CHAPTER II

"Deceptive Consciousness"
The Spire, Golding's fifth novel generated a good deal of controversy when it first appeared. This is because "the disagreement among critics" relates more to "evaluation rather than explication," as Katharine T. Jobes observes in her perceptive introduction to Hemingway's novels. The Spire, however, holds our fascinated, riveted attention for the convincing world that it recreates. The book's impressiveness still resides in the feeling of supreme poetic intensity, by which the rich complexity of its themes are realized. Therefore, despite all the controversy, this is what makes The Spire an arresting book, with an originality of its own, and marks a watershed in Golding's career in a number of ways. Between Lord of the Flies and The Spire, Golding wrote, The Inheritors, Pincher Martin and Free Fall. Though we see the various transformation which Golding's imagination has undergone in the last forty-two years, his concern is still to draw our attention to the "undiscovered person" (The Pyramid p. 111) within us - "the cliffs of fall" which "no-man-fathomed," which I alluded to in my introduction. Golding avails himself of "every moment" to reveal "the new and shocking valuation of all we have been." 

Still concerned with the problem of good and evil, Golding this time is intent on showing the ethical ambiguity of even our most noble deeds. Self-love and drive for power, taint even such an outwardly commendable act as arranging for a 400 foot spire to be mounted on a Cathedral. Jocelin's motives are compounded of idealism on the one hand, and
contempt for many people on the other. He equates his strong ambition, irrational though it is, with the will of God, driving himself half-insane and exploiting people callously. The tone of the book is sympathetic, but the vision is stark and ruthlessly penetrating as usual.

In this novel too, therefore, Golding's moral patterning is locked into the very fabric of the novel like hidden foundations. The 'myth' can only be discovered beneath, where we like Jocelin learn to see:

"More, much more. More than you can ever know ... The work before everything. And woven through it, a golden thread ... Growth of a plant with strange flowers and fruit, complex, twining, engulfing, destroying, strangling." (p.194)

In Golding's mythic view of reality, ordinary seeing is always a lens to see something deeper, to tell the ultimate nature of things and dare to see whether in those words from The Inheritors "the line of darkness had an ending" (p.233). The result of this structural order is that, the real depth and meaning of successive events, does not emerge clearly until Jocelin makes his discovery, for only then, does he enter into a state of consciousness that allows him to take a valid measure of himself and the pattern of complication in which he has been involved. The structure of the novel allows us "to understand what it means to perceive and will thus, in a sense give us back the world." In this way, his novels "are productive of meaning at the same time as (apparently) concealing meaning."
The Spire, is set in the Middle Ages - the period when most of the great Cathedrals of Europe were built - and it is clear that it is based on the actual history of the construction of the spire at Salisbury Cathedral. Despite its historical setting, Golding did not intend to recreate a particular historical age. He always treats his time and place with assurance and authority, deriving from the fact that he uses them as something near to metaphor. What is at issue, is not the social facts as such, but the human experience which they mainfest. And so Golding writes in An affection for Cathedra 1s:

"If you live nine miles from Salisbury Cathedral, it is natural to take something away for your writing. But the story .... could have taken place elsewhere - The Spire could have been anywhere. I was writing about a Cathedral of the mind."\(^5\) (Emphasis mine)

Salisbury, is built on marsh land without sufficient foundation to support a structure of such weight, it nevertheless stands and so is said to be "built on faith."\(^6\) These facts, however, suggest very little of the central meaning of this complex study in human motives. We need to see through, and into, and past, the "idea" or "vision". The wonder of the book is to be inside the protagonist's mind and to discover thereby what it is to be 'us'. The whole novel is a preparation for the single moment of visual perception, "imagination plus the thing-perceived in-itself"\(^7\) - the spire not to be conceived instrumentally as pointing towards
something "a diagram of prayer" (p.120) - but as something supremely self-contained, a thing of beauty in need of no justification. This is possible only at the moment when we, like Jocelin, can keep at bay the idea-making patterning intellect so that all that lies "in" the spire can come through, until knowing nothing, we are left staring at an object, seeing it as it is, for the first time. We are left at the end stating:

"I shall never know the truth until they take the Cathedral apart stone by stone like a puzzle" (p.199).

We too, like Jocelin, require an indepth study to discover the truth of the novel. "The kind of eye... to grasp and mould what (we) look at... or accept it in totality" (p.36). Although the spire, is human nature in both its height and depth, we are not really told about this. Golding simply implies it. His novels, as we well know, never have one unequivocal message. As the protagonist states:

"That's too simple, like every other explanation. That gets nowhere near the root" (p.195).

Vision, as we know, is a representation of what eternally exists, really and unchangeably. But when man tries to transform his vision into matter, vision becomes complex and withers. "It was so simple at first", says Jocelin. "I had a vision, ... a clear and explicit vision... But then the complications began. A single green shoot at first, then clinging tendrils, then branches, then at last a riotous confusion" (p.168).
This brings to mind Lawrence's remark in his Foreward to Fantasia that "Man live and see according to some gradually developing and gradually withering vision."

That is why, Jocelin cannot allow the 'air' to be free but feels he must "fashion his vision in stone" (p.21) - build a four hundred foot spire to pierce it.

Gothic architecture expresses spiritual aspiration, but it is a "diagram" of man and so it is built in blood and sin, human evils, quarrels and hatred - "life's lavatory" (p.91), Golding's own phrase in The Pyramid. No man can justify claim to be innocent of his own nature, the truth which Golding expresses in almost all his work:

"There is no innocent work. God knows where God may be" (p.222).

In his essay, "Anatole France", Joseph Conrad expresses similar sentiments on man's limitations and aspirations: "Our best hopes are irreallizable; that it is the almost incredible misfortune of mankind, but also its highest privilege, to aspire towards the impossible; that men have never failed to defeat their highest aims by the very strength of their humanity which can conceive the most gigantic tasks but leaves them disarmed before their irremediable littleness."8 (Emphasis mine).

The Spire first appears to Jocelin in what he believes to be a holy vision which he thought God gave him, and which he senses physically as a fountain bursting up with "flame and
light, up through a notspace, filling with ultimate urgency and not to be denied ... an implacable, unstoppable, glorious fountain of the spirit, a wild burning of me for Thee" (p.193).

Jocelin's spiritual aspiration masks an unremitting egoism. His concern is centred on his will which defines and supports his self. "I shall thrust you upward by my will" (p.40), he states, although he sees it in omniscient terms: "It's God's will in this business" (p.40).

To quote Nietzsche, we might say that "architecture is a kind of rhetoric of power." Jocelin admits "I was all pride" (p.191) and creates his own "rhetoric of power" in the spire.

Here, Golding examines not so much the self-centred and selfish human being as the dark centre of the self "the cellarage" (p.213), "morbidity and horror lurking beneath the surface of one's consciousness. Human pride wishes to deny any connection with the decay and corruption apparent in all nature and regards this dimension as darkness and evil." That is why, Jocelin despite being a believer, is self-deluded:

"The mind touches all things with law, yet deceives itself as easily as a child" (p.10).

This capacity for self-deception and the myth making power of the mind may be traced simply to "human nature". Jocelin's belief amounts to an obsession with himself that he has been 'divinely' appointed to build a spire for his cathedral. His entire life has been built on idealistic
notions too pure to withstand the assault of reality. He builds his own self-made world and has a naive faith in his own goodness. The dumb stone cutter carves the "gargoyles" (p. 67) of Jocelin with "wide, blind eyes" (p. 24), an image of innocent naivety which Jocelin, as if to underline the point, misinterprets as representation of his spiritual vision. Jocelin's innocence is that of a wide-eyed child, who cannot see his own pride and who can lie to himself about his motive in wishing to see daily his "daughter in God" (p. 11), Goody Pangall. Jocelin sees his church as an island of sanctity in a foul ocean of sin, a ship offering rescue on the rough seas of the world: "There is no good thing in all this circle but the great house, the ark, the refuge, a ship to contain all these people and now fitted with a mast" (p. 107). Evil is a threat that comes from outside. Satan is "the beast" (p. 161) who batters at the walls of the fortress church in a storm. Jocelin, given to identifying himself with his church, has a rather similar attitude to himself: he is sanctified; sin and Satan are threats from without. Thus a sexual dream is a visit from Satan not a welling-up of something from within, some repressed part of Jocelin's self. Even when he has gained much in self-knowledge he falls back on blaming Goody Pangall's supposed witchcraft. Jocelin has been guilty, as were others before him in Golding's novels, of externalising the devil. Jocelin is imperceptive and we are warned of this fact from the beginning of the novel, when he fails to understand, in his ignorant self-complacency and
pride, that the two deacons of his church are actually abusing him. Moreover, he feels he is doing all he can for all these poor people, sending his overpowering "arrows of love", (p.8) to everyone and yet he overlooks Father Adam standing at his very elbow. To Jocelin's consciousness he is merely "the little man" (p.26):

"... he has no face at all. He is the same all round like the top of a clothespeg ..." (p.26).

Jocelin spoke, laughing down at the baldness with its fringe of nondescript hair:

"I ask your pardon, Father Adam. One forgets you are there so easily! And then, laughing aloud in joy and love - I shall call you Father Anonymous!" (p.26)

At the point of self-extinction, Jocelin earns the right to the pity of 'Father Anonymous', who alone stays to nurse him. It is then that Jocelin sees how mistaken he was to think the "clothes-peg" man was "faceless" (p.196) and he states:

"It was just that what was written there, had been written small in a delicate calligraphy that might easily be overlooked unless one engaged oneself to it deliberately, or looked perforce, as a sick man must look from his bed" (p.196).

Jocelin learns to break the wall of the self which erected against others is destructive and enters into a world where he can perceive others for the individual miracles they are and finally state:

"I would take God as lying between people and to be found there" (p.220).
The Cathedral is "an image of living, praying man. But inside it was a richly written book to instruct that man" (p.192), symbolizing man's physical nature as well as his spiritual dimension. By constructing the spire, simply as an act of love and forgetting that it is both physical and spiritual, Jocelin "ruins the foundations of his own being." We are not really told about this. Golding implies, however, that the spire and the church itself resemble the male body. Jocelin's lust for Goody Pangall is anticipated in this description:

"The model was like a man lying on his back. The nave was his legs placed together, the transepts on either side were his arms outspread. The choir was his body; and the Lady Chapel where now the services would be held, was his head. And now also, springing, projecting, bursting, erupting from the heart of the building, there was its crown and majesty, the new spire" (p.8).

It is Golding's belief that the physical and spiritual are perpetually intermingled. Jocelin is disgusted by any relationship between the flesh and spirit. He turns away in disgust catching the impotent Verger Pangall, being mocked by a workman dancing, the "model of the spire projecting obscenely from between his legs" (p.90). Jocelin has his head in the clouds from the outset and finds himself at ease in the airy world of the ascending spire. Time and again he tries to escape into free air and light, away from darkness where "horror and farce took over" (p.59). But "since no man can live his life with eagles" (p.110) Jocelin too is forced to affirm in his mind's dark cellar "the god that is both creator and destroyer."
This novel gives us the vision of folly (as do all the others). It opens like The Inheritors, in innocence, with joy and laughter, the ecstasy of innocent vision. We see him laughing in "holy mirth" (p.8) as God the Father seems to explode in radiance through the stained glass of the Cathedral. But his eyes are "half closed" (p.7). Therefore, "the meaning of the stained glass, that story of Abraham and Isaac and the cost of faith passes Jocelin by."\(^{13}\) It does so initially because his glance is so fixedly upwards "to the empty air above the crossways" (p.20) and his spiritual vision is "no more than a child's playing let's pretend" (p.85). He therefore is not sensitive to Pangall and the tears he sheds and has no scruples, as he forces others to fulfill his vision. Infact he tells Roger, the master builder:

"The building is a diagram of prayer; and our spire will be a diagram of the highest prayer of all ... He chose me. He chooses you, to fill the diagram with glass and iron and stone, since the children of men require a thing to look at" (p.120).

Provision for a spire was not part of the original plan of the Cathedral and Roger estimated that the foundations were inadequate to support such a massive structure. But it is no match for what Jocelin calls "faith" and illusion on which he insists on building. But now he realizes that there may be a necessary price to be paid, by Roger as well as himself.
"I see now it'll destroy us of course. What are we, after all? Only I tell you this, Roger, with the whole strength of my soul. The thing can be built and will be built, in the very teeth of Satan... Only you and I, my son, my friend, when we've done tormenting ourselves and each other, will know what stones and beams and lead and mortar went into it" (p.88).

Jocelin knew that Roger is trapped in what he sees as a "tent" (p.57) a net of illegal attachment with Goody, Pangall's wife. He disregards Roger's plea to remove him from the area of temptation and was wilfully blind to it. He connives at it because he thinks it will keep Roger at Salisbury to complete the task. He deliberately uses adultery to further his own end and although the thought - "she will keep him here" - was so "terrible that it went beyond feeling," yet it "left him inspecting it with a kind of stark detachment" (p.64). He is prepared to regard even this, as a means to the greater good. To console himself he states: "I am about my Father's business" (p.67). Infact he tells Roger:

"The net isn't mine, Roger, and the folly isn't mine. It's God's Folly" (p.121).

Is it spiritual? Is it foolish? Is he guilty? Such questions are not answered rationally. Only during the process of building does Jocelin realize the full implication of Roger's frantic warning. "You just don't know what'll come out of our going on!" (p.89). Throughout the construction of the spire, he tries to avoid the "whole train of memories and worries and associations which were altogether random" (p.95). There were times where Jocelin "surprised himself; or, rather,
a dark corner of his mind surprised him" (p.75). But then his "logical mind would put the thing in perspective" (p.75). Therefore when perched at the top of the spire he is happy: "cheerful as a child that sings" for"the happiness calms all the confusions in his head" (p.106), but when he looks two hundred feet down at the pit "unlooked-for things came ... things put aside, from the time when the earth crept" (p.105).

Because Jocelin cannot see his own body-needs for worship, he gazes everywhere else. He stands high; he is dizzy. Not only are these repeated images of height realistic - they symbolize the spiritual adventures of Jocelin. He goes up, but he must fall; he must see his own earth as well as divine air. When Jocelin perceives his human limitations, he crawls with his face close to the ground:

"So he crawled across the boards on hands and knees and the figure crawled towards him. He knelt and peered in at the wild halo of hair, the skinny arms and legs that stuck out of a girt and dirty robe. He peered in closer and closer until his breath dimmed his own image and he had to smear it off" (p.154-155).

This figure - also masked like Jack and the hunters - is the Dean himself. The dirt cannot be smeared off, especially by flying away. Through such means Golding reminds us that Jocelin's "vision hugs the ground." 14

The first stage of Roger's programme is to breach the Cathedral walls, letting in both dirt and light. As the spire grows up, so does Jocelin. The process of enlightenment involves becoming aware of the dirt and beauty of the human
world, his cloistered existence had kept at a distance. In a thick yellow fog, workmen with deformed cloth-covered faces, caked with dirt and sweat, chant obscene songs in the transepts. Golding manages to convey the startling effect of seeing a Cathedral which is not usually in a state of dust and chaos. The very first hours of effort to construct, illustrate that both man and nature will oppose and eventually corrupt Jocelin’s pure vision. The autumn rains begin and do not cease in answer to Jocelin’s prayers:

"So he prayed among other things for fine weather. But the rain came for three days ... As for the whole building itself, the bible in stone, it sank from glorification to homilectics. It was slimy with water streaming down over moss and lichen and flaking stones" (p.51).

The Pit dug at the crossways reveal that the church now rests on rubble, brushwood, mud. Water seeps into the pit, into the graves, in the choir and arcades, and the Cathedral is filled with the smell of corruption. There is irrational fear among the workmen. Plague threatens "and the voices rose in fear, of age and death, in fear of weight and dimension, in fear of darkness and a universe without hope" (p.55). But Jocelin is adamant and says: "Let them fall and vanish, so the work goes on!" (p.49). The Pit, besides, suggesting the ingrained evil which is "one of us", also points to Jocelin’s unscrupulous use of other people to achieve his goal:

"...like a good general, he saw how they needed help; for even to him, his instruments, these people he had to use, seemed little more than apes now that clambered about the building" (p.55).
Here again the metaphor of seething water and darkness conveys the horror implicit in death, decay and destruction. Therefore, as Jocelin peers into the Cellarage beneath the crust of the earth: "down in the vaults, the cellars of my mind" (p.166), he sees some form of hideous life that must not be exposed to the light of day. The ground is boiling with graverworms or grubs doing their silent work among the "noseless men" who lie buried there. To him it is "Doomsday coming up" (p.80). Like the children in Lord of the Flies, Jocelin too comes to regard this dimension as darkness and evil, a dimension of his nature he has always denied. The narrator in Poe's The Pit and the Pendulum, who looks down into the pit at the centre of his cell and sees the darkness of his inner self, so also does Jocelin become aware of himself when he confronts his reflected image "in an apocalyptic glimpse of seeing" (p.90). When he perceives his human limitations, he cries out in protest "Filth! Filth!" (p.60). But the "noises from the crossways, and his own memories were a hard thing to put aside" (p.77). He found himself "looking at nothing, and thinking about things instead of praying about them" (p.77). He found his mind was adrift and:

"... he found himself looking down at the tiles of the floor with their heraldic beasts. Nearer to him than the floor were the people, the four of them - and his body shuddered again - Roger and Rachel Mason, Pangall and his Goody, like four pillars at the crossways of the building ... a horror of the burgeoning evil thing, from birth to senility with its ghastly and complex strength between" (p.62-63).
The spire is a place of vision yet a place of sacrifice too: "here where the pit stinks I received what I received" (p.53). It becomes clear that central to Golding's vision is the sacrificial victim who performs the necessary exorcism of fears. The whole incident of Pangall's murder "hunting noise of the pack that raced after the vanishing Pangall" (p.90), and burial in the pits earth "crouched beneath the crossways, with a sliver of mistletoe between his ribs" (p.212), is cleverly handled by Golding.

The workers adopt Jocelin as their totemic figure, since according to them he would ward off their superstitions about heights. Moreover, a sacrificial victim, according to them, would strengthen the inadequate foundations of the spire. Golding suggests tentatively that man prefers to destroy the "objectification of his fears rather than recognise the dark terror of his own cellarage,"15 thereby showing "a failure of human sympathy, ignorant of facts, the objectivizing of our own inadequacies so as to make a scapegoat" (The Hot Gates p. 94). Therefore, like Liku and Simon in The Inheritors and Lord of the Flies, Pangall too is murdered.

As time goes on and the spire is near completion, Roger Mason becomes a drunkard since Goody miscarries his child and dies wretchedly. Jocelin comes to see how mixed were his own motives in wishing to build the spire. The spire is not merely a diagram of prayer or signpost to heaven, but a phallic image of his own desire for Goody Pangall, the lust that he had almost succeeded in concealing from himself. It
is sexual energy as well as faith that creates the work, as is underlined by Roger’s intercourse with Goody in the scaffolding of the spire, and by the fact that the financial support of the project is being provided by Jocelin’s aunt Lady Alison, a king’s mistress, a fallen woman. Nor is this the only admixture Jocelin discovers, to the purity of the faith upon which the spire is built. The band of workmen that Roger precariously commands are not merely "Murderers, cutthroats, rowdies, brawlers, rapers, notorious fornicators, sodomites, atheists" (p.167) but "worsre" are worshippers as Jocelin sees it, of Satan himself.

Jocelin trusted only in the eye of the spirit but the novel carries him to the place where he can admit the eye of lust as well. So, the action of the novel is to bring home to Jocelin, how blind he has been to physical reality, to people, to relationship. Until cleaned of himself - his frenzied obsession to deny his true nature, he can bring the two windows of his eyes together and focus on the spire - a vision that overturns his view of the world. He experiences what Joyce called 'epiphany,' far more profound in scope than the egocentric vision which led him to believe he was chosen by God to build the spire. This is the only moment when he has been able to keep at bay the idea-making intellect when the "disjunct sentences, burned before his mind" (p.157). His world of concrete perception turns inside out in a Blakean way, where insight becomes metaphysical, forced to contemplate what Golding calls the "thumbprint of mystery" (*The Hot Gates*)
p.81), where reality freed from learnt meanings and dreary systems occurs as a spiritual event.

When he looks at the stained glass windows of the Cathedral now, it is not to see "God the Father... exploding... in a glory of sunlight" (p.7), but a "dully rich story ... and the light of the altar was a divided thing, a light in each eye" (p.62). Although Jocelin can see the completed spire which "joined earth to heaven" (p.69), its very stones are windows by which men look at the infinite yet "cry out" (p. 223) because of the thoughts which can torment one since one realizes that it is an expression of the worst aspects of human nature; greed, cruelty and lust.

To extend this to moral terms, human acts may be seen to have elements of innocence and guilt. Jocelin too cries out on his death-bed convinced of his own guilt. Like Pincher before the Dwarf, Sammy before the rag, Jocelin confronts the "stone hammer" that he has "traded for four lives" (p. 222). Lying on his twisted back - a form of spinal consumption that is slowly destroying him, he review his crimes:

"... like a birth itself, words came, that seemed to fit the totality of his life, his sins, and his forced cruelty, and above all the dreadful glow of his dedicated will" (p.137).

Jocelin sees his own ridiculous frailty and that of all men who are mere parchment-covered creatures, hollowmen held erect by "a mad structure of bones" (p. 222). But like the other protagonists, Jocelin rushes through the darkness and
has a vision that foreshadows his death and experiences mystery as "terror-and-joy." The notion of darkness is treated in a new manner here. The darkness is described here as "panic shot" (p. 223) but above it struggles a magnificent kingfisher flying like an arrow through the azure sky. The reborn Jocelin is a visionary, experiencing a Blakean vision of an apple tree as "a cloud of angels flashing in the sunlight" (p. 204) though with "a long, black springing thing" (p. 204), amongst its leaves. The joyous beauty contains also, and indeed grows out of, the darkness: the nature of beauty, like human nature, is terrible, mysterious and paradoxical. Jocelin experiences explosive beauty but has a vision also of the ugliness and darkness of men, mad bones and vile bodies prancing absurdly in "woven stuff" and "skins of dead animals" (p. 222). The achieved beauty of the spire which immortalises both Jocelin and Roger, is flawed by the tilt it develops; is an image and product of human aspiration and imperfection. Focusing on the spire enables him to realise that "everything is related to everything else" (Free Fall p. 186). He was blind for "at the moment of vision, the eyes see nothing" (p. 24), but he can now bring the two windows of his eyes together and see the "upward waterfall" (p. 223), a miracle in stone.

Jocelin struggles to leave behind for others, some fragment of the truth he sees, but the words that form in his mind are too complex to articulate what he has learned of his own nature, the nature of others and the nature of God's
world. He simply cries out "It's like the appletree" (p.223). It may seem a cryptic statement to us, but for Jocelin it is a truth discovered from his experience. We move away from the essence of Jocelin's paradoxical statement if we try to reduce it to a simple formula. We can take this episode like one of Marlowe's inconclusive experiences, "...where the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze." 17

We can simply catch a glimpse at the shape of innocence-with-experience, if we read with great care, not only through the eyes but, in Frank Kermode's apt phrase, "over the shoulder of Jocelin," 18 we see the fallen nature of his world, and the flaws in him, though at first these are mere suspicions.

The vision is, therefore, captured only in vague symbolic images which holds the fruit of both good and evil and Jocelin partook of both, as the first man did, as all men do. This is the reality of our mortal condition, the universal experience which can be seen in terms of original sin or the loss of innocence. For Golding, "that single-mindedness, relentless insistence on self, and exclusion of the rest of the universe in order to satisfy the imposing demands of the ego, is the definition of original sin." 19 And Jocelin's location of the sin in the course of his life completes his understanding of the guilt he cannot expunge, the fallen nature he cannot change.
In Golding's view contemporary man experiences his spirituality as 'darkness' which is accessible but elusive. Man has a choice either to resist the darkness, like Martin in *Pincher Martin* and suffer annihilation or like Jocelin to be momentarily transfigured into a state where he is certain of nothing - "I know nothing at all" (p.223), and yet, has gained a visionary insight into the nature of things. Appalled by the vision of his own sinfulness, and the sinfulness of the world around him, he abandons hope in God. Father Adam encourages him to reaffirm his belief that he might receive the Sacrament and be saved, but Jocelin's reaction is ambiguous:

"Father Adam, leaning down, could hear nothing. But he saw a tremor of the lips that might be interpreted as a cry of : God! God! God! So of the charity to which he had access, he laid the Host on the dead man's tongue" (p.223).

It is clear that the mechanical system of salvation upheld by Father Adam is an absurd travesty of the mystery of a man's faith. At the close, Jocelin may be in despair, but, that despair is also a "visionary scepticism:" Jocelin can see deeper into the mystery. His vision of the awful unknowableness, the mystery of things, seems in a curious way, closer to God, than Father Adam's mechanical faith. His despair is, after all, the product of his profound sense of his own sin in all its seriousness, and the physical devastation of his self-sacrifice. He may be in darkness, but perhaps that darkness is that spiritual desert of uncertainty.
in God and self-condemnation so powerfully evoked in the "Terrible Sonnets"\textsuperscript{21} of Hopkins, the darkness that is nearness to God.

The sources and means of evil are also the means of power and creation. For as Golding states in "All or Nothing":

"The mind of man is the biggest thing in the universe, it is throughout the universe."

In the end, therefore, it all depends on man himself, and his perception of the shape of the universe. As the protagonist in \textit{Free Fall} states:

"What we know is not what we see or learn but what we realize" (p.149)...

"Conduct is not good or bad, but discovered or got away with" (p.218).

Jocelin is ultimately saved by Grace and he earned it through suffering. What Baudelaire states is equally applicable to him: "He could not escape suffering and he could not transcend it ... but what he could do was to study his suffering."\textsuperscript{22} He comes to realize 'what he was for' and that is his salvation. He is granted forgiveness because he learns the selfless quality of forgiveness. This occurs at the moment when he goes to Roger and admits:

"I injure everyone I touch, particularly those I love. Now I've come in pain and shame, to ask you to forgive me" (p.210-211).
"Help me!"

"It was as if these words were a key. He felt them shake him... The shaking hurt his back and his head; but it was connected with an infinite sea of grief which sent out an arm to fill him and overflowed liberally at his eyes" (p.196-197).

Jocelin "cried out, not in terror but in grief" (p.155). Grief and seeing through eyes that have been washed clean by tears, is the deepest dimension of all in human sight. The tears that have sprung from a forceful insight into his own being, finally help Jocelin to break down the wall of self and selflessly extend himself to others. He tells Anselm:

"I beg you. No forgiveness for this or that, for this candle or that insult. Forgive me for being what I am" (p.203).

In the opening stanza of The Ring and the Book, Browning tells us that: "... there's nothing in nor out o'the world / Good except truth : yet this, the something else, /What's this then which proves Good yet seems untrue?" The truth cannot be simply a rigid stone book that is clear in its meaning to all. Goodness cannot be reduced to following a strict code of rules. "Truth and goodness, we might usefully combine in the word wisdom. Wisdom is glimpsed only out of the corner of the eye, it is elusive."

Golding, in The Spire, presents a religious vision, the meaning of which is dark. It can be expressed only in daring and ambiguous metaphors and paradoxes; the spire itself is such a metaphor and paradox. "Perhaps God has a key to meanings, the power to create light from darkness, perhaps he
alone has clear distinct ideas of truth and goodness," but "God knows where God may be" (p.222).

However we interpret Golding's novel, one thing is clear, The Spire begins in vision and proceeds by correcting that vision, refracting it through the physical world. It ends with a vision rather than a single view. And Golding leaves the discovery there. We are left with the flow of meaning which pervades this vision. Man's mind, which has "cliffs of fall," as we have seen traced in this novel, is ultimately what helps us to reassess and revise our simple categorization of the world we know or the world we think we know. For Golding, the "systems man creates to describe himself and his life - narrative structures or even Freudian theory - falsify because they are selective. They are useful nets for trawling in the dark waters, but they do not catch the ocean upon which they are cast; 'Living is like nothing because it is everything.' (Free Fall p.7)"

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87
NOTES


21. Ibid., p. 98.


25. Ibid., p. 105.

26. Ibid., p. 82.