



CONFLICT BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL: MAJOR THEME OF THE NOVELS OF WILLIAM GOLDING

Leshveer Singh

Research Scholar M.J.P.R.K.U. Bareilly India

Anuradha Singh*

Associate professor dept. of english, gokuldas H. G. PG college moradabad india. *Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT In Golding's words we are a species that produces evil as a bee produces honey. Naturally as humble insects produce harmony and sweetness, we produce the wickedness and violence which spoils our lives. The purpose of Golding's writing is not say-sex or geometry. It is just understanding. The understanding of 'terrible disease' and to rouse an alertness amidst people and help in making this universe a paradise which man seems to have lost. Each and every novel of Golding searches the predicament of human life which is full of decay and fall due to the original sin committed by our first parents Adam and Eve. He is strongly adhere to the biblical term 'idolatry'. By this man isolates himself off from the Supreme power whom we called God. My aim is to point out the 'truths' and probes the different state of human mind and also religious concerns hidden in the mighty lines of William Golding's novels. Like the plays of Shakespeare, the novels of Golding serving its purpose of filling the faith into human mind which has gone a long long ago. The novels of Golding, namely, 'Lord of the Flies', 'The Inheritors', 'Pincher Martin' and 'Free Fall' are worth mentioning in this connection.

KEYWORDS : Truths, Violence, Alertness.

End of Innocence: Lord of the Flies

With rapid strides in science and technology, when man has become capable of surmounting the gravest of grave physical dangers and difficulties facing him and even obtaining domination over the universal order, life should have been pleasant and happy. There should have been a sense of fulfillment and joy everywhere. The writers and their writings of the age should have fully echoed these feelings. But it is quite different. Conditions of poverty and strife continue to prevail at a very high level. Social inequalities, injustice and mutual hatred were deeply rooted in the society. This type of atmosphere was very disturbing to the soul of the writers and William Golding started writing in such an atmosphere. War experiences gave him a chance of observing the frustrate fighting of humanity at close quarters. The wounds of war drove home to him the savagery, cruelty and lust inherent in man's nature. This very conception gives a framework to his novels. In Golding's own words, 'Lord of the Flies' is an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature. We should understand that the boys who ram wildest, the first to succumb to their savage instincts were cathedral choir boys. Such boys live most of the lives in a religious atmosphere, they are naturally supposed to be more content and innocent and better behaved than other boys. But we should keep in mind that the central theme of the story is adult: startling conception that the veneer of civilization can fall away, under great strain, completely and disastrously.

Golding firmly believes in the existence of God. The Supreme power created the good earth so that man may live and flourish and add richness and grace to the things around him by his markedly higher intelligence and ability than the animals. Virtues like humanity, nobility, generosity were exclusive qualities given to man so that his ambitions were always within bounds and he would not overstep his limitations. But unfortunately, by misusing his superior intelligence, man has created things that are totally material and the lust and hunger for more of which has given birth to selfishness, greed, meanness and a desire to get anything and everything. Insatiable hunger has made man a slave. Is it good for man? That is the question which pinches the inner soul of a religious minded man like William Golding. Man never hesitates to employ any means to achieve his ends. However, his efforts and attempts are totally frustrating. Man's sufferings make him aware of his existence of a 'supreme being' makes him rebel against that 'Being'. He tries to break that cordon and negate the existence of a 'supreme being' other than himself. This also impels him to do things that are monstrous and ruinous. He has fallen from the high position in which was intended to be and the result, leading a life of sin and depravity.

The story of the boys on the island is infect, the story of man. Man appeared on earth in an uncivilized state with no fire to cook. He went about eating fruits and perhaps even raw meat. The boys move in the reverse order soon. They pass from civilization to barbarism. They are

stranded on an unnamed coral island cut off from the rest of the world. They find themselves in the state in which primitive man lived. In their primal innocence they are happy just like our first parents, Adam and Eve, were in paradise. They ate fruits and drank water. Soon they start hunting. For this they have to throw off their clothes and paint themselves. Now they seem to be relapsing into barbarism.

Man's Spiritual Fall: The Inheritors

William Golding in 'The Inheritors' exactly reverses the idea of H-G Wells saying it is the Neanderthals who are creatures of primal innocence, it is the New Man, who introduces guilt, crime, suffering and conscious ambition into the world. It is a moving and brilliant achievement, inhabiting, the near-animal consciousness of Lok, a Neanderthal man and describing in his clumsy terms and with great pathos the casual destruction of his species by Homosapiens. We know after reading the lines that innocence, good and happiness were instinctive before Homosapiens developed and with him an all destructive urge to evil. The readers are shown their ancestors, already armed, arrogant, murderous and corrupt-not superior to the Neanderthals, only more clever and more evil. Here Golding directly enters into the consciousness of Neanderthal man, his dependence on the senses, his curiosity about the new people, his innocence until, like Adam and Eve, he learns the difference between good and evil. We can easily see man's spiritual fall and his evolutionary rise. We can see in Lok, the puzzled innocent Adam before the fall.

Realization of Vice: Pincher Martin

The story in the novel is really a study of a man who will not accept the fact of his own death and whose ravenous ego invents a rock for him to endure on. It seems to us that he is not fighting for bodily survival but for his continuing identity. A former actor and British naval officer Pincher Martin is blown off the bridge of a destroyer by a torpedo. We know his courageous and ingenious struggle to preserve his life and to live until he is rescued. But as the story moves forward our admiration of Martin's heroic fight for life is slowly undermined by our increasing knowledge of his viciousness and greed. The reality is that he is already drowned. Most interestingly on rock Pincher Martin is left entirely to himself and since there is no one to dominate or devour that self is unable to confirm its own existence. The 'rock' has a very special meaning for the readers because it is related to the existence of Martin. Basically, we can divide the action of novel in two parts. In the first part torpedo blows Martin off the bridge of his destroyer through the events of his efforts to survive on a barren rock. Here Martin's extraordinary will to survive operates. Martin acting out of his ego. He seems simple, honest and admirable because he clings to life so tenaciously. But his past life proves him an unscrupulous egoist who has stopped at no depravity, no betrayal of love and friendship to nourish his own ego.

Sufficient to Have Stood: But Free to Fall

Golding portrays Samuel Mountjoy in his another famous work

entitled 'Free Fall'. The story is inspired by the biblical myth and the fall of man from the blissful seat of Paradise. Here the hero is examining his life with a view to discovering a pattern, some connection between his two worlds of experiences, one deterministic, the world of empirical observation, the other a world in which the burning bush is not consumed, a world of horror and glory, heaven and hell. Sammy Mountjoy, who rose from the slums of Rotten Row to become a successful artist. Sammy searches for the moment at which he lost his freedom, at which he made a crucial decision that inescapably hardened his natural propensity towards sin. Sammy, guilt ridden, traces his career, looking for the point and the reason. The central event of Sammy's life is the recognition of the beauty of Beatrice, later by a positive act of will, he rejects the possibility of living by this vision and subjects her to his lust. Here he falls down himself.

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