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Vagaries of a Precarious Centre: Allegory of Erection in William Golding's *The Spire*

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Abstract

This paper intends to study William Golding's 1964 novel *The Spire* as a post-empire novel having tell-tale signature of a colonialist mind at work behind the primary motive of erecting a spire. The novel is fraught with post-Freudian understanding of human psychology of building phallic structures which also carries the colonialist motive of domination and self-aggrandisement. The

architectural aspect of colonialism is a symbolic one of imposition and authority. One can interpret the event of 9/11 as a symbolic destruction of hegemony and neo-imperialism, as represented through the destruction of Twin Towers by the third world terrorists. Golding's novel *The Spire* can profitably be read against the backdrop of decolonisation and the post-empire hangover of the colonialist mind.

Keywords: Erection, Centre, Architecture, Phallic, Colonialism, Postcontamination.

William Golding is a postwar British novelist, but in essence he is a post-empire writer who is ideologically close to the empire but in the time of decolonisation expresses nostalgia and consternation at the loss of the empire. Decolonisation does not only mean the loss of the empire, the loss of the centre and power, but also the rise of the margin. In the time of decolonisation when Golding wrote, the rise of the margin problematized the ideology of the colonial centre, rendering it precarious in the decolonised setting. Burdened with guilt and sin of having the colonies and now losing them, the centre grapples with new realities of psychology and ontology. Taking the master-slave narrative to a new dimension, Golding's novels present the colonial syndrome under the garb of allegorical Fall and sinfulness of man, but all the time featuring characters who find themselves reenacting different kinds of colonial imposition. One such story is *The Spire* in which the building of a spire over an old cathedral runs the colonialist vision of erection as a mark of glory and divine sanction. The architectural motif fits well into the colonialialist agenda, like Kubla's decreeing of a pleasure dome in Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan". As the Mongol emperor in Coleridge's poem brings about architectural order over the natural chaos and the barbarism of Tartars as part of the poet's dream vision, so the Dean of a cathedral in Golding's story plans to build a spire against all odds as part of a divine vision, and his domination

over natural chaos and unruly army of workers is worked out in geographical terms. Allegorically, both Coleridge's poem and Golding's novel may be read as a statement of the nature of creative imagination, fraught with sexual tension, contamination, pain, joy and a sense of incompleteness; as they reveal the process of authoring a second nature and the metafictional nature of writing itself. Coleridge's poem, written in the heyday of the early nineteenth century British colonialism, evokes the medieval Orient of exoticism and opulence; whreas Golding's novel, written in the difficult time of the mid-twentienth century decolonisation, evokes the medieval Christendom of churches and spires. Golding's going back to the Christendom of fourteenth century medieval times as a setting for his story probably has this precise point: that having retreated from the colonies and thus deprived of external manifestation, the English colonialist mind has to internalise the whole colonial process and fall back on its own subalterns to treat them as expendable others in the same process so that the "book is all about the human cost of building the spire" (Golding, *A Moving Target*, 166). Secondly, as Stefan Hawlin shows in "The Savages in the Forest: Decolonising William Golding" that Golding emerges as a colonialist writer in *Lord of the Flies* who is in favour of bringing back the colonial rule and reinstate the precarious centre by subduing the chaotic and murderous margin through military takeover (Hawlin 125-135). If Hawlin's analysis of *Lord of the Flies* is applied to Golding's other novels, especially *The Inheritors, Pincher Martin* and *The Spire*, then they gradually come out of their innocuous fable mode to become, to borrow Sara Suleri's words for E. M. Forster's novel *A Passage to India*, "acts of representation as a mode of recolonization" (Suleri 245). Quoting Edward Said, Suleri suggests that while presenting an "imaginative yet drastically polarized geography dividing the world" into Orient and Occident, "Forster transgresses even an Orientalist decorum... by implying that India is really not other at all, but merely a mode or passageway to endorse the infinite variety that constitutes a reading of the West"

(Suleri 246). For Suleri India represents a lack, "where the god neglects to come":

> *The structure of the novel images this neglect through its emblematic representation of empty institutions, or buildings that are somewhat wanton in their lack of habitation. A Passage to India makes neat architecture of this lack, in that the three sections of the book – 'Mosque' , 'Caves', and 'Temple' – function primarily as cavities to contain western perceptions of that which is missing from the East. The edifices thus constitute the shells into which Forster can uncurl echoes of what first appears to be a humane compassion, but what gradually and more threateningly develops into an exquisite nostalgia for betrayal....Both Mosque and Temple, therefore, collaborate and collapse into the emptiness that is the Cave. (Suleri 248)*

Instead of collapsing into emptiness, although always threatened by negation and dissolution, Golding's spire becomes an act of representation as a mode of internalisation of this lack which is to be filled in by desperate act of erection. In the muddle and mystery resulting from 'the infinite variety that constitutes a reading of the West' that reveals 'an exquisite nostalgia for betrayal', the erection of the spire simultaneously turns out to be a phallic erection and also a metafictional writerly feat.

It would not be wrong to say that Golding's fiction is built on the loss and lack of empire, expression of which ranges from overt to covert. The mythic propensity of his writing on the one hand masks the fall of the empire with the fall of man, and on the other makes his novels allegory of human evil, but the mask falls off and the real face of the colonialist intention bares itself under an able critical investigation. The fall of the empire syndrome is marked by trauma, violence and guilty introspection, making the novels an uneven apology for injustices done. However he tries to distance his fiction from the contemporary by means of an alienated setting, the theme of colonialism becomes apparent. This is particularly evident in his first three novels, *Lord of the Flies, The Inheritors* and *Pincher Martin.* In *The Spire* he employs the same technique of positioning

his novel in a distant setting in Christendom, in fourteenth century medieval period, before colonialism became a rampant European phenomenon, by taking up the story of a Dean of a cathedral who is obsessed with building a 400-foot spire upon a structure that lacks a foundation, Quixotic enough to sanctify it with a vision of divine mission. Golding's fascination with a lack gets itself manifested in different forms of building, building a civilisation in *Lord of the Flies,* building a habitat in *The Inheritors,* and building a colony in *Pincher Martin.* This building or making is done at the expense of the other, an act of denial, repression and elimination of the other, that grants a body to the imperial vision. *The Spire* is motivated by an embodiment of such a vision, which is now rendered disembodied in the wake of decolonisation. The identification of the spire with Jocelin's own body and then variously with fetishes like phallus, red hair of his object of desire, upward waterfall, kingfisher and appletree is a process of developement of thought in terms of erection that makes the author a colonizer of his fictional space.

Golding's love for massive structures and buildings is revealed in his essays on cathedrals and pyramids. In "An Affection for Cathedrals" he writes about the Winchester and Salisbury cathedrals and how these cathedrals were stabilised from "collapsing into its own soggy foundations" (Golding, *A Moving Target* 12). He specially narrates the history of the Salisbury cathedral of how it came to be built in the 13th century in the middle of a swamp and eighty years later "the builders erected the highest spire in the country on top of it, thousands of tons of lead and iron and wood and stone. Yet the whole building still stands. It leans. It totters. It bends. But it still stands." (Golding, *A Moving Target* 17). Again in his essay "Egypt from My Outside" he mentions the spire of the Salisbury cathedral while talking about his experience of climbing a pyramid. The whole essay reveals his thrill and admiration for the great pyramids. Similarly in "Egypt from My Inside" he talks of "the Egypt of mystery, of the pyramids and the Valley of the Kings" (Golding, *A Moving Target* 44) and claims that he is "in fact, an

Egyptian, with all their unreason, spiritual pragmatism and capacity for ambiguous and even contradictory belief" (Golding, *A Moving Target* 55). This identification with the ancient Egyptian paradigm and his passion for the marvel of human construction of precarious structures also identify him with the precarious centre designed to astonish and overwhelm the surrounding landscape and which in spite of the danger of falling or disintegrating stands dominating as part of the imperial vision. Golding's spire is based on the Salisbury cathedral spire, and Jocelin's spire is designed to be as spectacular as a precarious centre can be in the falling session of the Empire, evoking and invoking the vagaries related to the erection of such a centre. The novel combines the experience of a guilty centre as happens in *Free Fall* with the experience of the unrepentent dead centre as happens in *Pincher Martin.*

Golding's revival of the allegorical mode for a commentary on the post-empire British psychology and internalisation makes his art dubious as his fiction moves from being fair-minded fables to profoundly ambivalent political statements. The kind of post-empire internalisation that John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* (1955) is susceptible to, is also evident in Golding's novels. That Jimmy Porter, the protagonist of Osborne's play lives in one-room flat and gives vent to his pent-up energy in vitriolic outbursts against his wife in a sado-masochist behaviour, looks back in anger and nostalgia for the good old days of the Empire, is symptomatic of the angry decade of 1950s. With the loss of the empire, the outward flow of energy is no more possible, leaving the space for 'island-complex', claustrophobia and internalisation. Golding's saint figures, the subaltern scapegoats, and women characters bear the brunt of this internalisation as they are trampled and sacrificed for the sake of self-aggradisement. In *Free Fall*, it is Beatrice Ifor, in *Pincher Martin*, it is Mary Lovell and in *The Spire*, it is Goody Pangall who are sacrificed for the expansion of the ego. Simon in *Lord of the Flies*, Nathaniel in *Pincher Martin*, and Pangall in *The Spire* are the figures to raise the feeble voice of the subaltern protest

only to be overwhemned by the tynnanical forces. In *The Spire*, the internalisation also takes the form of embodiment of vision, and the erection of the spire not only seen as tantamount to a phallic erection, but also seen in terms of spine. Thus the body of woman is the territory for subjugation, even if vicariously, and the lustfulness is the power of domination, all rendered in architectural cum physical terms of phallic creation of the spire, in the strange tale of progeniture. Laurence Lerner in his essay "Jocelin's folly: or, Down with the spire" has already pointed out that there is more than vision involved in the building of the spire; that it is 'a monument to monomania', a product of Jocelin's megalomaniac vision, and its construction is nothing sort of a disaster to the world of the cathedral (Lerner 4).

> *Jocelin was told in a vision that he should build a spire that would be the centre of the richly written book of instruction which was the cathedral, that would be the crown, the ultimate prayer. He persuaded – or bullied – the chapter to agree to this building, and the novel is the terrifying story of how corrupt and self-centred that vision was. Jocelin discovers that his love for Goody Pangall, his daughter in God, was far more sexual and forbidden than he had dared realise, and his repressed lust for her turns out to be profoundly and inextricably connected with his passion to build the spire. We discover, and perhaps he does too, that his angel, who comforted and strengthened him all through the long task, is in fact his tubercular disease of the spine, appearing to him in alternations of pain and warmth. He discovers that the structure of prayer that was meant to destroy his pride was simply a displaced expression of that pride, for (as Father Adam, the most charitable, the kindliest character in the book, says of the things in Jocelin's vision) 'they never taught you to pray'. Jocelin's journey of self-discovery issues in the understanding 'I'm a building with a vast cellarage where the rats live; and there's some kind of blight on my hands'. (Lerner 4)*

The spire that Jocelin hopes to connect the earth and the heavens stands precariously, like his diseased spine, reeking of bog and corruption of flesh at the very foundation of its erection. The

misplaced energy, like sexual unfulfilment, erupts in a masturbatory surge of narcissism. The lack that drives the action of filling up the space in upward motion, because no sideward drive is possible, like an upward waterfall, continues to betray the repressed sexuality of colonialism. It appears to dying Jocelin an apple tree, but for all practical purposes it stands "as a symbol of misplaced sexuality, self-aggrandisement, and social disintegration" (Lerner 5).

The ironic discord that lies at the heart of Golding's art, makes his novels profoundly ambiguous. The most problematic issue in *The Spire* is that neither the vision nor its execution was pure, in fact the novel involves a discovery of the state of postcontamination that the project was mired in. Born out of pride and ego, the building of the spire was equally corrupted by unholy and sinful condition of men and material. The violence and blood of oppression that lie behind the human ambition of domination are revealed to Jocelin. As he is swamped by the vulgarity that he himself caused he realises, "*There is no innocent work. God Knows where God may be*" (222). The identification of the man with the building is complete, that he is "a building with a vast cellarage" (210) and that now he is "a building about to fall" (222). Jocelin is a believer in miracles and he considers the power of miracles is at work in the conception and construction of the spire, beginning with the lack of foundation, or the practical engineering problems that start besetting the construction, or in the power that he exercises over his fellow priests and the master builder Roger Mason, or in the tainted money of aunt Alison, or in his tainted deanship. The miracle of faith totters and has to be stabilised by the ingenuity of reason. Faith and Reason, Jocelin and Roger, are fused together; and the more the spire thrusts upward the more they are degenerated both physically and spiritually. The material and the spiritual, progress and regress, all exact their appropriate cost. There is no pure work, the condition of expansion and progress are set in terms of self-aggrandisement and colonialism, and all show symptoms of postcontamination. The faith in miracle is externalised in Jocelin's frantic need for the relic, a

holy nail, and his frantic effort to climb the spire and hammer the nail at the top of the spire so that it should not fall in a stormy night. Thus the most important miracle is the fact that the spire, despite its precariousness, stands, or is made to stand. The spire as the centre, however precarious, should not fall, should not wither away; it should rise through the chaos with dogged determination, cunning and manipulation so that it remains spectacular with awe and admiration. The centre should hold on, perpetuate itself as a symbol of monomaniac exercise of power. The centre is an article of faith, a miracle, an appletree, a manna, a succour; its architectural marvel and dominance over the landscape releases the pent-up energy of the die-hard colonialist psychology. The triumphant exultation of its erection mitigates the sinfulness and destructive history of its very existence. Culture must tame nature and in the end must look natural as an agency of inflicting hegemony and power. In an essay entitled "The Architecture of Desire: William Golding's *The Spire*" Betty Jay argues, "*The Spire* closes with a revelation that produces an epistemological shift in Jocelin. He finally admits his duplicitous motives for building, and, indeed, his culpability. At this juncture, previous declarations of intent are nullified by the dying jocelin's extended confession" (Jay 160). The erection is an embodiment, the process of giving a body, and it puts in more flesh and sacrifice than the purity of spirit. According to Betty Jay, "Throughout the course of the novel, Jocelin's insistence upon the divine origin of his vision is exposed as delusory. Instead, his vision is shown to be predicated upon a need to repress or redirect transgressive desires and therefore is grounded in the flesh rather than spirit" (Jay 160).

It is this post-Freudian libidinal complication behind the erection of the spire that overshadows the medieval ecclesiastical setting and makes the novel move closer to contemporary intellectual atmosphere of post-war, post-holocaust and post-empire twentieth century. Roger, Pangall, Rachel, Goody and Jocelin himself are sexually complicated. Even Jocelin's deanship and the money he receives from aunt Alison for building the spire are tainted, they are

the result of Alison's whoring with the late king. The moral tale shows Jocelin's journey from innocence to experience, as happens in all Golding novels, making *The Spire* "the tragi-comic story of a *felix culpa"* (Boyd 86). According to S. J. Boyd, the novel opens "in innocence, with joy and laughter, the ecstasy of innocent vision" (Boyd 86) of Abraham and Isaac. The vision of sacrifice and the mystery of divine will soon deteriorate into sexual complications, steady paganization, and physical illness, making the spire an unstable symbol of salvation and damnation, even to Jocelin. Considering the vision as Jocelin's colonising impulse, and the fact of his growing identification with his pagan workmen, the discontinuation of service at the church, and the human sacrifices that he has to connive at in order to make his dubious project successful, it appears that colonisation itself is a *felix culpa*, a tragi-comedy that happens with the coloniser. In the decolonised setting, the coloniser has to come down to the level of the colonised, in an irony of fate, to re-enact the role of Jesus Christ. Interestingly, Betty Jay finds the spire as "both erection and resurrection" (Jay 164) for Jocelin. The novel displays the Orientalist sexual subconscious dream of the coloniser towards the colonised on the one hand, and on the other displays the role of the Christian paradigm of resurrection as a means of decolonisation in the same way W. B. Yeats's poem "The Second Coming" does through the vision of "And what rough beast, its hour come round at last/Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born" (Yeats, "The Second Coming"). The Christian motif of the spire being a "Bible in stone" (120) or a "prayer in stone" (191) recurs in the novel, as also the pagan cellarage motif. And the final vision of Jocelin is the humility of Jesus Christ, calling his riotous workmen "my children! My children!" (215) in the forgiveness of a fallen world. Michael P. Gallagher in his essay "The Human Image in William Golding" finds a broadening of the human image in *The Spire*, that there is "a stress on the *notion* of human relationships, on the role and worth of people, and a new up-curve of human value and of man's potential to grow in insight and even to reach out towards salvation"

(Gallagher 204). This understanding of the necessity of forgiveness of the Other is a crucial development in the novel. Father Adam thought him weak and deluded but Father Adam could not understand Jocelin's moral compulsion, "Nor did Father Adam understand how necessary it was [for Jocelin] to have forgiveness from those who were not christian souls; nor how for that it was necessary to understand them" (203).

Thus the master slave narrative changes in Golding's fiction, deeply embroiled that he is in the human relationship between the coloniser and the colonised in the decolonised post-empire time. Jocelin's confession that he has "traded a stone hammer for four people" (222) and his begging forgiveness from Father Anselm and Roger Mason are indicative of the changed heart of the master. Even the death scene takes this direction towards meliorism, "Father Adam, leaning down, could hear nothing. But he saw a tremor of the lips that might be interpreted as a cry of : *God! God! God!* So the clarity to which he had access, he laid the Host on the dead man's tongue" (223). Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor comment on the ambiguity and incomprehension of the final scene, "But they do amount to a statement of Faith. Although it is not 'God! God! God!' in the way Father Adam means, it is, one suspects, God! God! God! in the way Golding means, and in its love and exultation it has its own inclusive charity" (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 235). One can still compare this experience of Jocelin with Kurtz's experience of 'Horror! Horror!' in his death scene, and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is exactly the kind of novel that Golding has internalised in his fiction.

What is interesting in the novel is Jocelin's identification of himself with the spire and the people. His sympathy both for the precarious spire and the victimised people corresponds with his steady degeneration morally and physically. As he becomes one of the workmen, he suffers from paganization of himself. And as the spire rises through the bog of primitivism towards enlightenment, it cannot shake off the vulgarity and depravity which lie at the

foundation of the spire, demanding more and more sacrifice to it. The opposition between christianity and paganism, between the spire and the stonehenge, between Jocelin's and Pangall's kingdom, is never resolved in the novel, but is shown to be in a state of postcontamination. What is affected most in the erection of the spire is Pangall's kingdom, his old cottage attached to the cathedral, which has been taken over by the unruly workmen. His wife Goody has been defiled, he is himself hounded out from his cottage and is ritually murdered in a pagan rite. Repeated reference to mistletoe makes his death reminiscent of the scandinavian Balder myth. Pangall's has been a mumbling voice of protest against this oppression and subjugation which Jocelin ignores and in a sense abets Pangall's humiliation. As the spire precariously leans and sways, Pangall's death haunts Jocelin. At the end when Jocelin asks for Roger's forgiveness suggests that "Roger should kill himself to atone for Pangall's death and to avert God's wrath from the spire. The suggestion is presented as a thoughtless one: "Something made me say it – something out of my control!"" (Roper 27). Incidentally Roger tries to commit suicide by hanging himself during the storm. According to Derek Roper, "Theologically the incident has a point: it asserts that even when we have won some insight into our condition our depravity is ineradicable, that we are pagans at heart" (Roper 27-28). The irony of the army of workers is that according to Jocelin they are "good men", but according to the Visitior they are "murderers, cutthroats, rowdies, brawlers, rapers, notorious fornicators, sodomites, atheists or worse" (167). And theirs is an invasion on Pangall's kingdom, on behalf of Jocelin. Commenting on the significance of the overrunning of Pangall's kingdom, Virginia Tiger writes:

> *It is this kingdom that is vanquished, as the dimensions of a cathedral, the shape of a landscape and a whole town undergo a convulsion of change, with new roads and a 'New Street'. Like other vanquished kingdoms, Pangall's shares the regrettable loss that is implicit in the nature of change itself. One way of life lost, another grows from its place; Pangall and his line testify to that ancient repetition of*

> *rise and fall, growth and decay-and-growth. He and his kingdom's line witness the cycle figured in the paradoxical 'upward waterfall', which Jocelin is made to affirm at the novel's close. (Tiger 169)*

The colonialist implication of this defeat of Pangall's kingdom is merged with the history of similar rise and fall. Kevin McCarron argues perceptively:

> *The historical setting allows the proximity of Stonehenge to challenge the authority of the cathedral, and just as for The Inheritors Golding selected a period of crucial historical importance, the destruction of Neanderthal Man and the simultaneous ascendancy of the New Men, so too in The Spire he has chosen a period and a setting which allow him to depict a destructive collision; this time between pagan beliefs and Christianity. (McCarron 24)*

The similarity of Pangall's kingdom to the that of the Neanderthals evokes a sense of tragic waste inevitable in the modernity and colonialism – these two events in the human history are the two sides of the same coin.

Jocelin's spire becomes a symbol, like the doubloon episode in Melville's *Moby Dick*, in which the characters interpret the coin variously, and *Moby Dick* is a story of an army of sailors coerced and inspired by the mad captain Ahab to kill the mysterious white whale called Moby Dick, a story similar to Jocelin's in its sexual and colonialist implications. Jocelin's spire is viewed differently by different people. Jocelin's own view of it also changes with the erection. Accordingly his perception of the other changes like his perception of good and evil. David Skilton finds one cluster of images important in understanding Jocelin's view of the other, and this cluster is "gargoyles-eagle-raven-mayfly" (Skilton 162). The process of domination is unravelled through these images. According to Skilton, the gargoyles – a symbol of purity,

> *also have a significance particular to this novel, because four heads of Jocelin in stone are to be built into the top of the new tower. The dumb man who carves them shows*

> *Jocelin with an aquiline nose, hair streaming back to give an impression of speed. 'An eagle, perhaps?' asks Jocelin. 'You are thinking of Holy Spirit?' These heads connect with the other gargoyles, and with Jocelin's spire as 'a silent cry' as well. (Skilton 163)*

The stages of Jocelin's ambition and its fulfilment are shown by the images of birds, like eagle and raven, and Roger and his workers are contrasted with Jocelin by the image of mayfly. "Jocelin contrasts himself with Roger Mason as a raven to a mayfly. The raven knows that the sun will rise tomorrow, but the mayfly can know nothing of tomorrow, as it only lives for one day. It can see only means, not ends" (Skilton 163). Moreover the symbolism of light and darkness also illuminates Jocelin's perception of the other.

> *Throughout the book the people Jocelin speaks with are seen moving into and out of the light, so that anything is visually realised as vividly as in any film. There is only light and shadow – hardly any half-light. Darkness descends with the rain and cloud, as the graves in the cathedral flood, and the mud at the bottom of the pit begins to work. But once the work on the tower progresses, there is light up there, while the nave remains in blackness. Then on Midsummer Night, Jocelin sees the bale fires from the plain round about, and realises that he is looking at the light that belongs to the devil, which his spire, raised up, must fight eye to eye with its cross. (Skilton 164)*

The paranoia and ambiguity about darkness is typical of the new men in *The Inheritors.* And in the colonialist ideology, darkness is Africa, which has to be conquered with all the might and light of the European architecture of civilisation.

What becomes so important in the novel is the status of Jocelin as a colonialist master in the post-empire time. This is marked by a sense of domination by sexual erection on the one hand, and on the other by a sense of losing that domination by increasing emasculation as signified by the precariousness of the erected spire/phallus. The manliness and virility of the master is embodied in the architectural erection, his precariousness and jeopardy is embodied in the

precariousness of that erection. Emasculation is a recurring motif in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*; it becomes a dominant motif in Golding's *Free Fall* and *The Spire.* In Achebe's novel the falling apart of the Igbo community and the representative of its values, Okonkwo, is shown in terms of increasing emasculation to connote the precariousness of this community in the face of colonialist intervention. In Golding's novel, it is the precariousness of the centre that is signified in the symbolic emasculation of Jocelin who thinks himself as God's emissary, and hence the authority of the author. According to Paul Crawford, "The construction of Jocelin's spire, and coterminously the novel *The Spire*, is humorously linked with penile erection" and "Ever threatened by collapse, the spire emphasizes sexual, religious, and creative impotency" (Crawford 120). One can find in the overthrow of Pangall's kingdom, as Virginia Tiger does, the echo of the sacred wood myth of "the emasculation of an old king by his successor" (Tiger 170); but the identification of Jocelin and the Pangall happens in the emasculation of Jocelin. The simultaneous erection of the spire and the emasculation of Jocelin are dynamically presented through the upward and downward movement, the tower and the pit; and also the construction of the spire and the deconstruction of Jocelin's spine. According to Paul Crawford,

> *Throughout the novel Jocelin refers to his personal "constructive" angel who aids his work. Yet with a critical prescience, Golding eventually reveals this angel as "deconstructive", a cancer that deforms Jocelin's spine and brings chaos and death. This naturalization of the angel as cancer erodes the wider fantastic hesitation in a way that works metaphorically to suggest the threat that hangs not simply over the spire as a building, but over the novel itself and language in general. (Crawford 122)*

Jocelin moves between the vision of heaven and the nightmare of hell. This is practically the same kind of movement one can notice in Golding's fiction. In *Lord of the Flies* the British boys try to build a civilisation on the basis of imperialist literature, but their efforts end "in blood and terror" (Golding *The Hot Gates* 89). In *The Inheritors*

the vision of heaven comprises the state of innocence of the Neanderthals, and the nightmare of hell is represented by the state of experience of the new people. In *Pincher Martin* the die-hard colonialist mentality conjures up a heaven of a rock, only to turn to a nightmare of hallucination. In *Free Fall* the freedom of innocence is contrasted with the fallen condition of loss of freedom. In *The Spire* the subterranean corruption ruins the angelic vision and turns it into a devilish project. Like Sammy Mountjoy in *Free Fall*, Jocelin faces a trial not merely by the external agency of the Visitor, but also the internal agency of his conscience. With every corruption, Jocelin is emasculated. He comes to term with reality by corruptly appointing Ivo as a canon of the church because his father supplied timber; by condoning Roger's relationship with Goody to keep Roger continue to work; and by using his personal seal to acquire money for building the spire. He not merely "traded a stone hammer for four people" (222), but also damaged the career of Father Anselm, undermined the chapter and sacrileged the cathedral. He finally comes to realize that he has become unworthy of forgiveness and redemption.

Jocelin's transition from the realm of a colonialist to that of a colonized enables him to live in both the realms, and this is perhaps the new development and new realization in the decolonized time, and this contributes to the vision of man in Golding's novels. Golding's vision of man in his fiction becomes explicit in *Free Fall*, the adumbration of which is given in *The Inheritors* that consciousness is a dubious gift to humanity, because consciousness begets guilt. Innocence is unselfconsciousness. *Free Fall* talks about three kinds of humanity, the innocent, the wicked and the guilty, "The innocent and the wicked live in one world... But we are neither innocent nor the wicked. We are the guilty. We fall down. We crawl on hands and knees. We weep and tear each other" (*Free Fall* 251). Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor find a 'new distinction' between the Wicked and the Guilty, unlike the Wicked "The Guilty live in both worlds, so that they recognize what they are, understand

how they became as they are, but can find no forgiveness" (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 196). Jocelin in *The Spire* is an example of the Guilty, and therefore, like Sammy Mountjoy, undergoes his own purgatorial ordeal of an colonialist self. The allegorical tendency of Golding's fiction allows the novels to be read as novels and also as allegories. And what emerges in the reading process is not merely a metaphysical dimension but also a colonialist dimension as well.

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