having for long unmercifully abused it, he is again at the last a receiver of the miraculous gift.[18]

As the church was not complete without a spire so the body of man was incomplete without a phallus. At the beginning of the work Jocelin does not realize the physical aspect

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[17] For example Oldsey and Weintraub insist that "The spire does not topple, wrong though it theoretically is for the structure it so precariously graces at the novel's close. Only Jocelin has fallen." The Art of William Golding, p. 130. Similarly E.R.A. Temple: "Jocelin fails, as did Lucifer, and his fall engenders what his faith could not, the knowledge of error." "William Golding's The Spire: A Critique", 173.

[18] "William Golding: Between God-Darkness and God-Light", 12.

of man's nature and his ignorance is emphasized by the less sophisticated workmen who taunt Pangall and mock his impotence by placing the model of the church between their legs so that the spire becomes a phallus. The anguish which Jocelin goes through is caused by the necessity for him to understand that the physical as well as the spiritual does exist and must be taken into account.

Wesley Kort presents a very acute analysis of the importance of the monument beyond the individual circumstances of Jocelin's situation at the end:

> Still, the glory of The Spire, the mythic grandeur of the work, is rooted in something less predictable; it is rooted in our general understanding of what the whole human enterprise involves, the risk and the faith, the guilt and the joy. From the tower of Babel and Prometheus down to our own arts and sciences, we recognize how poorly the human enterprise is based. Still, although a creation drains a man, falls on his head, or reduces him to itself, it stands, if only for a while. And the moment of standing is the precious point of Golding's groundless spire.[19]

Jocelin suffers from ignorance at the beginning of the construction but he moves out of this into the area of knowledge and it is difficult to see him, in light of Golding's other works, as failed. Like Pincher and Sammy he quite ruthlessly exploits people and like Pincher, Beatrice and Father Watts-Watt he attempts, at one point, to take refuge in insanity. This escape is denied to him

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[19] "The Groundless Glory of Golding's Spire", 78.

because he has achieved a level of awareness which will not allow this. His attempt was more grandiose than those of Sammy and Pincher in physical aspect but each of them attempted to create something: for Pincher it was his own universe, for Sammy it was the novel Free Fall, and for Jocelin it was the spire. In this context it would be difficult to assign a protagonist who has achieved the state of self-knowledge, and the unified vision, to the category of a failure. The importance of Jocelin's confidence in himself and in his faith is made quite clear by Golding in an interview in which he speaks of Salisbury Cathedral and says that the spire "is a definite act of faith."[20]

Jocelin is vindicated because he is, essentially, nothing more than a man. He initially viewed the world from the vantage point of one system which included certain important factors but he eventually combines the opposing systems of the world. His faith was justified by the monument he created, that "diagram of prayer" which points out of purgatory, away from hell, towards heaven. Like the spire itself, Jocelin is flawed and seemingly on the brink of falling but in death he succeeds in achieving his goal, both physically and spiritually.

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20 Bernard F. Dick, "'The Novelist is a Displaced Person'. An Interview with William Golding", College English, XXVI (1965), 481.

CHAPTER FOUR

Heaven is Music
-Inscription on the tombstone of
"Bounce" Dawlish, The Pyramid.

Golding's sixth, and most recent, novel marks a radical departure from earlier works. The most interesting fact is the method of publication. A three-part work without an appropriate numbering of chapters, the first and third parts of The Pyramid were initially published in different magazines. The opening section was published as "On the Escarpment" being heralded as "a section from Mr. Golding's forthcoming novel, The Pyramid"[1] and the closing section as "Inside the Pyramid".[2] Each of these sections stands as a separate work but considered as part of a novel they, naturally, prove more illuminating.

The Pyramid is not a narrative experiment in the manner which we have come to expect from Golding. It is

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[1] Kenyon Review, XXIX (1967), 311.

[2] Esquire, LXVI (1966), 165, 302. I am indebted for this bibliographic information to Bernard F. Dick's fine article, "The Pyramid: Mr. Golding's "New" Novel", Studies in Literary Imagination, II (1969), 83-95. He also points out that internal evidence, a reference to Evie in "Inside the Pyramid", indicates that Golding seemed to have written, or at least had a definite idea about the shape of, the finished work.

more straight-forward and deals little with points of view, the collapsing of time or different consciousness yet with all these technical sophistications removed it is still a flawed and rather poor novel. It does, however, maintain essential connections with earlier Golding works. Again the subjective mode of time is employed almost exclusively because the emphasis is on memory, as it was in Free Fall.[3] This story is not told, however, as a search motivated by the burning theological concepts of free will and the fall. In fact, The Pyramid is not as overtly religious as we would expect because it follows Free Fall and The Spire.

The only perceptible result of the lack of any such motivation or the use of religious themes is that The Pyramid is not as carefully sculptured nor as complex a work as Sammy Mountjoy's "confession". Golding does expect that his readers will bring to this new novel all of the knowledge and concepts which they have gathered from the previous works. It is more difficult to isolate Oliver's mot-

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[3] Note Laura Krey's general statement that "to remember, in other words is, in a sense to be human." "Time and the English Novel", in William S. Knickerbocker, ed., Twentieth Century English, p. 401. Each of the sections of the novel has to do with Oliver's memory of incidents which revolved around another major character but as we shall see Oliver is proven to be entirely too human in his memories and his reactions to them. He denies the implications which they present and refuses to analyse them in any manner similar to Sammy Mountjoy.

ivation or his intention in remembering the three other major characters and the incidents in which they are involved. This is a result of Oliver's character for we are not granted as complete an insight into it as we were allowed in the case of Sammy Mountjoy. Nor does Oliver seem to progress or mature significantly throughout the work. Although this makes it hard to penetrate to Oliver's core it is part of Golding's authorial intention.

The departure in narrative technique is combined with, and may be a result of, a shift in the focus on Golding's common themes. In earlier chapters it was noted how the novels of isolation (Lord of the Flies, The Inheritors) move into the novels of man in society (Free Fall, The Spire) with the transitional work being Pincher Martin. Once again a transition has been effected and basic concerns are viewed from a different angle of vision. Oliver is connected to Sammy Mountjoy and Dean Jocelin as they were connected to Pincher Martin. Oliver has the potential to achieve the revelation and accompanying state of knowledge which each of the other three arrived at, but his story is essentially different in situation, for we are not shown fruitful interaction between man and society but rather the stultifying effect society has upon the protagonist. Oliver does not possess the strong ego which characterised the other three protagonists nor are his memories the tale of a Promethean struggle. They portray, instead, the power of the social

forces which continually surround him. The move, then, in Golding's work has been from an examination of the basic nature of man to his actions within society, and how these affect him, to society and its claustrophobic warping power for the protagonist and those surrounding him.

There are parallels which unite all of Golding's works and the epigraph to The Pyramid could serve as an introductory note to any of them:

> "If thou be among people make for thyself love, the beginning and end of the heart."
> -from the Instructions of Ptah-Hotep

As a partial explanation of the title it has been noted that

> Mr. Golding is no less fond of puns than the ancient Egyptians, whose language was full of word-play facilitated by the fact that the written language only. The consonants of which the written words "love" and "pyramid" consist are identical.[4]

So the concern here is not just the individual and love, both physical and spiritual, but the individual, love and society. This is, in effect, a fuller examination of the working of love, or the lack thereof, within relationships on a larger scale. It was this relationship factor which both Sammy and Dean Jocelin perceived as being of ultimate

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[4] Avril Henry, "William Golding: The Pyramid", Southern Review: An Australian Journal of Literary Studies, III (1968), 28. Henry refers to D.A. Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian (Oxford: 1962), pp. 110-1 as his source.

importance for the individual.

At the opening of the novel we find our protagonist engaged in playing "C Minor Study of Chopin" which seems to express his "own love", his "own hopeless infatuation", for the older Imogen. Oliver imagines himself, at a naïve virginal eighteen, to be suffering intensely from the effects of unfulfilled love; his passion for Imogen is not unlike, in its idealistic nature, Sammy's initial reaction to Beatrice. Oliver's object of passion is not attainable by him and he is quickly brought back to reality by Evie Babbacombe's nocturnal request for assistance.

This rather simple scene establishes a great deal for the rest of the novel. Bobby Ewan, the son of the doctor who lives next to Oliver's parent's house, is the local pride. He has "borrowed" the car of the music teacher Bounce Dawlish to take young Evie Babbacombe, the proverbial young thing from across the tracks, to a dance. He obviously could not take her in his father's car as she is too socially distanced from him to be an acceptable date. While the two are copulating, or attempting to, they manage to run the car into a shallow pond. Young Ollie is summoned by Evie to help Bobby remove the car from the pond and return it. He agrees to help for two reasons: first because Evie, the "local phenomenon", has flattered his pride by coming to him and accompanies her request with a "cold peck" on his cheek; second he is the social inferior

of Bobby Ewan in the rigidly structured and carefully maintained hierarchy of the village and Oliver is able to feel superior to Bobby whom he now refers to as a "silly young ass." The importance of this incident is that it establishes the importance, even to these youngsters, of the social hierarchy. Also it seems to introduce the familiar two-system concept as Oliver thinks that "Evie had none of Imogen's sacred beauty. She was strictly secular."[5] This is Oliver's romantic idealization and does not really represent any consciousness on his part of such a two-system reality. This concept is to be shattered later but even then Oliver fails to fully comprehend that Imogen's attraction was purely physical and was enhanced only by the fact that he could not obtain her.

Oliver is lured from his immediate meditations upon Imogen's charms by Evie's more obvious availability. The first section presents Golding's understanding of the effect of a small town upon a sensitive, albeit rather unperceptive, lad. Evie is quite aware that her sexual attraction is the only quality she possesses which will allow her to break through the social barriers in any manner. Oliver is also conscious of this, although not of its significance, as he says that "In the conflict between social propriety and sex-

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[5] The Pyramid (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), p. 16. All further references are to this edition.

ual attraction there was never much doubt which would win." (p. 45) Evie uses the presence of Ollie to cover up her affair with Bobby because the social distance between the Babbacombes and the Ewans is far too great whereas it is not nearly so large between the Babbacombes and Oliver's family. With a flash of insight Oliver realizes that to Evie's parents he "was a possible suitor."

The mental torment through which Oliver passes is not even recognized by his parents. At one stage, after he smashes his hand on the piano, his mother has "a desperately concealed fear" for his sanity. They have absolutely no perception and consequently no knowledge of the change in their son as he becomes almost obsessed in his discovery of the pleasures of sex.

Like Sammy with Beatrice, Oliver merely wishes to use Evie for his own purposes. In retrospect one latent situation in Free Fall is brought to fulfillment in The Pyramid. Beatrice always marked the top of her letters to Sammy with a cross to indicate that they were safe from having a child. Here Evie confronts Oliver with the possibility of her being pregnant. He reacts in an egotistical manner, thinking only of himself and what such an occurrence would mean to his plans to go to Oxford and the social shame such a situation would bring. When Evie finally tells him that she is not pregnant and the dreaded crisis will not occur all Oliver is able to say is "'Thank God!'" Evie

breaks down crying that "'...nobody ever loved me. I wanted to be loved. I wanted somebody to be kind to me - I wanted-'" and Oliver realizes that both of them wanted "tenderness" but that he, in no way, wanted it from her. He stands guilty of her accusation that all he wanted was her body. He was ruthless in his drive to satisfy his own lust and he never really cared about the person inside the body. At least Sammy Mountjoy seemed to be interested, at the beginning of his pursuit, in discovering who Beatrice Ifor was; Oliver is not even capable of that minor effort. He seems to be totally incapable of bringing any sort of understanding into this, or any other, relationship.

Evie fulfills the function her name implies by bringing Oliver from a state of innocence regarding sexual matters to one of limited knowledge. It is hard for Oliver to accept the evidence of an abnormal relationship, a sado-masochistic one, which he assumes exists between Evie and the crippled Captain Wilmot. He can only laugh but Evie bribes him into silence by promising to do whatever he wishes, but not on that day. So Oliver sets the rendezvous for the next day. In the meantime Evie has a chance to talk to Oliver's father and set the stage for a traumatic discovery.

On returning from copulating in full sight of the village with Evie, who insisted that the act had to take place on that particular spot or not at all, Oliver discovers that his father had been watching him through binoculars.

Ironically Oliver's mother, at this time, is attending the wedding of the once-worshipped Imogen. The only advice Oliver's father can offer is that pre-maritial sex is "'... wrong, wrong, wrong!'" Typically for the socially conscious, and somewhat confused, young Oliver it is only when his father becomes aware of this initiation into the garden of earthly delights that Oliver yearns "desperately for some sewer up which I might crawl and reach my parents, kneel, be forgiven, so that the days of our innocence might return again." (p. 100 Italics added.) For Oliver the most horrific thing is neither the sex nor the exploitation but the fact that his parents know that he engaged in such an act with Evie Babbacombe.

Oliver avoids Evie prior to his departure for Oxford but he encounters her a final time just before entering his third year. She has become the respectable mistress of a businessman. When her and Oliver go for a few drinks she accuses him of raping her when she was fifteen. Again all Oliver seems conscious of is the reaction of the people in the pub and the social scandal that might be caused by such talk. The accusation is a result of Oliver's own idiocy as he attempts to outdo Evie in "sophistication". She admits that David, her lover, is good in bed and then says that he is better than Oliver was. Oliver tries to deny, in the ensuing hush, that Evie and he ever had such a relationship because he is conscious of what this would mean to his

parents if it came out in the village.

In their final confrontation Evie throws some light on the welts Oliver had discovered on the back of her thighs as she accuses him of "telling" about her and her dad. The incestal overtones are completely lost on Oliver who can only cry out after her. When she does not respond he merely "goes home confounded, to brood on this undiscovered person and her curious slip of the tongue." (p. 111) For Sammy Mountjoy there would have been a rhetorical question here but Oliver goes no further and remains ignorant about the implications of Evie's speech and about her as a person.

Ironically, the gold cross and chain which Evie lost during the episode with Bobby Ewan and the pond, and which Oliver returned, carried the inscription Amor vincit omnia. This, barring Oliver's rather literal rendition, translates as "Love conquers all." Not just physical love but spiritual as well. This is something which Oliver is incapable of either giving or receiving. Although more fully developed as a character, Evie is the direct descendant of Beatrice but she does not end up in the same pathetic state. She is only the first of three characters, each of whom Oliver is involved with, who cannot find this total love. Each of the three characters remains "undiscovered" by Oliver whose conscious self will only recognize superficial characteristics but whose subconscious seems to be dimly aware of a deeper type of connection.

The second section of The Pyramid precedes the last part of the first section chronologically as it occurs at the end of Oliver's first term at Oxford. Having become a budding young scientist Oliver feels that his situation has changed significantly since that traumatic summer when he was eighteen: "Evie was gone, Imogen married; and I was a proper student with a proper sense of values and duty and therefore no worries." (p. 112) This may be so, but the power of Oliver's perception and his willingness to acknowledge the depth of another person's character remain unaltered in the least.

Oliver walks right into the rebirth of the village's Operatic Society and its production of King of Hearts, which is the type of maudlin, cheap theatre that would appeal to the sensibilities of the village's middle-class citizens as high art. Mrs. Underhill, the town's "permanent ingénue" has been replaced, not without a fuss, by Imogen, whom Oliver still has on a pedestal. Press-ganged into taking a bit-part in the production Oliver attends the rehearsal where the pettiness and childish artistic pretensions, especially of Imogen's husband, Norman Claymore, are exposed.

The most important figure in this section is the professional producer Evelyn De Tracy, who manages to smooth matters over during rehearsal by using flattery. On rushing home to change costume, during the final production, Oliver

meets De Tracy, who has been drinking, in the street. Suggesting that they might have a drink De Tracy proceeds to reveal attitudes quite contrary to the ones he expressed earlier, even going as far as to criticize Imogen as "a stupid, insensitive, vain woman." Although slightly confused, Oliver feels befriended and becomes extremely excited in attempting to articulate his emotions. He concludes with telling De Tracy that what he wants is "the truth of things." As an answer he is given a sheaf of photographs which show De Tracy to be a transvestite. Typically Oliver is as uncomprehending this time as he was in the earlier scene with Evie and instead of realizing what he is being shown he merely bursts into laughter. This snaps the intimacy between him and De Tracy, who backs off and only reminds Oliver that the costume change must be made soon.

As parting advice, in an effort to "cure" Oliver, De Tracy suggests that after leaving the stage Oliver listen to the "'Great Duet'." With some difficulty, and only after consulting De Tracy, whom he has to search out, Oliver makes a rather awkward final entrance. Taking De Tracy's advice he discovers that Imogen is indeed only "A stupid, insensitive, vain woman." (p. 154) and that she and her husband

> ...were two people whose ignorance and vanity made them suitable to, acceptable to no one but each other. It was a spyhole into them, and ugly balm to my soul. I listened; and I was free. (p. 154)

It is rather hasty of Oliver to presume his freedom at this point. Rushing out, with this realization, to find De Tracy Oliver discovers him to be quite drunk. After putting him on the Barchester bus Oliver realizes that that may not be De Tracy's destination and the section ends with Oliver crying out after Evelyn just as he had to Evie.

Golding's emphasis in the second section is on the narrow part of society from which Oliver issues. This small segment has artificially defined boundaries which are carefully defended by its members. The scene in which Imogen's lack of talent and her accompanying vanity become apparent echoes an earlier scene. In the first part of the novel Oliver meets Evie on the bridge and she begins to sing, surprising Oliver who comments: "'You've got a jolly good voice!'" (p. 52) He then suggests that Evie keep practising and she replies that she would if she "had someone to play for" her. Oliver is taken back by the fact that her parents do not have a piano. His gaze shifts to Chandler's Close and he comes to the realization that "it was what the papers called a slum. If Sergeant Babbacombe hadn't got a piano, certainly none of the others would have one." (p. 53) Evie comes from the lower part of the town and, although her father may be at the top of that particular social stratum, the Babbacombe family cannot penetrate into that social segment in which Oliver resides. Evie can sing, she has talent, but never, under any circumstances, would she be invited to

take part in a production of the Operatic Society.

If this provincial, middle-class organization cannot even recognize and utilize the talent which resides within the village it is no wonder that none of those involved with the production, Oliver included, can ever conceive of the metropolitan theatre which De Tracy represents. Nor, could they ever come even close to an understanding of De Tracy's complex character. Such ideas do not enter into that narrowed group consciousness because their social position seriously impairs their perception. Oliver does not seek to understand Evie. She is, for him, merely a sexual object from a lower part of society. An object which he can use without regrets but one whom he would never regard in the same manner as he does the more socially acceptable Imogen.

Ironically it is De Tracy who acutely analyses and indicates the true nature of Imogen's character to Oliver who, only then, realizes that his infatuation was largely physical and that he had no idea whatsoever of her actual character. Unlike Sammy's eventual view of Beatrice, Oliver never seems to understand that Evie is also a person, and by all indications, one much preferable to Imogen. Oliver rejoices in his freedom after he recognizes Imogen for what she is but he is not really free - he has just rid himself of another object. He does not go any farther and is still strictly bound by the conditioning of his social stratum. It is De Tracy who perceives the basic nature of

Imogen and at one glance is aware of Oliver's infatuation with her. Oliver never achieves this level of perception on his own and is only able to react physically by laughing at the photographs of De Tracy in a ballerina's costume. This is the second character whom Oliver leaves undiscovered because there is too much of a threat presented to him.

The third, and final, section of the novel occurs some years later but uses memory flashbacks to reach back farther than has been previously. The first section deals with the summer when Oliver was eighteen, ending with the minor incident where he encounters Evie for the last time, three years after that summer; the second section was concerned exclusively with one day in Oliver's holiday at home after the end of his first term. The last section has scenes from the time when Oliver was three, six, the period when he took violin lessons from Bounce Dawlish, his return on Easter vacation from Oxford, his parents' final yearly visit to him at Oxford, his return with his family to persuade his mother to live with them, and the final post-1960 visit. All these scenes have one element in common: Bounce Dawlish, the final character in the trinity of unloved and misunderstood (the other two being Evie Babbacombe and Evelyn De Tracy) with whom Oliver comes in contact.

The description of the emotions Oliver feels as he approaches on his last visit to his home town are revealing:

> The determination never to return, lest I should find my heart wrung or broken by dead things, this I found replaced by no more than a mild curiosity. I was wary perhaps, and willing to run away, if nostalgia became so sharp, so raw as to be unbearable, but the glass windows of my car made a picture postcard of the place. I could roll through it, detached, defended by steel, rubber, leather, glass. (p. 158)

The differences between Sammy Mountjoy and Oliver are clear. Oliver has only a "mild curiosity" and is prepared to retreat hastily if memory, which he refers to in a condescending, and protective, way as "nostalgia", presents to him a burden which he does not wish to carry. Consequently Oliver will be denied the profound revelation accorded to Sammy because an honest evaluation of the past and a recognition of the implications are a prerequisite.

Stopping to see old Henry Williams Oliver senses that his visit is a mistake and wishes to retreat to "the security of leather and steel and glass" but is caught by Williams before he is able to do so. This is where he receives the important information that Bounce Dawlish is dead, but only after he sees that Williams now owns her "vintage two-seater", the one first seen when young Ollie helped Bobby Ewan retrieve it from the pond. This car is an important link between Evie Babbacombe and Bounce Dawlish, who represent the unloved and misunderstood, in their relationships with both Oliver and the other men of the village. Oliver is reminded of his supposed devotion to Bounce by Henry who tells him where the memorial is so re-

spects may be paid.

Seated in front of the tombstone, Oliver spies the three words that make up the epigraph and instantly remembers "Old Mr. Dawlish" whose words they were. Bounce's father was a failed musician who remains in Oliver's memory because of one particular incident. A "Poor Man" was cranking a phonograph placed in a baby's carriage around which "ragged and dirty" children danced. Mr. Dawlish rushed out and smashed the phonograph in one of his "eccentric" fits. Presumably this modern invention in the field of music was unacceptable to him because it degraded music. In fact, this action was only that of a cantankerous, old man who was frustrated by his lack of his talent but who believed that such violent actions were the mark of an unrecognized genius. The interesting sidelight which accompanies this incident concerns Oliver's father. Himself a violin player, Oliver's father wishes Oliver to learn "some" music, but only "some" for he holds the conviction that to pursue such a profession would only mean "a course of indescribable bohemianism", ending with Oliver "pushing round a phonograph." In the pragmatic world-view of Oliver's father music is only a hobby and a dedication to it, or any other art form, is dangerous and is not even to be considered for his son. It is no wonder that with such a view prevelant in this social segment that De Tracy, as a representative of the arts, could not be understood by these people. Mr. Dawlish's eccentric-

ities were tolerated because he also owned a business and some property in the village.

Dauring the course of his music lessons with Bounce, Oliver is told of how she was made to copy out fugues by her father who punished any mistake by a ruler across the knuckles. She shares her father's dislike for the modern and this is clearly shown when she attacks Oliver's father and Oliver, at one music lesson, for obtaining a wireless set which she refers to as "cheap, nasty, vulgar, blasphemous." Oliver realizes that Bounce is very limited in her musical appreciation for the wireless enabled him to hear "Kreisler, Paderewski, Cortot, Casals" while her musical highlights

> ...were inaccurate and not very lively performances of St. Paul, the Messiah, the Elijah, some Stanford, and Stainer's Crucfixion every Easter. For the rest, it was Heller, Kummer, Matthay's Relaxation Exercises, with Hymns Ancient and Modern on Sundays. (p. 188)

She is, in reality, nothing more than what her father was - a second-rate musical talent. Her father forced her to study music in an attempt to make of her what he could not be. She confesses to Oliver, in a later scene, that she dreamt of being a boy so that she could pretend she was a vetinarian but her music practise did not allow her any time for animals. Lacking her father's dedication and ambition, or obsession, she was nevertheless forced into the field of music by an uncaring parent who took no account of his child's wishes for a career.

Oliver, although much older by the time he receives

this information, does not recognize the parallel to his own earlier dilemma. At his first formal music examination he is told by the examiner that he "may have Absolute Pitch", which is an extremely desirable attribute for the professional musician. Later his ambition is enflamed by his ability to play the piano and he begins to envision a career as a pianist. However, he is torn between two poles on this point for that year it is necessary that he "begin to work for a scholarship at Oxford." He has been conditioned to believe that "Physics and Chemistry were the real, the serious thing." (p. 192) He, half-mockingly, suggests to Bounce that he is seriously thinking of music as a career. She discourages him and rightly points out that his "father would never agree."

By the time the next music lesson occurs Oliver has decided that he might at least take a music examination in piano. Hoping to discourage him, Bounce plays a Chopin Impromptu but Oliver is not discouraged, he just sees exactly how limited her talent is. After an ear test Bounce realizes that Oliver does have extremely good pitch and begins to encourage him.

At first it seems to Oliver that it must be apparent to everyone that music is what he "ought to be doing", but as soon as his practise interferes with his studies the situation changes. In a revealing scene Oliver's parents apply subtle pressure which is intended to work upon the

concepts they have conditioned Oliver into believing are of utmost importance:

> "Well I know you've got a piano lesson tommorrow; but you've also got a chemistry lesson tomorrow!"
> "Look——Father. Didn't you learn the violin?"
> "I never let it come between me and the Materia Medica—Oliver, don't you really want to go to Oxford?"
> "'Course I do."
> "These last months are so important, dear," said my mother pleadingly. "You know we only want what's best for you."
> The old shame, inculcated year after year, at the idea of becoming a professional musician kept me silent. As if he was reading my mind, my father peered kindly at me across the table. If he had been angry, I could have withstood him; but he sounded understanding and sympathetic as if we were both face to face with iron necessity.
> "You'll have to keep it as a hobby, the way I did. Anyway the gramophone and wireless are going to put most professional musicians out of business. Good Lord, Oliver, don't you understand? With opportunities like yours, you might even become a doctor!" (p. 197)

Oliver informs Bounce that he has decided not to work for his "ARCM" but this does not surprise her. Oliver has foregone his own ambition and concedes the choice of his future career to his parents. His father and mother have done moderately well because of his father's profession as a druggist. In their pragmatic way they see that the sciences are the only possible career for Oliver. If Oliver applies himself he may even achieve that lofty social position enjoyed by the Ewans - he "might even become a doctor!" It is strange that Oliver is aware that he has been conditioned to reject the idea of becoming a professional musician by his parents but chooses just to note the fact rather than attempt to combat the situation. What Oliver fails to com-

prehend fully, at any point, is that he, like Bounce Dawlish, entered the wrong profession under parental pressure. This denying of spiritual fulfillment, because of material concerns, means that both Oliver and Bounce must reside in one system and can never achieve the unified vision. The parents of each of these figures are firmly entranced in a one-system world and force the system they have chosen upon their offspring. The irony is, of course, that Oliver does not become a doctor, he remains firmly in the parental tradition and is, simply, a chemist.

This introduces the two-system dilemma which Sammy Mountjoy first presented to us. For Bounce Dawlish the two disciplines are vetinary medicine and music; for Oliver they are chemistry/physics and music but in both cases the choice is between the arts or the sciences. The difference between The Pyramid and Free Fall is that none of the characters presented in Oliver's memory attempts to embrace both systems. Both the major figures of this section, Oliver and Bounce, are forced by parental authority, either directly physical or, in a more subtle fashion, psychological, into fields they do not wish to enter. The parents hope to achieve their ambitions through the success of their children. In the process the children are stultified and neither of the two makes any effort to achieve a unity which would combine both systems.

Weaved throughout the narrative which relates Oliv-

er's music lessons is the relationship between Bounce Dawlish and Henry Williams. What this reduces to is another instance of exploitation. Henry insinuates himself into Bounce's favour and then moves his family in with her. Proceeding from this he manages to build up a garage business, increasingly ignoring the emotional needs of Bounce now that he has achieved what he desired.

Bounce's demands are not exhorbitant and she does not seem to wish for any act of adultery on Henry's part. One time when Oliver is waiting for his music lessons he hears her "ludicrously pleading": "'All I want is for you to need me, need me!'" (p. 188) This craving for affection becomes more intense as she feels she is being ousted from the Williams' family circle. She engages in a series of minor, self-caused motor accidents which force Henry to come to her aid. This series results in her license being suspended for five years. Deprived of this method of forcing Henry to pay attention to her, Bounce resorts to something more serious. Oliver is an accidental witness to this startling act:

> And I knew even then that the sight was seared into me, branded where I lived, ineradicable—Bounce pacing along the pavement with her massive bosom, thick stomach and rolling, ungainly haunches; Bounce wearing her calm smile, her hat and gloves and flat shoes—and wearing nothing else whatsoever. (p. 207)

Like Beatrice and Father Watts-Watt before her, Bounce moves into insanity as a type of protective state, or rather, she

moves into what appears to be insanity. Oliver, on his final visit, understands the relief this state brought thinking that

> You could say that the only time she was ever calm and happy, with a relaxed, smiling face, they put her away until she was properly cured and unhappy again. You could say that, for example. (p. 216)

Naturally nobody in this stultified village world does, for such a statement would be an admission that an eccentric act could be the result of a peaceful state of mind.

The major revelation of this section occurs as Oliver gazes at the tombstone of CLARA CECILIA DAWLISH 1890-1960. Since the time when he was a young lad taking music lessons from this woman, whose middle name, Cecilia, is ironically, that of the patron saint of music, he had it drilled into him that he was "devoted" to her. He was no different than other children for

> There was not an admissible boy or girl in our society whose parents were not agreed on our devotion to Bounce. It was a rock in our lives, so real, so hard, so matter-of-fact. (p. 170 Italics added.)

As a middle-aged man, Oliver finally comes to his realization and in doing so comes closer to that "centre" which earlier Golding protagonists faced:

> ...This was a kind of psychic ear-test before which nothing survived but revulsion and horror, childishness and atavism, as if unnameable things were rising round me and blackening the sun. I heard my own voice—as if it could make its own bid for honesty—crying aloud.
>
> "I never liked you! Never!"
>
> Then I was outside the churchyard, standing on the grass in the centre of the Square; and for that moment I could not think how I had got there. A

> middle-aged man, running away as though he had found himself once more in the long corridor between the empty rooms! (p. 213)

Almost immediately afterward Oliver goes beyond his first, simple emotional statement and comes to an understanding that his feelings are caused by something deeper: "I was afraid of you, and so I hated you. It is as simple as that. When I heard you were dead I was glad." (p. 214) It is left to the reader to infer why Oliver was afraid. The answer is starkly simple: Bounce Dawlish was a village eccentric, she was outside the normal family life experienced by Oliver. In short, she, like Evie Babbacombe and Evelyn De Tracy, was an outsider who produced only confusion and was rejected because she was an example of impulses and urges which the middle-class attitude attempted to stifle; she was, and remained, the village eccentric. Not a person to be dealt with but only a provincial character to be treated with tolerance and slight amusement.

On an earlier visit Oliver takes his daughter Sophy to see Miss Dawlish. As his daughter clings to him in the presence of this woman, Oliver seems to sense that Bounce's life is seriously lacking and he becomes determined that his own daughter "should never know such lost solemnity but be a fulfilled woman, a wife and mother." (p. 212) Unconsciously he has taken the same sort of step that Bounce's father and Oliver's own parents had taken. This is the conviction that one's children should be "fulfilled"

but only in the way which the parents envision and not in accordance with the child's wishes or ambitions.

Later, on the final visit, Oliver discovers the bonfire in which Bounce had burned her music, metronome, bust of Beethoven and photograph of her father. This is as near as Oliver ever comes to a full revelation. He sits swept by emotion: "I did not know to what or whom my feelings had reference, nor even what they were." (p. 216) It seems likely that Oliver is contemplating his own unfulfilled ambition of becoming a professional musician. He had talent and the possibilities of what he might have become seem to be on the fringes of his consciousness as he is faced with the evidence of Bounce's final rejection of a career which she had never wanted and one in which she was only mediocre. But Oliver avoids facing what her rejection might mean to himself and the parallel which exists. He merely returns to Henry's garage to get his car and then motors away.

Oliver does not retreat at the end of the novel as a typical Golding protagonist. He is characteristic of his own part of society in that aptly named village of Stilbourne. Everything remains intact and there is no possibility of growth as a human being because such a growth would be dangerous as it might destroy the artificial, middle-class attitudes. Consequently the major figures of the novel, and especially Oliver, remain unfulfilled. In a

subtle way Golding supplies a hint of this. He has Oliver refer to the Stilbourne Operatic Society by using the initial letters in an acronym-like manner to form the internationally recognized radio shorthand word for help - SOS. (pp. 114, 115, 156) The point is that the narrow segment from which Oliver comes, and all those who are directly influenced by it, are in dire need of some sort of aid if they are ever to achieve fulfillment. The prescription for their illness is to be found in the epigraph which opens the novel. We now see that the function of this aphorism is to indicate that love does not exist in the village and that it is the necessary emotion without which these people will remain still-born.

There is a price to be paid, however, in developing this emotion. This price must be paid before one is able to start on the path of development and this is a price which Oliver refuses. He is given once last chance when Henry goes to change his money at the gas station:

> He took my money and went to change it. I stood, looking down at the worn pavement, so minutely and illegibly inscribed; and I saw the feet, my own among them, pass and repass. I stretched out a leg and tapped with my live toe, listening meanwhile, tap, tap, tap—and suddenly I felt that if I might only lend my own sound, my own flesh, my own power of choosing the future, to those invisible feet, I would pay anything—<u>anything</u>: but knew in the same instant that, like Henry, I would never pay more than a reasonable price. (pp. 217-8)

The full price which must be paid is the suffering and torment which accompany self-knowledge. It is only with know-

ledge of the self that one is able to achieve some sort of knowledge of others - in fact, to begin to discover them.

The tapping which Oliver is conscious of is the rhythm created by the feet of the villagers over a period of time. If he wished he could attempt to penetrate this rhythm and make the same type of search as Sammy Mountjoy but he declines. This is the rhythm of the novel; in particular these are the movements of those three characters in Oliver's memory through whom he may have reached an understanding of himself and the world. Oliver is given three chances but in each case he backs off. Each of the characters was in some manner involved with music. Once Oliver rejected music as a career, and now he rejects the rhythm of memory. He has made his choice.

The irony is that Henry paid his "reasonable price" when he erected the monument to Bounce. In putting up the tombstone Henry has three words inscribed upon it: "Heaven is Music". What he did was to attribute to Bounce an aphorism which she had constantly repeated because her father drummed it into her. Williams never understood, or like Oliver chose not to, that this was not the case for Bounce. To her music was simply the only thing she had been trained for.

For the town the inscription is just as false. The music of the operetta <u>King of Hearts</u> was not heavenly in any fashion - it was petty and empty. This concern with

mundane music indicates the inability of any of the villagers to be elevated to that Platonic heaven which is the music of the spheres - the wonder of the universe and the perception of harmony and unity that comes with self-knowledge. In the final scene Oliver senses this as he looks into Henry's face and sees his own face mirrored. He is far more perceptive than Henry but fights down any conscious recognition of the real issues. He, like Henry, has and will continue to exploit those who are useful to him in his own dull manner but will not move an inch towards self-knowledge.

This stultification and abortion of growth is what the title refers to. It has been suggested

> ...that the Pyramid refers to monument, metronome and crystal, all linked by similar shape and by their relation to Time, whether gesturing against it, imposing it or simply employing it.[6]

This interpretation seems overly complicated without producing any useful insight. There is only one reference to the pyramid structure in the novel itself: "And ruefully I remember how the Ewans always gave me a present at Christmas. They also vibrated in time to the crystal pyramid." (p. 178) What this "pyramid" refers to is easily identifiable when two other Golding works are taken into account. Sammy Mountjoy has previously mentioned it saying: "...I... boasted with rudimentary feeling for the shape of our social

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[6] Avril Henry, "William Golding: The Pyramid", 29.

pyramid that I was the rector's son, sort of—and become unpopular." (Free Fall, p. 146) Golding, in the essay "A Touch of Insomnia", talks of going with his Nanny to France and how their compartment was closed for he "supposed there was some sealed-off hold where the base of our social pyramid rested." (The Hot Gates, p. 135) The pyramid is simply the symbol of the class structure which exists, and is rigidly enforced, in the small village. It is crystal because it is transparent. Oliver has taken great pains to transmit this transparent quality to the reader for even he, in his dim-witted fashion, realizes that it exists.

To perceive the significance of this structure even further we merely have to contrast the title of this work with that of the previous novel, The Spire. The initial distinction is that the pyramid is a pagan construction whereas the spire is Christian. It is the second distinction, that we may make, that is more important. Pyramids, to Golding's contemporary Western audience, are houses for the dead while, in contrast, the spire is a monument to the living power of God and if seen as a phallic structure the contrast becomes even more apparent. The spire of Dean Jocelin is transformed and signals the merging of the spiritual and the secular into an integrated whole. The pyramid of Oliver marks nothing of the sort - it is a fitting monument to the villagers of Stilbourne.

Oliver, at the end of the novel, remains the perfect

example of these permanently dead people and he drives away "concentrating resolutely" on the task of driving. He engages his mind in a simple mechanical reaction in an attempt to drive away memories which are dangerous to him. We see little of the depth of Oliver's character, in the manner which we viewed Pincher Martin, Sammy Mountjoy and Dean Jocelin, but this is not Golding's failing. Rather it is exactly his point - as an author he cannot reveal Oliver's character because it is shallow and he is not a figure of the same calibre as the protagonists of the three previous novels. He remains permanently isolated in the pyramid because he prefers his security to self-knowledge. He does not have the honesty to engage in meditation upon his past as did Sammy Mountjoy. Rather than being an artist or a person with a vision, he chooses to remain, unenlightened, in one system. He is the Golding protagonist who is a failure as a human being. He does not receive a revelation because he desperately blocks out his past. The last view we have of him shows him frantically running away from the possibility.

CHAPTER FIVE

The collection of three short novels entitled The Scorpion God is a step outside the usual area of Golding's work, in both size and mode. Such a move, however, is one which is not totally without precedent. It was noted in the previous chapter that two of the three sections of The Pyramid were published separately and are able to stand on their own as short stories. This three-part structure is again employed in The Scorpion God. The obvious difference is that the same characters do not appear in any of the three short novels but the essential similarity is that the three works all revolve around identical themes.

As explained in the introductory chapter, "Envoy Extraordinary", because of its date of publication, will not be considered directly here. Still, a bibliographic fact is of importance in an examination of this collection. From "Envoy Extraordinary" came the play The Brass Butterfly, which is intended to be a light comedy. What I am suggesting is that all three works of The Scorpion God share not only a similarity in theme but also in tone and mode. As "Envoy Extraordinary" must be viewed as a light comedy so must the other two works. In this collection we find that Golding is parodying himself by treating his usual themes in a different manner. There are, however, major flaws in this coll-

ection. All three works lack the nobility of expression found in Golding's best novels and are neither as complex nor as well-written.[1]

The most important figure in the title work is the Liar whose rebellion against the accepted concepts precipitates the difficulties. We are shown Great House failing in the run which was a trial to prove that his divine right to rule was still valid. This is not just a detail which Golding has added for his own purpose for J.B. Priestley remarks that the "task of each Pharoah of Mesopotamian king, on his accession, was to renew, to restore in its triumph, the Beginning."[2] This non-achievement in the run is not viewed as a failure, by either Great House or his subjects, but is seen as an opportunity to be entombed in a pyramid and thereby achieve a state of being transcending that of life on earth.

This burial of a living king, within a monument dedicated to him, is totally in accord with Egyptian belief. The characters in "The Scorpion God" consider this process in a favourable manner for it brings the one involved into

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[1] For an examination of the complexities of Golding's style see Howard S. Babb, "Four Passages from William Golding's Fiction", Minnesota Review, V (1965), 50-8.

[2] Man and Time, pp. 145-6.

the "Eternal Now", which is completely outside man's temporal scheme. Aldous Huxley, in The Perennial Philosophy, discusses the mystical view of time and suggests that "The universe is an everlasting succession of events; but its ground, according to the Perennial Philosophy, is the timeless now of the divine Spirit."[3] This is the type of concept which appeared in connection with Dean Jocelin's vision in The Spire; here it is not an isolated incident but an accepted belief of the society. Priestley refers to Breasted who says that "Among no people, ancient or modern, has the idea of a life beyond the grave held so prominent a place as among the ancient Egyptians."[4] What the Liar objects to is the method employed in Great House's attempt to achieve his "life beyond the grave". Such a notion appears in an earlier work, for while Golding apparently accepts the trimordial concept of time he may be experimenting, in Pincher Martin, with Josiah Royce's idea of the "Eternal Now".[5] In one instance, after Great House has been entombed and the Liar is still refusing the opportunity, the Head Man refers

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[3] p. 184.

[4] Man and Time, p. 147.

[5] For a fuller examination of Royce's theory see William Fleming, "The Newer Concepts of Time and Their Relation to the Temporal Arts", Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, IV (1945), 101-6.

to the protagonist saying that "His [Great House's] Liar still endures the vexations, the insecurities, the trials of a moving Now."[6]

The Liar is a man of knowledge of the undesirable type. He has obviously travelled more than any of the entourage of Great House's court yet even Great House insists that such stories as Liar tells must be fantasy:

> The God tapped the Liar on the shoulder.
> "Tell me some lies."
> "I've told you all I know, Great House."
> "All you can think of, you mean," said the Head Man.
> "They wouldn't be lies if you knew them." (p. 25)

The type of knowledge which Liar possesses is merely factual, and we are not shown him receiving any type of revelation.

Ironically the Head Man, when talking to Pretty Flower, states that the faculty which "distinguishes man from the rest of creation" is "His capacity to look at facts - and draw from them a conclusion." (p. 50) Following this assertion the Head Man says of himself that "They have said - and it would be false modesty to deny it - that all knowledge is my province. What a man can know, I know." (p. 51) Unfortunately for the Head Man this is not quite true for he does not have the knowledge of the Liar, nor are the conclusions he draws the same as those of the protagonist.

The Liar is a man who turns his knowledge to the wrong

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[6] The Scorpion God (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 54. All further references are to this edition.

ends. His ego and instinct for self-preservation do not allow him to placidly accept the fact that he must die merely because his patron has not fulfilled the requirements of a ritual. In effect the Liar has committed the action which George H. Thomson sees as one of the defining characteristics of later Golding protagonists, from Pincher Martin to Dean Jocelin: "To turn away from God into life is to assert the persona that says "I"."[7] By strongly affirming the importance of his own ego, above and beyond anything else, the Liar, as do many of Golding's characters, accepts one system as final. He is unable to hold any view which regards death as a transcendence of life.

What the Liar becomes is a Hitler figure, as he makes his plans of conquest quite clear and brashly articulates the exploitation of Pretty Flower:

> "The man who holds the high seat in this country is the man who has you, strange and beautiful woman, for his bed. He could burn up the banks of this river from one end to the other, until all men living by it were bowing to your beauty." (p. 60)

Certainly the Liar's escape from the guards is intended to be humourous for it is the type of escape one expects from a super-hero, not from a character who has just been

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[7] "William Golding: Between God-Darkness and God-Light", Cresset (Valparaiso University) XXXII (1969), 9.

pulled out of a pit. But this humourous episode does not provide any relief to the serious tone which has been created by Liar's ambitions.

The residence in the pit is a telling incident for, as we saw in The Spire, the pit is to be considered as a place where the denizens of hell spring from. This is made even more apparent by the one reference in the work to the title. After he has been stabbed by the Liar the Head Man says that "He [the Liar] stings like a scorpion." (p. 62) The obvious inference is that the knowledge and will, which the Liar possesses, are deadly weapons which he will not hesitate to use.

The Liar is the absolute reverse of Sammy Mountjoy. Oliver, in The Pyramid, refuses the burden which Mountjoy assumed but he at least came close to a type of revelation and retreated only because of his own weakness. For the Liar there is no possibility of a realization of the unity of the world. He is a figure driven by his own ego but he is not compelled by a vision similar to Jocelin's nor does he enter into a Pincher-like situation. Essentially the Liar successfully denies the validity of the pyramids.

Golding tries to treat these themes lightly and attempts not to place the same sort of obvious, heavy emphasis upon them in this work as he did in the earlier novels. He fails because he remains a moralist and his motive is didactic. We have noted the etymological pun on "love"

and "pyramid" in The Pyramid and this pun is employed here but in a reverse manner. Oliver was incapable of either giving or receiving love and as a consequence remained entrapped in the social pyramid. The Liar receives love and this enables him to progress to a position of power and also to deny the pyramids, which form a basic religious belief of the Egyptians. He is able to escape only because of Pretty Flower's love for him and the young Prince's affection. But he exploits these emotions to his own ends. Other Golding protagonists have engaged in similar actions but not with the calculated ruthlessness which the Liar evidences. In a serious work by Golding the audience would expect that the Liar's exploitations would eventually cause him anguish and possibly result in a revelation. Instead he is rewarded in the reverse, achieving his materialist goals and remaining spiritually ignorant, and therefore, content.

The Liar's comically obstinate refusal to be buried with his patron, his miraculous escape, the character of the young Prince (who wishes to be a girl) and the arrogance of the Head Man, in asserting that he knows all that there is to be known, are elements in Golding's attempt to create the tone of light humour which is intended to convey his usual themes in a different, but powerful, fashion. All three of these works are yet another experiment for

Golding. "The Scorpion God" is not in any manner facetious, although it may be failed, for what we are shown is essentially the rationalist triumphing over the mystic, or, as was portrayed in The Pyramid, the material/physical over the spiritual. A great deal of the action in this work is humourous but the most significant passage occurs at the end. Pretty Flower accepts the Liar and we see that "Her arms were up, their henna'd palms outward, gesture reserved for revelation." (p. 62 Italics added.) She has accepted the Liar's plans because they are lovers but she is not the wise ruler figure which we find in "Envoy Extraordinary". She does not realize what the impact of the Liar's rule will be. Her fault is that she is ignorant and in this respect totally unlike the Emperor in "Envoy Extraordinary" who, Oldsey and Weintraub suggest,

> ...understands the difference between progress and change, and sees little chance, given man's unchanging nature, that man will ever learn to use his intelligence any more wisely or well merely because he [8] has increased the number and complexity of his tools.

In terms of Golding's previous works the name of the protagonist is significant for the Liar is exactly that; he presents a world-view which is incomplete and although his knowledge may be factual it is not of the same value or degree as that of Sammy Mountjoy or Dean Jocelin.

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[8] The Art of William Golding, pp. 155-6.

The epigraph to "Clonk Clonk" provides not only an indication of the theme of this narrative but is applicable, especially the final two lines, to all of Golding's work:

> Song before speech
> Verse before prose
> Flute before blowpipe
> Lyre before bow (p. 63)

Quite simply the voice of the artist is more important to man than the voice of the warrior. Unfortunately in "Clonk Clonk", the most simplistic of the three works in The Scorpion God, Golding does not attempt to broaden the implications of the epigraph but makes it bear directly upon this single story without any indication of a wider scope. There is a definite connection between The Inheritors and this story, for again Golding has retreated far into the past. The difference is that "Clonk Clonk" is not an experiment of the same order. There is no concentrated effort to delve into the alien consciousness of another species of man.

Chimp is forced into a state of isolation by the other hunters but the circumstances which Golding has manufactured generate a type of sympathy for this figure rather than an admiration for a greatness in stature, as we have for Martin, Mountjoy and Dean Jocelin, or even the pathos which is created by the figure of Lok. The major comic element employed here is the concern with names, which is a technique which Golding uses, although more sparingly, in almost all his works.

Chimp was once "Charging Elephant Fell On His Face In Front Of An Antelope" and his new name is intended to be derisive for the hunters imitate the chimps they meet and their "speech" "conveyed contempt of the chimps." Combined with this is the bi-sexual attitude of the people and the childish actions and natures of the hunters which is put forward in the fashion of light humour. Chimp is brought back into the tribe by his sexual alliance with She Who Names the Women and he is fully accepted as one of the Leopard Men.

The ending is indicative of Golding's mood in this work. He resorts to employing a fairy-tale quality and for the characters "everything ended happily." In The Inheritors the audience, after gaining an amount of sympathy for Lok and his "people", was supposed to be greatly affected by their extinction. The people in "Clonk Clonk" live on the side of a volcano and are eventually destroyed but Golding tosses this off flippantly saying "by that time there were plenty of people in other places, so it was a small matter." (p. 144) Coming from such an intensely serious writer as Golding this is dismaying but perhaps our confusion is supposed to be deflected when we realize that the extinction was a result of a natural calamity rather than a man-made one. Perhaps—but this is not enough to justify this work. Golding should stay with his serious works and leave comedy alone. He has neither the under-

standing nor the talent for such a mode. His major comic device, the rapid changing of names, is infused with twentieth-century colloquialisms, for example "Boss Chimp", and such a device rapidly ceases to be entertaining and becomes tiresome instead.

CHAPTER SIX

Golding's works maintain a continuous line of progression in which each informs and and amplifies other works. A single character does not appear in more than one work, as opposed to some of Faulkner's novels, but the type of character does, as in the work of J.P. Donleavy and Thomas Pynchon, although the situation may be altered. It is demonstrable that Golding's work, like that of the authors just mentioned, must be read in its entirety. Lately, as in The Scorpion God, Golding has come to expect that this will be the case. The Pyramid loses most of whatever impact it does have if the reader is not aware that Oliver is a failed Golding protagonist.

From the first five novels, up to The Spire, a character which may be viewed as the typical Golding protagonist emerges. The one exception is The Inheritors where we see through the eyes of Lok but, while he is the major character, he is not the figure which appears in the first novel or the following three. Golding in this work was attempting to portray an entirely different consciousness in order to emphasize the "inheritors'" loss of innocence. The typical protagonist, or rather a part of the typical protagonist, appears only peripherally in the figure of Tuami, the artist. The Inheritors serves, basically, to establish the

fallen nature of man and reveal the problem-causing combination of intelligence and knowledge.

As has been pointed out previously, the first two novels, Lord of the Flies and The Inheritors, are intended to be extremely strong critiques of earlier works of literature which put forth concepts that had little validity concerning twentieth-century man's situation. In both of these novels the suffering and isolation, which appears consistently in Golding's works, plays a large part. However, the full development of a protagonist is kept under control by the element of criticism which makes these works similar, in a sense, to Orwell's 1984 and Animal Farm and Huxley's Brave New World. Once this impulse was satisfied Golding could then go on to create his triumvirate of protagonists: Pincher Martin, Sammy Mountjoy and Dean Jocelin.

Pincher, the first of the three, is to be admired, but not liked or emulated, as we view him in his monumental, and losing, struggle to keep his ego alive. He is the prime example of the egoist - that figure driven by the dark, internal Beast. His character and experience are the prototype for Sammy Mountjoy and Dean Jocelin. Both Sammy and the Dean are also driven by their egos and their traumatic revelations are a direct result of having to face this "dark centre" because of isolation and suffering. Both achieve a vision of unity, which combines two systems (Reason/Faith,

religious/secular). Such a vision is denied to Martin because he is the culmination of the evil nature of humanity as it is portrayed in the two earlier works. In one sense Martin is humanity but Golding also makes him an individual whose "self" comes directly under examination, thus paving the way for Mountjoy and Jocelin. It is not necessary to recapitulate the stories and suffering of these two characters as their similarities, such as exploitation, have been shown earlier.

It has been suggested that

> Restoration rather than preservation is his Golding's aim: he would restore concepts of Belief, Free Will, Individual Responsibility, Sin, Forgiveness (or Atonement, anyway), Vision and Divine Grace. He would restore principles in an unprincipled world, and he would restore belief to a world of willful unbelievers.[1]

Golding develops and explores all these concepts in his first five works but his "Divine Grace" is something that must be worked for. It is given only to the deserving, that is, those who undergo isolation and anguish, and is not handed out indiscriminately.

In emphasizing the mistakes and horrors of the past, whether the individual's or mankind's, Golding hopes to avoid the possible calamities of the future. The emphasis he places upon the man who has gained knowledge of his ess-

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[1] Oldsey and Weintraub, The Art of William Golding, p. 34.

ential "self", that "dark centre", is great in the first five works. Therefore it is somewhat puzzling to find Golding portraying a failed protagonist in The Pyramid. One may admire Golding for attempting to show the other side of the coin but Oliver, unfortunately, remains an essentailly boring character and the novel itself is on the point of appearing to have the sole motivation of attacking the British class-structure.

This abrupt shift in focus leads directly to the rather poor collection, The Scorpion God. The title work has as a protagonist a tyrant in the making and shows how he rises, in a ridiculous fashion, to a position of power in the kingdom. "Clonk Clonk", the tale of Chimp and his troubles, is an even simpler and poorer story while "Envoy Extraordinary", the best of the lot (perhaps because it was the earliest), revolves around the mayhem created by the inventions of Phanocles. The Emperor realizes that, although Phanocles' interest may be scientific, his inventions are dangerous to the world. Consequently the Emperor exiles Phanocles to China and this is intended to be the big punchline. Our history-books tells us that it was the Chinese who were responsible for first discovering gun-powder, whereas, at least in this story, it was Phanocles who brought the inventions to them. For some reason the introduction of these discoveries into the Orient did not seem to make much difference. Yet, this is stepping beyond the bounds

of the story. All one is able to say is that Golding fails miserably in his attempts at sustained comedy.

Although The Pyramid and The Scorpion God do not stand as good works they are useful in interpreting Golding's other novels. The Pyramid is partially successful in creating the atmosphere of stultification and Oliver's non-achievement serves to emphasize the understanding and knowledge which other Golding protagonists have arrived at. The Scorpion God sheds no light on Golding's themes but it is interesting to see a writer attempt another mode. Neither of these works mitigates the influence and achievement of the previous five novels. Nor do they affect Golding's contribution to twentieth-century literature.

In his examination and investigation of man and his nature Golding is aware that he has not found an easy, general solution:

> I suppose you can only say as a footnote to that, which is a very good summation, that to be aware of that situation may possibly be, in some ways, a bit of a solution or tending towards a solution. But I'd like to say: don't credit me, the way people do all the time, with solutions. I haven't got them. You see, ever.[2]

Perhaps in his future works Golding will be able to find these solutions; but, whatever the case, his attempt to make modern man aware of his situation is admirable and

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[2] Jack I. Biles, Talk: Conversations with William Golding, p. 104.

this may be only the first step in a long process. A suitable motto for Golding, his work, his protagonists and his audience is to be found in the Vishnu Purana:

> That is active duty which is not for our bondage;
> that is knowledge which is for our liberation:
>
> All other duty is good only unto weariness;
> All other knowledge is the cleverness of the artist.

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ERRATA

(v) 1.6 omit rather
1.22 axes] concerns

7 1.1 omit essentially

18 1.6 physcially] physically

24 1.10 led] leads to
footnote 3 pretnesions] pretensions

31 1.6 "fag-crads"] "fag-cards"

51 1.23 Naziis] Nazis

56 1.4 physcial] physical

59 1.5 omit other

76 quotation 4 language only] language consisted of consonants only

81 1.17 When her] When she

82 1.5 incestal] incestuous

90 1.3 Dauring] During
1.18 vetinarian] vetinary

93 1.13 vetinary] vetinarian

94 1.7 exhorbitant] exorbitant

100 1.8 has and] has exploited and