CHAPTER - V

LITERARY TECHNIQUE

I. Introduction
II. Narrative Modes
III. Use of Fables and Myths
IV. Symbolism and Imagery
V. Conclusion
In this chapter, it is proposed to examine the technique of Golding's novels in relation to their themes discussed in previous chapters. The fictional technique includes narrative modes, use of Fables and Myths, use of imagery, symbolism, and use of language. The way an artist looks at the world and his method of presenting what he feels are so closely linked that they cannot be separated except in theory. The writer's technique is his manner of organizing and manipulating his material. Technique, therefore, simply cannot be removed from any act of creation involving material and a purpose. It is actively present, whether we are aware of it or not. And also, it would not be wrong to say that the literary technique of a writer is determined and shaped mainly by his outlook on life. It is interesting to study Golding's literary technique along these lines.

Although, like many authors, he utilizes his personal history, Golding is unique in the way that he uses the actual to build a structure of meaning. The symbolism of his novels
is often more important than the action. Though the literal story is in itself interesting, his characters, images, and settings go beyond the merely literal, to represent universal truths about human nature and society. His themes match our notion of realistic subjects; however, the vigour and vitality of his fiction lies in its form, in the shaping of the remote experience through an organic development of a thematic structure of images.

In the course of my personal interview, I asked him, where his work is to be placed in literary tradition. He said, "It's the theatre much more than novel writing. It's great drama in particular. I think of the shape of a novel, when I do think of a novel as having a shape, as having a shape precisely like Greek drama. You have this rise of tension and then the sudden fall, and all the rest of it. You may even find the technical Greek terms tucked away in the book, if you like, and check them off one by one. So the Greek tragedy as a form, a Classical form, is very much there. The idea of the character who suffers a disastrous fall through a flaw in his character, that you find there, I think. So it does really stem as much from Greek tragedy as much as anything else. I don't think I would mark its line of descent from any novelist I can think of".

So, the chief influences that helped Golding in shaping his literary personality are the Greek drama and the epic. His
use of the disheveled choirboys in *Lord of the Flies* and the inner voices of Pincher Martin and Sammy Mountjoy as choruses; his use of myth; his evocation of fate as a force directing human lives in opposition, often to laws of probability; his use of tragic irony, where the destiny of an individual; his description of ritual processions and sacrifices: all these elements of the Greek drama contribute to the symbolic overtones of his novels.

II

Narrative Modes

Golding is always searching for modes of expression most suitable for communicating his meaning and creating the desired impact. He seems to have succeeded in strictly adhering to his belief concerning works of art, that he had once expressed to Frank Kermode, that there is no point in writing two books that are like each other.¹ Now, let us examine the various narrative modes that Golding employs in the narration of his novels.

In *Lord of the Flies*, Golding uses the omniscient author point of view, permitting him to enter any mind. However, he

¹. Quoted by Leighton Hodson, *Golding*, p.2.
often presents his material with cool objectivity. It is through Ralph's consciousness that he, for the most part of the novel, presents the fortunes of the boys. Ralph's sense of adventure in the beginning and his agonizing sense of transition from adolescence into adulthood are well shared by the reader. Golding does not let his reader involve himself completely with his own, or his characters' feelings. His tone is cool and analytical. Even in the most violent scenes, he will detachedly observe butterflies at the same time that he presents the central action. He seems to be encouraging his reader to decide on the issues with calmness and reason, the same qualities that the author himself exhibits as he narrates the story. Towards the close of the book, Golding uses a sudden change in point of view, with the naval officer arriving as if from nowhere. The Euripidean device - **deus ex machina** - is structurally faulted by some critics. James Gindin, for instance, considers it a gimmick.²

Golding's characters are psychologically credible. He allows his characters to gradually reveal themselves through talk, gesture, and action. An important mode for character presentation is the dialogue that Piggy is a cockney and Ralph

---

² 'Gimmick' is in fact Golding's own term. But he viewed it, unlike Gindin, from a positive angle.
a middle-class boy is readily revealed in their speech. Their attitudes towards the island and their responses to their predicament show a clear distinction between their natures. Ralph thinks of the shell as a pretty play-thing; Piggy thinks of its cost. Ralph is always day-dreaming, whereas Piggy is practical. Again, the contrast between Ralph and Jack is suggested in their features and gestures. The creation of Simon reveals Golding's craftsmanship. The unsuspected introspective depths of the simple Simon are gradually unfolded before us, his tragic end making a profound impression.

The personalities of the boys do change. In general, the boys who were innocent in the beginning lose their innocence because of the gradual flowering of evil that wraps their characters. In some boys, there is a change for the better. Piggy at the end is more dignified. Simon is filled with an adult wisdom. Ralph is serious and sombre.

Golding's literary virtuosity is best revealed in *The Inheritors*. It is a challenging subject for fictional treatment. Golding chose to embody in fiction unique configuration of human experience. The main problem faced by the author is to depict the sub-sapiens folk with their pre-language and pre-logical state of mind. Being endowed with little understanding, reason and intelligence, they cannot
verbalize themselves clearly. Golding solves the problem admirably by giving the characters a sort of stylized inarticulateness.

Much of the communication between them is mimetic, emotive, non-verbal, telepathic, and mainly in the form of pictures, thus suggesting their state of innocence. The unique life-style of the Neanderthals is very well realized in such original verbal configurations as: "Lok's feet were clever. They saw" (p.11). "Lok's ears spoke to Lok" "?" (p.43). "He (Lok) became Lok's belly" (p.73); "the Ha-ness of Ha" (p.70). The verbal texture is so devised as to recreate the quality of the uncultivated sensibility.

The narrative stance adopted by Golding admirably brings out the Neanderthal way of life. We may find it difficult to take in the whole thing at a first reading as we watch through the eyes of the Neanderthal protagonist, Lok who "gazed without thought" (p.40) or "looked without seeing" (p.140). Hence, more often than not, we find that "there were questions but no answers" (p.140). The activities of the Homo Sapiens seen through the eyes of Lok are no better than a puzzling silent film. We, like Lok, see the new men talk, but never hear them and have difficulty in knowing what it is all about. The 'incomprehension' is the thing; it is the Neanderthal way of life.
The whole narrative pattern is so devised as to dramatize the Neanderthal man's way of life in his own terms. As the readers follow it through the consciousness of the innocent and unself-conscious Lok, they have a feeling that they are not merely watching the Neanderthal world from outside, but are well inside it, as much bewildered, dismayed and appalled as Lok himself. It is not a representation but a communication of innocence and its problematic character. The pattern itself carries meaning.

The too objective tone, the meticulously detailed description of the "red creature", the extremely formal "evidence of occupation", the absolutely unemotional registering of details may still pass for the language of the anthropologist. But the writing in its sound and rhythm, its short unconnected sentences, its repetition again and again of the pronoun "it" and "the creature" appears to be rather contrived to communicate 'meaning'. The last chapter, representing Tuami's viewpoint, is the closest to naturalistic prose. It is however literally interspersed with the symbolic, the metaphoric and the imagistic which stamp it as different from the 'realistic'.

The stylistic devices vary from denotative to lyrical, "laugh-sound", "man-sound", "pain-sound" being denotative and the description of the sanctuary of ice-women (p.82) being lyrical. Expression like "the girl (Tanakil) came, hunger-slow"
(p.153); fire "roared like water" (p.92), "... weeds, not moving with slow rhythm but shivering madly as though anxious to be gone" (p.28) are poetic indeed.

The sudden shift towards the end pulls us out of the consciousness of Lok and places us outside the narrative at a vantage-point from where we can have an objective view of Neanderthal man and Homo Sapiens, and form our own conclusion. The distancing enables us to see Lok as the ape-man, as "the red creature" (p.217). The use of 'it' to refer to Lok apparently dehumanizes the character. But it has, in reality, the effect of intensifying our sympathy for Lok, and emphasizing the inhumanity of the "true" men. The switch in point of view lays bare the emotional complexities in the lives of the new people - their consciousness and guilt, their self-deceptions and an apprehension of the darkness apparently without end.

The narrative is realistic in Pincher Martin and assumes a symbolic dimension as the reader sets out exploring the submerged imagistic patterns. In fact, it simultaneously works on realistic and symbolic level. Martin's struggle for survival in the present looks as realistic as Robinson Crusoe's on the island. Martin's climb up the rock, his erecting the dwarf, his search for food and water, his creating the "Claudian
aqueduct"  is his gathering the sea-weed, the topography of the rock itself, the realities of the sea and the sky - all appear so convincing. But the realistic details become part of the vast symbolism that informs the work.

The narrative employs in subtle design dream sequences, and hallucination scenes taking the form of flashbacks in film trailers vividly depicting the scenes of past life. The flashbacks show us Pincher's unpleasant determination never to miss an opportunity, never to be the loser in the game. The game for him is consume or be consumed. The past scenes, though culminating in a revelation, serve to underline the unwavering consistency of Pincher's behaviour and his attitude to himself and other people.

Golding achieves a certain flexibility by telling the story in the third person which enables him on occasion to slip out of the restricted circle of the character's own consciousness and to bring to bear on the reader a growing pressure of moral judgement. In order to understand the narrative action of the novel, one must attend to the symbols and images in the novel. There is little of plot in the book. The sequence of events is determined, not by the interaction of character and environment as in conventional novels, but by the necessities of the symbolic form in which Golding has expressed his theme.

3. V.V.Subbarao, William Golding: A Study, p.52.
The language of the flashbacks, clipped, bare, lacking resonance, often extremely directly referential may be said to suggest fable. But except for the scene with the masks, it could be taken to be in the mode of psychological 'realism', embodying the bare, clipped, memories of a dying man about the highlights of his life.

The language of Pincher Martin is closer to myth in the complexity and density of its texture and symbolism. What is taken to be metaphoric strangely turns out to be literal. The images working at several levels, the symbols allusive and dynamic, gathering meanings as the narrative proceeds, are not reducible to the one-for-one correspondence of fable. Even the syntax suggests not only a dazed mind but a shattered personality as well. The myth, that is, the struggle on the rock is a fight for identity, emerges slowly from the surface through the linguistic texture.

In Free Fall, Golding uses the first-person narration, narrated through the protagonist Sammy. He narrates his first-person account of the events at some undefined point in time after they have occurred, and tries, in his retelling, to clarify his responsibility for what has happened to himself and others. The events are offered, not as they occurred, but in the order of their importance to Sammy Mountjoy. This narrative has chronological
sequence but it has no pattern and therefore no meaning. In re-examining his past, Sammy is searching for a pattern which will give experience moral coherence.

This novel comes close to realistic fiction away from the mode of fabulation or myth. Sammy's childhood, his adolescent world, and the seduction scenes are presented in terms of character and environment. It cannot, of course, be regarded entirely as a novel of social content and concern. It is a work reflecting the contemporary man's sense of loneliness and the resultant craving for communication. We may equate Sammy's seeking the company of Beatrice to his craving for communication.

The confessional mode determines the form of the book. In keeping with it the author employs the shifting and elusive temporal sequence, chronological discontinuities, and self-narrated monologues. In its dislocation of space and time, Free Fall resembles Pincher Martin. While in Pincher Martin past and present events intermingle on the protagonist's consciousness, in Free Fall the focus is mainly on the past. The past events are recalled on the principle of associative memory, the narrative structure moving backward and forward through the "shuffle fold and coil" of time (p.6). It's protagonist, Sammy, is more fully developed than Lok or Pincher, more like a character. Free Fall is thus, more novelistic in its social background, characters and events. All these, are not introduced for their own sake
but in the interests of the search for a pattern. One of the patterns explaining the search for self-knowledge is psychology, hence the relevance of the social setting and parental background.

The descriptions are more detailed, the language more relaxed, the sentences better connected: Sammy is reminiscing, recalling events, examining evidence, rejecting, judging, coming to conclusions. As a consequence, the prose is conversational and colloquial, thus attempting to establish a relationship with the reader, who is thus involved in the search. The method is also analytical, questioning, and speculative. At times the language is used for the bare statement. Pincher Martin also employs the language of reason but he does so only occasionally to reassure himself. Here, however, it is one of the two modes representing the world of the intellect as against that of the spirit.

In The Spire, the entire action is presented through the consciousness of the protagonist himself who testifies to the authenticity of his vision. In its thematic structure and concern, it resembles Greek tragedy, especially the works of Aeschylus. The Greek pre-occupation with tragedy is very much evident here; man's fall as a result of the violation of the limits set by the order. Jocelyn commits hubris and is punished with nemesis. But then, as an Aeschylus, his suffering leads
to self-knowledge. Aeschylus says that men learn through suffering. In his *Oresteia* the hero's suffering culminates in an epiphany freeing him from his guilt. In *The Spire*, we see this pattern of agon (conflict), pathos (suffering), and epiphany (revelation) Jocelin is regenerated through guilt and suffering and emerges a true tragic figure. He achieves, a new awareness, besides true humility and compassion, as he is purged of his ego.

The *Pyramid* is concerned with the manifestation of the drives of the self in the context of ordinary social reality, takes us to a different world altogether, miles away from the extremely intense claustrophobic world of *Pincher Martin* and *The Spire*. The *Pyramid* is more in the realistic tradition of the English novel. The book resembles *The Spire* only in its geometric title. The social dimension of the narrative recalls to us only *Free Fall* and like it, is in the first-person narrative.

In *Lord of the Flies*, *Pincher Martin*, and *Free Fall*, the modern life forms only the skeletal background against which man's consciousness or the human condition is explored. But here the contemporary social milieu is more concrete and substantial. Certain realities of the social life of the post-war England form the background against which the protagonist evaluates his evolving consciousness. The characters are more rounded than in
Free Fall. Both, again, are in the autobiographical mode, written by a middle-aged man looking back on his past. Here, the protagonist, Oliver, is a very ordinary person, and not even like Sammy of Free Fall, who was an artist of fame in search of metaphysical meaning.

The novel reflects some of Golding's central ideas on the two cultures. It also recalls Golding's own childhood experience. In this respect, the novel recalls his autobiographical essays "Billy the kid", "The Ladder and the Tree", "On the Crest of a Wave". His interest in Egyptology suggested here in the title and the epigraph is revealed in "Egypt from my Inside".

The language of The Pyramid, therefore, is closest of all Golding's fables to novelistic prose. It is different in tone and quality from his earlier novels. It is more relaxed, the descriptions more detailed, the sentences are longer, better connected and much less deviant. It has little of Golding's characteristic, poetic intensity, the complex interweaving of image and symbol, the terseness of texture. The prose is closer to the more recognizable idiom of everyday life.

The Scorpion God, consists of three short novels, all set in the remote past, the first two - the title story and 'Clonk Clonk' - in prehistoric times, while the third, 'Envoy
Extraordinary', is set in Roman Empire. Both, The Inheritors and The Scorpion God are anthropological fables.

All novels are creations in language, acts of rhetorical energy; all writers, fabulatory or realistic, construct the society with which they deal and make it coherent through verbal correspondences. Golding's writing, when it is most alive, is alive because he's creating those coherences before us at a point of great exposure. With due respect one might suggest that this novel, which makes Golding's strength and at the same time, shows his weakness makes an ideal testing place for the whole of the Golding's dilemma.

Darkness Visible is about the necessity of facing and accepting one's true nature - the good as well as the evil - and the suspension of judgment in favour of selfless love. It brings Golding's fables right up to the modern times with nihilism and terrorism which are balanced by a prominent religious element.

The social background and the characters suggest the realistic, while the extremely diagrammatic structuring and the careful artistry links it with a fable. Its complexity, its obviously symbolic character, the difficulty in translation again suggests the mythic.
The prose as compared with his latter works is more relaxed. The authorial voice can occasionally be heard, though at times with the tentativeness, the delicate suggestiveness: "For all that the most painstaking inquiries could find, he might have been born from the sheer agony of a burning city" (Darkness Visible, p.20).

Darkness Visible incorporates various styles. One finds the bare, sterile, childish language of the various, balanced by the rich poetry of the Matty sections. The dull flat monotone with its short, unconnected sentences, and the banal language of Matty's diary, is set against the longer, well connected sentences and the subtlety in the handling of the language in Sophy section.

Though Rites of Passage follows Darkness Visible very closely, it resembles Golding's first three novels structurally. The switch in point of view employed by Golding in the first three novels occurs here also. Colley's letter which marks the shift puts the whole action in a new perspective. It takes the reader and Talbot himself on a voyage of discovery into the recesses of a haunted mind. Talbot discovers his "omissions" and the captain's "commissions" (p.185) and realises that the Colley affair underlines man's inhumanity to man. The juxtaposition of events and impressions serves to expose the delusions or self-deceptions of the characters concerned.
To establish the nature of the two characters, Colley and Talbot, and to depict the two different levels of experience and apprehension, Golding deploys two different registers of language: the colloquial register with a dose of nautical idiom depicting the collision of interests in the external world, and the sentimental, sometimes lyrical, narrative reflecting the subjective processes of the mind. Noting the change of viewpoint handled with great skill and deftness, William Boyd says it is "used not only as an instrument of humorous irony and a subversive literary technique but also as a means of focusing on the theme of guilt, persecution and delusion". 4

Golding brings into the framework of the novel the rites of a birth, marriage, and one more death which seem to serve no dramatic function. The elements of myth and ritual are employed as mere machinery and are not integrated into the texture of the work as its informing and sustaining spirit. As such, it is hard to take the statement - "God, what a world of conflict, of birth, death, procreation, betrothals, marriages for all I know, there is to be found in this extraordinary ship!" (p.263) - as a philosophical gloss on the total action of the novel. In Darkness Visible and Rites of Passage, the protagonists narrate and record facts in the form of a journal.

The Paper Men, is yet another illustration of its author's extreme virtuosity and versatility. The experimental quality of The Paper Men seems to consist primarily in the fact that it is a mock-heroic autobiographical narrative of a writer-hero told in the first person. It resembles Free Fall in some ways. In the first instance, it is like Free Fall, a first-person narrative. While the protagonist of Free Fall is a young artist with a "flowering reputation", the narrator in The Paper Men is a highly-gifted writer named Wilfred Townsend Barclay. Both are capable of visionary gleam.

Barclay's narrative looks impressive in so far as it tells us how he and Tucker damn each other. But Barclay's account of his experience in the Sicilian church is likely to leave the reader unresponsive when he views. Barclay's past life, however admirably verbalized it is, we have a feeling that there is no struggle here. It does not logically flow from the events of the story. One is likely to be sceptical about it all and reject it as Liz does by the strange experiences of Barclay calling it "some kind of fancy religion" (p.172).

Finally, turning from Barclay to his creator Colding, one might say that in his characteristic preoccupations with guilt and the inner depravity of man, "the natural blasphemy of our
condition" (p.125), he superimposes the spiritual without bothering to work it out from within. Barclay's inner world of the spirit and the outer world of his relationship with the Tuckers on the one hand and his wife and daughter on the other do not act creatively on each other. And the conclusion which looks more like a trick ending than a real denouement is pathetic rather than tragic. The novel appears quite impressive on its surface, but has no real depth.

The Close Quarters, is a sequel to Rites of Passage, and is in the first-person narration. There is a remarkable copiousness of "atmosphere", though it remains unaligned to a sturdy plot. The richness of an interior denies the theme. It is hinted, for instance, that Talbot's social superiority makes him a butt of ridicule among his colleagues. But the novel is mysteriously mute over such matters, beyond a few curt, cutting and cryptic comments - "Indeed it is not easy for a man of my inches to hit off the right bearing in this world of deck beams and squally tars. If he goes about concealing his height he is bent down like an ancient cripple, whereas if he stands up straight - he is always cracking his skull and stumbling over ...."

This tragedy of the misfit would have served as a fine point of centrality in the theme. But like everything else in the
novel, it remains a suspended idea. There is a marked absence of textual tightness, so that the novel floats along on the weightlessness of the plot's insubstantiality. It is not very clear whether Golding intended the novel as a light-hearted adventure story, or something deeper. Perhaps, its whole point is its pointlessness! There is more "action" here than "feeling". At the most, Close Quarters is a mildly stirring experiment with form.

The studied self-consciousness of Talbot's narrative style works as both in analogy and a disguise for Golding's own literary allusiveness. Talbot's craftsman-like prose offers a kind of parallel with the practice of seamanship: both seeking to subdue unruly forces by a system of rules and formulas. He is fascinated by nautical, or what he calls "Tarpaulin" terms, re-discovering, in their simple proverbial phrases, a forgotten thesaurus of human wisdom.

Again, Fire Down Below, the last of the trilogy, is Golding's most genial, most various and most harmoniously structured novel. The most striking point is: he has not before so skilfully contrived the alternation of passages of excitement with passages of rest. If he had been born when it was natural to tell stories in verse he would have been a great narrative poet; and in almost
every novel he has written, he has had before him the problem of creating the intensity and coherence of an epic in prose. This is evident in Fire Down Below, because its story, that is the struggles of a ship and its passengers in the vast weather of the Antarctic Ocean, recalls two of John Masefield's Dauber and The Bird of Dawning. Neither is much spoken of today: the first because it is in verse, the second because - although like others of Masefield's novels it contains one passage as good as anything in English literature; the encounter of an open boat with a great wave - the story as a whole maintains no depth of excitement of event.

Golding has in his best novels, found stories in which, without the support of verse, the poetic energy of such passages is kept at the same, or a rising intensity to the very end.

Thus, Golding's artistic genius lies in his deep kind of moral accountability to this age and to the fellow men whose conscience he is supposed to awaken, making use of no more potent weapon than these intricately crafted, sometimes fabular, at times parodistic methods. In a sense, Golding stresses the moral pulse of the age; his diagnosis of the divided, distorted, and dehumanized self, of "mankind's essential illness" is conveyed through a spirited nostalgia, a virile recollection of the
fundamental decency now neglected and forgotten, the ceremonies of innocence which support and sustain this frail but human frame.

III

Use of Myths and Fables

The perennial Golding themes recur in the form of fables or myths. Each has the characteristic hardness and shapeliness where all that is superfluous is removed in order to achieve a poetic intensity. Golding's works are poetic structures where everything is scrupulously geared to the creation of the greatest aesthetic impact, and to contributing to the resonance and complexity of the theme.

They are so very obviously patterned, that the structure carries a core part of the meaning. Moreover, the fiction seems to function through a more or less 'naturalistic' mode. This imparts to the writing a peculiar quality - a combination of a certain simplicity with a richness. The fables are also all infused with Golding's moral sense.

Golding is well-known as a writer of fables, but he said that he would like to have his novels characterized as myths
rather than fables. In his essay "Fable", Golding himself has used the term to depict Lord of the Flies suggesting that "The fabulist is a moralist. He cannot make a story without a human lesson tucked away in it". According to Golding, the fabulist is didactic and desires to inculcate a moral lesson.

A clear distinction can be made between a fable and a non-fable. In a non-fable the writer is concerned in presenting a realistic picture of life with all its trials and tribulations, whereas in a fable the author tries to inculcate a moral lesson into an imaginary story. Golding’s use of 'Fable' and 'myth' in his novels is one of the important features that attract the attention of the readers. Golding says that "Myth is something which comes out from the roots of things in the ancient sense of being, the key to existence, the whole meaning of life, and experience as a whole". "Myth", it has been rightly said, "..... is not a distinct fictional mode or form. Myth is simply an imaginative tendency, or mode of perception to which all art struggles". Let us examine how far Golding is successful in

7. Frank Kermode, Puzzles and Epiphanies, p.201.
using this technique. In Lord of the Flies, as in Golding's other novels, we see the workings of the myth-imagination as it seeks to transcend the limitations inherent in fabulation and invests the book with greater depth, significance, and scope.

One can find a certain unity of pattern behind Golding's novels. Most of his novels make use of isolated surroundings. Lord of the Flies takes place on a deserted and uninhabited island, The Inheritors — in a pre-historical setting, Pincher Martin — on a rock in the middle of the Atlantic, The Spire — in the secluded premises of a Cathedral, and the trilogy — takes place on a ship en route from England to Australia. It appears as if it is important for Golding to withdraw the setting of his plots into an atmosphere of isolation.

It is from the naturalistic scene, the characters and the story, and a world like that of everyday reality that 'the truth' emerges. The characters themselves take on the representative timeless characters of archetypes. In Lord of the Flies, the opening chapter introduces us to the most important protagonists by way of their physical presence and realistic descriptions. This introduction prepares us carefully for the symbolic role that each will play in the fable. At first, Ralph accepted the notion of a world without adults, and in his innocence, he delighted in
that idea. But Piggy, the bespectacled boy who believed in the triumph of reason and commonsense is always an adult in a child’s body. Golding invests the character of Piggy with a childish myth - that is around the spectacles. The myth that spectacles denote superior intellect not merely persists, but is taken for granted and is thoroughly worked into the theme of the novel.

Here, Golding is attempting to project a relatively simple thesis - the beast in man is innate and not engendered either by pernicious social influence or sex. Children before puberty, therefore, are ideal subjects for the presentation of the dark urges. This very fact, however, precludes any very deep probing into the nature of evil or of the mysterious depths of the self. When this is done the naturalistic illusion is broken and the language tends to be too adult for a child. As a result the boys in their innocence, reverted to savagery and finally brought ruin upon themselves. Simon's death is the collective responsibility of all on the island.

At the end of the novel, when rescued by the Naval Officer, Ralph weeps and embraces the officer. He weeps for the darkness of man's heart as evident to him. Golding, the schoolmaster, has from the beginning seen them far too realistically to invoke that myth. In terms of the fable, Ralph weeps in realising his
"fallen nature", the reason why he and all the boys perversely destroyed themselves.

Golding's real mythopoetic power becomes apparent in The Inheritors. Here, he used the myth of the pre-historic man. For Golding the "Meanderthalers" are supremely innocent and gentle creatures. They have no consciousness and cannot think but they can share images. Golding has the authority of the real imaginative power to make his creatures what he wills in the myth that he writes. The description of the Neanderthal man makes one believe that Golding is really at the heights of his myth-making power. Through, the myth, Golding clearly brought out the idea that the progress in civilization and the developed consciousness are the price of the guilt and the evil in the "Inheritors".

In Pindar Martin, Golding describes one man's struggle to retain his identity in the face of an alien nature. Golding used the myth of the false world created by Martin's imagination, where he struggles for survival against all odds, with his intelligence, education and strong will, but fails to retain absolute control over his own identity, while to do so is both foolish and dangerous. Golding worked it out so well that we also believed it till the end as a real rock.
In Golding's social novel *Free Fall*, the myth of Free Fall is essentially the Fall of man and his infected will. The fall of Sammy Mountjoy is the fall from innocence. The myth of Sammy's fall is analogous to the myth of the fall of Adam and Eve from their state of innocence. The theme of the novel as in his earlier works is innocence and tribulation. Sammy discovered that his act of the seduction and betrayal of Beatrice is the starting point of the guilt and the loss of his innocence. He realises that his expiation of the sin might bring him divine grace. Through this realization of Sammy Mountjoy, Golding conveys to us, however, that the worst sinner/man is, he can qualify himself for the divine grace by a clear cleansing of his heart and a frank confession of his error with humility.

*The Spire,* is a novel about vision which motivates Jocelin, the Dean of the Cathedral Church in his obsessive drive towards his goal, that of "the building of the spire". The massive structure of the spire and its building up to an unimaginable height reminds us of the myth of the tower, the top of which would reach the heaven, lest they should be scattered upon the entire earth. *The Spire* is an example, equating the erection of a Cathedral Spire with the protagonist's conflict between his religious faith and the temptations to which he is exposed. *Darkness Visible,* continues to illuminate the universal
confrontation of Good and Evil. *Rites of Passage*, an allegorical work, set in the early nineteenth century, takes place on a ship en route from England to Australia. The voyage serves as a device to isolate a microcosm of British society, allowing Golding to further develop his theme of the darkness inherent in human nature. Thus, Golding treated the myth of the original sin and the myth of the fall of man in most of his novels. Thus, Golding is constantly pre-occupied with innocence and guilt in all his novels. Through his myths in all the novels we find Golding working from an unusually strong moral assumption. Golding says evil is an indwelling element in human nature and he insisted that one should recognise and control it.

Whatever the various degree of combination of fable and myth, Golding employs the techniques of a novelist. Free indirect speech, psychological realism, a strong narrative line, even suspense are used to plunge the reader into the story and to force him to identify him emotionally with the protagonist.

IV

Symbolism and Imagery

Thus, Golding's novels often termed as fables or myths are laden with symbols (usually of a spiritual or religious nature)
so heavy in significance that they can be interpreted on many different levels. In *Lord of the Flies*, the author gives to almost every detail in the story a meaning of its own and a representational meaning in terms of the theme of the development of evil on the island. The boys themselves are representative of different ways of life - the intellectual, the adventurer, the bully, the torturer - so as to give the impression of diversity that is found in an actual society. The places represent human potentials; for example, the jungle, the darkness of the human spirit, the sea, the destructiveness of man, the platform reason, the mountain hope. Objects like the boulder and Jack's knife represent powers of violence inside the boys. The conch shell stands for order and stability. Incidents, for example, the several hunting rituals, symbolize the increasing powers of evil.

Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor see the presence of the fabular element in the language in its comparative clarity of design and intention, in its conscious artistry. The symbols are simpler, more easily 'translatable', not having the complexity of his later works, nor are they as "dynamic", growing and changing in meaning, significance in the total 'connections'. For example, "rocks", "blue flowers", "food and drink, and ____", (Lord of the

Flies, pp.33-34) can immediately be taken to signify the instinctual, the spiritual and perhaps the comforts of civilization.

The mythic element comes to light in the surrealistic language of Simon's confrontation with the pig's head, where for the first time it is referred to as Lord of the Flies and acquires definition and a new dimension. The scene is however, presented almost naturalistically - it could be explained as an internal debate in Simon's mind, and as the mental disturbance presaging his oncoming epileptic fit. However, the scenes do not quite fit in with the rest of the narrative. There is a slight break in the naturalistic fabric of the fable with the introduction of the surrealistic mode: the pig suddenly starts talking, the Lord of the Flies expands like a balloon, Simon finds he is looking into a vast mouth (Lord of the Flies, p.137). The strangeness of the images and the language, the 'unreality' suggests the fabular as does the intrusive:

You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are? (Lord of the Flies, p.137).

It is however, the entire episode and not the individual details that suggests complex meanings and is therefore closer to myth.
In *The Inheritors*, the Neanderthal's sense of oneness with nature is underlined through anthropomorphic and animistic images. The trunk of a birch "no bigger than a man's thigh" (p. 16); the log was "trembling like Pa" (p. 124). "The Cliff leaned out as if looking out for its own feet in the water" (p. 25). "The fire is awake ...." (p. 30). The sour smell of the wine is like the "decay of autumn" (p. 160); the new men are "like a winter" (p. 198). The new people are compared to wolf, honey, fire, water. The new men struggle with the log "like beetles on a dead bird" (p. 214). Vivani's laughter "rose like the charm of starlings" (p. 152). The iterative images of the island and the dead tree strikingly reinforce the idea of the Fall.

As an anthropological version of the Fall, the novel is an extraordinary rendering of what might be called a twilight period in the evolution of consciousness, a state of transition from unself-consciousness to self-consciousness. Significantly, much of the action takes place in twilight. He disappears over the Cliff as the sun is setting. Mald dies as the night approaches. After Pa is carried over the waters in the sunset, Lok gets back to the cave and in the twilight meets with his end. And a Tuami and his men leave the forest, they see the sunlight fading into "tree darkness" (p. 231).
The Inheritors is not so closely and densely packed with images and symbols as Pincher Martin. Symbols are so rarely employed, so grounded in the naturalistic that they are not noticed on a first reading. They gain significance only towards the end of the book with the growth in the reader's knowledge of the people and the tribe and through repetition in the course of the narrative. It is only now that one begins to notice the imagery of the snake, the devil, the darkness, the fall and so on. However, the meaning of the fable seems to lie more in the narrative as a whole and to emerge only gradually in the course of the narrative. And this brings the novel closer to myth.

V.V. Subbarao states that Golding makes a symbolic use of the primitive material, and the novel traces imaginatively the evolution of human consciousness. Golding is not concerned, he says with the specific life of Neanderthal man as such, even as he is not concerned with the specific life of his own times. Golding uses the bare realistic details for the purpose of building up a myth of his own. The Inheritors, he further says, is ostensibly the story of the supersession of Neanderthal Man by Cro-Magnon man. But in reality, it is a paradigm of the human situation repeating itself in the history of man or human species,

10. V.V. Subbarao, William Golding: A Study, p. 35.
as each tastes of the fruit of the Tree of knowledge of good and evil, and passes from a state of primal innocence to rational consciousness and guilt.\footnote{11}

The characteristic trait of Golding's work a certain poetic ordering mainly through the submerged patterns of imagery and symbolism - is most dominant in Pincher Martin, a work that reflects the author's esthetical concerns. It is a metaphorical rendering of the idea that "God is the thing we turn away from into life and therefore we hate and fear him and make a darkness there."\footnote{12} The cellar image is a vital constituent of Golding's vision. Being an objectification of his childhood experience,\footnote{13} the image becomes central to his work. The rock inverted by Martin's "ravenous ego"\footnote{14} as he awaits judgment in the afterlife is somehow linked in his memory to the cellar of his childhood days:

\begin{quote}
It's like those nights when I was a kid, lying awake thinking the darkness would go on for ever.
\end{quote}

\footnote{11}{Ibid., p.35.}
\footnote{13}{See Golding's autobiographical essays "The Ladder and the Tree" and "Billy the Kid" in The Hot Gates.}
\footnote{14}{William Golding, "Pincher Martin", Radio Times, CXXXVIII (March 21, 1958), p.8.}
And I couldn't go back to sleep because of the dream of the whatever it was in the cellar coming out of the corner (p.138).

The grown-up Martin is haunted all the while by the primal fear, the fear of the dark, the fear that springs from a consciousness aware of its fragmentation and alienation.

This definitive symbol is rather faintly sketched in the earlier work *The Inheritors* which ends with Tuami, man's ancestor, gazing at the line of darkness which is apparently without end. To the fragmented consciousness of man the other is incomprehensible. Since it cannot be reduced to rational patterns, man imagines it as darkness. It negates his existence which is ego-oriented, as it does in the case of Martin; or it teases him out of thought as with Sammy Mountjoy in *Free Fall*. Man's inability to grasp its mystery as in the case of Sammy or his wilful rejection of it as it is with Martin leaves in the inner depths of his being a darkness - "the interior blackness" (p.181) - of which he is scared.

Again, the cell scene in *Free Fall* is a re-enactment of the Fincher drama. It encapsulates Fincher's spiritual terrors. Physical darkness in the lonely cell leads to a sense of metaphysical terror. Sammy cries out in terror; "Help me! Help me!" (p.184). The door which he has earlier slammed shut
on the world of Moses and Jehovah now burst open, and he emerges from the cell "a man resurrected" (p. 186). Mountjoy turns Samuel, whereas Pincher when experiences the terrors of darkness spurns rescue, "refuses the selfless act of dying" and fails to evolve into Christopher.

Critics like Frank Kermode, John Peter, and Samuel Hynes have recognized the novel's resemblance to a poem. Its symbols and images are its animating force. The Chinese maggot box is symbolic of Pincher's whole way of life, while the glass sailor on the rock points to a larger frame-work and suggests an archetype situation. Martin's agony and isolation are described in a passage (pp. 48-49) which is all metaphorical and conveys the power of Golding's linguistic medium. The central conflict is communicated through the images of red lobster and black lightning. Golding said that for him it was a book of colour: 'a pair of red claws locked against black lightning'. Thus, the imagistic pattern in Pincher Martin achieves an inward and organic relation. The novel is indeed a tightly constructed narrative where the content is totally realised in its form.

---

15. Ibid., p. 8.
In *Free Fall* there is only one really important image - the darkness - which is placed at the centre of the novel. Everything else that Golding wishes to convey about Sammy is done by means of recreating a social setting and period or by emblematic characters. As against the language of reason, there is the richly poetic, metaphorical and symbolic language of passage like the opening of *Free Fall* and that, describing Sammy's experiences in the cell. However, on the whole, the prose of the fable is not as densely packed with symbols and images as that of *Pincher Martin*.

*The Spire* with its surrealistic, metaphorical mode, its synaesthetic devices, its complex symbolism, its poetic intensity is closest to *Pincher Martin*. The two resemble each other also in their deviant syntax, their vivid concrete images, in the extreme tenseness and economy of the verbal surface. This can be traced to the fact that both are about isolated figures obsessed and struggling. Both describe similar consciousness - lonely, agonized, claustrophobic, hallucinated and hysterical.

The cellar image again figures in *The Spire*. Chaos is discovered by Dean Jocelin in the inner depths of his own being, "down in the vaults, the cellarage of my mind" (p.166). Jocelin sees himself as "a building with a vast cellarage where the rats
live ...." (p.210). The cellarage - a symbol so central to Pincher Martin - besides suggesting here the Pincher in him, his unscrupulous use of other people to achieve his goal, points to the ingrained evil.

The Spire is the finest symbolic expression of Golding's intention to make people understand their own humanity though it has been attacked for implausibility and obscurity through and through. One of the chief sources suggested for Golding's work is the English history. Golding's spire is clearly modelled on the Salisbury Cathedral near which he had lived for many years. The details of the construction of the spire of Salisbury Cathedral are adopted by Golding for constructing his own myth.

We see Golding working typically in The Spire, in what may be called multilayered or multilevelled symbolism, more than an architectural reality, the spire as a superb imaginative analogy. Golding is reported to have said, ".... the story .... could have taken place elsewhere - the spire could have been anywhere, I was writing about a cathedral of the mind". 17

According to V.V. Subbarao, The Spire leads itself to multiple interpretations. It is a "diagram of prayer", the

Ark of God, the raised phallus, "a dunce's cap", a "stone hammer .... waiting to strike", and finally it is like "the appletree". The spire that bends but does not fall is also a morally ambiguous structure. It emphasizes man's vulnerability, involvement with evil even at the level of spiritual aspiration but his final regeneration through guilt and suffering. It conveys the message that the higher one aspires, the lower one can sink but out of the depths of degradation and suffering humility is born which leads to self-knowledge, just as the spire rises towards heaven from the weak, muddy and murky foundations on earth. Thus, it is a structure of multiple ramifications - a complex of images that at once suggests the aspirations of man on physical, emotional and spiritual levels.18

The Spire is symbolic of human nature in both its heights and depths. And most significantly Jocelin's quest for a pattern is Golding's own quest for a suitable objective correlative to embody his "sense of a transcendent evil and good".19 It successfully culminates in the Spire/Appletree image. Thus, good and evil, light and darkness, the spiritual and the sensual are enigmatically related.


The novel's remarkable achievement is its imagistic pattern. Through a wide range of images - the mayfly, red-hair, mistletoe, wolf-howl, the dark cellarage, the tent, the kingfisher and raven, burning fires, the appletree, and above all, the spire itself - the novel conveys the complexity of Jocelin's motivation and experience.

Whilst the images in Pincher Martin are on the whole, weird and terrifying - claws, hands, teeth, swivelling windows, here they have the lyrical beauty of towers, forests, geese, ravens, red hair, the golden maze of feet. The rhythms and images tend to be 'poetic' in the more traditional sense of the term.

The language of The Spire is therefore 'mellower', more 'poetic', the tone less strident, the rhythms more unbroken, less insistent. The tone is muted, the rhythms flowing gently from chapter to chapter. The verbs are less dynamic compared to those in Pincher Martin, the tone different. The following words by the protagonists of each best express the difference: "I shit on your heaven!" (Pincher Martin, p.200) and "It's like the appletree!" (The Spire, p.223).

The Symbolism of The Pyramid is extremely indirect. Comic exaggeration and the grotesque remove the language from the novelistic. The verbal surface can be metaphoric, imagistic and
richly suggestive, exploiting rhythm and the larger resources of the language, as in the Bounce section.

In Denis Donoghue's view *The Pyramid* is an "embarrassment, a disaster". He says, "The ordinary universe is beyond him, or beneath him, in any event he cannot deal with it. He writes of ordinary things with extraordinary awkwardness ...."20 J.Wakeman would rather view the novel as "the most adroitly disguised of William Golding's allegories, and one of the most complex". He observes that the book is shaped like a three-level steep pyramid, and has several layers of meaning. "It is certainly more humane, exploratory, and life-size than its predecessors, less Old Testament, more New Testament".21

Oliver observes that "we cannot even think, without leaving a mark somewhere on the cosmos" (p.89). Extending Oliver's experience - his growth to maturity - to the status of the entire human condition - while at the same time remembering that it is "Golding's least philosophical, and most modest, novel"22 - one

---

might say that the pyramid of order disintegrates once it is explored and evokes a convulsion of understanding in the explorer, as it has in the protagonist of the novel.

The symbolism in Golding's novels is difficult, as one finds with a modern poem. It is the result of textual compression, thematic complexity, elusive texture and allusiveness. So, many reviewers have found the book *Darkness Visible*, on the whole either unsatisfactory, or hard to admire. But there is no agreement regarding any part of the novel which is unsatisfactory. While Paul Ableman says, he read the first part in a trance of admiration, 23 Nigel Dennis found it tiresome and puzzling and the second half interesting. 24

*Darkness Visible*, like Frankley's the *Ironmongers*, seems a "complex disorder of ancient and modern" (p.42) where the realistic, the symbolic and the grotesque vaguely intermingle. Starting with physical details, it moves on to an exploration of the mystery of the human condition. The maturation of Sammy is communicated through mystical and theological symbols and allusions which cannot be easily comprehended. Matty's motives and actions are obscure. He simultaneously lives in the actual and the mystic.

worlds, but the resultant inter-action between the two worlds, and its impact on Matty are not convincingly depicted in fictional terms. It puzzles more than edifies. As Paul Bailey observes, "Matty belongs in a poem or a painting, where he can defy explanation and resist development". The portraits of Matty and Sophy taken together are an exquisite rendering of the self as a texture of perceptions, images and motifs pointing to its salvation on the one hand or damnation on the other.

In Close Quarters, Golding takes us back to the ostensibly simple form of a 19th century narrative, seeks to reinvest the stereotypes of sea-faring fiction with darker, more ambiguous values. As a story-teller his touch never falters. His attention to details of idiom and setting show a reverence for his craft that would do credit to a master-shipwright. It is the dark undertone of his metaphors and in the literary ostentation of his allusions that a feeling of strain and contrivance appears. As he steers us through the calms and storms, we are never quite sure whether we are in the safe hands of a master-mariner or under the dangerous spell of the sea.

In Fire Down Below, he found a story about a passion to create something, and supported its passion by making the story

an image of its structure, of what he as novelist is doing with it - in Pincher Martin, Martin's attempt to control his experience in the ocean, in The Spire, the building of the spire itself. In both, the story goes straight forward to its end; in Fire Down Below, indeed in Talbot's voyage as a whole, the image is more various - the voyage itself, the skills, understanding and improvisation which oblige the winds, calms, waves, and currents, the pressures working with and against the ship and the story, to carry them to the end of the earth.

Thus, Golding is considered the virtuoso novelist producing almost invariably a tour de force. We see in his novels a density of texture, controlled manipulation of language - subtle and sinewy, compressed metaphor and image, poetic intensity, and mythopoeic sensibility. The lyrical in Golding is not merely a question of texture, image, or metaphor, but an informing element of his work communicating a tragic sense of human destiny.

V

Conclusion

Thus, the novelistic technique imparts to his created world the solidity and surface reality associated with the novel. These, however are all deployed, to present the 'truth' with the
greatest imaginative and emotional force to make it acceptable. This manner of writing can impart a dream-like, unreal, fabular quality of the narrative. Also, it focuses on the sensation at the expense of the perceiver or the source of the sensation. Golding is concerned with the human nature under stress, with the inner action of the mind, with sensations, emotions, powerful instinctual drives that define the nature of the self, not so much in this man or that man.

Golding has reinvigorated language, reinvested it with a new freshness and an added power. His verbal expression covers a wide range from the 'language' of pre-man to modern contemporary speech, from the simple language of schoolboys, with its slang, to one that can capture the extremely sensitive apprehension of a painter, a priest, a saint. It varies from the densely textured, complex poetic prose to the extremely simple, from the high seriousness and intensity of The Spire and Pincher Martin to the more relaxed prose of reminiscence of Free Fall, and to the comic and the farcical of The Pyramid. It is a prose that moves from the coldly analytical language of reason and science to the hysterical, from the 'religious' to the secular, from the most deceptively naturalistic to the most obviously symbolic.

Language in Golding's writing is not important in itself. As Hodson has rightly pointed out, though not an "experimentalist
in the novel like James Joyce, Virginia Woolf or the writers of the *nouveau roman*, Golding has always taken great trouble to find a form and a language for his work that corresponds to and illuminates his subject. Form and content with him are welded together as they are in poetry.

Medcalf has seen in Golding's use of language the influence of Greek and Old English: "There is something dynamic, concrete and living about Greek to which .... he responded". He shares with them the use of metaphor "without any necessary consciousness of metaphor .... in which even abstractions acquire a concrete and substantial quality". The words, as Medcalf very rightly points out, are "relatively clean of association, hard and sharp". There is, it is true, a certain peculiar combination of simplicity, a hardness along with a richness and depth that is peculiarly Golding's. And this "kind of attitude towards meaning". Medcalf traces to "the whole approach of his books to experience .... (the) pushing (of) conceptualization back to the point where

28. Ibid., p.8.
29. Ibid., p.8.
it is just experience". Therefore, Golding employs language, on the whole, most naturalistically, to draw the reader into the narrative, to make him see with other eyes, experience on other pulses to take him to the level of the experiential before he can objectify, intellectualize and judge.

Thus, Golding is concerned with the exploration of various areas of human experiences for an understanding of the composition of the self. The power of his literary technique lies in its ability to hold the various 'truths' in tension, while at the same time realizing them is an intensely concrete situation that haunts the imagination. Undoubtedly, it may be said that Golding is one of the most original of contemporary writers in using his medium daringly and creatively and with astonishing success.

30. This point has been made by Kinkead-Weekes and I. Gregor in their comments on the description of the shell in Lord of the Flies. See Golding, pp. 18-19.