INTRODUCTION

William Golding, a prolific writer of modern times, is known for his original vision and expanding contours. He gives us flashes of light and radiance of understanding which illumine our minds and warm our hearts. However, he doesn't give us a system of philosophy. As it is said of him, he only 'baits his hook for Leviathan'¹.

Many critics have explored the multi-dimensional aspects of his novels in terms of thematic, ethnical, psychological and philosophical stances. However, the existential aspect has not received enough critical attention. The studies in the form of books and research papers on Golding have shown only a sensitivity to the existentialist overtones of his works but the sensitivity has not been yoked to the rigour of the existentialist system. This aspect has been invoked in all its range and subtlety in this thesis in order to unlock the deeper latent intrinsic thrust of Golding's existential world.

To say this is not to assert that Golding himself is an existentialist. In fact, his reflections on the nature of man, and the impasse he has found himself in, reveal illusion behind the reality by opening eyes to something which has always been true, but which for one reason or the
other may not have been recognised. His concern with man's origin and fate has primarily been determined by the second Great War, as he points out in the essay "Fable": 'Before the second war I believed in the perfectibility of social man—but after the war I did not because I was unable to'.

The last war revealed to him a world bifurcated into 'I' and 'not I'. Existential vision is also primarily concerned with the study of this 'I'. The basic concept existentialism is—'I am, therefore I think'—a contention, which is diametrically opposite to that of Descarte who said—'I think, therefore I am'. Existentialism believes that we exist before we have any specific perfection or nature. We are thrust into being and make ourselves through our actions. Mankind is nothing else except what the individual makes it to be through his actions.

All the nine novels of William Golding, viz., Lord of the Flies (1954), The Inheritors (1955), Pincher Martin (1956), Free Fall (1959), The Pyramid (1967), The Spire (1964), Darkness Visible (1979), Rites of Passage (1980) and The Paper Men (1984), which will be dealt in this thesis, practically cover the major existentialist themes, such as authentic existence, being-with-others, freedom of choice, encounter with death, absurdity and leap of faith, and also guilt and alienation. There remains The Scorpion God (1971),
the 'Three short novels', which, in fact, are only three short stories, including the Envoy Extraordinary (1956), one converted into a play entitled, The Brass Butterfly two years later. These stories have been left out, which 'read themselves like a dream'.

The body of the text, excluding the conclusion, groups the novels to bring out the existentialist in-scape, using certain existentialist perspectives. Chapter I groups Lord of the Flies (1954) and The Inheritors (1955). Chapter II focuses only on Pincher Martin (1956), as it deals with the master-theme of death with which the existentialist thought wrestles with magnificent obsession. Chapter III analyses Free Fall (1959) and The Pyramid (1967), using the perspective of Freedom and Choice in existentialism. Chapter IV deals with The Spire (1964) and Darkness Visible (1979) from the point of view of leap of faith and the theme of absurdity. Chapter V explores Rites of Passage (1980) and The Paper Men (1984), using the existentialist formulations on Guilt and Alienation.

These novels affirm Golding's view that people perish without vision. Virginia Tiger rightly points out—'In Golding's view contemporary man lacks vision'. In all novels man is seen quite closely from various angles in a spectrum which reflects what Golding himself terms 'an Aeschylean
preoccupation with the human tragedy'. The image of man, which emerges from his fictional corpus, is at once both 'heroic and sick'.

Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor, Virginia Tiger, Samuel Hynes, Don Crompton, V.V. Subbarao etc., have all tried to capture Golding's 'heroic and sick' vision through thematic and critical appraisal. The existential study of the present thesis, which has eluded the grasp of Golding's scholars, however, doesn't aim at proving that there is a thread of existentialism in Golding's fiction. As a matter of fact, it is only a study of the characters of his novels in the light of existential perspective.

In the first novel, the *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph, Jack, Piggy and Simon are taken as the representative of the major facets of human behaviour. In their character-analysis, it has been shown how being-for-itself (human consciousness) takes recourse to authentic or inauthentic living. Being-for-itself, i.e., human consciousness, according to Sartre, stands for subjectivity and freedom. Many times an individual tries to flee from one's own freedom on account of various factors—one may try to project oneself in a way what one is not; one may start living according to the image others have made of one; one may identify oneself with the past or one may pretend to give meaning to existence in theoretic systems. In fact,
all this attempt of fleeing from one's own freedom has been termed as Bad Faith by Sartre and it is a synonym of inauthentic existence. The characters in the *Lord of the Flies* have been analysed through this approach.

Since the Other is also a being-for-itself, the encounter between two persons is characterised by the disintegration of the subjective world. For a long time, the Other was regarded only as an object of perception and not as a subject. Sartre's phenomenological analysis provides remarkable insight into the irrevocable spatio-temporal conflict involved in the encounter with the Other. One party, with its own possibilities, tries to transcend the possibilities of the Other, which becomes the attempt of reducing the Other to the rank of an object. However, the Other can assert his subjectivity by adopting a free attitude toward the former. This interesting conflict is engendered through 'Look' and 'Body', the Sartrean twin agencies, which form the crux of his analysis. In *The Inheritors*, Sartre's vivisection of these twin agencies has been profitably applied for unfolding a new meaning in the encounter of the Neanderthal man, Lok, with the immediate descendants, the Cro-Magnon man.

Sartre divides the world into two types of beings—the being-for-itself and the being-in-itself. The former stands for human-consciousness, whereas the latter connotes
all that is not human-consciousness. In fact, being-in-itself is only massive and dumb "packed-togetherness". 'Human reality', as Sartre designates man, is characterised by the tension between being-in-itself and being-for-itself. This tension has been studied by him in its various aspects and it becomes the means by which he explains the individual, his environment, his relationship with others, his relationship with the past and even his death.

In knowing, the being-for-itself introduces negation. The being-for-itself knows Peter by eliminating that what is not Peter. This negating capacity is carried by the being-for-itself in every act of knowledge, be it interrogation, destruction or negative judgement. This negating capacity, which is also termed as nihilation or annihilation, is possible only because the being-for-itself is 'out' of the being-in-itself.

The being-for-itself is Freedom. Nevertheless, in the life of some people, this negating capacity of human consciousness results in the negative attitude towards their own freedom, which, in fact, according to Sartre, is only an attempt of escaping the anguish, responsibility or the burden posed by freedom. This escape from freedom, i.e. bad faith, manifesting in varied ways, makes an interesting study in the context of this thesis.
The typical tension between being-for-itself and being-in-itself, prevailing at the time of death, has been taken into account in the analysis of *Pincher Martin*. It is an engaging exploration into the evanescent moment on the doorstep to death, from whose bourn no traveller comes back to tell his tale. Sartre, the atheistic existentialist, doesn't attach metaphysical value to death the way Christianity does. However, Heidegger sees the highest possibility of existence in cultivating the awareness of death, for this realisation can be instrumental in awakening the individual. Even to Kierkegaard, a theistic existentialist, death masquerades as the meaning giver.

According to Sartre, being-for-itself can never become being-in-itself because something fundamental separates consciousness from inertness. Being-for-itself-in-itself, i.e., consciousness plus inertness, is a utopia, equivalent to God, which as Sartre postulates, is never possible. This Sartrean exposition is basic to the understanding of his position regarding God and his analysis of the moment of death. In the analysis of *Pincher Martin*, it also becomes a point of reference in regard to Golding's view about dying *Pincher Martin*: '--- to achieve salvation, the persona must be destroyed'.
The existentialist concept of freedom and choice, the basis of analysis in the third chapter, grouping *Free Fall* and *The Pyramid*, is worth mentioning. The existentialist notion of freedom, ought not to be confused with the general notion where freedom stands for obtaining the object of desire. In existentialism, freedom implies to will by oneself, which is an autonomous choice. Freedom and free choice are one and the same thing in Sartre's system. The main stress is on free attitude by virtue of which even the seeming obstacles to complete freedom, such as past, place, surroundings, fellow-brethren etc., lose its deterministic influence.

However, just as Sartre discusses the possibility of escaping freedom through negative attitude towards one own self in the form of bad faith, he also discusses certain modes of relationship in which the alienation from freedom is evident. Love relationship, also figuring in *Free Fall* at length, is one of those modes, according to Sartre, where loss of freedom is a foregone conclusion. Since Sammy, in *Free Fall*, while being caught in love relationship with Beatrice, wants to investigate the problem of loss of freedom which is the sole engagement of the novel, the afore-said Sartrean analysis, therefore, carries its special relevance in the analysis of *Free Fall* in this thesis. Here it may also be pointed out that subsiding into bad faith in the form of love
relationship is also a matter of one's choice. One can decide to assert one's freedom any time.

In sexual union, Sartre speaks of clogging of consciousness but this clogging remains only during the sexual indulgence, for there is an automatic release with coitus. Therefore, as compared to the loss of freedom in love relationship, there is degrical variation of the same in sexual indulgence. In The Pyramid, the relationship between Oliver and Evie is mainly confined to sexual exploits. In relation to Free Fall, that way, The Pyramid provides a comparative study in the context of freedom and choice.

The self-transcending movement of consciousness as evident from Sartre's doctrine, acquires a new dimension for the theistic existentialist like Kierkegaard who believes in a transcendent Being, namely God. Authentic existence, according to Kierkegaard, is only attained in the moment before God—a self-revelatory moment, which can only be enveloped through faith. This act of embracing God or Christ may be in defiance of reason but this alone is the true way to him. In this mould, Kierkegaard stands for 'leap of faith'.

Kierkegaard's approach also encompasses some of the subtle aspects involved in the act of faith, which provide a clue to the understanding of Jocelin, the protagonist of
The Spire. Broadly speaking, Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son at the command of God is a subject central to his theistic stance. He keenly studies the various aspects of the persons who develop the ability to respond to the Divine. He also terms such persons as the knights of Faith—the symbol of the glorification of the human will.

In the fourth chapter, Kierkegaardian and Camusian approach figure as a contrast in the respective analysis of the contrasting theme of The Spire and Darkness Visible. Camus believes in confronting the Absurd directly without resorting to Kierkegaardian means of transcendence and faith, which he considers to be an evasive device. He is highly critical of Kierkegaard's existential solution that involves in 'self-deception'. The common standing between Camus and Kierkegaard is not in the solution they seek, rather it is in the common problem they want to solve. In answer to the Absurd, one takes a leap of faith, while the other stares in the face of the problem. The Spire, rooted in faith, becomes a befitting subject-matter for investigation in the light of Kierkegaardian approach, whereas the Darkness Visible makes a revealing study through Camusian perspective. However, again to repeat, it is not Golding who is trying to present existentialist themes.

The fifth chapter, dealing with the Rites of Passage
and *The Paper Men*, gauges the theme of guilt and alienation, referring once again to Sartrean viewpoint. It takes into account those layers of self-deception that have to be stripped off before one can be one's true self. The existential analysis of guilt and alienation probes into the labyrinth of consciousness, as it uncovers the gap between existence and essence, i.e., the gap between the self one is and the self that is projected.

Existentialism practically covers every aspect of life. According to Sartre, existentialism is not an 'ism', rather it is the truth of life. No wonder if these explorations enable us to shed more light on Golding's novels which try to capture the vision of life. This dissertation primarily and essentially focuses on the existentialist themes, though there are also occasional references to the *Gita* and some other schools of thought.

The chapter-wise break-down of the thesis is as follows:

**CHAPTER - I**

*Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*: Exposition of Being-for-Itself and Being-for-Others

In the *Lord of the Flies*, the existentialist perspective is used for the character-analysis of all the four
major characters, namely, Ralph, Jack, Piggy and Simon. The analysis illustrates how their being-for-itself takes recourse to various attitudes. Ralph, despite his goodness, fails to live on the authentic plane, for he is given to bad faith in certain ways. Jack, who otherwise may be termed as uncivilised, incorporates something positive in that he freely displays his individualistic stance, a prelude authentic living. However, on the basis of the Sartrean view on Existentialism in relation to Humanism, he falls short of that ideal mark where there may be a harmonious blend of existential individuality and humanistic concern. Nevertheless, as compared to Piggy's exasperating and crippling rationalism, his dionysian irrationalism conveys greater existential individuality. Amongst all of them, Simon can be termed as an existential hero, for he is both humane and individualistic.

The Inheritors has been analysed in the context of being-for-others, the inalienable dimension of being-for-itself. Lok's encounter with the Other, the Cro-Magnon man, has been revealed through the twin agencies of the 'Look' and the 'Body'. The 'look' of the Other threatens the subjectivity of Lok, who, initially, is unknown to this tension posed by the challenge. Once the Other is able to make rupture in Lok's consciousness, he feels 'Lok-other' surging in his self. Later, his different attitudes have been studied in the form of Sartrean 'original reactions'. He overcomes his fear by thrusting himself toward
his own possibles'. Then he approaches the Other with heady excitement but the latter is bent upon treating him as an object. In the meantime, he experiences being-with-others through the manifestation of the primary agency in the form of 'body'. This aspect has been unfolded at length in a revealing manner. Also existential 'perception' has been compared with Gestalt psychology. Later he experiences 'analogical identification' with the Other and feels 'two Loks' in him. Eventually he faces his death at the hands of the Other, which has been studied in the existential context.

CHAPTER - II

PINCHER MARTIN: ENCOUNTER WITH DEATH.

The chapter probes into Pincher Martin's encounter with death and his 'after-death hallucination' from existentialist point of view. Martin's death has been studied in terms of the tension prevailing between being-for-itself and being-in-itself at the time of death. It illustrates, in accordance with Sartrean exposition, how Martin's being-for-itself is only engulfed by being-in-itself at the time of death in a typical way without ever 'touching' the latter.
His imaginative creation of the cycle of seven days has been studied in regard to the nihilating potential of being-for-itself. It also refers to the point that death as such is only 'nihilation of the potential of nihilation'. The existential view regarding the impact of Martin's past at the time of death has also been compared with the view enunciated in the *Gita*. The possible mode of salvation in Martin's case, as stated by Golding in an interview, adds a new dimension in the context of existential analysis. In the end, this chapter also shows on the basis of Sartre's view as to how Martin's death becomes the concern of the Other. Moreover, the existential worth of death has also been taken into account with reference to Heidegger.

CHAPTER - III

FREE FALL AND THE PYRAMID : THE THEME OF FREEDOM AND CHOICE

The existential focus on *Free Fall* and *The Pyramid* amplifies the comparative predicament of Sammy and Oliver in the context of freedom and choice. This study provides insights into the working of Sammy's mind, which is primarily concerned to know as to how it has lost its freedom. It is, in fact, the 'coral growths' of his mind which have robbed
him of his childhood freedom. The comparison between Sammy and Oliver on the basis of Sartrean perspective, reveals the essential difference involved in their respective loss of freedom. Sammy certainly is more liable to lose his freedom, for his love-relationship with Beatrice, along with his sadistic attitude later on, is the very cause of loss of freedom — atleast this is the Sartrean verdict which considers the alienation from freedom in love-relationship as a foregone conclusion. Of course, it is another matter that this too is one's choice and that one can choose to reassert one's freedom anytime by transcending love-relationship — the course, which has been analysed in Sammy's context in a revealing manner. Sammy's 'I', which entangles him, has been shown to be different from Sartrean 'I' that doesn't stand for ego. Sammy's 'I' has only wrongly identified itself with Sartrean 'characteristic unrealizables'.

Oliver, on the other hand, has shown to be on a different footing in his relationship with Evie with his primary thrust for sexual consummation, which covers the major part of The Pyramid. It has been shown how in sexual relationship there is 'clogging of consciousness', which, according to Sartre, finds a release in coitus, resulting in the restoration of subjectivity. This insight has particularly been found to be true in Oliver's case, as it is
corroborated by his later life. Apart from highlighting the comparison between Sammy and Oliver, this chapter also shows the positive way in love-relationship, as against the Sartrean stand, with reference to Whitman, Lawrence etc.

CHAPTER- IV

THE SPIRE AND DARKNESS VISIBLE : LEAP OF FAITH AND THE THEME OF ABSURDITY.

The Kierkegaardian theme of 'leap of faith' has been explored in The Spire by tracing out the existential individuation of Jocelin. He has been compared with Kierkegaard's knight of Faith, the rare individual with supreme faith, the perfect example of which is found in Abraham. Like Abraham, Jocelin is also shown to have transgressed the ethical in favour of the divine call. Though, unlike Abraham, Jocelin has traces of spiritual pride and simultaneous secret wish for the physical possession of Goody, 'his daughter in God'. His tension between faith and wish has been analysed at length with reference to the tension prevailing in the mind of knight of Faith, who, even after renouncing everything, is allowed to hover round the secret wish. Jocelin's comparison in this context has also been made with Kierkegaard himself
who too betrays the tension between faith and the secret wish. The Kierkegaardian study of Jocelin in this mould has also been juxtaposed with the finding of the Gita and the Tantra.

If The Spire shows the way in transcending the Absurd through faith, Darkness Visible illustrates how the Absurd has to be encountered directly. The second novel reveals an entirely new dimension, when it is seen through Camusian perspective. Matty comes out as an absurd hero in his direct encounter with the Absurd which leads him to the realisation of the worth of human solidarity. Also his unique encounter with the Spirits has been analysed through Camus' as well as Huxley's approach. On the other hand, Sophy has been depicted as Camus' 'rebel', though with some reservation.

CHAPTER - V

RITES OF PASSAGE AND THE PAPER MEN : THEME OF GUILT AND ALIENATION

The theme of guilt and alienation has been depicted in this chapter with a difference. The existential notion of guilt and alienation, differing greatly from the popular notion of the same, becomes the means of elucidating Colley's guilt and Barclay's sense of alienation, along with that of
Rick Tucker's. Colley's guilt has been studied in terms of the gap between his existence and essence. The irreconcilability between his persona of a parson and his act of fellatio, resulting in his suicide, is seen through existential glasses. The study also shows a parallel in Sartre's example of guilty homosexual. Above all, it also registers the authentic attitude towards the source of guilt, against which Colley is found to be wanting. The reference to Lord Jim and the Gita highlights an inter-related point regarding guilt.

The study of The Paper Men, on the other hand, presents the existential theme of alienation, which is an added dimension to the theme of guilt. Barclay's gap between his existence and essence has been studied not only in his individual context but also in comparison with Colley. Barclay's sense of alienation has been discussed with reference to the existential view regarding individual alienation and the cosmic one. His existential journey till the point of dread, and a retreat thereof, presents a graph which maps out his experience of alienation. In his comparison, Rick Tucker's experience of alienation provides a variation on the theme of alienation. It has also been shown how both of them become alienating factors to each other.

The existential terminology has been given below in a simple form as a ready reference for the benefit of a lay
reader.

Absurd: The dialectic between the being of man and the objective world has been termed as the absurd by Albert Camus. It manifests itself in the realisation of the individual who tries to exist as a subject in the world of objects—that is, it is the cleavage between man's aspirations to unity and the insurmountable multiplicity of the world. It is in the context of the absurd that Camus postulates the concept of the absurd hero and the rebel in *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Rebel*. However, Jean Paul Sartre sees the absurd in the meaninglessness of man's existence in which the perpetual drive toward an unattainable goal is bound to be a failure.

Anguish: Anguish or dread is the feeling that the individual experiences when all support, security and certainty have gone. It is the experience of the unsupported self, standing face to face with its own freedom. As against fear and fright, which are caused by definite things, anguish is characterised by its indetermination and its results in the feeling that the ground beneath one's feet has given away. An individual, who realises that he is constantly confronted with possibility and the need for decision, is liable to experience anxiety.
Bad Faith: Bad Faith or Mauvaise Foi is a lie to oneself in the attempt of escaping the anguish of freedom and responsibility. Bad faith occurs in various ways, while this flight from freedom or reality takes place:

1. **Les Comedies Humaines**: It happens when an individual attaches importance to the banality of day-to-day life. In this state, the actions of an individual register the emptiness of gestures and convey the inauthenticity of role-playing.

2. **Le Passe'**: It refers to the mould in which an individual lives according to the past, identifies with one's old image and refuses to be open towards innumerable possibilities.

3. **L'Autorui**: Here one loses hold of one's subjectivity by living according to the image others have made of one.

4. **Les Salauds**: This is linked with the inauthentic flight of those people, the Salauds (Swine), who display strict adherence to the rigid code of conduct and values.

5. **Easy Answers**: It pertains to the evasive attempt whereby an individual wants to give meaning to existence in theoretic terms, such as Humanism or Aestheticism.
6. Inauthentic Modes of Relations: All the inauthentic modes of relations are included in this case, where Sartre shows the subject being reduced to a state of an object.

Being-for-itself: Being-for-itself is human consciousness conceived as a lack of Being, a desire for Being, a relation to Being. In fact, it has many characteristics, though in itself is only Nothingness or Freedom. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre shows the various ways in which the Being-for-itself expresses itself—it manifests as lack or desire which seeks satisfaction through 'possession'; it is bestowed with the capacity to transcend itself or to 'project' in a manner which is other than the existing states of affairs or situations; and above all, it has the drive to express itself as a free agent. It is Nothingness (Being-for-itself) out of which all that is of interest and of value in this world is created. This is possible on account of the specific activity of the Being-for-itself, which is termed as 'negation' or 'nihilation' or 'annihilation'. This negating capacity is expressed in interrogation, destruction, negative judgment and in every act of knowledge whatsoever. Being-for-itself is the negation of a massive, dull, inert and full being which is termed as the Being-in-itself.
Being-in-itself: Being-in-itself is Non-conscious Being. It is massive, dull, inert full being, with dumb 'packed-togetherness'. In fact, Sartre divides the world into two sorts of beings in his analysis—Being-in-itself and Being-for-itself.

Being-for-others: Being-for-others is an inseparable dimension of the Being-for-itself. In this dimension of being, my self exists outside as an object for others. This exposure results in the perpetual conflict with the Other because each Being-for-itself tries directly or indirectly to recover its own Being by making an object out of the other.

Consciousness: Consciousness is the transcending Being-for-itself. It cannot exist in a void; it must be consciousness of something exterior to itself. Since it 'exists' only in the awareness of the external objects, one cannot claim to the effect that 'I am conscious'. Rather one can only state: 'I am conscious of that particular thing'.

Contingency: It refers to the unjustified existence, which appears as a brute fact with its immeasurable incomprehensibility. In other words, man is only thrown into the world.
Essence: Essence refers to that aspect what an individual 'makes' as he lives. It signifies the attempt to express oneself as 'something'. Therefore, it connotes the 'what' of the being. Sartre believes that man has no fixed essence. Each man makes his essence as he lives.

Existence: Existence means concrete, individual being here and now. It is the first principle of existentialism, connoting the fact that man's existence is prior to essence—meaning thereby that his being 'here' and 'now' precedes his being 'something'.

Existentialism: Existentialism can be defined in the best possible way through its fundamental maxim: 'existence precedes essence'. It implies that man is freedom first and foremost and that he can express himself in any way, for he has no fixed nature. It is exactly what Sartre says as such—'Man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world—and defines himself afterwards'. Therefore, existentialism is an attempt to rehabilitate man in his own eyes. Only when the dread or anguish of freedom is faced and the choice is made after assuming responsibility, existence is realised in the existentialist mode.
Facticity: This connotes the limiting factors in existence or the obstacles which freedom has to face. Sartre terms the whole set of obstacles as facticity. Heidegger names them as 'the brute existents'.

Freedom: Freedom is the very being of the Being-for-itself which is 'condemned to be free' and 'condemned to choose'. Freedom exists as 'freedom of choice'. Man is free to liberate or bind himself through the choices he makes.

Nihilation: Nihilation or negation is the specific activity of the Being-for-itself by virtue of which it perpetually negates the Being-in-itself by realising inwardly that it is not the Being-in-itself. Had human reality been massive and dull being like the Being-in-itself, engulfed in the density of being, it would have excluded the capacity for nihilation or negation. The Being-for-itself nihilates the the Being-in-itself in several ways: Firstly, the former nihilates the latter as a whole and reveals itself to be 'outside' the Being-in-itself. Then this consciousness divides, limits and organises the cosmos through: its nihilating potential, expressed in every act of knowledge, whatsoever it may be. This results in the act of its recreation continually till the time of death. Being-for-itself continues to express itself as a
flight out of the past and into the future. It nihilates
the past, for example, in the manner that I am no longer
'the journalist-that-I-was'— the past becomes what I
was before.
Notes


   Also quoted on the blurb of *The Scorpion God* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971).


