CHAPTER VI
OTHER DEVICES OF NARRATION INCLUDING LANGUAGE
"There is almost universal agreement that Golding is a master of language and style." (1) James C. Livingston comments on the unconventional approach of William Golding in his introduction to *The Spire*:

"The reader should keep in mind that Golding is willing to experiment and that what he is doing is almost unique in contemporary writing....... concerned to explore the vast possibilities of language as well as themes of universal import." (2)

Golding is a great artist and even Frederick R. Karl who condemns him, perhaps more than anybody else, does not fail to notice this fact. He writes:

"Even if his didacticism makes him resolve what should be unresolvable, he nevertheless indicates in nearly every line that he is an artist seriously interested in his craft." (3)

Even his otherwise defective works are popular in academic circles for what Angus Wilson calls 'the mastery of language'.

From his childhood Golding has been interested in words.

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He writes:

"I had a passion for words in themselves and collected them like stamps or birds' eggs." (4)

Golding's prose is simple, rather deceptively simple, in its diction and syntax. But this simplicity is far from what we may call simplicity. His power of describing things and events is marvellous. Once Tolstoy, the greatest of all writers of short stories, said to Gorky:

"You are an artist....... You feel superbly, you are plastic; that is, when you describe a thing, you see and touch it with your hands. That is real writing." (5)

This is what Golding does. While describing a thing, he not merely sees and touches it, he makes the readers see and touch. We may see, for instance, how Golding describes the shell in *Lord of the Flies*:

"In colour the shell was deep cream, touched here and there with fading pink. Between the point, worn away into a little hole, and the pink lips of the mouth, lay eighteen inches of shell with a slight spiral twist and covered with a delicate embossed pattern." (6)

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6 *Lord of the Flies*, p. 17.
His grasp of physical realities and his ability to describe them are so superb that Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor observe:

"Physical realities come first for Golding and should stay first for his readers."(7)

His writing is so deeply rooted in reality that had he lived in an earlier age he would have found an important place among the realists. He describes objects and episodes with precision and exactness. We wonder at the clarity with which he observes things. The opening page of Lord of the Flies presents the protagonist, Ralph coming out of the forest:

"He was clambering heavily among the creepers and broken trunks when a bird, a vision of red and yellow, flashed upwards with a witch-like cry; and this cry was echoed by another."(8)

The phrases 'clambering heavily' and 'a witch-like cry' are the products of a "more than ordinary sensibility", as Wordsworth would describe the faculty. The flying of the bird upwards is seen as a 'vision of red and yellow' flashing up. These words, though simple and fairly ordinary, have a power to make the readers see and hear. The arrival of Piggy

8 Lord of the Flies, p.7.
on the scene is described similarly in meticulous detail:

"The owner of the voice came backing out of the undergrowth so that twigs scratched on a greasy wind-breaker. The naked crooks of his knees were plump, caught and scratched by thorns carefully, and turned round. He was shorter than the fair boy and very fat. He came forward, searching out safe lodgements for his feet, and then looked up through thick spectacles."(9)

The last sentence is especially striking. His clumsiness and his carefulness are graphically presented through mention of his "searching out safe lodgements for his feet!"

Yet Golding is not merely a realist or a naturalist either. He is a serious writer who has set about to present something significant about human nature. The details of his description are often meant to suggest something more than the physical reality. What C.B. Cox says in this regard is very apt:

"His narrative style has an unusual lucidity and vitality because he never forgets the concrete in his search for symbolic action."(10)

His descriptions not only create a picture but foreshadow the action of the novel. The description of Ralph's blowing the conch is meant to make the readers aware of what is going to happen:

9 Lord of the Flies, p.7.
"Ralph grasped the idea and hit the shell with air from his diaphragm. Immediately the thing sounded. A deep, harsh note boomed under the palms, spread through the intricacies of the forest and echoed back from the pink granite of the mountain. Clouds of birds rose from the tree tops and something squealed and ran in the undergrowth. Ralph's face was dark with breathlessness and the air over the island was full of bird-clamour and echoes ringing."(11)

We see, of course later, how the shell attains symbolic significance. This magnificent object repels Jack as the sound comes back from the pink granite of the mountain unabsobered. The primitive savagery inherent in him cannot tolerate law and order, that is, civilization symbolized by the conch. Ralph's fate also is predicted in this act. At the end when the naval officer arrives to rescue them, we see him running in panic 'breathless'. The whole island is burning, and the pigs run and squeal in the undergrowth with birds flying noisily. Critics like Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor and V.S. Pritchett have been attracted by this quality. The latter observes:

"Golding's main merit lies in his exact descriptive observation.... not only(in) the precision but(in) the foreshadowing power of that description."(12)

11 Lord of the Flies, p.18.
The opening paragraph of *Free Fall* is another notable example of this quality. In fact, carefully observed, all his novels tell us in advance what we are to meet later. If a writer is very skilfull and if he can manipulate his description he can obliquely suggest meanings which are not at all stated explicitly. The description of Simon's dead body being washed into the sea by waves is handled with great skill:

"Towards midnight the rain ceased and the clouds drifted away, so that the sky was scattered once more with the incredible lamps of stars. Then the breeze died too and there was no noise save the drip and trickle of water that ran out of clefts and spilled down, leaf by leaf, to the brown earth of the island. The air was cool, moist, and clear; and presently even the sound of the water was still. The beast lay huddled on the pale beach and the stains spread, inch by inch...."

One can feel the contrast between the violent deed and the stillness and even serenity of the scene. Golding continues:

"Along the shoreward edge of the shallows the advancing clearness was full of strange, moonbeam-bodied creatures with fiery eyes. Here and there a larger pebble clung to its own air and was covered with a coat of pearls. The tide swelled in over the rain-pitted sand smoothed everything with a layer of silver. Now it touched the first of the stains that seeped from the broken body and the creatures made a moving patch of light as they gathered at the edge. The water rose further and dressed Simon's coarse hair with brightness. The line of his cheek silvered and the turn of his shoulder became sculptured marble. The strange attendant creatures, with their fiery eyes and trailing vapours, busied themselves round his head."
The body lifted a fraction of an inch from the sand, a bubble of air escaped from the mouth with a wet plop. Then it turned gently in the water. "(13)

This description is meant to convey much more than the physical reality. In other words, it is symbolical. One easily gets the impression of the dead body being taken away by the angels. Golding is certainly suggesting the level to which Simon is elevated after his death. The 'strange attendant creatures, with their fiery eyes and trailing vapours' are carrying him beyond the water. As one of Golding's critics remarks, the death by water is ambivalent—suggesting both death and birth at the same time. One should bear in mind that a Christian gets his new life through water at the time of baptism. What to an unperceptive reader is a mere physical detail is an excellent piece of symbolism to a sensitive reader. Oblique passages like this are often deceptively simple.

Golding's prose, in Philippa Moody's phrase, is "marvellously flexible and expressive". (14) His faith in his ability to twist the language to serve his purpose is evidenced by his boldly venturing to write a novel from the

13 Lord of the Flies, pp.169-70.
point of view of Neanderthal man, who is sub-human and sub-rational. What results is a convincing tour de force that places him among the greatest writers of post-war England. It is an unusual achievement as an imaginative creation of primitive consciousness. As Samuel Hynes puts it, "the discourse of The Inheritors is strange to us and sometimes extremely obscure." "But", he continues, "if the style imposes limitations it also has its expressive strengths."(15) The "people", as the Neanderthal men are called, have not achieved linguistic skills. They do not have abstract thought; they do not know how to connect one idea with another. It is such a consciousness that Golding has to present in the novel. Hence, he has to invent many words for the purpose. "Picture" is the word for their thought. The choice of this word is particularly apt because they do not have any thought. Their senses are highly developed and they see, hear and smell things in an unusually sensitive manner. They see everything as alive, and Golding uses a figurative language to describe their perceptions. For instance, their journey to the overhang is vividly described:

"The top of the cliff leaned back a little so that instead of climbing over the jagged top they could

skirt the sheer part over the river where it ran out of the confusion at the foot of the falls. The trail gained height at each step, a dizzy way of slant and overhang, of gap and buttress where roughness to the foot was the only safety and the rock dived back under, leaving a void of air between them and the smoke and the island. Here the ravens floated below them like black scraps from a fire, the weed-tails wavered with only a faint glister over them to show where the water was; and the island, reared against the fall, interrupting the roll of dropping water, was separate as the moon. The cliff leaned out as if looking for its own feet in the water. The weed-tails were very long, longer than many men, and they moved backwards and forwards beneath the climbing people as regularly as the beat of a heart or the breaking of the sea." (16)

One cannot say that Golding's language is natural here. It is artistic. He is describing the scene in vivid detail as it appears to a Neanderthal man. A close look at the similes will reveal how careful Golding has been. Similes like 'the ravens floated below them like black scraps from a fire', 'the island.... was separate as the moon' and 'the weed-tails..... moved backwards and forwards beneath the climbing people as regularly as the beat of a heart or the breaking of the sea' are typical of the style of The Inheritors. Limited though it is, it tells us all about the sensuous life of the "people" vividly.

As a result of Golding's experiments, there is a marked difference in the way language is used in The Spire.

16 The Inheritors, pp. 24-25.
from the way it is used in Lord of the Flies. As Philippa Moody observes:

"It changes from novel to novel in order to take on disparate experiences; from the basic unadorned vision of The Inheritors to the rich, rhythmic, and highly metaphorical language of Free Fall." (17)

Even in one book we see different styles as the point of view changes. In The Inheritors the language changes from the sensuous to the type current in normal conversation as the point of view shifts from Lok's to Tuami's. The stylistic difference reflects clearly the difference between the persons. The style he has devised for the Neanderthalerers is indeed an artistic triumph. In Pincher Martin the point of view, for the most part, is that of a proud, unyielding sensualist. His egoism is reflected in his thoughts and words:

"I shall see wreckage.

I won't die.

I can't die.

Not me —

Precious." (18)

The similes used in the book are generally those derived from scientific observation. Martin sees red lobsters swimming.


Then he remembers that lobsters are red only when cooked. So it should be an optical illusion. He says (thinks):

"Like the train that seems to move backwards when the other one steams away from beside it. Like hatched lines with one across." (19)

There are other similes of this kind. Martin does not believe in God. He is a proud rationalist who believes in his self-sufficiency. The scientific world of empirical verification is the only one real to him. The following similes demonstrate the same fact.

"The air sucked up his voice like blotting-paper." (20)

"Sight is like exploring the night with a flash light." (21)

In Free Fall, the registers of both religious writing and scientific materialism are used. The reason is plain enough. The protagonist is shown as a man struggling between these two patterns.

The opening paragraph of the book gives a clear indication of what is to follow:

"I have walked by stalls in the market-place where books, dog-eared and faded from their purple, have

19 Fincher Martin, pp. 166-67.
20 Ibid., p. 80.
21 Ibid., p. 133.
burst with a white hosanna. I have seen people
crowned with a double crown, holding in either hand
the crook and the flail, the power and the glory.
I have understood how the scar becomes a star, I
have felt the flake of fire fall, miraculous and
pentecostal. My yesterdays walk with me. They keep
step, they are gray faces that peer over my shoulder.
I live on Paradise Hill, ten minutes from the
station, thirty seconds from the shops and the
local. Yet I am a burning amateur, torn by the
irrational and incoherent violently searching and
self-condemned."(22)

The first part is eloquent and rhetorical. We can notice,
 apart from the figurative language with religious associations —
hosanna, the crook, glory, pentecostal — the repeated pattern:
'I have walked', 'I have seen', 'I have understood', 'I have
felt' which gives a rather obvious rhythm to the utterance.
And, in contrast, we have the matter-of-fact information in
hackneyed language — "Paradise Hill, ten minutes from the
station, thirty seconds from the shops and the local!".

The language in all the six novels is finely controlled
and often highly economical. Oliver, the protagonist of
_The Pyramid_ calls his mother's language telegraphic. In many
instances that is true of Golding also. Some of the flashback
scenes in _Pincher Martin_ are over-compressed.

What are you going to do about, there was nothing
written down. Have a drink with me sometime."(23)

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22 _Free Fall_, p.3.
"Oh clever, clever, clever power, then you can
bloody well walk home. Oh clever, real tears
break down triumph, clever, clever, clever." (24)

Dialogue in Golding's work can often be very staccato,
as we may notice in the scene of Martin's assault on Mary:

"Don't you understand, you swine? You can't —-
The last chance. I must.
"I'll marry you then."
More summer lightning.
"Chris. Stop laughing. D'you hear? Stop it!
I said stop it!"
"I loathe you. I never want to see you or hear
of you as long as I live." (25)

Such language fits well into the situation and the mode of
experience.

Golding's prose is highly poetical and several critics
go to the extent of considering him a religious poet who
writes novels. Whether he is a religious novelist or not may
be considered elsewhere. However critics are unanimous in
granting him a poet's status. It is worthwhile, here, to
remember that Golding started his literary career by publishing
a collection of poems in 1934, though he has not published any
since then.

All his novels are rigorously controlled like poems.
The simple fact that all the six novels are more or less equal

25 Ibid., p.152.
in length tells us that they have been organized with a poet's precision. Golding's strength as a poet is evidenced by his imagery and the musical quality of his prose. Images play an important role in his novels. His similes are chosen with taste and handled with extreme care. They are not employed merely for the purpose of illustration which is the primary function of a simile. They make a contribution to the atmosphere. However it should be added that many of Golding's similes are selected by an author who is overwhelmingly attracted by the sound of words, and a striking feature of some of his similes is their sound as much as their aptness:

"I could be as snug as a bug in a rug." (26)

"He came on the mouldering bones of fish and a dead gull, its upturned breast-bone like the keel of a derelict boat." (27)

"Sight is like exploring the night with a flashlight." (28)

"Now I am thin and weak. My joints like knots and my limbs like sticks." (29)

"Mr. De Tracy smiled down; and each word was like a wasp's sting." (30)

26 Pincher Martin, p. 87.
27 Ibid., p. 59.
28 Ibid., p. 133.
29 Ibid., p. 188.
30 The Pyramid, p. 145.
Golding's prose is very often metaphorical. The metaphors are built into the structure of the novels and none of them can be taken away without destroying the effect of the work. 'The dark cellar' is a pervading metaphor for the subconscious. If the boys in Lord of the Flies are terrified of the darkness, we see at the end of The Inheritors the 'frenzied hurry' of the new men to escape the line of darkness. Pincher Martin and Sammy cannot sleep because of this dark cellarage. When locked up in a dark cell, Sammy torments himself to submission. The metaphor is carried to the utmost clarity when Jocelin (The Spire) wonders:

"What's a man's mind Roger? Is it the whole building, cellarage and all?" (31)

Again, in Pincher Martin Martin's voracious ego is made apparent through the metaphor of the 'Chinese tin box'. A fish buried in the tin box is eaten by maggots. Then the maggots eat each other. Finally there is a successful maggot who has heroically eaten the last but one. When Martin, in utter agony shouts:

"I'll live if I have to eat everything else on this bloody box." (32) his ferocious determination becomes obvious.

31 The Spire, p.213.
32 Pincher Martin, p.159.
Another feature of Golding's technique is his skill in the employment of symbols which illuminate his themes and enrich his novels. Symbolism is often discussed in literary criticism as a feature of language but it is not always so. It is a feature of the style only when certain images called up as figures of speech reveal symbolic power. At other times, as when objects are named—like the actual cellar under the spire (The Spire)—the placing of symbolic objects, persons or events may more properly be discussed under the general strategy of communication of the theme through the story itself. Golding is a symbolist though many critics including Fredrick R.Karl have tried to see him as an allegorist. Symbolism and allegory are obviously two different things. While symbols achieve their meaning through a process of agglomeration, allegory builds on a simple one-to-one correspondence. Sometimes it becomes difficult to understand mainly when writers use personal symbols. But, if he uses the familiar and well-worn ones, they tend to become cliches. Golding starts with these trite symbols—Ralph's fair and Jack's red hair—and moves on and on until he attains a subtlety beyond expression. Golding's symbols exhibit a growth from the straightforward ones of obvious meaning to the complex and ambiguous ones of the later works. The Spire is perhaps the best of Golding's novels and it is a symbolical novel. The spire itself is
magnificent symbol. At the most apparent level, it is a symbol of spiritual aspiration. But it is more. It symbolizes sublimated eros. Jocelin's desire for the sacristan's wife is never allowed to come to the surface except at the last moments of self-revelation. It is, again, a symbol of folly — a dunce's cap. It stands as a raised club ready to strike, as well. We have seen in the novel how Jocelin's folly has taken threatening proportions, how it has destroyed other people's happiness, in fact, the people themselves. The fact that the spire, the central symbol, suggests many things is a proof of the complex view of the author.

Golding often suggests his meaning through images. His images are vague at times and the readers find themselves in the position of the Athenians in front of the sphinx. The welts on Evie's body (The Pyramid) raises questions and suggest various possibilities. How did they happen to come there? Who inflicted them? Or are they simply the marks of Evie's sexual debasement? One may go to the extent of wondering whether they are the ugly marks of "an incestuous congress".

About the nature of ambiguity in Golding, Virginia
Tiger remarks:

"We know from The Spire that ambiguity in Golding's fiction is always instructive and designed to demonstrate the spiritual complexities inherent in any human situation since it is his conviction that paradoxically many explanations may be simultaneously true."(33)

As Joseph Veale observes:

"It is the nature of symbols to suggest much more than they say and to be ambivalent. .... They do not pluck out the heart of mystery; they respect it and leave it mysterious. They radiate meaning, rather encapsulate it."(34)

Golding's prose is highly musical. Samuel Mountjoy, leaving school and highly obsessed by Beatrice Ifor walks into the woods:

"I took my sudden excitement into them, I began to wade into the tall bracken as though somewhere inhere was the secret.

Even the wood-pigeons co-operated for they sang the refrain of a dance tune over and over. 'If you knew Susie' they sang from their green penthouses and all the forest, the bracken, the flies and uncatalogued small moths, the thumping rabbits, the butterflies, brown, blue and white, they murmured sexily for musk was the greatest good of the greatest number. As for the heavy sky, the blue to purple, it filled every shape between the trees with inch thick fragments of

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stained glass, only at arm's length out of reach. ... In basements of the forest among drifts of dried leaves and crackling boughs, by boles cathedral thick, I said in the hot air what was important to me; namely the white, unseen body of Beatrice Ifor, her obedience, and for all time my protection of her; and for the pain she had caused me, her utter objection this side death."(35)

Hearing it read out by someone, one wonders if it is not musical verse. Golding's love for sound and rhythm is reflected in small sentences and phrases also. Sentences and phrases like,

"Cane Charmer Sleep-Cracker mottoes. Old tags. Rag bag of a brain."(36),

"random intersections of instant bushes of lightning."(37),

"the pebbles clicked and chirruped."(38)

are instances of his love of sound and rhythm.

Golding's syntactical structures vary from one-word sentences to very long ones with many clauses, forming a sequence one after the other. His choice of syntax is always

35 Free Fall, pp.235-36.
36 Pincher Martin, p.141.
37 Ibid., p.190.
38 Ibid., p.25.
appropriate. The length of the sentence often conforms to the particular emotion. *Free Fall* is full of long sentences with many coluses, whereas *Pincher Martin* and *The Spire*, dealing with tense conflicts, have very short sentences. Philippa Moody remarks that Golding twists the language to effect the required impression. She cites an example how Golding has coined a new portmanteau word 'flinked'. According to her this "coingage encompasses more than flickered and blinked."(39) Golding's significant contribution to language is not individual words but new phrases and new usages. When he writes, "water cascades from the trees", "the parachutist furrowed the lagoon" he is giving a new dimension and flexibility to the English Language.

"Point of View", as Norman Friedman observes, "is becoming one of the most useful critical distinctions available to the student of fiction today."(40) And this perhaps is the most discussed feature of technique since Henry James. In Victorian novels, the author is always poised to intrude, to


comment on, to interpret the characters. Twentieth century fiction is pushing the author back step by step. The disappearance of the author from his fiction as a device, helps the story to unravel itself with greater intensity and dramatic vividness. The appearance of Mark Schorer's essay 'Technique as Discovery' in 1948 revolutionized critics' approach to the "point of view". He examines "the uses of point of view not only as a mode of dramatic delimitation, but, more particularly, of thematic definition."(41)

Thomas E. Sanders speaks of four points of view in fiction — the omniscient, the limited omniscient, the first person and the objective. The most inclusive of these all is the omniscient where the narrator, like God, knows everything and he is free to enter any mind at his will. "Closely allied to the omniscient is the limited omniscient point of view, wherein the author is seldom the narrator. Instead, a major character or a minor one tells the story, usually in the third person. As the omniscience is limited, the narrator is allowed access to only one mind."(42)

The first-person point of view uses the personal pronoun 'I' and the character can reveal himself as he understands himself. Recently the objective or dramatic point of view has gained much popularity. This allows only observable actions to be recorded. The narrator lacks identity and is therefore said to be effaced.

An author selects his point of view in order to give his fiction the best effect possible. What can be done from one point of view is generally difficult from another. The most important consideration is to bring about the desired effect. Golding does not resort to the omniscient tradition. Yet in *Lord of the Flies* the author intrudes to comment on the action at several places. The author's explicit comments seem inartistic, and critics find them unacceptable because of its being the "teller's assertion rather than the tale's enactment." Jack, at the end of the first chapter, fails to stab a piglet caught among the creepers. The omniscient author explains:

"...because of the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh; because of the unbearable blood."(43)

Similarly, when the antagonism between Jack and Ralph is

43 *Lord of the Flies*, p.34.
evert, the narrator comments:

"They walked along, two continents of experience
and feeling, unable to communicate." (44)

Again when Roger throws stones at Henry, and throws them to
miss, the author intrudes:

"Roger's arm was conditioned by a civilization
that knew nothing of him and was in ruins." (45)

In no other work by Golding do we see this type of
mixed point of view. The Inheritors looks obscure initially
because of the point of view. It is written from that of a
Neanderthal man who has not developed the power of logical
thinking. The protagonist is too naive to understand cause
and effect, and events remain separate without any connection.
The Neanderthalers are highly sensuous and a thought occurs
to them in the form of a picture. Because we are limited to
such a consciousness, understanding is difficult. But once
we catch the idiom, as it were, things begin to move forward.
But just before the end, the point of view shifts suddenly.
The difference is enormous. Lok, whom we had been seeing as a
human being with very limited power of thought, is suddenly

44 Lord of the Flies, p.60.
dehumanized. Immediately after, "Lok began to gibber again. He ran up and down on the terrace." (46) We are told that "the red creature stood on the edge of the terrace and did nothing." (47) This shift in the point of view has invited the criticism of James Gindin. He observes that it "spoils the unity without adding relevant perspective." (48) Critics like Virginia Tiger defend the author. From the first point of view the author as well as the reader gains a distance "so that the reader can grasp with his whole imaginative self and unanalytical mystery." (49) Using Lok's eyes, we see what is to be seen. But we see more. We see much more than Lok perceives. Wayne C. Booth says in The Rhetoric of Fiction that "there can be no dramatic irony, by definition, unless the author and audience can somehow share knowledge which the characters do not hold." (50) The novel abounds in this dramatic irony. Lok does not understand even what he sees.

46 The Inheritors, p.216.

47 Ibid., p.216.


49 Virginia Tiger, The Dark Fields of Discovery, op.cit., p.98.

And we get a vivid picture of the life of the Neanderthalers from Lok's point of view. When the point of view shifts, we enter the consciousness of the new men. We understand that the new men have failed to understand the humanity of the pre-rational men. As soon as they utter the words, "the red creature", a chasm is created and again the dramatic irony appears with full force. From both the points of view the readers are at a vantage point. We were seeing the new men from a distance. Now from the point of view of Tuami, we see how the new men think and behave. Their feelings and thoughts which were alien to us from Lok's viewpoint have come nearer and become real to us. In this way, Golding makes it easier for the reader to identify with the new men. For, the purpose of the narrative, as I understand it, is to make modern man aware of his own humanity.

Pincher Martin also uses two distinct and separate points of view. At the end of the narrative one feels a sort of rebellion if one has not been attentive enough to notice the clues during the course of the narrative. Narrated from the point of view of a shipwrecked sailor, Pincher Martin, it looks at first a survival narrative along the lines of Robinson Crusoe. But, as the narrative progresses and when Martin is haunted by the memory of his past deeds, the reader
begins to doubt the quality of his heroism. Soon the reader understands that it is not heroism but a parody of heroism. The reader cannot fail to understand the irony lurking behind "I am Prometheus", "I am Ajax". The identity-preserver's egoism stands in sharp contrast to the altruism of the mythical heroes.

But when the point of view shifts and we are told that Martin was dead even before he could kick off the sea boots, critics like Wayland Young feel that "this particular trick ending, the trickiest of them all so far, leaves one with a rather rebellious feeling."\(^{(51)}\) H.S. Babb sees the last chapter as merely allegorical — Davidson, the officer who comes to claim Martin's body is Death; Campbell the fisherman is everyman. In spite of Babb's apparently convincing interpretation, one feels that the metaphysical tone of the chapter is meant to imply the fate of an identity-preserver who refuses to accept God. The novelist is perhaps driving the point home that however heroic an egoist is, death will leave him "broken, defiled". From the point of view of Campbell, an ordinary man, we are back in our world to judge for ourselves what has become of such an unyielding hero.

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Free Fall is narrated in the first person by the protagonist Samuel Mountjoy, a successful painter. The point of view never changes as in The Pyramid, another first person narrative. Though the points of view are those of the protagonists and though both are the narrators, the novels vary very much in their approach. Mountjoy breaks the chronological order to present first what is most important. He deals with events in the order of their merit, and Free Fall is rather a reassembling the incidents to give moral coherence to his experience. But the novel seems to fail in this attempt. Without the scene in the mental hospital the novel would have been more coherent. But it would have meant something different also. James Gindin objects to the scene on the ground that it palliates the structure of the novel. Still there is no shift in the point of view. The tone of The Pyramid, in spite of its consistent point of view, is different. It has rather a tone of self-mockery. The point of view gives us a chance to penetrate into the mind of the protagonist and see things as he sees them and sometimes even better.

Golding's greatest achievement, to me, is The Spire. It is, in David Skilton's words, "a dense book that requires a certain amount of effort of penetration." (52)

The main difficulty in reading arises from the point of view. The novel is written from Jocelin's point of view, in the third person. The difficulty arises mainly from the distance at which Jocelin stands from us. His mentality is quite alien to ours. He is a monomaniac visionary who sees things in a very different way and hence he is not a reliable informant of what happens. The readers are compelled to use their imagination and inference to know more than what the protagonist knows. In this way "the novelist's narrative persona is almost entirely suppressed." (53)

It is a great achievement of Golding that the obscurity in *The Spire* is aesthetic and enlightening. The readers are seldom allowed to go ahead of Jocelin. They loyally follow the protagonist through his maze. We occupy our seats inside Jocelin. When enlightenment comes, it comes slowly. We understand Jocelin's humanity as he begins to understand it himself. Here and there we go a step ahead of Jocelin, but not often or very far. Golding's handling of the point of view in *The Spire* is remarkable and the book gains an intensity which it may not have had otherwise. The book's uniformity in tone and intensity is undeniable.

53 David Skilton, *op.cit.*, p.47.
The stream-of-consciousness is another technical device that the novel has found in the twentieth century. Golding's use of this technique has been restricted to three of his novels. (A reference has been made to this in the chapter on Characterization). Most of the flashback scenes in Pincher Martin are presented through this narrative device. Events are not reported exactly in the way they happened. Events stream into the consciousness in fragments and at random. For instance, Pincher's taking Mary for a drive is described:

"Wait, like a shape in the driving seat. Does she know nothing of me at all? She comes from the road house, one foot swerved in front of the other as in the photographs, walking an invisible tight-ropes across the gravel, bearing proudly the invincible banner of virginity.

'That deor's not properly shut. Let me.'

Subtle the scent, the touch of the cheap, transmuted tweed, hand shaking on the gear, road drawing back, hooded wartime lights, uncontrollable summer lightning ignoring the regulations from beyond that hill to away south in seven-league boots, foot hard down, fringes of leaves jagged like a painted drop, trees touched, brought into being by sidelights and bundled away to the limbo of lost chances."(54)

This technique of narration is very appropriate for the revelation of personality. The author's personality is entirely effaced in this type of narration.

54 Pincher Martin, pp. 150-51.
The novelist's handling of time in *Free Fall* is complex. In fact, in no novel of Golding's, with the exception of *The Pyramid*, are we made aware of the flow of time. The only reference to the passing of time in *Lord of the Flies* is the growing of the boys' hair. We know how inexact that reference is. In *The Inheritors*, the story develops chronologically, but it cannot be said how many days it has taken for the story to be completed. *Pinker Martin* seems to be a timeless struggle for it is about a dead protagonist, and, in retrospect, we feel that it has all been a moment spread out to cover many years. Sammy in *Free Fall* sits brooding at a typewriter recollecting the events of the past. He covers a period from infancy to middle-age, when he was released from a Nazi prison-camp and later visited the insane Beatrice at a mental institution. But chronology is violated frequently because he shuffles events in his memory. The biggest shuffle seems to come at the end. Sammy visits Beatrice, certainly after he is released from the Nazi camp. And he visits both his spiritual parents. But immediately after this, Sammy is shown being released from the camp with the commandant's comment:

"The Herr Doctor does not know about peoples."

The last sentence of the novel, quoted above, is very vital to the understanding of the work. But one is tempted to

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55 *Free Fall*, p.253.
ask: "Was that time-shift inevitable for the scene?"

The Spire covers almost two years and a half. That is the time taken for the completion of the spire. But time actually matters only with regard to the protagonist. Only those points that significantly affect his consciousness are touched. The other events are merely skipped. This is an extreme case of skipping time without even a mention of it.

This account of Golding's manipulation of other aspects of technique apart from characterization and plot-making and situation-devising, is sufficient to show that, barring some points of dissatisfaction or dispute, he has a sure judgement in the selection of appropriate devices and considerable skill in handling them.