APPENDIX

An Abstract of Personal Interview with William Golding

1. What was your reaction when you were awarded the Nobel Prize?

Golding: I confess being both surprised and unsurprised. I had thought about getting it year ago, then forgot all about it, so when it did come it was a pleasant surprise.

2. In most of your works, the persistent theme you use is the fall from innocence or the loss of innocence. What inspired you to deal with this theme only?

Golding: Well, it's quite a big theme, isn't it? It's rather like saying here's a novelist who writes about people.

3. You appear to emphasise the predominance of evil in the world. Why?

Golding: I am concerned with the question of the good and the evil and have explored human nature, particularly under stress. I am still haunted by the phrase, 'Original Sin', but I also believe in 'Original Virtue'. But why have people reading my books chosen only to pick on my concern with original sin? I do believe that there is original virtue too. Man is created with the knowledge of both the good and the evil and has a capacity to do either. Inescapably, my novels have grappled with the question of
human beings and their relationship with the society insofar as it has affected their capacities for the good and the evil.

4. What is the philosophy of your life?

Golding: Slowly spelling out what must be his essential philosophy, he said "it seems to me if God doesn't stand behind my books, then they have failed. So if I am committed to anything, it is to a religious attitude of man. All religions have seen both the good and the evil, whereas politics tends to say 'We are all good, all that matters is to alter the system'.

5. Does your childhood experience of darkness have an impact on your works?

Golding: Yes, yes. But that was a recurrent nightmare, that wasn't philosophy. It became a convenient metaphor for the experience of the human being turning away from God and into egotism, the darkness of egotism.

6. Is this not equivalent to original sin?

Golding: It could be linked with it, yes. Man, unless he is prevented somehow, will turn away from God.

7. What literary tradition do you consider that you belong to?
Golding: I am reluctant to categorise myself in any particular style or tradition, but believe that the literary form nearest to my heart would probably be the Greek tragedy. Many of my stories might have taken the form of a Greek tragedy. You see, Greek tragedy has two elements in it - it has relatively simple characters. You never find complicated, psychological studies there in these Greek plays. Second, they have a simple structure - tension builds up throughout the play until the final catastrophe.

8. Who were your literary heroes when you began to write?

Golding: I was much influenced by Aldous Huxley, and I'm still not able to understand why, except that I think his irreverance appealed to young men very much. But he seemed to me very modern in the sense that there was nothing stuffy about his writing, he was snide, you know, and of course he was a satirist and people like satire. I think people like satire.

And he's the one I can think of oddly enough who was the big contemporary influence on my writing. Other than that my influences have been poetry: the line has been from English poetry to my novels, far more than from English novels to my novels. I can't explain why that should be so but it is, it has been like that.

Mrs. Golding: I think that's partly because you're not really a realist novelist as most English novelists have been. I remember Charlie Snow sitting on the floor with my
husband and holding his hand high and saying "Bill you're
the world's greatest symbolist novelist and I'm the world's
greatest realist novelist.

9. Would you comment on the current state of British
literature?

Golding: I don't read very much of that because I read a
different kind of literature, but in so far as I do read
it. I think it's in a very healthy state. You see, take
someone like Iris Murdoch who is writing those enormous
books which are in a sense experimental books, take a man
like Kingsley Amis, who goes on being inconsistently rude
to society, won't let society get away with anything in
fact even overdoes it, but if you want internationalism
you could take Lawrence Durrell whose books are never rooted
in England at all. And oh! there are many others: there's
Dance to the Music of Time by Anthony Powell, there are a
number of academic writers, there's Malcolm Bradbury and
many others.

But even in my casual way, picking up books like this
it seems that they write entertaining books and they do
take into account the whole round world rather than just
the southern countries of England you know.

So, I would say that literature is in a pretty healthy
state. And you don't need more than a very few writers for
it to be healthy. And I ought to add that I think modestly,
and myself am still writing.
10. What impressions do you carry about India?

Colding: (laughs). It is rather a difficult question to answer in few minutes. It is a very rich and colourful country and attracts the tourists. The people are much more gentle, friendly, and intelligent than I thought. And they lead a very protected life which I very much admire.