

Chapter V

Free Fall

Golding's fourth novel Free Fall is the goal towards which he has been working through the three previous novels. In a very illuminating article on this important book, Mr. Ian Gregor and Mr. Mark Kinkead-Weekes have written: "'Lord of the Flies' gives a grim endorsement to the child as 'father of the man'; 'The Inheritors' sees man in relation to the life which preceded him; 'Pincher Martin' in relation to the life that awaits him. What has been carefully excluded is the central relationship of Man in relation to Man. It is precisely to this subject that Mr. Golding addresses himself in 'Free Fall'.²⁰⁹ The action of the three preceding books takes place in an unfamiliar environment, far removed from present-day 'reality'. So far, Golding's myth has been enacted on a desert island, in a primitive forest, and on an isolated rock in the middle of the Atlantic. Thus he has made his point about the timeless, inherent quality of man's evil by deliberately wrenching us away from familiar settings of time and place. But now, having convinced us that the human dilemma is not essentially a social problem, that it is "for more fundamental than a complex of taxes",²¹⁰ he wants,

209

Ian Gregor and Mark Kinkead-Weekes, "The Strange Case of Mr. Golding and his Critics," The Twentieth Century CLVII (February, 1960), 116.

210

William Golding, Samuel Hynes, William Golding (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 3.

in his fourth book, to stress that the dilemma is ours and we, after all, are living in a specific society, not on desert islands or isolated rocks. So, he takes the same myth a fourth time, the myth of the Fall, and presents it in more familiar circumstances. To remind us that the theme is the same, there are deliberate echoes of the earlier books. Sammy's life in the grammar school echoes the lives of the British schoolboys in Lord of the Flies. The collision between sophisticated Philip Arnold's evil and Johnny Spragg's good is a parallel of the conflict between the innocent, virtuous Neanderthal man and the civilised but corrupt Homo Sapiens. And the hero, like Pincher Martin, is a great maggot who sacrifices people to his own lust.

Golding's new hero, then, belongs to twentieth century society - he is a modern man among men - constantly influencing or being influenced. Through the hero's narration we see the world as it usually is and his characters live in a normal environment. Although in Pincher Martin the hero's nature is also revealed by his relationship with other people, we observe this relationship only through Pincher's confused recollections while he himself is cast up on the rock struggling for survival. But Samuel's world is a real social world in which he meets and knows many kinds of people.

At one point Samuel Mountjoy has found to his agonizing amazement that he has lost his freedom to choose. He knows that he once had free will to make his own choice. At one time he was free to choose anything he liked. His freedom was once so real that he thought he could taste

it. The taste of freedom was like "the taste of potatoes."²¹¹ But now he can no more taste it because of "the decision made freely that cost me my freedom."²¹² He recalls the time he sat by the fountain:

"I was very small and I was sitting on the stone surround of the pool and fountain in the centre of the park. There was bright sunlight, banks of red and blue flowers, green lawn. There was no guilt but only the splash and splatter of the fountain at the centre. I had bathed and drunk and now I was sitting on the warm stone edge placidly considering what I should do next. 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 for joy in the taste of potatoes. I was free. I had chosen."²¹³

The freedom has been lost between that moment and the present. The whole book is a search for the exact point of time when the freedom was sacrificed; it is also an examination of the terrible consequences of such a sacrifice and, less obviously, of the welcome release from torturing ignorance which comes with the individual's understanding of his evil nature.

Since the very first paragraph seems to suggest the whole theme of the book in miniature, it must be quoted in full.

"I have walked by stalls in the market-place where books, dog-eared and faded from their purple, have burst with a white hosanna. I have seen people crowned with a double crown, holding in either hand the crook and flail, the power and the glory. I have understood how the scar becomes a star, I have felt the flake of fire fall, miraculous and pentecostal. My

211

William Golding, Free Fall (London: Cox and Wyman Ltd., 1959),

p. 5.

212

Ibid., p. 6.

213

Op.cit.

yesterdays walk with me. They keep step, they are grey faces that peer over my shoulder. I live on Paradise Hill, ten minutes from the station, thirty seconds from the shops and the local. Yet I am a burning amateur, torn by the irrational and incoherent, violently searching and self-condemned.²¹⁴

The book which follows this paragraph contains all the elements mentioned - the Lenten purple and the white hosanna, the crook of the Shepherd, Christ, and the scourge of justice administered to him. It shows how scars may become stars, how a man may experience through his tears the transfiguration of the pentecostal vision. "It records a knowledge of an old myth - the Christian myth - made new by being actualised and realised in experience."

In the search for the point of loss of freedom; Sammy divides his life into three periods: childhood, adolescence and manhood. In each period he will not take any events for granted, even the minute ones for fear that the smallest point should contain the vital clue. He investigates not only occurrences and environment but also all people with whom he has been in contact. No one is excused, not even his own mother. At the end of each period, after having searched violently for the point that causes his fall, he always stops to ask "Here?" If he finds that the answer is "Not here," he continues his search until he reaches a point of recognition where he finds that his deliberate decision has caused his fall. Sammy's memoirs are not presented chronologically. They are arranged in order of significance. The logic of the events is not in their time sequence but in their relative importance.

214

Ibid.

Born in 1917, during the restless time of revolution, Sammy is a bastard who never knows his father and suspects that even his mother does not know him either. Perhaps his father was a soldier who came to fight in the time of tumult and then left there when peace returned. He asks his mother several times who his father is and the answers vary according to her mood; he was once a soldier, once a teacher, a parson and even the Prince of Wales. He knows and his mother knows that they are creating an ideal father, but finally Sammy gives up the idol of his father and concludes, "My father was not a man. He was 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."²¹⁵

Sammy lives in a slum, Rotten Row, with his mother who is indifferent, secretive and incomprehensible yet he feels warm and secure when she is near him. His definition of her is:

"She terrifies but she does not frighten.
 She neglects but she does not warp or exploit.
 She is violent without malice or cruelty.
 She is adult without patronage or condescension.
 She is warm without possessiveness.
 But above all, she is there."²¹⁶

She is content with her life, takes any kind of job available: charring, washing and sweeping public buildings, picking hops. She is quiet and to him "she is complete and final as a full stop."²¹⁷ Despite her hard work during the day she always enjoys herself in the pub next to their home at

215

Ibid., p. 12.

216

Ibid., p. 13.

217

Ibid., p. 9.

night. She is a type who will get as much happiness and enjoyment for as long as possible. But she never thinks and worries about the future. Sammy grows up among dirt and filth and frustration. Poverty makes the people around him rude; they, including his mother, quarrel and lead nasty lives. Since his home is next to the pub he has seen what a little boy should not have seen.

During those days only Evie, a girl who is one or two years older than he, makes him see the world as beautiful and wonderful. It seems to Sammy that Evie knows everything. She knows so much that he cannot help adoring her. He believes in everything she tells him. He is led, without awareness, into Evie's world of fantasy. When she escorts him to the infant school, she tells him stories that both convince and horrify him. When he grows up he begins to realize that all the stories Evie has told him are nothing but fantasy and she herself is a great liar. Thus Evie gradually fades from his life and in her place appear Sammy's two boyfriends who are as close to him as Evie once was; they are Johnny Spragg and Philip Arnold.

Johnny is very interested in aeroplanes and he persuades Sammy to sneak into an airfield into which entry is prohibited. They are chased away by a soldier. Later they steal into a general's garden and are caught. Yet after he has examined very carefully these two incidents Sammy finds that neither of them motivated the turning point in his life. Neither his mother, nor Evie, nor Johnny Spragg are influential enough to steer his life. The only person that has altered it is Philip Arnold, a friend of his in an elementary school.



Philip is a sadistic coward who likes to inflict pain and loves to witness violence. He is always the target of mockery and blows given by other boys, yet he is more dangerous than they. He pretends and flatters in order to be safe. He is the type best fitted to survive in the modern world because he knows about people and knows how to use them. Sammy is first aware of his inferiority when the boys, including himself, collect fagcards. Sammy does not have as many as he wants because his mother smokes cheap cigarettes. Philip persuades him to rob the little boys of their fagcards. It is Sammy who is responsible for the theft but it is Philip who gets the fagcards. After this incident Sammy for the first time feels "my guilt stays on my back."²¹⁸ Yet his is not so severe as to destroy his innocence because when he asks, "Is this the point I am looking for?", the answer is: "No. Not here."²¹⁹

Philip's evil influence can be more damaging than this. Sammy's innocence and faith in true friendship make him fall into another of Philip's traps, with much more serious consequences. Philip is fatally dangerous because he knows man's nature and knows how to use the right person for his own ends. Philip's parents are strict and devout members of the Church of England. He is tortured by his parents and frustrated by the selfish local curate who makes money from religion. He wants to get even with the curate and the religion as a whole. Yet he is clever enough not to stain his own hands. He is a born psychiatrist who knows

218

Ibid., p. 41

219

Ibid.

that his false flattery of Sammy will surely force the latter to keep up his position as a leader - a daring hero who can do everything. Philip also knows that Sammy's inferiority complex which makes him feel like an outcast from society will force him to need "something to hurt and break just to show them."²²⁰ Philip dares him to urinate on the altar of the church. Sammy realizes too late that he is caught by Philip's net; his ego gives him no choice. He desecrates the church by spitting on the altar, and he alone must take the consequences of Philip's petty act of revenge.

Sammy the adult feels that he has nothing to do with Sammy the boy. The latter is only the boy he knew once; he does not feel responsible for this boy's impudence. Although this incident is not the cause of his fall, it is a link that joins two completely different episodes, his childhood and his adolescence. During his stay in the hospital, his mother dies, and with her death the period of his childhood comes to an end. This is the first section of his life in which he has elaborately searched for the cause of his fall. Despite many incidents which are the fruits of his malconduct he has found with great relief that his childhood is spent in "those days of terrible and irresponsible innocence"²²¹ that save him from any guilt. The wicked boy Sammy is "some other person in some other country to whom I have this objective and ghostly access,"²²² and that is why "if he had murdered, I should

220

Ibid., p. 51.

221

Ibid., p. 20.

222

Ibid., p. 60.

feel no guilt, not even responsibility,"²²³ So amidst all the dirt and nasty environment in the slum, he can still maintain his innocence; he is free from any fatal guilt. And when he asks himself, "Here?" The answer is "Not here,"²²⁴

The next period of his completely altered life begins when he moves from the slum to stay in the rectory with Father Watts-Watt, the local vicar, who becomes his guardian after his mother's death. The clean clothes, good food, a comfortable bedroom provided in his new circumstances mean nothing to Sammy because the undertone of this environment is indifferent coldness. Here Sammy and Father Watts-Watt live together but never understand each other. "The house itself was cold with more than lovelessness. ... And bed meant darkness and darkness the generalized and irrational terror."²²⁵ He prefers Rotten Row where life, despite its dirt and hard work, is warm, lively and human. To those people in the slum, "there is a sense in which when we emerged from our small slum and were washed, the happiness and security of life was washed away also."²²⁶ Lacking warmth and understanding in the rectory, Sam considers the whole process of cleanness inhuman and incomprehensible. Mrs. Pascoe, the housekeeper, is cold and unfathomable. Father Watts-Watt is even worse. He is queer and eccentric. His sexual abnormality

223

Ibid., p. 36.

224

Ibid., p. 60.

225

Ibid., pp. 125-126.

226

Ibid., p. 14.

scares Sam when he first meets him in the rectory. The first sentence he speaks to Sam is, "You'd be a pretty child if you kept yourself clean."²²⁷ The word "pretty" embarrassed Sam because it is used for girls only. The more Sam knows him, the more he is scared by him. Father Watts-Watt, whose name suggests his own inexplicable nature, does many things that indicate his inclination to homo-sexuality and that frightens Sam more than the nightmare and the darkness in the bedroom. The first night he comes to Sam's bedroom, says many awkward things and is going to kiss him if Sam answers him that his mother used to kiss him good night. When Sam is in the bathroom he comes and whispers to Sam to open the door and forbids him in future to lock the bathroom door. He even orders Mrs. Pascoe to see about that; "He must never bolt the bathroom door - never!"²²⁸ Sam shivers, despite the fact that he is sitting in the hot water. He keeps telling Sam to go to his bedroom in the middle of the night if anyone comes to make Sam believe things about him. He tells Sam that he has enemies who try to take away his reputation and destroy him. Sam knows that he lies and says of him that, "he was incapable of approaching a child straight because of the ingrown and festering desires that poisoned him."²²⁹ He tries to repress his desire under the pretense of madness. But a man who pretends to be mad is surely not completely sane. And Sam comes to the conclusion that; "He had a

227

Ibid., p. 50.

228

Ibid., p. 118.

229

Ibid., p. 124.

developing persecution mania."²³⁰ He makes up stories and uses them as an excuse to come into Sam's bedroom. Sam's instinct senses his lies and knows that he pretends "to be mad in order to evade the responsibility for his own frightening desires."²³¹

Father Watts-Watt sends him to the local grammar school where his life develops under the influence of two teachers: Mick Shales and Miss Pringle who represent the world of rational science and the world of religion respectively. These two teachers' natures are completely opposite. Miss Pringle is a pessimistic old maid who is both hypocritical and sadistic, but appears to be religious. She always tortures Sam and puts him in a helpless position. Sam tries to find out the reasons and assumes that, "she hates me partly because I was hateful and partly because she was hateful and partly because she had a crush on Father Watts-Watt - who had adopted me instead of marrying her."²³² While Mick rules by love, she rules by fear and "her weapons were no cane; they were different, subtle and cruel, unfair and vicious."²³³ She punishes a student by embarrassing him, making other students laugh at him until her victim becomes frustrated and desperate. Yet she is, in one way, a good teacher. "She told her stories with the vivid detail you sometimes get from people who are frustrated mentally and sexually."²³⁴ She howlerises

230

Ibid., p. 122.

231

Ibid.

232

Ibid., p. 147.

233

Ibid.

234

Ibid., p. 148.

the stories yet still keeps the moral meanings clear. Miss Pringle makes Sam lose faith in religion. How can a person so cruel, so hypocritical and hateful remain religious and seem very close to heaven? On one occasion, she accuses Sam, unjustly, of reading a nasty meaning into the story of Moses. As a punishment she makes him sit alone, away from all other students. Here Sam is reasonable enough to hate the adult and does not want to grow up. Grown-ups never understand him nor can he understand them. They are nothing but authorities to him. He becomes "a man against society"²³⁵ and rebellious because society will not compromise with him. He is avoided by all his classmates. Miss Pringle does not hesitate to remind him that he is a slum boy who is an outcast from society.

Sam is not only frustrated by the society at school, but also by the smaller society at the rectory. His life there somewhat destroys his stature. His position gives him "a rootless background." He feels that he is gradually losing his identity and self-confidence. He really cannot classify the relationship between him and people in the rectory. What is he to them and what are they to him? He begins to feel lost and it is easy for such a person to lose his freedom. These new indifferent circumstances rush him to adolescence. He is now reaching a stage when he must be responsible for himself. He must make his own choice.

In Samuel's eyes, Nick Shales, who teaches science, is the best teacher, the only one who has an optimistic attitude to society and to

235

Ibid., p. 41.

the world. He loves and respects his pupils. Miss Ravenna Pringle hates Nick and is jealous of him because he loves people and is well loved and because "he found it easy to be good."²³⁶ His world is a rationalistic one that "gave Nick a love of people, a selflessness, a kindness and justice that made him a homeland for all people."²³⁷ Miss Pringle is angry when outwitted by a student, while Nick openly accepts the fact when he does not know the answer. He is like a saint beaming among children while she has around her only a few "sycophantic girls, a line of acolytes not worth having."²³⁸ Nick is a socialist who has a high ideal of improving society. Yet he can do nothing because he himself is poor; he is even incapable of raising his own standard of living. He is from a poor family and works hard in order to gain knowledge which is therefore the most precious thing to him. He is still poor when he is a teacher. He can work out only his good will, his ideal.

It is obvious to Samuel that these two worlds stand side by side: Nick's rational, scientific world and Miss Pringle's religious one. However "we held both universes in our heads effortlessly because by the nature of the human being neither of them was real."²³⁹ Miss Pringle's world existed, as it is believed, thousands of years before they were born. It cannot be proved whether it once really existed or never existed at all. Nick's world is proved by many facts in a small

236

Ibid., p. 162.

237

Ibid., p. 161.

238

Ibid., p. 162.

239

Ibid., p. 160.

classroom. They study the stars that are drawn on the board by Nick, not those in the sky and "Nick thought he spoke of real things."²⁴⁰ These two universes, although very influential in his childhood are rejected, like Evie's fantastic world, by Samuel. Most people impose either of these patterns on their lives, but Samuel Mountjoy rejects both because they are too exclusive.

Sam does not like Nick's universe because it is soulless. Rationality leaves no place for spirit in his cosmos. For Nick, only rational choice should be exercised because what is right is what is best. "He denied the spirit behind creation; for what is nearest the eye is harder to see."²⁴¹ So Nick's universe is like a grove that can cover on the surface but is empty inside. Nick's world is not sufficient for him since there are many things in life that are not based on scientific facts. One cannot live all one's life from a purely scientific point of view. Something is real and exists, but is beyond the reach of science. It is man's soul, man's spirit. Miss Pringle's world is also inadequate. Her world lacks what Nick's has and has what Nick's has not. There is only the central substance - soul without shape in her universe. Sammy feels that he is tortured and melted by the destructive heat of "the burning bush."²⁴² It is too much for a fallible man like him to keep balance in such a one-sided, loaded universe. That is why he rejects

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid., p. 162.

²⁴² "The burning bush" is the form that God used to represent himself when Moses went up Mount Sinai and asked for His help for sinful people. There God gave him "The Ten Commandments" that restored/human race to virtue again.

them all and tries to seek his own which will be best suited to his life and his nature.

Samuel does not believe in rational choice. What is best to him is what appeals to his feelings. And he has found what he has been seeking for a long time at his first lesson in an Art school. According to him "masturbation is universal"²⁴³ and when he thinks about sex he declares, "I know too well what I wanted."²⁴⁴ He is to draw a living model, Beatrice Ifor, in a drawing class. At first he will not draw her because he senses something is going to happen in the approaching future. To this he says, "I may have - who knows? Seen with other eyes, or remembered the future.. I may have been trying to avoid the life laid down for me."²⁴⁵ It seems to him that his own subconscious knows the approaching danger beforehand and tries to warn him to avoid the trap already predetermined for him. Yet he cannot escape from it. He has made his emotional decision when he elaborately surveys her features. Being proud of his own freedom, his ability to make his own choice, he deliberately makes up his mind that he must have her. In his interior monologue he poses questions and answers them himself:

"What is important to you?"

'Beatrice Ifor.'

She thinks you depraved already. She dislikes you.

'If I want something enough I can always get it provided I am willing to make the appropriate sacrifice.'

What will you sacrifice?

'Everything.'

243

Op.cit., p. 66.

244

Ibid.

245

Ibid., p. 167.

Here?"²⁴⁶

There is no negative answer. It is obvious that his decision to have Beatrice is the cause of his fall, the point where he loses his innocence. He feels that he is trapped, as he was trapped by Philip; but this time he has trapped himself.

On his way to the college where Beatrice studies, after he has made his decision, he finds that he has already lost his freedom:

"I sat my bike on the downward slope of the bridge, and already I had left my freedom behind me. I had allowed myself, the unquiet pleasure of picturing her, taken the decisive step of moving forward. I sat, waiting, watching the red light."²⁴⁷

The red light is the signal of danger and it symbolizes here the danger of his fall. But Samuel ignores the warning and by so doing he is doomed forever. Like Dr. Faustus who sells his soul for the sake of power, Samuel has sacrificed his freedom for the satisfaction of his lust. His longing for love, warmth, understanding and individual communication make him need someone to give him these things. He cries desperately, "I said I loved you. Oh God, don't you know what that means? I want you, I want all of you, not just cold kisses and walks. ... I want fusion and identity. I want to understand and be understood - oh God, Beatrice, Beatrice, I love you - I want to be you!"²⁴⁸ His desire for her is so strong that he plans to seduce her and he ultimately succeeds.

246

Ibid., p. 179.

247

Ibid., p. 61.

248

Ibid., p. 81.

Beatrice's nature is as opposite to his as white is to black. She is religious, innocent, pure, calm and submissive. Her religious taboos tell her that the kind of 'pre-marriage' in which they indulge is sinful and shameful. "But she was a girl, her emotions and physical reactions enclosed as a nun. She herself was hidden."²⁴⁹ Like a nun, she considers virginity the most important thing. But when she cannot resist Sammy she acts as though she sacrifices herself for God's sake. She never responds to him. He still feels that she is unfathomable, untouchable and unattainable. Finally he concludes that his feeling for her is not love at all but "infatuation". Their love affair drags on for two years. He feels that he is degraded by his exploitation of her and with contempt he takes her as an animal - sex without brain. She becomes "dog-like"²⁵⁰ with "dog faith and big eyes and submission."²⁵¹ He cannot bear the idea of being degraded by physical contact with her and finally breaks off the relationship.

He joins the Communist Party because "there was certain generosity in being a communist; a sense of martyrdom and a sense of purpose."²⁵² Through the Party he meets Taffy, a girl whom he immediately recognises as 'his type'. He deliberately abandons Beatrice to marry Taffy. Beatrice breaks down and is taken to an asylum where she stays

249

Ibid., p. 85.

250

Ibid., p. 94.

251

Ibid., p. 95.

252

Ibid.

for seven years before Samuel comes to visit her and finds that she can never be cured. This is one of Samuel's greatest sins. He has destroyed a decent, religious girl.

When the war breaks out he joins the army where he serves as a recorder and becomes a captain. He is captured by the Nazis, thus losing his physical freedom. In the Nazi prisoner-of-war camp Dr. Halde, a Gestapo psychologist, asks him whether he knows anything about his colleagues' plan of escape. In such a state he finds with great pain that he is unable to make any decision - decide whether the plan is sensible or not; consequently he feels unable to answer Halde's question:

"My enunciation was slurred and hurried, the voice of a man who had never stilled his brain, never thought, never been certain of anything. Yet still his was the foreign voice, nationless, voice of the divorced idea, a voice that might be conveyed better by the symbols of mathematics than printed words."²⁵³

He is not certain because he has lost his ability to choose what is right and what is wrong. His friends who try to escape are finally killed. He is interviewed again and again by Dr. Halde and the Gestapo because he is a recorder in the army who knows every prisoner well and must have known their plan. The Nazis want to prevent the next escape. But Samuel keeps saying, "I know nothing. Nothing!"²⁵⁴

Dr. Halde is very clever and knows Samuel too well. This is how he analyzes Samuel's nature:

253

Ibid., p. 103.

254

Ibid., p. 110.

"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 yourself. Intellectual ideas, even the idea of loyalty to your country, sit on you loosely. ... Only the things you cannot avoid, the sear of sex or pain, avoidance of the suffering repetition and prolongation of the other, this constitutes what your daily consciousness would not admit, but experiences as life."²⁵⁵

Dr. Halde takes advantage of Samuel's nature. He locks Samuel in a tiny dark cell with cold concrete walls. He wants "uncompensated darkness," the hardness of the concrete, the endless height of walls and the narrowness of the cell to extract from Samuel the last "scrap of information"²⁵⁶ through the hidden microphones. In fact Samuel knows the plan but he is not sure of any knowledge. He is losing faith in everything because he is no more a man of free will. Those prisoners can deny the plan; they can say 'yes' or 'no' because they have freedom to choose. "But what can I say," he protests, "who have no knowledge, no certainty, no will?"²⁵⁷ He knows that his body is "no complete body of any animal or man,"²⁵⁸ because it is a body without soul.

When he was a young talented artist, he would not accept any imposed pattern in his life. He was so proud that he wanted to seek his own pattern. He would not accept any social form. By that time he is so proud of his free will, he has freedom to choose anything he

255

Ibid.

256

Ibid., p. 130.

257

Ibid., p. 131.

258

Ibid., p. 138.

likes. But now he begins to realize that to be part of society, of the world is "not just an ambition, but was necessary. Therefore the thing in here, the dead thing that looked out must adapt its nature to conform. What was the nature of the new world outside and what was the nature of the dead thing inside?"²⁵⁹

Experiences in life teach him little by little to understand that patterns form orders of things in society. But man gets so much involved with patterns, with forms, that he completely forgets the substance. "The brilliance of our political vision and the profundity of our scientific knowledge had enabled us to dispense with this substance."²⁶⁰ So people impose empty patterns on their lives. By "substance" he means "the relationship of individual man to individual man."²⁶¹ He seduces Beatrice because he thinks that he will gain this kind of relationship, but he is mistaken. He gains nothing but sin that cannot be forgiven, because Beatrice is not in a condition to forgive him at the time of his remorse.

The name, Beatrice Ifor like the names of most of Golding's characters, is significant. Her first name "Beatrice" means blessedness - high and noble spirit. Her last name "Ifor" means "I for - for me." Although she herself is religious and highly spirited, in Samuel's eyes she is "flesh and blood"²⁶² despite the "unearthly expression"²⁶³ on her

259 Ibid., p. 143.

260 Ibid.

261 Ibid., p. 144.

262 Ibid., p. 168.

263 Ibid.

face. Since the world of spirit is too cold for Samuel, instead of choosing Beatrice he has chosen Miss Ifor. He takes only her body to satisfy his desire, without paying attention to her soul. His own nerves, Mountjoy, suggests his own nature - a nature which chooses the path of self gratification in sex.

When he is captured by the Nazis he has nothing to lose. His freedom has been lost for a long time. He is not interested in his colleagues' plan for escape. The little dark cell cannot do any harm; it extracts from him an intimate knowledge of his past sins that gradually burns him up. He does not care to escape since he realizes that he cannot find any place in the world to protect him against his own evil. He cannot run away from that because it is part of him. "Guilty I am; therefore wicked I will be."²⁶⁴ He knows that "guilt comes before the crime and can cause it. My claims to evil were Byronic."²⁶⁵ Sex has trapped him and caused his fall and now he is like "the fallen angel." Sex means sin and shame for Beatrice. And sex is the wicked thing for Nick Shales who believes only in rational things and he tells Sam, "I don't believe in anything but what I can touch and see and weigh and measure. But if the Devil had invented man he couldn't have played him a dirtier, wickeder, a more shameful trick than when he gave him sex."²⁶⁶ But sex, for Sammy, is the only beautiful thing. It is the root of art and all beauty in the world. That is why he does not delay

264

Ibid., p. 176.

265

Ibid.

266

Ibid., p. 175.

in choosing it. This is the free fall of man. Man is free to choose anything he wants. It is his own choice that brings him destruction.

The episode in the prisoner-of-war camp, from Dr. Halde's first interrogation until Sammy is let out of the pitch-black tiny cell in which he is tortured, is very important, because it is here that he first realizes the full enormity of what he has chosen to become. In the dark cell, in which he is alone, he becomes his own torturer. He is tortured by his imagination which reveals the extent to which he has sacrificed his integrity to lust. Horrified by this knowledge he screams out from the darkness, "Help me", and the cell door opens.

He staggers out into the world of the camp, which is sordid and ugly, but through his tears of shame the world is transfigured; it becomes strangely beautiful:

"Beyond them the mountains were not only clear all through like purple glass, but living. They sang and were jubilant. They were not all that sang. Everything is related to everything else and all relationship is either discord or harmony. 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."²⁶⁷

This is in fact Sammy's pentecostal vision mentioned in the first paragraph of the book. Exactly the same words are used to describe it: "I was visited by a flake of fire, miraculous and pentecostal; and the fire transmuted me, once and forever."

According to William L. Bradley, the definition of man is that of a being "who can choose his future, make decisions about himself and

his world, imagine himself in various future situations and plan what he is to become. In other words, man has a capacity to make decision in the light of many choices. ... He lives in nature but is not really part of it. He is conscious of the supernatural but is separated from it by freedom. Man is alone because of his self-awareness. This makes him very great and also very tragic because he has power to choose his own failure and destruction."²⁶⁸ Samuel is the representative of the whole human race which has fallen through the operation of free will. The headmaster warns him before he leaves the school - that if he wants something he can sacrifice everything for it. But soon he will regret the sacrifice because what he has got is not worth what he has lost.

The emphasis of the novel and of the title itself is that man has free will and his evil is freely chosen. Sammy's painful search is for the moment of free decision when he could accept the good path or the evil path and chose the evil. There is however a more than passing suggestion of predestination, the idea that man's choice is conditioned by his environment. The section which explores Sammy's discovery of his sin's origin in the prison cell is followed by the episode of Mick Shales and Rowena Pringle, because these two people seem to have been the strongest conditioning influences in his life. Perhaps the distinctive influence of Miss Pringle was slightly stronger than the humane though Godless philosophy of Mick Shales. It is Miss Pringle, then, who upsets

268

William L. Bradley, An Introduction to Comparative Religion (Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 1965), p. 184.

the balance and precipitates Sammy on the downward path. There are other adverse factors of his environment which should also be considered. Sammy is a fatherless bastard and what he has done to Beatrice is what his unknown father had done to his mother. Perhaps he unconsciously wants to take revenge for his mother or perhaps his father had paved a way for Samuel to imitate him. He is an outcast from society and also a rootless boy condemned to life. His loneliness and his lack of love make him try to grasp someone to communicate with, someone to give him love and warmth. He was once made use of by his friend, Philip, who was seeking a vicarious revenge. Realizing that his sin has been committed partly on account of many influential circumstances around him, Samuel now and then cries for justice, cries to be an innocent, blameless victim of society and environment. When he tries to investigate his past carefully, he cannot find any moment when he has free will:

"And yet as I remember myself as well as Beatrice I could find no moment when I was free to do as I would. In all that lamentable story of seduction I could not remember one moment when being what I was I could do other than I did."²⁶⁹

To him freedom often seems an hallucination that does not really exist. He would feel better and be glad to accept his destiny if someone could understand him and his situation and then forgive him:

"If I could say with Mick Shales that the word 'freedom' is just a pious hope for an illusion I might accept the drag of all those half-dead days and not mind them."²⁷⁰ Samuel feels that it is unfair to blame him for

269

Op.cit., p. 145.

270

Ibid.

his sin since he was born in the corrupted world. He belongs to the race of sin. How can he escape from the curse of mankind? How can he remain innocent and guiltless while the world has already been predetermined him for damnation? Thus Samuel calls for justice, for fair consideration:

"Their world is mine, the world of sin and redemption, of showings and conviction of love in the mud - You deal daily in the very blood of my life. I am one of you, a haunted man - haunted by what or whom? And this is my cry; that I have walked among you in intellectual freedom and you never tried to seduce me from it, since a century has seduced you to it and you believe in fair play, in not presuming, in being after all not a saint. You have conceded freedom to those who cannot use freedom and left the dust and the dirt clustered over the jewel. ... I am your brother in both senses and since freedom was my curse I throw the dirt at you as I might pick at a sore which will not break out and kill."²⁷¹

At last Samuel has found out the point at which he fell from his freedom. Being proud of his own free will he has chosen the world of flesh instead of the world of spirit. The conditioning is strong, but it is his deliberate decision that causes his fall.

As in his other books, Golding never fails to claim his hero as the representative of mankind; "I am one of you," "I am your brother", says Samuel to the reader. So what happens to him can happen to all of us. Through Samuel, Golding demonstrates clearly his own basic belief, the basic theme of all his books that evil is part of the nature of man. Samuel, like Pincher Martin, is an individual who makes use of other people in order to satisfy his selfish lust. The impact of Free

271

Ibid., p. 11.

Fall' is all the more horrifying because it is so much easier for the reader to identify with a 'hero' who is firmly rooted in a convincing, recognisable world.