

A STUDY OF DISCORD AND HARMONY
IN THE NOVELS OF WILLIAM GOLDING

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AN ABSTRACT

In his six published novels, William Golding has portrayed man as a being whose complex nature is shaped by the conflicting influences of spirit and reason. His first two novels, Lord of the Flies and The Inheritors, reveal Golding's belief that the acquisition of the ability to reason, with its attendant potential for the misuse of rationality, is a crucial step in the evolution of man's nature. The characters in his novels find themselves forced to deal with the considerable powers of their intellect and to reconcile these powers with the spiritual aspects of their beings. The states of mind exhibited by the characters as they strive to resolve the conflicting forces in their own natures have been referred to, in this thesis, as states of 'discord' and 'harmony.' 'Discord' is the more common of the two states and is illustrated in those characters who have failed to reconcile the provinces of reason and spirit in their own beings. 'Harmony,' which implies a balance of forces, is a state of mind which is seldom achieved by a character, but which is always powerfully present as an alternative to 'discord.' The terms 'discord' and 'harmony' have been found useful as a means of referring to states of mind which are both artistically and philosophically significant in Golding's novels.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

William Golding, who first shocked his readers with a savage portrayal of man in Lord of the Flies, has continued to probe the nature of man in equally disturbing ways in his succeeding novels. He presents his characters in the process of grappling with the forces of rationality and irrationality in their own natures. The manner in which they deal with these forces is reflected in the mental states of 'harmony' and 'discord'.

'Discord' is a state of inner turmoil present in many individuals who have acquired the ability to reason. It occurs when an individual uses his rational faculty, not to understand others, but to control them in such a way that the possibility of meaningful relationships is destroyed. In so doing he tends to over-simplify the complexity of the human being, denying important aspects of his own nature as well as the natures of those with whom he comes in contact. As his relationships crumble he becomes isolated from his fellows and this isolation is experienced as a state of discord. Each of Golding's novels contains characters who exist in states of discord, although Pincher Martin and The Spire are most exclusively concerned with an analysis of this state.

'Harmony' is a state of inner tranquility which can be attained by an individual who is highly sensitive both to his physical environment and to other individuals with whom he comes in contact. This heightened sensitivity enables its owner to understand others and to respond to their needs, thus enhancing the possibilities for meaningful relationships. Harmony, as a state of being, can be most clearly observed in the lives of innocents who have not yet acquired the ability to apply their reason in such a way as to control their environment. It is illustrated, in Golding's novels, in the pre-rational community of Mal and his people and sometimes in the lives of young children. It is perhaps best illustrated in the character of Simon, who is tempted to use his reason for destructive purposes, but who overcomes the temptation by responding to his inner awareness of truth.

The achievement of harmonious relationships between individuals who have acquired the capacity to reason is difficult, but not impossible. Some of Golding's more contemplative protagonists, such as Sammy Mountjoy, Oliver and even Dean Jocelin, strive to understand the causes of their states of discord and to replace discord with harmony. In order to do so they must first recognize their dangerous tendency to control others and then struggle to strengthen personal relationships by replacing this tendency to control with understanding. If Golding can be said to have made one positive statement about the nature of man, it is in

the affirmation of the struggle, in which his characters are engaged, to face the "darkness" which exists in their own hearts and to resolve the discord into harmony.

Golding's novels portray man as a being in whom states of violent discord, such as that manifested in *Pincher Martin*, and states of perfect harmony, such as the one illustrated by *Simon*, are shown to be the poles between which he oscillates in his life-affirming struggle to move towards harmony.

CHAPTER II

CIVILIZATION, A MASK OF HARMONY: THE INHERITORS AND LORD OF THE FLIES

The Inheritors and Lord of the Flies seem designed to shatter any illusions their readers may have had regarding the effectiveness with which civilization integrates the complexities of human nature within a social structure. They unmask the smoothness and apparent harmony of the external picture and reveal the real face of human nature which is hiding behind this "mask" of civilization. Ultimately, the reason for the failure of civilization to effect harmonious relationships between individuals is that it depends upon a level of rationality which is inconsistent with man's true nature.

The Inheritors, Golding's second novel, is a conjectural investigation into the origins of man, or more importantly, into the origins of man's nature. It tells the story of a struggle between two primitive peoples. Mal's people, from whose point of view the story is told, exist in a state of harmonious relationship with each other and with their surroundings. Their language skills are rudimentary, their thought processes are simple and their culture very basic; yet they present a picture of joy which arises directly from their innocent and harmonious participation

in the life which is all about them. Their simple attainments are called into play in a struggle with a much more sophisticated group, a group with which modern man can identify more closely than he can with Mal's people. This group, led by an old and ineffective chief by the name of Marlan, arrives on the mountain slopes which are the yearly summer habitation of Mal and his people. The two groups, living in the same environment, exhibit markedly different responses to the same situation. Marlan's group cannot find an adequate food supply and its members are frightened by the strange shape of their innocent neighbors. Their fear prods them into violence and Mal's unsuspecting group finds itself engaged in a struggle which it cannot comprehend. Mal dies and the members of his tribe are systematically destroyed by this "new people" who, unaware of their victory, retreat in fear and confusion back down from the mountain on which the struggle has taken place.

The point of view maintained in this novel focuses the attention of the reader on the evolution of man's capacity to reason. Through the mind of Lok, we feel the same harmonious closeness with nature that Lok himself feels. We view the action through the eyes of an innocent, whose uncomprehending conjectures as to the significance of the action adds a level of irony to our own, more informed opinion. We also see, later in the novel, Lok and Fa struggling to come to grips with concepts which, if reached, will enable them to leap the gap which separates a creature of

instinct from a rational animal.

Mal's people live in a state of sympathetic relationship with each other and with the world around them. They feel themselves to be vitally connected with the earth through the creative life forces which are personified, for them, in the female figure of Oa, out of whose great belly they believe they have all come. The awe in which they stand of Oa and the respect which they have for her creative powers are manifested in practically every aspect of their culture. Liku constantly carries with her a "little Oa," made for her out of a swollen root. Mal's burial, which follows immediately upon his death, is a simple ritual which celebrates his return to the protective belly of Oa. His people weep for him, but their belief in a sustaining creative force somewhat mitigates the finality of death. The creative forces of Oa are paid exuberant tribute by Lok in his happiness at perceiving the approaching spring:

Oa had waited for them. Even now she was pushing up the spikes of bulbs, fattening the grubs, reeking the smells out of the earth, bulging the fat buds out of every crevice and bough. He danced on to the terrace by the river, his arms spread wide.

"Oa!"¹

¹ William Golding, The Inheritors (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), pp. 31-32.

The reverence, which they exhibit towards this maternal creative force, emerges as a simple celebration of life which is in marked contrast to the complicated and savage ritual of the paternally oriented religion of Marlan's tribe.

The reverence of Mal's people toward nature is also reflected in their sensitivity toward their environment. They observe her rules and watch for her signs, never initiating violence as a means of obtaining food or lodging. The delicate manoeuvres which Lok performs in analyzing scents is only one of many examples of the closeness of "the people" to nature.

The vital and communicative relationship which "the people" maintain with nature is surpassed only in their own personal relationships. Among each other they are warm and gentle, functioning more harmoniously as a unit than as individuals. Their silent commiseration with Mal's old age and sickness is typical of the attitude which they practise towards one another:

Mal lifted his legs like a man pulling them out of the mud and his feet were no longer clever. They chose places of their own unskilfully, but as though something were pulling them sideways so that he reeled on his stick. The people behind him followed each of his actions easily out of the fullness of their health. Focused on his struggle they became an affectionate and unconscious parody. As he leaned and reached for his breath they gaped too, they reeled, their feet were deliberately unclever.²

²Ibid., pp. 22-23.

This "unconscious parody" provides each of the people with a direct link to Mal's agonized consciousness and a consequent appreciation of his trouble. This high level of communication which pervades all their personal relationships is expressed as well in silence as it is in action. One instance of this unspoken communication occurs when they reach their mountain retreat after a long day's travel. They reactivate the fire which they have been carrying and settle themselves comfortably in the overhang:

One of the deep silences fell on them, that seemed so much more natural than speech, a timeless silence in which there were at first many minds in the overhang; and then perhaps no mind at all.³

The richness of feeling and depth of wordless communication which is achieved by these people is the most outstanding manifestation of their warm, gentle natures. Their individual states of happiness rely mainly on the happiness of the group as a whole. Lok, through whose point of view the story is told, amply illustrates their total interdependence. His response to Liku's demand that she be allowed to cross the water with him is typical of his spontaneous response to any situation:

³Ibid., p. 34.

This lit a kind of sunshine in Lok's head. He opened his mouth wide and laughed and talked at the people, though there was little connection between the quick pictures and the words that came out.⁴

It is his feeling of kinship with the rest of Mal's people which makes him feel happy and secure.

The appearance of "the other" on the mountain has, for Lok, the inexplicable effect of threatening his sense of security. Their coming coincides strangely with the disappearance of his own tribesmen. In an attempt to connect the presence of the new people with danger to his own, Lok tracks one of them in the forest. As he follows the scent of the strange, new invader, unconsciously parodying his movements, he begins to understand him:

He was beginning to know the other without understanding how it was that he knew. Lok-other crouched at the lip of the cliff and stared across the rocks of the mountain. He threw himself forward and was running with legs and back bent. He threw himself into the shadow of a rock, snarling and waiting.⁵

Lok attempts to understand the invader in much the same way as he tried to understand Mal's misery in his "unclever" walk up the mountain. His attempt to achieve the same level of communication with "the other" has the effect of destroying the sense of harmony which he had felt before with his own people. Having abandoned

⁴Ibid., p. 19.

⁵Ibid., p. 77.

his pursuit, he is passed by the old woman of his tribe who does not see him:

The old woman knew so much; yet she had not seen him. He was cut off and no longer one of the people; as though his communion with the other had changed him he was different from them and they could not see him. . . . The other had tugged at the strings that bound him to Fa and Mal and Liku and the rest of the people.⁶

Fear, for Lok, arises mainly from a feeling of alienation, of separation from those with whom he feels such a close association. This feeling intensifies as his people steadily and mysteriously disappear and culminates as he watches Liku and the new one being carried by the new people across the dreaded water. Unlike Fa who, when awakened to the threat which the new people embody, becomes quickly conditioned to a new need for expediency and is willing to leave Liku, Lok cannot conceive of life without her and their intimacy seems as close in their separation as it had previously been in person. Towards the end of the incomprehensible struggle with the new people, his growing feeling of separation becomes unbearable:

Here, with the so familiar sights about him, with the history of his people still hanging round the rocks, his misery returned with a new strength. . . . He groaned at emptiness and had a great feeling for Fa on the other side of the slope. There was Liku too somewhere among the people and his need of either or both became urgent.⁷

⁶Ibid., p. 78.

⁷Ibid., p. 208.

The final catastrophe, which deprives Lok of all his people and leaves him alone on the mountain slopes, is accompanied by a change in the point of view. Lok, seen from the outside and known from the inside, retraces the steps of his happy past. The agony of an irrevocable separation from his people is too much for him and his solution is to reunite himself with the great creative forces of which he had always been in awe:

The creature wrestled with a rock that was lying on a mound of earth but was too weak to move it. At last it gave up and crawled round the hollow by the remains of a fire. It came close to the ashes and lay on its side. It pulled its legs up, knees against the chest. It folded its hands underneath its cheek and lay still. The twisted and smoothed root lay before its face. It made no noise, but seemed to be growing into the earth, drawing the soft flesh of its body into a contact so close that the movements of pulse and breathing were inhibited.⁸

This action of Lok's can be well understood from our previous knowledge of Mal's burial. The meat and water which were given to Mal to sustain him in his future life, are not within Lok's power to supply for himself and so he substitutes his last possession, Liku's Oa doll. The foetal position in which Mal had been arranged is assumed by Lok in preparation for his return to the womb of Oa. The manner of his death, then, completes the cycle of his people fittingly. The innocence of his own life has not quite been violated by the discord introduced by the new people. He has struggled with

⁸Ibid., p. 221.

their dark powers and, upon losing, does what seems most natural to him, which is to return willingly, even eagerly, to the earth from which he was once born. His life has been lived in a state of joyful harmony with everything around him and his death is a pathetic celebration of the unity of all life.

This series of incidents and their effect on Lok anticipate some of Golding's later protagonists who are faced with the problem of alienation. A high level of communication between individuals is seen to be a criterion of harmony, while isolation inevitably brings discord. The harmony of Mal's people is an ideal which is unattainable by more civilized societies for it is based on instinct, not reason. The appearance of an ability to reason in Lok and Fa, with their growing understanding of "the others," creates in them a feeling of alienation which is seen to be the natural state of rational man.

Set against exactly the same background, in which we have seen Lok functioning, the new people present an entirely different picture. From the beginning, they appear to be out of harmony with each other and with their surroundings. For instance, the same environment which yields food in plenty to Mal's people, denies even a bare subsistence to Marlan and his group. Mal's people arrive on the mountain slopes praising the productivity of Oa, who

is pushing up the spikes of grass and tender young shoots seemingly for their benefit alone: Marlan's group, on the other hand, appear to Lok to be in dire straits for want of food:

And they were not merely hungry. Lok knew famine when he saw it. The new people were dying. The flesh was sunken to their bones as Mal's flesh had sunken. . . . They walked upright and they should be dead. . . . Lok knew that if he were as thin as they, he would be dead already.⁹

Lok makes this observation from the safety of a large tree overlooking a clearing. He sees a group of the new people perform a ritual stag dance during which they sacrifice the fingers of a live man. Ironically, the tree from which Lok watches is described as follows:

The top of the tree was empty like a great acorn cup. It was white, soft wood that gave and moulded to their weight and was full of food.¹⁰

And yet this violent and elaborate ritual of the new people is an attempt to placate the unknown powers which can provide them with food.

The inability of Marlan's group to find food is a comment on their separation from the environment, a separation which is not experienced by Mal's people. Thus, it is Liku, the uncivilized child, who teaches Tanakil, the civilized child, how to eat tree fungus. Although Tanakil exhibits an obvious relish for the new food, she is prevented from eating it by a panic stricken parent.

⁹Ibid., p. 143-144.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 137.

The vehemence with which Tanakil's mother reproves her for eating the tree fungus is ample evidence of the rapidity with which civilization removes itself from the simple benefits provided by nature.

The interpersonal relationships of the new people are also much less harmonious than those of Mal's group. Through the detached observation of Lok and Fa, we see the tension that divides Marlan from many of his tribesmen, the rage that attends the attitude of Tanakil's mother towards her daughter and the dissension which divides the tribe over the consideration given to killing Liku for food. This last mentioned argument arises in the campsite of the new people. Marlan, the weak chief, is pestered by his people to provide food. Many of them want to kill the "new one" or Liku, and Marlan is at last forced to give in. As Vivani will not give up the "new one," Liku is at last chosen and this decision begins a drunken orgy which lasts most of the night. Lok and Fa are present during this orgy, hidden in a large 'food' laden tree. Although Lok does not see the killing of Liku, he sees much which surprises him in the actions of this strange group. Under the influence of an unknown, sour smelling drink the new people react strangely and violently. Even sexual relationships are marked by a violence which surprises Lok:

The two people beneath the tree were making noises fiercely as though they were quarrelling. . . . He looked down at them and saw that Tuami was not only lying with the fat woman but eating her as well for there was black blood running from the lobe of her ear, ¹¹

¹¹Ibid., p. 175.

This violence is in direct contrast to the mating habits of Mal's people among whom sexual desire springs naturally from ordinary expressions of tenderness and where there are no taboos to create unlawful liaisons.

The basic difference between the two tribes can be described in terms of their reaction to fear. For Mal's tribe, especially Lok and Fa who lack the conceptual ability to rationalize, fear arises from isolation and manifests itself in bewilderment. For Marlan's tribesmen, fear is also a product of isolation and of an inability to relate to one another, although they do not acknowledge these causes. Instead they use their intelligence to invent an object for their fear. Fa notices the insubstantiality of their fears, not realizing that she and her people have been incarnated as the objects:

The new people are frightened. They stand and move like people who are frightened. They heave and sweat and watch the forest over their backs. But there is no danger in the forest. They are frightened of the air where there is nothing.¹²

This fear, which is so ironically misplaced, creates the hatred and mistrust which are manifested in every action performed by the new people. It is not until Tuami, the tribe artist, comes to consider the problem himself that he realizes that fear is not so easily dealt with: he alone begins to see that it comes from the inside, from an inability to cope with the complexities of one's own nature and to adapt this nature to the environment.

¹²Ibid., p. 206.

The different reactions to similar situations exhibited by these two groups of people, are not shown to arise from basic differences of nature; rather their differences are shown to relate to their levels of civilization. Mal's group, having just emerged from the unconsciousness of animal life, is beginning to exercise its intelligence in new ways, ways which will bring it closer to the mental superiority of "the others." Marlan's group has already suffered this drastic alienation from the animal world and, through the application of intelligence, has experienced its ability to exert unnatural controls. The two groups are not irrevocably different: both share the potential benefits and dangers of man's true nature.

Marlan's tribe then, is not the only one to create discord in its adaptation to its surroundings. In a minor way, Mal's people have arrived at a level of civilization which is beginning to demand rationalization and deception. On his way up the mountain Lok thinks with pleasure about the good food he will soon have to eat:

...he had a sudden picture of good things, of honey and young shoots, of bulbs and grubs, of sweet and wicked meat.¹³

The people will not kill animals for meat but they relish it as a delicacy. Thus, when they find a dead animal, it is accepted "without blame." In direct contradiction to his earlier thoughts

¹³Ibid., p. 24.

about the goodness of meat, Lok finds it necessary to justify his taking home a dead deer:

"The people are thin with hunger and they must eat. They do not like the taste of meat but they must eat." ¹⁴

Aside from their inherent tendencies towards a loss of innocence, the presence of the new people presents Mal's group with several new problems which require speedy adaptation. Fa, on the whole, adapts most quickly to their presence. She quickly learns to recognize them as a threat and to perceive the motives behind their actions. On one occasion the new people try to kill Lok with a spear. It sticks into a tree beside his head and he removes this strange "twig" and accepts it as a present. Fa insists that he throw it back:

"Do what I say. Do not say: 'Fa do this!' I will say: 'Lok do this!' I have many pictures." ¹⁵

Fa's instincts of self preservation do indeed give her many more pictures than Lok and teach her quickly the way to reply in kind to the new people's hostilities. It is Fa who suggests that Lok run away with her, leaving the children behind, as she seems to intuit the indomitable forces against which they must pit themselves. Her responses to many of the situations presented by the new people are not modelled on her past conditioning. They are, rather, responses to a new demand for expediency with which she has never

¹⁴Ibid., p. 56.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 117.

been faced before. Her speedy adaptation to the new habit of violence speaks well for her cleverness, but not as well for her innocence.

Lok remains the more innocent of the two, but he also shows himself capable of corruption, particularly in the scene in which he and Fa drink the liquor which has been left by the new people as an offering. After cramming themselves with the meat, which was also left, they drink the "rotten honey," delighting in the sensations which it creates. Under the influence of these new sensations and affected by them in a manner which is startlingly similar to that which has already been exhibited by the others, Lok feels himself to be one of the new people. He and Fa argue, fight and make love in a manner quite as savage as that which they have just witnessed.

Lok's pleasure in being able to call himself one of the new people arises out of the awe in which he holds them. He, like Fa, is vaguely aware of the indefinable threat which they pose:

The new head knew that certain things were gone and done with like a wave of the sea. It knew that the misery must be embraced painfully as a man might hug thorns to him and it sought to comprehend the new people from whom all changes came.¹⁶

His growing comprehension leads him to make comparisons and to draw likenesses which will explain the new people more clearly:

¹⁶Ibid., p. 194.

"They are like the river and the fall, they are a people of the fall; nothing stands against them."

He thought of their patience, of the broad man Tuami creating a stag out of coloured earth.

"They are like Oa."¹⁷

Certainly there is an element of irony in the generous appraisal which Lok gives to a frightened and selfish people. However, his comments must also be taken seriously, for they contain an element of truth. The powers possessed by the new people spell death and destruction for Mal's people, but they also represent the possibilities for good on which the hope of humanity rests.

The ability of Tuami to 'create' had led Lok to the comparison between the new people and Oa, the prime creative force. Tuami, the artist, through whose point of view the last chapter is presented, is the predecessor of the Golding protagonist who tries to organize his past experiences and create from them a new understanding. He recognizes the fact that their hasty flight from the mountain will not remove them from the terror which attended them there. The change for which he is looking must occur within man himself:

He had hoped for the light as for a return to sanity and the manhood that seemed to have left them; but here was dawn - past dawn - and they were what they had been in the gap, haunted, bedevilled, full of strange irrational grief like himself, or emptied, collapsed, and helplessly asleep.¹⁸

¹⁷Ibid., p. 195.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 224-25.

Tuami begins to recognize his hatred of Marlan as being a part of the irrationality and fear which have characterized the actions of the group as a whole. Thus, the dagger which he has been carving to kill Marlan, his chief, suddenly seems to him to be a particularly useless object:

What was the use of sharpening it against a man? Who would sharpen a point against the darkness of the world?¹⁹

This new realization, that the "darkness of the world" cannot be incarnated in any imaginary foe, but must be recognized as being endemic to the nature of man, leaves Tuami feeling confused regarding the action he should take. Ultimately it is the "new one," the last of Mal's tribe, who restores harmony to the mind of Tuami and to the group as a whole. His cavortings with Vivani cause laughter among the whole tribe. Tuami picks up his knife again, this time directing his attention to the ivory haft. It is in the relationship between the new one and Vivani that Tuami recognizes a new subject for his ivory:

They were an answer, the frightened, angry love of the woman and the ridiculous, intimidating rump that was wagging at her head, they were a password.²⁰

The importance of human relationships asserts itself as a positive, a harmonizing force over the divisive conflicts within the tribe. Armed with this new understanding, Tuami can face the darkness with some

¹⁹Ibid., p. 231.

²⁰Ibid., p. 233.

hope of achieving a new harmony:

Holding the ivory firmly in his hands, feeling the onset of sleep, Tuami looked at the line of darkness. It was far away and there was plenty of water in between. He peered forward past the sail to see what lay at the other end of the lake, but it was so long, and there was such a flashing from the water that he could not see if the line of darkness had an ending.²¹

Tuami cannot possibly know the whole of the story which has occupied the few days of this struggle. What has happened is that the irrational fears of Marlan and his tribe have resulted in the extermination of a group who had lived innocently and purely within the demands of their environment. This more civilized group has inherited, not only the lush mountain slopes, but also a burden of guilt for the innocence which they have destroyed. Although Tuami does not know the particulars of the struggle, he is beginning to understand that man's fears cannot easily be dealt with by incarnating them in some external force. Fear is an inherent component of our own natures and must be dealt with as such.

The Inheritors clearly illustrates Golding's belief that the human inheritance is more than a glorious hold on the intelligence necessary to advance a civilization. The reasoning faculty of Marlan's tribe is obviously superior to that of Mal's people, but their susceptibility to the irrational is also great. By succumbing

²¹Ibid., p. 233.

to irrational fears, Marlan's tribe have applied their intelligence to support this irrationality, and have destroyed innocence, both in the form of Mal's people and in their own beings. Consciously, they have chosen to deny the power of human relationships and have thus become guilty beings. In the relationship between Vivani and the new one lies their hope for a restoration of harmony, where the rational and irrational aspects of man's being are transcended.

Civilizations may change, but the nature of the individuals who carry it forward does not alter very much. Consequently, Golding can say with impunity, two years after the publication of The Inheritors:

Surely the hydrogen bomb is only an efficient way of wiping out the other tribe - a pastime we've always been prone to?²²

It is this thought which connects The Inheritors with Lord of the Flies, Golding's first novel. The fact that young, civilized boys, marooned on a tropical island, should quickly resort to savagery is inconsistent with the mask of harmony which civilization presents to the indiscriminating eye. There is an element of shock in the thought that the civilization of a group of modern, British school boys should stand them in no better stead than the primitive civilization of Marlan's tribe in their battle with fear.

²²William Golding, "The Writer in his Age," London Magazine, IV (May 1957), 45.

If it has been easy to view the action of The Inheritors with a sense of complacency derived from the remoteness of the historical setting, then it will be more difficult to view Lord of the Flies in the same distant light. The story concerns a group of boys who are evacuated from the dangers of a war situation and are forced down in their plane in the midst of a tropical island. The boys are civilized; the new environment is commodious and abounding in the necessities of life, paradisiacal in fact. Gradually, however, their paradise is ravaged by dissension and turned into a nightmare more closely resembling hell than heaven. The innocence with which they arrive on the island is transmuted into a frightening burden of guilt as the darkness which has been latent in each heart pushes its way to the surface. The cycle which has been revealed in The Inheritors, involving a movement from the harmony of unconscious innocence, through discord, and back to the hope of an achieved harmony, is shown in Lord of the Flies to manifest itself in the history of each individual. All of the boys find themselves caught up in the inescapable meshes of their own natures and dragged from innocence to depravity and, through the mind of Ralph, to a hint of what is necessary for the re-establishment of harmony.

A movement, from a state of innocent serenity to one of discord, is anticipated in the first day's action. Ralph, upon arriving on this paradise island, cavorts in innocent delight.

He patted the palm trunks softly; and forced at last to believe in the reality of the island, laughed delightedly again and stood on his head.²³

At the end of the same day he is gazing in horrified wonder at the forest fire they have inadvertently started while the little boys cry: "Snakes! Snakes! Look at the Snakes!"²⁴ Already the island paradise has acquired the characteristics of an island inferno as the boys' early attempts to impose civilized measures fail.

Certainly, the action, viewed in its totality, represents a movement from harmony to discord. Their earliest days are the calmest:

The first rhythm that they became used to was the slow swing from dawn to quick dusk. They accepted the pleasures of the morning, the bright sun, the whelming sea and sweet air, as a time when play was good and life so full that hope was not necessary and therefore forgotten.²⁵

Even these first days of happiness, however, are stirred by ripples of discontent. The disappearance of the boy with the mulberry birthmark, after the fire, sounds an ominous note. The frequent unresolved arguments which mark the assemblies anticipate the final break in relations between Ralph and Jack. The event which eventually destroys all evidence of happiness and serenity, however, is the introduction of the beast. Values clash over the measures to be taken, with Ralph and Jack providing the major focus in the

²³William Golding, Lord of the Flies (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), p. 15.

²⁴Ibid., p. 60.

²⁵Ibid., p. 73.

resulting dissension. Dissension erupts into open warfare and finally into the fire maddened hunt of Ralph which is abruptly ended by the appearance of a naval officer, a man who, ironically, is himself engaged in a similar conflict, an atomic war of world proportions. The easy, rocking rhythm of the first few days has grown gradually more savage and compulsive until it reaches the crescendo of the hunters' cry, "Kill the beast; Cut his throat! Spill his blood!" The terrifying speed with which the conflagration of the entire island follows at the heels of the boys' entry into "paradise" can only be understood through an examination of the diversity of individual approaches to the situations which are presented in the book.

The first day's events outline the personalities of the major characters, each of whom exhibits his particular response to the situation in which he has found himself. Piggy is early established as being one of the central characters and as providing his own peculiar response to the island dilemma. His first question reveals the heavy reliance on civilization, as he has known it, which is to characterise his total outlook:

"Where's the man with the megaphone?"
 The fair boy shook his head.
 "This is an island. At least I think it's an island. That's a reef out in the sea. Perhaps there aren't any grown-ups anywhere."
 The fat boy looked startled.²⁶

²⁶Ibid., p. 12.

Piggy, we soon find out, has very good reason to be startled at this sudden loss of civilization, for he is singularly unfitted for a Rousseauistic sojourn on a tropical island. Fat, asthmatic and short-sighted, his humorless powers of common sense do little to blot out the ludicrous picture he presents against this primitive background. His only hope is to mould the island, as nearly as possible, to the shape of the civilization which he has just left. Appropriately then, it is Piggy who suggests the use to which the conch is immediately put:

"We can use this to call the others. Have a meeting. They'll come when they hear us --"²⁷

Having done this, it is Piggy who suggests taking down the names of the boys and otherwise attempting to create some sort of order out of the unfamiliar and bewildering freedom. On the whole, it is Piggy whose sights remain the most unswervingly on the civilization they have left. He remains convinced of the ability of this civilization to restore order and harmony to the island chaos.

It is easy to sympathize with Piggy's response to the situation. He is rational and sane, if vaguely and inexplicably unappealing. For the most part he is impartial, engaging Ralph's support because of the indisputable justness of his proposals. It is only through Ralph that Piggy's intellect can be rendered

²⁷Ibid., p. 22.

acceptable to the rest of the group. Ralph, who has few ideas of his own, is easily persuaded to accept Piggy's views on the necessity of maintaining a civilized order. Throughout the novel, it is Ralph who remains the spokesman for this rational approach to the situation, although the opposition to it grows.

Jack and Simon each represent a different attitude to the environment which Piggy finds to be antithetic to his abilities. In fact, it is worthwhile to note that Piggy does not 'react' to an environment at all; his heavy reliance on the past precludes, for him, the possibility of their new environment having anything positive to contribute to their situation. Both Jack and Simon, on the other hand, are aware of possibilities inherent in their new situation, and both react to the stimuli of the tropical island, although in entirely different ways.

At their first meeting the boys decide that their locale must definitely be established as being an island before they can proceed with their plans. Ralph, as chief, is to choose two people to explore with him. He chooses Jack, who is the other natural leader of the group, and then, in an attempt to avoid partisanship, he chooses the unobtrusive Simon as being the least liable to cause dissension. At one particular point they stop to examine some bushes. The dialogue is as follows:

Simon spoke first.

"Like candles. Candle bushes. Candle buds."

The bushes were dark evergreen and aromatic and the many buds were waxen green and folded up against the light. Jack slashed at one with his knife and the scent spilled over them.

"Candle buds."

"You couldn't light them," said Ralph. "They just look like candles."

Green candles," said Jack contemptuously "we can't eat them. Come on."²⁸

In this short interchange there has been a very important disclosure of character. Simon, sensitive to the world around him, is the first to notice the green buds. He doesn't say much except to utter short exclamations of delight, but it is enough to reveal one of his typical characteristics, his tendency to look beyond the mere physical facts to an appreciation of the mystical and spiritual element in all created things. In this case, the beauty of the bushes seems to point towards an aura of greater significance. Jack, on the other hand, notices the buds only after they have been drawn to his attention. His first reaction is to slash one with his knife, thus deriving its full sensuous effect. Immediately afterward, he dismisses them abruptly as being "not food." These two different actions, in response to the same physical phenomenon, are typical of the succeeding actions of the two boys. Simon is by far the most responsive of the boys to his surroundings and remains in close contact with them. Jack always responds brutally, attempting to dominate his environment rather than to communicate with it.

²⁸Ibid., p. 40.

Throughout the novel, these various attitudes expand and solidify. The boys' belief that civilization can be instituted in some form which will comprehend their variety of activities and attitudes holds them together for a time, under the guidance of Ralph and Piggy. However, the civilizing measures soon grind to a halt. The boys disappear to the fruit trees or the lagoon rather than assist in the building of the huts; there is a failure to be constant in the attempt to keep the fire burning on the mountain and the water supply is not maintained in coconut shells at the camp-site. A general and indeterminate fear begins to take root in the troubled settlement and this fear is incarnated by the littluns as "the beast." Intangible as this beast is, it yet emerges as the greatest threat to their paradise. It is a problem for which their former civilization has ill prepared them and there are a variety of opinions as to the measures which should be taken. Ralph clings tenaciously to the opinion that proper living conditions will automatically dispel these irrational fears. He tries to explain the littluns' predicament to Jack:

"You've noticed, haven't you?"
 Jack put down his spear and squatted.
 "Noticed what?"
 "Well. They're frightened."
 He rolled over and peered into Jack's fierce, dirty face.
 "I mean the way things are. They dream. You can hear 'em. Have you been awake at night?"
 Jack shook his head.

"They talk and scream. The littluns. Even some of the others. As if -"

"As if it wasn't a good island."

Astonished at the interruption, they looked up at Simon's serious face.

"As if," said Simon, "the beastie, the beastie or the snake-thing, was real. Remember?"

The two older boys flinched when they heard the shameful syllable. Snakes were not mentionable now, were not mentionable.

"As if this wasn't a good island," said Ralph slowly. Yes, that's right."

Jack sat up and stretched out his legs.

"They're batty,"²⁹

Ralph's half hearted attempt to come to terms with this indefinable threat meets with a formidable resistance from Jack, who denies the validity of the littluns' claim altogether. From Simon he receives a co-operation which is almost too enthusiastic, for Simon strips away all vagaries and speaks uncomfortably close to the point. The problem is not resolved in any of their discussions. Ralph remains bewildered by his inability to deal with this indefinable beast; Simon fails in his attempt to define the problem; Jack remains resolutely confirmed in his own course of action, which does not depend one way or another on the existence or non-existence of the beast. Jack and the body of supporters which he gathers around him respond unquestioningly to the irrational urges which Ralph and Piggy attempt to repress. Thus they become hunters, who are so dedicated to their blood lust that every other activity assumes a

²⁹Ibid., p. 66.

greatly reduced importance. Jack's appearance is an appropriate complement to his personality:

His face was crumpled and freckled, and ugly without silliness. Out of this face stared two light blue eyes, frustrated now, and turning, or ready to turn, to anger.³⁰

His presence in the forest introduces a note of discord by creating tension and fear in an environment which is silent and self-contained:

Only when Jack himself roused a gaudy bird from a primitive nest of sticks was the silence shattered and the echoes set ringing by a harsh cry that seemed to come out of the abyss of ages.³¹

The tension which accompanies Jack's presence in the forest is later shown to contrast severely with the quiet harmony which attends Simon's presence in the same environment.

Shortly after declaring himself to be a hunter, Jack misses his first opportunity to kill a pig, "because of the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh."³² This, however, is the last qualm he ever evinces and the compulsion to kill a pig grows to dominate his thoughts. He tries to explain this compulsion to Ralph:

" . . . You can feel as if you're not hunting, but - being hunted; as if something's behind you all the time in the jungle."³³

³⁰Ibid., p. 27.

³¹Ibid., p. 62.

³²Ibid., p. 41.

³³Ibid., p. 67.

This indefinable sense of opposition, which he feels in the forest, seems to intensify the desire which he feels to kill. His gradual acceptance of the notion of a beast, which he had formerly denied, grows out of his increasing need to settle upon some believable embodiment for the vague forces which encourage his blood lust. For Jack, the beast becomes, as it was for Marlan's tribe, an animistic force which can help or hinder one's efforts to derive a living from one's environment. The existence of this beast removes the individual's responsibility for justifying actions which can more easily be charged to the demands of another and a greater force, a beast.

Jack is the driving force behind the boys' radical regression from civilization to savagery. He is supported, however, by a large number of boys who are similarly motivated by their lust for blood. The final pig hunt, which results in the killing of the great sow, reveals the sensuality of the pleasure which they derive from these slayings:

Here, struck down by the heat, the sow fell and the hunters hurled themselves at her. This dreadful eruption from an unknown world made her frantic; she squealed and bucked and the air was full of sweat and noise and blood and terror ... The sow collapsed under them and they were heavy and fulfilled upon her.³⁴

This killing of the sow, which occurs late in the action, reveals the extent to which this group of boys have been able to dispense with the controls of civilization in order to construct a ritual which

³⁴Ibid., pp. 167-68.

corresponds to more basic urges.

The controls of the civilized world have not slipped away unnoticed. In the first days spent on the island, most of the boys' activities are measured against their past in order to form adequate judgements of 'right' and 'wrong'. Maurice's action of ruining the little boys' sand castles and kicking sand in their eyes is measured as follows:

In his other life Maurice had received chastisement for filling a younger eye with sand. Now, though there was no parent to let fall a heavy hand, Maurice still felt the unease of wrong-doing.³⁵

Roger, who emerges as the most sadistic of the boys, amuses himself by throwing stones in the direction of one of the small boys:

Yet there was a space round Henry, perhaps six yards in diameter, into which he dare not throw. Here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life. Round the squatting child was the protection of parents and school and policemen and the law. Roger's arm was conditioned by a civilization that knew nothing of him and was in ruins.³⁶

There is an ambiguity about the word 'civilization' as it is used in this passage, which helps to illuminate the relationship between civilization and the state of harmony. The civilization which conditioned Roger's arm is itself in ruins; it has not been able to prevent the catastrophe of war. But beyond this is the fact that civilization conditions arms and not hearts. It can prevent Roger from throwing the stones directly at the little boy only with a conglomeration of arbitrary and superficial controls. It has nothing to do with the controls which should arise spontaneously from the

³⁵Ibid., p. 76.

³⁶Ibid., p. 78.

inside to condition one human response to another. For this reason, the boys find it as easy to cast off these superficial controls as it is to paint on the masks which allow them to do so. In the business of effecting harmony, civilization is as superficial as the masks which are donned to dispel it.

Piggy and Ralph, who, for the most part, remain outside the activities of Jack and his gang, do not recognize the inadequacy of civilization to deal with their problems. They cling to it as their sole resource in their struggle against Jack's newly evolved code of ethics and behaviour. Towards the end of the book Ralph, himself, begins to lose his grasp on the ends to which he has devoted his own actions. His assemblies, which were instituted as a means of effecting order, begin to lose their charismatic attractions. Their last pretensions to civilization crumble on the night of Simon's murder.

Simon returns from the mountain alone, sick, and amid the terrors of darkness, after having journeyed there to face the beast and discover for himself what it really is. He has the information which can save them from an unwarranted terror. Jack's gang have begun a dance which takes the form of a mock pig-hunt. As Simon stumbles into the midst of their circle, the crowd erupts violently amid the hysterical crescendo of their cry, "Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!" Their hysteria reaches such proportions that it is released in the one obvious way; Simon

becomes a sacrifice to the chant which has demanded an object. Both Piggy and Ralph take part in the peripheral action of the orgiastic mob which kills Simon. The next morning they discuss the incident in fear and bewilderment. Ralph, rocking himself backward and forward with the conch in his arms, is fully conscious of what has happened and is eager to embrace the knowledge of his own guilt. Piggy, to whose rational mind such an irrational deed is incomprehensible, insists on calling it an accident:

"It was an accident," said Piggy suddenly, "that's what it was. An accident." His voice shrilled again. "Coming in the dark - he hadn't no business crawling like that out of the dark. He was batty. He asked for it." He gesticulated widely again. "It was an accident."³⁷

Piggy stubbornly refuses to admit the fact that they assisted in a completely irrational deed, murder. He rationalizes murder as easily, and in much the same way, as do other civilizations, by fixing the blame on the other side. Ralph, however, who is clutching the last vestige of civilization, the conch, is beginning to understand its impotence against the stronger forces of human nature.

Sam and Eric, the identical twins who function as a unit, are the last to remain true to the ideals of Piggy and Ralph. They leave Ralph only when physically forced by Jack's band. Their astonishment at being captured is revealed as follows:

³⁷Ibid., pp. 193-194.

Samneric protested out of the heart of civilization.
 "Oh, I say!"
 " - honestly!"³⁸

If this is the full force of a protest from the heart of civilization, then civilization is, indeed, on shaky ground. And this is precisely the point which has emerged from this incredible struggle of a few boys against the dim forces which pit them against each other. This struggle results in a knowledge of, what Ralph describes as, the "darkness of man's heart." He is the one character who, like Tuami, manages to assimilate the action in his mind and draw from it some knowledge of the nature of man.

Simon, the little boy who went on the first exploration trip with Ralph and Jack, is the one character who transcends the muddiness of the action which has implicated all the other boys in a massive charge of inhumanity. His response to his new environment is not the brutal desire to kill and hurt which grows to typify Jack's attitude; nor is it a tenacious effort to cling to the feeble controls of an inadequate civilization. His approach to the situation is fresh, combining delight, rationality and a strong sense of humanity in response to this strange dilemma. From the beginning, he is revealed as a saint-like character who moves in harmony with his surroundings and his fellows. In many ways he is reminiscent of the innocence of Mal's group, in the sensitive way in which he responds to

³⁸Ibid., p. 220.

his environment, for example. But Simon is a sophisticated saint, and not an un-tempted innocent. He is the one character to appear in Golding's novels, with the possible exception of Nathaniel in Pincher Martin, who exists, fully aware of the darkness which motivates our actions, and capable of facing and thus transcending this darkness.

In the early part of the book, he is depicted in quiet harmony with his surroundings and his fellows. He finds himself a retreat in the forest to which he retires after helping Ralph with the duties of the camp. The same candle buds, which he had noticed so appreciatively on the exploration with Ralph and Jack, form part of his forest retreat:

Now the sunlight had lifted clear of the open space and withdrawn from the sky. Darkness poured out, submerging the ways between the trees till they were dim and strange as the bottom of the sea. The candle-buds opened their wide white flowers glimmering under the light that pricked down from the first stars. Their scent spilled out into the air and took possession of the island.³⁹

The candle buds, which had remained folded against the heat of the day, come alight for him in the mystical serenity of the forest bower. The light is pure, cool starlight, not the hot, sweat-inducing glare of the sun which typifies the hunts. The shadowy surroundings are reminiscent of the sea bottom, the same gentle sea which surrounds and claims him later in the novel. The aroma which Jack had earlier forced from them by slashing the buds,

³⁹Ibid., p. 72.

is willingly relinquished in Simon's presence. Through Simon's senses the environment appears to radiate beauty; it is not the hostile force which urges Jack to hunt, or the unaccommodating background for a man-made institution, which is the way it appears to Piggy and Ralph.

Simon also manages to transcend the conflict which plagues the relationships of the other boys. He is the most faithful and dependable of Ralph's workers. He is sensitive both to Piggy's brilliance and to the physical attributes which incapacitate him in his surroundings. He notices the discomforts of others before his own, as is evinced at the first pig roast when he gives his meat to Piggy, who has not been offered any by Jack. His time is always expendable to the littluns' who follow him into the forest:

Here the littluns who had run after him caught up with him. They talked, cried out unintelligibly, lugged him towards the trees. Then, amid a roar of bees in the afternoon sunlight, Simon found them the fruit they could not reach, pulled off the choicest from up in the foliage, passed them back down to endless, outstretched hands.⁴⁰

His personal relationships are thoughtful and gentle, manifesting none of the discordant conflict which divides the other boys from one another. The reason for his ability to live so harmoniously is that he is intuitively aware of the real nature of the beast, the thing which divides man from man.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 71.

In the assembly which discusses the possibility of the existence of a beast, most of the boys try to placate the littluns by denying its existence altogether. Simon, however, takes the conch and risks saying that there might be a beast after all. The reactions to his comment are bitter and Simon is forced to expand his original statement:

"What I mean is ... maybe it's only us."

"Nuts!"

That was from Piggy, shocked out of decorum. Simon went on.

"We could be sort of ..."

Simon became inarticulate in his effort to express mankind's essential illness. Inspiration came to him.

"What's the dirtiest thing there is?"

As an answer Jack dropped into the incomprehending silence that followed it the one crude expressive syllable. Release was like an orgasm. Those littluns who had climbed back on the twister fell off again and did not mind. The hunters were screaming with delight.

Simon's effort fell about him in ruins; the laughter beat him cruelly and he shrank away defenceless to his seat.⁴¹

Simon's attempt to force the boys into an awareness of the beast, as part of themselves, is a failure. It remains for him to demonstrate, through his actions, his real belief in its existence and his ability to face it. The opportunity soon presents itself when Samneric discover the beast on the mountain top and flee from it in terror. In reality, it is a dead parachutist who has floated in from the other and larger war which dominates the rest of the world. Ralph, Jack and Roger investigate the twins' claim in the semi-darkness of falling

⁴¹Ibid., p. 111.

night. In the half light they come almost face to face with a rotting corpse caught in the branches at the top of the mountain, but their fear prevents them from recognizing its true aspect, that of a real man. The beast, its existence confirmed in the minds of the boys, is really an incarnation of their fear.

Simon's confrontation with the beast follows Jack's acknowledgement of the existence of such a creature. To placate this "beast," Jack leaves the head of the sow which he and his hunters have killed for their feast. Simon, hidden in the depths of his forest retreat, witnesses the killing and stays behind to observe the pig's head which is soon engulfed by flies. He carries on a dialogue with this object, which informs him as to the real nature of the beast:

"You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are?"

The laughter shivered again.

"Come now," said the Lord of the Flies. "Get back to the others and we'll forget the whole thing."⁴²

This confrontation with the pig's head is terrifying for Simon, not because of what it reveals, for Simon had already recognized the beast as being part of human nature, but because of what it demands. It demands that in order to support his belief that the beast exists within human beings, he must investigate and disprove the theory that there is a beast on the mountain. He falls into a swoon, wakes,

⁴²Ibid., pp. 177-78.

and then journeys up the mountain to face the beast. He does not, as the Lord of the Flies suggested, go back to the boys, which would be a denial of the confrontation which he knows is necessary. He staggers up the mountain and finds the dead parachutist:

Simon felt his knees smack the rock. He crawled forward and soon he understood. The tangle of lines showed him the mechanics of this parody; he examined the white nasal bones, the teeth, the colours of corruption. He saw how pitilessly the layers of rubber and canvas held together the poor body that should be rotting away. Then the wind blew again and the figure lifted, bowed, and breathed foully at him. Simon knelt on all fours and was sick till his stomach was empty. Then he took the lines in his hands; he freed them from the rocks and the figure from the wind's indignity.⁴³

This act of true humanity releases the beast both literally and figuratively. As the dead man floats out to a more kindly grave in the sea, the beast in Simon's own nature has been conquered and he is freed of its presence. He has reached the end of his own personal search for harmony and has succeeded, after recognizing and confronting the fear which prods us into inhumanity. His trip down the mountain, with his news, is made in the light of this new understanding. His own death, which becomes an occasion of great moment for the other boys, particularly Ralph, is not portrayed as a tragedy in the terms of Simon's own life. In fact, it is described in terms of such quiet beauty that his reabsorption into the elements seems to be part of a natural and universal process:

⁴³Ibid., p. 181.

Somewhere over the darkened curve of the world the sun and moon were pulling; and the film of water on the earth planet was held, bulging slightly on one side while the solid core turned. The great wave of the tide moved further along the island and the water lifted. Softly, surrounded by a fringe of inquisitive bright creatures, itself a silver shape beneath the steadfast constellations, Simon's dead body moved out towards the open sea.⁴⁴

Simon, at the moment of his death, has nothing more to accomplish. His human potential has been fully realized in the achievement of a state of harmony in which his own heart has been fully linked with his environment and with his fellow man. Within his own personality, he has blended the other approaches using reason, instinct and even fear to the best possible advantage in the achievement of his quest.

It is Ralph, who, in his steadfast pursuit of the just course of action, tries to comprehend the meaning of their actions on the island. He emerges with an understanding which comprehends the significance of Simon, Jack and Piggy in this horrible catastrophe:

For a moment he had a fleeting picture of the strange glamour that had once invested the beaches. But the island was scorched up like dead wood - Simon was dead - and Jack had... The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; ... Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy.⁴⁵

The darkness of man's heart precludes innocence from the world. Each individual must learn to face his own dark powers of

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 190.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 248.

irrationality while striving to make use of his rationality. An over-emphasis of one or the other will result in the extremes manifested by Jack and Piggy. The two aspects of man's nature can only be harmonized through the transcending power of human relationships, as Simon has shown. Civilization alone is no harmonizing agent; it is a superficial construct which can only function effectively as long as the individuals, who make it up, maintain harmony by recognizing the necessity for relatedness as opposed to the desire to control

The Inheritors provides a fictional-historical account of the inheritance of human nature. It shows that the powers of the mind which enable us to enrich our culture also remove us from the harmony of an unconscious world. Lord of the Flies is a provocative reminder that one must not unwittingly relate the level of civilization with the ability of the individuals within that civilization to effect harmony. For all the boys, with the exception of Simon, discord erupts as soon as the superficial controls of civilization are removed. Civilization is only a mask of harmony. True harmony, like that achieved by Simon, is the result of an individual quest.

CHAPTER III

STUDIES OF INDIVIDUALS IN DISCORD: PINCHER MARTIN AND THE SPIRE

Both Pincher Martin and The Spire deal, in depth, with the imperfect relationship of an individual with his cosmos: both are studies of discord as it manifests itself in a particular case. The central character in each novel has denied one aspect of his dual nature and thus lives, not in harmony with others and with himself, but in a state of violent inner turmoil. Pincher Martin, greedy for pleasures of the flesh, denies the spiritual aspects of man's being and exalts the existence of the physical body even when it is dead and subject to the corrosive agents of nature. His relationships with people are warped by this over-emphasis of the body, and the ugliness of his life on earth is reflected in the state of physical torture which he is made to suffer after death. Dean Jocelin weighs the balance in the opposite direction, but with similar results. His denial of the flesh and exaltation of the spirit wreaks havoc on the whole of the world with which he has contact. The carnal aspects of his nature eventually force themselves upon his notice and reveal to him the impossibility of executing God's will at the expense of man's needs. Jocelin's understanding of his mistake re-establishes some measure of harmony to his existence, but Pincher Martin, grasping to the

last for the lost thread of his own existence, strikes an eternally discordant note.

Pincher Martin is a novel which works partly within the framework of the traditional survivor story. This tradition becomes a tool for presenting the central character as an anti-hero who, while comparing himself to Prometheus, the saviour of humanity, is proving himself to be a kind of Satan. Golding has woven image and symbol into a pattern which emerges gradually throughout the novel and is not fully completed until the last page. The story, which first appeared to concern the struggle of an individual for the preservation of his body, becomes instead a vivid testimony to the existence of his soul.

Throughout this novel Golding has maintained a complex handling of time and space which tends to enlarge the background of his theme of discord and harmony. In accordance with the complexity of time, the book deals at one level with what must have happened in only seconds of real time, at another with the week long struggle for survival and finally, through the use of flashbacks, the significant events of Pincher's past life which range over several years. Corresponding to the levels of time are three levels of spatial extension: at one level the entire action of the novel takes place within Pincher's mind; at another level the action takes place on a projection of barren rock, and at a third, through the flashbacks,

we see Pincher living in the outside world. This complexity of space and time is maintained throughout the novel until the shift in point of view which marks the last chapter. At all three levels we see one man fighting against the cosmic balance of the universe and attempting to impose his own warped standards on the world. Against the widest temporal background, that of his personal past, we see that he has failed to establish meaningful and harmonious relationships with his fellows, except for Nat, who maintains the relationship one-sidedly. Against the physical background of the rock, and in the week of time during which Pincher is isolated on this rock, we see him exert himself in a physical struggle against the elements of nature which he believes he can conquer by his wit. The most important struggle, however, takes place within his own mind, accompanied by a sense of time which is so incoherent as to be non-existent; this is the struggle to admit the possibility of death. The greed which has marked Pincher's personal code of ethics prevents him from accepting any fact which he himself cannot control, such as death. Ultimately, however, he is forced to acknowledge the mutability of the physical as he succumbs to the wearing forces of nature.

Christopher Hadley Martin is the centre of his own universe: he recognizes no other power. He exhibits in an exaggerated manner all those characteristics of the rational human mind which tend to

persuade man that he can dominate his surroundings and perpetuate his own feeble image. He is a man of gigantic mental tenacity, operating in faithful dedication to the implications of greed contained in his naval nickname, Pincher. His character is succinctly summarized by Pete, one of his acting associates:

He was born with his mouth and his flies open and both hands out to grab. He's the cosmic case of the bugger who gets his penny and someone else's bun.¹

His characteristic facial expression is that of a snarl, his most characteristic utterance, an obscenity. He believes so strongly in the power of his own consciousness that he even begrudges the unconsciousness of sleep. For to him, "sleep was a consenting to die, to go into complete unconsciousness, the personality defeated, acknowledging too frankly what is implicit in mortality, that we are temporary structures...."² The discord which envelops Pincher at all three levels of the novel is the result of his failure to interpret his humanity correctly. He denies physical death and spiritual life, both of which, within the context of the novel, appear to be "implicit in mortality." The significance of this denial and the resulting discord must be examined at each of the three spatial and temporal levels on which the book operates.

The broadest level is that which accounts for Pincher's past life. Information relevant to this period comes through

¹William Golding, Pincher Martin (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 120.

²Ibid., p. 91.

Christopher's memories which, tangled and incoherent as they first seem, arrange themselves into a detailed and revealing picture on which to base our interpretations of the action taking place at the other two levels. We early discover that his personal relationships have been carried on in accordance with a very special code of ethics, a code which is never directly endorsed by Chris, but which is adequately explained by Pete, one of his acting associates. In order to explain his theory of the way in which Chris relates to other people, Pete draws an analogy between Chris's behaviour and an ancient Chinese story. According to the story, a box is buried containing a dead fish in which maggots soon appear:

The little ones eat the tiny ones. The middle-sized ones eat the little ones. The big ones eat the middle-sized ones. Then the big ones eat each other. Then there are two and then one and where there was a fish there is now one huge, successful maggot. Rare dish.³

Pete, whose drunken venture into the depths of Chris's soul is well founded in personal bitterness, is one of the many who find themselves treated as left-overs after Chris has taken the pickings. His drunkenness, however, is no impediment to his logic for he realizes that Chris too must one day be a sacrifice to his own ethical code. He concludes his story with an account of the digging up of the box, an account which returns to Chris's mind many times during his sojourn on the rock:

³Ibid., p. 136.

"Have you ever heard a spade knocking on the side of a tin box, Chris? Boom! Boom! Just like thunder. You a member?"⁴

Chris, of course, is indisputably an adherent of the maggot creed but, being a man of gigantic greed, he is also a man of gigantic delusion and he successfully deceives himself into thinking that he can both live by this code and control his own destiny. The extreme physical torment which Christopher suffers on the island is interrupted several times by the sound of the spade rattling against the tin box, a reminder that forces beyond his control will claim him.

In his relationships with the theatre people he follows, as a matter of course, the code of ethics dictated by the maggot story. "Secure in his knowledge of the cosmic nature of eating,"⁵ he teases the pathetic Alfred mercilessly about the cuckolding of his wife, Sybil. He appropriates Pete's wife Helen, who is described as having "black maggot eyes in a white face,"⁶ as one of his mistresses. He gradually incurs the disfavour of all his 'friends' and is fired by the director, George, with little ceremony and no evidence of sorrow.

The circle of acting acquaintances has been appropriate as a background against which Chris acts out the ugliness of his own

⁴Ibid., p. 136.

⁵Ibid., p. 89.

⁶Ibid., p. 154.

character. For the most part, these people share his code of ethics, even though they are less masterful than he in its execution. His relationships with Nat and Mary, however, assume a different character. Mary, whom he considers to be cheap and inferior, he tries to include in his, "eat or be eaten," code of behaviour. She steadfastly refuses, however, to enter into the spirit of this deadly game and deals a severe blow to his ego merely by exercising her "impregnable virtue." His attempt to rape her is, for Chris, merely a ludicrous exercise in self-degradation which implants her painfully in the centre of his consciousness. His inability to drag her into his own world aggravates him because she acts as a threat to a course of action which he has chosen. She and Nathaniel, who maintain an entirely opposite approach to life, grow to dominate the "centre" of his consciousness, always presenting him with an alternate choice to the one he has made.

Christopher's relationship with Nathaniel is both intriguing and complex. Nat is developed, as a character, only as he is related to Chris. We know little about him, his job, or his usual activities. However, as he gradually emerges, quiet, thoughtful and religious, it appears that he is an obvious contrast to Chris, having achieved a quiet level of harmony in his own existence which is noticeably lacking in Chris's. It is Nathaniel to whom Christopher cries for help when the darkness and water overwhelm him. And yet his contempt for Nat is obvious in most of their daily interaction.

His description of him on board ship is of a man misplaced, quite ridiculous in his surroundings and yet naïvely unaware of the image he presents. Nat is always, in fact, as serenely unaware of his own image as Chris is affectedly aware of his. Although Christopher feels himself immeasurably superior to Nat, he is forced to recognize in him an harmonious adjustment to life which he himself lacks, and which puts Nat on a level which is beyond his own reach. Consequently, he maintains, towards Nat, an attitude of both love and hate, exhibiting these complex emotions at every contact as the following passage will illustrate:

Nathaniel's face altered even at that distance. The delight of recognition appeared in it, not plastered on and adjusted as Petty Officer Roberts had smiled under his too-close eyes; but rising spontaneously from the conjectural centre behind the face, evidence of sheer niceness that made the breath come short with maddened liking and rage.⁷

This ambiguous attitude typifies Christopher's part in the relationship between himself and Nathaniel. Nat, on the other hand, is always uniformly warm, gentle, frank and full of respect for his friend.

The development of the contrast between Christopher and Nathaniel becomes basic to our interpretation of discord and harmony as they function in the novel. Each of the two friends exhibit a completely different orientation to life. Chris, as we

⁷Ibid., p. 55.

have seen before, is dedicated to the principle, "eat or be eaten." Accordingly his values are all centred on the physical, on appearances, sensations and possessions. His approach to life is rationalistic in the extreme. Nat approaches life from a decidedly religious point of view. He is sensitive to the physical world around him in a manner which is reminiscent of Simon, in Lord of the Flies, and his values derive from the spiritual world. He notes in Pincher, "an extraordinary capacity to endure,"⁸ a capacity which, according to Nat, can be employed in "the technique of dying into heaven."⁹ Pincher, however, turns his remarkable capacity for endurance to an end which is more in line with his own orientation to life, the sustained and rationalistic effort to prolong the existence of his own body:

I must keep this body going. ... So long as the thread of life is unbroken it will connect a future with the past for all its ghastly interlude.¹⁰

Life, for Nat, implies more than a physical existence:

Take us as we are now and heaven would be sheer negation. Without form and void. You see? A sort of black lightning destroying everything that we call life.¹¹

Pincher's refusal to acknowledge the spiritual aspects of life and his determination to hold onto all that is physical, results in the above statement of Nat's becoming truth for Chris. The flashes

⁸Ibid., p. 71.

⁹Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 81.

¹¹Ibid., p. 70.

of black lightning which torment Pincher on his island become a symbol of the desolate negativity of his soul. Nat accepts willingly what Pincher is forced to accept only through torment, that death is one fact which does not submit neatly to rationalistic explanation.

The whole of Christopher's life, although it is not part of the direct narrative, underlies our interpretation of the story. Within moments of his contact with the water Pincher drowns and a part of his mind separates itself from his body:

... the man lay suspended behind the whole commotion, detached from his jerking body.¹²

The succeeding ironic struggle of the dead man for existence occupies a week of isolation on a barren island of rock. The object of the struggle, which appears to be survival and rescue, is really the ego's determined effort to refuse to admit an irrevocable fact, the death of the body. The six days spent on the island are not real days; they are a Satanic imitation of God's creative power in which Pincher creates, not the harmoniously organized cosmos which God himself created but the supremely disorganized and discordant world of a true Satan.¹³ It is this fierce dedication to the flesh, a dedication supported by his rationalism, which makes it impossible for Chris to admit the death of his own body.

¹²Ibid., p. 8.

¹³James Baker, in his book, William Golding, (St. Martins Press, New York, 1965), says that the Biblical metaphor is really a key to Pincher Martin.

The six days spent on the island are, in one sense, the least real of the three dimensions although they form the most consistently presented block of time in the novel. Similarly the geographical existence of the rock is the least real of the many physical settings which are presented in the novel. Neither the rock nor the six days exist; they are created by Pincher's mind and become his own private hell. They are important inasfar as they relate the personality of Pincher, which is revealed in the flashbacks, with the timeless struggle of his soul to admit the death of the body. The actions which fill these days could be called heroic but are not, because they violate that harmonious state in which man operates with, and not against, his world.

Early in the novel Golding prepares us for the kind of misconception which will direct Pincher's actions: he has confused himself with the creator as is revealed by his memory of the jam jar containing the figure of a man:

By varying the pressure on the membrane you could do anything you liked with the glass figure which was wholly in your power. You could mutter - sink now! And down it would go, down, down; you could steady it and relent. You could let it struggle towards the surface, give it almost a bit of air then send it steadily, slowly, remorselessly down and down.¹⁴

The sadistic pleasure which he enjoys in contemplation of this control causes him to ignore the implicit warning it offers him in his own

¹⁴Ibid., p. 9.

situation. The similarity of the situation occurs to him briefly:

In a moment of wordless realization he saw himself touching the surface of the sea with just such a dangerous stability, poised between floating and going down.¹⁵

Pincher, who conceives of himself as the powerful centre of his own universe, is, in reality, a delicate bubble subject to the powerful and inevitable forces of nature.

Pincher's misconception with respect to his own importance is understandable in the light of his conviction that intelligence breeds power. He is convinced that he can defy death merely by applying his intelligence to his surroundings. His sufferings on the island and the actions he performs to alleviate these sufferings are impressive in the beginning, but gradually become known for the extravagant, mock-heroic attempts to prolong consciousness which they really are. After all, Golding has warned us early in the novel about what is happening to Pincher:

Eternity, inseparable from pain was there to be examined and experienced.¹⁶

Pincher examines his rock in detail. He discovers food, water and shelter. He experiences bodily pain which, excruciating though it is, he finds preferable to a loss of consciousness. The pain is inescapable because it is his eternity:

¹⁵Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 14.

The sunburn went on pricking, the bristles scratched and scraped, and the unevenness of the rock lit their slow, smouldering fires. They stayed there like the sea. Even when consciousness was modified they insisted. They became a luminous landscape, they became a universe, and he oscillated between moments of hanging in space, observing them and of being extended to every excruciating corner.¹⁷

And yet, even pain of the intensity described above does not convince him of his own vulnerability, of his need for help. He is still convinced of his own sufficiency to conquer this situation:

Intelligence. Will like a last ditch. Will like a monolith. Survival. Education, a key to all patterns, itself able to impose them, to create. Consciousness in a world asleep. The dark, invulnerable centre that was certain of its own sufficiency.¹⁸

Blinded by his own pride, he makes a final, mock-heroic effort to control his own destiny. Exhibiting his characteristic focus on the physical, he decides that the agony which he is suffering is the result of his plugged bowels:

"I am poisoned. I am in servitude to a coiled tube the length of a cricket pitch. All the terrors of hell can come down to nothing more than a stoppage. Why drag in good and evil when the serpent lies coiled in my own body?"¹⁹

Ironically, of course, Pincher is poisoned, but it is a spiritual kind of poisoning which cannot be purged by any physical device. It can only be purged by a kind of selflessness of which he is incapable. The "terrors of hell" are no more and no less than his insistent attempt to prolong consciousness past death. For

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 122-23.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 163.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 163.

the six days during which he convinces himself that he is alive, he suffers a mental and physical torture which reflects the agonies of his soul.

In order to maintain the illusion that he is alive, Pincher is forced to thrust one part of his consciousness to the background. This detached consciousness is described by Pincher as the "dark centre":

There was at the centre of all the pictures and pains and voices a fact like a bar of steel, a thing - that which was so 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.²⁰

This indestructible centre of being, which is continually providing Pincher with information which he attempts to repress, gradually becomes identified with the non-physical aspect of man.²¹ The skull which houses this "dark centre" seems, to himself, to resemble "the round, bone globe of the world,"²² a description which is apt for one who is so clearly trying to create his own universe. It is inside this bone globe, plagued by pain and fear,

²⁰Ibid., p. 45.

²¹Michael Quinn, in an article called, "An Unheroic Hero: William Golding's 'Pincher Martin'." Critical Quarterly, IV (Autumn, 1962), p. 251, attempts to define the term 'centre' as it is used in the novel. He says: "Golding uses this device, not only to evoke the sense of agony but primarily to define the distinction between body and that which makes a man truly a human being and to suggest the kind of dissolution with which Martin feels himself to be threatened."

²²Ibid., p. 48.

that Pincher lives and plans, working out his salvation on a barren rock which must be beaten into yielding the minimum requirements of survival.

Various aspects of his surroundings and situation remind Pincher of his true state. The most striking reminder is the rock itself, which he feels to be vaguely and uncomfortably familiar. He describes it to himself as follows:

A single point of rock, peak of a mountain range, one tooth set in the ancient jaw of a sunken world, projecting through the inconceivable vastness of the whole ocean.²³

There is continual confusion in his mind between the topographical features of the island and those of his own mouth. At one point, reflecting on the corrosive effects of nature on the rock, he represses the analogy which seems naturally to suggest itself:

He looked solemnly at the line of rocks and found himself thinking of them as teeth. He caught himself imagining that they were emerging gradually from the jaw - but that was not the truth. They were sinking; or rather they were being worn away in infinite slow motion. They were the grinders of old age, worn away. A lifetime of the world had blunted them, was reducing them as they ground what food rocks eat.²⁴

His preoccupation with the rock is centred on its durability, its ability to withstand the wearing powers of the ocean. This preoccupation is understandable in light of the fact that the rock is a creation of his own mind. Thus, his real worry is that his own

²³Ibid., p. 30.

²⁴Ibid., p. 78.

mind will eventually be eroded to nothingness; as long as he can prove the rock to be impervious to assault, he can also prove the supremacy of his own mind.

In order to maintain the illusion that he is alive and that the rock has a reality outside of his mind, Pincher must continually repress the information held by the "dark centre," his detached consciousness. He defies the truth by continuing to impose his own pattern of existence on the rock,²⁵ building a look out, providing for air-rescue by the laborious building of a seaweed cross, obtaining food, water and shelter, and naming the main topographical features of the rock. Eventually, however, the "dark centre" asserts itself on his unwilling soul, convincing him that the simulated life on the rock is really the "black lightning" of his own hell:

The knowing was so dreadful that the centre made the mouth work deliberately.

"Black lightning."²⁶

²⁵James Baker, in his book, William Golding: A Critical Study (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 43, defines the relationship between rationality and the loss of innocence which, while it is particularly applicable to Pincher Martin, is also important with respect to other of Golding's protagonists. He says: "In order to avoid the terrors of the irrational, one must deny the irrational itself; one must deny the reality of all that he cannot comprehend and master. The "rational" man, therefore, imposes his own laws on the universe so that it will conform to his own sense of order and confirm his own logic. Such a man is no longer "innocent," for he pits his own will and intelligence against the patternlessness of a cosmos he cannot possibly control."

²⁶Ibid., p. 177.

Pincher never really accepts this knowledge; he rages to the last in violent opposition to the forces which will inevitably master him.

Pincher's effort to prolong life on the rock is ended when the "dark centre" is forced into the realization that he is, in fact, dead. The island, which was entirely a creation of the mind, is necessarily reduced to imitation as the mind's grasp weakens, and thus, we find him raging on a "cardboard rock."²⁷ As he loses touch with everything but his own greed, we see the gradual disappearance of his created world. He is left with only the claws which typified his existence:

Pieces went and there was no more than an island of papery stuff round the claws, and everywhere else there was the mode that the centre knew as nothing.²⁸

Pincher rages impotently against facts which he has already acknowledged. His last words bear strong testimony to his Satanic temper: "I shit on your heaven!"²⁹

Surprisingly enough, even the violence of Pincher's opposition is awarded, not a sudden and easily definable end, but a "wearing ... away in a compassion that was timeless and without mercy."³⁰ The forces of nature, particularly the sea and the storm, inevitably assert themselves over Pincher's impotent ragings, re-establishing

²⁷Ibid., p. 196.

²⁸Ibid., p. 201.

²⁹Ibid., p. 200.

³⁰Ibid., p. 201.

their mood of quiet inevitability after the precarious and clamorous turmoil of Pincher's mind.

The shift in point of view at the end of Pincher Martin plays a vital role in the impact of the novel. It relieves all ambiguity as to the exact moment of Pincher's death, pin-pointing the moment of his drowning within the first few pages of the narrative and thus providing a final stress on the importance of the three levels of spatial and temporal extension. The usual conventions of the survivor story are shattered, the most important of which is the glorification of the rational man. Pincher, to whom physical existence is the one important reality, has used his reason not merely to understand his world, but to control it. In so doing, he has exalted his own position to that of a creator and has denied the significance of other human beings. The ingenuity which, under normal circumstances, we would have been inclined to praise becomes, in this context, a major cause for blame. An added effect afforded by the ending arises out of the discussion between Mr. Campbell, who finds the body, and Davidson, the naval officer who comes to retrieve it. Davidson's assurance that the dead man could not possibly have suffered as he didn't even have time to remove his seaboots, adds a level of irony which throws the physical and spiritual worlds into vivid focus.

Pincher, in his attempt to pit himself against forces which far surpass his own may have been Promethean in his capacity for endurance, but was also Satanic in his dedication to greed and

pride. Like both Prometheus and Satan, he is not an ordinary character, a Ralph for instance, who struggles with darkness and tries to reconcile himself with his surroundings. No ordinary man would, or could, put his intelligence and endurance to such a test against such invincible powers. His mistake is in thinking that he can impose his own will on the orderly cosmos whose activities are invincible. The sea, for instance, which terrifies Pincher with its powers of destruction, is impressive in its mere inevitability; it is the natural possessor of the ruminative powers which Pincher would have appropriated for himself:

There was a gentle undertone compounded of countless sloppings of wavelets, there was a constant gurgling and sucking that ranged from a stony smack to a ruminative swallow. There were sounds that seemed every moment to be on the point of articulation but lapsed into a liquid slapping like appetite. Over all this was a definable note, a singing hiss, soft touch of the air on stone, continuous, subtle, unending friction.³¹

Ultimately he is taken forcefully by the same sea which gently claimed and immortalized Simon. From the moment of Pincher's appearance in the first line of the novel, "struggling in every direction,"³² to the final grasp of his claws for life as they "gripped their whole strength into each other,"³³ he is presented as a man who is violently out of harmony with his surroundings. Portrayed in contrast to the

³¹Ibid., p. 57.

³³Ibid., p. 201.

³²Ibid., p. 7.

spiritually orientated and harmoniously established Nathaniel, and against the eternally murmuring and timeless backdrop of nature, Pincher sounds his note of discord and is overcome "in a compassion that was timeless and without mercy."

Pincher Martin is, in many ways, similar to another of Golding's novels, The Spire. Dean Jocelin, the protagonist of the latter book is, like Pincher, a man of Promethean will and stamina. The note of discord which is sounded in both their lives arises, in each case, from a different kind of denial. The dominant image of each book is appropriate to the particular aspect of personality which has been denied: the rock on which Pincher lives for six days becomes a symbol of the barrenness of his soul, the existence of which he had denied; the spire, which is conceived by Jocelin in a vision as an image of prayer, becomes also a phallic symbol, a sublimation of his suppressed sexual desires.

The ambiguity of space and time which forms the structural principle of Pincher Martin and through which the theme of discord and harmony is presented, does not exist in The Spire. The Spire examines discord as it is manifested in one individual by exploring, in depth, the mind of a man as it functions over approximately a two year period. This two year period is not rigidly outlined as a chronological sequence of events: rather, the emphasis is placed on the intensity of Jocelin's mind as it endeavours to carry out the purpose of its indomitable will, engaging itself in mortal combat

with the other characters in the novel.

In The Spire, as in Pincher Martin, the relationship of the central character with others provides a significant insight into the meaning of the terms 'discord' and 'harmony' as they apply to the novel. The case of Pincher Martin is fairly straightforward. He misinterprets his position in the cosmos by conceiving of himself as a creator, a controller of men, and he is proven to be mistaken. The case of Dean Jocelin is much less straightforward, but I think it can be shown that he too confuses his role with that of a creator and in imposing his will he destroys all that is really meaningful. His distorted conception of his own power and importance acts as a barrier which cuts him apart from the community of souls to which he is supposed to be ministering. As the breach widens, Jocelin becomes a maniacal solipsist, exerting a tragic and inescapable degree of control over a terrorized community. Thus, we must see discord in this novel as being the tragedy which results when the bonds which tie one human being with another are ignored.

It is perhaps more difficult to discuss this novel than any of the others because the theme is worked so inextricably into the poetic fabric of Golding's prose. The story is told from the point of view of Jocelin himself, and his vision is the key to our interpretation. As though Golding has implanted a camera behind Jocelin's eyes, the prose involves the reader in his extravagant visual perspective:

He was laughing, chin up, and shaking his head. God the Father was exploding in his face with a glory of sunlight through painted glass, a glory that moved with his movements to consume and exalt Abraham and Isaac and then God again.³⁴

The images which riot through his brain gradually expose the pattern of Jocelin's complex personality, and his rapidly shifting visual perspective provides the only secure insight into the moral perspective of the novel. As Jocelin becomes increasingly isolated from his community in his effort to encourage the building of the spire on the strength of his own will, he begins to see the world and its inhabitants as growing smaller and less significant. The earth becomes, "a huddle of noseless men grinning upward";³⁵ the church authorities who come to examine his irregular practices appear to Jocelin as being, "small themselves, and growing smaller as he watched them";³⁶ a "drunk man who lay in the gutter beating time feebly with his arm while a dog lifted its leg over him,"³⁷ is no longer a human being, but merely "a slug." From Jocelin's point of view then, isolated as it is from the world around him, his fellow man is reduced to a series of insignificant objects. Jocelin does not regain a respect for humanity until he himself is the man in the gutter:

Here I show what I am, he thought . . . He was hardly conscious . . . of the hem of Rachel's skirt and the sandalled feet of Father Adam. Hands began to care for him gently.³⁸

³⁴William Golding, The Spire (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 7.

³⁵Ibid., p. 106.

³⁷Ibid., p. 109.

³⁶Ibid., p. 162.

³⁸Ibid., p. 216.

His moral perspective is shown to be partly restored through the violent shift in his visual perspective.

There are two major patterns of imagery in the novel which develop in Jocelin's mind and which can be used to trace the breakdown in communication which becomes discord. First, there is the analogy between a man and a house, an analogy which is recognized and articulated by Jocelin at various points throughout the book. The second pattern of imagery grows out of his unconscious mind; it has to do with fertility and with rampant growth, an obvious subconscious reaction to his consciously suppressed sexuality.

The analogy between man and house is suggested by Jocelin on the second page of the narrative as he gazes at the model of the church:

The model was like a man lying on his back. The nave was his legs placed together, the transepts on either side were his arms outspread. The choir was his body; and the Lady Chapel where now the services would be held, was his head. And now also, springing, projecting, bursting, erupting from the heart of the building, there was its crown and majesty, the new spire.³⁹

Jocelin here is comparing a church to a man on the basis of rough and superficial outline. However, as this analogy becomes expanded into the symbolic base of the novel, it assumes a depth of meaning which surprises even Jocelin himself.

³⁹Ibid., p. 8.

In order to stand and endure, a building must be constructed on a secure foundation; there should be a kind of harmonious relationship between the parts. Christ's parable according to the book of St. Luke makes clear the necessity for a strong foundation:

Every one who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like; he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well built.⁴⁰

In the language of parable, Christ has been advocating a way of life for men, as individuals. A man who listens to his words, words of love, is like a man building a house on strong foundations. Jocelin, of course, who represses sexual love and ignores brotherly love, eventually discovers the weakness of the foundation on which he has built. On the authority of his vision Jocelin builds the church, secure in the knowledge of his rightness. Ironically though, he has misinterpreted the words of God. There arises a terrible inverse relationship between the erection of the stone church and the gradual breakdown of the real church, the people of the community. Each human being, as Jocelin discovers, is a kind of building, and the house of God must be built on their cumulative strength. Jocelin has been mistaken in the notion that he must use his will to break down the people in order that the house of God may rise.

⁴⁰ The Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha, Revised Standard Version, College Edition, 1965, Luke 6:46-48.

Roger Mason's urgent demands that Jocelin pay attention to the lack of foundations on which this great monument is to be constructed go unheeded. Roger's description of the shifting morass, on which Jocelin has instructed him to build the church, becomes significant in the light of Jocelin's later attempts to recognize the "cellarage" of his own mind. Roger calls the muck which he discovers in the pit, "some form of life; that which ought not to be seen or touched, the darkness under the earth, turning, seething, coming to a boil."⁴¹ For Jocelin, sexuality, or the mind's cellarage, is similarly constituted, "a filthy thing, a rising tide of muck."⁴² Goody, the unrecognized object of his sexual desires becomes "that which ought not to be seen or touched." Jocelin's refusal to acknowledge himself as a sexual being manifests itself in the sublimation of physical love into the building of the spire. He realizes, too late, that the human mind, in order to be whole, must acknowledge its sexuality. This realization is evidenced in his pathetic questioning of Roger:

What's a man's mind Roger? Is it the whole building,
cellarage and all?⁴³

The recognition of the "cellarage" is the most difficult step for Jocelin to make in restoring unity to his being and thus, harmony to his life.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 79.

⁴²Ibid., p. 58.

⁴³Ibid., p. 213.

There are further analogies, however, between the community of the church and the church itself. The four stone pillars of the building, which Roger points out as being weak structures consisting of layers of stone, gradually become identified with the four persons who are important to Jocelin and whose lives are interwoven with his. Roger and Rachel, Pangall and Goody are, in fact, the pillars on which his own life rests:

Nearer to him than the floor were the people, the four of them - and his body shuddered again - Roger and Rachel Mason, Pangall and his Goody, like four pillars at the crossways of the building.⁴⁴

They, like the pillars of the church, are not solid structures and they crack and fall under the weight which they lack the foundation to support. Jocelin's willingness to sacrifice each of them, that the building may be finished, strains them to the breaking point, particularly Goody and Roger.

Goody, the most beloved of the four, by Jocelin, is also the most brutally violated. Jocelin marries her to a man whom he knows to be impotent and later allows her to fall into the hands of Roger Mason, knowing she will keep him at the building site. She dies in childbirth, hated by Rachel, ignored by Roger, deserted by Pangall and misunderstood by Jocelin. Jocelin has a brief moment of realization in which he understands his complicity in

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 62.

her tragic death:

... like a birth itself, words came, that seemed to fit the totality of his life, his sins, and his forced cruelty, and above all the dreadful glow of his dedicated will. They were words that the choir boys sang sometimes at Easter, quaint words; but now the only words that meant anything.

This have I done for my true love.⁴⁵

The irony of the choir boys' song arises out of the fact that Jocelin's unacknowledged love for Goody has resulted in the sordid circumstances of her death. The irony is compounded by the fact that Goody is only one of many such sacrifices to the "dreadful glow" of Jocelin's "dedicated will."

Jocelin's complex attitude towards Goody lies at the centre of his personality and must be unravelled if we are to understand the tensions which tear him apart as he struggles to recognize himself as a whole being. Although he calls her "his daughter in God," she lives in the centre of his consciousness as a symbol of physical and not spiritual woman. His lust for her is redirected into the building of the spire. Appropriately then, his heroic struggle to the top of the spire to drive in the last nail is followed by a vision of Goody which draws together the completion of the spire and Jocelin's suppressed physical longing in one great moment of climax:

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 137.

She came towards him naked in her red hair. She was smiling and humming from an empty mouth. He knew the sound explained everything, removed all hurt and all concealment, for this was the nature of the uncountrv. He could not see the devil's face for this was the nature of the uncountrv too; but he knew she was there, and moving towards him as totally as he was moving towards her. Then there was a wave of ineffable good sweetness, wave after wave, and an atonement.⁴⁶

Jocelin's eventual recognition of his sexual love for Goody and his fulfilling of that love, even in his imagination, restores him to some kind of an integral human being. He subsequently understands the nature of his mistaken interpretation of God's word:

If I could go back, I would take God as lying between people and to be found there.⁴⁷

Instead, in his effort to build to the glory of God, he has merely "traded a stone hammer for four people."⁴⁸ It is Jocelin's recognition of his complicity in Goody's death, and his acknowledgement of his love for her, which eventually forces him to redefine his concept of God, to see God manifesting himself in the relationships between individuals.

Jocelin's refusal to acknowledge the pit of muck on which his spire is built is analagous to his refusal to recognize the sexuality present in his own being, in that of Goody, and in the other major characters in the novel. Thus, both the church and the churchgoers appear to share a similar fate; they begin to crumble on

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 178.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 222.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 220.

their poor foundations. Nevertheless, their total collapse is not part of the story for it would deny the resilience which, Golding implies, is also a part of the nature of man. It is Father Adam, who exhibits compassion for man's weakness without rationalizing the blame, who provides a final comment on the analogy between man and building.

He speaks to Jocelin about the spire:

It's a great harm, certainly, but you built in faith, however mistaken. That's a small sin as sin's go. Life itself is a rickety building.⁴⁹

Adam's humble acknowledgement of man's weakness, of his vulnerability to deception, has a positive and hopeful quality which can only be explained in terms of its unadorned honesty.

In order to understand Jocelin's personal descent into chaos or discord and his restoration to harmony, it is necessary to trace the progression of another series of images which grows to dominate his mind, those which have to do with plant growth. To Jocelin, the natural world presents him with a kind of paradigm of order, one which he feels he is imitating:

I am like a flower that is bearing fruit. There is a preoccupation about the flower as the fruit swells and the petals wither; a preoccupation about the whole plant, leaves dropping, everything dying but the swelling fruit. That's how it must be.⁵⁰

Jocelin, in an effort to make his will supreme, has done what Pincher Martin also did; he has made himself the centre of the

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 190.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 97.

universe. However, the plant does not grow as it was supposed to have done; it runs rampant. The vision of the spire which was to mature into a ripe fruit is strangled by the baser parts of the plant. Jocelin himself notes this inexplicable aberration in the growth of his vision:

I had a vision you see, a clear and explicit vision. It was so simple! It was to be my work. I was chosen for it. But then the complications began. A single green shoot at first, then clinging tendrils, then branches, then at last a riotous confusion... ⁵¹

The reason for the aberrant growth of the plant is clear; the conditions which have fostered its growth are corrupt. Jocelin, to whom "the renewing life of the world was a filthy thing, a rising tide of muck," ⁵² is nevertheless obsessed with the reproductive function of man. His repression of the sexual aspects of his own being and his disgust for reproduction manifest themselves in the deformed product of his own vision, the crumbling spire.

Jocelin's growing awareness of his mistake is recorded as follows:

... the plant was visible to him, a riot of foliage and flowers and overripe, bursting fruit. There was no tracing its complications back to the root, no disentangling the anguished faces that cried out from among it; so he cried out himself, and then was silent. ⁵³

Jocelin is here beginning to identify with the rest of humanity, with those whom he has hurt. This awareness of his common humanity grows throughout the last three chapters of the book.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 168.

⁵³Ibid., p. 194.

⁵²Ibid., p. 58.

It involves a recapitulation of his past life and actions and a totally new understanding of these actions. Thus, he learns that he was made Dean through the influence of a relative who had pleased the king in a sexual encounter, not through the choice of an heavenly king, as he had thought. He realizes, and explains to Lady Alison, that he had loved Goody, "and that not the lawful, the ordained thing; but... the unlawful"⁵⁴ He realizes that as a priest he has been both pompous and ignorant. It is interesting to note that he begs forgiveness from Anselm not for any particular crime but, as he himself says, "for being what I am."⁵⁵ We begin to see in Jocelin, at this point, something of the tragic knowledge that we see Lear struggling to accept when he cries, "I am not ague proof." Jocelin, in coming to understand his own humanity, has restored order to the world which he had previously brought to a state of violent discord. The vision accorded him in his new found state is an apple tree in bloom, the parts of which are in perfect harmony:

There was a cloud of angels flashing in the sunlight, they were pink and gold and white; and they were uttering this sweet scent for joy of the light and the air. They brought with them a scatter of clear leaves, and among the leaves a long, black springing thing. His head swam with the angels, and suddenly he understood there was more to the appletree than one branch. It was there beyond the wall,

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 186.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 203.

bursting up with cloud and scatter, laying hold of the earth and the air, a fountain, a marvel, an appletree...⁵⁶

Jocelin's appreciation of the appletree is of a totality, unlike his earlier effort to cultivate one part of the plant in the hope that the rest would die. His growing ability to appreciate a totality arises out of his newly integrated personality and from his shattering recognition of himself as a mere human being. His new awareness of humanity leads him to the reinterpretation of God which has already been noted:

If I could go back, I would take God as lying between people and to be found there.⁵⁷

Union with God which, to Jocelin, represents the ultimate achievement, he now understands will only grow out of harmonious relationships between individual human beings.

There is no shift in point of view at the end of this novel as there was in Pincher Martin. Neither is there as definite an indication of the final moral state of the central character. The shift in point of view at the end of Pincher Martin enabled the reader to separate himself from Pincher's mind and to see clearly the moral implications of the struggle for existence. The Spire allows for no such separation and the reader is no more assured that Jocelin's growing understanding will be a sufficient atonement for his sins than is the Dean himself. In fact,

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 204-05.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 220.

Jocelin dies feeling that God is still obscured behind the tangle of his past sins. That he is ushered out of life by the charity of Father Adam, and that his final vision is of the appletree, is probably a sufficient indication that he has found what Pincher Martin refused even to look for, an understanding of the harmony which grows through self-knowledge and relatedness to others. Jocelin discovers, almost unwittingly, what Sammy Mountjoy and Oliver, the protagonists of Free Fall and The Pyramid, struggle consciously to understand.

CHAPTER IV

TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING: FREE FALL AND THE PYRAMID

In Free Fall and The Pyramid, Golding's exploration into the nature of man is furthered by his two protagonists, Sammy Mountjoy and Oliver who, in their attempt to record their feelings of spiritual barrenness and isolation, explore and analyse the psychological state of discord which we witnessed in Pincher Martin and Dean Jocelin. It is the sense of inner chaos, the cause of which they do not yet understand, which encourages their exploration backwards in time. They trace cause and effect in their lives to see how they have been formed by their past acquaintances and to see the ways in which they, as individuals, have affected others. They both ultimately achieve an understanding of their own natures which, while it does not restore simple harmony to their lives, at least enables them to strive towards that end.

As Sammy Mountjoy, in Free Fall, traces his individual line of cause and effect back to its beginnings, we see contained in his life story the whole evolution of the human heart as it has been portrayed by Golding in the other novels. His early innocence, for instance, which he describes in great detail as something which must be felt to be appreciated, is reminiscent of the innocence

of Mal's people before they are influenced by "the others."

Choice, in a state of innocence, lacking the compulsion of conscious preference, is a joyful exercise in freedom as we can tell from one of Sam's earliest memories:

The gravelled paths of the park radiated from me; and all at once I was overcome by a new knowledge. I could take whichever I would of these paths. There was nothing to draw me down one more than the other. I danced down one ... I was free. I had chosen.¹

The adult Sam, however, is perplexed by the painful complexity of choice. His decision to win Beatrice is made and executed in much the same manner as Pincher Martin's decision to defy death and Jocelin's decision to build a spire. In all three cases human beings become sacrifices to the strength of will imposed by the protagonists, who are acting on decisions made with a view to achieving a definite goal. Thus, the breakdown of Sam's relationship with Beatrice creates, in him, a condition which is similar to the inner discord of Pincher Martin and Jocelin. The achievement of total communication with Beatrice has been his goal, and when this becomes no longer possible and she is reduced to a pitiable and ruined creature, Sam finds himself hurled into a mental limbo. His efforts to provide himself with a way of life which would structure meaningful relationships for him have all failed:

¹William Golding, Free Fall (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), pp. 5-6.

I have hung all systems on the wall like a row of useless hats. They do not fit. They come in from outside, they are suggested patterns, some dull and some of great beauty. But I have lived enough of my life to require a pattern that fits over everything I know; and where shall I find that?²

The above passage, which appears at the beginning of the novel, shows Sam as having arrived almost at the level of understanding which Jocelin had achieved just before death. Already, Sam is dissatisfied with any inflexible and superficial set of controls imposed from the outside; he has only to learn the importance of relationships between individuals. He eventually makes this discovery while he is in a German prison camp, but finds himself incapable of atoning for his past deeds and even unable to use his new knowledge to harmonize new relationships. Nevertheless, the inexplicable miracle of his release from prison camp, his recognition of the ugliness in his own nature, and his belief that the relationship of "individual man to individual man" is "the forge in which all change, all value, all life is beaten out into a good or a bad shape,"³ suggests that Sam will continue the struggle to achieve harmony by acting on his new understanding.

Sam begins his autobiography with a passionate declaration of his desire to transcend isolation, to bridge the gap between "individual man and individual man":

²Ibid., p. 6.

³Ibid., p. 189.

We are dumb and blind yet we must see and speak.⁴

In this one paradoxical statement he has caught the dilemma which underlies the human condition: as intelligent beings we are encouraged to understand our cosmos and to communicate that understanding to others and yet we remain incapable of achieving this goal. His attempt to understand this apparent paradox takes the shape of an investigation into the way in which the conflicting worlds of spirit and reason have influenced him. He discovers that there are two basic approaches to the establishment of true communication between individuals: one is the rational approach in which relationships can be reduced to the physical factors of cause and effect; the other is a spiritual approach in which cause and effect does not apply and the realm of intuition and miracle are applicable. It is Sammy's choice of the rational approach, and his denial of the spiritual, which results in his inner state of discord.

Golding is careful to provide Sammy with a parental background which will not interfere with his uniqueness as a human being, which will reduce the parental determination of his character. His unknown father, as he himself states:

... was a speck shaped like a tadpole invisible to the naked eye. He had no head and no heart. He was as specialized and soulless as a guided missile.⁵

⁴Ibid., p. 7.

⁵Ibid., p. 14.

His enormous mother is remembered by the grown Sammy in terms of her warmth, her largeness and the uncomplicated sense of security she provided. She is reminiscent of the Oa figure in The Inheritors and certainly Golding intended to attribute to her the qualities of an 'earth mother'. Sammy's physical parentage then, emphasizes his role as an everyman figure, searching for understanding. His search does not take the shape of a conflict between generations, for he has no older generation to rebel against. It takes place, within his mind, as a conflict between the rational and spiritual aspects of his own being. Hence Nick Shales and Rowena Pringle, whom he calls his "spiritual parents" are more potent influences than his physical parents in the shaping of the struggle which leads Sam eventually to the loss of his freedom.

Sam is detailed and explicit in his account of the lessons in reason and spirit which he receives from Nick Shales and Rowena Pringle. His natural propensity towards the spiritual approach to life is crushed by Miss Pringle, the spinster teacher whose accounts of biblical events, while compelling in themselves, are made less acceptable by her hypocritical actions. Her persecution of Sam turns him away from the scriptural world in which miracles are as believable as chemistry. He is lured into an acceptance of the rationalism of Nick Shales, the scientist, who redeems the coldness

of his discipline by the warmth of his being. It is, however, interesting to note that both Nick Shales and Rowena Pringle have shut out of their systems the pure power of love. Sam is disappointed by Nick's condemnation of sex as a "dirty trick," and humiliated by Miss Pringle's gross interpretation of his landscape drawing. Their failure to recognize the power of love in their systems affects Sam's ability to interpret love in the terms which should have been most natural for him, spiritual terms. He is, in fact, conditioned by his "spiritual parents" to the cruelty which he exhibits in his first love affair.

Sam's relationship with Beatrice is of central importance in his investigation of his own nature. It is in the gradual evolution of his feeling for her that his fall from freedom can be traced. He is still innocent when he first recognizes, in her, something unique and desirable. His account of that recognition reveals her particular attractions to lie in her spiritual appeal:

...I saw there in her face and around the openness of her brow, a metaphorical light that none the less seemed to me to be an objective phenomenon, a real thing.⁶

However, his adoption of Nick's rationalism encourages him to deny these qualities and to emphasize the physical characteristics which he notices secondly:

⁶Ibid., p. 222.

If I saw that light of heaven, why then it should have been a counterpoise to Nick's rationalism. But my model was flesh and blood. She was Beatrice Ifor; and besides that unearthly expression, that holy light, she had knees sometimes silk and young buds that lifted her blouse when she breathed.⁷

It is not merely Sam's recognition of Beatrice's physical attractions which condemns their relationship to ultimate failure; it is the fact that his recognition of her as a physical being leads to a denial of her spiritual qualities. Thus, his interpretation of his love for her in entirely physical terms becomes a desire to control and inflict pain rather than a recognition of the spirituality which first attracted him:

... I said in the hot air what was important to me; namely the white, unseen body of Beatrice Ifor, her obedience, and for all time my protection of her; and for the pain she had caused me, her utter abjection this side death.⁸

His final visit to her, in the insane asylum, reveals the shocking success of his desire to reduce her to "utter abjection." Beatrice, the spiritual guide, whose sole concern was the unselfish desire to lead him out of distress, is reduced to a mindless body through Sam's inability to recognize spirit and his over-emphasis on the

⁷Ibid., p. 222.

⁸Ibid., pp. 235-36.

importance of physical conquest.⁹

Although Sam's love for Beatrice is debased by his denial of the spiritual aspect of her being, it is, nevertheless, a real and passionate love. In applying the physical laws of cause and effect to their relationship he decides that true communication with his flesh and blood idol must take the shape of a physical act:

"I want you, I want all of you, not just cold kisses and walks - I want to be with you and in you and on you and round you - I want fusion and identity - I want to understand and be understood - oh God, Beatrice, Beatrice, I love you - I want to be you!"¹⁰

His calculated seduction and pretended madness are efforts to speed up the physical sharing which is to crown their love. This sexual sharing, however, which was to break down all barriers, turns Beatrice into a faceless replica of her former self. As Sammy himself comments:

What had been love on my part, passionate and reverent, what was to be a triumphant sharing, a fusion, the penetration of a secret, raising of my life to the enigmatic and holy level of hers became a desperately shoddy and cruel attempt to force a response from her somehow.¹¹

⁹Critics such as Bernard S. Oldsey and Stanley Weintraub, The Art of William Golding (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965), p. 114, and Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor, William Golding (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), p. 178, and others, have mentioned the Dantesque significance of Beatrice's name.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 105.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 122-23.

Whereas his first drawing of her had been inspired by a "metaphorical light" which he recognized on her forehead, his last paintings catch only the subjection of a physical body, a subjection which Sammy had willed and wrought and which repels him to the extent that he must then reject this ruined creature. She becomes a tragic sacrifice to his denial of spirit, a fact which he does not fully realize until many years later. As he rediscovers the world of the spirit in his own being, while in prison camp, the spiritual qualities in Beatrice which he had refused to recognize reassert themselves in his memory:

That negative personality, that clear absence of being, that vacuum which I had finally deduced from her silences, I now saw to have been full. ... She was simple and loving and generous and humble; qualities which have no political importance and do not commonly bring their owners much success.¹²

Eventually, it is the breakdown of Sam's one sided approach to life which opens the way to a new understanding, one which will make possible true communication between individuals.

The change in Sam comes about in his confrontation with Dr. Halde who, in an attempt to extract information, confronts Sam with his own skepticism:

There is no health in you, Mr. Mountjoy. You do not believe in anything enough to suffer for it or be glad. There is no point at which something has knocked on your door and taken possession of you. You possess

¹²Ibid., p. 191.

yourself. . . . And between the poles of belief, I mean the 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.¹³

This assessment of Sam by Dr. Halde is important because it brings into sharp focus the psychological conditions of discord. The most noticeable condition is that of isolation, of unrelatedness. ("You possess yourself") Secondly, we see the poles of rationalism and spirituality which are Sam's philosophical heritage, neither of which he can embrace whole heartedly. Sam is tortured by the belief that to commit himself to one or the other of these two poles will give him the stable point of reference for which he is searching. The complexity of choice with which he is confronted is here represented as a moral and psychological dilemma. In Lord of the Flies, the same complexity was presented by embodying each of the several basic approaches to life in one of the main characters. Simon, in Lord of the Flies, manages to integrate Jack's primitivism and Piggy's rationalism with his own spirituality in a total response to his environment: Sam recognizes the necessity for such an integration but is faced with the seeming impossibility of effecting it; for him "there is no bridge."¹⁴ Sam's eventual recognition of the importance of the individual and the need for a total response to life, combining both the rational and the spiritual aspects of his

¹³Ibid., p. 144.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 253.

being, is a theoretical endorsement of an approach to life which was actualized in Simon.

Sam's participation in the war is not motivated by any particular belief in its causes. The cruelty with which he has expelled Beatrice from his life, in order to marry Taffy, confuses and appalls him. The war is no antidote, nor an atonement for his cruelty, but rather a confirmation of his own mental state:

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.¹⁵

The manner in which he has exercised his will on Beatrice, marshalling all his ingenuity to one end, has had the effect of isolating him from others in much the same way as Pincher Martin and Jocelin became isolated as they continued to impose their wills on others. Thrust alone into a physical isolation cell by Dr. Halde, Sam is faced with the terrors of solipsism:

I? I? Too many I's, but what else was there in this thick, impenetrable cosmos?¹⁶

The answer to this last question constitutes the substance of his revelation.

The words which precipitate Sammy towards this escape from the chaos of isolation are simply a spontaneous cry for help. They are irrational and instinctive in the sense that he does not really

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 131-32.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 169-70.

believe there is a possibility of the kind of help for which he is asking. However, the cry itself seems to preconceive the existence of something other than himself, and merely by calling out, he finds he has broken out of his solipsism:

When a man cries out instinctively he begins to search for a place where help may be found...¹⁷

Significantly, he is awarded physical release from his cell immediately after he has achieved a kind of spiritual release from isolation. There is no rationality in this sequence of events, nor in the statement of the commandant who releases him, "The Herr Doctor does not know about peoples."¹⁸ The mere act of crying for help, in its presupposition of the possibility of some spiritual power and its acceptance of irrationality, has removed the need for rational answers to questions. Sammy's readmission of a non-rational aspect of life into his own approach to living, has freed him from the impossible task of imposing some artificial pattern on the complexity of life.

Other of Golding's characters have illustrated this same point, the necessity of admitting the insufficiency of the human mind to impose patterns on life. Dean Jocelin, in The Spire, had expected to effect a miracle through the strength of his own will. His inability to make his will supreme gradually crushes him into an understanding of his need for others. His cries to Father Adam for

¹⁷Ibid., p. 184.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 253.

help have the same result as we have noted in Free Fall:

It was as if these words were a key.¹⁹

It is at this point that Jocelin, too, escapes from solipsism and attempts to re-establish communication with others. On the other hand, it is Pincher Martin's refusal to call for help, to admit his own insufficiency, which results in the terrible agony which he suffers. The discord which is manifested in every aspect of his life and death is the result of the conflict arising out of Pincher's determination to impose a pattern on a world whose complexity will not submit to such restriction.

Sammy's physical and spiritual release from isolation is accompanied by a heightened perception of the significance of the world around him:

The power of gravity, dimension and space, the movement of the earth and sun and unseen stars, these made what might be called music and I heard it.²⁰

Having abandoned the attempt to impose his will on the world, an attempt which had resulted in discord and isolation, he discovers that, "as time went on and I became accustomed to the rhythm of silence I began to learn about the new world."²¹ This new

¹⁹William Golding, The Spire (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 196.

²⁰William Golding, Free Fall (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), p. 187.

²¹Ibid., p. 189.

knowledge has a double focus: on the one hand he faces his own nature objectively and finds it to be "not beautiful but fearsome"²²; on the other, he views the world outside himself with a new appreciation of its beauty and significance:

What had been important dropped away. What had been ludicrous became common sense. What had had the ugliness of frustration and dirt, I now saw to have a curious and reversed beauty...²³

It is while contemplating this new sense of priorities that he is startled by a sudden awareness of the very substance of life, a substance which he compares to the pillars of society:

This substance was a kind of vital morality, not the relationship of a man to remote posterity nor even to a social system, but the relationship of individual man to individual man - once an irrelevance but now seen to be the forge in which all change, all value, all life is beaten out into a good or a bad shape.²⁴

The choice of metaphor underlies the importance of his discovery. Society, and in fact civilization, is only as strong as the individual relationships of which it is constituted. As The Spire illustrates, when individual relationships are warped, the pillars threaten to collapse, hurling society into total chaos.

The concept of relatedness, being the opposite of isolation, proves to be the most important aspect of the revelation. However, a recognition of the importance of the relationship between individual man and individual man does not automatically make it a realizable

²²Ibid., p. 190.

²³Ibid., p. 199.

²⁴Ibid., p. 189.

ideal. As Sam himself notes:

Everything is related to everything else and all relationship is either discord or harmony.²⁵

He had originally hoped to find, as had the boys in Lord of the Flies, one clearcut solution to the problem of transmuting discord into harmony. This hope is shown, in both cases, to be merely an illusion. The glimpse of understanding achieved by Ralph at the end of Lord of the Flies is a less articulate version of Sammy's revelation at the end of Free Fall. Their past, which includes, in both cases, a coming to consciousness and thus guilt, cannot be atoned for. In Free Fall this is made particularly explicit through Sam's final visit to Beatrice. The suffering he has caused her he sees as being irreparable.

In tracing backward the line of cause and effect, Sam has discovered the sad fact that, "people don't seem to be able to move without killing each other."²⁶ Jocelin makes a similar lament in The Spire:

There ought to be some mode of life where all love is good, where one love can't compete with another but adds to it.²⁷

Unfortunately, this mode of love is possible only in an innocent, unconscious world such as was exhibited in the society of Mal's people in The Inheritors. In a civilized society, men become guilty of turning love into the basis of control rather than of

²⁵Ibid., pp. 186-87.

²⁶Ibid., p. 248.

²⁷William Golding, The Spire (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 214.

understanding. Thus, it remains a bitter truth that while man strives to achieve harmony in his personal relationships, he is often guilty of attempting to control others, thus leading himself towards isolation and discord.

Free Fall does not, however, end on a note of complete pessimism. It is significant that the final sentence of the novel should be the enigmatic comment of the commandant as he releases Sam from prison, "The Herr Doctor does not know about peoples." Golding seems to suggest by this that such inexplicable acts belong to the miraculous world of the spirit in which love redeems, rather than destroys. Thus, the fact that the statement accompanies his release from prison suggests the possibility of his escape from mental isolation, or discord.

The Pyramid, Golding's most recent novel, re-asserts the importance of the struggle to resolve discord into harmony, to transcend isolation through relatedness. Its protagonist, Oliver, whose lack of a last name serves to universalize his story in much the same way as Sammy Mountjoy's lack of parents universalized his, conducts an examination of his own past and arrives at a final understanding of life which comes remarkably close to Sammy's.

If Lord of the Flies revealed the fact that civilization is merely a mask of harmony behind which individuals exist in states of discord, then The Pyramid can be said to illustrate an

aspect of this same mask. The pyramid of social status, which dictates relationships and relegates certain people to the inhuman status of objects, is shown to be a superficial and insidious structure which promotes the causes of discord.

In order to deal adequately with the entire pyramid of Stilbourne society, the novel is divided into three sections, each of which is developed separately as a short story. The three sections are connected through Oliver, whose recollections of his boyhood contain vivid sketches of many of the town's inhabitants. His accounts of Evie Babbacombe, and the production of the 'King of Hearts' by the Stilbourne Operatic Society, reveal Oliver in the form of a 'naive hero', whose failure to understand the implications of his own actions ensures an ironic perspective for the reader. States of discord are portrayed comically in the first two sections of the novel. In the third section of the novel, his more serious account of his boyhood association with Bounce, his music teacher, provides a sobering analysis of the state of discord and its causes. The way in which the tone of the novel modulates as it progresses, can be accounted for by Oliver's growing awareness of himself in relation to his society as a whole, the social pyramid. In the first section, Oliver is an adolescent who hasn't yet questioned the standards dictated by social convention. In his encounters with Evie Babbacombe, he adapts social snobbery rather skilfully to his own purposes. The second section of the

novel sees him questioning the validity of society's standards but, as yet, incapable of applying any other criteria to personal relationships. Hence, he never appreciates the tragic aspects of Evelyn de Tracy's life. The last section of the novel is written from the point of view of the mature man looking back at his childhood and applying a greatly expanded understanding to himself and to his music teacher, Bounce. As a whole, The Pyramid provides insights into characters existing in various degrees of discord. Through Oliver, it illustrates the attempt of an individual to understand the complexities of the human mind and the necessity of comprehending and facing all aspects of this complex structure.

It is Oliver's relationship with Evie, the 'secular sexpot' of Stilbourne, which dominates the first portion of the narrative. While he does not analyze the relationship in the same way as Sammy had done with Beatrice, it, nevertheless, marks for him a similar descent from innocence to guilt as he learns to use Evie to his own advantage while denying her own human needs.

Oliver's admiration of Evie is not clouded by the idolization which characterized Sammy's love for Beatrice. Evie is, in no way, spiritual. As her name suggests, she is, from the moment of her first appearance in the novel, the very image of fallen woman. In comparing Evie with his idol, Imogen, Oliver makes the distinction quite clear:

Evie had none of Imogen's sacred beauty. She was strictly secular.²⁸

His single-minded pursuit of her is as relentless and as cruel as Sammy's pursuit of Beatrice, without the justification of love. He never questions his belief, a belief arising out of his knowledge of her inferior status, that she is an object which will somehow satisfy both his curiosity and his lust. He ensures the tranquility of his conscience by accepting the fact that he is evil:

...I would get Evie to a place where I might wreak my wicked will. I understood it to be wicked. Well, I was wicked. I swore a great oath of implacability and felt better.²⁹

Wickedness, for Oliver, is, at this point, merely transgressing social convention in such a way that he himself is the injured party. He has no conception of having sinned by injuring another human being. Thus, in response to Evie's cries for love Oliver notes:

She wanted tenderness. So did I; but not from her. She was no part of high fantasy and worship and hopeless jealousy. She was the accessible thing.³⁰

Oliver's insistent denial of Evie's humanity is carried to a final extreme when he uses his knowledge of her sordid relationship with Captain Wilmot to blackmail her into submitting to his own desires. Evie's plea that he keep his knowledge to himself

²⁸William Golding, The Pyramid (London: Faber and Faber, 1967, p. 16.

²⁹Ibid., p. 56.

³⁰Ibid., p. 89.

awakens in Oliver a sense of cruel power:

My heart gave a heavy leap and my flesh stirred. . . . she was up here, life's necessary, unspeakable object. I stared curiously at my slave.³¹

It is this conscious use of power to manipulate others which marks the end of Oliver's innocence.

Ironically, it is Evie, the 'object', who perceives dimly the hypocrisy of the social world from which she is barred. In an attempt to unmask some of this hypocrisy she contrives to expose the 'brute' in Oliver to his father. With one pair of magnified Stilbourne eyes focussed on the hill, Oliver acts out his little ritual of lust with Evie. His subsequent humiliation at having been watched by his father blossoms into the beginning of a recognition of guilt:

I stood, a heap of dung, yearning desperately for some sewer up which I might crawl and reach my parents, kneel, be forgiven, so that the days of our innocence might return again.³²

Two years later Oliver meets Evie in Stilbourne and is, for the second time, humiliated before the eyes of the town's inhabitants. This time, a drunken Evie expounds bitterly and loudly on their adolescent encounters and concludes with an enigmatic comment on her relationship with her father. As she crosses the square, on her way home, Oliver is, for the first time, compelled to understand her as a human being:

³¹Ibid., p. 91.

³²Ibid., p. 100.

I stood, in shame and confusion, seeing for the first time despite my anger a different picture of Evie in her life-long struggle to be clean and sweet. It was as if this object of frustration and desire had suddenly acquired the attributes of a person rather than a thing; as if I might - as if we might - have made something, music, perhaps, to take the place of the necessary, the inevitable battle.³³

Oliver's realization that Evie is a person and not a thing renews, in his mind, the possibility of a friendship based on understanding rather than exploitation. It is, however, too late to begin again with Evie and he is aware of this fact. He describes their failure to "make music" as "the necessary, the inevitable battle," a comment which recalls Sammy's similar regrets that he could not have acted other than he had with Beatrice and that "people don't seem to be able to move without killing each other."³⁴ Nevertheless, the fact that Oliver understands Evie in a new way is a sufficient indication that he is becoming aware of the necessity for recognizing, rather than denying, the humanity of each person. As will be seen in the last two sections of the novel, this sensitivity to the needs of others is an ideal which is not often attained, but as an ideal it is basic to the understanding of all Golding's protagonists who wish to escape discord.

The second section of the novel presents the most general view of the social pyramid which towers over Stilbourne. Oliver's role

³³Ibid., p. 111.

³⁴William Golding, Free Fall (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), p. 248.

as the 'naive hero' is particularly outstanding in this section. Home from Oxford on holiday, he blunders into the Stilbourne Operatic Society's production of 'The King of Hearts'. Unwittingly, he reveals for the reader, two levels of discord: on the one hand he provides a comic insight into the superficiality of the relationships which flourish in Stilbourne society and, on the other, his innocence acts as a foil against which Evelyn de Tracy emerges, a contorted and tragically unrelated figure.

Evelyn de Tracy, who has been hired to cajole the Stilbourne Operatic Society (appropriately abbreviated S. O. S.), through their production, is the only character in the novel who does not live in Stilbourne. With a tired cynicism, Evelyn veils his contempt for his untalented and vain group of singers and actors behind a torrent of flattery, at the same time unveiling, for Oliver, the falseness of a group of people whose talent and sincerity had never before been a matter of question for him.

The crucial scene, with respect to Oliver's new understanding, takes place in the bar while the opera is being performed. De Tracy undertakes to "cure" Oliver of his misconceptions with respect to the town. With his help, Oliver receives his first intoxicating insight into the fact that Stilbourne is, in many ways, true to its name, abortive rather than complete and sound. Imogen, for instance, is revealed to him in an entirely new light, one

which allows him to judge her more objectively. He notes her insensitivity to music:

In that landscape where notes of music, and all sounds were visible, coloured things, she trod with ignorant, ungainly feet. . . . She was so out of tune that the line of the song that should have been spiky as a range of mountains was worn down like a line of chalk hills. . . . I listened; and I was free.³⁵

By seeing Stilbourne briefly through the eyes of an outsider Oliver gains a new perspective of his town, one which no longer recognizes in the social pyramid an harmonious structuring of relationships.

Despite his newly acquired sensitivity, Oliver fails to comprehend the second message which Evelyn has for him. The director has tried to unmask himself, as well as the Stilbourne inhabitants. He makes tentative advances to Oliver, but the conversation reveals Oliver's incomprehension:

"I think the two of us might steal off for a drink, don't you Oliver?"

"I'm in costume!"

"So am I. . . ." ³⁶

A constant level of irony is maintained as Oliver's eager idealism is counterpointed with de Tracy's worn cynicism:

"... Everything's - wrong. Everything. There's no truth and there's no honesty. My God! Life can't - I mean just out there, you have only to look up at the sky - but Stilbourne accepts it as a roof. As a - and the way we hide our bodies and the things we don't say, the things we daren't mention,

³⁵ William Golding, The Pyramid (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), p. 154.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 144.

the people we don't meet - and that stuff they call music - It's a lie! Don't they understand? It's a lie, a lie! It's obscene!"

"Very famous. Made a lot of money." ³⁷

Their conversation, maintained at these two distinct levels, reaches a turning point which Oliver fails to notice. Reduced to helpless laughter before the pictures of Evelyn in full ballerina costume, he fails to perceive that these pictures are the real Evelyn de Tracy. He accepts the abrupt and agonized explanation of Evelyn's that they were taken of "some farce." The reader, however, cannot help being thrown back to an earlier statement of de Tracy's in which, while searching for a metaphor which would describe all life, he inadvertently discovers an appropriate metaphor for his own blighted existence:

"It's an outrageous farce, Oliver, with an incompetent producer." ³⁸

The naive point of view which has been maintained in this section has preserved both the comic and tragic perspectives of the action in clear focus. It could be said that against the background of comic discord provided by the Stilbourne Operatic Society, whose ability to make harmonious music parallels their ability to live harmonious lives, we see in Evelyn the tragic possibilities of unrelatedness and, in Oliver, the youthful expectation of success.

³⁷Ibid., p. 147.

³⁸Ibid., p. 148.

The last section of the novel is much more reflective in tone than the other two. Oliver, the naive hero, has become a mature man for whom an awareness of discord is no longer an intoxicating feeling. Standing by the grave of Bounce, his old music teacher, Oliver feels compelled to examine their past association in order to understand his feelings of revulsion for her, feelings which disturb and sadden him. His thoughts result in two major insights: first of all his exploration of Bounce's character further delineates the tragic possibilities of a life cut off from meaningful relationships with others; secondly, in the light of his growing understanding of Bounce he looks at his own life and discovers the ways in which his past has shaped him, turning him into a complicated being in whom conflicting forces exert their pull and are uncertainly dealt with.

Music has been of peripheral importance in the first two sections of the novel. In the third section, however, music is examined as a way of life which concerns itself with absolutes, in contrast to the more practical aspects of life which depend on the predictable world of cause and effect. In their relative weighting of music and 'practicality', the characters reveal the essence of their outlook on life. It is, as we have seen in the other novels, the way in which a character learns to recognize and resolve conflicting forces in his own nature, that accounts for his mental

state of discord or harmony.

Oliver, in whom we see the conflict between the rational and spiritual approaches to life embodied in his choice of vocation, is influenced by the extreme positions of Bounce and his parents. For his parents, music is merely an accessory to good living. His mother considers it a social accomplishment. His father, who himself plays the violin with what de Tracy, at one point, called a "smouldering dexterity," sees the musical world through the eyes of one determined to keep it in its place. His suspicious attitude towards all in music that is not solid and conventional is explained by Oliver as follows:

... my father had a deep conviction that the profession of music was a perilous one and that I should descend through a course of indescribable bohemianism, to end, perhaps, pushing round a phonograph and holding my cap out.³⁹

Oliver, for whom music is more important than it is for his parents, is, nevertheless, affected by this point of view as he discovers when he once allows his ambition as a pianist to assume the status of a profession:

All at once the obscenity of erratic, unpensioned music presented itself to me.⁴⁰

Ultimately, he succumbs to his parents belief that music is an inferior choice of profession to chemistry.

³⁹Ibid., p. 165.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 193.

Bounce's attitude to music is a direct counterpoise to that taken by Oliver's parents. She espouses her father's simple concept, "heaven is music," and makes it her whole life, not merely an ornamental accessory. Unfortunately, however, her limitations as a musician are glaringly noticeable. She reveals her imperfections as early as Oliver's second music lesson when she plays him a scale, "sometimes putting her fingers in the wrong places so that I laughed and made a face."⁴¹ His respect for her musicianship decreases even more as Oliver becomes increasingly aware of her lack of talent.

Nevertheless, it is not her failure as a musician which makes Bounce such a pathetic figure; it is the fact that music has become a retreat, an alternative to real life. There is heavy irony in the fact that her inability to live contentedly as a human being finds no compensation in her musical world. In fact, the suggestion that Bounce would willingly renounce her role as the severe, pipe-smoking music teacher is maintained in the forefront of the story by her reactions to Henry.

Henry Williams' effect on Bounce is to interest her in the business of living, a business for which she has a hidden yearning and little talent. Before Henry's arrival in Stilbourne, Oliver dreams of "Bounce existing in a dark emptiness, a house

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 168-69.

empty of life except for the grinning piano."⁴² Her extended vigil in this gloomy haven of music is broken only when Henry induces her out with a car, and from this point onwards the car remains her link with the outside world. In particular, it is her link with Henry, who becomes the object of her one flirtation with a human being as opposed to the idolization of the absolute in music.

Throughout Oliver's long association with Bounce, he gradually increases his understanding of her and in examining his own reactions to her he also learns to understand himself better. The first response which she invokes in him is fear, a fear which arises from the dark severity of Bounce herself and the gloomy house in which she lives. Fear is soon transmuted to a contempt for her eccentricities, which Oliver discovers to be a socially acceptable judgement to all but Henry:

... I spoke about Bounce as if he and I and all of us were on one side of a fence, and she on the other, with the Stilbourne eccentrics. ...

"Indeed," he said, "Miss Dawlish is a dear, kind lady." So I stood, silent and blushing a little.⁴³

Contempt becomes a mixture of pity and revulsion when Oliver becomes old enough to realize the pathos of her thwarted efforts to fulfill herself as a human being. He describes his reactions upon entering her house to say goodbye before leaving for Oxford:

⁴²Ibid., p. 179.

⁴³Ibid., p. 186.

The sounds that came from beyond the dark panelling were a kind of ear-test. But a rook had no business to be down there on the left, on the rug before the dull, red eye of the fire. Nor could it add to its faint cawing those curious, strangled sounds as from an incompetently handled instrument. I stood stone-still left hand down, right hand raised, and listened as the caws and chokes prolonged and multiplied themselves; and the ear-test provided the picture I could see as clearly as if no panelling divided us. She was down there in the dark on the left, huddled before the dim fire beneath the glowering bust; trying to learn unsuccessfully without a teacher, how to sob her heart out.⁴⁴

Oliver's ear, which is so accurate in identifying musical intervals, proves to be just as accurate in recognizing the desolate sense of isolation which is being expressed in the "caws and chokes" of Bounce's untutored sobbing. The fact that Oliver is recognizing, in her sense of isolation, a state of discord, is suggested by the analogy between her crying and the sounds of "an incompetently handled instrument."

Oliver's last visit with Bounce provides him with a horrifying insight into the gross distortion of values which characterize her isolation from human contact. Her final comment, made to him as he stands with his hand on his daughter's head, feeling a "fierce determination that she should never know such lost solemnity but be a fulfilled woman,"⁴⁵ is stark and terrible in its revelation of her soul:

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 199-200.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 212.

"D'you know, Kummer? If I could save a child or a budgie from a burning house, I'd save the budgie."⁴⁶

Her isolation from human contacts has made her no more than an object, a "square woman" with "slablike cheeks"⁴⁶ who has never been humanized by the power of love.

It is not until after Bounce's death that Oliver finally manages to explain to himself his complex reactions to his old music teacher. He discovers that his childhood feelings for her, which were always interpreted by his mother as being "devotion," were in fact closer to hatred, a hatred which manifests itself in profound disgust as he stands by her grave:

For it was here, close and real, two yards away as ever, that pathetic, horrible, unused body, with the stained frills and Chinese face. This was a kind of psychic ear-test before which nothing survived but revulsion and horror, childishness and atavism...⁴⁷

He realizes that his hatred arose out of his fear of her, linked as she was in his mind with the dim halls, grinning piano and yellowing curtains of her old house:

... from the security of my own warm life, I set myself to speak, inside myself, of how things were.

'I was afraid of you, and so I hated you. It is as simple as that. When I heard you were dead I was glad.'⁴⁸

Having understood the connection between hatred and fear, Oliver frees himself to visit her old house before leaving Stilbourne for the last time. It is during this final visit that Oliver receives his final understanding of Bounce.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 212.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 213-14.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 213.

He surveys the ruins of the old house which is in the process of being demolished. In the back garden he finds the terrible evidence of her rejection of the music to which she had devoted her life, the charred remnants of music texts, metronome, bust of Beethoven, and even a corner of old Mr. Dawlish's picture, which had presided over the music room for so many years. Evidently, one of her last actions had been to reject totally the music for which she had lived.

Oliver understands her final action to be one of great bitterness born of an awareness of the blight which has ruined her life. Thus, he also understands the irony of the epitaph which Henry has had engraved on her tombstone, "Heaven is music." The shock with which he absorbs this understanding is recorded as follows:

I sat on her chair, put my elbows on my knees and my face in my hands. I did not know to what or whom my feelings had reference, nor even what they were.⁴⁹

Bounce's world of music, to which her humanity has been sacrificed, and Henry's world of practical common sense, are both suddenly as real to him as the two worlds of Nick Shales and Rowena Pringle were real to Sammy. He is re-awakened briefly to the attractions of music, which he had rejected:

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 215-16.

I stood, looking down at the worn pavement, so minutely and illegibly inscribed; and I saw the feet, my own among them, pass and repass. I stretched out a leg and tapped with my live toe, listening meanwhile, tap, tap, tap - and suddenly I felt that if I might only lend my own sound, my own flesh, my own power of choosing the future, to those invisible feet, I would pay anything - anything: but knew in the same instant that, like Henry, I would never pay more than a reasonable price.⁵⁰

Oliver, like Sammy, has discovered that there is no way of escaping the past. He also has understood the nature of the struggle in which he finds himself involved to resolve discord into harmony.

The Pyramid deals with the same themes which appeared in the other novels, and resolves these themes in much the same way. Oliver, as he grows from childhood to manhood, notices the same tension between rationalism and non-rationalism which was so forcefully present in Free Fall. These poles are represented by the two vocations, chemistry and music, and though one is chosen, the power of the other remains strong in the end. For Oliver, as for Sammy, there is no bridge between these two worlds but they must both, nevertheless, be recognized and accepted as real. Oliver also manifests the same misuses of reason as were noticed in the earlier novels. The ability to reason which can easily be turned to a desire to control, is illustrated in Oliver's

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 216-17.

calculated degradation of Evie. His loveless exploitation of her has the effect of reducing her, in his mind, to a being less than human. His eventual recognition of the way in which he has denied her humanity leads to an understanding of the human capacity to apply reason so as to cause pain to others. Irrationality, a perversion of reason, takes the form of hatred and is inspired by fear. Oliver's hatred of Bounce arises directly from his fear of her, as he himself recognizes. This is the same kind of pattern we noticed in The Inheritors, where hatred and the desire to annihilate the enemy rose from irrational fear of the unknown. Rationality and irrationality are both potential forces for good if they are transformed by love, by the recognition of another's humanity. If they are not so transformed they lead to isolation which, in its denial of human relationships, brings only discord. (e.g. Pincher Martin, The Spire). Bounce's life is a tragedy because she is never understood as a human being and thus cannot escape from her inner isolation. Love, which implies an awareness of the needs of others, is the harmonizing agent, the one faculty which can turn both the irrational tendency to fear, and the rational desire to control, into understanding. The epigram, which Golding prefixes to this novel, could apply equally well to the previous novels as a means of transforming the discord of unrelatedness to harmony:

If thou be among people make for thyself love, the
beginning and end of the heart.⁵¹

Although Simon may be the only one of Golding's characters to have completely fulfilled this ideal, the recognition of its validity as an ideal remains central to the understanding of Sammy Mountjoy, Dean Jocelin and Oliver, in their efforts to understand their states of discord and to recover a measure of harmony.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 9.

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