CHAPTER V

THE UNHOLY SPIRE

*The Spire* presents the savagery of a church man who is bent upon building a spire without caring about human life. He uses other persons as tools for the fulfilment of his aim. Jocelin has had a vision, which prompts him to build a spire. The other clerics are against it for different reasons. Some clerics are jealous of Jocelin. Some resist the idea because of the losses both spiritual and pecuniary, which would result from the disruption of the regular services of the church. Still others resist it only because a change is to be resisted. Pangall, the old caretaker – lame, misshapen, a left-over from the past – is against it because he cannot tolerate the mess and intrusion in his quiet household. Roger Mason is against the idea as he thinks such a spire an impossibility on the basis of his craft. Provision for a spire was not part of the original plan of the cathedral and Roger estimates that the foundations are inadequate to support such a massive structure. While persuading Roger Mason, Jocelin tries to justify faith and prayer against reasonableness: “The building is a diagram of prayer; and our spire will be a diagram of the highest prayer of all... the folly isn’t mine. It’s God’s folly. Even in the old days he never asked men to do what was reasonable”¹.

The novel depicts the savagery of “civilized” clergyman Jocelin. He disregards others’ feelings for fulfilling his vision of getting the spire built. He is instrumental in letting Roger and Goody Pangall be corrupted. Pangall, the old caretaker, and the whole lot of workers become passive sufferers due to Jocelin’s misadventure. Roger questions Jocelin but is satisfied by Jocelin. Roger has a lower social status than Jocelin. But he is certainly more thoughtful as he knows that the structure of the spire will spell doom for many workers.
Thus, in the beginning of the book, we find a strange contradictory attitude of Jocelin where his insistence on building the spire leads him to become bestial in his disregard of others. At the same time, Jocelin knows that a price has to be paid by him as well as by Roger:

You and I were chosen to do this thing together. It's a great glory. I see now it'll destroy us of course. What are we, after all? Only I tell you this, Roger, with the whole strength of my soul. The thing can be built and will be built, in the very teeth of Satan... (SP, 47).

Paul Crawford argues: “The turning upside down of cathedral life and spatial relativization deepens an uncertainty that complements the questioning mood promoted by self-conscious aspects of the novel”2. Jocelin’s spiritual achievement of building the spire is undermined by his encouragement and connivance at lower body transgressions and carnivalesque violence. Phallicism of the spire undermines Jocelin’s desire for spiritual transcendence. There is a profanation of the religious or sacred “high.”

Jocelin is prepared to use Roger’s entanglement with Goody Pangall as he knows that this will keep Roger at his work. Pangall is being used by the superstitious workmen to ward off impending disaster. The spire is built and the normal life of the cathedral ceases. The end result of this building of the spire is disastrous for everyone. Goody Pangall miscarries Roger’s child and dies. Roger becomes a drunkard and Jocelin becomes doubtful about the wisdom of building the spire.

Don Crompton sees the spire as some sort of Jocelin’s sublimated lust for Goody Pangall3. Jocelin arranges Goody’s marriage with Pangall even knowing that Pangall is impotent. Goody has known this, but for Jocelin the discovery of the true nature of his physical preoccupation with her is as gradual as the slow erection of the Spire itself. With the growing of the spire, Jocelin’s illusion of himself as a sort of Christ in the wilderness begins to crumble. Desperately, he
believes that his visions had been prompted by witchcraft. But such superstitious rationalisation will not do.

Jocelin deludes himself that he is humble, “Lord: I thank Thee that Thou hast kept me humble” (SP, 22). His condescension and presumption in his dealings with his subordinates prove otherwise. “I ask your pardon, Father Adam. One forgets you are there so easily!... I shall call you Father Anonymous!” (SP, 26). In the heated exchange with Father Anselm, the Sacrist, it emerges that Jocelin is unconventional in his approach to the problem of the defilement of the Church as the workers would be filling it with dust and rubble (SP, 32-35). The malicious Sacrist initially votes against the spire but retracts ungraciously, leaving a sting, “an indefinable rebuke that was a sort of insolence, so that the thread snapped” (SP, 35).

Four stone-heads of Jocelin are carved to decorate the four sides of the tower. These four heads have their noses like eagles’ beaks and the nostrils widely flared like a pair of wings. We begin to doubt Jocelin’s humility. Simultaneously, we begin to feel that these heads are the outcome of Jocelin’s pride. It is when the eagle itself is free and ranging in its pride at the tower’s rim that the trouble begins. There, everything that belongs to him is seen simultaneously, and pride of possession mingles with a corrupting sense of power. From a height, Jocelin sees two roads converge on the cathedral. He knows that the spire has attracted these roads. He sees his flock reduced to ants below him. He sees their secret sins. He sees the woman watering the milk, the drunkard in the gutter, the bargee who should be delivering his stone relaxing instead in the local inn. Jocelin judges these happenings like god.

The book is set in the fourteenth century which was the great century of church corruption. This is evident in the election of the new chancellor Ivo and the elevation of Jocelin to deanship. The savagery is felt when Jocelin discovers to his horror that his Aunt Alison, a favoured mistress of the old king, had urged the King to ‘drop a plum in his mouth’ out of no better motive than the whim to be generous to a sister she really despised. The Church of Rome has promised a
holy nail to Jocelin and it is ironically contrasted with the hard cash that comes from Alison’s whoring at high places.

Jocelin lacks pity. He asks Roger to send a man to whip a drunkard on the streets, when his own house, the cathedral, is sullied by “murderers, cut throats, fornicators, sodomites and atheists?” (SP, 167). At the inquiry into Jocelin’s transgressions, it is clear that he has evaded confession for two years and kept company with men, “who are more than merely wicked!” (SP, 169). He is branded as an outcast by his churchmen.

By the ironic interplay of contrasting elements, Golding has given expression to the larger ambiguities surrounding Jocelin’s motives for building the spire, and the nature of the building itself. The supporting pillars give forth a strange music and one wonders whether it is an acknowledgement of immanent miracle or the first sign of a disaster. The pit at the crossways, in terms of the physical analogy, represents the bowels, the centre of corruption and the darkness of man’s heart. Psychologically, it is the Id, terrifyingly suggesting monstrous barely controlled passions beneath the surface. On the other hand, it is ritually prepared “like a grave made ready for some notable”, and to penetrate the significance of that phrase in terms of the myth relating to Pangall, is to recognize that its terrors are compensated by its mythic power to heal and renew.

Jocelin drives a nail at the top of the spire. He is nailing the cathedral to the sky in affirmation of the supremacy of his Faith over Roger’s Reason. He uses the nail not because it is a conventional relic but because it epitomizes the power of faith. But even this is not enough to dissipate Jocelin’s terror of gradual awakening. Jocelin realizes his mistake of not listening to Roger’s warning that the pillars are not solid but stone skins filled with rubble. A decisive insight leads him to village to ask for Roger Mason’s forgiveness. He also wants to know the support that is holding the spire up. At this moment, he sees an apple tree in full blossom over his head:

He twisted his neck and looked up sideways. There was a cloud of angels flashing in the sunlight, they were pink and gold.
and white; and they were uttering this sweet scent for joy of the light and the air. They brought with them a scatter of clear leaves, and among the leaves a long, black springing thing. His head swam with the angels, and suddenly he understood there was more to the apple tree than one branch (SP, 220).

After this vision, Jocelin has the vision of the kingfisher in flight across the water. But at this moment, these visions are a sort of romantic distraction that experience has taught him to suspect: "Father Adam was right. I make too much fuss among the apple tree and the Kingfishers." Only at his death-bed does Jocelin have an insight into the final truth of his original vision.

In fact the visionary gleams of an apple tree and the kingfisher, in connection with building of the spire, are a final vindication of the righteousness of Jocelin's purpose. It is a vindication in Golding's phrase of the 'My Godness' in man that comes and goes as quickly as the Kingfisher and the blossom of spring, as opposed to the terrifying, hardened, broken-down criminality in man that constantly threatens but can never quite destroy him. And it is this final certainty that penetrates the rigmarole of the last rites and brings Jocelin in the end the peace that is beyond understanding and his own form of beatitude.

The savagery of the workmen surfaces in their behaviour with Pangall, an older caretaker. Jocelin notices the mistletoe berry near the crossways after Pangall has been hunted from the cathedral by the workmen. Its significance becomes clear to him when, alone on top of the spire on Midsummer Night, he sees the bale fires burning on the hills in the direction of Stonehenge and realises that Pangall has been the victim of a pagan ceremony to ward off the bad luck that the workmen feel must inevitably result from building so high and at such cost.

Paul Crawford argues that fantastic and carnivalesque modes function in four ways in *The Spire* (PHWG, 119). They interrogate human cruelty and sinfulness in general. Jocelin considers the building of the Spire a miracle. Natural explanations gradually strip away. Jocelin encourages human
transgression and sinfulness. Second, these modes act to magnify the tension between notions of construction and deconstruction, between fiction as both capable and, at the same time, incapable of communicating meaning. Third, these modes attack religious dogmatism and authoritarianism. Finally, these modes undermine the influence of class in the building of the spire. In comparison to Pincher Martin and Free Fall, The Spire does not deal with contemporary issues. It is a more internalized fiction (PHWG, 116).

Writing about The Spire, Paul Crawford argues: “The novel’s setting in the distant past and away from contemporary history marks his preference for the “conservative” universalism that muffled his critique in The Inheritors” (PHWG, 119). At the time of writing The Spire, Golding was concerned with “the loss or nontotalisation of meaning and disablement of fictional integrity” (PHWG, 119).

Fantastic and carnivalesque modes complement metafictional uncertainty in the novel. The novel is an equivocal art that balances a variety of oppositions – supernatural with the natural, the “high” with the “low”, text with world and faith with reason. The self-consciousness of the novel is not like the labyrinthine fiction of post-modernism. The spire is completed despite the threats of collapse. In line with the modernist tradition, we are made to know that the pattern-maker can overcome pluralism and create “form and substance where perhaps there would be nothing”

The whole building of the spire is paralleled with storytelling and with the completion of a pattern. Various stages in the spire’s building are so many “disjunct sentences” of a “story, which though they left great gaps, still told enough” (SP, 156). Paul Crawford argues: “The construction of Jocelin’s spire, and coterminously the novel The Spire, is humorously linked with penile erection” (PHWG, 120). The spire is a huge “architectural metaphor” both for Jocelin’s repressed sexual feeling for Goody and fictional creativity. The spire points to sexual, religious and creative impotency. The meaning of “spire”, as of the novel, remains unclear till the end. The words and sentences like “Berenice” (SP, 221) and “It’s like appletree!” (SP, 223) evokes various interpretations. But
the end of the novel dramatises the limitations of interpretation. The images cannot be unravelled. As the spire stands on shifting sand, so does the novel on the shifting ground of language. The novel is completed but leans precariously toward utter collapse and loss of meaning like the spire.

At the heart of the fantastic is the fact that the building seems to rise against the laws of physics. Jocelin's efforts defies natural explanation. The reader's judgement of whether the construction of the spire is ultimately supernatural or natural is suspended. Jocelin refers to his personal "constructive" angel who aids his work. Golding reveals this angel as "deconstructive", a cancer that deforms Jocelin's spire. Jocelin's fantastic interpretation regarding construction of the spire is juxtaposed with Roger's natural one. This conflict enhances hesitation.

Jocelin's visions have Gothic images and they strengthen the fantastic mood of uncertainty. Images of devils, ghosts, witchcrafts and nightmares are frequently encountered. Medieval Christianity has its low and popular aspects. There is irresolution between the natural and the supernatural till the end. This way the fantastic in the novel is total.

The carnivalesque functions in tandem with the fantastic. Everything is made topsy-turvy and relativised. Even the visions of the spire's construction as a "final beginning" (SP, 13) or "upward waterfull" (SP, 233) are oxymoroncic. The cathedral becomes a "pagan temple", complete with workers like "priests of some outlandish rite" (SP, 10). Dirty language is used. But every action is relativised. "Holy" spire is constructed against the background of filth, depravity and equivocation of behaviour, particularly on the part of Jocelin.

In the novel, the religious morality is set against the earthy and filthy living of pagan workers. Similarly, order is welded to chaos and pattern to deconstruction. Workers' life is carnivalesque. It threatens Jocelin's vision. Jocelin tolerates this behaviour because he has to use these workers as a means to an end. He goes even further to put blinkers on his eyes regarding illicit behaviour of Roger and Goody. The model of the cathedral with its phallic spire
suggests Jocelin’s repressed desire for Goody: “He detached the spire with
difficulty, because the wood was swollen, and held the thing devoutly, like a
relic. He caressed it gently” (SP, 55). In a dream he lies down like the cruciform
structure of the cathedral with Goody astride him: “Only Satan himself, rising
out of the west, clad in nothing but blazing hair stood over his nave and worked
at the building, tormenting him so that he writhed on the marsh in the warm
water, and cried out aloud. He woke in the darkness, full of loathing” (SP, 65).

Sexual transgression at every point contradicts the “high” spiritual
atmosphere of the cathedral. Roger cuckolds Pangall with the connivance of
Jocelin. There is a suggestion that the workmen were performing “outrageous
combination of the sexes” (SP, 45). Cuckolded Pangall becomes a target of
carnival mob who bring the “noises of the market place” (SP, 9), “tavern talk”
(SP, 26), and “jeer” (SP, 19). In his portrayal of the mocked cuckold, Pangall,
Golding reminds us of his earlier interest in the victimization of the “weak” like
Piggy and Alfred. Violence toward the excluded and marginal is an aspect of
noncelebratory carnivalesque. Jocelin is not seriously concerned about this low
materiality of workmen. Rather he throws in an “alehouse joke” when he was
“hurrying out of a hole with his folly held in both hands” (SP, 58). As with
Pangall, the workmen jeer and laugh at him as well. Jocelin’s wife Rachel, too,
becomes a part of “filthy” carnivalesque of frank sexuality. She tells Jocelin of
her laughter as a coitus interruptus in her sex life with Roger.

In fact, Jocelin has himself invited the violent, transgressive and “low”
behaviour of the pagan workers in which Pangall is killed and Jocelin himself is
beaten up and left for dead in “the filth of the gutter” (SP, 215). Jocelin wants
that the spire should get built. He even connives and encourages the rowdyism of
workers for his own interests. As Lok and Fa observe the New People from a
treetop in The Inheritors, so does Jocelin survey the low, stinking masses with
their alehouses and brothels from the height of the spire. The spreading muck
brought about by Jocelin’s spire decrowns even the heraldic splendour of statues
of crusaders who now “wore filthy chainmail, or dung-coloured plate armour”
(SP, 72).
Richard S. Cammarota notes that in *The Spire*, “the image of the mouth, suggesting acquisition and consumption, has a lively history in the novel”⁵. Suggestion of “acquisition and consumption” attacks the hypocritical “sanctity” of Jocelin. Jocelin’s spiritual appetite consumes those around him. Rather like Christopher Martin who is devoured by the “black lightning”, Jocelin receives his own comeuppance for leading a selfish, grasping life by being consumed by cancer. Jocelin is aware of the human costs of his appetite. He requests to be sculpted for his tomb with “head fallen back, mouth open” (SP, 219). Paul Crawford remarks: “Like Rabelais’s *Pentagruel* (1532) and *Gargantua* (1534), *The Spire* attacks the austere, monological authoritarianism of the medieval church through the relativity, uncertainty, and as Mikhail Bakhtin has argued, dialogism of a fantastical topsy-turvydom” (PHWG, 129).

Pangall is made a scapegoat but scapegoats are also commonly associated with the idea of divinity. In Golding’s scheme, there is a hint of the Roman god Vulcan who was deformed and lame. Pangall’s deformity and impotency reflect details documented by Frazer concerning those gods who figure as scapegoats in vegetation myths. The adultery between Pangall’s wife Goody and Roger Mason reminds us of the classical situation of Venus and Mars trapped in the golden net of Vulcan’s forging.

The main myth connected with Pangall is that of the Norse god, Balder. Balder was made invulnerable to all physical hurt by the goddess Frigg. All things on earth and in heaven swore not to harm Balder. Loki, the mischief-maker discovered that the mistletoe had not taken the oath because rooted as it was in the oak tree itself, it was neither in heaven nor on earth. Loki used this information to bring about Balder’s death. He fashioned an arrow from the mistletoe and encouraged the blind god, Hother, to shoot it at Balder. A whole complex of suggestions link this myth with Pangall: there is his death by the mistletoe. Pangall’s ancestors built the original church with the very oak out of which the beams were made. According to the Balder myth, the life of the god was in the tree. The mistletoe once pulled, the god would die.
If Pangall is to be equated with Balder, it is equally relevant to see Jocelin as Loki, the mischief-maker who brings about the conditions where disaster follows. The original treatment of Pangall by the workmen, described by Roger as ‘a joke’ just as in the myth the crowd amuses itself by testing Balder’s invulnerability. If Pangall is linked with Balder, then of course, other questions arise as well.

Jocelin, like Pangall, becomes a hunted man, outcast and victim, but the murderous town people spare him when they see that sickness has already taken its toll of his body. Moments before his death, Jocelin envisions:

He saw all people naked, creatures of light brown parchment, which bound in their pipes or struts. He saw them pace or prance in sheets of woven stuff, with the skins of dead animals under their feet... (SP, 157).

Jocelin’s final vision is that of the kingfisher and apple tree and has become one with the created and permanent beauty of the spire which he has built at the cost of four lives.

Jocelin seeks explanations and justifications for his action in one pattern after another. Action is steeped in his inner consciousness which is increasingly unreliable. Here, The Spire recalls Pincher Martin. Unlike the other fables where the mythic integration in the concluding coda could be accomplished by the reader through assembling of various clues, in The Spire the protagonist himself realises the full import of his actions. He accomplishes the fusion of alternative explanations. The things which Jocelin has deliberately ignored consequently suppress his civilized action towards the general welfare. These things include his immoral actions of using Goody Pangall as a bait for Roger and his own repressed feelings for Goody. These things again come up in the coda and make Jocelin realise that he got the spire built on a shifting sand. He comes up against the cellarage of his own mind in the coda. In his last cryptic cry, “It’s like the apple tree”, the fragmentations of Pagan and Christian, cellarage and sky, panic-
shot darkness and blue bird-over-water and all that these elements represent are brought into essential relationship.

Both Jocelin's folly and the purity of his dedication are hinted at through ironic asides, symbolic patterns and certain metaphors like the tent, the mayflower, the kingfisher, raven and all the burgeoning tree. Each new level in Jocelin's life brings a new effect, a new cause, a new lesson. A funnel is built over the crossways and the pit is filled in. But a new pit emerges on a higher level in the swallow's nest that Goody and Roger occupy. There is a lesson for each height like 'dark waters in his belly.' Jocelin feels that he brings "essential evil" with him all the way to the "stork's nest", a third kind of pit at the head of the tower. Yet, something new is learned, something that could not have been predicted.

We're mayfly. We can't tell what it'll be like up there from foot to foot; but we must live from morning to evening every minute with a new thing. Jocelin wants to be raven "that knows what the sunrise is like" and have "some knowledge of yesterday and the day before" (SP, 117).

Jocelin has, like "Pincher" of Pincher Martin, and children of Lord of the Flies, denied a dimension of his nature and comes to regard this dimension as dark and evil. During the crucial episode at the pit, the symbolism of the cathedral model assumes this larger relevance when Jocelin 'in an apocalyptic glimpse of seeing' catches the impotent Pangall being mocked by workman who is dancing "the model of the spire projecting obscenely from between his legs" (SP, 90). He is disgusted by any relationship between flesh and spirit and is the obverse of Sammy of Free Fall. "Renewing life" horrifies him. It is like mud overcoming his body. Jocelin deliberately denies the dreams their sexual origin which we assign to them. For example, the careful identification of Goody with the dumb sculptor of the story where the red-haired 'devil' of his dream's 'uncountry' hums from an empty mouth; both figures are, of course, objects of Jocelin's suppressed desire, silent servants to his prurience and prudery but he
prefers to interpret them as bewitchments or bad angels thus creating a demon from the stuff of his own mind in the manner of the New People and "Pincher".

We find an identification between the Cathedral and a man's body with the obvious phallic symbolism of spire at several junctures in the fable. Cathedral has, like the cellarage and the Spire, personal and public correspondences. Thus Jocelin's sexual crisis corresponds precisely with that of the building. Jocelin speaks of himself as a "building about to fall" (SP, 222) just as the spire seems to be toppling. It would be an oversimplification to consider the spire's construction as 'the phallic sublimation of Jocelin's repressed yearning for the red-haired wife'. It is also 'the mast of a ship', 'a dunce's cap', a 'stone hammer' waiting to strike, and the stone diagram of the highest prayer of all. Frank Kermode remarks that "it gives one some idea of the nature of this writer's gift that he has written a book about an expressly phallic symbol to which Freudian glosses seem irrelevant" and it seems very relevant for the element of phallicism operates as just one aspect of the primordial.

Paradoxically, when Jocelin can control his thoughts, the various images are suppressed and the reader's understanding suffers a suspension because these images convey ambiguity and threatening power to a reader and seem inexplicable to Jocelin. Of course the imaginings which convey these images are those of an obsessed mind but they also suggest a pattern that Jocelin is deliberately ignoring. Sometimes a reader has a better access to happenings than Jocelin. Jocelin's obsession has certain glaring social and moral implications which are not construed by Jocelin himself as Roger is terrified of heights and is being driven by an unrelenting will. Also, Roger's wife is churlishly dismissed when she requires sympathy. On the whole, a reader identifies with Jocelin very strongly.

It is true that the savagery of workmen towards Pangall and obsessiveness of Jocelin are noteworthy but the book seems to glance two ways. The workmen are 'good men', yet infidels and blasphemous. Though the Cathedral is rich with the "Fabric of constant Praise" (SP, 165) yet it seems a "pagan temple" (SP, 10). Jocelin is a brutal self-deluded egoist, nevertheless when exalted by vision (whether God-inspired, flesh-
inspired, or disease-inspired), he accomplishes the concrete construction of a spire that “joins earth to heaven” (SP, 69). Its very stones are windows by which men look at the infinite, yet “they cry out” (SP, 223). An ostensibly sturdy Christian Cathedral rests on the uncertain foundation of “the living pagan earth” (SP, 80). Its four pillars are less majestic saints than human lovers; they dance over slime and stirring grubs. An exultant prayer is supported by the corrupt money of an adulterous aunt and a murdered man, who “crouched beneath the crossways with a silver of mistletoe between his ribs” (SP, 212). Creation brings with it violence and death. Jocelin cries out on his death-bed having been convinced of his guilt. The man of God rejects God: “How proud their hope of hell is. There is no innocent work. God knows where God may be” (SP, 222).

For Golding the physical and the spiritual are perpetually intermingled. While fumbling for a formula for his folly, Jocelin decides his spire was nothing but ‘a great [phallic] club’ lifted towards a tangle of hair blazing in the sky. He mutters aloud, ‘Berenice’. But no single conception of corruption suffices. Golding makes this point – very obliquely – by having Father Adam (who is set upon helping Jocelin into heaven) read the Berenice of the Catullus poem whom Jocelin refers to as Berenice, the most obscure early Christian martyr. Jocelin is released from his sense of guilt when the oppositions of fable are resolved through his sighting the physical spire from the window at the moment of his death which leads him into the spiritual vision. Like Pincher before the dwarf and Sammy before the rag, Jocelin confronts an object emblematic of his own guilty self and it is the ‘stone hammer’ that he has ‘traded for four lives’. Unlike Sammy and unlike Pincher, Jocelin experiences not just purgative panic but astonishment and joy which ‘split the darkness’. As Virginia Tiger observes,

The final truth is not of sets of opposition but as a suspension of perpetually interfused antinomies. Thus morally human acts have elements of innocence and guilt, each modifying, each creating one another.

159
V.V. Subbarao has observed that in *The Spire* out of the depths of degradation and suffering, humility and self-knowledge are born just as the spire rises towards heaven from the weak and muddy foundations on the earth.

Pangall’s cottage resting against the Cathedral side even appears in one of Jocelin’s dreams. Historically it goes back to past civilizations. This cottage is a ‘Kingdom’ and built like a “monument against the architect’s intentions” (SP, 17). In fact, some of its fatigued piecemeal construction predates the Cathedral and the Normans themselves by over ‘a thousand years’; presumably, then, sewn into its decaying fabric are fragments of Roman origin. Golding elaborates upon this historical point:

The intention was that the Pangalls picked up what was lying about and also “won” building materials. The Saxon wayfarers, by the way, used Roman ruins as shelter, thus calling them Cold Harbours. Where you get the name, Cold Harbour, you get or had got a ruin, probably Roman. There are, for example, roused Roman tiles in a Mildenhall Church near Marlborough. I put a Cold Harbour in *The Spire* to render the whole concept critic-proof.

It is this Kingdom that is actually and symbolically invaded by the pagan workmen, as they taunt Pangall and insolently pile the rubble of construction around the cottage. It is this Kingdom that is vanquished as the whole town and Cathedral undergo a convulsion of change. Pangall and his line testify to that ancient repetition of rise and fall, growth and decay and again growth.

Pangall, with his devil-broom and deformity, is identified with the earth that Jocelin rejects because of his dusty brown and ‘dung coloured’ exterior. Pangall sheds tears of humiliation but the sunlight draws the Dean’s eye away from the “sharp tap on the instep of Jocelin’s shoe”, an incident adroitly prefiguring the crucial episode at the pit. Here, Jocelin scrapes from his instep the brown obscene berry of mistletoe and tries to close his eyes and ears to the long wolf howl and “hunting noise of the pack that raced after” (SP, 90) and the vanishing Pangall.
Progress in understanding also enhances one’s civilized behaviour. Jocelin’s discoveries about his past, which follow the pattern of the revelations in Ibsen’s plays from *The Pillars of Society* onward, reveals that he originally owed his preferment to Lady Alison’s whim when she was lying in bed with the late King and that he was unqualified for his appointment. The discovery follows in rather the same way as the respectability of the Alvings in *The Ghosts* is shown to be based on rottenness and sham. Jocelin alone had been unaware of this fact and this revelation forms his first progress of understanding. The other comprehensions, like the ritual killing of Pangall and the significance of his own feelings for Goody, come after some time.

Similarly, at the time of Pangall’s ritual killing, Jocelin’s perceptions are immediate, concrete but unanalysed.

In an apocalyptic glimpse of seeing, he caught how a man danced forward to Pangall, the model of the spire projecting obscenely from between his legs... he could not see, but only heard how Pangall broke. He heard the long wolfhowl of the man’s flight down the south aisle, heard the rising, the hunting noise of the pack that raced after him (SP, 207).

Jocelin sees Goody clutching a pillar, her red hair hanging free, her dress torn, turning her “white, contracted mouth,... towards Roger on this side of the pit, his arms spread from his side in anguish and appeal, in acknowledgement of consent and defeat” (SP, 90). Jocelin hardly understands what he has seen and heard and he is “locked in his head with only a few things. These few things sorted themselves endlessly but never arrived at any order” (SP, 91). He believes Pangall to have run away and deserted Goody, but finding a few pages later a berry and a twig on the floor, he turns to worrying about the seasoning of the wood the men are using. Jocelin does not express finally what has happened to Pangall until his last interview with Roger Mason at the very end of the book when he talks about the spire.
Jocelin continually sorts his thoughts and tries to make order out of past events. On Midsummer Night, the workmen leave early and Jocelin is alone up the spire. In the darkness, Jocelin sees the bale fires of the Pagan celebrations way out on the plain and says to himself:

It’s another lesson. The lesson for this height. Who could have foreseen that this was part of the scheme? Who could have known that at this height the thing I thought of as a stone diagram of prayer would lift up a cross and fight eye to eye with the fires of the Devil? (SP, 155-56).

Jocelin thinks of Goody and of the workmen, and like Ralph at the end of Lord of the Flies “wept bitterly without knowing what he wept for unless it was the sins of the world”. His mind gets to work on its own, as “a host of memories flew together. He watched, powerless to stop as they added to each other.” Then he feels suddenly cold, ‘remembering himself watching the floor down there, where among the dust and rubble a twig with a brown, obscene berry lay against his foot... “Mistletoe!” He rushes down the tower, “and at the crossways, the replaced paving stones were hot to his feet with all the fires of hell” (SP, 155).

This moment in the tower is the turning point in Jocelin’s realisation, for it is the moment at which he first understands what is actually happening at that very moment. At this point, the two opposite chronologies intersect, and from now on, as time passes, and the events move forward, his understanding progresses in the contrary direction, until at last, he knows exactly what happened that day at the crossways, just how he has destroyed the people around him, and how his phallic ambition to erect the spire is connected to his interest in Goody.

The symbol of cellarage suggests Jocelin’s unscrupulous use of other people to achieve his goal. It points to the evil ingrained in him. Jocelin discovers that within his being sensuality exists along with spirituality, and it is likely that his spiritual longing for the spire is a camouflage for his sensual cravings. Goody’s red hair haunts him. As Jocelin nears his end,
He looked up experimentally to see if at this late hour the witchcraft had left him; and there was a tangle of hair, blazing among the stars; and the great club of his spire lifted towards it. That’s all, he thought, that’s the explanation if I had time... (SP, 221).

Jocelin’s love for Goody has been a deceptive form of possessiveness. The moment of Jocelin’s physical and spiritual fall is also the moment of his regeneration. His pious complacency vanishes and he becomes truly humble and fully human. With a newly acquired sense of his own unworthiness, he goes to Father Anselm and Roger Mason to seek their forgiveness but is spurned by both. He displays remarkable forbearance as he faces the crowd, a sea of imprecations and hatred. He cries out Christ-like, “My Children! My Children!” (SP, 215). It is the moment of his atonement. Joseph Campbell says that atonement (at-one-ment) consists in no more than the abandonment of the self-generated double monster – the dragon thought to be God (super ego) and the dragon thought to be sin (repressed id). But this requires an abandonment of the attachment to ego itself.

It is ironical that Jocelin’s first vision of the spire exposes him to the perils of pride. It has the effect of arousing his hubris, instead of leading him to self-knowledge and harmony. It prompts one to question the genuineness of his mystical experience. The disturbing aspects of Jocelin’s vision are the proud feeling of his being the chosen one, and the cost involved. His pious complacency and his stance of spiritual superiority appear to be no more than the manifestations of his will – “the dreadful glow of his dedicated will” (SP, 137). He regards the discordant voices as resulting from a lamentable lack of faith. Jocelin thinks that Roger has no vision, “He is blind”. In fact, it is Jocelin who is blind to any point of view or perspective other than his own. Jocelin is a visionary who makes little use of his physical sight and this shortcoming makes him incapable of having deep understanding of the ongoing events.
In pursuing his goal, Jocelin betrays an utter lack of concern for others. His relations with Father Anselm are devalued. He begins to hate Adam whom he calls Father Anonymous or the clothespeg man. Lady Allison’s tainted money is accepted but her letters get no response from Jocelin. Pangall is thought of as a nuisance. He trades a stone hammer for four human lives. Jocelin thinks, as he winks at Goody’s illicit contact with Roger: “we are each responsible for our own salvation” (SP, 86). This contrasts with Major Scobie’s conduct in Graham Greene’s *The Heart of the Matter*. As he experiences the tension between the demands of faith and the claims of human relationships, Major Scobie declares, “I know the answers as well as he does. One should look after one’s own soul at whatever cost to another and that’s what I can’t do, what I shall never be able to!”¹⁰. Jocelin, unlike Major Scobie, doesn’t show the tension between commitment to his vision and the pressure of humanity. He is capable of humanity as he asks Anselm, “Father Anselm, Friendship is a precious thing... What have we done to it?” (SP, 48).

Jocelin’s problem is that by being loyal to his gilded vision, he commits an offence against humanity. This is the cause of his cold, savage disregard for others’ feelings. Like Oedipus, Jocelin moves from what he thinks to be his confident and happy knowledge of God and men to a sharpened awareness of “the natural chaos of existence” (SP, 81).

Through Jocelin, Golding conveys a savage tendency among some persons who use others as objects and exploit them for their own purposes. Golding may agree with Professor Woodroofe when he says:

In business and in work and in many of our everyday contacts with people such as shop assistants, public officials, people are necessarily means to our ends and we in turn are means to their ends and I do not see how this can be avoided. But we should never treat people simply or only as means to our ends, no matter how high that end may be. Only an attitude of reverence-reverence for human beings just as they are, treating human
personality as something sacred, can save us from lapsing into the I-It relationship. Jocelin cannot move from an I-It relationship to an I-thou relationship. His aim for a spire is not sufficient to raise him far above the level of selfish extroversion. It is Golding’s conviction that both light and darkness are being pressed upon man; and man must recognise this insistent and unseen pressure as a challenge and adapt himself to the good in it. Egotism has taken a person away from the spiritual source of his being. Egoism expresses itself through terrorism, hatred, pride, immorality and atheism. Consideration of only personal good and of disregard to others, of failure to balance opposites and of failure to realise that although darkness is “non-life” yet it is essential as a background to the illuminating light of life lead to alienation, suffering and bitterness.

It is true that most of Jocelin’s savage behaviour stems from his obsessiveness and increasing egoism. But, as Virginia Tiger contends, most of the criticism that alludes Jocelin’s increasing egoism, his isolation and fable’s theme to Golding’s weakness in presenting human relationships certainly misapprehends all this (VT, 174).

To study The Spire along with The Scorpion God makes an interesting reading. The Liar, the protagonist in The Scorpion God is thought to be savage in ancient Egyptian society. He refuses to go to the grave with the king. Actually he, unintentionally, becomes an instrument of establishing civilized practices as far as safeguarding human beings and humanity are concerned. Jocelin’s faith disregards reasonableness whereas the Liar clings to reasonableness during a situation of crisis. As opposed to The Spire, The Scorpion God is based on a down-to-earth approach. Jocelin creates a situation knowingly that the consequences of it might be dangerous for human lives but his so called God-given vision and faith act as the supportive mechanisms. The Liar, on the other hand, deliberately kills others to save himself. Jocelin is a cleric and his faith, in which he brings about untold misery to others, has a stamp of religion on it. The
Liar is involved in directly killing others but is not as reprehensible and condemnable as Jocelin. The Liar’s efforts are directed towards saving his life. He involuntarily exposes the savage tradition of ancient Egypt. The Liar seems to be a character from Joseph Conrad’s fiction who sticks to the simple philosophy of saving himself in the face of adversity by employing the available means. The Liar unintentionally becomes an instrument to bring about civilization in ancient Egypt through seemingly uncivilized means. In \textit{The Scorpion God}, Golding’s interest in and love for Egyptian history and ways of life, becomes clear.

Egyptians, unlike the Greeks and most modern men, do not divorce life from death. They don’t consider interest in death unwholesome or morbid. Golding is much interested in Egypt and the Egyptians, like Golding, were possessed by death and retained their sense of its coexistence with life: “the heart of my Egypt therefore is to be at once alive and dead, to suggest mysteries with no solution, to mix the strange, the gruesome and the beautiful” (DC, 76).

Golding’s concern in \textit{The Scorpion God} is a political moment in Egypt when the King of the upper Kingdom of the Nile conquered the lower Kingdom down to the delta and established his Kingdom at Memphis. Modern Egyptologists are now sceptical as to whether exactly this sequence of events took place at all, but the legendary conqueror is traditionally identified as Hor-Aha, or as Narmer, and most often as Menes (though Herodotus refers to him as ‘Min’). Walter B. Emery points out that a fragmentary mace-head, now in the Ashmolean, identifies the figure of an early King wearing the crown of the upper Kingdom with a pictograph of a scorpion thus providing Golding with his title\(^2\)

A kilted Egyptian King, wearing the tall white linen crown of the upper Kingdom, carrying the traditional crook and flail in each hand is running heavily. He is addressed as ‘Great House’, a translation of the title ‘Pharaoh’. For the Egyptians the King was an incarnation of the God Horus, who must prove his divine self-renewal by running a ritual race round a course called ‘the field.’
Golding’s Great House has to run uninterruptedly every seven years, starting from the palace and running round the low rectangular buildings that are the houses of the dead, then back to the palace again. His success is supposed to ensure the river’s rise for which all are waiting. The Liar, a thin young man, runs along with him and also cheers and urges the King on. There is a quality of desperation about his exhortations that reveals an underlying terror. If the God fails to complete the race and prove his potency, or if the river fails to rise high enough, the God must die.

Walter B. Emery in his book *Archaic Egypt* suggests that “It would appear probable that in primitive times, when the King showed signs of failing powers, he was forcibly removed by death” (AE, 108). And if the King/God died, his household were obliged to accompany him to the land of eternal life, to the “Motionless Now” that succeeds the mere moving “Now” of existence. The Liar is an outsider and is simply terrified. Meanwhile, the ten-year-old heir to the throne explains to a blind man that his sight is failing. The Prince cannot think that he can become king in future. He prefers to be a girl while citing his breathlessness and poor vision before the blind man. Tears trickle down his face. He smears one of his arms across his nose. It arouses a feeling of pity for him. The blind man steps out to warn Great House that the prince is going blind, but just as he does so, the God collapses, and the blind man is doubly blamed, both for tripping him and for his evil words about the prince – the house of God cannot be touched by sickness. The blind man is led away to a gruesome place, a pit.

These practices of testing the King’s potency and the resultant dire consequences in the case of his failure point the savagery prevalent in ancient Egypt. Moreover, there is an illicit relationship between the Liar and Princess Pretty Flower whereas society permits such a relation with Kinsfolk. The Liar urges the Princess to arouse her father, the God. At a feast that night, she dances a version of the seven veils in an effort to seduce him, and it is clearly expected that he should make love to her in public. According to Herodotus, the Egyptians do in public what other people do in private. But the King is more interested in
playing checkers with the Head Man (presumably Herodotus’ High Priest); he plays with the kind of dicing sticks that have since been found in archaic tombs. Her failure confirms the Head Man’s view that for Great House, this is ‘a beginning’ – the story amusingly reverses a number of common phrases, so that ‘private parts’ become ‘public parts,’ and, because the Egyptians believe in an eternal life, our phrase ‘the end’ becomes ‘a beginning’. Interestingly, the story also reverses our notions about civilization and savagery. Within the framework of Egyptian society such practices as illicit relationships among kinsfolk are considered acceptable. Therefore, arousing one’s own father, and trying to seduce him in public does not meet with disapproval.

A mysteriously veiled old woman brings a cup of poison for the King to drink so as to begin his journey to other world. The whole procession of the God towards “life” depicts the savagery inherent in the Egyptian tradition of that time. When the God is carried in a procession, the long-haired women danced, cried, some tried to wake him up from his sleep on the litter, others wailed and cut themselves with knives. The desperation of the Liar is evident and heartrending:

Moreover, sometimes he (the Liar) shouted, and sometimes he screamed, and sometimes he moaned; but all the time he struggled with the soldiers so that they had a hard job not to spoil him. He was in a fair way to spoil himself for there was a scum of foam round his mouth. His noise penetrated most of the way up the procession.

As the God’s body is elaborately prepared for burial, the river begins to rise, reaching its optimum height on the day of his formal internment in the nameless ‘long, low building’ round which we first saw him run. Here, his mummy is placed in its three coffins, standing upright and gazing outward, the eyes and mouth open as in life. Into the tomb, singing, go all the necessary household servants and then a line of chosen representatives of the main professions, all ready to drink poison and accompany the God to his eternal
Kingdom. Only one person the Liar refuses to die with his monarch, “Great House in the Motionless Now” (SG, 40) and is dismissed to the pit. The clean men (the lowest grade of priests were called ‘web’ i.e., ‘clean’ priests) seal up the tomb behind the dead and dying. Behind a slit stands the God’s twin or double, gazing out through its stone eyes. It was believed that the soul or ‘Ka’ might be safely preserved within such funeral statues, though again this custom belongs more typically to the period after the unification of the Kingdoms, rather than to pre-dynastic Egypt.

The young Prince arouses our pity when he is made to practise the ‘god pose’ by the Head Man after the entombment of the God/the King. The Head Man looks insensitive and callous when a little child is made to wear a child size ceremonial outfit. His lovely side-lock is gone and he is bald beneath the closefitting wig. So much so that the Head Man orders him not to blink. A tear rolls down his cheek in his effort not to blink. The Head Man wants him to shed tears for the people and for that he has not to blink. He wants to make the young Prince realise that he is different from the People and that is why if People blink he should not follow suit. When the young Prince argues:

“Anyone would weep”, said the Prince sullenly, “if he kept his eyes open and didn’t blink or rub them”. “‘Anyone’”, said the Head Man, “would blink or rub them. That’s the difference” (SG, 42).

We can’t help smiling disdainfully at this reasoning of the Head Man.

Alarmingly, the river continues to rise. The prince is too young, timid and effeminate to assume the mantle of the God. The Head Man, exploring the cause of the river’s rise, learns of Pretty Flower’s affair with the Liar and decides that he must be made to rejoin his master by force. Poison is brought and the Liar retrieved from the pit where he has ruthlessly sacrificed the blind man’s life to his own survival. The Liar breaks the Blind Man’s stick while trying to climb out of the pit. He is unmindful of the fact that he has drunk the water and the Blind...
Man is dying because of lack of water. Practical wisdom has taught him to save his life and be away from the clutches of the Head Man's "granite durability of rational demonstration" (SG, 50). Cornered, the Liar is more subversive than ever and in the voice of a God urges Pretty Flower to make use of her army, demanding 'Supposing I were Great House?' Such hubris is intolerable, but as the Head Man gives the order for his death, the Liar seizes one guard's spear, kills others, fatally stings the Head Man 'like a scorpion' and makes good his escape.

Alone and helpless, Pretty Flower will naturally turn to her lover for guidance. What happened next is not recorded by Golding, but it is evident from the archaic mace-head on which Scorpion is depicted. His solution to the problem of the rising waters of the Nile was to dig artificial channels for it to run into. Obviously, Scorpion had put Pretty Flower's 'beginning of an army' to good use, uniting the other petty chieftains along the upper Nile beneath his rule, and then proceeding to conquer the lower Kingdom. We gather that the Liar comes from farther north and has probably been sold into the upper Kingdom as a slave and entertains Great House with absurd and obscene legends of other lands.

The Head Man is a confirmed rationalist. He also justifies parochialism by logic. These two factors are responsible for his being savage towards others. His actions are bereft of sympathy for other human beings in the kingdom. The Head Man's pressing problem is the Nile's rise. It has passed the 'Notch of Sorrow' and the 'Notch of Excellent Eating', and if it continues to rise, it may reach the 'Notch of Utter Calamity'. His method of investigating the reason for this is to begin by establishing the known 'facts': "Who kept the sky up?... Who made the river rise?" The answer, obvious to all, is the God, Great House. The Head Man then argues that since the river continued to rise after his entombment, "something angered him after he entered the House of Life" (SG, 51).

According to this hypothesis, the likeliest source of his anger was the Liar's refusal to accompany his master to the House of Life, a betrayal that the
Head Man is determined to rectify. The Head Man's remarks to the Liar, "He (the God / the King) likes to hear your lies again and again" when the God is to die and the Liar is to accompany the God to death are ironical. The Liar has the tenacity to retort, "He's heard them so often he could remember them himself or get someone to make pictures of them!" (SG, 20).

The Liar is unwilling to accompany the God to death which is, of course, life for the people of ancient Egypt as described in *The Scorpion God*. The Head Man justifies his parochialism by logic, but his limited perspective is exposed when he sets out to reveal the Liar's 'fictions' for what they are:

Do you suppose, my dear, there are real places where people marry across the natural borders of consanguinity? Besides, where would they live, the puppets in these fantastic lies? Suppose for a moment the sky to be so big it stretched out to cover these lands! Well-think of the weight!. Yes Madness (SG, 55).

Golding, like C.S. Lewis, is irritated by the bland assumption that the rationalists know it all, and that whatever cannot be disposed of as obviously impossible, can instead be attributed to the need to fantasise, and thus be dismissed with a 'Freudian' interpretation. The Head Man goes on to provide a psychoanalytical explanation of the Liar's compulsion to lie. According to this view, the Liar's stories of forbidden and impossible things are simply the fantasies that everyone indulges in "a desperate attempt to get rid of his own corrupt desires, to act them out in imagination; because – by the laws of nature – they cannot be externalised" (SG, 55).

A study of *The Scorpion God*, reveals the flourishing of abnormal practices detrimental to the safety, progress and development of human beings. These abnormal practices are triggered by the fear of natural disaster, oppression of the ignorant and the weak and the persecution of free thinkers like the Liar. Pretty Flower's cry "I have shattered the laws of nature" (SG, 52) proves her superstition. She is the product of the culture prevailing in Egypt. Pretty Flower
believes that her sin in having an illicit relation with the Liar has caused the river to rise.

Iconoclasts like the Liar pay the price of their non-conformism to savage practices. The bigoted majority wants to subject him to torture. His revolt proves the point that opposition to any savage practice is essential to save oneself and more so to mitigate it. Virginia Tiger observes that in *The Scorpion God*, it is the free thinker, the man who explodes religious orthodoxy who emerges as a spokesman for the imagination" (VT, 225).

The Head Man’s religious authority is threatened by the intelligent and questioning intellect of the Liar. Golding is drawn to the darkness of the Egyptians who brought life and death very close in their rituals. Golding admits:

I recognise in their relics ... my own mournful staring into the darkness, my own savage grasp on life ... I am, in fact, an Ancient Egyptian, with all their unreason, spiritual pragmatism and capacity for ambiguous belief

In most of the cases, the society in *The Scorpion God* is steeped in perversity and abnormality through which stems the savagery resulting in suppression of basic human values of living. The Head Man, before dying, declares that the Liar has a death wish. The Liar has death wish because he prefers life to death and is terrified of the eternal life of the embalmed corpse in its three coffins which the Head Man offers him in exchange for “the vexations, the insecurities, the trials of a moving now.”

The Head Man is entrapped within the comically limited horizons of his society and his whole conception of life is circumscribed by the usage of the upper Kingdom. In *The Pyramid*, Evie’s incest with her father was the unmentionable, the unthinkable thing, in *The Scorpion God*, Pretty Flower’s incest with her father and brother is considered natural and desirable and it is only copulation with strangers that is dirty. A ten-year old prince is a misfit as he does not want to “bounce up and down” on his sister. Momentarily, the Liar’s
words enlarge his world for him, as those of Evelyn de Tracy had done for Oliver: “He tells me lies that take away the weight of the sky.”

The “Upper Kingdom” is a precarious society whose failure to renew itself is far more perilous. The old God fails, the Head Man is slain, and only the under-age son survives. Without the ruthless, self-interested and widely experienced stranger to drag them forcibly into a new era, through selfish energy and a more constructive rationality that finds a practical solution to the unpredictable spates of the Nile, the Kingdom would have fallen.

Golding cannot be expected to conform to the absolute certitude of historical fact. Imaginative creation or historical imagination goes beyond documentary evidence. This view conforms to the post-modernist view of history as fictional truth whereby the historical text remains indeterminate. This indeterminacy leads to the creation of new texts resulting in lack of coherence and continuity.

The relation is primarily between reality and theory. Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob in the book *Telling the Truth About History* see an inherent constraint in this relationship between reality and theory. The fact is that evidence limits the factual assertions that can be made. This limits the range of interpretations. Interpretation often takes hold over the thinking process which cannot transcend its own discursive practices to get at the truth. According to post-modernist accounts, there is no autonomous procedure to interpret reality. Since all judgements are based on interpretation, they can be fallible.

It is interesting to compare *The Scorpion God* with *Envoy Extraordinary*. Both are concerned with the powers and limits of reason and knowledge. In *The Scorpion God*, the established and complex culture is depicted in a more positive direction whereas in *Envoy Extraordinary* it is suppressed and absorbed. Unlike *The Scorpion God*, *Clonk Clonk* depicts the risk factor of an individual rather than the society. There is a happy ending because men are still like children and unfallen. The men go in awe of the women, regarding their power as magical and mysterious.
The Liar is more cunning than the Head Man and he has imagination and good sense, too. He says that their land is the “land of half wits”. They do not have the sense to realise that they can climb the cliffs nearby when the river is rising. They are in a “totalitarian state of ignorant innocence”\textsuperscript{17} and are subdued by the Scorpion God who is high in the evolutionary scale. The Liar has no scruples to take away the old man’s food and water when both of them are imprisoned in the pit. He thinks and asks Pretty Flower to think in terms of power and lust.

On a philosophical scale, the Liar’s unprecedented courage born out of desperate circumstances is compatible with Friedrich Nietzsche’s concept of a courageous person as evident in his essays \textit{Schopenhauer as Educator}, \textit{The Future of Our Educational Institutions} and \textit{The Use and Abuse of History}. Nietzsche advocated the reconstruction of morality as well as theology in terms of the evolution theory. To Nietzsche, the function of life is to bring about “not the betterment of the majority; who taken as individuals, are the most worthless types”, but “the creation of genius”, the development and elevation of superior personalities. In another essay \textit{Richard Wagner in Bayreuth}, Nietzsche saw and appreciated Wagner’s masculine decisiveness and courage which later went into the conception of the Superman.\textsuperscript{18} The Liar, in \textit{The Scorpion God} was like a Superman who surmounted the odds to establish himself.

Nietzsche was disgusted with all kinds of weaknesses. To him, greatness is no greatness if it is not united with sincerity towards one’s self. Nietzsche would have surely preferred the Liar, the rebel as he preferred Siegfried the rebel to Parsifal the saint. Of course, later on he realised that Parsifal’s gentleness was as necessary as Siegfried’s strength. In his masterpiece \textit{Thus Spake Zarathustra}, the Chief Character Zarathustra preaches to humanity to “Erect your cities besides Vesuvius. Send out your ships to unexplored seas. Live in a state of war”. Albeit profound atheism in the book, the message is to rebel, to strive for hardship, to be brave and courageous without any fear as the Liar in \textit{The Scorpion God} is. The Liar becomes a value breaker of the old Egypt and Nietzsche’s text of \textit{Zarathustra} says:
He who must be a creator in good and evil-verbatim, he must first be a destroyer, and break values into pieces.

Thus the highest evil is part of the highest goodness. But that is creative goodness.

Let us speak thereon, ye wisest men, however bad it be. To be silent is worse; all unuttered truths become poisonous.

And whatever will break on our truths, let it break! Many a house hath yet to be built.

Thus spake Zarathustra (WD, 417).

Thus, whereas *The Spire* is about the inextricable mixture of faith, folly, arrogance and sublimated desire that make every work of art at once a miracle and a self-betrayal, *The Scorpion God* is a straightforward presentation in which the chief character voluntarily or involuntarily sticks to reasonableness. *The Spire* is a profoundly different novel from its predecessors due to the overwhelming mystery about the moral significance of the central event of building a spire.

In *The Spire*, the metaphors of violence have a savage raw realism that reinforce the sexual and eschatological import of the novel. If the Church is the model of man lying down, then the spire, “springing, projecting, erupting from the heart of the building” (SP, 8) is a distinctly phallic symbol, linked to Jocelin’s suppressed lust for Goody. Jocelin likens his work to a surgeon’s, “Now I lay a hand on the very body of my Church. Like a surgeon, I take my knife to the stomach drugged with poppy” (SP, 13). Though the final outcome of building the spire proves disastrous for all, to the dying Jocelin, good and evil appear inextricably intertwined. Jocelin’s visions of the kingfisher and the blossoming apple tree hold opposed experiences of terror and joy in synthesis.
NOTES


