CHAPTER III

THE MODERN PROMETHEUS

In *Pincher Martin*, Golding has presented a character who remains incorrigible till the end. His capacity to do evil without remorse is amazing. He is proud, arrogant, vile and savage in dealing with his friends. The dominant traits in “Pincher” Martin’s character are pride and greed. He is a consummate actor who can “play pride without a mask”. As the producer of the morality play puts it, “Chris-Greed. Greed- Chris know each other”. Living beings are things for Martin. Mary is “nothing but another step on which one must place the advancing foot”\(^1\). He thinks of Jane as being “good for a tumble”. He carries on an affair with the producer’s wife, Helen, and conducts a sexual experiment with a boy. He maims a friend to avoid losing a motor cycle race. He humiliates Alfred by inviting him to look at his wife in his own bed. Narcissistic and exploitative, he becomes aggressive when frustrated. He cripples his friend in his bid to win a motor-cycle race. Again, he thinks of killing Mary when he fails to seduce her. He plans to murder Nat, for he succeeds where Martin has failed, namely in winning Mary’s hand.

The doctrine Martin believes in and practises is that of eating which he finds as a universal process. “The whole business of eating was peculiarly significant. They made a ritual of it at every level, the Fascists as a punishment, the religious as a rite, the cannibal either as a ritual or as a medicine or as a superbly direct declaration to conquest. Killed and eaten” (PM, 88). One might call it “Omnivorous egotism” (Henry James) or “emotional cannibalism” (Osborn Andreas)\(^2\). Martin would “think about eating women, eating men, crunching up Alfred, that other girl, that boy...” (PM, 90). This is his pattern of life and this pattern is interrupted by Mary Lovell.
Michel Foucault in his book *Madness and Civilization*, while discussing madness and passion quotes eighteenth century French writer Francois Boissier de Sauvages who in his book *Nosologie methodique* (Lyons, 1772), Vol. VII, P. 291 has said that – “The distraction of our mind is the result of our blind surrender to our desires, our incapacity to control or to moderate our passions....”\(^3\). According to Foucault, passion continued to be the meeting ground of body and soul not only before Descartes but also long after his influence had diminished. Passion was the point where the soul’s activity had a contact with the body’s passivity and each was a limit upon the other. Anger, jealousy, sadness etc. are some of the passions which cause certain movements in the humours, and sometimes violent movement disrupts the entire harmony of the body. Anger induces hatred, whereas sadness excites melancholy. While discussing the phenomenon of passion, Foucault has advocated that the possibility of madness is implicit in the very phenomenon of passion (FMC, 83). It is true that Martin’s incapacity to moderate his passions doesn’t lead him to madness in the literal sense of the word. It is a madness of gobbling up everything, of trampling other’s happiness, of being insensitive to the peace and progress of others.

*Pincher Martin*, underscores the importance of religious belief. But unlike in *The Spire*, this religious truth is stated by a calculated distortion. Some truths have to be stated by negation or distortion. *Pincher Martin* is about a dead body and an indestructible consciousness; yet the protagonist’s history of guilt and greed is intended to stand as a fable for contemporary man.

“Pincher” Martin, like a modern person, doesn’t believe in divinity. He doesn’t submit to it. He remains faithful to his own will. Many critics have opined that Golding wanted to show, through the portrayal of Martin, that grace from God comes by acceptance of the will of God. Conversely, damnation would be the consequence of sinful rebellion.
Michel Foucault in his book, *The Order of Things*, raised a very interesting point. He points out that modern thought has never been able to propose a morality. The reason being that:

since any imperative is lodged within thought and its movement towards the apprehension of the unthought; it is reflection, the act of consciousness, the elucidation of what is silent, language restored to what is mute, the illumination of the element of darkness that cuts man off from himself, the reanimation of the inert – it is all this and this alone that – constituted the content and form of the ethical.

Modern thought is not a pure speculation but a certain mode of action. It unites or reunites, attracts or repels, liberates and enslaves. Thought is in itself an action – a perilous act at the level of its very dawning and existence. To say that all thought is either ‘progressive’ or ‘reactionary’ is not true. Nor is it true that all thought expresses the ideology of a class.

The study of *Pincher Martin* reminds us of Golding’s other works like his short story “The Anglo-Saxon”. In this story, a non-conceptualising man and his country are superseded by machines of destruction that a new world invents. A rural cattle driver, George, has his habits crudely interrupted by soldiers from the American Army as armaments are installed in the English countryside. Like Lok, George sees noises as shapes ‘like a drumroll, like a circular saw’. And similarly Martin’s words ‘and sounds were sometimes visible as shapes’, like pebbles hard and enduring. In the pub, noises come out of his mouth: ‘the words jumped out from the background and jerked him as they passed through his mouth.’ George blinks out of his own ‘warped window’ like Pincher who must peer at the world through ‘arches’ of eyebrows and ‘fringes’ of eyelash. Again like Martin, George sifts for a thought ‘the six hundred and fifty words’ hanging ‘on hooks in George’s dark cupboard’; ‘blunt words broken and worn, clung to out of custom like a chipped cup’. His mouth ‘quacks’ as it tries to shape thought.
Ironic universality is achieved by identifying the protagonist with figures from literature and myth. Thus “Pincher” is associated with Lear and Hamlet. Scandinavian culture enters through Thor’s lighting, Greek culture through allusion to Ajax, and Roman culture through allusion to the Claudian well. The fable can also be seen as a grim parody of ‘Prometheus Bound’, as well as a parody of ‘Robinson Crusoe’. But the fable’s focus is a bleak and radically delimited one, for it studies a man alone on a rock in mid-Atlantic. “Pincher” struggles to inflate a lifebelt. Almost immediately, he is smashed against a barren rock: “A single point of rock, peak of a mountain range, one tooth set in the ancient jaw of a sunken world, projecting through the inconceivable vastness of the whole Atlantic ocean” (PM, 30).

In enormous pain and with great difficulty, Martin crawls up this rock using limpets as climbing pegs; the water beats against him washing him back mercilessly but with a final titanic thrust, he pulls his body into a rocky trench:

The man was inside two crevices. There was first the rock, closed and not warm but at least not cold with the coldness of sea or air.... his body was a second and interior crevice which he inhabited. Under each knee, then, there was a little fire.... But the man was intelligent. He endured these fires although they gave not heat but pain (PM, 48).

Philip Drew assumes that the rock against which Martin is smashed is Rockall, a rock off the Hebrides. Frank Kermode explains that “Martin calls his rock Rockall not only because that is a real rock but because he remembers a poor joke turning on a word that is a bad rhyme for Rockall and which is the obscene word for ‘nothing’.” Martin reasons to himself: “I am busy surviving. I am netting down this rock with names.... If this rock tries to adapt me to its ways, I will refuse and adapt it to mine” (PM, 86-87).

On the rock “Pincher” wants to live a civilized life. He proceeds to create a civilized environment on the landscape; a prominent ledge he calls ‘Lookout’, a lower ledge, ‘Safety Rock’; where he finds mussels to eat he calls ‘Food cliff’;
other points in the map he names ‘Piccadily’, ‘Leicester Square’, and ‘Oxford Circus’. A good British sailor, he even provides himself a pub, the ‘Red Lion’.

Memory flashbacks reveal Martin’s savagery, for he had been a “Pincher”, who eats everything he can lay his hands on. He was “born with his mouth and his flies open and both hands out to grab” (PM, 120). As a rival actor says of him, “The only value in the world is his own personality; that which does not serve him, he tries to dominate”. Moments before his submersion in the sea, his criminality appears. Aboard the “Wildebeeste”, he decides to drown a generous friend by having the ship turn suddenly. He had earlier not been able to control his friend. The irony is that the order, ‘Hard a-starboard’ is the right order, for exactly at that moment, the “Wildebeeste” is torpedoed. It suggests that Martin is perhaps the only victim of the sea, for, the rest of the crew may have survived.

In his book *Madness and Civilization*, Michel Foucault has quoted the nineteenth century writer Johann Christoph Spurzheim, who in his book ‘Observations sur la folie’ (Paris, 1818), has made a synthesis of all the previous analyses about the determining elements of madness. Foucault supports this observation that “freedom of conscience entails more dangers than authority and despotism” (FMC, 202). It is true that freedom permits an independent opinion, but it does not tell about the righteousness of the independent opinion. It also does not teach an individual to adjust to any opposition to that independent opinion. Too much liberty also doesn’t permit a person to master time. Speculation breeds fear and hope. In this scenario, the legitimate desires of an individual which encourage true natural liberty are challenged by illegitimate desires and then instead of true natural liberty we have “liberty of interests, of coalitions, of financial combinations, not of man, not of minds and hearts” (FMC, 203).

This is the condition in which we find Martin. He is constrained and harried by unlawful demands which are bred by his egotism, jealousy, greed and possessiveness. He is not free to think rationally as these unlawful demands impinge upon his thinking and he becomes a slave to them. Dictated by these
demands, Christopher feeds them. Of course, a person’s greatest desire is his personal liberty but it has its disadvantages, also. It is pertinent to note that “Pincher’s” interests which dispossess him of his legitimate desires are fostered by his own behavioural pattern.

Martin’s cry of “Christopher Hadley Martin, Martin Chris I am what I always was” (PM, 76) is a triumphant cry and the Rock also becomes a simple meaningless mechanism. Virginia Tiger has rightly put it, “Martin’s conscious determination leads him towards realization of ego. But this ego is not sufficient to overwhelm the rock and thus imagined horrors ensue, which merges memory with hallucination” (VT, 105).

Further flashbacks tell us about Martin’s childhood experience wherein he dared, or imagined he dared, to descend steps into a cellar at night to encounter the feet and knees of some appaling god-like effigy. This childhood terror fuses with a more awesome hallucination. The pillar of stones, which he calls ‘Dwarf’, becomes the cellar god. A confrontation occurs between the seemingly mad Pincher and some kind of godhead with “immovable, black feet”. Just as Simon hears the Head speak to him, Pincher hears this god say, “Have you had enough, Christopher?” But Pincher resists what he takes to be a nightmare or an hallucination yelling demonically, “I shit on your heaven”. A storm begins to overwhelm him but he still resists.

As in The Inheritors, Pincher Martin offers a coda ending and a change in perspective. We come to know that “Martin didn’t even have time to kick off his seaboots” (PM, 208) before drowning. In the first chapter, Martin kicks off his seaboots to avoid drowning and later tears apart his already inflated lifebelt to give himself a Wagnerian enema. On the last page it is made clear that Martin drowned after he had inflated the lifebelt before he had time to kick off his boots. The coda presents a puzzle.

Howard Babb says that Davidson could represent Death and Campbell, a crafter, is in our position facing the question of survival. Gregor and kinkead Weekes convert Campbell’s question about suffering into the larger question
about eternity itself: “How do we tell the truth about death? No matter what any of us believes officially about surviving, in our minds there obstinately lurks the opposite spectre.”

Samuel Hynes declares that “the physical death is passed over; there are kinds of dying that are more important than that instant of merely psychological change.” For him, it is “the paradoxes of living death and dying into life that ultimately inform the novel.” Martin’s struggle is a physically dead man’s hallucination to recapitulate his past on earth. Also, his resistance to death is intended as an eschatological prognosis about Martin’s future career in eternity. Golding himself has said; “Just to be Pincher is purgatory; to be Pincher for eternity is Hell”. Thus, in Pincher Martin, Golding is exploring imaginatively the moment of purgatory – a moment which contains the present, the past and the future.

Paul Crawford argues that fantastic and carnivalesque modes in Pincher Martin complement the mood of uncertainty and equivocation. Pincher Martin has self-conscious metafictional dimensions. In the end, it is known that Martin’s work is only an imaginative creation. This ending is prepared for by several references to the “natural” environment in terms of the written text. The “rock” has “edges like the cut pages of a book” (PM, 77), the air sucks up Christopher’s voice like “blotting-paper” (PM, 80), he “writes” on the “rock” with seaweed and views his experience as having the making of a great story: “And what a story! A week on a rock. Lectures_ _” (PM, 88). The metafictional commentary reaches a climax when we come to know that the rock is fabricated and that our own “realities” are fictions.

Ultimately, Christopher’s reality breakdown is a recognition of textuality and its illusory status: “‘There was nothing in writing! ’” (PM, 199). The whole final scene tears like paper: “The sea stopped moving, froze, became paper, painted paper that was torn by a black line” (PM, 200). The sea is “erased like an error” and the “lines of absolute blackness” interrogate and dismantle the “rock” that “proved to be as insubstantial as the painted water” (PM, 201). The “island
of papery stuff’ is removed to leave a pair of kitsch claws “outlined like a night sign against the absolute nothingness” (PM, 201). There is the difference between claws and hands and it suggests that Martin is not a writer but a character in a novel. Philip Redpath writes: “The difference between claws and hands emphasises the fact that Martin is not a writer and not therefore in the authoritative position of the writer. Ultimately, Martin dies because he is a character in a novel.”

In the novel, supernatural versus natural, real versus unreal, and rational versus irrational create a strong sense of indeterminacy in Christopher’s Promethean existence. The uncertainty about the “reality” of Martin’s survival and of the fictional enterprise is achieved through fantastic and carnivalesque modes. Carnivalesque relativises spatial oppositions such as high versus low or up versus down. Lack of sleep, exposure to the sun and overwork are all offered as possible explanations for Christopher’s hallucinatory experiences. Indeterminacy is strengthened by the “doubling” of various figures and objects, such as Christopher’s nose, the “Dwarf” who is also the “Old Woman”, the chain of his dog tag, his reflection in a mirror. The double motif is particularly prominent in flashbacks of Christopher’s theatrical life of playing two parts: “‘Didn’t you see the rehearsal list, Chris? You’re doubling – but of course—’” (PM, 118). As reality is “pinched” and spatial coherence deteriorates, he experiences transitory, Kafkaesque metamorphoses into a lobster. Christopher self-diagnoses this and other abnormal perceptions and transformations as caused by pyrexial delirium or seafood poisoning and gives himself an enema to clear his system. However, the solubility of what should be insoluble guano, the appearance of a “red” lobster, and the striking resemblance the “rock” bears to a rotten tooth, that had once stood in his head, compounds doubt about the status of his reality.

Topsy-turvydom is employed throughout the novel. The jam jar analogy condenses Christopher’s plight. He is caught between transcendence and materiality, survival and drowning, and life and death. His world is frequently turned upside down: “My legs must be up in the air over the other wall” (PM,
Christopher relativises the spatial position of the sun and sky and indulges in various reversals and inversions. He views Nathaniel as if he were upside down like a “bat” in some bizarre “reversed world” (PM, 103). The “black lightning” that will exterminate Christopher’s clinging consciousness resembles “a tree upside down” (PM, 177).

Paul Crawford suggests that the novel interrogates the English totalitarian personality in the shape of Christopher Martin. He writes: “In Pincher Martin, Golding seems to suggest that confidence in English resistance to the “third way” of fascist politics can be no more than tentative” (PHWG, 92). The novel is set against the backdrop of World War II. Christopher is shown to be appetitive, violent and carnivalesque in his abuse of other people, particularly women. He has a determination to survive and Paul Crawford links this determination to extreme survivalism-at-all-costs preached in Hitler’s Mein Kampf. Crawford argues that Christopher inherits the misogynistic legacy of the protofascist Freikorps (PHWG, 92).

The final breaking of the “durative” fantastic into a natural explanation that Christopher had been suffering a kind of hallucinatory damnation offers a suitable critique of his totalitarian personality. His personalised “torture chamber” on the rock is a punishment for his sadistic living. He thinks of death, maggots, corpses, coffins, phantoms, ghosts and childhood fears. Christopher is tormented by a needle like pain in his skull. The shock recognition that Christopher’s “after-life” is merely a limited hallucination that finally burns out adds to Golding’s incipient critique of religious authority. This critique was initiated subtly in the madness of the “saint” Simon in Lord of the Flies and in The Spire.

There are frequent references to the carnivalesque “lower body” in the novel. They tell us about Christopher’s cruel and appetitive nature. Christopher’s life is opposed to any higher moral achievement. The references to soft, fluid intrusion of lower body functions belong to a more feminine dimension. It points to the destruction of the masculine hardness at the core of Christopher’s
personality. Paul Crawford observes that Golding juxtaposes an English subject’s atrocious appetite and will to survive with the kind of “soldier male” personality of the Freikorpsman of Nazism. (PHWG, 94). The “soldier male” is presented as maintaining phallic strength through his weapons and holding back like a dam the inner softness that threatens his firm stand. It is this protective and armoured masculinity that we see in *Pincher Martin*. Christopher Martin’s metamorphosis is into the “body-machine” of a lobster. But his hard, phallic body thrust into a crevice only temporarily fends off dissolution. His lobsteresque masculinity is eroded in a particularly mucosal and often feminine softness. Christopher has also become subhuman like the lobster and deserves extermination which comes in the shape of annihilation by “black lightning.”

Eating or being eaten appears to be the ground of Christopher’s being. The pebbles on the “rock” are potato-shaped. The “rock” itself is converted into a “hot cross bun” (PM, 109). Christopher refers to his mind as a “loaf” (PM, 59) and his battling consciousness as a “pudding” that “has boiled over” (PM, 191). The seaweed appears touguelike and the “rock” is thought to emerge from some geologic indigestion or “gripe of the earth’s belly” (PM, 77).

Christopher is literally all mouth. He has fierce and cruel ways of consuming. Paul Crawford argues that Golding has Holocaustic furnaces in his mind while pointing to Christopher’s consuming: “I breathe this air into my own furnace, I kill and eat” (PM, 115). Helen, Sybil, Mary and Nathaniel become victims of Christopher’s appetite and lust. Mary, with her “apple-breasts” (PM, 148), is a tasty morsel that excites Christopher’s digestive juices. Christopher’s murder victim, Nathaniel, becomes the ultimate meal; “Christ, how I hate you. I could eat you” (PM, 100). Nathaniel and “Pincher” are polar ends of the human psyche like Ishmael and Ahab of Melville’s *Moby Dick*. While Ahab and Pincher seek to dominate Nature. Nathaniel and Ishmael symbolise acceptance, not revenge. Martin is ruled by “the life-thwarting syndrome” manifesting the elements of sadism, narcissism and destructive and ultimately self-destructive passions.
Mikhail Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* has argued that the “gaping mouth” is related to “the lower stratum; it is the open gate leading downward into the bodily underworld”\(^{11}\) Christopher has a direct link between oral and sexual consumption. He mixes various acts of consumption with the “punishment” that “fascists” dole out: “You could eat with your cock or with your fists, or with your voice. You could eat with hobnailed boots or buying and selling or marrying and begetting and cuckoldling” (PM, 88). Christopher sexually “consumes” Sybil and grins sadistically to cuckolded Alfred, like the decapitated pig’s head in *Lord of the Flies*: “Secure in his knowledge of the cosmic nature of eating he grinned down at him” (PM, 89). Victimization and mocking the cuckold have a long history in the carnivalesque rituals of Shivaree or “rough music.”

Christopher has an aggressive and colonising nature. Even during his struggle with red lobster, he says, “‘What piece have I lost in my game? I had an attack, I was doing well, and then—’” (PM, 172). Paul Crawford has particularly suggested misogynistic tendencies in Christopher Martin in *Pincher Martin* and Sammy Mountjoy in *Free Fall* and linked these to Nazism (PHWG, 97). Christopher’s misogynic subjection of Mary evokes not simply the colonisation of war in its most brutal form but also social Darwinism, being “nothing but another step on which one must place the advancing foot” (PM, 149). His tendency of subjecting everything to the dictates of his will again becomes clear when he places his feet on hallucinatory faces to climb out of a crevice in the “rock”. This standing on the bodies of people is reminiscent of mass Jewish graves. He accuses his “God” hallucination of making him a consumer of people: “‘Yet suppose I climbed away from the cellar over the bodies of used and defeated people, broke them to make steps on the road away from you, why should you torture me? If I ate them, who gave me a mouth?’” (PM, 197).

Christopher’s consumptive existence frequently melds food with sex or excreting. It is carnivalesque in its non-celebratory style. The “Island” is presented in terms of feminisation. Penile penetration of the crevice is repeated.
over and over again: "My flesh is perceptible inside – as though it were bruised everywhere to the bone. And big, Tumescent" (PM, 129).

The anemones Martin eats like sweets are "slumped like breasts when the milk has been drawn from them" (PM, 63), and we never hear the last of his mouth at the "tit of the lifebelt" (PM, 16). Christopher thinks of sexually consuming even boys along with women and girls: "Think about eating women, eating men, crunching up Alfred, that other girl, that boy, that crude and unsatisfactory experiment" (PM, 90). Christopher has misogynic fantasies about Mary: "Those nights of imagined copulation, when one thought not of love nor sensation nor comfort nor triumph, but of torture rather, the very rhythm of the body reinforced by hissed ejaculations – take that and that" (PM, 149).

Christopher is provided with a stinking environment of slime, feces, and urine. It reflects his low and brutal life. This lavatorial focus is magnified by Christopher's anxieties about having not opened his bowels for days and his self-administration of an enema. The evacuation is suitably theatrical, and not without due reference to wartime violence. The result is "explosive... like the bursting of a dam, the smashing of all hindrance" (PM, 165). His temporary victory and restoration are described in military terms that reinforce again and again Christopher's colonizing personality: "I knew I should suffer and I have. But I am winning" (PM, 166). Amid "slime and circling scum" (PM, 199), Christopher rejects the notion of salvation: "I shit on your heaven!" (PM, 200).

Martin's inability to achieve salvation is to be read as an excessive warning on contemporary man's inability to achieve any kind of spiritual vision. We have Martin's own view of his horrendous plight and we have also Davidson's and Campbell's view of it in the coda. We move from the fevered world of Martin's mind to the objective and sane conservation of Davidson and Campbell. The Naval Officer interprets survival as a question about physical suffering while Campbell's bewilderment suggests that there might be some spiritual dimension to it. But the perspectives of the rock--narrative and the
coda—are not intended to contradict each other. Martin’s suffering is to continue eternally according to the fable’s theology. The process of understanding takes place outside the fable and we observe that man is more than Davidson’s literalism and less than Martin’s monumental endurance. Golding once remarked: “Where there is no vision the people perish” and Martin’s tale is that of a soul in purgatory. Martin like the children of Lord of the Flies and the New People of The Inheritors fears death and creates a demonic adversary in the sea, the rock, the sky, and even a dreadful theophany. The whole experience on the rock is Martin’s post-mortem experience of himself. The survival tale is concerned with his life in purgatory and his reluctance to surrender to his destiny. A reader has always a peculiar access to Martin’s consciousness.

Everytime Martin comes close to realising his death, he turns away. At one point he leaves a sentence unfinished: “strange that bristles go on growing even when the rest of you is...” (PM, 125) and the reader supplies the conclusion ‘dead’. Similarly, Martin repeatedly flinches from calling the trailing rocks ‘the Teeth’ since again ‘to lie on a row of teeth in the middle of the sea-----’ is to be ‘dead’. On another occasion he mutters “the process is so slow it has no relevance to----- ” and again the reader supplies ‘dead’. Indeed, evidence for his death is unmistakably present in certain repeated motifs, particularly those involving guano, his lobster/hands, the rock/teeth, as well as certain reiterated symbols including a maggot-box and a curious experimental tool.

Virginia Tiger remarks, “We Stare through the windows of Martin’s eyes and are both inside and outside the consciousness of the protagonist. We experience the classic battle of man against the elements and acknowledge Promethean nobility while we simultaneously know at another level that the Promethean energy is cosmically irrelevant” (VT, 112).

A modern civilized person falls prey to greed. Golding once remarked that it is a “fairly objective exercise in finding out what happens to Greed when all things that surround it and gives it its food are taken away and it has nothing to prey on but itself”\textsuperscript{12}. Along with being fearful of death, “Pincher” has been
greedy at all times. Martin is reduced to the abstraction Greed, the ‘two claws’ as Lok is reduced to perception, the ‘inside-Lok,’ as Jack is reduced to three irrational terror, the ‘frantic thing’. Martin’s life can be viewed from ‘savagery’, the ‘furtive – thing’, as Sammy Mountjoy is reduced to three distinct temporal angles. In the ‘present’, the tale of Martin’s survival and extinction on the rock is an image of Prometheus man pattering into civilized shapes a hostile Nature. Here, an identity gradually evolves and is destroyed by brute Nature as a storm overcomes the fever-ridden body. In the ‘present’, man is a creature caught between the two forces of consciousness and of a mute unconscious environment. As Martin mutters, man “is a freak, an ejected foetus robbed of his natural development, thrown out in the world with a naked covering of parchment, with too little room for his teeth and a soft bulging skull like a bubble. But nature stirs a pudding there...” (PM, 190).

In reducing Martin to a pair of red claws, Golding emphasises man’s violent attachment to his corporeal existence. Civilized man experiences a nostalgia to return to his primitive state. Martin’s claws seem an echo of Eliot’s horror of reductive irrationalism of The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock:

I should have been a pair of ragged claws.
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

This nostalgia for a simpler existence is attributed only to the timorous Prufrock and the image itself is one of inverted Darwinism, a pure and horrifying regression to one of the lowest forms of animal life.¹³

On the rock, “Pincher” sustains a triple alienation, first between his own consciousness and the world; then between his consciousness and his thought. Finally, there is the separation between thought and language. Martin is aware of dislocation between mind and body: “I was always two things, mind and body. Nothing has altered” (PM, 176). But he resists its implication. A “silent indisputable creature” sits at the innermost centre of ‘Pincher’, looking out from his ‘dark skull’ into the ‘inscrutable darkness’. His consciousness is described as a creature immersed in water---“ it floated in the middle of this globe like a
waterlogged body”. The ineradicable “is ness” of Martin is suspended in his physical body. Martin strives for just that suspension between pain and passivity, consciousness and nothingness, that will neither eject him back into the world of the fever-fire nor thrust him away from his “hoarded personality.” It is the interior balance or inactive mode that a waterlogged body would possess.

Each intelligent action of Martin on the rock leads him back to reality. Understanding makes Martin confront himself and that is to confront the fact of his death. While cutting seaweed for an SOS signal, he sees the island somehow evasively familiar: “He looked solemnly at the line of rocks and found himself thinking of them as teeth... they were emerging gradually from the jaw....; or rather they were being worn away in infinite slow motion.... A lifetime of the world had blunted them, was reducing them as they ground what food rocks eat” (PM, 78). At other times there comes nagging elusive pictures of eating and Chinese maggot boxes in his memory. Also, association of maggot-box with a coffin brings death to his mind. When Martin decides to call the Rocks teeth, he is suddenly terrified and must run from the incipient knowledge that “to lie on a row of teeth in the middle of the sea” (PM, 91) is to be dead. Martin is also afraid to sleep as sleep is a ‘consenting to die’ in which the centre may slip into unconscious bleakness.

Martin becomes conscious of the pattern over which his intelligence cannot dominate. Suddenly, Martin recalls a childhood dream of something coming out of a cellar corner and “squeezing tormenting darkness, smoke thick” into which he descends “three stories defenceless, down the dark stairs... down the terrible steps to where the coffin ends were crushed in walls of the cellar-and I’d be held helpless on the stone floor, trying to run back, run away, climb up” (PM, 138). In the “night world” there are gods sitting behind the “terrible knees and feet of black stone”. More than childhood terrors, the cellar suggests that it is God from whom we turn away into life and thus find hate, fear and darkness there. A person, with a free will, will either turn to God or away from Him. And Golding remarks: “When you turn away from God. He becomes a darkness; when you turn towards Him, He becomes a light, in cliché terms.”
The characteristic device of the ‘picture’ and fragmentary snapshots induce memories which plague Martin’s center. Along with revealing Martin’s nature, a kind of delirium is created by Golding out of Martin’s own memories. At the fable’s opening, Martin is flung into the sea. Turbines scream and the ‘green sparks’ of a bomb tracer is punctured. The green sparks merge with “luminous pictures” that shuffle before him like a bundle of snapshots, “drenched in light”. The green tracer continues to flicker and spin and Martin’s centre, terrified of nothingness, clings to these tracers as, when thrust against the imagined pebbled island before him, it clings to the “pattern in front of him that occupied all the space under the arches.” Inside his head, pebbles shake, outside at the right side of his face, pebbles nag like “aching teeth”. Martin then proceeds to construct an illusory present out of the memory of this missing tooth. Rockall’s entire topography is an imaginary tooth in the mouth of the ravenous Martin.

Martin’s ravenous and savage thinking is revealed when he behaves in an insensitive way towards the feelings of others. He even refuses to recognise the separate identity of others. He says, “You’re not a person, my sweet, you’re an instrument of pleasure” (PM, 95). Embodied in several symbols, the Chinese maggot box in particular, is Martin’s sin of gluttony. His sin is greed “Chris-Greed. Greed – Chris. Know each other” Despite his hardened criminality, Martin is attracted to goodness but on these occasions, he acts from greed, not from charity.

Martin realises spitefully that both Nathaniel and Mary stand “in the lighted centre of my (his) darkness” because his dark centre is lit. Moreover, he is also drawn to them. Virginia Tiger aptly remarks... “they interrupt the consistent pattern of his malice. The autonomy of his greedy ego is challenged by goodness; he must destroy that goodness or be destroyed” (VT, 126). As he repeats to himself: “But what can the last maggot but one do? Lose his identity?” (PM, 184).
So, we have the civilized goodness of Nat and Mary in the face of the savagery of Martin. Martin has several opportunities to break his pattern of greed but he does not. His torture then is self-inflicted. This is a point of utmost importance since the island is his own creation. The pressure and the black lightning is the heaven he chooses. Ironically when Martin is flung into the water, he starts to swim towards the light, not the darkness. “The riven rock face with tongues of spray” towards which he swims, then, might be the implacable visage of a compassionate god; the thunderbolts splaying from its hand, might well be the golden bough of Aeneas which could take the wanderer to the earth’s belly and bring him back. Martin is unable to interpret the lightning as a golden bough. At the last moment he has the choice of operating from his My-godness. But like his refusal of the cellar god and dying-into-extinction of Nat, he rejects this last mercy. He yells his satanic dismissal of divine pattern: “I spit on your compassion”. The compassion of God tries ceaselessly to open him but it cannot force Him open since that would violate the given free will.

Martin’s personality is revealed only in relation to hostile nature. Of course, we are compelled to estimate his behaviour in comparison to other characters like Mary Lovell and Nathaniel Waltersen who live in a civilized society. On the rock, we admire Martin’s tenacity in clinging on to life. But his past reveals him to be an unscrupulous egoist who had stopped at no depravity.

Ironically, the qualities that keep Martin alive against odds are the qualities that make him morally repulsive. It is indeed difficult to condemn those qualities by which man survives. A red lobster in the sea provides the answer. Martin realises that perhaps his whole effort to survive, rock and all, has been a subjective creation and an act of the will, asserting itself against necessity. He has invented it all, ingeniously, but not perfectly because he has forgotten that only boiled lobsters are red and that guano is insoluble and he has arranged the rocks on which he survives like the teeth in his mouth. From this point on, the apparent reality of Martin’s survival begins to dissolve.
“Pincher” is a devourer of life, ‘born with his mouth and his flies open and both hands out to grab’. He is the huge successful maggot, devouring the other maggots and crying, “I’ll live if I have to eat everything else in this bloody box!” Martin’s greed is to preserve his own personality. Thus greed is not a motive in itself but a means for him. His efforts have been to preserve his identity by assertion and in that effort, he becomes a savage and goes to any extent to preserve his personality. Martin asserts his will upon others because he thinks he is simply the modern heir of Descartes: man proving his own existence from the inside out. Starting with mind, he creates his own world in which all meaning and value is in self; and all outside self is meaningless mechanism, the material upon which the mind plays, and on which the self feeds. This egocentric version of reality not only relates Martin to the Cartesian tradition but also to ‘Prometheus.’

Prometheus is the mythic hero who can be described as humanistic, liberal, man-friendly and God-defying man. Prometheus’ existence gives meaning to his suffering or his suffering affirms his existence. One might expect Golding, the disillusioned ex-liberal, to consider Prometheus a symbol of that conception of man which he finds most immoral. Martin plays Prometheus to appropriate imaginary background music by Tchaikovsky, Wagner and Holst. It was not really necessary to crawl but the background music underlined the heroism of a slow, undefeated advance against odds. This is not heroism but a parody of it and the parody describes the overall relationship between what Martin imagines himself doing and the reality in which he exists.

But in modern times, the greatest value is given “to the distance that both separates and links thought-conscious-of-itself and whatever, within thought, is rooted in non-thought” (FOT, 353). The need remains to get down to the inert network of what does not think. This inert network is also related to thought. Thus ‘I think’ doesn’t become ‘I am’. Therefore, there is no scope of assertion of an ego which Martin betrays during his various acts. This concept has been given a name ‘Unthought’ by Michel Foucault in his book The Order of Things. He writes:
For can I, in fact, say that I am this language I speak, in which my thought insinuates itself to the point of finding in it the system of all its own possibilities, yet which exists only in the weight of sedimentations my thought will never be capable of actualizing altogether? Can I say that I am this labour I perform with my hands, yet which eludes me not only when I have finished it, but even before I have begun it? Can I say that I am this life I sense deep within me, but which envelops me both in the irresistible time that grows side by side with it and poses me for a moment on its crest, and in the imminent time that prescribes my death (FOT, 353-54).

Martin could very well have said that I am and that I am not all this. The modern cogito does not lead to an affirmation of being, but to a whole series of questions concerned with being. ‘Unthought’ is not lodged in man but in relation to him. It is an inexhaustible double with thought. It plays the role of a preliminary ground upon which man recalls him to attain the truth. It is a retreat in thought, away from immediate assertion, to arrive at the truth. It is true that ‘Unthought’ is alien. The necessity for a so-called modern “civilized person” like Martin is to bring it as close to thought as possible. In this way, alienation can be ended by reconciling with essence and also the veil will be lifted from the unconscious.

The most important single scene in the novel is probably the one in which Nathaniel explains his eschatology to an amused Martin. According to Nathaniel, man must learn the technique of “dying into heaven” in order to make himself ready for heaven when death comes. “Takes us as we are now and heaven would be sheer negation,” he says, “without form and void, you see? A sort of black lightning, destroying everything that we call life....” If we do not prepare ourselves for heaven (heaven here meaning simply eternity described spatially), then we will die into the sort of after life that our natures invent. The rock with the only possible value of bare survival is the heaven which Martin has invented. But because it is his own invention, it is not eternal. It exists by an act of will,
and when his will fails, and he admits that he cannot believe in the objective existence of his invention, then, the black lightning comes and annihilates him.

Death, as the end of identity, is the central point in the novel. Acceptance of this will make the loss of identity less fearful. Whether indeed we will live in a ‘heaven’ of our own invention if we die unprepared is of no importance, except as a symbolic way of representing the terrors of death to an identity-preserver, a Pincher.

Martin pits three thousand years of human knowledge, intelligence and will-power against the blind forces of nature. He remarks to himself: “I am busy surviving, I am netting down this rock with names and taming it. Some people would be incapable of understanding the importance of that. What is given a name is given a seal, a chain. If this rock tries to adapt me to its ways I will refuse and adapt it to mine. I will impose my routine on it, my geography. I will tie it down with names” (PM, 86-87).

Martin is a mythic symbol of man’s steadfast endurance. He is Odysseus, spewing the salt water from his lungs, battered yet surviving. He is Ajax defying the lightning. He is Lear in his madness and defiant to the end. But Martin is also shown to be an adulterer, a homosexual, a thief, a rapist, and a would-be murderer to offset all he shows himself to be on the rock.

Martin’s human consciousness is an “evolutionary specialisation, like a pig’s snout which is used to ensure handsome survival”. He is hideously greedy but he also finds out that the cause lies within himself. He knows that his fear of the gull which makes him think of lizards originates in something he has read and that he can cure the world by curing his own disorder. Martin once undertakes to take out the poison within him after eating disgusting food. He knows the cause of ailment: “I am in servitude to a coiled tube the length of a cricket pitch. All the terrors of hell can come down to nothing more than a stoppage. Why drag in good and evil when the serpent lies coiled in my own body?” (PM, 163). But this poison of savage behaviour does not preclude even his dearest friends. It is a typical case of a supposedly modern and civilized
person, an important link in the furtherance of civilization, to behave in a savage way even while aware of doing something wrong. Martin doesn’t use intelligence to counter the poison of savagery within him. The result is torture and the creation of his own hell.

Foucault in his book Discipline and Punish has underlined the importance of discipline in a person’s life. In his words; “Discipline, on the other hand, arranges a positive economy; it poses the principle of a theoretically ever-growing use of time; exhaustion rather than use; it is a question of extracting, from time, ever more available moments and, from each moment, ever more useful forces”14

In a disciplined environment each passing moment is filled with many different but ordered activities. Through these ordered activities, a technique of subjection comes into being. This technique of subjection gives birth to a new object superseding the mechanical body. It is clearly revealed that, due to the absence of subjection and an overwhelming greedy and selfish orientation in Martin’s personality, a total chaos is created by him and “Pincher” Martin is not able to supersede the calls of his mechanical body and spirit. By discipline and subjection, a new object is formed which supersedes the mechanical body and according to Michel Foucault:

This new object is the natural body, the bearer of forces and the seat of duration; it is the body susceptible to specified operations, which have their order, their stages, their internal conditions, their constituent elements. In becoming the target for new mechanisms of power, the body is offered up to new forms of knowledge. It is the body of exercise, rather than of speculative physics; a body manipulated by authority, rather than imbued with animal spirits; a body of useful training and not of rational mechanics, but one in which, by virtue of that very fact, a number of natural requirements and functional constraints are beginning to emerge (FDP, 155).
As his struggle on the rock and past life show, Martin exhibits determination and strong will power. But in most of the cases, Martin did wrong things to gratify his greed. And sometimes, his acts though willed, become necessary as well. For instance, as an officer of the watch, Martin gives a helm-order a moment before the torpedo strikes. The order was willed and murderous but it was necessary as well. Martin says afterwards that all that happened was “because of what I did” but it could not have been otherwise. But Martin’s assertions of all that happened “because of what I did” and that “If I ate them, who gave me a mouth?” are obviously willed. It is true that another approach could have been taken by Martin. Nathaniel suggests this other way in the abandonment of the beloved self. Nathaniel is the one who sees and knows. But Nathaniel’s religion has a seedy quality and it contributes to Martin’s agony as well as shadowing it with some ecstatic alternative.

Martin’s rejection of the mystery of life leaves in the inner depths a darkness “the interior blackness” of which he is afraid. Martin sees an apparition. It suggests that God has been a witness to the traumatic struggle of Martin in his after life. He might as well be regarded as “the producer of the whole drama” (WG, 150). Martin asserts that he has created his own heaven. The apparition replies, “You have created it.” It may be taken as ironical. The rock is a device contrived to test and tease Martin’s will, to subdue his ego, to meet the master in the form of black lightning, and to see the super pattern. Martin is shocked to see the rock as expressions such as “terrible and apocalyptic”, “mother of panic”, “wild beast”, “the world sprang here into sudden war” convey. We have seen that there are choices before Martin but he shies away. There are also semblances of inner promptings to goodness in Martin’s character. Nat recognises his “extraordinary capacity to endure…. To achieve heaven” (PM, 71). Nat’s this notion offends “Pincher”. He is also repelled by Nat’s gnomic prediction that soon he will die. He has an intent to murder Nat and symbolically it is an attempt to bury the inner promptings to goodness. Martin admits to an involuntary love for Nat. “Good – bye, Nat, I loved you and it is not in my nature
to love much". But like a modern civilized ravenous person, Martin is at a loss to reconcile the apparent contradiction within himself:

There was a desperate amazement that anyone so good as Nat, so unwillingly loved for the face that was always rearranged from within, for the serious attention, for love given without thought should also be so quivering hated as though he were the only enemy (PM, 103).

Martin’s will to survive at all costs gets the better of his conscience which keeps hinting, in the form of memory pictures pertaining to his association with Nat, that the whole experience may be a terrible delusion, a clash within man between his will and conscience. Martin’s imagination is in the service of the ego which wishes to perpetuate itself in the after life. He creates an order but an order which accommodates his appetites and passions. His intellect tries to decipher the data supplied to it through the imagination and sense-perceptions. Martin tries to not only escape from reality but also to triumph over it just like a modern man.

B. S. Oldsey and S. Weintraub, quoting E. M. Forster’s observation that there is no Redeemer in Golding’s theology remark, “The modern Prometheus must continue to suffer on his rock”. But it is not quite right to say so. There is certainly the Redeemer but the modern Prometheus refuses to recognize Him at the height of his egotistical arrogance. The great powers with which “Pincher” Martin, like the mythic hero Prometheus, is endowed are misdirected and misapplied and consequently debased.

The Genesis metaphor fulfils an ironic function and points to the pseudo-divine autonomy assumed by the rational man. The various ideas are subsumable under the cellar image. It brings into focus the texture of the protagonist’s inner struggle and gives a rare perspective. The interior monologue or stream of consciousness technique employed for the major part of the book effectively communicates the traumas of the flickering consciousness, its responses and reactions to a hostile environment. Morris Beja points out that the psychological
relativity of time which has dominated the modern themes in fiction forms the basic concept of Pincher Martin. Martin himself experiences a sense of transcendence of time; “An hour on this rock is a lifetime” (PM, 45). Temporally, the whole action lasts a second or for eternity, and spatially it is a rock or the macrocosm itself.

Michel Foucault, in his book The Order of Things, has stated that man is an “empirico-transcendental doublet” because he cannot claim himself to be sovereign on the basis of the immediacy of thought. He is always open and constantly traversed. This mistake of assuming himself sovereign on the basis of his thought was committed by Martin and he persisted with it till the end. There was no positive and constant traversing on the part of “Pincher” Martin. Foucault writes:

Because he (man) is an empirico-transcendental doublet, man is also the locus of misunderstanding – of misunderstanding that constantly exposes his thought to the risk of being swamped by his own being, and also enables him to recover his integrity on the basis of what eludes him (FOT, 352).

Transcendental reflection in modern form finds its fundamental necessity in “mute, yet ready to speak, and secretly impregnated with a potential discourse of that not-known from which man is perpetually summoned towards self-knowledge” (FOT, 352). Transcendental reflection underlines the significance of Foucault’s concept of ‘Unthought.’ Immediate experiences of life are not everything. In order to become that life whose web, pulsations and buried energy exceed the immediate experience, man has to be delimited, open and constantly traversing.

The Inheritors and Pincher Martin depict the primitive struggle for survival. But in Pincher Martin, along with the struggle for survival, there is an effort by the protagonist to grasp at things and stamp them with a will, a natural outcome of pride. This exercise of sheer will on the rock by Martin sometimes gives the impression of de-intellectualisation and reliability on instincts. But the
hell that is created on the rock looks real as Martin’s past life is never far away
from our memory and his efforts on the rock are impelled by ravenous greed and
sheer will to survive. Martin’s fight is more for his identity than for his bodily
survival.

Martin is an atheist. He has a freedom of choice which he uses to centre
the world on himself. He has no belief in purgatory. The greed for life forces
him to refuse the selfless act of dying. In the novel, we see a metaphysical
problem of God and creature. Martin prefers his greed. Golding seems to suggest
that God takes upon himself the frailty and suffering of the creature to lead him
to happiness. To the modern civilized spirit, God and religion could only be the
work of imagination. Modern man is faithful to his intellectual will in a world
dominated by materialism and scientific rationalism. A modern man like Martin
no longer sees himself as faced with a divinely ordered universe in which he may
receive grace or damnation through his spiritual adaptation to or sinful rebellion
against the will of God. The condition of godless people is designated by the
symbol of darkness. The cellar metaphor according to Golding is “a convenient
metaphor for the experience of the human being turning away from God, into
egotism, the fearful darkness of egotism”\textsuperscript{16}. Martin’s denial of God is not a
misconception but a choice.

A recurrent metaphor from a universal process of eating occurs to show
Martin’s greed. It gives the novel its intellectual dimension. Golding demands
the reader’s unremitting attention to the dangerous and the most repulsive
activities of the selfish nature left in man by the animal reincarnation of his
prehuman stage of evolution. \textit{Pincher Martin} stems from Golding’s concern with
the kind of corrupt humanism that the contemporary world has been battered
with. Golding is concerned with struggle related to unprecedented ethical
destitution and spiritual crisis.

In the novel, Nathaniel is like Simon of \textit{Lord of the Flies}. He is Golding’s
unique man who understands the necessity of purgatory. Golding says : “...[Nathaniel] is what [one] might call a compendium of the people I have known
during my life who would argue from that point of view. I don’t think there’s any particular, any single guru (one) could find. A great friend of mine who is almost exactly the same age as me, but has been very sick, I suppose he might stand as an example of the kind of person that Nathaniel is portrayed as. But Nathaniel is much less a character than his other man.... Nathaniel is a mechanism, a plot mechanism. He’s got to be there for Pincher to bounce off of, really, more than any thing else" (JBWG, 144). Nathaniel is a mystical person who “intuits what most of us evade.”

*Pincher Martin* is about a modern godless man. The protagonist has supreme pride, confidence in his education, reason, intelligence and will to surmount all odds. The struggle exists at three levels – natural man’s struggle for physical survival, social man’s struggle for ego survival, and religious man’s struggle for soul survival. After being washed ashore, “Pincher” Martin shows his will and intelligence for survival:

The end to be desired is rescue. For that, the bare minimum necessary is survival. I must keep this body going. I must give it drink and food and shelter. When I do that it does not matter if the job is well done or not so long as it is done at all. So long as the thread of life is unbroken it will connect a future with the past...

Point one. Point two, I must watch for signs of sickness and doctor myself. Point three.... (PM, 81).

Martin is over anxiously careful in giving his world on the rock the solidity of specification in order to render it credible to himself. Sensation is a reality for him on the rock. For example, he feels the hardness of the stones but is incapable of and uninterested in tracing its source: “The hardness under his cheek began to insist” (PM, 24). Also “… there was a redness pulsing in front of his eyes” (PM, 21).

The repetitive use of words also lulls Martin’s suspicions about the reality of his universe. Badly shaken at the idea that the rocks are teeth, “Pincher” Martin attempts to shut out the sickening reality by singing loudly or striking
pose and declaiming a passage. However, he fails to reassure himself. In his
terror he grips the stone dwarf and the head falls and goes clattering down the
cliff. “Pincher” Martin then rushes headlong to rebuild the dwarf.

He scrambled down the rock, found a too heavy stone,
 moved it about a yard and then let go. He threw himself over the
stone.... He scrambled back to the too heavy stone and fought with
it. He moved it, end over end. He built steps to the top of a wall
and worked the great stone up.... He bled.... He dismantled the
dwarf and rebuilt him (PM, 80).

It is clear that a determined rational man is struggling frantically to
rebuild the figure so as to attract planes. But there is no escape from the terror of
the black lightning for a man who is externally a civilized and rationalistic being
but inwardly betrays a deep sense of innate savagery. Martin’s attitude
throughout the book lacks self-restraint. He can stoop to any extent for the
gratification of his desires. There are no bars to his thinking and thus no
subjugation or submission.

We can study Martin’s approach towards life in the light of Michel
Foucault’s concept of ‘Analytic of Finitude’ from his book The Order of Things.
Pincher never seems to be an ‘enslaved sovereign’. A person became an
‘enslaved sovereign” or an object of knowledge when economics, biology,
philology came into existence and the classical discourse, in which being and
representation found their common locus, was eclipsed. Life should define itself
“in the depths of its being, the conditions of possibility of the living being”
(FOT, 340). We call Martin a ‘modern Prometheus’. Unlike “Pincher’s”
tendencies, the analytic of finitude demands that human beings, “withdraw into
the depths of things and roll up upon themselves in accordance with the laws of
life, production, and language” (FOT, 341).

It is true that the man is not conceived as the end-product of evolution, yet
he is recognised to be one extremity of a long-series of laws of life. Also he is
the principle and means of all production. But he is not omnipotent as “Pincher”
Martin thinks himself to be. Man is governed by labour, life and language. We can have access to a person through his words, his organism and his thinking and “as soon as he thinks, merely unveils himself to his own eyes in the form of a being who is already, in a necessarily subjacent density, in an irreducible anteriority, a living being, an instrument of production, a vehicle for words which exist before him” (FOT, 341).

Thus, the contents of labour, life and language which are exterior to a person and older than him, herald a person’s finitude. These contents are revealed to him by his knowledge. This finitude is in the paradoxical form of the endless. According to Foucault, “…it probably has no end, is of a journey which, though it probably has no end, is nevertheless perhaps not without hope” (FOT, 342).

It is pertinent to discuss, here, Martin’s life in the light of Foucault’s concept of finitude. Martin does not care about the larger and older contents of life of which he is a vehicle. It results in negating the finitude. Larger and older contents of life, through which a person discovers himself, are also thoroughly imbued with finitude. These contents neither trap a human being nor allow him to “traverse them without residuum in the lightning flash of an infinite understanding” (FOT, 342). Martin does not realise that his experiences are connected with his body, his desires and also with the language he speaks. All these positive forms tell a person that he is finite. A person’s body gives him the mode of being of life. Similarly a person’s desire connects him to his existence and the mode of being of production. Also, a person’s speaking thought links him to the mode of being of language and to “the whole backwash of history to which words lend their glow at the instant they are pronounced” (FOT, 343). This finitude is found in everything that indicates itself as a concrete limitation of person’s existence. The limitation acts not as a determination imposed upon man from outside (because he has a nature or a history) “but is a fundamental finitude which rests on nothing but its own existence as fact, and opens upon the positivity of all concrete limitation” (FOT, 343).
This realisation of finitude does not dawn upon “Pincher” Martin. He has to be an “enslaved sovereign” and an “observed spectator”. Daily experiences of life are called positive experiences by Foucault whereas ultimate reality happening once in a person’s life is called fundamental. Daily experience of death like condition is the same as well as different from that Fundamental death on the basis of which life is given. From the nineteenth century, finitude is not situated within the thought of the infinite but at the very heart of these contents that are given “as the concrete forms of finite existence”. Foucault remarks:

...if man’s knowledge is finite, it is because he is trapped, without possibility of liberation, within the positive contents of language, labour and life; and inversely, if life, labour and language may be posited in their positivity, it is because knowledge has finite forms (FOT, 345).

The metaphysics of infinity became useless when the empirical contents were detached from representation and contained the principle of their existence within themselves. It appears that modernity begins when human beings’ existence turns inwards – within his organism, inside the shell of his head, in the whole structure of his physiology and in the folds of language older than himself. But, as Foucault says, “more fundamentally, our culture crossed the threshold beyond which we recognise our modernity when finitude was conceived in an interminable cross-reference with itself” (FOT, 346).

Our sensitivity towards calling “Pincher” Martin a modern man suffers a radical change by these references to modernity as Foucault highlighted. “Pincher’s” existence, for most of the time, has been pointing outwards without any conscious efforts towards inward living. His demands become boundless and evil enters at every step when his very existence endangers the existence of others.

Through “Pincher” Martin, Golding has presented a protagonist whose life had been an interminable saga of violence, egotism, arrogance, cruelty, self-aggrandisement, greed and revenge. He glories in inflicting pain on others. Like
Jack of *Lord of the Flies*, he oppresses others. His tenacity in clinging to the rock of his imagination springs from his overriding arrogance. His magnificent resistance to death is heroic... “he was convulsed and struggling.... He spat and snarled” (PM, 42). The negative emotion of hate keeps him alive. The pain and endurance of Martin in the rock crevice remind him of the trench tortures in the battlefield (PM, 40). His memories are full of outrages... “Waiting for the police by the smashed car. Waiting, for the shell after the flash of the gun” (PM, 139). “Pincher” Martin feels fear and terror but not guilt or remorse. As the black lightning strikes, he yells “I spit on your compassion!” (PM, 199). He remains bereft of humility till the end.
NOTES

1. William Golding, *Pincher Martin* (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), p. 149. Subsequent references in the chapter will be cited as PM.


