Chapter Three

William Golding: Life and Works

I had read much for my age but saw no point in figures. I had a passion for words in themselves, and collected them like stamps or birds’ eggs. (Golding 1965).

William Gerald Golding was born on 19 September 1911, at Saint Columb Minor, near Newquay in Cornwall in England. It was two years before the First World War broke out. He was raised up in an educated family. His father, Alec Golding was a distinguished English schoolmaster, an author of standard school geography, and a man of academic excellence and astounding versatility and was a strong influence on him. Admiring his father, the polymath, he says: “He was incarnate omniscience. I have never met anybody who could do so much, was interested in so much, and who knew so much.” (Golding 1965: 168). This reflects what kind of picture and influence William Golding had for the world of his father, “the world of sanity and logic and fascination.” His mother, Mildred, was an active supporter of the women’s Suffragette Movement (right to vote) in Britain, a movement that led to the emergence of feminism. (Carter & McRae 1997).

Being one of the two sons born to Alec Golding and living in a house surrounded by ‘the gloom and the crushed wood’ and close to the church graveyard, he grew up relatively with a sense of isolation, which was very strong in his early childhood. In his autobiographical essay entitled “The Ladder and the Tree”, Golding recalled the day of his father rigging up the swing for him which hints at the fear and apprehension of the unknown:

My father amiably rigged me a swing in one dark corner for use on rainy days but I never used it unless he was there – never dared to stay alone with the gloom and crushed wood underground (. . .) When the sun had gone down I did not look at the churchyard at all. I knew how the stones were lengthening, lifting and peering blankly, inscrutably, over the walls. As I went indoors, if I dared a backward glance, or climbed toward the little shot window, I saw how they indeed peer; but up, always over my shoulder or my head, crowded, still, other. Then I would go quickly to my father or my mother or my brother for human company by the fire. (Golding 1965: 166-167).
He was considered to have led a secluded life as a child. He can be seen reflecting this sense, this feeling of being disparate. In his words, he states:

My nights were miserable as it was, with every sort of apprehension given a label, and these even so only outliers of a central, not-comprehended dark. (ibid: 167).

His first day experience at school is also believed to have been suggestive of the type of loneliness he had: “I had known no one outside my own family - nothing but walks with Lily or my parents, and long holidays by a Cornish sea.’ (ibid: 159). He also adds: “I had also a clear picture of what school was to bring me. It was to bring me fights. I lacked opposition, and yearned to be victorious.” (ibid). He further says: “At the end of the morning I was left disconsolate in my desk. The other boys and girls clamoured out purposefully.” (ibid: 161).

For his childhood reading, the juvenile literature had contributed in shaping Golding’s personality. Golding says that he had “a pretty well defined library behind me in childhood to explain the size of my mind and its mental furniture.” (quoted in Hodson 1969: 6). On the other hand, Golding’s youthful world contains in being assiduous reader especially for the classics, ‘not because it was the snobbish thing to do or even the most enjoyable, but because this is where the meat is.’ (quoted in Dick 1965: 18). Baker also affirms that ancient Greeks ‘taken collectively, represents one of the most potent forces in shaping (or confirming) Golding’s conception of human psychology and human fate.’ (1965: xvii).

When he was ten, Golding was sent for his secondary education to the Marlborough Grammar School where his father was a science teacher. After that, in 1930, at the age of nineteen, Golding attended the Brasenose College at the University of Oxford. Though he began writing when he was just seven, he, in compliance with his parents’ wish, was enrolled to major in natural sciences and to be qualified a ‘microscopist.’ Yet his interest in literature was predominant. Golding grew more and more intrigued with literature, and suddenly
switched over to the field of English literature after spending two years or so studying science at Oxford. Golding’s decision to leave science had been the result of deep liking and inclination for Greek literature, which for him: “seems ( . . ) to lie closest to the object. The words, the Greek words seem . . . to lie nearer or perhaps even more in the thing they stand for, than those of any other language.” (Carey 1986: 182). Though Golding’s science experience did not last long, it had exerted an obvious influence in his fiction. His novels, a possible exception, is *The Pyramid*, show consistent thematic motif which describes the dichotomy between religious and scientific rationalism. The break-up at this academic stage, ‘ have remained,’ Oldsey and Weintraub (1965: 8) observe, ‘ apparent in his writings. . .his academically split personality, his science-versus-the-humanities point of view, and his habit of running literary experiments which still smack of the laboratory he rejected.’

With his keen interest in Anglo-Saxon and Greek literature, he read *The Battle of Maldon*, and Homer and Euripides respectively, which he believes to have been major influence upon his own writing. (Livingston 1967). He further, in more than one interview, stresses his love for Greek literature:

> If I really had to adopt literary parentage – I don’t see why I should - but if I really had to adopt it, I should name thunderous great names like Euripides, and Sophocles, and perhaps even Herodotus. And I might go so far as to say that I have a profound admiration, illogical as it may sound, for Homer. (quoted in Baker 1965: Preface).

Golding also relates his interest and literary influence in literature to the Greek tradition, which often intrudes upon the form of his novels. In his interview with Baker (1982: 165-166), he illustrates:

> So the Greek tragedy as a form, a classical form, is very much there. The idea of the character who suffers a disastrous fall through a flaw in his character (. . .) So it does really stem as much from Greek tragedy as much as anything else.

Golding also read Ballantyne, H. G. Wells, Henty, Burroughs and Huxley. Yet his literary interest in the doctrine of such writings may share the same skeleton but different
souls or ways of handling issues. Golding (1982) vigorously maintains that, “one book does not come out of another unless it is still born.” (quoted in Dick 1967: Preface). He also stresses the fact the each novel should have its own, “unique pattern” and not to be repeated (quoted in Hodson 1969: 2):

It seems to me that there’s really very little point in writing a novel unless you do something that either you suspected you couldn’t do, or which you are pretty certain nobody else has tried before. I don’t think there’s any point in writing two books that are like each other.

In his undergraduate days, he dabbled in poetry and succeeded in writing his first book, a collection of twenty-nine short poems. At the age of twenty-one, he was the author of his first literary effort, Poems that was part of Macmillan’s Contemporary Poets Series in 1934. This work reflected the author’s first love with literature. Such a poetical attempt foreshadowed his apprentice literary inclination, which later on led to the emergence, in his literary career, of a new genre of writing (i.e., fiction). Feeling regretful, Golding abandoned poetry, as poetry was not his metier. In an interview with Dick (1965: 480), Golding stated: “I don’t own a copy . . . Actually I’d rather forget it . . . You might say I write prose because I can’t write poetry.” He further stated:

I remember the awe with which I contemplated my first finished set of verses and thought it was a poem ( . . . ) When I was twenty-one, a friend sent my verses to a publisher who in a moment of blindness offered to publish them ( . . . ) I wonder how big my fanmail would be. (Golding 1965: 27).

He attended college at Oxford and graduated in 1935. He then left for London where he practised different talents, which demonstrate his artistic personality. He worked in small theatre companies like the Little Theatre at Hampstead. He joined as a part-time actor, writer and a producer of small plays for a small, non-commercial theatre; one of the roles he played was Danny in Emlyn Williams’ Night Must Fall. Born in a musicians’ family, he practised music. He played the piano, the cello, the oboe, the violin and the viola. Music, for a great writer like Golding, is no doubt an emotional discharge for he said, “certainly music has
played an immense part in my life.” (Carey 1986: 179). He also taught in Maidstone Grammar School and there in Maidstone he used to have evening classes at Maidstone jail ‘trying to keep the place alive.’ (ibid.).

In 1937, he returned to Oxford and studied for a Diploma in Education. One year later, he started his teaching career at Bishop Wordsworth’s School, a grammar school in Salisbury. In 1939 and after the declaration of war, he married Ann Brookfield, an analytical chemist, and they had two children David (b. 1940) and Judith (b. 1945). Right after he began teaching English and philosophy, he was called upon to join the Royal Navy at the age of twenty-nine, 1940, where he served on minesweepers, destroyers and cruisers. Commissioned as lieutenant, he took over a rocket ship until the end of the Second World War during which he witnessed the D-Day invasion and participated in the chasing of the German warship, Bismarck that ended in its sinking.

It was during the war years that Golding’s belief about the goodness of humanity was shattered. The brutalities of combat sickened him and made him believe in ‘the vileness beyond all words that went on, year after year, in the totalitarian states.’ (1965: 86-87). The obsession of Second World War, indisputably, had a dramatic impact on the life and art of William Golding that dominates his early novels, Lord of the Flies, for example. It shook, if not at all destroyed, his belief in the goodness of humanity. This is dramatically crystallised in the following statement:

When I was young, before the war, I did have some airy-fairy views about man (…) But I went through the War and that changed me. The war taught me different and a lot of others like me. (quoted in Hodson 1969: 11).

This also gives an impression that the war had created new dramatic insights of ‘the irrationality of men in conflict.’ (Baker 1965: Preface). It ‘had demonstrated all the horrendous cruelties of which man was capable’ (Gindin 1988: 4) and which changed his youthful views about the world. He states: “I do remember asking myself in my innocence -
or ignorance - why the world was not like that and was too young to know the answer.” (Golding 1982: 177).

Deeply affected, Golding also reminds us of the creepy, shocking incidents he experienced and the various atrocities, that had effect on his outlook, he states:

I must say that anyone who moved through those years without understanding that man produces evil as a bee produces honey, must have been blind or wrong in the head. (ibid: 87).

The statement “Man produces evil as a bee produces honey” summarises all what Golding had in mind about man and which runs throughout his novels, the diabolic nature; and the comparison here ‘as a bee produces honey’ assuredly indicates Golding’s belief that man’s propensities for violence is natural as that of a ‘bee’.

In 1945, William Golding returned to Bishop’s Wordsworth’s School in Salisbury where he resumed teaching career for nearly ten years to support his family. Meanwhile he experimented with his writing talent and wrote several novels but failed to find a publisher, as ‘they weren’t any good’ and did not carry his own voice or themes. Then he took a new path in the search for his own, individual style to become a real novelist other than a writer whose work ‘was merely writing other people’s novels instead of my own.’ (quoted in Page 1985: 9). This belief granted him the strategy of the first-hand facts of his own life to test his views of human nature.

In the post-war period, he committed himself to writing in the true sense. In 1952, he wrote Strangers from Within, a novel, which was turned down by no less than twenty-one publishers. He submitted it in 1953 to a newly established publishing firm namely Faber. However, it was rejected by the Book Committee for the reason that it was ‘An absurd and uninteresting fantasy about the explosion of an atomic bomb on the colonies of a group of children who land in jungle country near New Guinea.’ (Carey 1986: 57).
Reconsidering the novel again the committee found it promising and ‘potentially powerful’ and advised that it should have several re-readings. Contacting the author came at a later stage where he was asked for some revisions in the structure and content of the novel. William Golding sent back his amended version of it, which satisfied the publisher. However, another problem cropped up and that was the title. The title was not that catchy. William Golding then did not object rather began to suggest alternatives among which were ‘A Cry of Children’, ‘Nightmare Island’, ‘To Find an Island’ till they agreed upon the title ‘Lord of the Flies’ suggested by one of the editors at Faber, a title which enjoys subtlety and symbolic significance as far as evil, in Golding’s intentions, is concerned.

*Lord of the Flies* is the literal translation of the Hebrew ‘Beelzebub’ which denotes the devilish spirit, to borrow the Greek term, the Dionysian factor; sometimes it is also translated as ‘Lord of the Dung’, the filth that attracts the flies over. So Golding found in *Lord of the Flies* the vessel that can fully contain his motif and ideology of the corrupt character of man. (Dick 1967: 27).

At the age of forty-five, he became more famous, with his stunning debut established, when his *Lord of the Flies* was eventually published in 1954. It was translated into many languages and later was filmed in 1963. This success raised his aspirations and strengthened his confidence as a writer in full mastery of his art and craft. The gap that lasted since the publication of the poems and the achievement of *Lord of the Flies*, he believes, was for the austere reason that he considered himself a copier, a borrower or a parodist and so his novels should bear his own personal stamp: “so my novels were splendid examples of other people’s work. And it was only when I was so far from succeeding that I thought, well, to hell with that lot. I’ll write my own book and devil take the hindmost. Then I wrote *Lord of the Flies***”. (Carey 1986: 189).
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*Lord of the Flies* is a gripping fable which narrates the story of a group of English boys aged twelve and downwards, who are evacuated due to the atomic attack on Britain, find themselves marooned on a deserted island after the shooting down of the plane. The group of boys, though fascinated by the charm of the island, has to do with the essentials for their survival.

As the story progresses and the stress of the situation reach its brim, characters change dramatically, and we come to see the dark side of the boys as their life of civility slide out. The boys divide into two warring factions: the rational society represented by Ralph, the protagonist who shows decency and readiness to seek rescue and the primitive one represented by Jack, the antagonist marked by violence and wickedness. Gradually the boys start acting evil and lapse into savagery and then lead a life of barbarism where murder becomes part of their life. In this novel Golding shows, that evil element erupts in man when the societal constraints are removed.

Here in this novel Golding has made it real clear that he had a firm idea in introducing the mystical devastating nature of human being. Simon, in his hallucinatory confrontation with *Lord of the Flies* represented by the personified impaled pig’s head, it said ‘I’m part of you ... Close, Close, Close!’, remarkably provides the clue to Golding’s vision that evil is only within ourselves. It reflects and echoes what is assumed to be evil which is latent in human soul. Apparently enough this novel reveals that evil element erupts in man when the societal constraints are removed. This conclusion goes against other adventure novels like Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island* (1857). *Lord of the Flies* differs from the two adventure books in its dictum, in other words, in the way it approaches the nature of man. Discerning that human beings are morally sickened, Golding traces man’s chaos back to his or her diseased nature that has nothing to do with the goodness or badness of society, he elaborates that:
a correct structure of society would produce goodwill; and that therefore you could remove all social ills by a reorganization of society . . . but after the war I did not because I was unable to. I had discovered what one man could do to another. (Golding 1965: 86).

His thesis about man is also elaborated in his detailed essay “Fable” where he describes the breakdown in *Lord of the Flies* as the mere outcome of man being inherently evil:

So the boys try to construct a civilization on the island; but it breaks down in blood and terror because the boys are suffering from the terrible disease of being human. (ibid: 89).

In the same line of argument, he further illustrates that what led the ‘earthly paradise’ to destruction and civilisation to breakdown is, ‘simply and solely’ the iniquity of boy’s nature, (. . .) “the nature of the brute.” (ibid: 89). Unlike Ballantyne who looks at man as a more civilised and much wiser especially if they are encountered with extreme, painful situations. The boys in Ballantyne’s novel were “managed to create and idyllic society”. That is, Ballantyne presents a utopian picture of the world. The boys in Golding’s novel desperately failed to keep their ‘earthly paradise’ and became a place for hunting not only animals but humans as well, that is, their behaviour turned to be barbaric and not civilised as that of Ballantyne’s novel. That is to say, Golding overturned Ballantyne and rendered an image which he believes to be a ‘realistic view’. Golding did not believe that evil is there somewhere outside as Ballantyne did in his juvenile novel, *The Coral Island*; rather he believed that the predicament rests upon the fact that evil resides in human heart. Carl Niemeyer maintains that: “Ballantyne’s book raises the problem of evil - which comes to the boys not from within themselves but from the outside world;” (quoted in Golding 1965: 88) whereas the externalisation of evil has no place in Golding’s novels.

A year later, his second, fictional tour de force novel, *The Inheritors* was published. This novel is reported to be his favourite. Adhering to the search of revealing the nature of man, he brilliantly presents another type of conflict. As *Lord of the Flies* shows how some children turn savages, hunting and killing the other group of children that seeks decencies
and democracy in their new environment, *The Inheritors* (1955) on the other hand extends the author’s point of view and amplifies the moral thesis of the cause of the falling of man. *The Inheritors* narrates a violent conflict of a small group of innocent, simple-minded Neanderthaler known as the ‘people’ and an aggressive, larger and more powerful tribe known as ‘the new people’, Homo sapiens. It is worth mentioning that ‘Lok’ is a Sanskrit word meaning ‘man’. And so it can be compared to ‘Beelzebub.’

The novel opens with a group of eight people toiling back to their summer caves in the mountains. To their surprise, the log that bridges the two banks of the river has gone away. The ‘people’ should have another log to reach the other bank of the river. So they lay another tree trunk across the river. In the attempt to cross over the new log, one of the tribe named Mal falls in the cold water, which sets him sick. When they reach their old cave, Mal dies. The people go in search of food and wood. Once they are back home, they discover that Ha does not return. Lok, a man in the tribe, rushes to find him unaware of the danger awaiting him. While searching for Ha, he discovers the new scent of the *Homo sapiens*. He amicably calls out, ‘New People! New People! Where is Ha?’ The new people who fear the people’s existence shoot a poisoned arrow at him and Lok perceives the killing attempt as gifting him something. With Ha’s disappearance and the new people’s presence, they conclude that Ha might have gone off with them.

In a raid by the new people on the Neanderthaler’s cave, they kidnap Liku and the new one, the female child and a baby respectively. They murder Nil and the old woman and extinguish the fire. Lok and the other female, Fa, intend to rescue the others but their attempts end in failure. They plan again to steal the two children back. Under the cover of the night, the two people reach the inheritor’s camp. They find the ‘new people’ in amidst their worshipping rituals that end in the cannibalistic killing of Liku. Lok finds himself away from Fa who later is wounded. Trying to escape the new people, she is carried over the waterfall to
her death. Lok, crying over the ashes of Liku as did before Ralph upon the arrival of the officer, is left alone, to die. With the small Neanderthal baby stolen, the new people sail away in fear; and Tuami, one of the new people, figures out that sailing away from the island of the “red devils” will not rescue them from the evil inherent in their own nature.

As *Lord of the Flies* was the product of his literary influences and where he challenged and refuted the ideals of the English society, this novel tells again of another of Golding’s influential literary writer, H. G. Wells. Yet, again, he subverted the rationalist cant of Wells. (Kinkead-Weekes & Gregor 1967). He offered an ironic view, which goes against Wells’ *The Outline of History* (1920). Being anti-Wellsian, Golding states, “I would attack his simplistic view of history and his simplistic view of the nature of man (…)” (*Twentieth Century Literature* 1982:138). Golding’s anti-utopian convictions are explicit enough and overtly stated in his essay ‘Utopias and Antiutopias’:

> We must produce *homo moralis*, the human being who cannot kill his own kind, nor exploit them nor rob them. Then no one will need to write utopias, satires or antiutopias for we shall be inhabitants of utopia . . . . (Golding 1982: 184).

His next novel, *Pincher Martin* (first published in the United States under the title-*The Two Deaths of Christopher Martin*), appeared in 1956. As with the case of the previous two novels, *Pincher Martin* is also a product of literary influence, namely, the *Prometheus myth*. Apart from the analysis of mankind’s generic illness as manifest in the previous novels, Golding offers a new examination of the thesis focusing on one individual character rather than on the group as dynamic interactions.

The main plot of *Pincher Martin* centres on the eponymous naval officer. Christopher Hadley Martin (nicknamed as Pincher) who is the sole survivor and whose warship is torpedoed in the mid Atlantic during the Second World War. Upon striking his destroyer, he is immediately blown off the deck and into the sea where he heroically struggles, “in every direction, he was the centre of the writhing and kicking knot of his own body.” (Golding
1956: 7). In an attempt to survive, he kicks off his seaboots and inflates his lifebelt. Resisting the forces of the ocean, he eventually clings to “a tiny rock.” There he struggles for six days in the mid of the ocean. He endures pain and sufferings: he drinks from a pool of rain water, eats seaweed, limpets, mussels, talks to himself, constructs a stone and calls it the Dwarf and makes a pattern of seaweed as signals for rescue. He gets poisoned of eating sea anemones and suffers constipation and he injects himself an enema. While he is on the rock, he restores the stripe of his past, ruthless, miserable life encrusted with self-centredness and cruelty toward others. These flashbacks reveals a man who, “had no belief in anything but the importance of his own life; no love, no God.” (Golding on Pincher Martin, quoted in Dick 1967: 49), he discloses that he is a totally greedy, hateful man. He satisfies himself whatever the cost is. He uses people for the assertion of self. He is so fiendish that he even kills his best friend, Nathaniel.

In the course of his struggle, he continually reasserts his own identity so that he does not lose sanity in his encounter with the annihilating environment: “I am what I always was!” (ibid: 76). He is finally washed away dead coming to know that he dies the moment he is thrown into the sea. Drawn in the Atlantic, he is washed ashore. It is only on the last page where his body is recovered that a reader astonishingly comes to know that that miraculous survival only exists in the mind of a dying man.

‘If you are worried about Martin - whether he suffered or not-’

( . . . ).

Mr. Cambell sighed.

‘Aye,’ he said, ‘I meant just that.’

‘Then don’t worry about him. You saw the body. He didn’t even have time to kick off his seaboots’ (PM: 208)

The doomed six-day survival is nothing but a momentary lapse of time before his death that happened on page two, the moment he cries, ‘Moth--.’ Dominated by his ravenous ego, he refuses to succumb to any power even ‘the selfless act of dying’ as simply
forgotten shipwrecked sailor; it convinces Martin that he is still alive creating “his own murderous nature.” Stubbornly, ‘he refuses to admit he’s dead and constructs a universe of his own that’s gradually taken to pieces.’ (Golding 1982: 142). It is this ego of Martin that exists between the body and reason that keeps resisting the casual death. Golding describes this greedy force as the, “centre”:

There was at the centre of all pictures and pains and voices a fact like a bar of steel, a thing – that which was no nakedly the centre of everything that it could not even examine itself. In the darkness of the skull, it existed, a darker dark, self-existent and indestructible. (PM: 45).

After a gap of almost three years, William Golding came out again with the fourth novel, *Free Fall* (1959). This novel is also a parody of Dante’s *La Vita Nuova* (The Poems of Youth). Golding describes *Free Fall* as, “the patternlessness of life.” Taking a new direction in his literary career, Golding presents a new mode of writing - switching from third person narrative to first person narrative, from exotic, remote and isolated settings as on island, in sea, in pre-history, or on a rock, to the more open, contemporary social world. *Free Fall*, like its immediate predecessor, deals with an individual. Yet the theme is more personal and more individual in which society has a role to do in shaping the life of an individual. Another significant difference relates to Golding’s continuing quest for self-knowledge. He offers a new mode of vision - from characters being evil, or avoiding recognising the truth of their own nature, like Martin, to characters in the search of understanding their own evil, in other words, characters in search of truth. (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 1967).

*Free Fall* is about an artist named Sammy Mountjoy who is the narrator of the story. Sammy, who lives his earliest years in the slums of Rotten Row, is born illegitimate to a promiscuous charwoman and an unknown father. In his school days, he is persuaded to defile the altar of the local church. Having caught in the act, he is so struck by the verger on the ear that he is taken to hospital. While in hospital his mother dies. He is then adopted by the local vicar and sent for education in the grammar school where he discovers his talent for drawing
and falls in love with Beatrice Ifor. After he finishes school, he goes to London to study art and become a painter. There he also joins the Communist Party. Thereafter he manages to have sex with Beatrice under the pretext of marrying her. Later he abandons her for a girl named Taffy, a party fellow. He marries her and they have a child. Coming to know of the marriage, Beatrice suffers permanent mental collapse and is admitted to an asylum.

During World War II he serves as a war artist. He is by the Germans captured and imprisoned in a stark dark cell. While he is held in captivity, he discovers his “own interior identity.” (Golding 1959: 190). The experience, that forces him to retrospectively recalls all his ‘yesterdays’ that have passed in order to figure out why things went wrong. He looks back and forth in his store of memories. He examines his childhood as a fatherless boy in Rotten Row; he searches his chaotic school days and the smacks of innocence, at the rectory, and his amative romance with Beatrice who is jilted after he has satisfied himself and who has lost her sanity upon hearing his being married to the new girl. All this examination of his life is to find out the knot that led to what he is now; to find the moment where, “he sees the better path and chooses the worse,” in other words, “where did I lose my freedom?” (ibid: 5) Sammy asks himself. Although all these attempts to find an answer to this burning question rendered almost the same answer: ‘No. Not here.’ (ibid: 132) except the last one ‘Here?’ (ibid: 236) The guilt he has committed upon Beatrice keeps haunting him. Thus, he dedicates himself to search for the moment when, why and where he has surrendered his freedom, and lost the power to choose. Sammy Mountjoy speaks:

But then what I am looking for? I am looking for the beginning of responsibility, the beginning of darkness, the point where I began. (FF: 47).

Amid the terror and the blackness of the cell, Dr. Halde, his interrogator, discloses the mediocrity of his character, the state of consciousness he has grown up with:

You do not believe in anything enough to suffer for it or be glad (. . .) you wait in a dusty waiting room on no particular line for no particular train. And between the poles of belief in material things and the belief in a world made
and supported by a supreme being, you oscillate jerkily from day to day, from hour to hour. (FF: 144).

It is only when he recalls the words of his headmaster on graduation day that he finds some consolation to the dilemma he is in and is able to trace his life back to the exact point in which he is no longer free to choose, the point at which he has imposed a ‘pattern’ on his life. “If you want something enough, you can always get it provided you are willing to make the appropriate sacrifice.” (ibid: 235). The decision once taken freely and cost him his freedom is now almost clear. “Behind the premeditated exploitation of Beatrice (the first bitter fruit of his fall),” Baker explains, “there lies a decision in which his natural innocence was confounded and destroyed.” (1965: 62). Sammy concludes, in his quest for a pattern, there are two worlds, and both are real. Yet, “There is no bridge,” resulting in the free fall of Sammy Mountjoy.

What we notice in this literary period is that *Lord of the Flies*, *Pincher Martin* and *Free Fall* share the fact that the Second World War considerably influenced William Golding. More specifically, the war element is present in each novel. Interesting is that Golding is not a war novelist. He made use of war as a background but did not talk about war for the war itself. He did not write about soldiers or battles but war is taken as a point of departure for a revelation of what he believes in the problem of man to learn, “to live fearlessly with the natural chaos of existence, without forcing artificial pattern on it.” (quoted in Baker 1965: 55-56). Therefore, it goes without saying that war had influenced Golding and his writings. Another of Golding’s interests and passion that can be seen in his *Free Fall* and *The Scorpion God* is Egyptian civilisation. Another more interesting factor that played a large part in determining both the content and tenor of his writing was his time and experience as a school teacher. His pervasive contact and experience with the world of children in his school days made of him a fly on a wall watching, observing and witnessing the world of rudeness. The years he spent with small boys as a father and a teacher enabled him to ‘understand and
know them with awful precision.’ (Golding 1965: 88). In an interview with Davis, Golding illustrates the experience one gets from being a teacher of small boys.

If you teach small boys for a number of years, you do learn about not only about small boys . . . we can see ourselves mirrored in the behaviour of the small boys. It is a small step to understand from there what people can do.

William Golding continued his brilliant career with the publication of *The Spire* (1964). Unlike *Lord of the Flies*, which was written in almost four months, *The Inheritors* in twenty-eight days or *Pincher Martin* in three weeks, *The Spire* took much longer. It took, reportedly, five years to be completed. The five-year effort for *The Spire* seems to have been Golding’s exigency to unite in a single vision the duality that threatened to tear Sammy Mountjoy apart. In this novel, we are presented with a profound self-conflict between the spiritual and the rational forces. Crompton points out: ‘*The Spire* is about a conflict between Faith and Reason and at its profoundest levels it is still concerned with that conflict.’ (1985: 31).

*The Spire* narrates the story of Jocelin, Dean of an English cathedral who thinks he has been obsessed by a divine vision to build a four hundred-foot stone spire on the already existing church. This vision, he believes, descends from God and that he is God’s messenger on earth. He commissions the construction of the spire. This instruction of the addition of the new spire brings a general opposition. He is confronted with acrimonious protest by the chancellor of the cathedral, Pangall, the impotent caretaker, for he believes they will suffer a lot of lose both spiritual and pecuniary. This sense of apprehension is also shared by his lifelong friend and confessor, Anslem, who disapproves of the construction of the spire. Even though, he ignores the opposition and the advice and continues his visionary dream for, “They don’t know ( . . .) they can’t know until I tell them of my vision.” (Golding 1964: 4).

On the day of work, Roger Mason, the master builder, finds the foundation inadequate and warns of the pillars being unable to support such a massive spire for one
reason that the church is floating over a patch of swampy ground. In an attempt to persuade the master builder, Jocelin reassures him that building the shaft is ‘the highest prayer’, that they are both chosen for the job. He is directed by the will of God that he is blessed with the presence of an angel whose warmth he always feels at his back.

Nothing deters Jocelin from fulfilling his vision no matter how massive corrupt the costs and sacrifices are. Neglecting his spiritual duties, he pursues the work relentlessly to be completed in spite of his tubercular spine. This is for the urge of his egoistical nature for self glory. He sacrifices everything for the sake of his doomed divine dream: “Cost what you like.” (ibid: 35). He knows the master builder has an affair with Pangall’s young wife, Goody but he ignores such a relationship lest he will lose the services of the master builder: “She will keep him here.” (ibid: 59). Though, at first he is repulsed to have known of their love affair as he bears sexual intentions to Goody. He is funded corrupt money from a, Lady Alison, formerly mistress to the king who looks for a tomb for herself in the church. He also forces the Master builder and army of workmen to proceed with the construction of the monument through illegal means. Building the spire has brought pain and disorder into human lives. Pangall is made a butt by the pagan workmen. Later he is kidnapped and murdered by the workmen as a sacrifice to ward off any impending disaster. Goody dies in child birth of adulterous relationship which Jocelin abets. A workman slips off the scaffolding and dies. The town has suffered the ill-mannered behaviour by the pagan workmen that riot and disrupt the peacefulness of the town and the cathedral itself.

The consequences of the construction of the spire bring Jocelin horror and distress. Recognising that his ‘guardian angel’ is a devil in disguise that whitens the black and beautify the ugly at one end and tortures his spine at the other end, Jocelin gradually becomes aware of his deep darkness. He discovers his guilt holding himself responsible for the deaths
and sufferings of others. As he lies dying of his tubercular spine, the spire stands high. The spire does not topple, only Jocelin has fallen. (Oldsey and Weintraub 1965:130).

By 1964 Golding had five novels to his credit; novels which enjoy seriousness in handling human issues. Each novel examined a moral dilemma, which, he believes, to be universal. His vision seems to be consistent in all the first five novels, in which the fabulous or mythical form marks their individuality of a single doctrine represented by the complexities of human nature. *Lord of the Flies* explores the problem of evil element in human nature; *The Inheritors* traces the rootedness of badness in prehistory ancestors; *Pincher Martin* deals with the egoistical nature of Pincher Martin. With *Free Fall* Golding takes a new turn in his literary career and presents a novel which is concerned not only with the predicament of guilt labelled as ‘evil’ but also of the reasons for such irrationality. *The Spire* makes a comeback, a resurgence to the earlier method of the first three novels in terms of setting (which is remote) and doctrine, the nature of man which is Golding’s ultimate concern.

*The Pyramid*, Golding’s sixth novel, was published in 1967. *The Pyramid*, by form, is a collection of three sections. Two of the three sections appeared earlier in different periodicals: the first was published in 1967, the *Kenyon Review* as *On the Escarpment*, and the third was published in 1966 as *Inside the Pyramid* in *Esquire*. *The Pyramid* takes a new dimension in presenting a moral issue and depicting the human nature in a comic social context and which is told, like *Free Fall*, from a first person point of view.

*The Pyramid* is set in the tiny English village of Stilbourne and narrated by the protagonist, Oliver, son of a chemist. It details the growth of Oliver from childhood to middle age. The main outline of the story is the revelation of the complexities of the English society “which is paralysed to the point of immobility by its obsession with class and the niceties of social behaviour.” (McCarron 1994: 31). Social differences impose upon them many tensions
in a society bristled with violence, exploitation, and hypocrisy. In the story, it is shown how an adolescent looks at life in a city, which is severely based on social class discrimination. In his adolescent days with Bobby, Oliver recollects:

You’re my slave.
No I’m not.
Yes you are. My father’s a doctor and yours is only his dispenser. (TP: 23).

The first part of the novel occurs in the early 1930s when Oliver is only eighteen waiting for the start of his first graduate study at Oxford, yet, torn between his love for music and the prospect of a new career in chemistry. This period also reveals Oliver’s hopeless love for the soon-to-be-married Imogen Grantley. It also discloses the early intimation of sexual desires with Evie Babbacombe, daughter of the janitor of the town hall. His infatuation for Evie Babbacombe is encouraged for she belongs to the low class and so easy to hunt. Besides, her torrid relationship with Robert, the doctor’s son has triggered in him that she is an easily “accessible” girl whom he thinks more mature and more experienced. His seduction of Evie Babbacombe is the product of his own inner selfishness to satisfy his sexual desires: “I would get Evie to a place where I might wreck my wicked will.” (ibid: 56). Later in her romance affair with Oliver, she discovers that he is selfish and knows that it is her “damned body” that matters and no love, no affection is to be hoped for. After a gap of two years, Oliver returns to Stilbourne longing for Evie. Chatting in the Crown’s Saloon one evening, she is offended, reproaching Oliver for his stubborn mind-rooted social prejudices. She then scandalises Oliver that he has tried to rape her.

The second part of the novel is a flashback of events which forms the first stage his life. This part contributes to the dispelling of Oliver’s illusions about the society. Upon realising that Oliver is selfish, Evie leaves to disappear forever from Oliver’s life. He is at Oxford majoring in chemistry. When back to Stilbourne, he reluctantly attends the activities of the Operatic Society in Stilbourne. This period also covers his encounter with Evelyn De
Tracy, the grotesque and homosexual composer hired to produce the society’s version of *The King of Hearts*. This participation at the music society brings Oliver face to face with his first love, Imogen, now married.

The third part depicts the return of the fully-grown up Oliver. His last visit to Stilbourne in 1963 triggers a chain of reminiscences, span from his childhood to middle age, of his adventure with his former music teacher, Miss Dawlish, (better known as Bounce) and of her role in determining his future. He renounces, before her grave, that his assumed ‘devotion’ to her has actually been hatred. He recalls her life with Henry Williams whose success in business is built upon Bounce’s destruction. Oliver sees himself in Williams, who both ‘would never pay more than a reasonable price.’ (ibid: 217). This time, having discovered his own humanity, he asserts that both Williams and he can not love selflessly. Soon he leaves Stilbourne.

At the more abstract levels, each episode traces ‘the progress of Oliver’s psychological development’. Each shows the transformation of Oliver’s attitude from indiscrete adolescence, to mental turbulence and finally to the awakening awareness of the complexities of human beings.

In all his novels, William Golding traces the complexities of existence to the problem in the depths of man’s nature. However, the motif of *The Pyramid* has something different to say of the source of the intricacies in human nature. Dickson (1990: 98) points out that *The Pyramid* suggests:

> the external society rather than an inner evil is the source of Oliver’s problems. From *Lord of the Flies* to *The Spire*, Golding has implied that a corrupt individual can eventually corrupt his society. In *The Pyramid*, a corrupt society impedes individual moral choice.

In 1971, Golding launched his seventh novel, *The Scorpion God*. It is a volume of three novellas of prehistory and antiquity: *The Scorpion God*, the title story, *Clonk Clonk* and a reprinting of *Envoy Extraordinary*. The interesting note about these three short novels is
that they are a product of Golding’s fascination with the past, especially Greek and Egyptian history.

*The Scorpion God* is set in the most ancient past of Egypt. It tells the life of an Egyptian king called the ‘Great House’ meaning ‘Pharaoh’, and his Egyptian followers who believe that the king is God-incarnate and do “everything in public that other people do in private, and everything in private that other people do in public.” (Baker 1982: 158). In other words, they see incest as natural whereas unrelated sex is treated as taboo.

The king has to undergo a ritual race once every seven years. He has to run along “the field”, the course in which the river moves, to prove his constant supernatural powers in restoring the flow of water and hence the rise of the river which is everybody’s wish. If the king fails to accomplish the race or if the river does not flow high enough, then he and his household are sent to death. In this ritual practice, the ‘Liar’, an outsider, known as the jester, who amuses the king by telling jokes and funny stories, accompanies him. The ‘Liar’ is in fact the king’s real antagonist for his disbelief in the king’s water-rising powers.

Having failed to achieve the race, the king and his chosen ones are driven to death by the order of the ‘Head Man’, the priest. In the process, The Liar, the king’s favourite, ‘refused the gift of eternal life’ (Golding 1971: 54) and so he is thrown into ‘the pit.’ Later on, he is insisted to join the house of life with the buried king as the Head Man discovers his illicit relationship with Princess Pretty Flower, the king’s daughter that goes against the kingdom’s orthodoxies. As the confrontation intensifies, the Head Man orders the death of the Liar. In an attempt to escape, the Liar snatches a soldier’s spear and stings the Head Man “like a scorpion.” (ibid: 62).

Unlike his previous fiction, *Clonk Clock* is an optimistic and comic story. Set in prehistory, it depicts the world of an African matriarchal tribe which looks at life asplayfulness and hunting, and no place for violence. As the men are interested in hunting so
their names follow what they encounter in the jungle, like Angry Elephant, Leopard Man, Furious Lion, and Rutting Rhino. Similarly, the women are given names according to what they eat or make like Palm, Cherry or Little Fish. In other words, their names serve as a mirror to their surroundings. Playing and hunting is all what men do and follow as their daily routine. Women, other than home chores, brew alcohol, grow plants, bring up children and even set up shelters.

Thematically, the story revolves around two main characters - Palm, the Head Woman, and Chimp, a male flute-player, who suffers a physical weakness. Crippled, he encounters challenging turns which keep him away from taking part and joining the other hunters. Therefore, he is physically looked upon as inferior and treated as an outcast in comparison to the other hunters. Yet, this social view swiftly changes and he is easily integrated in the group. This is the idea the author wants to inject as to what happens in such societies.

Envoy Extraordinary is the third novella in the collection. Though it is the last, chronologically it is the first to be written for it was published in 1956 in a collection entitled ‘Sometimes, Never: Three Tales of Imagination’, which also included other two contributions by ‘John Wyndham’ and ‘Mervyn Peake’. Later on in 1957, this story was made a play and was retitled The Brass Butterfly.

The story, set in the ancient times of the Roman Empire, narrates the confrontation between a Roman Emperor and a genius Greek inventor, Phanocles. With the trio of inventions: a pressure cooker, a steamship and a missile, he tries to get his inventions accepted so that he obtains the Emperor’s sponsorship. The Caesar, however, approves of the pressure cooker and disapproves of the other two inventions, as he would “usher in the entire modern age a thousand years too soon (. . .).” (Baker 1982: 159). Being distasteful to such
discoveries, the Emperor offers Phanocles the post of an ambassador. He finally sends him to China as ‘Envoy Extraordinary’ with his inventions.

For a period of nearly eight years, Golding fell silent. However, this silence was broken up with the publication of his eighth novel, *Darkness Visible* in 1979, suppressing all the critics’ expectations that he was no longer at his best. *Darkness Visible* is, like its companions, still preoccupied with man’s proclivity for evil. Boyd (1988: 128) maintains that:

> The sense of the eternal nature of man’s wickedness notwithstanding, *Darkness Visible* does convey a sense of prophetic urgency, a sense that evil in our time is burgeoning, is spiralling toward some awful end, that the foul brew of the cup of abominations is brim full and about to bubble over.

Full of pain and pathos, *Darkness Visible* opens in a very horrific and terrifying manner. With apocalyptic flames devouring the city of London after a bombing attack during the Second World War, a small child astoundingly plunges out of the raging inferno. Horribly mutilated, he is rushed to a hospital. Miraculously saved, he suffers grotesquely permanent disfigurement in the face, which makes of him a butt for the boys in the foundlings’ school and later at work. Unknown to everybody even to himself, he is given the name of Matty. He is physically deformed; yet, he is innocent, selfless and leads a life of virtue. Therefore, he is seen as the model of goodness, a saviour in search of redemption. On the other antipode of the story, there are the characters of the twins, Sophy and Toni. Sophy, dark and cruel, appears as a sexual seductress with a criminal mind. In other words, she is an agent of evil. Toni, fair and brilliant, indulges in political violence.

The polarity of the two representations (i.e., good and evil) comes to a fatal collision when Sophy’s vicious plan is revealed for the abduction of a child for ransom from the school where Matty works as a janitor. As the story unfolds with Matty aflame, it ends so, yet, this time with the fire burning Matty to death. He dies to thwart the kidnapping, hence, “sacrificing himself for all human ego.” (Gindin 1988: 70).
For the last twenty-seven years of literary prominence, William Golding achieved considerable success but the real taste of success can be credited to his novels *Lord of the Flies* (1954) and *Rites of Passage* (1980). (McCarron 1994) *Rites of Passage* was written in 1980 as an individual, separate novel. Interestingly, two novels grew out of it, *Close Quarters* (1987) and *Fire Down Below* (1989) as “I come to realize that I had left Edmund Talbot, a ship and a whole ship’s company (. . .) lolling about in the Atlantic with their voyage no more than half completed.” (Golding 1991: Forward). The three novels, then, were altogether published in a single volume entitled *To the Ends of the Earth: A Sea Trilogy* in 1991.

*Rites of Passage*, the first installment of the Sea Trilogy, set in the 19th century, portrays the new life and experiences of Edmund Talbot on deck. He is a highly educated aristocrat, who narrates and at the same time reports the events through the journal he writes in order to please his godfather with whom his distinguished career awaits. It also spots, as in *The Pyramid*, the rigidity of the English class divisions, which is “the classic disease of society in this country.” (Baker 1982: 136).

The voyage sets out with Talbot, brash, snobbish and arrogant, on board of a decrepit ship outbound ‘from the south of Old England to the Antipodes’, Australia. Aboard there are sailors, soldiers, some emigrants, and a few ladies and gentlemen. There is also Colley, a naïve and obsequious parson from a lower social class. During the voyage, Colley gets drunk and makes a butt of himself as he wanders half-naked and urinates in full view of the passengers on deck. ‘In a state of mad exuberance’, he sexually pleases one of the crew for the first time in his life. Upon recovering, Colley discovers what he has committed, the stigma that forced him to lock himself in the cabin. Feeling “the lowest hell of self-degradation,” he wills himself to death. Edmund, having read Colley’s long letter, learns that it was not that he suffered abuse from the crew, “It was not that he had got drunk (. . .) It was not that he had openly urinated in front of the passengers and crew. . . It was not even that his
latent homosexuality had been revealed to him,’ (Crompton 1985:133) it was the inner cry that “Men can die of shame” which led to this tragic end. (Golding 1991: 239).

_Close Quarters_, the second installment, continues the journey. It furthers Talbot’s emotional education and moral growth. In other words, this part depicts Talbot’s emotional life. During the voyage, a vessel is sighted. It is The Alcyone, a British ship. The ship, which is seen as enemy, has turned out, for Talbot, to be The Titanic in which he meets Miss Chumley, the lady that sails into Talbot’s heart. Smitten, he deeply falls in love with her. Unlike his purely torrid longing toward Zenobia in _Rites of Passage_, Talbot’s true feelings with Chumley spring from his real love in which “he resolutely refuses even to contemplate her sexually.” (McCarron 1994: 54). On the other plane, with reference to his relationship with the other passengers, the story shows the shift from the aristocratic arrogance to the more understanding in Talbot’s personality.

Apart from all the hazards the ship encounters en route to Australia, _Fire Down Below_ concludes the trilogy with the arrival of the ship to the shores of Australia. As with the _Rites of Passage_ and _Close Quarters_, _Fire Down Below_ again has life lessons within for Mr. Talbot. This time Mr. Prettiman teaches him politics. Talbot meets Miss Chumley once again. He proposes her and she accepts to marry him. Back with Miss Chumley to England, he practises his political life. The tales combine artfully to convey basic life lessons in a society obsessed with class-ridden strata. Moreover, these fabulous stories still present Golding’s fundamental concern, the evil nature.

In 1984, William Golding released his eleventh novel, _The Paper Men_. The story, set in the present, is told from a first person perspective. In a style full of humour and sarcasm, the events of _The Paper Men_ circle around an aging, callous and alcoholic English writer named Wilfred Barclay, the narrator, hounded by Rick. L. Tucker, an American scholar,
unctuous and selfish, who is pesterling the old man’s for his consent to become his official biographer and literary executive no matter what the costs are.

Barclay, contemptuous and cynical, rejects such a proposal, as he is discontent with the status of academia. In addition to the fact that he believes that writing biography is only writing about ‘farcical elements of his life.’ (McCarron 1994: 50). The more importunate Tucker gets, the more resolute Barclay becomes in his opposition. Having no scruples, it happens in the story that he is caught, in Barclay’s house, rifling the dustbin, to salvage any crushed material for his memorabilia. Indefatigable, he also brings his wife in the hope that she will arouse him sexually so that in return they will get his authorisation. The same scenario goes on until the end of the story where Tucker desperately kills Barclay.

*The Double Tongue* (1995) is Golding’s last novel published posthumously. The story introduces us to an old woman, the narrator, chosen, in her younger days, to become a Pythia, a prophetess in the shrine of oracle at Delphi, an ancient Greek city. Served for thirty-six years as the mouthpiece for the prophecies of the God through a sacred tripod, the story portrays the isolation, loneliness and despair Arieka has had all along. It also tells of her relationship with her god that turns out to shaky as she develops suspicion about the nature of the gods, ‘No body seemed to know precisely who the Olympians were and whether Apollo had originally been one of them.’ (Golding 1995: 157).

Apart from fiction, William Golding also penned other genres of literature. He wrote two radio plays of melodramatic nature: *Miss Pulkinhorn* (1960) which speaks of ‘a woman (. . .) in a cathedral who, torn between her own rigid orthodoxy and her mysticism (. . .) defies the established church (. . .).’ (Gindin 1988: 63). *Break My Heart* (1962), set in a boys’ school, is an exploration of human nature. During his lifetime, he published two books: *The Hot Gates* (1965) and *A Moving Target* (1982) which are collections of occasional essays - lectures, articles, travel reflections and autobiographical accounts, which provide illuminating
insights into the genesis of his novels. An Egyptian Journal (1985) is the result of Golding’s cruising on the Nile along with his wife. With vivid and powerful description, Golding provides detailed account of their excursion to the thought-provoking ruins of Egypt and its legacy.

A great writer must be in the spotlight for honours and awards. In view of literary merit, William Golding received many prestigious awards during his literary career that lasted over thirty-five years. As an outstanding literary distinction, William Golding was awarded fellowship in the Royal Society of Literature in 1955 for his distinguished work, *Lord of the Flies*. Ten years later, he received the honorary designation Commander of the British Empire (CBE). In 1979, William Golding won James Tait Black Memorial Prize for his novel *Darkness Visible* and in 1988 he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for his merits and seriousness of literary purpose.

Among eminent nominees like, Alice Munro, Barry Unsworth, and Anthony Burgess, William Golding received the prestigious Booker Prize for British Literature, for his panoramic novel, *Rites of Passage* that deals “significantly with both the nature of art and a central cultural and historical conflict.” (Gindin 1988: 106). In recognition of his great achievements, William Golding, among his fellow novelists like Graham Green, received the greatest honour, i.e. the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1983 “for his novels which with the perspicuity of realistic narrative art and the diversity and universality of myth, illuminate the human condition in the world of today.” (Swedish Academy Nobel Prize Citation: 21).

Golding’s five novels, from *Lord of the Flies* to *The Spire* maintain in one way or another his theory of the nature of man. The first three novels examine respectively the civilised world, the primitive race and a modern individual in his or her struggle to survive. In *Lord of the Flies*, Golding underlines the importance of a well-ordered society whose *raison d’etre* is the protection and welfare of each member. He warns in his favourite novel, *The
*Inheritors*, however, that the meek, the naïve, the innocent and probably the ignorant too are self-defeated by the nature of their virtues and that will forfeit the earth to strong, ruthless, and cunning people. *Pincher Martin* is more of a special case because we enter the individual psyche of a morally rotten protagonist, whose selfishness warns us against falling.