CHAPTER I

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The post-war humanity is cut-off from its religious moorings. The uprooted man floating gossamer-like—the flotsam and jetsam—in the wilderness of the industrialized and high-tech society, full of frustration, angst and despair is a vulgar caricature of the essential man whom God created in His own image. Though humanity, according to Christianity, has always existed in a state of sin ever since its expulsion from the Garden of Eden, the all-round deterioration in the present century has made it even more palpably evil. The observation of Wilhelmsen (1957) reflects the spirit of our times: "For the first time in history man has absolutely no place in the universe" (5).

The chances of restoration of humanity to its original glory seems to be a distant possibility. The reason for this is not very difficult to be found. It is easily traceable to the darkness of man's heart. As Gaspar Lefebvre in his book, Redemption through the Blood of Jesus (1960), says, "Man has gone astray in his inmost being, in his hidden thoughts and desires" (7). The present alarming decline in moral standard is largely due to the ever-increasing darkness of man's heart.
How to make man realize his sinful nature and stop him from sinning any further, if not restore him to his prelapsarian glory, is a question that agitates the minds not only of the Church but also of those writers who have a serious commitment to life as they have to art.

Just as life tends to cut itself off from religion and become more and more secular, art, as a replica of reality, also becomes increasingly secular. The secularization of art was so alarming during the post-war period, as if keeping pace with the alarming secularization of life itself, that T. S. Eliot was prompted to lambaste this tendency in his essay entitled, "Religion and Literature" (1935). There he condemns the whole of modern literature which is corrupted by secularism. The thrust of his argument is that we cannot have a literature worthy of consumption if we ignore the religious dimension, that is, man's propensity for evil (Kermode 1987, 97-106). As he says in another essay, "Notes Towards the Definition of Culture" (1948), "the artistic sensibility" in our times "is impoverished by its divorce from the religious sensibility" (Kermode 1987, 294).

Like Eliot, Greene also, in an essay, "François Mauriac" (1945), bemoans the absence of the religious sense in the English novel. In that essay, he says, "with the death of James the religious sense was lost to the English
novel, and with the religious sense went the sense of the importance of the human act" (CE, 91). Human act without the dimension of evil becomes unreal and unimportant. He finds fault with the characters of Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster for wandering "like cardboard symbols through a world that was paper thin" (CE, 91). Golding, too, in a lecture entitled, "Fable" which he delivered to the American audience, snipes at the absence of a dimension of evil in the Victorian novels. He mocks at the literary convention of boys on an island and says that the characters so far have been only "paper cutouts with no life in them" (HG, 88).

The Victorian smugness which buried the sense of evil and the importance of religion in containing it under its carpet and tried to portray man as a smooth, socially agreeable creature spurred a few religiously conscious novelists like Greene and Golding to react. They shunned the secular path of their times and tried to revive a religious consciousness to the English novel.

Though the primary duty of art is to itself, it cannot rise to greater glory merely through a portrayal of the immediate and contemporary without accentuating them through a juxtaposition with the enduring and universal. And to do this, a writer needs the framework of religion.
The present study proceeds from the belief that these two great writers of our times—Greene (1904-1991) and Golding (1911-1993), in their concept of man as treacherous, violent and sexual, seem to relate man's condition to the Christian notion of the consequences of the Fall. It tries to find out to what extent the Christian religion provides a scaffold for them to construct their respective edifices of fiction. It explores how far these authors are concerned with the fallenness of man. It studies their individual visions of redemptive possibilities of man. It also tries to study how far their personal religious concepts get transformed in the course of creative activity.

Though Greene had a recourse to Catholicism to which he got converted on the eve of his marriage to Vivian and brought its dogmas to have a direct bearing on his literary creations, his handling of God's mercy often came into clash with the canons of the Catholic Church. Golding, on the other hand, remained satisfied with making only a limited reference to Christianity in general and not to any one sect of it in particular.

David Lodge, in his Novelist at the Crossroads (1971), says "Greene has adopted the alien dogmatic system of Roman Catholicism and put it at the very centre of his mature work" (88). There are even more severe views like that of George Orwell's comments on Greene's Catholic books and
characters which condemn him outright for his blatant Catholic leanings.

But Greene, though dubbed a Catholic novelist, shall not be dismissed as such. Such a pigeonholing may be possible only if we forget the other areas of fiction where too he had made a mark. In fact, he wrote all his books only after his conversion. Even in his thrillers and secular novels, which came before and after the middle phase called the 'Catholic phase', we come across a strong sense of evil. Hence, it is a sense of evil religious in its intensity (and not orthodox Catholicism), which seems to be more important to Greene. And to Golding also.

Anthony Burgess, in his essay, "Good and Evil" (1967) refers to both Greene and Golding as two writers who are much concerned with evil. According to Burgess, Greene is so much interested in evil that he is sometimes considered a Jansenist heretic and Golding an anti-Wordsworth and anti-Rousseau who believed in the noble savage (61-65).

In fact, Greene's Catholic phase produced only four books out of a corpus of about three dozen books in all. Greene himself stated in defence of himself that of all his books only four were about Catholicism and that he should be considered not as a Catholic novelist but as a novelist who happened to be a Catholic.
In the earlier novels coming under the 'thriller phase' and in the later novels forming part of the 'secular phase', there was not much scope for the imposition of Catholic theology. Still, a discerning reader may come across a growing need felt by the characters of these periods for some kind of belief to live by.

It seems that Greene's concern in general is with man's capacity for evil and the need to curb it. Catholicism merely provided the main framework to project this preoccupation and it did more so in the case of his mature fiction starting with Brighton Rock (1938).

Golding, though he does not assume any dogmatic position, is also an essentially religious writer. Though Stephen Medcalf says that "He [Golding] is more likely, if asked, to say that he is not a Christian than that he is" (Carey 1986, 40), Golding's concern in his novels seems to be making man realize his sinful nature and goading him to seek a way out through a return to religion.

Like Greene, Golding is also concerned with the sinfulness of man—the essential human condition which is the result of the Original Sin committed by the first parents. He seems to believe in the Christian concepts of the creation of world by God, the Original Sin, the consequent Fall, the existence of free will and so on.
However, Golding's God does not seem to be a Christian God. Rather it seems to be a Cosmic Force.

Golding does not relate the human condition to Christian notions only. His vision seems to go beyond the bounds of Christianity and embrace the whole knowledge of human race. Religious affinity of any kind does not seem to deter him from probing the evil nature of man in other lights also.

George Orwell, in Inside the Whale (1940), states that "any kind of ideological orthodoxy was inimical to the production of good fiction" (qtd. Lodge 1971, 89). According to a number of critics, this is what exactly happens in the case of Greene in spite of his claims that he was saved in his art by a disloyalty to religion. Especially with regard to the aspect of redemption, his religious ideology seems to interfere with his creative process.

But in the case of Golding, his creative imagination, though nourished by a religious sense, does not seem to boil down to any ideological orthodoxy. He transcends dogmatic, sectarian religion and taps fields as varied as primeval rituals, myths, and archetypes of various races and civilizations, anthropology, sociology, ancient philosophical systems and modern science, too.
If it can be stated that Greene's purpose was to give a Catholic interpretation to man's condition and thus revive an interest in Catholicism, no such purpose can be attributed to Golding. His task is not merely giving a Christian interpretation to life. It goes beyond religion and aims at something even higher. As Virginia Tiger says, Golding has "taken upon himself the formidable task of arousing religious impulse and restoring to this recalcitrant time the spiritual dimension which is the stuff of vital mythopoeia" (TCL, 28, no. 2, Summer 1982, 217).

When art is constantly tied down to a particular belief, it will fail to rise above to the level of universality. Of course, the world can be seen in a grain. But if the grain itself is made out to be the world, it will no more be worthy of anyone's attention. Greene's Catholic tendencies make him easily liable to the charge that he projects Catholicism itself as the universal truth. When an artist explores human situation through a particular set of dogmas constantly, his art ceases to be the medium for conveying any universal truth and he comes in for bitter criticism.

Sammy's anguish over his desertion of Beatrice for Taffy in Golding's Free Fall may be more appealing than Scobie's over giving up Helen and Louise for God in Greene's Heart of the Matter. Scobie's story will be
incomprehensible to sections of society where bigamy or polygamy is in vogue. The moral of one woman one man could be better understood through Sammy's story than through Scobie's. If Greene fails, he fails because he presents it as adultery which is a sin according to Catholicism. This predominantly Catholic rather than emotive and literary treatment fails his art. Dealing with the same problem, Greene makes it out to be an unCatholic behaviour while Golding makes it out to be an irreligious conduct and thus the latter seems to stand a better chance of rising to the level of universal acceptance.

In spite of recurrent critical opinions which pin down Greene as a Catholic novelist, what Maria Couto (1988) says about the role of Catholicism in Greene's writings merits our attention. She claims: "The artistic validity of Greene's use of Catholicism in his novels can best be appreciated when we come to understand that it functions not in, by and for itself but as a way to exploring reality" (23).

What will interest any scholar of Greene and Golding above all other things is that though they are preoccupied with the sinfulness of man, the former even while being dogmatic about his Catholicism seems to place his emphasis on the social aspect of evil while the latter, though not a fervant Christian, appears to stress the Catholic concept of
the inherent aspect of evil. In Greene, we will see each of his characters being largely influenced by the evil ambience in which he/she finds himself/herself. On the other hand, each of Golding's characters produces evil and projects it on to others and the ambience.

Though surprising, it seems to be a basic difference consistently present in their works. Incidentally, this basic difference may help establish a new perspective with regard to Greene's much-talked-about Catholic orthodoxy; that he did not merely transcribe Catholicism but transfigured it true to his own claim to artistic integrity and Maria Couto's claim that it functions "as a way to exploring reality."

Greene, as a journalist and a much-travelled man, had a very good opportunity of observing contemporary life in all its seediness and made use of it for portraying human condition. But as a Catholic he could not eschew the danger of interpreting his knowledge of modern life with a tinge of his own faith. The result was that his work was a peculiar blend of realism and Catholicism. According to Lodge, as he says in his Modes of Modern Writing (1977), though Greene's mode of fiction belongs to the realistic tradition, "it is a great tradition revised to admit the Christian eschatology" (51). Greene is generally bracketted with Mauriac, Waugh,
Doris Lessing and Iris Murdoch who are better known as Catholic writers.

If Greene, in his obsession with the sinfulness of man, which to him is less individual and more social in nature, dons the cloak of a realistic-theological writer, Golding, in his preoccupation with the essential sinfulness of man, wears the mask of a fabulist for giving expression to his morals which may otherwise cut deeply. A fabulist according to him, is one who "cannot make a story without a human lesson tucked away in it" ("Fable," in HG, 85).

Golding penetrates the surface reality and goes deep to catch man unawares in his essential nature which is selfish and brutal. His forte lies perhaps in his great capacity to show this essential condition of man to be the universal condition. Of course, the essential condition of humanity could not but be the same whether it is Catholic, Christian, non-Christian or even atheistic; whether it is England, Europe or Africa. Human condition varies and fails to represent the universal condition only when it is dyed in any particular orthodoxy, as what happens in the Catholic novels of Greene.

Referring to the realism of Golding which is not of the usual, known variety, James Stern (1955) says: "His novels are exceptions to the social-realistic novels of his
contemporaries, and Golding himself has characterized them as 'myths'. His goal is always the nature of man" (38).

Golding's moral seems to be that man is fallen, sinful and has to prepare himself for sacrifice to rise above his condition which, of course, is not easy. He makes exhaustive use of myths that are readily available or creates his own myths for conveying his message. Though Greene also made use of symbols, archetypes, and myths, he still remained rooted in the realistic mode while Golding preferred to revive the archaic mode of fable.

Fable is a narrative which has a purpose anterior to its existence. It has a thesis which it embodies. Golding, though a fabulist and so a moralist, does not sit over man's condition to pronounce ethical judgements. He seems to portray man's sinful condition out of clear moral assumptions and leave the rest to man himself. As Samuel Hynes (1976) says, "though Golding is a moralist, he is not a moral maker, and his novels belong, not with Aesop's fables, but with the important symbolic novels of our century--with Camus's and Kafka's" (Page 1985,100).

However, the general tendency is to consider Golding as a sui generis (Fowles, 150) novelist--a novelist who is a class by himself and one who shares nothing in common with others. As Patric Swinden, in his English Novel of History
and Society, 1940-1980 (1984), says, "There was nothing to borrow from Golding that was not intimately bound up with his powerful idiosyncratic view of the world" (9). In his books, form and meaning are intrinsically fused together.

In every one of Golding's novels we come across a new pattern which may be symbolic of the patternlessness of human life. He sacrifices the time-honoured and well-established constituents of fiction like narrative (even if narrative is there, it seems to be split up in a confusing manner that the reader finds himself at the crossroads and probably fails to make heads and tails in one reading) and characterization. But he achieves excellence through a fusion of form and meaning without sacrificing the imaginative aspect which is vital to the art of storytelling.

If Golding and Greene are put to reader-response test, the former will be considered writerly and the latter readerly. Golding's successful achievement of a superb technique for the portrayal of fallen man's patternless life produces the side-effect of distancing his readers.

Wayne Booth, in his essay, "Telling as Showing: Fielding as Narrator" (1961) remarks: "At the beginning of The Catcher in the Rye (1951), J. D. Salinger's adolescent hero says, 'what really knocks me out is a book that, when
you're all done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it" (Hazell 1978, 119). This kind of intimacy we may not expect in the case of Golding. He strenuously keeps his 'ugly mug' out of the pages of his books.

Greene on the other hand establishes a very good rapport with his readers in spite of the Catholic irritants that he sprinkles all through the pages of his books. Greene excels in the art of conveying his sense of evil in delectable stories while Golding makes a mark as an extraordinary analyst in the laboratory of human sinfulness.

C. G. Jung in his "Psychology and Literature" refers to two modes of artistic creation: the psychological and the visionary. Greene can be said to belong to the former mode which "deals with materials drawn from the realm of human consciousness" (Lodge 1972, 177). And Golding to the latter which draws its material from the unknown sources: "It is a strange something that derives its existence from the hinterland of man's mind. . . . It arises from timeless depths; it is foreign and cold, many-sided, demonic and grotesque . . . vision of monstrous and meaningless happenings that in every way exceed the grasp of human feeling and comprehension" (178).
It is an experience of the above sort explained by Jung which confronts us while reading Golding's books like Lord of the Flies (1954), Free Fall (1959), The Spire (1964), Darkness Visible (1979) and The Paper Men (1984). An elaborate understanding of his writing and creative modes becomes imperative because they are intrinsically fused in his works.

It may be stated that in spite of their differences in religious beliefs, fictional modes, style and technique, they seem to be united only in their subject which is the fallenness of man. Both write about fallenness itself and do not repeat the Fall story which has a blissful beginning, a miserable middle and an unhappy ending. It is the human misery which is a sequel to the Fall and dogs man from his birth to death that seems to engage their attention.

They do not look at the human life through a prism of magical colours. Nor do they consider the world a rainbow. Their vision of human condition seems to be tragic and unromantic. If Greene's obsession seems to be with the seedy details of modern life and the concomitant poverty, treachery, betrayal, violence and sexuality, Golding's seems to be rooted in the innate wickedness of man.
Though their preoccupations are the same—the fallenness of humanity, they seem to differ with each other when they approach the issue of redemption.

When we come to the aspect of the possibility of redemption, we find Greene's Catholicism in full play which would absolve even the worst sinners and confer sainthood on them. Added to his Catholicism is perhaps his humanism which cannot condemn any soul to perish in hell-fire.

Golding, as he says in "Fable," looks at human history as a record of man's inhumanity to man. What he means is that mankind is incapable of correcting its past mistakes. And as such, he cannot portray man as having the capacity to qualify for mercy. Perhaps he does not want to invoke any religious dogma or reductive theory in this connection.

He is not a Catholic, nor even a staunch Christian. He does not subscribe to any particular school of thought. To him, Freud, Marx and Darwin, the three great thinkers who influenced the Western thought to a very great extent, are "the three most crashing bores" ("A Moving Target," MT, 186). The violence that the present century had witnessed in its first half made him lose faith in the 'great bores' and seemed to have hardened his view of man as incorrigibly wicked.
To Golding, the world is a hell: "We can say if we will with Marlowe's Mephistopheles, 'Why this is hell nor am I out of it.'" (MT, 201). Greene also voices a similar opinion. While in Mexico, he considered it a hell in comparison with his London, an altogether different geographical locality. But when he returned to London, he realized that there is no difference between the two different geographical localities: "Mexico was something I couldn't shake off, like a state of mind" (LR, 148).

Golding perhaps looks at this reality—the reality of human condition all over and all through the ages and decides that man cannot rise above his fallenness.

Though there is a near uniformity in critical opinions about Greene's handling of the aspect of redemption, opinions vastly differ over Golding's handling of the same.

According to Frank Kermode, as he says in "On William Golding" (1962), "Golding believes in human guilt and the human sense of paradise lost; he also believes in divine mercy" (Hazell 1978, 154). Kermode makes a clear case in favour of redemption in Golding's books.

Jean E. Kennard also subscribes to this view when he says, "It is untrue that Golding's novels leave us without answers" (177).
But Anthony Burgess (1967) says, "Christianity accepts a fall and the possibility of redemption. Golding cannot, however, posit an Eden—not for man; man did not fall from grace; he was never in a state of it" (65).

Striking a somewhat middle course, Broes observes: "Man is for him 'heroic' as well as 'sick'. It is this dichotomy in man, the unending conflict between the forces of light and dark in each individual—rather than any unrelieved vision of corruption—that is at the centre of his novels" (450).

The general critical tendency towards each of Golding's books ever since the first one, Lord of the Flies, came out in 1954 has been that it presents a world of darkness and holds out no hope for future, though there have been occasional positive comments like the one by Kermode given above.

But what we feel might come closer to the truth about Golding's view of mankind's chances for future is that he is neither a despairing pessimist nor a promising optimist. It may be that he does not go easy on man's sinful nature but he does not close the doors on mankind. For in his later novels, he seems to lose his grip and offer a ray of hope for humanity. Even Burgess who claims that in Golding man is never presented as having ever been in a state of
grace, comes around to an acceptance of the availability of choice for man in his later novels. He states: "But choice is, in the later novels, available to his adult modern heroes" (65).

Golding himself refers to a possibility for redemption in his "Belief and Creativity" (1980): "It may be—I hope it is—redemption to guess and perhaps perceive that the universe, the hell which we see for all its beauty, vastness, majesty is only part of a whole which is quite unimaginable" (MT, 201), and in that "unimaginable whole" which he calls "cosmos" there is a Good. Still later in 1983 while delivering his acceptance speech at the Nobel prize awarding ceremony, he expressed a regret for having accepted the label 'pessimist' thoughtlessly twenty-five years ago. He said, "I don't feel hopeless myself" (203).

According to Sylvère Monod (1982), "The writer's duty may be to denounce weaknesses and frailties and perils. But he must at the same time lead his readers to realise that beyond his denunciation there may lie something else" (Page 1985, 142-43). True to what Monod feels, Golding, we hope, will not fail his readers.

Golding visualizes the redemptive possibility of man to be lying in his capacity to relate himself to the cosmos properly. And the route to a relationship with the cosmos
is through a relationship between man and man. Peter Green (1960) says: "Golding is, primarily, a religious novelist: his central theme is not the relationship of man to man but the relationship of man, the individual, to the universe; and through the universe, to God" (Rev. Eng. Lit., 1, No. 2 [April 1960], 63).

Though what Green says is largely true, where he misses the point is when he makes unimportant the relationship of man to man. It is the vital point in Golding's vision. In fact, Golding seems to stress exactly this point in his later novels and even in the earlier ones like Free Fall and The Spire. To Golding, if there is a God on earth, it is the relationship between man and man which will ennoble him to enjoy a relationship with his universe/cosmos and through it with God.

With everything said, Golding still seems to lag far behind Greene in extending redemption to man which the latter does at a stroke through his Catholicism and humanism.

It is the similarity in the choice of subject matter and the dissimilarity in the treatment of it combined with the difference in approaches to the problem of hope for future that aroused an interest in the present study. Though a study in comparison of these two great writers with
the same preoccupation has not been made so far, these two are frequently brought into focus together with regard to the award of 1983 Nobel Prize for Literature.

There is a general feeling that it should have gone to Greene. The proponents of this view seem to base their arguments on the variety and volume of his work. On the other hand, the defendants of Golding justify the award on the ground that he is more serious and universal than Greene. It is true that Greene produced novels, to borrow an expression of John Keats quoted by Golding in "A Moving Target", "'as easily as the leaf comes to the tree'" (MT, 156). Golding on the other hand, like an oak tree, put out "one green leaf now and then and apparently with much labour" (156). But it is an oak tree, it should be noted.

Though it is not our immediate business to weigh one against the other in the light of the Nobel controversy, it offers us a vantage point to look at the two writers a little more critically.

A selection of novels of these writers taken for the present study was so made as to ensure representation for the early, middle and later phases of their artistic careers. The programme of the thesis offers a perspective of the preoccupation of the authors with the human condition ranging from man's birth to death. The three
chapters that follow immediately are devoted to a study of sin in childhood, adolescence and adulthood respectively. The study of the possibility of redemption in the case of both authors is dovetailed into one chapter preceding the final one or conclusion. The first section of each of the four kernel chapters dwells on Greene's works after some initial remarks about both the authors and the second section on Golding's, with occasional cross-references to both the authors.

The present dissertation, though a study in comparison, does not attempt at drawing parallels between situations and characters presented in the novels of these two writers. It aims at establishing the implicit similarity in their creative preoccupations with regard to a particular aspect of human condition, that is, the fallenness of man, and the explicit dissimilarity with regard to hope for the morrow.

Though social, moral, archetypal and psycho-analytical approaches to criticism are made use of for an interpretation of the texts, Christian theology forms the mainstay.