INTRODUCTION
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I

William Golding's insistence on tracing the evil in the world to the defects in human nature and his courage in exploding the various lies man has invented to escape his guilt of having waste-landed and raped the planet he lives on has made him one of the significant novelists in the post-war literary world. Out of the anguish that he feels at man's turning upon his fellow-beings viciously comes a torment of faith; the ruins of civilizations lead him to suggest how man can learn from his errors. He, "a citizen, a novelist and a school master," suggests how the world must be subjected to a close scrutiny and the human condition laid bare without binkers, how a digging operation of sorts must be undertaken, the roots of sickness exposed, and the unnameable named. For only after has this been done, only after the malady has completely been diagnosed, can health be restored. A total commitment to a total change is required as no piece-meal remedy will do.

What is "the human condition"? At the very outset it has to be pointed out that it is too large a concept to be defined in a sentence or two. Everything that concerns man and has led to or may result into his rise and fall as a human being constitutes the human condition. The artist's contemplation of the human condition creates in him an interest in the remote past and a concern for the distant future since he believes that man is not just what he is now, that his condition is a product of the past and will produce the future.

A theoretical discussion of the idea and the term "the human condition" will be rewarded if begun with two modern heavyweight thinkers -- Hannah Arendt and Eric Fromm. Arendt says quite significantly: "The human
condition comprehends more than the conditions under which life has been
given to man." Men, she argues, exist in relationships: "... everything
they come in contact with turns immediately into a condition of their
existence." Equally important is another observation of hers: "In addition to
the conditions under which life is given to man on earth, and partly out of
them, men constantly create their own, self-made conditions ... ."

Man has a social existence as much as a personal one. When he has
to evaluate things and make decisions he stands in his "aloneness alone!"
But his decisions, in fact his whole life, influence the existence of others
in no small way. Since in choosing himself man chooses others, the choices
he makes are far-reaching in their implications. His choices, his thoughts,
his actions condition not his alone but others' condition also.

That the condition of man is in a perilous state is a truth which also
cannot be gainsaid. For one thing, both his coming and leaving the world
are outside his control. Not only this, many other aspects or levels of living
are also beyond his understanding. When Fromm says: "Never is he [man]
free from the dichotomy of his existence: he cannot rid himself of his mind,
even if he should want to; he cannot rid himself of his body as long as he
is alive -- and his body makes him want to be alive," we can safely see
that he has rightly understood the predicament man is in. To meet the
problems raised by the mind and body, to satisfy his existential needs, man
relates himself to the world in various ways. To refer to Fromm again:
"... the human passions (such as striving for love, tenderness, freedom as
well as the lust for destruction, sadism, masochism, the craving for power
and property) are answers to 'existential needs', which in turn are rooted in
the very conditions of human existence."
In the case of an eclectic writer like Golding, any attempt to trace his responses to some particular theories, whether theological or philosophical or psychological will fail at once. Like the human condition he grapples with in his novels, he is too protean, too complex, too contradictory to be categorized by Christian, Jungian, Freudian, western or eastern models of interpreting life. He does not subscribe to any one single pattern of beliefs convinced as he is that life's problems and solutions cannot be contained in a single system. Accordingly, he vehemently challenges all those attempts which offer man as a simplex being. But since all writers are somewhere concerned with the human condition, there are some similarities in their evaluations. If, then, Golding's interpretations bear some closeness of approach with others of his trade, it must not diminish his position of eminence in the literary world. These parallels elucidate more clearly and substantially Golding's own world-view. Thus when we find that what Golding says about man and his condition bears a striking resemblance to what St. Augustine, Freud, Jung, Niebuhr and Fromm, from among the non-literary world and Kafka, Melville, Conrad and Greene, to name a few of the more well-known modern novelists have said, we should not feel surprised or be taken aback. If there are parallels of meaning they are there as coincidences and not borrowings. He is not original, all right, but only in the sense that most un-original of all men of letters that famous bard whose first name resembles Golding's own, William Shakespeare is not. Originality, we must not forget either, is the sin of the Devil. Writers, of course, are wary of being traced. (Golding's *The Paper Men* bears this out amply.) If Golding does not welcome any comparison with Conrad, then we should not forget that Conrad had, in his own turn, not only dismissed any affinity with Melville but expressed his dislike for him in no uncertain worlds. But then is this not what the
human condition is all about -- man refusing to admit that his own life hangs precariously by that of others? He avoids looking into himself, avoids recognizing that his private life may not be the same as his public life.

While a sense of despair is not new to the present age, while, that is to say, every generation tends to regard its own time as the most wretched and creates its own weapons to fight the chaos, the truth is that the world has felt neither its orphanhood nor its helplessness so acutely as it does now. Bereft of any belief or illusion, man today stands isolated and alienated not only from the outer world but from himself also. When Copernicus, Descartes, Newton, Darwin and Freud, in their various ways, removed God from man's awareness of his situation, they really took all solid planks from under his feet leaving him hanging precariously. His emphasis on science (and its related constituents like reason, logic, reductionism) to wield control over both himself and nature alike has brought about an about turn in his values and debased his morals and ethics. Bloated with the power science has given him, he worships science. But science is the God that has failed. Wars, the best specimens of the power of science, might well be taken as showing the worst failures of science in controlling the world. It can be asked then whether the gods were not justified in punishing Prometheus for stealing fire from heaven; for might fire, man's first recognition, not prove his last? As we see, in our own age the two world-wars have wrecked man as surely as they did the world. Man lies in a state of comatose so far as his spiritual growth is concerned though his material development may be mind-boggling. It is safe to say then that the gain of material well-being has been the loss of spiritual health. He is the victim of his own inventiveness. He is the doctor who himself lies "etherized upon the table".
Wars, the Second World War in particular, have hugely conditioned the responses of Golding also. Born on 19 September 1911 in Cornwall, William Gerald Golding was too young when the First World War broke out. Unaware of the cracks in the civilization, he was content to be swayed by the easy-to-come and romantic notions about life and man. Some "airy-fairy" views had shaped his mind as they had the majority of people at that time. These were the views which drew life from R.M. Ballantyne's belief in the innocence of man and James Frazer's hope that man has the capacity to make progress on the crest of science. Besides these two, the young Golding was also greatly impressed by H.G. Wells's affirmation that man had come out of the cocoon of his primeval, bestial existence.

The war in 1939, however, provoked Golding to re-view the world and the condition it was in. No longer able to pin his hope on the myths of reason and progress, he found it difficult to believe that in the modern conditions of life man can remain human. Hard that he tried to remain hopeful, the viciousness and the sickness of the world came as big shocks. All this led him to conclude that if humanity is to continue it has to evolve beyond itself.

Wars have been major components of any history of the worlds. As Golding has told Muriel Wasi: "Understanding war helps you understand a great slice of human history." Equally significant to the present thesis are his remarks, quoted by Biles, that in the war, "One had one's nose rubbed in the human condition." The understanding the world war brought to him destroyed whatever hope he had about the health of the human condition. Consider his this elaboration of the impact of the Second World War:
The Great War was wholly unlike the expectations their upbringing had wished on the eager combatants. It proved to have areas of sheer indescribability. It produced from its poets — since the net was so wide as to include every kind of fish — an unmatched sense of articulate outrage. It reduced them to a statistic and they screamed. . . . The Second World War came near to demolishing all the assumptions of the first one and uncovered entirely different areas of indescribability. The horror of the brewed up tank, the burning place, the crushed and sinking submarine — all that is difficult to describe but the job can be done. The experience of Hamburg, Belsen, Hiroshima and Dachau cannot be imagined. We have gone to war and beggered description all over again. Those experiences are like black holes in space. Nothing can get out to let us know what it was like inside. It was like what it was like and on the other hand it was like nothing whatsoever. We stand before a gap in history. We have invented a limit to literature.8

But it is not as a fact of the history of the present age that the war impressed Golding; rather it showed him the image of man sub specie aeternitatis, Concerned with the basics in the human condition, he found that "the hydrogen bomb is only an efficient way of wiping out the other tribe — a pastime we've always been prone to."9 The mindless violence in the world shattered his earlier romantic notions about man, and set him thinking. He abandoned the optimistic and simplistic ideas about man, his nature and his destiny which the world had accepted without doing any thinking. To Golding the war showed the darkness of man's heart and confirmed his childhood dreary knowledge that "the darkness was all around, inexplicable, unexorcised, haunted, a gulf across which the ladder lay without reaching to the light."10 He discovered that the evil in the world lay not in the facts of race, economics or social heredity but in the human consciousness, and so was timeless and spaceless. He said: "I believed that the condition of man was to be a morally diseased creation and the best job I could do at the time, was to trace the connection between his
diseased nature and the international mess he gets himself into. He deduced that the aggressiveness in the human world was not a consequence of the right having a tough time with the wrong, but an outcome of two wrongs fighting for supremacy. If, however, the so declared vanquished ended up in a blind alley, the seemingly victorious winners also found themselves in a cul-de-sac. It can be said, then, that whereas for Darwin man was the animal that was, for Golding, as it was for Freud, man is the animal that was.

In an important essay, "Fable," he gives full expression to his "official belief":

One of our faults is to believe that evil is somewhere else and inherent in another nation. My book was to say: you think that now the war is over and an evil thing destroyed, you are safe because you are naturally kind and decent. But I know why the thing rose in Germany. I know it could happen in any country. It could happen here. . . . If disaster came, it was not to come through the exploitation of one class by another. It was to rise, simply and solely out of the nature of the brute. Golding, we can then infer, distrusts the hopefulness about the future of man which is based on scientific progress. He finds that the rationalists fail to look at man without the mask of civilization. If man is looked beyond and under the mask, Golding believes, he would appear in his true, natural colours. Man, the maker of the society would come as its destroyer, the crown of evolution as it curse. Selfish, morally irresponsible, callous and blinded by his governing impulses, he creates, or finds himself, in no-win situations. He is not at war with his outer environment alone; he is out of tune with his own good nature also. This is because he is so self-centered and aggressive that he would silence "the still sad music of humanity" in him, would extinguish the "spark of God" that as much describes him as the plotting evil of the devil does. Prompted by his self-aggrandizing ways, he has
come to believe that they are the only true and effective methods to
deal with the crisis he is in. A circle of unparalleled viciousness develops
which few are able to break.

These dark thoughts about the condition of man have, undoubtedly,
been strengthened by the torture and treachery Golding saw man suffering
from and generating in the last war. But this is not limited to the
present man. Obviously, Golding's "preoccupation with the human tragedy"\textsuperscript{13}
leads him to look at man now, yesterday and tomorrow, "here," as well as
"there," so that the conclusions he makes about the nature of man, the
human condition have a timelessness about them. To use a paradox -- and,
indeed, the "paradox" as a way of looking neatly describes the human nature,
as will be borne out later -- Golding's novels while limited to a particular
time and place and concerned with a small group or even a single individual
are at the same time universal in their significance. Because he looks below
"the rash appearing on the skin"\textsuperscript{14} to see what the hidden causes of human
illness are he is released from the confines of pre-war and post-war.

Golding's view of human nature contrasts sharply with one other view --
popularly named after Rousseau -- according to which man is savage but
noble. In literature, this view finds its most ardent expression in books like
R.W. Ballantyne's The Coral Island. For people like him, any social disorder
can be corrected by overhauling the social machinery. Blaming the society
for having woven a web of complications and vitiated human relationships,
they express an ineradicable faith in man's efficiency and capacity to reject
the evil and side with the good. Having reduced the problem of Evil to one
of institutional evils, errors, they sought to correct the societal imbalances
in the hope that this would make the world the desired world. As recently
as in 1951, J.D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye once more affirmed the
belief in man's innate honesty and affectionateness. Thus Holden
Caulfield, adrift in a world of "phonies," insists on rubbing dirty words
off walls to prevent little girls from seeing them. He finds evil everywhere
he goes, but not evil men; in any case, racked by the vileness and violence
about him, he retains his hopefulness about man precisely because to him
evil is outside man.

But what if it is inside? And writers like Golding see it there. Having
become unable to found their faith in the idea of reason and automatic
progress, they have adopted, what can be called, a religious view of man. They
oppose the classical, or rationalistic interpretation of the human condition,
herited in the main from Greece and Rome and which has influenced the
mind of man since then. The rationalists contend that man's most distinctive
mark has been his use of reason. For Plato, reason, the chief function of
which was to guide conduct, was the highest part of the soul. Independent
and immortal in its essential nature, it alone could penetrate the very
basis of things. For rationalists, to quote from a philosophy text-book,
"men are capable of arriving at irrefutable knowledge independently of
sense experience. From this point of view, the rationalist claims to be
able to provide us with genuine knowledge, truths (laws) about the world
and not merely laws of thought."15

Golding, along with the intuitionists, refutes the dominance of reason
and senses in writing the world view, and suggests that intuition is a higher
kind of knowledge. Moreover, he has come to regard reason as the most
stubborn antagonist of thinking. To Bergson also, intellect was incapable of
grasping of reality because it conceived it in terms of divisions of time,
into mutually exclusive entities called the past, the present and the future.
This brings in an intellect which destroys the very indivisibility and flow of time. By foisting its own concepts of categories on, what Golding was later to call, "multiplicity of phenomenon," it loses its understanding of the flow of life, the continuity of time, the "patternlessness of life." Frank Thilly so explains the limitations of "reason":

Conceptual thought is well adapted for employment in a dead, static world, the world of inert matter where mechanism reigns, and here it has won its greatest victories. Where there is no individuality, no inwardsness, nothing but dead surface, science and logic have both practical and theoretical worth. When, however, they extend their operations to the world in which everything is moving, growing, becoming, living, they mutilate and falsify the real. Baffled by the infinite variety and change of forms, and taking the whirling flux for illusion, the intellect proceeds to construct a bony skeleton, a rigid framework, and offers this as the true reality. ... Intuition, on the contrary, takes the perceiver closer to the understanding of the essence of things, their very inwardsness. Its poetic quality helps gain a knowledge of the human condition distilled to its quintessence. Thus Titus says:

In the literature dealing with intuition, one comes across such expressions as "immediate feeling of certainty," "imagination touched with conviction," a "total response" to some "total situation," and a "direct insight into truth." Titus continues: "An intuitive element is the foundation of our recognition of the beautiful, of the moral standards that men accept, and of religious values," and concludes, "We discover the él\textsuperscript{e}lan vital, the vital impulse of the world, by intuition, which is inward and immediate, rather than by intellect, which is external and which describes the living in static terms." What this whole discussion amounts to in the present context is that the knowledge of the world cannot be reduced to a single closed formula, and that each source of knowledge — sense, reason and intuition — has its merit and superiority over the other in certain situations and conditions.
To believe that the world exists in an either/or system, and to think that
the mysteries of life and living can be understood by approaching them
through a single route is perhaps the biggest mistake man can make. For
if this were true, man's ailments and their remedies would have been
described and prescribed finally and completely by the doctors of various
philosophies or theologies or sciences a long time ago. Because no single
"theory" has been able to describe man fully and for ever, we need, William
Montague rightly says, a "federation of the methods."  

Life is in meeting, in creating a meaningful dialogue with the world.
When man stops living as a monological man and recognizes that it is only
in a "world of dialogue" that he can exist that his spiritual evolution truly
begins. Martin Buber fully underlines the necessity of the dialogic approach
to life when he asks man to move from an I - It stance to an I - Thou
attitude when meeting the world; for he understands that man can acquire
authentic selfhood and totality of living only in a personal encounter.
Mutuality, directness and intensity must define all man's actions. Buber says,
"It is only when the individual recognizes the other in his very otherness, as
a human being other than himself, and when on this basis he effects a
penetration to the other that he can break the circle of his solitude in a
specific transforming encounter."  

III  
The hope that man can change himself is checked by the stark
realization that he does not change himself. It is this truth about man
that makes serious viewers of the human condition like Dobzhansky cry:
"There is a tragic discord in the soul of man."  Another viewer has called
man "the worst conceivable disappointment of the hopes of mankind."  
Equally agonized at the spectacle of violence is Albert William Levi when he
sees the condition of the modern world broken by "a sense of impending disaster, a rootlessness of the person, a pervasive terseness which points to certainties dissolved and emotional centres displaced." This sounds like the prose version of Yeat's "Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world." Spengler cries: "Man is a beast of prey. I shall say it again and again." The senselessness in human existence makes Carlo Giacon observe that man "is destined from birth to stagnation or crime." Lord Ritchie-Calder looks at the human societies and concludes that "past civilizations are buried in the graveyards of their own mistakes, but as each died of its greed, its carelessness or its effeteness, another took its place." A similar assessment is made by Jean Dorst: "Thus back at the dawn of its existence mankind carried the germs of destruction and even self-destruction which assumed dramatic proportions in the later phases of its history." Equally concerned with the aggressiveness of man, Freud finds men as creatures to whom their neighbour appears as "someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him."

All this cannot fail to convince one already prone to such beliefs of truths about the human condition Schopenhauer propounded on the basis of his observation of the behaviour of the Australian bull-dog ant. He said:

... if it is cut in two, a battle begins between the head and the tail. The head seizes the tail with its teeth, and the tail defends itself bravely by stinging the head; the battle may last for half an hour, until they die or are dragged away by the other ants. Thus the will to live everywhere preys upon itself, and in different forms is its own nourishment, till finally the human race, because it subdues all the others, regards nature as a manufactury for its own use. Yet even the human race... reveals in itself with most terrible distinctness this conflict, this variance of the will with itself: and we find homo homini lupus.
While these statements about man do seem valid, can it be not argued also that they fail to consider the other side of the coin? There is ample evidence to counter the pessimism reflected in these statements. If Schopenhauer's bull-dog ant stands for man, Edward Wilson's corals also express the human condition as well. To give the question a sharpness: if man can be said to have inherited his aggressive instincts from bull-dog ants, can he not have inherited the benign cooperative instincts from corals? What then is human nature, and the essential human condition?

The truth about man is not to be defined by exclusive and contrasted views. It has to be admitted that man's goodness is as inseparable from his evil as oxygen and hydrogen are in water. No one clinches the issue as powerfully as Montague when he points out: "The two views define not only two ways of looking at human beings -- important enough in themselves -- but also two ways of being human." The reality about man, it needs no great effort to notice, lies at a point where the two exist in simultaneity. The fact is that, homo cum duo has been the image of man since the ancient times. Photius, the Byzantine lexicographer, must have had this in mind when he referred to the nature of man:

For every other creature is guided by one principle, but we (human beings) are pulled in different directions by our different faculties... towards the better by the godlike element... Towards the worse by the domination of the bestial element within us.

Pascal too, after exhorting man --- "... know then proud man, what a paradox you are to yourself" -- reflects: "what a chimera then is man! What a novelty! What a monster, what a chaos, what a contradiction, what a prodigy!"

Among a host of outstanding writers, Blake, Yeats and Lawrence have seen life as a product of contradictions and paradoxes. Blake affirms that "Without contraries is no progression." In "Crazy Jane Talks with the
Bishop," Yeats, in a more robust note, contends that "fair needs foul" and concludes:

'... Love has pitched his mansion in
the place of excrement;
For nothing can be sole or whole
that has not been rent.'

In a like vein, Lawrence affirms duality to be a necessary mode of awareness considering it to be the very basis of existence. What appear as contraries are in fact the various directions man may take. This idea is expressed clearly in his poem called "Climb Down, O Lordly Mind --":

A man is many things, he is not only a mind.
But in his consciousness, he is two-fold at least:
he is cerebral, intellectual, mental, spiritual,
but also he is instinctive, intuitive, and in touch.

The mind, that needs to know all things
must needs at least come to know its own limits,
even its own nullity, beyond a certain point.

IV

Golding also defines the human condition in terms of duality. He sees that there is a conflict between the opposing impulses of life, a tug of war between intuition and reason. The result is that man is a product of both conscience and pride, care and greed. He is heroic as much as sick. If harmless, he is horrible also, somewhere. Capable of transcending his limitations, man is more prone to falling into the bog of his finiteness.

Not only a product of nature, he is a creature of spirit also. This it is that makes man a paradoxical creature. Golding is justified if then he announces that "There is nothing that can be said about human life which is not paradoxical."36

For Golding, man's condition is defined according to whether he operates from his "My-Godness" or chooses to make evil his good.
Both these tendencies are innate in him. Capable of self-transcendence, he is more frequently motivated by a hunger for power and domination. In all this, Golding believes, man's "intellectual complications" play a significant role. In the pride of intellect, man assumes himself to be the creator of creatures and sets about writing their destinies. All Golding's characters exhibit this feature, as will be borne out in the discussion of the novels later. But here a mention of *The Paper Men* will help set the ball rolling. The narrator-author of this novel plays with the emotions and intelligence of his critic/creature. At the same time the critic himself makes little of the novelist's life. A situation is then created where it becomes difficult to know as to who the creator is and who the creature as each insists upon having his way and using all the intelligence and knavery at his command to bring about the other's ruin.

In "Belief and Creativity," Golding makes the claim that "The novelist is God of his own interior world," and goes on to say that "if we could but understand our flashes of individual creativity we might glimpse the creativity of the Ultimate creator." In the novels, however, it is his destructivity that a character reveals in the main. Working under a self-deception that has its roots in pride, he regards himself as the arbiter of his world; not only this, he views the others as a threat to his "peace" and "security." Since, however, the world is not just one man alone but "men," we can only shudder with fear when we think of a world inhabited by such "men." Quite obviously, a situation of "zero sum" game develops, a situation where the winning of one party (or even one way of life) involves the necessary subjugation of others engaged in the "warfare," with the result that on the world level there is absolutely no progress. In Golding's world, we find Ralph, Jack, Piggy, Oliver, Sophy, Anderson -- all living a sinful life.
sinful in that they are obsessed with an urge for control and power, ignoring in the process that they are a part of a whole and not the whole itself. Thus Oliver, in The Pyramid, retaliates to Bobby Ewan's treating him as "my slave" (p.23) by having it out on Evie and treating her as "one of the diseases my father had talked about." (p.101). In Darkness Visible Sophy, with her "phenomenal intelligence" (p.129) sets about disrupting the "placid normalities of the daylight world" (p.134). Because she regards the school boys as "edible," she says: "Lovely my pet! I could eat you!" (p.176). Pincher has spent his whole life "eating" and unmanned the people in his vicinity. Anderson, in Close Quarters, has an infinite power on the ship and its passengers, and "can do anything he likes to you but get you in the family way" (p.162).

This condition of aggression and violence divides the world into "I" and "not-I"; the "not-I" experienced as a threat, invites the wrath of "I", and the war goes on endlessly. It is not just that man feels the presence of others as a threat: even in himself he finds elements which "need" to be "controlled." Pincher lives for a physical world and denies, like Sammy in Free Fall, the existence of a spiritual world which, however, would not be denied. Jocelin, in The Spire, on the other hand, ignores the physical self when he concentrates upon the sacred one. But in all these cases, the relative, elevated to the absolute, creates pride and self-deception, a deeper mire of sin and evil. Facing their evil, Tuami and Jack and Barclay and Jocelin "genuinely" feel that had they not brought about the destruction of the "other," they themselves would have perished. Frank Kermode's observation — "...human consciousness is a biological asset purchased at a price; the price is the knowledge of evil"41 — aptly sums up this situation. Equally pertinent is Josipovici's verdict: "Greed, envy and lust are the
inevitable concomitants of civilisation." It is this underside of civilization, the negatives man believes as his positives, the decay, the corruption, the evil in the world that Golding subjects to an incessant gaze. Here is a world where man has forgotten, has decided not to put God at the centre of his life, and has found it both convenient and necessary to make himself the pivot around which to move the world.

For Golding, man is a fallen creature. His fall lies in his willed separation from a wholeness and choosing to get activated by a divided, limited perception of things. Whether this truth about man can really be traced to the Christian interpretation or not is not important here, but what is is Golding's belief that the inability of man to live in harmonious relationships with the other men is what "original sin" is really all about. The "official" Christian belief incidentally also matches Golding's. Calling sin "a form of self-deification," W. Burnet Easton says, "It [original sin] is a revolt of the creature against the creator." It ends up in the making of a world man stands in opposition to. He continues:

We all go through the Adam and Eve experience of breaking the innocence and security of the "original-we" and of becoming self-conscious by discovering we are Selves belonging to a world to which we are opposed at the same time. And the first act in that discovery is the Adam and Eve act of self-assertion. Original sin is original because it arises from an original given nature without which man would not be man.

Quite clearly, it is this egoentricity of man that has divided him into fragments. Golding's characters are torn into pieces by the inherent paradoxes and contradictions in human existence. They are fragmented into reason, technology, culture, intellect, imagination, common-sense, passion, tradition, faith, religion. But while these elements should exist in a
simultaneity in life, man is activated and governed by one of them separately and regards the impulse he survives by as the right and only impulse to be had. This creates situations of crises in the world. As we shall see later, Jack, Ralph, Piggy in Lord of the Flies, the people and the new men in The Inheritors, Sammy in Free Fall, Jocelin in The Spire, Pincher in Pincher Martin, Oliver in The Pyramid, Sophy in Darkness Visible, Colley, Anderson and Talbot in Rites of Passage, Close Quarters and Fire Down Below, and Barclay in The Paper Men, reduce themselves to fixed, limited patterns of conception when dealing with the essential patternlessness of life. Even the "good" characters in Golding's novels, in spite of their larger and deeper understanding of the human condition, cannot, in the nature of things, have an infinite and total knowledge of man. Simon, Nathaniel, Lok, Matty and Colley are handicapped by this serious blemish and so are prevented from understanding as to how they can come to terms with the viciousness of evil. The result is that they pay for it with their life.

Obviously, what is needed is a bridge between these various and contradictory responses to life's riddles. A new mode of knowledge has got to be created where the receiver of the knowledge is able to remove the "dissociation of thought and feeling." An emphasis on thought at the expense of feeling is as dangerous an approach to life as its reverse since the suppression of one leads to its getting manifested at some other place or time.

The manifestation of this "other," and this comes as "evil" to the character in Golding's novels, may take place in the individual's own person, as in Jocelin, Sammy, Matty and Colley, or in the world in general where one set of characters is countered by the other set. The refusal as well
as the inability on the part of man to forge a bridge leads to the things getting out of control. Each character or each value, passion, or striving seeks its own fulfilment and control on the other. As a result, no vision of a whole man emerges as no conjunction of opposites occurs. This issue of the balancing of thought and feeling, "self" and "other," "I" and "not-I," is indeed an intricate issue and provides the base as well as the motion to Golding's novels. In each novel, Golding tests this issue to find out whether a position can be created where man does not suffer from his finitude but accepts it, and does not fight against his wholeness — "What else is there to do?" (p.160) says Simon in Lord of the Flies.

Two things stand as the essential conditions if such an attempt is to be made: choice and intransigence. Freedom is the basis of the existence of human life; man is judged by what he makes of his freedom: whether he chooses to bind himself to his limitedness or decides to struggle against what inhibits him. This is the final test, the ultimate choice that defines man, decides his grandeur or his misery, his heroism or his sickness, his rise or his fall.

Evil -- moral evil -- is basically a product of man's free will. In man's choosing to be his own creator lies the seeds of evil. If we trace the evil in the world, we will reach the human heart and find that evil is a distortion and running away from the God-centre in him. St. Augustine, when locating man's abusing of God's plan of creating a paradise on the earth, saw that it was in man's choice to disobey God that condition of death were produced. "I wandered, O my God, too much astray from Thee my stay, in these days of my youth, and I became to myself a waste land," moans an anguished Augustine. Golding also, while giving a gloss over the symbol of celler in Pincher Martin, observes that it is in man's
free choice to abandon God that the emergence of sin takes place: ". . .
God is the thing we turn away from into life, and therefore, we hate and
fear him and make a darkness there. . . . Pincher is running away all the
time, always was running, from the moment he had a persona and could
say 'I'."47

His freedom gives man an illusion of power, and power betrays him
into pride and violence. Reducing all the visible world, and the invisible
too, so as to increase his power, man commits himself to a path that can
only bring ruin. Added to the perplexity of "choosing" and "becoming" is
the dilemma of not choosing the choice man has chosen to become what
he has become. For, as already argued, Golding sees no easy, categorical
stances to take when viewing the whole confusing scenario. More likely,
and in fact this is what happens to Golding, he is drawn into believing a
relativity of sorts.

It may be argued that if the world is a "relative" world, how man can
be judged, how his actions or intentions can be found wanting. Golding,
however, is a relativist who believes that there is an absolute, definable
moral force -- call it God -- which should control man's whole existence.

And there indeed comes a moment when man does become aware of
his sinfulness, his betrayal of God, his exploitation of people. This moment
then has the strength to bring him out of the mire of evil he has fallen
into. This is the moment when the conscience starts operating. Simultaneously,
at this point, an element of suffering and the possibility of redemption is
introduced. The sense of guilt, the sense of having done wrong or having
the possibility of doing wrong takes man into newer territories. As a matter
of fact, if evil is "only us" then good can also be "only us," meaning that
if it is in man's choice to commit sin, it is also in his choice alone to act
good, to become one who, to use Jung's words, has "imagination in evil"
and is equipped with the "capacity to deal with evil." 48

Conscience can start operating on various counts. Regret at the loss
of contact with the world is the chief starter. When man isolates himself
from all kinds of dialogue, he tends to alienate himself from life also. "To
communicate is our passion and our despair," (p.8) Sammy says in Free Fall.
Conscience is the activity by which man brings himself back into the human
fold, removes his "self" from the centre of his world, and makes "God,
the "otherness," the suppressed factor, the factor he was running away from
all the time, as the deciding factor of his life. Both Freud and Jung have
found in the birth of conscience the promise of the rejuvenation of the sick
man. Freud discusses the means civilization adopts to inhibit as well as
remove man's aggressiveness.

What happens in him to render his desire for aggression
innocuous? Something very remarkable, . . . His aggressive-
ness is introjected, internalized; it is, in point of fact, sent
back to where it came from -- that is, it is directed towards
his own ego. There it is taken over by a portion of the ego,
which sets itself over against the rest of the ego as superego,
and which now, in the form of "conscience," is ready to put
into action against the ego the same harsh aggressiveness that
the ego would have liked to satisfy upon other, extraneous
individuals.49

Jung also has given his version of the origin and effect of conscience. He
establishes that the suppressed "other" fights to come on the surface but
the dominant "I" -- "self" -- uses its "knowledge and skill" to keep it down.
"In contrast to the subjectivism of the conscious mind," Jung says, "the
unconscious is objective, manifesting itself mainly in the form of contrary
feelings, fantasies, emotions, impulses and dreams, none of which one makes
onself but which come upon one objectivity." He goes on to say in a manner
quite like Golding's that only a few "let the will of God decide" their life.
These "few" are the religious persons and they stand "directly under the influence of the reaction from the unconscious." Jung calls this "the operation of Conscience." Conscience, then is man's action to make God the centre of existence, and this act alone, Golding would say, can help man resolve the paradoxes of existence.

This brings in the other idea — the idea of intransigence. Man, for Golding, is a pattern-making animal. In his attempts to reduce life to categories and formulae, man loses sight of its mysteriousness and the wholeness. Evil is another such pattern. It fixes man to limited and finite modes of perception. Since the evil way is the easier way, since the finiteness gives man a pattern of security and authority (because it leads him into thinking that he can "know" and "control" the world, for it is "finite") man tends to stick to his evil ways. A dead crust of habit gets formed; one illusion of power adds to the other; a whole spire of lies is raised, a dark pyramid of deceptions is built to enlace his "vileness beyond all words." The evil may also fix him, as it does Barelay, in The Paper Men, into a state of boredom, which is another name for dead habits.

Golding aims at breaking the stereotypes of accepted conventional norms of studying the human behaviour. Just as bad money drives out good money so do mummified habits the mystery, the patternlessness of life. Golding would rather like man to have an Egyptian's sense of mystery which lies in, he says, "to be at once alive and dead; to suggest mysteries with no solution, to mix the strange, the gruesome and the beautiful." It is the fascination for the "unreason, spiritual pragmatism and capacity for ambiguous belief" that prompts Golding to challenge "the measurement and analysis" of scientific method. He revolts against the simplification of life that is the essential method of logic and science, and pointedly calls
Marx, Darwin and Freud "the three most crashing bores of the western world."

In his fiction then, Golding shows a tendency to "peer out of my wrappings and speak out of a centre which for all the impediment of bondages has gone on living and changing." He looks for "intransigence," insists upon seeing the other side of the picture, the "other's" point of view. As he explained his credo to Kermode:

I see, or I bring myself to see, a certain set of circumstances in a particular way. If it is the way everybody else sees them, then there is no point in writing a book, if it seems to differ from the accepted point of view, there is a point in writing the book because it might at least be a talking point or it could be a contribution to other people's view of reality.

All this makes Golding an interesting writer for two reasons: One, in an attempt to give each his due, he leaves the issues unresolved and his novels open ended; two, the very fact of this commitment to the human condition makes it abundantly clear to him that he can take the side of neither this character nor the other but life only. His reversing the conclusions drawn by Ballantyne, Wells, Rouesseau and others does not mean that he opposes their verdict on Man: this is only partly true; he disagrees with them as much as he agrees with their hopefulness for man. But it is his fear also that good is not all that is about man and that evil is a stronger and more regular feature of the human condition. Evil, he realizes, is so firmly entrenched in man that it may require one "the most anarchic violence" to root it out.

This also explains why brutality and horridness are the main presences in his novels: these are the facts of the human condition. Violence and ugliness serve both an ethical and an aesthetic necessity; the revulsion one feels for Pincher, Oliver, Pedigree, Sophy, Barclay is the revulsion man should feel for himself.
William Golding's Aeschylean preoccupation with the human condition prods him to go beyond merely describing the human condition. The meaninglessness and the violence in the world do not paralyse and stupefy him; they tease him into thought. The crime and suffering, the confounding of knowledge with knowledge are not just reported; he hints at the Aeschylean resolution of evil through the education that suffering brings. It is not to say that he gives any comforting answers. But he does comfort us that there are answers to man's problems. It only requires intransigence on the part of man to find them.

Most contemporary literature either stops short of delving deep enough into the enigma that is man or fails to come out of the despair and desendency that a questioning of man brings in. It depicts man, who, according to R.D. Laing, "has a sense, not of renewal, but of being at an end of being only half alive in the fibrillating heartland of a senescent civilization." It shows man as one who has come to a point where he thinks "it is not possible to do more than reflect the decay around and within us, than sing sad and bitter songs of disillusion and defeat."57

Golding, however, like Graham Greene and Virginia Woolf, to name only two British novelists, has come to the awareness that it — the awareness — can be communicated and translated to redeem the human condition. Laing continues his argument:

From the point of view of a man alienated from its source creation arises from despair and ends in failure. But such a man has not trodden the path to the end of time, the end of darkness, and the end of light. He does not know that where it all ends, there it all begins.58

William Golding takes just this very path, goes to the "ends of the earth." He would likewise insist that man, the whole man, take this voyage, face his responsibility, understand his condition, understand also that he is not
helpless against the tyranny of his egoism, and understand also that his measure lies in his courage to will his condition. Man's condition is heroic or sick according to what he makes of it. Although Golding grants that evil is the ineluctable reality of life, he assures that God's merciless compassion, man's "My Godness" is a greater element. Evil is physically stronger no doubt, but it is good which can understand and recognize the nature of evil. When man makes choices, and chooses to bear the burden of his choice he leaps over to "the world of God and man" and "a universe ablate with all the glories" which reject this leap. He sees a "signature scribbled in the human soul, sign that beyond the transient horror and beauties of our hell there is a Good which is ultimate and absolute." The conversion of evil into good may sound paradoxical to the man of intellect. But this is how evil can be resolved. There is no pattern other than God's grace that can resolve the problem of evil.

God's grace comes suddenly, in flashes, as a lightning. There is no before and after to it, no logic and no pattern. Sammy cries for his physical survival, and the door to grace opens. To Jocelin everything merges into "nothing": "It's like the apple tree!" (p. 223), he cries in jubilation. These people are, to use William James's very powerful and exact phrase, "twice-born" people, those "... sick souls who must be twice-born in order to be happy." By moving from the pattern of ego to the pattern of the infinite, the patternlessness, they effect this "twice-born" state, move from death to life, and to a newness, where, Golding would say, God is all about man, where He is invisible but omnipresent!

Golding's novels can be divided into three broad phrases — the early, the middle and the present. I have tried to argue that Golding started his career as a novelist preoccupied with evil as the inexpungable feature...
of man. With *Free Fall*, and with more certainty in *The Spire*, he finds occasions to celebrate hope. But *Darkness Visible* takes him back to the darkness, the darkness which Tuami, in *The Inheritors*, had realized, had no ending. In *Rites of Passage*, he again starts his voyage to God and men, a voyage he successfully concludes in *Fire Down Below*, the only novel in which he makes his peace with the world of men. But admittedly these are very broad conclusions. Moreover, when Golding claims that he be allowed "the privilege of the story-teller; which is to be mystifying, inconsistent, impenetrable," there is every likelihood that these conclusions would always remain inconclusive.

Golding is "alive and changing as live things do." He is, he says, "a moving target." We too move on to the next target, his novels, to find how Golding the novelist grapples with the human condition.
INTRODUCTION — NOTES


9. "The Writer in His Age," p. 45. What Marcus Aurelius (Meditations, VII, 49) has said about the human condition also makes sense in the present context. He says: "To have contemplated human life for years is the same as to have interpreted it for ten thousand years. For what more wilt thou see?"


12. The Hot Gates, p. 89.


19. Titus, p. 34.

20. Titus, p. 35.


29. Quoted in Fedorov, p. 67.


32. Nigel Calder is one such observer who, getting his clues from Wilson's findings, writes about the corals: "These marine animals living in large colonies produce almost perfect societies, virtually superorganisms, in which the individuality of the animals is effaced. A new animal may actually grow on the body of another, and different types of animals in the same species can serve the colony in different ways; one digests the food while another concerns itself with circulating the sea water to provide the food. There is no conflict in such a community." See his piece, "The Sources of Human Altruism," _The American Review_ (Summer 1978), p. 43.


38. Golding's phrase, from "The Meaning of It All," interview with Frank Kermode, Books and Bookmen (October 1959), p. 10. Expanding upon this, Golding said in a later interview also, ". . . as a species that will be the thing that will trip us up, our own intelligence and our own lusts." See James R. Baker, "An Interview with William Golding," Twentieth Century Literature 28.2 (Summer 1982), p. 135.


43. He makes himself clearer on this point in his interview with James Baker published in Twentieth Century Literature, 28.2 (Summer 1982), p. 134.


45. Golding's words in Biles, Talk, p. 104.


It would interest one to know that both Golding and Jung use almost the same phrases to describe similar emotions. Thus both stress the need to find a "bridge" between the two poles of human experience. Golding's phrase "dissociation of thought and feeling" (in Biles, Talks, p. 104) matches Jung's belief that when "Thinking and feeling lose their inner polarity" there develops an "unconscious dissociation in modern man himself" (The Undiscovered Self, pp. 95, 110).

The idea behind tracing these parallels is not to weaken Golding's eminence but to make it stronger, to lend it a width and depth, to show that his ideas are not "hermetic" though he himself may be so. The sole purpose of indulging in this "academic game" is to suggest a view of man, life and world that Golding shares with others, equally worthy, though senior, and perhaps more popular also, writers. Another excuse and provocation to show such parallels was Golding's own assertion that if there are parallels between the vision of two writers, it is because "if people engage . . . in writing about humanity, they're likely in certain circumstances to see something of the same thing." See James Keating, "Interview with William Golding," in James R. Baker and Arthur P. Zeigler, Jnr. (eds), William Golding's "Lord of the Flies," Case Book edition (New York: Putnam, 1964), pp. 194-195. Equally relevant is Golding's retort to Baker when the latter asked whether he (Golding), in The Pyramid viewed the civilization, in the same way as Edith Sitwell did in Bucolic Comedies. Golding charged back, quite unnecessarily perhaps, " . . . Yes, there are similarities, but then people are similar, aren't they?" See Baker, "An Interview with William Golding," p. 156.


