CHAPTER - II

GOLDING'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Golding's novels are imbued with a profound moral purpose, and even when set in different historical or pre-historical periods they display in several ways a concern for contemporary problems coupled with a realistic attitude towards experience exemplified in perception and action of his central characters. No doubt, he is a religious and 'cosmic' novelist. He contemplates the larger issues of life, is darkness, death, judgment, goodness and God. His task is to render the 'old universal truth' compassionately and 'transparently'. He is mostly interested in paths of spiritual evolution. His mass of writings is held together by no formal link but by the unique power of his moral, religious and philosophical ideas. The philosophical elements in his fiction is unparalleled among contemporary English novelists, with the possible exception of Iris Murdoch and Graham Greene.

For social scientists like Rousseau and rationalists like H.G. Wells man is a noble savage. Any social disorder could be corrected by overhauling or replacing one part or the other of the social machine. It is society that has woven a web of complications and
alienated relation around man. 'Men are evil but man is good', so believes the philosopher who said 'Man was born free and everywhere he is in chains'. The Island (1857) the novel which brought Golding's retort in Lord of the Flies (1954) envisaged an Endemic society peopled by innocent young boys. Into this garden comes evil from outside in the shape of savages, but so resourceful are the boys, because of their good nature, that they overpower their evil without any injury to their moral fabric. But opposite to that and it comes out when it finds a suitable atmosphere pervasive in society.

A number of critics opine that Golding's writings verge on pessimistic attitude to life. However, he refutes the charge. "I am by nature an optimist" his eleven novels depict his concern with the darkness that exists in the heart of human beings. He explores this darkness in his novels in order to fathom its meaning. He explains his purpose of writing novels:

'I am very serious; I believe that man suffers from an appalling ignorance of his own nature. I produce my own view, in the belief that it may be something like the truth. I am fully engaged to the human dilemma but see it as far more fundamental than a complex of taxes and astronomy.'
Golding thinks that man – the contemporary man – lacks vision, and hence he must perish. In each of his novels, he tries to build a bridge between the two worlds – physical and spiritual. Golding opines that man abstract from his violence and projects it as fear of a demon, which will destroy him. He believes that goodness exists in man but man seldom turns towards it. Thus, in the earlier fiction he describes the spiritual dimension with a symbol of darkness. In Golding’s milieu, the point at which man acts triumphantly from his consciousness is precisely the point at which he can fall. His first three novels are directly concerned with man’s struggle for survival with his attempts to maintain not only body but also soul. C.B. Cox writes in *The Free Spirit* (1963) that Golding is a novelist who describes human egotism and suffering with convincing realism. In his novels Golding explores the tension between the heroic qualities of man.

He tries to understand man’s relation with God. From the publication of his first novel itself, he seems to be possessed with the theme of the fate of man on this planet. This vision of Golding can be characterized as apocalyptic vision. His novels are a revolution of the historical process of human blunders resulting in sorrow and
suffering which cast an ominous over the future of man. His apocalyptic vision has cast a deep shadow over most of his novels.

Golding's importance and greatness lie in taking up the great moral issues and concerning himself with what he calls sub specie aeternitatis. The human condition, Golding believes, is not enviable; there is nothing admirable about man's progress, for he has purchased his evolution by surrendering his innocence. Man's greatest achievements are built on evil, sin and guilt. He has looked at man's heart, unflinchingly and has not hesitated from revealing what lies there.

"Good can look after itself, evil is the problem"? Golding answered a critic who suggested that good was equally "an exclusive human concept"? Golding is preoccupied with evil in man and society that lends to gradual moral fall or to the fall of human values - its origin and its resolution. The main cause of the fall of human being is the evil in him and it overpowers a man when he loses his sense of being a man. Golding believes that evil is present in human veins, in his blood and it is genetic. He distrusts those social philosophers who declare that they can engineer a world devoid of evil, by manipulating the adverse environment, which is the cause of moral evil. It is not as Marx, Salinger and Rousseau believe that society corrupts man.
Golding indicts man and not society for the evil in the world: society is only an enlarged picture of man’s fragmented life.

Man does not hesitate to reject other’s achievements so that there should be absolutely no progress and he could win. In *Lord of the Flies*, Jack wins at the cost of Ralph and Piggy; just as Ralph and Piggy would have won at the cost of Jack and others of his clan. Golding involves the whole mankind in this game of evil which is, in fact the game of power as he shows in *Lord of the Flies*. In The Inheritors “new men” raise high empire by exterminating the “People” who represented innocence.

Man’s evil, Golding shows in his novels, lies in his exploitation of others. Almost all the characters excepting Simon in *Lord of the Flies* as Pincher, Sammy, Jocelin, Sophy and Oliver etc. have put this blinker and rare engaged in a merciless campaign, adopting all kinds of fraud games to subjugate the world around them. It is their ego that is driving them to deny the world outside their self. In the process of reaching high achievements, man unknowingly is going downward as he is losing his humanistic values and moral vision day by day. Man is, no doubt, a mixture of good and evil and it depends on man which self he would like to develop.
According to Golding morality can have no place of importance in a world where the age-old sacrosanct values of life have been sacrificed on the altar of science and technology. From the spiritual, the emphasis has shifted to the material. The entire thinking has changed. Lust for power, religious fanaticism and animal sex is the order of the day. Our uncontrollable ambitions and uncompromising egoism have blinded us to reason. Selfishness has gained ascendancy over uprightness and overconfidence has given birth to arrogance, so much so that the existence of a "Supreme Being", above self, has come to be questioned. Thus, Sammy Maintjoy, William Golding's leading characters in "Free Fall" found: "The world around us was sliding on and down through an arch into a stormy welter where morals and families and private obligations had no place."4

Again he says:

"There was anarchy in the mind where I lived and anarchy in the world at large: two states so similar that the one might have produced the other the shattered houses, the refugees, the deaths and torture accept them as a pattern of the world and one's behavior is little enough disease... There is peace for the wicked but war with its waste and just and irresponsibility is a very good substitute."5
Golding's novels offer a perspective evolution of man and his predicament without confining it to a specified framework of time. Man, Golding said, "is a prisoner of images" (Egypt from my Outside) and so is a writer like Golding who was concerned with the question. What is man? He himself said:

What man is under the eye of heaven, that I burn to know and that ... I would endure knowing the themes close to my purpose, to my imagination have stemmed from that preoccupation, have been of such a sort that they might have me little nearer that knowledge. They have been themes of man at extremity. Man tested like building material, taken into a laboratory and used to destruction; man isolated, man obsessed much drawing in a literal sea or in a sea of his own ignorance.6

The last phrase in the above statement is expressive of Golding's overriding concern as a novelist. 'He argued that since man suffers from an appalling ignorance of his own nature, the job of a writer is to show man his image.'7

Today, the stress is on muscle power, love and charity have ceased to have any meaning. Man has fallen to the level of animals in the ruthless pursuit of his wants. His attempts however, are frequently because of his ambitions.
Man's suffering makes him aware of the existence of a Supreme Being over himself, who keeps him in check, the idea of a Supreme Being whose restraining hand prevents him from over-reaching himself makes him rebel against that 'being'. He tries to break that cordon and negate the existence of a 'Supreme Being' other than himself. This also impels him to do things that are monstrous and ruinous.

Thinkers, philosophers and novelists specially those who had the poignant awareness of the unprecedented havoc wrought by the Second World War, have urged by projecting a dystopian vision of life, for an end of madness that has gripped the society. William Golding has been among those who took up the noble task of not only highlighting the dreary paleness within the glossy appearance demonstrating where essentially the brightness and truthfulness of the heart shone, and basking in whose glory real happiness could be found. The darkness that had enveloped a supposedly enlightened society profoundly shocked Golding. He mournfully describes the world as 'sinful earth'.

In a letter to John Peter, Golding observed that man's supreme failing lay in the fact that he stands in opposition to his own maker.
condition of man requires a metaphysical exploration. Writing about
he ignores. Owing to his, Golding underlines the nature and
religious worlds — the former, which man accepts and the latter which
Golding’s effort has been to create bridge between physical and
full of goodness and the milk of human kindness.

One day his humanity will destroy them all and his heart will be
not the symbol of humanity. Golding says that evil deeds do not last
forgets all goodness of this heart and does all the cruel work which is
and takes precedence over all other things and because of it, man
and fear that dominates the human life. It becomes all — important
view self as supreme and even above the Allmighty, results in the hate
over others. Thus the temper mental compulsion to assert oneself to
Man feels happy only when he is able to establish his authority
submission, by obedience to the force of nature."

ier ship was helplessly drifting in the sea, was possible only. "By
his own selfish nature. This, as summer explained to Tallboy, when
is the author of his own troubles, which again, could be traced back to
In other words, Golding could be taken to mean to say that man

and fear him and make a darkness there."

God is the thing we turn a way from in lo life, and therefore we have
his novel *Free Fall*, in which he tries to bridge the gulf, Golding remarked:

... We do live in two worlds. There is physical one, which is coherent, and there is a spiritual one. To average man with his flashes of spiritual experience.... That would is very important. But nevertheless... this experience of having two worlds to live in all the times...... is vital one and is what living is like.\textsuperscript{10'}

Golding cannot be said to be impervious to the constructive side of human nature or the potentials inherent in man for transcending his limitation. There is, in fact, a Conradian concern in Golding that involves, as Stein in *Lord Jim* suggests, immersion into the darkness of the depth of the sea of human nature emerging from it alive. The opposition between the destructive and constructive elements in man generates an intense and powerful drama in his fiction.

Golding's early literary efforts reveal his inner feelings over the flowed universal order and the threat it holds to mankind:

"Dear Sir, he said, "I must confess, this is a chastely ordeal land, but one thing mars its loveliness. The stars are rather out of hand if they would dance a minute. Instead of roaming wild and free, or stand in rows all trim and neat. How exquisite the sky would be!"\textsuperscript{11}'
In an interview with Owen Webster, he is started to have noted that the basic problem of the modern man is "learning to live fearlessly with the natural existence without forcing artificial patterns on it." ¹²

Man is never at peace with himself. His thoughts and action reflect his uneasiness and helplessness. He is in constant fear of being harmed by the unknown. This forces him, in a state of confusion, to be ever at war with his surroundings to satisfy his ego and exhibit his personality. Modern education, modern thoughts, modern living fully project this aspect on the social plane and offer no solution for a better and happy world.

Golding holds that education no longer contributes to one’s knowledge in a way it should. It follows the pattern set by the society and leaves no choice for individual development. Practically, there is no scope for free thinking. One has to adapt one’s self to that which is being taught in order to survive in a materialistic world. As Dr. S. Radhakrishnan points out:

In this hypnotized world most of us do things, which we do not will. Fatalism is gladly accepted by man weary of his will. The world has becomes anonymous, and the individual is last in it. In our educational institution, instead of being trained to develop out powers
and raise our intelligence we are moulded into approved patterns, stuffed with information, and taught to produce correct responses to the stimuli of patriotism, racialism and religion.13’

Golding too, is equally horrified at the way education has been scandalized. In the essay, *On the Crest of the Wave*, he is categorical that education is no longer, what it really ought to be. He observes:

Education still points to the glorious down officially at any rate, but has been brought to see, in a down-to-earth manner, that what we really want is technicians and civil servants and soldiers and air men and that only she can supply the... She still calls, what she is doing ‘education’ because it is proper, a dignified world – but she should call it ‘training’ as with dog.14

Gone are the days, Golding laments, when any person with a sound knowledge of ‘Homer... was thought educated than a bright and inquiring natural philosopher.”15

Now this emphasis however is on “limitless prosperity, health to enable us to live out a dozen television characters, more of everything.”16

And education has to live up to these exacting demands. Naturally, this has led to the sad neglect of philosophy and art. Science dominates all fields of life, so much so that “the man in the
street persuaded by persistent half-truths that 'sciences' is the most important thing in the world.”

However, Golding argues:

An obvious truth is being neglected. Our humanity, our capacity for living together in full and fruitful life, does not reside in knowing them or even in the power to exploit our surroundings. At best these are hobbies and toys adult toys and I for one would not be without them. Our humanity rests in the capacity to make value judgments, unscientific assessments, the power to decide that his just, that unjust. Yet these are precisely the question which 'science' is not qualified to answer with its measurements and analysis. They only can be answered by the methods of philosophy and the arts. We are confusing the immense power. Which the scientific methods give us with the all-important power to make the value judgment, which are the purpose of human education.

The modern scientific age is materialistic. It does not concern itself with social virtues and developing the finer qualities of the human mind. Golding asserts that this is wrong: “Science is not the
most important thing. Philosophy is more important than 'science'; so is history; so is courtesy. come to that, so is aesthetic perception."19"

Unfortunately, there seems to be little understanding of this fact in the modern western man. There is a general deterioration of standards everywhere. The society lacks character and strength. Misery is widespread and the world has become a sinful place to live in.

Man as seen earlier, refuses to accept the fact of his immanence and moral limitation. Rather, he tries to exercise his will and gain possession over his surrounding. It is only imagined as a darkness and is a challenge to his ego-oriented existence. Hence, he cannot coexist with the natural condition of the world without imposing himself on them. "The orthodox Christian, the Marxist, the scientific humanist, and so on." Golding notes," All deny certain experience because they cannot be filled into the more or less rigid patterns by which life is made comprehensible to them."

The society has failed, ironically, to harness the full potentialities of science and technology. Its narrowness of approach has come in the way. Far from being a master, the society has become
a slave. In the play *The Brass Butterfly*, the scientist Phanocles asks Caesar. The Emperor:

Phanocles: Caesar, I conquered the universe, and yet the ants have defeated me. What is wrong with man?

Emperor: Men, a steam ship, or anything powerful, in the hands of man. Phanocles, is like a sharp knife in the hand of Chile. There is nothing wrong with the steam ship. There is nothing wrong with man's intelligence. The trouble is his nature.20.

Golding's novels probe and play with human condition and nature at different levels; comparing and contrasting the good and the bad: the truth and the illusory. He tells about how the evils enter the human mind and how evil thinking makes man's nature selfish. His novels mirror his thoughts:

Jack and his choir in *Lord of Files* are opposed to the steady-minded Ralph and Piggy, in *The Inheritors* the rational has helped the new man to develop technique of oppression against the Neanderthals; Pincher Martin threshes heroically about in his passion but is finally proved wrong however
vigorously his spirit. Sammy in *Free Fall* has always placed his passion and desires before any fair attempt to understand other people. Jocelin in *The Spire* appears to live by his own reason and determination, when all is in fact, founded upon self-depiction and emotional dishonesty. Finally, Oliver in *The Pyramid* sees the truth behind lives that are crippled or destroyed by unhealthy repressiveness.21

Modernization has no doubt enabled rapid progress in direction that have helped many of the material wants of man higher and better production, quicker means of transportation, faster modes of communication, vastly improved condition of health and hygiene. But, at the same time, it has also been responsible for wrecking basic human values which made living worthwhile and good. Life has become so complicated and mechanical now that there is practically no time for enjoying life in all its beauty and sharing it happily with others. Man has become a slave to the mechanic and has allowed himself to be ruled by it. For all our progress, Golding feels that we are in no way different from the ancient Egyptians “with all their unreason spiritual pragmatism and capacity for ambiguous belief.”22

But he says:
We have blinding pride that was foreign to them. We discount the possibility of the potentialities of the human spirit which may operate by other means in other modes to other ends.23’

Instead of being “Purified, secure, wise like Egyptian mummy, there is awe and terror about us, ugliness, pathos, and this finality which we cannot believe is indifference but more like a preoccupation.”24’

Our much vaunted modern technology has driven us to the brink. We pride ourselves in the thoughts that we are a cultured, sophisticated and enlightened race unlike the natives and tribes. But in truth we are no better than them. Proud and vain, we breed hatred, preach the gospel of truth and practice a life of falsehood. We are not true even to ourselves. We are helpless, Golding notes that to: “Achieve salvation, individuality the persona, must be destroyed, false, his “original spirit, God-given...is hopelessly obscured...”25

Man must learn to be humble and pure of heart. He should conquer his own weakness, overcome his sense of pride and feel for himself. Instead of rejecting God and creating darkness of evil deeds
within himself, man must freely submit to the Almighty (God) and learn the: "Technique of dying into heaven". 

In this letter to Mahatma Gandhi Count Leo Tolstoy points out that:

Love is the aspiration for common and solidarity with our souls, and that aspiration always liberates the source of noble activities that is the supreme and unique law of human life, which everyone feels in the depth of one's soul. 

Man has the capacity to counteract his fear and honesty with love. Taumi in *The Inheritors* was able to realize this, "The role of self over another made object is the loss of innocence." 

Hudson observes, one should be magnanimous enough to treat others as equal. To achieve true salvation one must come to terms with oneself and destroy self and awake to the divinity within oneself and in other. With the death of self, and when the world and other men cease to be mere objects for the use of oneself, the spirit can see the "Edenic beauty" inherent in all things. Then "Love flows along". As Sammy found: "The Heart, the physical heart" and "makes love as easy as a bee, makes honey." Golding's greatness, to borrow
Hudson's words lie in his "Perceptiveness as a novelist and his genuine for making re-experience basic feeling and urges."30

Golding says:

In all the books I have suggested a shape in the universe that may, as it were, account for things. The greatest pleasure is not say - sex or geometry, it is just understanding. And if you can get people to understand their own humanity - well that's the job of the writer.31'

Golding, however emphasizes that evil cannot motivate man for long. Ultimately, the good will prevail. He holds that "Salvation and sanity to lie in the complete and honest understanding of the evil that resides in us."32

The traumatic experience which Golding had during the war drove home to him the savagery, cruelty and lust inherent in man's nature. The vileness which civilized people practiced shocked him. Hitlerism in Germany and Stalinism in Russia came not from barbarians but from civilized men and women. These pictures of men shook Golding's faith in human nature and gave a pessimistic tinge to his philosophy He refused to believe with those who fought for a
revolutionary change in the political structure for improvement in the condition of man. He believes that the external power was responsible for evil deeds of man. It was rooted in the depth of his soul."... man produce evil, as a bee produce honey."33

Golding confirms this in a more assertive way in the following statement:

"I am very serious, I believe that man suffers from an appalling ignorance of his own nature. I produce my own view in the belief that it may be something the truth. I am fully engaged in the human dilemma but see it as far more fundamental than a complex of taxes and astronomy."34

Man tries to conceal his baseness under a thin veneer of national prestige. Under these conditions no war is going to be the last so long as man is man, Golding says:

"My own conviction grew that what had happened was that men were putting the cart before the horse. They were looking at the system rather than the people. It seemed to me that man’s capacity for greed, his innate cruelty and selfishness was being
hidden. Behind a kind of pair of political pants. I believed then
that man was sick not exceptional man but average man."35

When one nation was blaming the brutality of war to the
another, William Golding was convinced that it was the result of the
inadequacies of human nature. It was this truth that he wanted to
transmute into his fiction. But the truth was so bitter that he thought
of sugar-coating it with a parable. The growth of evil in man was to
be traced from his innocence to his fallen stage (not theologically but
psychologically) and for this the thought of introducing a band of
children in a novel came easy to a man who had been a teacher for a
number of years. And the example of R.M. Ballantyne’s Coral Island,
written about a century earlier, was before him, Golding caught at it
and sketched the plot of his first novel Lord of the

Ballantyne projects his late against the Victorian backdrop. In it,
three boys – jack aged 18, Ralph 15 and Peterkin Gay 13. escape a
shipwreck only to find themselves on an unidentified and uninhabited
Coral island in the South Pacific. All the three have qualities which
ensure their survival on the Island. They have good time in the
tropical environment for they are without malice or wickedness. Evil
comes to them from outside. They witness scenes of violence and
cruelty among cannibals who frequent island. Further, it is invaded by a horde of prides who succeed in capturing Ralph. Ballantyne suggested that the happiness of the boys is thwarted by a hostile, un-Christian element, for while the former are unblessed savage, the latter are those who have cast away their Christian heritage. At the top of all, in the final scene they undergo a conversion, as it were by a dues ex machine, and the boys are rescued. The story emphasizes an Englishman: "pluck and resourcefulness which subdues tropical island as triumphantly as England imposes empire and religion on lawless breeds of men."36

This was the framework of the story. Which Golding adopted from Ballantyne’s *Coral Island* introducing radical changes to suit his own ends. Golding was free from narrow religion view and insular patriotism. He did not believe that evil could stem only from savages or men who were outside the pole of Christianity. He strictly kept out any religious or political idea, which ruined the civilization the boys tried to build on the Island. The realistic quality of Golding prevented him from accepting the facile Victorian optimism to which Ballantyne was subject. He says:
"You see really, 'I'm getting at myself in this novel. What I am saying to myself is' Don't be such a fool, you remember when you were a boy, a small boy, how I lived on that island with Ralph and Peterkin" (Who is Simon by the way, Simon called Peter, you see. It was worked out very in every possible way, is this novel). I said to myself finally. "Now you are grown up, you are adult, it's taken you a long time to become adult; but now you have got, there you can see that people are not like that; they would not behave like that if they were God-fearing English gentlemen, and they went to an island like that."37

The story of Lord of the is condition by germinal idea in the mind of Golding. About the plot of Lord of the , he thinks characters. Their ages range from six to twelve what other laboratory could be more propitious for the experiment he was going to make. The inference is inescapable: evil unaided by any social, political or economic factor is responsible for the downfall of the boys.

During an atomic war, school boys are evacuated in an aero plane with a detachable passenger tube. The plane passes over Gibraltar and Addis Ababa and is then attacked. The passenger tube, which has been released, lands on an uninhabited island somewhere in
the Pacific. The plane goes off in flames and the remains of the Tube
have been swept out to the sea in a storm. The first to get together are
two boys Ralph, a handsome good-natured boy, and Piggy, a fat
bespectacled boy who suffers from asthmatic attacks. They come upon
a large shining conch shell on which Ralph blows to call other boys
on the island. Among others, there is a distinct group of choirboys
headed by Jack Merrideue. They are called to assembly and plan their
little society on the Island without the help of any grownups. In spite
of the hidden jealousy of Jack, Ralph is elected the leader as he has
the conch—the symbol of Authority.

The adventure of *Lord of the Flies* is about the truth of man
which Golding gradually and systematically reveals, till man's
essential savage self is laid bare. The revelation follows the method of
devaluation.

The presence of the evil in the novel has not been shown in any
concrete form. It is a nameless horror which is experienced by the boys
on the island. Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is a spiritualist force hidden
in the unconscious of man. He believes that educational training,
principles of civilization or social morality have failed to suppress
this wild force emerges from time to time and pays havoc with life.

E L Epstein says:

"The devil is not present in any tradition religious sense; Golding's Beelzebub is the modern equivalent, the anarchic, moral, driving force that Preudians call the Id, whose only function seems to be to ensure the survival of the host in which it is embedded or embodiment, which function it performs with tremendous and single-minded tenacity. Although it is possible to find other names for this force, the modern picture of the personality, whether drawn by the theologians or psychoanalysts, inevitably includes this force, or psychic structure as the fundamental principle of the Natural Man." 38

It is this white-hot instinctive force emerging from the unconscious that finds its manifestation in the antagonism between Ralph and Jack. They are like two continents of experience and feeling, unable to communicate.
REFERENCES


3. Ibid p. 42.


5. Ibid pp. 131-132.


29. *Free Fall*, pp 187-188.


32. Ibid p.19.

33. Ibid p.87.

34. William Golding; "The writer in his Age' in reply to a questionnaire by London Magazine published IV (May, 1957), p.4.


12. Ibid


15. Ibid p.130

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid p.129

18. Ibid p.130.


24. Ibid p.75.