

**THE THEME OF PRIMITIVISM IN WILLIAM GOLDING'S
FICTION: A READING OF THREE TEXTS**

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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This dissertation entitled **THE THEME OF PRIMITIVISM IN WILLIAM GOLDING'S FICTION : A READING OF THREE TEXTS**, submitted by Manoj Kumar Dash, Centre of Linguistics and English, School of Languages, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far, in part or full, for any other degree or diploma of any University. This may be placed before the examiners for evaluation for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy.

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Acknowledgements

In the course of writing this dissertation, I have incurred debts both large and small that can not be fully repaid. My greatest debt of gratitude goes to my supervisor Dr. R.S.Gupta whose patience never flagged, even when he had to read several versions of each chapter and without whose guiding the thesis would never have seen the light of day.

I am grateful to Prof. Meenakshi Mukherjee for her valuable suggestions at the initial stage of the thesis.

I must thank the faculty members and the staff of CLE including Veena Rani and Rita Dhall for their unfailing assistance.

Particular thanks go to Mr. Venkatesh Moorthy for his valuable suggestions during the course of my writing the thesis, Mufizzar Rehman, who kept on prodding to finish the thesis, Tanushree for her interest in my topic, Rajeev who always asked about the next chapter.

I should like to thank the library staff at National Library, Calcutta for their efficient handling of my requests.

It is to Sneha Nani and Ranjoo Nani, I owe the most for their emotional support, care caution and much more.

For personal advice, criticism and assistance, I wish especially to thank my friend Nishamani.

I also wish to thank Arun Nath and the staff of Techno Mech for efficient word processing.

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Chapter-I

Mapping the Territory : Introduction and Background 1

Chapter-II

The Savage Mind : Primitive Sensibility 34

Chapter-III

A contrived Encounter : Conscious Primitivism 69

Chapter-IV

A Revealing Glimpse 95

Conclusion 110

Bibliography 114

CHAPTER - I

MAPPING THE TERRITORY : Introduction and Background

We stand, then, on the shore, not as our Victorian fathers stood, lassoing phenomena with Latin names, listing, docketing and systematizing. Belsen and Hiroshima have gone some way towards teaching us humility ... It is not the complete specimen for the collector's cabinet that excites us. It is not the complete specimen for the collector's cabinet that excites us. It is the fragment, the hint ... We pore, therefore, over the natural language of nature ... We look daily at the appalling mystery of plain stuff. We stand where any upright food-gatherer has stood, on the edge of our own unconscious, and hope, perhaps, for the terror and excitement of the print of a single foot.

— Golding, 'In My Ark'

Mapping the Territory : Introduction and Background

I

From the primitive past to this day when we are at the threshold of twenty-first century, it has been a long march of civilisation. As man proceeds away and away from that primitive past, in him a deep longing for that life in nature, in the caves has stirred him, perhaps due to the dissatisfaction with the present day life. As a corollary to this sort of a tendency the nostalgia for those cradle days of civilisation is so soul-stirring.

The misgivings of what we call the civilized sophistication have at times questioned the very enterprise of civilisation that has generated so much of mistrust for itself. The term primitivism is a very broad and universal phenomenon the manifestation of which we find in different ways and in various forms. It's so broad and multipronged that it becomes very difficult to chart its meaning and aptly enough Michael Bell accepts its 'natural untidiness'. As we look for its specific manifestation in literature its sheer vastness defies a comprehensive definition.

What is the cause ? What is the predicament that gives rise to such an idea or impulse in literature ?

The term 'Primitivism' means an idea or a complex of ideas in political and philosophical writings, but we should not lose sight of the fact that within the domain of a literary work - as in a play or in a novel - the primitivist impulse or idea finds a very neat 'symbolic status'.² The term covers both an idea as well as a poetic symbol, but here my interest will be in indicating and defining the poetic and the literary rather than the complex of ideas.

If we seek a straight-jacket and well-defined (sort of) meaning of the term, then it appears inconsistent as different critics and writers have put forward their own interpretations of the term. M.H. Abrams presents D.H. Lawrence in his 'A Glossary of Literary Terms' as a leading twentieth century primitivist whereas James Baird in a comprehensive assessment of primitivism in Melville and other writers virtually excludes D.H. Lawrence. Robert Goldwater observes that there are numerous definitions of the term. F.N.

This literary phenomenon is like this because the term 'primitivism' refers to a basic human impulse and feeling and does not refer to a coherent movement in literature. Bell says, "We cannot refer to 'the primitivists' as we do, for example to 'the romantics.'"³

This wild array of meaning, interpretations and differences make the investigation potentially illuminating.

Here an attempt will not be made to devise a definite and single meaning for this broad and wide ranging term, rather an attempt will be made to present the different shades of meaning that contribute to the primitivist impulses and feelings and content in different texts.

Modern primitivism differs from the earlier concepts like the myths of the golden age, the concept of the noble savage during renaissance and eighteenth century. Specifically the concept of the noble savage derives its poetic point from its very conventionality that has been phrased as a stylized view of human experience.⁴

Frank Kermode in his introduction to 'The Tempest' writes that a part of the source material of the play could be traced to a factual account of Bermuda savages, but the conventional mode of The Tempest is pastoral drama. Here the factual, anthropological material has been worked into a traditional system of stylizing an experience.

Modern primitivism differs greatly in this area as the primitivist material does not fall into a convention of stylization. Let us take for instance Conrad's Heart of Darkness'; in this novel the exploration and understanding of the primitive experience is at the heart of the text that questions the very meaning and value of the primitivist

impulse in a manner which does not fall in line with the established literary conventions. Works like Heart of Darkness that explore the primitivist impulse inwardly seek to assess and understand the different issues concerning primitivist motifs, feelings, impulses, symbols, and allegories.

Though it is very difficult to categorise the primitivist elements in literature still a pragmatic categorisation could be made : first, the literary works that seek to recreate the mentality or sensibility of primitive man as if it were from inside, and the other kind of literary works that in some way use the primitive motif more externally as an idea or metaphor.

In literature when we look into the primitivistic impulses and ideas what matters most is the 'primitive sensibility' that refers to the most essential qualities of precivilized feeling and thought 'according to many anthropologists. Anthropological accounts of the primitive world-view well explain the expression of primitive feeling and thought in works of literature. In the understanding of primitive man from the stand-point of 'Anthropology', the most striking thing is the mythic-sensibility which refers to the primary modes of response to the external world and to human nature from which the different mythic forms derive. In

literature the ancient mode of thought and feeling are recreated in many ways without taking the help of primitive objects or beliefs. A writer may evoke the ancient response to life without consciously being primitivist.

Primitive sensibility believes in the absence of a firm and rational distinction between the inner world of feeling and the external order of existence. Ernst Cassirer comments in this connection, "The linguistic term 'polysynthetic' has indeed been applied to the mythical imagination and the term has been explained as meaning that for the mythical imagination there is no separation of total complex into elements, but that only a single undivided totality is represented — a totality in which there has been no 'dissociation' of the separate factors of objective perception and subjective feeling."⁵

This suggests that 'primitive man' projects the needs and desires of his own nature as objective qualities of the external world. To quote Cassirer, "Accordingly, the world of mythical ideas, precisely in its first and most immediate forms, appears closely bound up with the world of efficacy, there lies the core of the magical world view, which is saturated with this atmosphere of efficacy, which is indeed nothing more than a translation and transposition of the world of subjective emotions and drives into a sensuous subjective existence."⁶

Primitive animism is one of the most notable manifestations of mythic consciousness. In accordance with this concept the external world is pervaded by spirits or powers. Primitive man, in different aspects of the external world like vegetation, weather, birds, beasts, and animals, observed the expression of a will and mentality like his own. He came to realise that his relationship with nature as a continuous one, though at times nature was hostile to him. So, primitive man came to terms with his environment by appealing and propitiating the animistic powers.

In the primitive world-view 'natural piety' is not a moral concept, therefore it does not object to blood or even cannibalism and sacrifice. We think about ^{to} conduct as moral responsibility but primitive man thinks in terms of taboos expressing a superstitious awe of the potencies of external nature. Taboo is a way of coming to terms with the mysterious and the ungovernable which still leaves them beyond comprehension or control. That remains essentially the meaning of 'Taboo' in primitive life.

So the three remarkable features of the primitive world-view are animism, natural piety and the rituals.

In the works of D.H. Lawrence and Herman Melville these features appear very boldly. In D.H. Lawrence's Mexican and

American fictions like The Plumed Serpent and The Rainbow very remarkable presentation^{of} primitivistic mode of response to life could be located. Another great primitivist writer is Herman Melville. His works like Typee and Omoo carry his experiences among a tribe of Polynesian cannibals. The same experience appears in a modified form in the telling symbolism and feeling of Moby Dick. None of these novels is primitivist in the sense of a regression to earlier human states, what matters here is the primitive affinity, the adopted attitude and the evocation of the primitive mode of response to life.

Here, after the discussion of mythic consciousness, it would be appropriate to look into the use of primitive material in literature with conscious reference to primitive motifs. However, the spontaneous recreation of mythic sensibility and the purposeful use of primitive motifs are not incompatible. It is the distinction between inward recreation and external reference.

One of the endeavours, in this sphere has been made by D.H. Lawrence, in his novel The Plumed Serpent (1926) whereas features of mythic sensibility permeate The Rainbow. Making its way through a conscious design the primitive element is referred to as an objective fact rather than being felt simply as an inherent quality of the evoked scene. In the exploration of animistic relation with the environment the difference

between inward recreation and external assertion becomes evident. They have an imposed and factitious quality about their usage.

Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness most successfully and powerfully makes use of primitive motifs in its externality. Conrad is concerned to locate the right approach towards the primitive as a human potentiality but D.H. Lawrence promotes a rejection of civilization for the primitive. Both the approaches are conceived within the limits of a conscious and civilized frame of reference. The primitive experience presented within a frame of consciousness is counted as an abnormal phenomenon. It is the socio-cultural situations that give rise to such phenomena. T.S. Eliot is well aware of the situation when he makes use of anthropological motifs in The Wasteland. While talking about myth, antiquity and contemporaneity he writes :

In using myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him. They will not be imitators any more than the scientist who uses the discovery of an Eeinstein in pursuing his own, independent, further investigations. It is simply a way of controlling of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.⁷

Eliot's The Wasteland is an expression of contemporary disintegration and in this long poem Eliot makes use of

reference to primitive myths and rituals. James Joyce in his Ulysses makes use of myth as a structural principle. Ulysses has got a sophisticated pattern of allusion, 'spanning the whole of European culture and beyond'.⁸ In W.B. Yeats' poetry an eclectic use of mythological motifs is observed that provide primitivist implications. In Yeats as well as in Joyce an impulse or an idea of the ancient past is evoked to suggest a continuity from those days till today.

Conrad, Eliot, Joyce and Yeats — these four modern masters have shown deep interest in primitive life and myths, taking these things into consideration from the stand-points of their time and life.

William Golding in The Inheritors recreates a primitive world with the full length and breadth of an anthropological scheme. The purposeful use of different stylistic devices in the designing of the text make evident his conscious creation of the primitive pattern. His idea of putting down a fable indicates a more conscious mind in the recreation of the primitive world in The Inheritors.

Lord of the Flies presents a similar stand-point more evidently. In this novel Golding indicates the weakness of the civilized order and seeks to capture the 'unorganised emotions of the savage lurking within it.'⁹ In this novel the

primitive has been seen from the stand-point of the civilised. Michael Bell, while reminding us of the conscious primitivism in the fiction of William Golding comments, "The Inheritors and Lord of the Flies are fables making essentially symbolic use of their primitivist material."¹⁰

Pincher Martin and Free Fall lay emphasis more on the complexity at characterisation and here his exploration of the buried self of man is different. Pincher Martin has been caught in a very extreme situation and in that predicament his social personality has been dislodged. When a boulder is dislocated it reveals a number of insects go berserk. Similar is the situation of Pincher Martin. Pincher Martin is in constant fear of being eaten and he is always after eating which reveals a moral underside that is comparable to that of Lord of the Flies. These novels were written in the post world war period and because of that these works reflect and contemplate on experiences of war.

It appears as though William Golding holds upto suspicion both the primitive and the civilised. (Like in Eliot, Golding's use of the primitive is a critical contemplation and assessment of the contemporary developments. But as in Lawrence, we don't find in Golding the inward recreation and assimilation of the primitive. The primitive in Golding is instrumental in the presentation of a moral idea through conscious symbolic use.

'Conscious primitivism' seeks the philosophic or symbolic use of the primitive material as it attempts to recreate the archaic life feeling.

A cursory glance at the historical aspect of primitivism seems pertinent here. Although primitivist nostalgia could be traced from the very early accounts of civilized reflection in 19th and 20th centuries it marked changes in its expression in imaginative literature. The old concept of reference to the golden age or the noble savage was replaced by the use of primitive motifs and the recreation of primitive sensibility.

The new views were factually supported by the new findings in the field of Anthropology. It was much modified and influenced by the Anthropological thoughts of Frazer, Cassirer and Levi Strauss. In the use of golden age and noble savage conventions, there is the portrayal of utopian simplicities but the literary documentation of ritual and magic, totem and taboo portrays a different world-view of man, that is the inner world of man — the real savage within.

As the assessments show the application of Anthropological perspective to literature prove that the primitivist material gather meaning in terms of a writer's vision in the making and shaping of his literary works.

II

Before focusing on the literary texts it would be helpful to take a brief look at the world of art. Since this is a movement that is not confined to literature alone, understanding the movement in art would also be very helpful.

Art and literature have got a very deep relationship in this sense that they reflect and portray the same ideas, ideologies, beliefs and faith. They like mirrors hold up to us the various concerns of humanity. They differ only when it comes to medium and means of expression; what art speaks in brush and chisel, in colour and stone, literature captures the same in words, in stories, fictions and poetry. Over the years a trend of ideas that we phrase as 'primitivism' has found its manifestation in literary works, so also in the sphere of art.

This discussion will deal largely with the visual art of primitive societies and of our present day societies. That we call primitive art which is made and used by primitive societies. All kinds of arts have aesthetic qualities but here as we talk about 'primitive art' the word primitive refers only to the nature of the society in which the work originates. Primitive art appears relatively vital but it seems crude in technique, compared to some very delicately rendered art objects from civilized societies.

The pre-historic cave paintings, carved and incised objects the engravings of simple magico-religious patterns on

rocks, peculiar and often grotesque clay figures are glowing objects of primitive art.

The pigments that they used were coloured earths red, yellow, ochre; white came from natural lime deposits and from burned shell; black was char-coal or manganese compounds. Mixed with water, the pigment was applied with the tip of a chewed stem, a feather or even the finger. It was sometimes mixed with tree sap oil treated afterward with fixative made from natural glue or wax.

Modern examples of primitive art may be found in the early wood-carvings of the aborigines in Formosa, especially in the Paiwan group. They could well be termed as the survivals of the primitives. In Europe and Asia primitive societies existed prior to the development of civilizations; however because these civilizations have flourished longer and more widely than those elsewhere, very few primitive societies have persisted.

In art, " a conscious return to the art of an under-developed state, whether in subject techniques, or form is known as primitivism."¹¹ From the historical point of view the phrase primitive enshrines three meanings. Painters and sculptors of the late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance were categorised under the phase primitives by the art critics of 19th and 20th century. Roughly speaking, this movement in art could be located between 13th to 15th century.

In the early part of our century the term 'primitive' referred to peoples who are at present the objects of ethnological studies, many of whom live on a stone-age level. They are the people cut off from progress and civilization. Therefore, in art the term 'primitive' has been applied to those artists who remain cut off from the culture of their immediate environment. This sort of a definition means 'naive, instinctive, childlike.' At a stroke, the term 'primitive' implies 'primordially', crudity, ingeniousness, simplicity and inexperience.

Classic art was rediscovered in the Middle-Ages and was celebrated as the art of the wise, on the contrary the art of the 14th/15th to 13th century was estimated as the art of the ignorant.

In accordance with the view of Giorgio Vasari, the first masters of the late 13th and early 14th centuries were the first artists, and therefore primitives. To him medieval art was the art of the barbarians that lacks in right proportion, order, and meaning.

Towards the close of the 17th century the old theory of classical art as consummate was knocked down and the ancient world was seen as but a stage in mankind's infancy. More and more interest was discovered in antiquity.

deliberate

Giovanni Batista Vico excluded art in his theory of the history of mankind as a sequence of stages of perfection. In his assessment that initial phase was peerless in its own way, he discovered imagination correspondingly stronger as intellect was feebler. And his idea was further extended by Johann George Hamann, Johann Gottfried Herder, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Denis Diderot.

The discovery of America had brought with it the myth of the noble-savage, the mythical creature who seemed to represent the survival of the earthly paradise, and who aroused aspiration toward the state of nature, that exists in every individual.

The term 'primitive' gathered many levels of meaning that included the art of the 'barbarian' Middle Ages, of archaic civilisation, of pre history and of tribal Africa.

of Kant

The fascination for the primitive was voyage towards purity, virginity, need to go back to the origins of creative possibilities.

In order to abandon the dogmatism and rationalism of modern civilisation, Paul Gauguin left Europe for the West-Indies and the south-sea islands. Gauguin gravitated toward, 'the myth of the people, who lived in a state of natural innocence, in close contact with nature, where the

response to life was more intense."¹² He was after life that was still primitive. With Gauguin an aesthetic attitude was reached that preferred the barbaric, the child like, even the irrational to civilization.

In modern times the phenomenon of primitivism was not confined to a search for innocence and liberty of vision or to a sympathy for certain formal achievements of primitive art, rather it was a manifestation of a much broader revolution than that. Scientific progress and new discoveries in the domain of psychology overthrew the conventional relationship of man and his own inner world. Luigi Salerno puts it as, "Art attracted to the unknown because of its faith in the perspective value of the imaginations, sought the pre-logical, the state of nature, the primordial, the original, an idiom still free from reason, determined only by the pure creative and expressive necessity."¹³

Picasso said, 'I make objects the way I imagine them, not the way I see them.'¹⁴ This intellectual realism of Picasso is typical of the savage and the child. He painted what his imagination conjured up in the midst of modern times.

Luquet made an attempt at determining the characteristics of primitive art through the drawings of children. The child does not create a geometric, abstract,

ideoplastic art but a representative, concrete, physioplastic sensory art. Cassare Lambroso and Freud discovered close affinities between the symbolism of the insane and that of the primitives, the sphere of primitivism embraced children's art and the art of lunatics and savages.

The sculptor Henry Moore also shared the fascination of the primitive as he looked towards ancient American sculpture and the paleolithic paintings of Altamira for inspiration.

From Picasso to Moore, the artists who celebrated primitivistic modes of presentation in their works completely annihilated the traditional idea of the artistic inferiority of the primitives.

"The child is the primitive par excellence,"¹⁵ says Luigi Salerno. Historians and scientists have interpreted children's art and have tried to deduce from its analysis the characterisation of the historically primitive.

The primitives don't constitute a current of modern art but are instead a phenomenon of modern art; they are the artists whose taste is oriented toward primitives. There we find an elementary and spontaneous idiom reflecting more directly a psychic mechanism, such as children's art, the art of aboriginal peoples.

III

The beginning of this century witnessed kaleidoscopic changes in different frontiers of life, and man was held in suspicion. World War I and World War II entirely changed the outlook of man and shattered a good many illusions. In addition to this, when the whole truth about Nazism and Stalinist Russia was revealed in the late 1948 and early 1950's, people, specifically poets, playwright, authors, thinkers became critical of their time and life. And in their writings we find the anguish, anxiety and concern mirrored clearly.

The Victorian view of civilisation's progress from good to better was challenged by the events and incidents of new times. A prominent writer of the period H.G.Wells was very much optimistic about the perfectibility of man right upto the 1930s, though he was disillusioned later on. He saw a world torn by one crisis after another like strikes, war, and depression.

The first world-war rocked the whole world and shook the old human faith. The Waste Land (1922) was one of the greatest products of this disillusionment. The war-poets like Owen, Sasoon and Rosenberg had built the plinth for Eliot's masterpiece. The lines of The Waste Land testify to that.

Man the maker of technology was crushed by technology as it turned against him in the form of arms and ammunition. The rapid industrialisation gave certain things on one hand and snatched away the same on the other and man was left denuded and dehumanised. There developed a deep distrust in the progress of science.

In the post-war period, the new generation of writers showed a temper and commitment that was radically different from their predecessors. Poetry reflected the disillusionment earlier than prose probably because it was in the hands of middle-class men and women like - Galsworthy, Forster, Chesterton, Richardson, Woolf, Mansfield, Maugham, Mackenzie, Walpole — who were not directly affected by the war.

In the fifties when Golding started writing his novels the scene was widely various and 'writers were bringing a much more fabulous and speculative mode into post-war fiction'.¹⁸ In the maintenance of this temper some of the writers like Malcolm Lowry (especially), William Golding, (perhaps Lawrence Durrell) were pushed out to the eccentric fringes though they were understood and accepted later on.

In the major writings of the post-war period an orientation to look back for shape and significance, sense and style is well-marked. Even in search of roots authors have gone to the extent of recreating the primitive past over and

above the expression of their love of the primitive past at the level of craft as well as content. In this context the comment given by Robert Burden seems relevant, "The literary historian tells us that new forms always derive from past traditions. In this sense, a new work is always the product of both a pre-existing pattern and a transformation of that pattern in a creative and historical circumstance. The meaning of a work is thus often grounded in a self-conscious relationship to past forms; and the transformation and implicit questioning of these often becomes both the basis of a work's structure and of its contemporary historical character."¹⁷



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Aldous Huxley in his writings like Brave New World (1932) expressed a deep distrust of developments in science. This book for him earned the title 'the greatest anti-Wellsian of them all'. He was greatly influenced by a great master of the time 'Freud' who was exploring the darker zones of human mind.

Joseph Conrad in his novels explores evil that manifest itself at sea, in fire, in jungle and in dark places. Through these circumstances Conrad tests the manhood of his protagonists. In so doing he scrutinizes his time and life.

D.H. Lawrence's works exhibit a number of conflicting forces -- the natural and the refined, the rural and the urban, the primitive and the civilized, the physical and the

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intellectual that supply success and potency to his writings. He rejects the civilisation of dirty industry and spreading towns, in other words urbanisation and industrialisation and believes in the natural keeping feeling above intellect. In his novel The Plumed Serpent (1926), D.H. Lawrence has been fascinated by the possibilities of religious experience to provide him and mankind in general with a satisfaction that civilised life did not grant. This fascination finds expression in the violent, mystical confrontation between European mystical confrontation between European Christianity and Indian Primitivism in The Plumed Serpent (1926) Lawrence champions the vitality and tribalism of the Aztec religion in a revived and triumphant form and he rejoices in its defeat of Western intellectualism. In so doing he rejects what we call 'civilisation' in favour of real life. In his novel The Plumed Serpent the conflict between the primitive and the sophisticated in men and women as lovers has come to the forefront and D.H. Lawrence boldly favours the primitive nature of life rather than the modern manner of life.

Though D.H. Lawrence and Joyce had their individual tones and tempers, style and treatment, these two writers shared a sense of rejection and alienation. Both of them have made manoeuvres in their writings where they constantly go back to their roots. Joyce was a very highly conscious artist. He

took a great interest in symbolism that gave an added dimension and source of interest. We find unmistakable glimpses of his powerful vision in his novels like Ulysses and Finegane's Wake where he rejects the so called civilised and seeks the natural self and response.

IV

It is the publication of the novel Lord of the Flies (1954) that brought William Golding to limelight. Since then he has published a number of novels, the most recent one being Close Quarters (1987). Clive Pemberton comments, "the importance and significance of his contribution to the modern novel is already widely recognised. He is not only one of its most distinguished practitioners, he is also one of its developers."¹⁸ His works manifest an unusual intensity in their concentrated poetic style and neat designing.

He taught at Bishop Wordsworth's School, Salisbury and came in close contact with the little people; later on the experience finds its expression in the novel Lord of the Flies. His participation in the second World War was another great event that left an indelible imprint in his mind. In many of his novels his reflections on his pupils and his reactions to the War could be traced out. Broadly speaking he explores man's nature and the changing contexts. William Golding writes, "Modern man is appallingly ignorant of his nature."¹⁹

Lord of the Flies is a highly original novel which has been filmed by Peter Brook. The Inheritors (1955) is the second novel that depicts the conflict between Neanderthal man and Homo-sapiens. This again is a novel with a taste having an original ring about it. Pincher Martin (1956) came as the third novel from that initial phase of expression, which saw the publication of three novels in quick succession.

There was an interval of three years between the publication of Pincher-Martin and Free Fall (1959). It was not entirely a barren period as The Brass Butterfly appeared in 1958. This comedy is not a considerable achievement by Golding and in so far as his growth and development as a novelist comfortably be placed at any point of the line leading from Pincher Martin to Free Fall (1959). Five years later the next Golding novel was published that is The Spire (1964). Golding took spells of silence in the publication of his novels. The Pyramid came out in 1967 and Darkness Visible, in 1979. The Scorpion God which is a collection of three short-stories came out in 1973, six years after The Pyramid (1967). Many parts of the book were in the vein of The Inheritors and in the vein of The Brass Butterfly. Darkness Visible (1979) was published six years after The Scorpion God.

The other novels Golding as a prolific writer, has written are Rites of Passage. (1980). The Paper Man (1984), Close Quarters (1987). two other miscellaneous works by him are A Moving Target (1982) and An Egyptian Journal (1985).

Golding cannot be categorised under a group or school of writers. His writings show an unusual kind of intensity and concentration. Golding says, " I had a passion for words in themselves and collected them like stamps or birds eggs ..."²⁰

As an early attempt in 1934, he published a small volume in Macmillan's Contemporary Poets series. They are evidently youthful poems, immature in thought and technique. Golding himself says. " Actually, I'd rather forget it ... You might say I write prose because I can't write poetry"²¹. In the second World-War he participated as a commander; he commanded a rocket-ship, saw action against the 'Bismarck' took part in the D-Day landings in Normandy and was once drifting for three days in the English Channel. The war experiences were a notable part of his development, war of some sort forms the back-ground to at least three of his first four novels. When the war came to a close he had given up the ideals of scientific humanism learnt from his early environs.

In 1954, his first novel Lord of the Flies was published and Ballantyne's novel The Coral Island (1857) remains in the

hinterland of the novel Lord of the Flies, besides some other works like Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. In Ballantyne's novel Jack, Ralph and Peterkin carry with them the social and moral scheme of England to their island. In their activities the colonisation and missionary propagation activities of mid-nineteenth century are evident. They deliver lectures to the natives, burn their gods and delight in an 'emotional unity'.

"There was indeed no note of discord whatever in the symphony we played together on that sweet Coral Island, and I am now persuaded that this was owing to our having been all tuned to the same key, namely, that of love."²² After a hundred years the novelist finds it difficult to play the symphony and Lord of the Flies exhibits the strain.

Lord of the Flies portrays the gradual regression of a group of middle-class boys into primitive and blood-thirsty savagery. It begins all well, the children think about civilised standards of conduct and try to impose them on their community. Jack says, "we have got to have rules and obey them. After all, we are not savages. We are English, the English are best at everything. So we have got to do the right things."²³ Democratically they elect Ralph as their leader, they have got a conch shell to summon the group. But appallingly enough the civilized standard of life vanish from

the boys' mind, gradually. At the beginning they are threatened by irrational fears of imaginary monsters, the dark and the unknown. In the midst of the novel the boys split into two groups -- the hunters and the rationalists (my phrasing). The hunters revel in the blood-lust 'induced by pig-sticking'. The hunters revert to the primitive practice of painting their faces, with coloured clay, they become men behind masks. They run behind the pigs with the ritual chant, "kill the pig ! cut his throat ! kill the pig ! Bash him in ! ' Finally they have victimised people from their own community Like the flames sweeping over the island, the savage bloodlust envelops the whole island.

The novel Lord of the Flies was seen from many standpoints, for some it was a modern political nightmare reflecting Nazi-Germany, for others it was a deliberate dramatisation of Freudian psychology. It was also seen as an exemplification of Hobbes' view that life without civilised restraint becomes nasty, brutish and short. Some others viewed it as a treatise on the consequences of original sin.

The novel is highly allegorical and exhibits the simultaneous operation of the factual and the fabular. The novel is imbued with symbolism too. It is from the poetic density of the text that the potency of the novel is derived.

In his literary style, words and phrases operate on two levels at once. What strikes the most on reading his texts closely is their precise and specific nature. Let us look at one example, the conch is obviously one of the most important symbols in the novel which is first presented to us with the most minute and detailed realism. The example follows :

Ralph took the shell from Piggy and a little water ran down his arm. In colour the shell was deep cream, touched here and there with fading pink. Between the point, worn away a little hole and the pink lips of the mouth, lay eighteen inches of shell with a slight spiral twist and covered with a delicate embossed pattern. Ralph shook sand out of the deep tube.²⁴

His prose carries the effect of poetry in its intensity and evocative power.

His next novel The Inheritors depicts the extermination of Neanderthal men by Homo-sapiens. The story is related from the point of view of the Neanderthal man. In this novel Lok and Fa, two Neanderthal people hide in a tree and witness an encampment of the new people indulging in an orgy of lust, drunkenness, cruelty and cannibalism. We come to recognise that innocence is bound to yearn towards and be destroyed by experience.

As Ballantyne suggested Lord of the Flies the source of The Inheritors could be traced in the pages of Outline of History (8th and 9th chapters) and "The Grisly Folk" by

H.G.Wells. Golding says :

Wells' Outline of History played a great part in my life because my father was a rationalist, and the outline was something that he took neat. Well, now Well's Outline of History was the rationalists gospel in excelsis I should think I got this from my father... seemed to me too neat and slick. And when I re-read it as an adult I came across his picture of Neanderthal man, our immediate predecessors, as being The gross brutal creatures who were possibly the basis of mythological bad man, whatever he may be, the ogre. I thought to myself that this is just absurd, what we are doing is just externalising our own insides.²⁵

H.G. Wells in his Outline and in several other works suggests with optimism that the passage of time and the process of education will add to human refinement. Golding's view rejects this kind of a philosophy and attacks the entire generation that bequeathed to him so many illusions. He later describes his father's views, "Science was busy cleaning up the universe. There was no place, in this exquisitely logical universe, for the terrors of darkness. There was darkness of course, but it was just darkness, the absence of light ... God might have been a help but we had thrown him out ... "26 At the close of The Inheritors, it is this kind of a darkness from which Tuami and his tribe flee but carry the darkness in their own insides. In his next novel Pincher Martin, Golding explores this darkness and the God who could have salvaged.

The novel Pincher Martin depicts the story of a castaway who clings to a rock in mid-Atlantic during the ~~s~~cond

World-War. Christopher Hadley Martin, a naval officer is blown off the bridge of a torpedoed destroyer into the water of the Atlantic. He is the lone survivor of that mishap and he manages to find a surface rock, "a single point of rock, peak of a mountain range, one tooth set in the ancient jaw of a sunken world." For long six days he struggles to survive on the bare rock ^aagainst the fury of nature till his dissolution at the end. All along in him there is a deep desire to eat and a fear of being eaten up. We get glimpses of his life by so many flashbacks. The novel reveals the nasty, brutish, short and solitary aspect of civilized life which in other words would be the primitive facade of civilized man.

It presents a survival adventure vividly and then declares its objective falsity. This device could be found in the symbolical tales of Poe and Kafka. The technical device of 'flashback' has been successfully used as in Ambrose Bierce's An Occurrence at Owl Creek and Ernest Hemingway's The Snows of Klimanijaro. Here in this novel the author presents the 'shape' of things in terms of images and image suggestions.

Before putting down Free Fall, he dramatized his novella Envoy Extraordinary for radio on an expanded version of which was published as The Brass Butterfly.

The next novel Free Fall talks about the cleavage between science and religion. Obviously, the fall refers to the Biblical fall from grace. It strikes a markedly different note from that of the earlier novels.

In accordance with Golding's views of fiction, the novelist should not describe current affairs because the contemporary life is only the visible expression of the basic human condition.

The novel The Spire is of high symbolic importance and exemplifies Golding's mythmaking method. Basically, the novel presents the conflict between faith and reason.

The above mentioned five novels may be considered as a group. They exhibit a wide range of experiments in the field of techniques but the purpose behind them all is to probe man's essential nature through the myth he invents and constructs.

This study of the theme of primitivism in William Golding's fiction will be concerned with the early novels of William Golding, but the focus will be on three major novels by him, i.e., Lord of the Flies, The Inheritors, and Pincher Martin. In so far as the theme of primitivism is concerned, the modern rendering of the concept, which is supported by the new Anthropological thoughts of Frazer, Levi Strauss, Edward Taylor, Cassirer and others, will be kept in view.

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11. Luigi Salerno, "Primitivism", Encyclopaedia of World Art,
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20. Ibid., p.1
21. Ibid., p.5
22. Ibid., p.7
23. William Golding, Lord of the Flies (London : Faber and Faber, 1954). p. 47
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CHAPTER - I I

THE SAVAGE MIND

We know very little of the appearance of the Neanderthal man, but this ... seems to suggest an extreme hairiness, an ugliness, or a repulsive strangeness in his appearance over and above his low forehead, his beetle brows, his ape neck, and his inferior stature. ... says Sir Harry Johnston, in a survey of the rise of modern man in his Views and Reviews : 'The dim racial remembrance of such gorilla-like monsters, with cunning brains, shambling gait, hairy bodies, strong teeth, and possibly cannibalistic tendencies, may be the germ of the ogre in folklore ...'

H.G.Wells.

The Outline of History.

The Savage Mind

I

Modern primitivism is markedly different from its earlier expressions like the myth of the golden age or the renaissance and eighteenth century concept of the noble savage. The difference consists in the mode and method of presentation and recreation of the primitive world-view. For that matter it looks into the details of the primitive thought process, and responses to life, time and world. It may not always be an overt presentation of the savage mind; it can also be a covert presentation of it. It is built into the warp and woof of the literary work in a very well-knit manner. When the primitivistic expressions are put in new perspectives and new contexts they escape detection unless one is very careful. In that sense, in modern primitivism the primitive material does not fall into a conventional pattern. This shift in sensibility is well-comprehended by Michael Bell as he comments, "The meaning and value of the primitivist urge is now itself the central issue and it is explored in such a way as to genuinely disturb civilized responses and assumptions in a way that is not typical of the established literary conventions."¹

Now it's more an inward search for the primitivist impulse, an exploration of the primitivist motifs and feeling

in man. From among the primitivistic modes of presentations two categories can be detected. One group of writers seeks to recreate the mentality and sensibility of primitive man as it were from inside, and another group makes use of the primitivist motifs more externally as an idea or metaphor.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to look into primitive sensibility in Golding's fiction.

Primitive sensibility refers to the most significant qualities of pre-civilised feeling and thought. It has not been possible for the anthropologists to capture the pristine modes of response and thought process entirely, still considerable attempts have been made to gather inferential information towards this. Here an attempt will be made to look into certain feelings, beliefs, thoughts, and modes of response that appear in works of literature and focus our attention on certain anthropological accounts of the primitive world-view.

Here our concern is with the primary mode of response to the external world and to human nature. In order for its presentation one need not ostensibly take help of the primitive objects and paraphernalia. The ancient mode of response to life may be evoked without even making a conscious attempt in that direction.

One basic mode of response in the primitive world view is that there remains no distinction between the inner world of feeling and the external order of existence. Earnest Cassirer encapsulates certain striking strands of twentieth century anthropological thought when he says; "... for the mythical imagination there is no separation of a total complex into instalments, but that only a singly undivided totality is represented — a totality in which there has been no 'dissociation' of the separate factors of objective perception and subjective feeling."²

One of the most striking manifestations of mythic consciousness is 'animism'. This concept is also known as 'mana'. In accordance with this concept, to the savage mind the external world is pervaded by spirits or powers. This kind of a belief has been rendered in modern terms as the projection of human desires and fears. In the primitive world, to the savage mind it appeared that the natural world in its different aspects like weather, animals, and vegetation manifested a will and a mentality similar to its own. This relationship of the primitive man with the external environment has been very well summed up in these words of Cassirer :

Here we have the mythico-religious proto-phenomenon which Usener has sought to fix with the term 'momentary god'. 'In absolute immediacy', he says, 'the individual phenomenon is deified,

without the intervention of even the most rudimentary class concept; that one thing which you see before you, that and nothing else is the god.' (p.280). To this day the life of primitive races shows us certain features in which this process is almost tangibly clear. We may recall examples of it which Spieth adduces : water found by a thirsty person, a termite mound that hides and saves someone, any new object that inspires a man with a sudden terror — all these are transformed directly into gods. Spieth summarises his observation with the words " 'To the mind of the Eve, the moment in which an object or any striking attributes of it enter into any noticeable relation, pleasant or unpleasant, with the life of man, that moment a Tro is born in his consciousness.' It is as though the isolated occurrence of an impression, its separation from the totality of ordinary, common place experience produced not only a tremendous intensification, but also the highest degree of condensation and as though by virtue of this condensation the objective form of the god were created so that it veritably burst forth from the experience.³

That being the world-view the primitive man should come to terms with the external environment and animistic powers by propitiating them by appealing to them. In different activities like felling a tree, killing animals and the like, their elaborate observances are found. That could well be brought within the purview of the term 'natural piety', that is observed out in honour of the spirits of nature, in awe, in terror and in respect.

The savage mind is in constant superstitious awe if the potencies of external nature and this kind of a response and recognition results in the acceptance of human life as part of

the world. And that's why it does not question the world-order.

For the execution of their beliefs and faith, elaborate rites and rituals are followed in different forms like sacrifice, ghost dance, incantations, worship and many other practices. Rites and rituals manifest the savage mind and its response at the same time, basically they remain as means of communication. They derive power out of that, they get control over certain natural phenomena. These are the salient features of the primitive world view.

In the works of authors, like D.H. Lawrence, Herman Melville such modes of feelings have been projected. In the works of Conrad, Golding and Joyce, we find many suggestive modes of feelings that are primitivistic in nature. The different literary contexts keep changing as much as life's mutations in time on earth.

I I

Basically Lord of the Flies (1954) is an adaptation of the situation in Ballantyne's The Coral Island but things have not been seen in a romantic perspective; they are viewed rather in a different perspective which refutes Ballantyne's thesis. Lord of the Flies tells the story of a group of adolescents who by chance find themselves on a solitary island

which is Edenic. The sound of the shell brings all the boys together and the conch becomes the symbol of harmony and order. They discover the different parts of the glorious island happily. But gradually things take an ugly turn that witnesses the savagery of the adolescents and the island itself is set on fire. The fire is sighted by a ~~wa~~ship and the boys are rescued at the end in a very ironic situation.

Ralph at a point raises the question, "... What's wrong ? ... what makes things break up like they do ?"⁴ That's what the novel explores — a buried facade of humanity. For that matter the novel has been worked out in a very skilful manner that results in the incorporation of many anthropological motifs and features. These features bring about the primitive sensibility resulting in the expressions of the savage mind.

War is always looked upon as an enduring primitive conflict : war for power, possession and the like. ... Lord of the Flies begins with an accident which occurs as a result of war. A group of boys fall down on a solitary island from an evacuation tube and the back-drop refers to a great war. This aggression and fight for power and possession could be traced in the midst of the novel, when boys fight among themselves. It proceeds to such an extent that the boys set the whole island on fire. The structure of the novel takes an ironic turn as the novel concludes. When the hunters have chased

Ralph out of the forest and he is running for his life, he falls down at the feet of a naval officer who has come to rescue them. Ironically enough at a distance a trim Cruiser is seen. Golding in this context comments: "The officer having interrupted a man-hunt prepares to take the children off the island in a Cruiser which will presently be hunting its enemy in the same implacable way. And who will rescue the adult and his Cruiser ?"⁵

The boys come from a civilised world that is busy at war, they turn savages and again they go back to a world that is involved in war. War is an enduring factor that persists.

The savage mind has always apprehended a power beyond the ken of its understanding. The whole earth and the different objects of nature are permeated by a mystic power and that power baffles the primitive. This finds its expression in the concept of 'mana' and 'animism'. The power remains but always eludes the comprehension of the primitive mind. In Lord of the Flies, the unknown and the overarching has been used profusely. Jack at a point feels, "being hunted: as if something is behind you all the time."⁶

Though the sensibility permeates the whole novel it finds bold mention and expression in these chapters : Beast from Water, Beast from Air, Shadows and Tall Trees; and Gift

for the Darkness. The kids are screaming in their dreams and they are afraid of an uncertain presence of 'the beastie or the snake thing.'⁷ They think that they should build huts on the beach for their protection. As Jack and Ralph discuss about it, Jack says, "... Just a feeling. But you can feel as if you're not hunting, but being hunted; as if something is behind you all the time in the jungle."⁸ Gradually the overarching thing seems to surround them, Percival says, when all of them are giving their opinions, that the "beast comes out of the sea".⁹

In the chapter 'Beast from Air' the twins are terrified by "the plopping noise of fabric blown open"¹⁰. They come to Ralph and wake him up saying, "we saw the beast —."¹¹ Their words are listened to carefully and "soon the darkness was full of claws, full of the awful unknown menace."¹² In the next chapter called 'Shadows and Tall Trees' at the close the explorers see "something like a great ape was sitting asleep with its head between its knees."¹³ They return in the confusion of the darkness. Thus, the boys feel surrounded by an unknown power that they fail to articulate that they fail to define.

In the primitive mind ritual has always remained "the most common means of communication with sacred forces and beings."¹⁴ The primitive people have held faith in direct

action rather than contemplation and reflective thought. The very practice or performance of a rite satisfied the urge of the primitive people, as if the very act was an achievement. That is why to propitiate the unknown and incomprehensible supernatural powers the primitive people have devised so many kinds of rites and rituals including the 'rites of passage'. Similarly in the novel Lord of the Flies, when the boys are baffled by the incomprehensible power they take naturally to ritualistic practices. The novel records the gradual degeneration and degradation of the boys. In the chapter 'Gift for the Darkness', the boys are divided into two groups, one that of Ralph and the other that of Jack. Jack is threatening and luring the boys away from Ralph's group, which is the common group. The boys in Jack's group are the hunters who go on hunting pigs. The hunters kill a sow and place the head of the sow on a stick and they leave that in the woods as an offering for the beast. Jack says loudly :

"This head is for the beast.
It's a gift."¹⁵

That's how they propitiate the dark, the unknown power through the ritualistic act of a sacrifice.

Anthropological findings have stressed the importance of mask, paint and other modes of disguise in any primitive community that hunts or goes to war. According to the primitive faith they confer dignity, terrify the victim or

the enemy and instil self confidence. Jack's band of hunters smear clay and charcoal on their faces, the mask that they assume gives them renewed courage and confidence to go for hunting and killing.

In the chapter 'Painted faces and Long hair' there is a detailed description of painting the face :

Jack planned his new face. He made one cheek and one socket white, then he rubbed red over the other half of his face and slashed a black bar of charcoal across from right ear to left jaw. He looked in the mere for his reflection, but his breathing troubled the mirror.¹⁶

This painting was just not a simple painting it altogether changed the mood and motive of Jack who had got his face painted. He is transformed he is another man — a savage. He to himself has become a stranger.

He looked in astonishment, no longer at himself but at an awesome stranger. He split the water and leapt to his face, laughing excitedly. Besides the mere his sinewy body held up a mask that drew their eyes and appalled them. He began to dance and his laughter became a blood thirsty snarling. He capered towards Bill, and the mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness.¹⁷

While chasing the pigs with painted faces and long hair, having sharpened sticks the hunters cry,

"Kill the pig. Cut her throat,
spill her Blood."¹⁸

"Kill the beast ! Cut his throat !
spill his blood."¹⁹

This becomes an incantatory chant repeated in chorus among the hunters at moments of high emotion. It is just like the primitive incantations made during the practice and performance of a rite. It seems as though the painted faces, long hair, the sharpened sticks, the chase, and the incantations present the boys as complete barbarians.

The pig killing frenzy gathers such sweeping power and momentum that the hunters kill 'Simon' in such a footing of pig hunting which apparently passes as the fact that they mistake Simon for a pig. It was a windy night and a storm was preparing to descend on the island, when the hunters are lost in a ceremonial celebration. At the height of their celebration Simon emerges from the woods and they all set upon him with sticks and hands while he cries about the dead man on the hill. No one listens, for whipped by their confusion of passion, blood-lust and terror of the beast, they tear Simon apart :

The littluns screamed and blundered about fleeing from the edge of the forest, and one of them broke the ring of biguns in his terror.

"Him !" "Him"

The circle became a horse shoe. A thing was crawling out of the forest. It come darkly, uncertianly. The sterile screaming that rose before the beast was like a pain. The beast stumbled into the horseshoe.

"Kill the beast ! Cut his throat ! Spill his blood !"

The blue-white scar was constant, the noise unendurable. Simon was crying out something about a dead man on a hill.

"Kill the beast ! Cut his throat ! Spill his blood ! Do him in !"

The sticks fell and the mouth of the new circle crunched and screamed. The beast was on its knees in the centre, its arms folded over its face. It was crying out against the abandonable noise something about a body on the hill. The beast struggled forward, broke the ring and fell over the steep edge of the rock to the sand by the water. At once the crowd after it, poured down the rock, leapt on to the beast, screamed, struck, bit, tore. There were no words and no movements but the tearing of teeth and claws.²⁰

This incident reminds one of the head-hunters of Borneo. The civilised boys behave like the primitives and the different aboriginal peoples. Leslie Spier speaks about the members of the leopard society in Western Africa, "who dressed in Leopard skins and thought themselves transformed into beasts, killed their victims for ceremonial eating."²¹ In the last chapter entitled 'Cry of the Hunters', this cannibalistic motif reaches its climax as the hunters with their savage ululation follow Ralph to kill him. Finally, the hunters have set the whole island on fire and smoked Ralph out of the jungle. They pursue him on the beach and he runs for life. But suddenly things take a different turn as, "A naval officer stood on the sand, looking down at Ralph in wary astonishment. On the beach behind him was a cutter, her bows hauled up and

held by two ratings. In the stern sheets another rating held a sub-machine gun.

The ululation faltered and died away."²²

III

The Inheritors is a fiction about an episode in the prehistory of man. The novel has got a setting remote from our own time and life. In these distant situations Golding investigates man's struggle for survival, the struggle being with his fellow men, with his physical environment and with himself. It is the story of the appearance of Cro-Magnon man and the extermination of the Neanderthals by them. H.G.Wells in his 'Out-line of History' describes Neanderthal man as a 'possibly canibalistic, gorilla like monster.' But Golding, "takes our accepted belief in man's evolutionary progress and turns it upside down."²³

It's an imaginative recreation of a distant time. For that matter Golding, unlike in his other novels, in this novel brings to life a phase from prehistory with details of different characters, representing the Neanderthal man and the new-people, the Cro-Magnon man. It earns a sense of completeness in the vivid presentation of the different actions, reactions and responses of the primitive people as might have been in that ancient past.

Apart from many other factors that contribute towards the making of the primitive mind, particular features like animism, rites of passage and cannibalism have been accentuated in the different contexts of the text.

The oneness and harmony of the Neanderthals with nature has been suggested through a number of animistic imagery. In Chapter-I, there is a description about the trunk of a tree: "It was the trunk of a birch, no thicker than a man's thigh, a trunk that was half-sunken in the mud and water."²⁴ In this sentence the associative image of a man's thigh relates the world of the Neanderthal people and the world landscape and nature. In the next Chapter there is the description of a sequence of hill climbing, and the passage gives brilliant examples of a world that the primitive believed to be imbued with a mystic power, behaving just like the primitive people. "The cliff leaned out as if looking for its own feet in the water. The weed-tails were very long, longer than many men, and they moved backwards, forwards beneath the climbing people as regularly as the beat of heart or the breaking of the sea."²⁵ The leaning out of the cliff, the movement of the weed-tails being compared with the heart-beat and the comparison of the weed-tails with the length and breadth and size of a man, all these images boldly mention the primitive tenor of thought. It conceives of a world that is permeated with a power and that is alive.

It's after a sun-set, the old woman is making a fire at the close of the first chapter. When she breathes into it and smoke and spark rise, she feels that the fire is waking up again as though it was asleep like a living being. A natural tendency for the primitive is to perceive no cleavage between animate and inanimate. Golding writes in this context :

She came again from the recesses and put on more wood so that the fire gave them a brilliant display of flame and sparks. She began to work the wet clay with her fingers, tidying the edges so that now the fire sat in the middle of shallow dish. There she stood up and spoke to them

"The fire is awake again."²⁶

In Chapter Twelve, as at many points of the novel the incomprehensible power has been brought into purview. Lok and Fa visit the camp of the Homo-sapiens. They have been terrorized and in a rush of them are killed in the stream. Tanakil loses her sanity while Tuami has a disturbing experience :

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. It seedmed as though the portage of the boats or boat rather, now she was gone — from that forest to the top of the fall had taken them onto a new level not only of land but of experience and emotion. The world with the boat moving so slowly at the centre was dark amid the light was untidy, hopeless, dirty.²⁷

Tuami has completely been disturbed by the fresh happenings and in such a mood he questions pertinently enough, "In this upland country, safe from pursuit by the tribe but shut off from men by the devil haunted mountain, what sacrifice would they be forced to perform to a world of confusion ? ... Who could sharpen a point against the darkness of the world ?"²⁸

At the close of the novel Tuami is looking "at the line of darkness"²⁹. Tuami is never sure "if the line of darkness had an ending."³⁰ They are looking at their environment with suspicion and fear. In Chapter-IV, through Lok's perception we get a glimpse of that incomprehensible and inarticulate power and presence. An awareness remains all the same, but it is not to be defined by the primitive mind :

He stood, shivering slightly at the loveliness of the water and looking at the nearer rock. A picture began to form in his head of the leap that had cleared this gap to land the other on the rock, and then, leap by leap over the deadly water to the dark island.³¹

Particularly, the image of the 'deadly water' and the 'dark island' point at the incomprehensible which has been felt all the same.

The rituals that accompany the transition from one life position to another are known to anthropologists as 'rites of passage'. The different changes in life status that come under

the category are birth of a child, marriage, death and burial. The rites give recognition to the newly attained status and seek religious sanction for it. The primitives accepted the naturalness of death. Leslie Spier states, "The care and ritual bestowed on the corpse were at once an outlet for grief and a precaution against evil consequences from the ghost or a means of acquiring the good will of this deceased member of the family."⁸²

At the close of Chapter-IV there is the scene of Mal, the old leader's burial. When Mal is going away for good, at that time the reaction of the other characters might be observed in their activities which we can term as "rites of passage." To the primitive mind death is not the end, rather it is a passage from one state to another, and in that they accept and acknowledge the naturalness of death. The old woman in the novel The Inheritors whispers in the ears of Mal, "Oa is warm, sleep".³³ To her it appears as a matter of sleep which conveys the idea that Mal would wake up to another state. Certainly, for him this is not the end. After the body of Mal has been lowered into the grave, the old woman brings one of the haunches of meat: "She knelt and put it in the whole by his face. Eat, Mal when you are hungry."³⁴

They go to the river and bring water to pour on the face of Mal. As they pour water they say : "Drink when you are

thirsty."³⁵ Then the old woman casts handfuls of earth and the others do the same. And thus Mal is buried. Finally, when everything is completed and the earth is again plain the old woman says, "Oa has taken Mal into her belly." So in the belief and faith of the primitives, Mal has been gathered into another state of being, passed on to another order of existence. To them it is a passage from here to another place. They accept it very coolly with a primitive understanding of the situation.

One might very well question, 'Who is Oa?' Oa to the primitives is certainly a supernatural power, and one can imagine Oa as the earth goddess. Death is not going to the burial tomb, rather it means going to Oa's womb, in other words, to the mother's womb.

IV

In an unpublished BBC talk, entitled 'Our way of life' Golding says, "... the sea appeals to the English on at least two levels. It attracts the adventurous practical men who make a career out of it until the sea becomes known and ordinary. But it also attracts the other pole of our character, the visionaries, the rebels, the misfits who are seldom conscious of their own nature. It is these ... who have a grudge or an ideal."³⁶ And it is this 'nature' of man that he explores in

the novel Pincher Martin. He explores contemporary man's consciousness and the condition of his being. The story of the novel has been enacted on the sea, in mid-Atlantic. This novel, like the Lord of the Flies, has also been cast against the back drop of war. It's the story of a castaway clinging to a rock at sea during the second World-War. He has been put in an extreme situation where the man within has been revealed or bared to the bones. The novel has been so designed that apart from a small chunk at the beginning Pincher Martin is dead throughout.

The novel does not deal much with actions, rather it deals with the consciousness of a man in an extreme situation. As the novel proceeds the complexity also grows and assumes poetic dimensions always eluding, not to be captured. When Pincher Martin was published in America it was entitled 'The Two Deaths of Christopher Martin', a title that emphasizes Martin's physical death in Chapter-I and the death of his ego or consciousness later towards the close of the narrative. As he struggles, in a moment a whole host of pictures from his past life flash across his mind.

We encounter him struggling against the violent waves and he is dashed against a barren rock: "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."³⁷

Against all odds at sea, fighting out the violent salty waves, he pulls his body into a rocky trench :

The man was inside two crevices. There was first the rock, closed and not warm but at least not cold with coldness of sea or air ... his body was a second and interior crevice, which he inhabited. Under each knee, then, there was a little fire ... But the man was intelligent. He endured these fires although they gave not heat but pain.³⁸

It would not be very far-fetched to say that this passage carries suggestions of cave-life of the ancient man, though the use and the level of suggestion is largely metaphorical. On the other hand as he raises a pillar of rock and calls it 'Dwarf', the very act might suggest the creation of a demi-god.

Another thing that is very strikingly dominant and which demands attention is his fear of being eaten and his own greed for eating. As we observe him, we find that he eats everything he can lay his hands on. He was, "born with his mouth and his flaps open and both hands out to grab."³⁹

At many points this realization dawns on him. Let us take for example his cutting 'sea-weed' for an SOS signal. He tries to comprehend his location : "He looked solemnly at the line of rocks and found himself thinking of them as teeth ... 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 ... if lifetime of the world had blunted them, was reducing them as they ground what food rocks eat."⁴⁰ On many points persistent pictures of eating flash across his mind in the images. He has got the terrible knowledge that, 'to lie on a row of teeth in the middle of the sea is to be dead.

As in the other two works, namely Lord of the Flies and The Inheritors, in Pincher Martin also the different elements of primitive sensibility have been fitted into the structure of the novel. In Lord of the Flies, we observe a number of elements have been worked out not very successfully. In The Inheritors, the very theme and the recreation of the prehistoric time become additional factors that contribute towards the profuse use of the various elements of primitive sensibility that build up a primitive world-view manifesting itself through the actions and reactions of the savage mind. The case of Pincher Martin is a bit different in the sense that it is not very pronounced in its deployment of the elements reflecting the primitive sensibility; to some extent they are muted and they don't make use of many elements. For that matter one will have to be very keen detect the camouflaged bits and pieces of primitive sensibility contributing towards the making of the savage mind.

Primitive sensibility has been built up not by an almost equal use of the different elements, but by its use in

different proportions in different novels. This comment refers to the three novels considered here. If it is considered in this light then Pincher Martin shows the least use of these elements, but the elements which are deployed make a seminal contribution towards the making of the world-view within the context of the novel.

In Pincher Martin a profound and profuse use has been made of animism, animatism, savage beliefs like the fear of the unknown, the fear of being eaten, and the eating habit. That apart as in Lord of the Flies so also in Pincher Martin the novel is cast against the back-drop of a great war that has got a bearing on the primitive mental make-up.

At the outset of the novel the ship on which Pincher Martin is boarding is torpedoed and he is blown off board and falls on the sea. He struggles for survival, strives to live in the face of a menacing ocean, and the record of what follows this incident makes up later section of the novel.

Perhaps with a great foresight Jawaharlal Nehru said, "In times of war, the civilizing process stops and we go back to the barbarous phase of the human mind" ⁴¹ In so speaking he visualises the primitive that refers to the enduring primitive conflict within a circular framework of history. The world has witnessed many battles and two great wars and the primitive

conflict still remains in the blood, bones and consciousness of man, and might spring up at any time.

Poor Pincher Martin is a victim of that conflict. That is what one thinks at a surface level, but we should not lose sight of the fact that he on his part also was a participant in the war. This kind of belligerent tendency is observed among the primitive tribes, even upto date among the surviving groups of primitives. Cannibalism is still practised among many aboriginals of Borneo. One contemplates and asks about the so called civilised modern man : Is he any different from the primitive ? Does the primitive still lurk within him ?

Though there is a lot of cross-firing among the anthropologists on the idea of 'animism', still at some point or the other they come to terms with the view of Edward Tylor that man has got a separable human soul apart from the body. To the primitive mind the shadow of a man, the sleeping and dreaming state of a man were the different expressions of it. They believed that everybody has got a phantom of his own. Anthropologist R.R.Marett aptly states, "For the belief in spiritual beings comprises firstly souls of individual creatures, capable of continued existence after the death or destruction of the body."⁴² In the same connection E.B.Tylor states :

"It seems as though thinking men, as yet at a low level of culture were deeply impressed by

two groups of biological problems. In the first place, what is it that makes the difference between a living body and dead one; what causes waking, sleep, trance, disease, death? In the second place, what are these human shapes which appear in dreams and visions?"⁴³

In the ideographic structure of ~~the~~ Pincher Martin the design of theme and plot is very different. After his fall from the ship Pincher Martin has struggled to survive, he has tried ^{to} inflate the life-belt, he has tried to kick off his boots but he ^{has} failed. In the final chapter only it is revealed that Pincher Martin has been dead since the fifth paragraph. The whole novel is the story of the dead man but the author drives the consciousness of dead Pincher Martin in such a way that one feels that Pincher Martin has never been dead. His body is dead, he has already come to the situation of physical death, what remains is his consciousness, his soul that continues to live, — his phantom. It is that surviving thing which enacts the fight of the man isolated on a rock amidst the great Atlantic Ocean. A whole array of his failures, achievements, corruptions, greed, and temptations have been depicted in flashes of pictures and memories. His present acts on the rocks and his past acts all get fused in a moment that looks forward to a future, that's a void. He is dead: 'The hard lumps of water no longer hurt. There was a kind of truce, observaton of the body. There was no face but there was a snarl."⁴⁴ That's how the description goes in the

beginning. But the physical death is left aside in a very shrewed manner, next to that follows the story of Pincher Martin the dead Pincher Martin, it is the story of his consciousness, something of Pincher Martin that survives even after his death. Can we call it his spirit, soul or phantom? It would agree with the anthropological view of the primitive sensibility. At the end of the novel we find Davidson and Campbell talking about the death of Pincher Martin:

"If you are worried about Martin — whether he suffered or not —" They paused for a while. Beyond the drifter they seem sank like a burning ship, went down, left nothing for a reminder but clouds like smoke."

Mr. Campbell sighed.

"Aye", he said. "I meant just that".

"Then don't worry about him. You saw the body. He didn't even have time to kick off his seaboots."⁴⁵

This is where the truth about Pincher Martin's death is revealed. Technically, it's a very successful attempt in the sense that it examines the man and the world around not through the eyes of a living character but through the eyes of a man who is dead but whose consciousness survives and acts and reacts like the living man. This corresponds to the primitive belief in the soul or spirit which survives even after the death of a man.

The consciousness of Pincher Martin and its different expressions become representative of man, and the depiction becomes a commentary on the different facades of man.

There was no cleavage between the animate and the inanimate in the primitive mind. The primitives believe that even the inanimate things were imbued with a mystic power and they also had feelings, emotions and will of their own. This kind of a belief corresponds to the belief in an animated world with which the primitives had to live in harmony.

Though Pincher Martin portrays a different world altogether with its sophisticated structural designing, it incorporates this feature called animatism. It makes a widespread use of this feature. Pincher Martin has been put in a very extreme situation, a solitary man on a solitary rock amidst the Atlantic ocean fighting for life. That is a situation which denudes a man to his bare bones. Golding says that when a stone is removed many insects are seen scurrying about. Here the hiding rock is removed and what remains is bare realities. In that dire situation he is the only lonely man alive — may be at the level of consciousness — and struggling. The menacing waves of the ocean, the rock, the sea-weed all these things surround him, and like a primitive man, he in his consciousness animates the whole environment. He feels that the rocks, the waves, the pebbles are alive and animated. They have got the power of life and the activity of the living. He is terrified and chilled to his bones.

In Chapter-II when we find the projection of a pebble beach, there Pincher Martin is seen in a number of confusions of his own. He is scared and asks "where the hell am I."⁴⁶ The next narration that locates him gives a brilliant hint of animatism. It considers the rock that he clings to as a tooth, "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 — and how many miles from dry land? An evil perversion, not the convulsive panic of his first struggles in the water, but a deep and generalised terror set him clawing at the rock with his blunt fingers. He even got half-up and leaned or crouched against the weed and the lumps of jelly."⁴⁷ Pincher Martin feels helpless in the jaws of the overarching; for him there is no chance of survival as though he is going to be eaten by the unknown power that surrounds him. In the same chapter the description comes alive with a passage like this: "The foam sank away and the pebbles chattered like teeth. He watched wave after wave as bursts of foam swallowed more and more of the pebbles and left fewer visible when they went back."⁴⁸ This idea of his being eaten up by the unknown and overarching power as he finds himself in the ancient mouth of the world keeps recurring throughout the novel. In Chapter-V, 'he looked solemnly at the line of rocks and found himself thinking of them as teeth'.⁴⁹ And the description goes: 'A life time of

the world had blunted them, was reducing them as they ground what food rocks eat."⁵⁰

At many points Pincher is thinking about eating, now and then in different points of association the idea of eating comes up. Sometimes talking about the Chinese dish and the maggots, sometimes talking about the producer's wife, the range extending from eating a man or a woman to a Chinese dish the narrative passage succinctly captures the elemental instinct of eating with wide ranging resonances :

The flaps of his sou'wester prevented him from heaving the flatness of his voice against the sky. He lay and mediated the sluggishness of his bowels. This created pictures of chrome and porcelain and attendant circumstances. He put the toothbrush back, and stood looking at his face in the mirror. The whole business of eating was peculiarly significant. They made a ritual of it on every level, the fascists as a punishment, the religious as a rite, the cannibal either as a ritual or as a medicine or as superbly direct declaration to conquest. Killed and eaten. And of course eating with the mouth was only the gross expression of what was a universal process. You could eat with your cock or with your fists, or with your voice. You could eat with hob-nailed boots or buying and setting or marrying and begetting or cuckolding — .⁵¹

In Chapter-VI, we see solitary Pincher in a very serio-comic situation, when he finds himself accosted by an unknown presence. He is baffled and in that situation a fear of the presence of the unknown springs up, a power and a presence not comprehensible to the primitive mind but well

apprehensible however. It is raining and the narrative goes :

Then he was jumping and shuddering for there was someone else in the hole with him. or there was a voice that spoke almost with his, from the water and slab. As his heart eased he could think coherently of the sound as a rare and forgotten thing, a resonance, an echo. Then immediately he could reason that his voice was full-sized in here so he quietened his body and spoke deliberately.

"Plenty of identity in here, Ladies and Gentlemen —."

He cut his voice off sharply and heard the rock say.

" — men — "

" It will rain "

" ain "

"How are you ?"

" — u ? "52

The unknown identity comes to settle on the speaking rock where the unknown incomprehensible, animate, inanimate all merge together.

In Chapter-III, we find Pincher struggling on the rock, and during that time of struggle and striving when 'an hour on the rock is a lifetime'⁵³, we find him likened to a 'catterpillar trying to reach a new leaf',⁵⁴ a wriggling "snake that cannot cast its skin"⁵⁵, "a lobster backing into a deep crevice under water."⁵⁶ This set of charged animal imagery builds up the primitive atmosphere, indicating life at an elemental level. That apart, in Chapter-IV, Golding in a very straight-forward manner recreates the primitive atmosphere by bringing into the structure of his novel images of now-extinct primitive creatures. When Pincher Martin is

clinging to the rock a flight of clamorous gulls come almost beating their feathers on the face of Pincher Martin. As they hover around him at that moment, Golding metamorphoses them :

"They were flying reptiles. An ancient antipathy for things ^{or} ^{with} which claws set him shuddering at them and thinking into their smooth outlines all the strangeness of bats and vampires."⁵⁷

The almost poetic use of animal imagery coupled with the picturesque description of animals of primitive times, immensely contributes towards the evocation and recreation of the primitive sensibility within the framework of the novel.

IV

In all the three novels it is markedly evident that several anthropological motifs have been worked into the structures of the texts. Features like animism, animatism, fear of the unknown, cannibalism etc. exhibit the different tendencies of the primitive mind. That is a time remote from us, when the primitives lived and walked the earth. But the disappearance of the people did not spell the dissolution of the primitive response to life, time and the world. As human history continued many modes of perception underwent modifications, but it is not the pastness of the past that matters, rather the presentness of the past. We, the civilised men, are the inheritors of that past, who have changed and have not changed at the same time.

In Golding's fiction these elements have been woven into the structure of the novels in a very competent and skilful manner. In the novel The Inheritors, the whole design with the details of the rites of passage, is quite in keeping with the time and tone of the novel. This novel recreates an episode in the prehistory of mankind on an imaginative scale. On the other hand in Pincher Martin and Lord of the Flies the primitivist material has been used not very boldly but in an implicit and muted manner. One finds the primitivist material in a modern context, in a modern setting in these two novels, but they are not very hard to detect.

One very striking issue of primitivism in literature is its use or applicaiton of the various primitive modes of response and perception, which in other words we term as primitive sensibility. And in these novels of William Golding, we discover its profuse deployment that characterizes primitivism in his novels.

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CHAPTER - I I I

A CONTRIVED ENCOUNTER

When I make my black pictures, when I inspect chaos, I must remember that such ... places are as real as Belsen. They, too, exist, they are part of this enigma, this living. They are brickwalls like any others ... But remembered, they shine.

— Golding, Free Fall.

A Contrived Encounter

In the earlier chapter we have observed the different elements of primitivism built into the structures of the novels under discussion. In this chapter an attempt will be made to look into the use of primitive material in two different ways, first the conscious and purposeful use of primitive motifs, and second the inward recreation of ancient modes of feeling. Of these two ways, the conscious use of primitive material in literature is more common and is symbolic in nature. It is very skilfully worked into the warp and woof of the novels and that is how it seeks to create the primitive mode of response and feeling. In other words it tries to create the primitive world-view seen under moral or psychological light.

So, in the designing of a novel the whole process becomes very self-conscious. Anyway the spontaneous recreation of primitive sensibility and the purposeful use of primitive motifs are not incompatible. However, the fact remains that an inward recreation of the primitive sensibility enjoys a different imaginative and creative status which is altogether modified when it comes to a deliberate making of it by the use of conscious reference to primitive motifs that are symbolic in nature. This is not meant as a value judgement; considering both the modes of presentation, rather, it is the

recognition and understanding of the difference that remains between the two. Conscious use of primitive motifs and material and spontaneous recreation of it make correspondingly two different worlds and world-views.

A prolific writer D.H.Lawrence has made use of both the conscious and spontaneous modes of presentation of primitivism in his novels. In his writings The Rainbow manifests brilliant examples of spontaneous and inward recreation of primitivism, whereas The Plumed Serpent exhibits wide-spread designing of conscious primitivism. In the different contexts of The Rainbow primitivism works in splendid camouflage which could only be detected by a very discerning eye, though it does have a tremendous and successful impact in creating the desired world-view. The Plumed Serpent on the other hand presents a markedly different mode of making as it vividly picks up a host of primitive motifs pertinent to the Mexican context. It drives one to think that whatever D.H.Lawrence could accomplish in his earlier novels with spontaneity, he did it in a later novel like The Plumed Serpent on purpose with full overt details of it. Is it his desperate quest for the earlier natural mythic sensibility ?

In case of conscious primitivism the whole use of the different elements and motifs in relation to primitive sensibility becomes an external assertion of it. So at many

points a gap between the overtly asserted belief and faith, and the real presentation of natural life feelings persists and makes evident this weakness of the primitivist endeavour. It might be an artistic failure also.

When ancient modes of feelings are imposed on different contexts of life and time they lack in conviction. In spite of all that the mode of conscious assertion has become the basic mode of choice rather than the inbuilt recreation of it.

It is an acknowledged fact that the sense of the primitive and attitude towards the primitive differ from author to author and so does the use of the modes of response.

II

Golding, D.H.Lawrence, Conrad and several other authors offer in their works different expressions of primitivism. They have their own individual modes of presentation. Time, place, person, and framework play an important role in the modification of their works. (Therefore,) broadly one can say that for all their differences they are spun from the same yarn at a fundamental level.

A multitude of meanings could be read into the skillfully designed patterns of the Golding texts, but as we are discussing the primitivistic tendencies in the writings of Golding, the present consideration takes precedence over the

conflict and other problems enshrined in the heart of the novels.

The plots of the novels carry us into the darker zones and remoter regions which correspond to states of mind and conditions of man. These voyages and trips are into the buried self of man. In other words, they are explorations and discoveries made in the heartland of man. But in most of the novels as in Golding's novel the self conscious assertion could be marked along with the concomitant patterning of the novels at a thematic level as well as at a structural level.

Somewhat like Conrad, Golding also explores the moral issues in his novels which he considers as fables. In so doing he makes use of the primitive elements which have been built into the structures of the novels, and through these elements he expresses his intended views and vision. But basically the works remain as fables and the other elements remain subservient to that.

How conscious is the planning and designing of his texts could be clear from the fact that they are 'fables'. Rightly enough H.J.Blackham states, 'A fable is a story invented to tell the truth, not a true story. A common definition used to be : a short-story in which the action is natural and the agents imaginary.¹ So in order to hammer out 'the truth' in his novels, William Golding has fashioned fables like

Lord of the Flies, The Inheritors, Pincher Martin and the other novels. Michael Bell, commenting on Golding's novels says, The Inheritors, and Lord of the Flies are fables making essentially symbolic use of their primitivist material."²

So from the very beginning of the novel there is a conscious design at work. This view could very well be supported by the fact that a novel like Lord of the Flies is not another novel in the line of Defoe's 'Robinson Crusoe' or Ballantyne's The Coral Island. This particular novel Lord of the Flies takes Ballantyne's The Coral Island as a point of departure. He takes cues from the novel but he completely transforms the characters, description, and the world-view. With a conscious bent of mind he works on the characters who people the world of his views and vision.

In Lord of the Flies Golding discovers and develops the primitive in a very dramatic manner which gives the semblance of an inward recreation of the primitive modes of response. But in the length and breadth of the novel his full anthropological concern in the making of the texts is obvious. He holds upto suspicion the civilised order and seeks to locate the unrecognised emotions of the savage lurking within.

In Chapter-IV, entitled 'Painted Faces and Long Hair' we mark the gradual degradation of the boys. Signs of conflict

and corruption have already been presented and to emphasize that all in an externalized expression Golding has imposed on them images of the primitives. The boys are engaged in chasing and killing pigs. Well, for their survival they could have killed a few necessary ones, but it has for them become a sport. They have become blood-thirsty hunters of primitive times. In order for the materialisation of their desired ends, Golding makes the boys paint themselves as savages. They have now long hairs and painted faces that help them hunt. They never resent it, they like it, and get lost in it.

As Jack is painting his face with coloured clay and charcoal the full details come out like this: "Jack planned his new face. He made one cheek and one eye-socket white, then he rubbed red over the other half of his face and slashed a black bar of charcoal across from right ear to left jaw."³ After being painted Jack looks in the mirror for his reflection and his own transformed image drives him crazy. His expressions become wild and he is no more Jack, he is somebody else — a primitive. The conscious making of the character and the concomitant impact become obvious when the authorial voice explains the situation in the following words:

He began to dance and his laughter became a bloodthirsty snarling. He capered towards Bill, and the mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness.⁴

As the hunters chase the pigs to kill them, they rush around to capture the animal and at the same time in an emotional frenzy they repeat a celebratory, chant, "kill the pig, cut her throat, spill her blood."⁵ That kind of a practice still persists among the aboriginal people and many other surviving primitive peoples.

Apart from the full picturisation of the primitive people and their designs and strategies, an eye for the full anthropological details can be observed in an expression like the following one :

"I cut the pig's throat", said Jack proudly, and yet twitched as he said it.
"Can I borrow yours, Ralph, to make a nick in the hilt?"⁶

Here particularly the phrase 'a nick in the hilt' is remarkable. In so speaking Jack intends to cut a notch in the handle of his knife. This is a primitive way of recording the number of one's killings which has been well-attested in anthropology.

In the chapters entitled, 'Beast from Water' 'Beast from Air', 'Shadows and Tall Trees' Golding seeks to fashion the primitive concept of 'animism' within the framework of the given texts. Lord of the Flies provides a modern context, but Golding seeks to create a context within a context. Within the modern context of the plot Golding develops the primitive. The littluns have sighted something in the air, they have

marked a 'twisty thing' in the jungle, they suspect a presence that threatens them from the surrounding sea. Golding keeps harping on a presence — a menacing, overarching presence. They have not been able to articulate it, they are baffled by it. How inarticulate the comprehension could be and how articulate Golding's fashioning of the situation could be, we see in the following passage :

I mean when Jack says you can be frightened because people are frightened anyway that's all right. But when he says there is only pigs on this island I expect he's right but he doesn't know, not really, not certainly I mean". — Maurice took a breath — "My daddy says there's things, what d'you call'em that make ink — squids — that are hundreds of yards long and eat whales whole." He paused again and laughed gaily. " I don't believe in the beast of course. As Piggy says, life's scientific but don't know, do we ? Not certainly, I mean —".⁷

The chapter 'Castle Rock' is the most striking expression of conscious primitivism. As in the earlier part of the text and plot we have observed the conscious use of primitivist material, so also here, but certainly in a bolder and louder manner. It unfolds before us a climaxing situation of the tensions built up in the earlier sections of the novel. In this chapter Jack has stolen away Piggy's specs due to the lack of which Piggy and Ralph cannot make a fire. That's why they go to Jack, and plead and claim the specs. When Piggy shouts for reason and justice he is murdered and at the point of death Ralph escapes. It happens near the place called

'Castle Rock'. The 'Castle Rock' is located at a cavelike place among the rocks. This shows symbolically the regression of the boys from civilised status to that of the caveman.

Apart from the conscious organisation of the primitivistic material and responses at several points, direct assertions are found that qualify the primitivistic responses and reactions of the characters involved. The hunters have been characterised as savages. This is an external assertion of the primitive motifs rather than a spontaneous expression worked from within the characters and contexts. The following lines constitute bold statements of 'conscious primitivism' in this fiction :

With ludicrous care he embraced the rock, pressing himself to it above the sucking sea. The sniggering of the savages became a loud derisive jeer.⁸

The tribe of painted savages giggled and Ralph's mind faltered. He pushed his hair up and gazed at the green and black mask before him, trying to remember what Jack looked like.⁹

An example from The Rainbow by D.H. Lawrence may be helpful in bringing about an understanding of the inward recreation of the ancient modes of reponse. There are many characters whose emotional projection at a surface level appears to be commonplace, but a careful look at the situation offers a distinctly ritualistic feel. In The Rainbow before going to propose to Lydia Lensky, Tom Brangwan is making

preparations. And his activities and series of responses present a case in point. At a surface level they appear very simple and commonplace but a discerning eye can easily detect the spirit of the episode. A long quotation becomes necessary in order to capture the feel of it :

One evening in March, when the wind was roaring outside, came the moment to ask her. He had sat with his hands before him, leaning to the fire. And as he watched the fire, he knew almost without thinking that he was going this evening. "Have you got a clean shirt?" he asked Tilly. "You know you have got clean shirts", she said. 'Ay - bring me a white one.'

Tilly brought down one of the linen shirts he had inherited from his father, putting it before him to air at the fire. She loved him with a dumb, aching love as he sat leaning with his arms on his knees, still and absorbed, unaware of her. Lately a quivering inclination to cry had come over her, when she did anything for him in his presence. Now her hands trembled as she spread the shirt. He was never shouting and teasing now. The deep stillness there was in the house made her tremble.

He went to wish himself. Queer little breaks of consciousness seemed to rise and burst like bubbles out of the depths of his stillness. 'It's got to be done', so why balk it? And he combed his hair before the mirror on the wall, he retorted to himself, superficially :

'The Klomon's not speechless dumb, she's not cluttering at the nipple. She's got the right to please herself, and diplease whosoever she likes'.

This streak of common sense carried him a little further.

'Did you want anything?' asked Tilly, suddenly appearing, having heard him speak, she stood watching him comb his fair beard. His eyes were calm and uninterrupted.

"Ay", he said. "Where have you put the scissors?" She brought them to him, and stood watching as, chin forward, he trimmed his beard. 'Don't go on' crop yourself as if you was at a shearing contest, she said anxiously. He blew the fine curled hair quickly off his lips.

He put on all his clean clothes, folded his tuck carefully and donned his best coat. Then, being ready as grey twilight was falling, he went across the orchard to gather the daffodils.¹⁰

In this passage Tom Brangwan's activities take after the rites and rituals of primitive people with the help of which they modulate and induce developments in an individual's life. There has been a psychological development in Tom and the different activities that he undertakes are external manifestation of the inner feelings. It is to be noted here that the external events and incidents don't assert a pattern on the character, rather they ooze out of the character naturally where lies the successful inward recreation of the ancient responses.

In Golding the whole design and the structural elements come together in constructing his novels, not in a very spontaneous natural manner, they rather come on purpose, — that is to drive home the philosophical considerations, and ✓ issues concerning good and evil. The Inheritors is a brilliant case in point. Like the other novel Lord of the Flies, this novel too purposefully takes H.G.Wells' Outline of History as a point of departure.

Golding works on certain ideas that he does not agree with in Well's Outline of History. In terms of his own train of thought he seeks to recreate an episode in the pre-history of man. That being the case, he works out a fable of his kind and creates the Neanderthal people and the new-people through whom he drives home his views. The primitive motifs have ostensibly been set within the sense and sensibility of the primitive characters in The Inheritors. The plot line of the novel traces the repression of the Neanderthals by the new people who possess a more developed physique and are sophisticated. To the Neanderthal people of The Inheritors the natural physical world of tree, mountain, river and rock is the prime reality; when forces alien to their world intrude, Golding begins their story. The inheritors are slightly more advanced than the Neanderthals. However, both the peoples are from pre-historic times.

The imaginative recreation of a prehistoric time, has claimed anthropological details at the level of presentation. The different elements of primitive sensibility have been broadly considered in the second chapter. Here, however it needs to be mentioned though to some extent it is in the nature of a repetition. The world inhabited by the primitives is essentially animistic in nature. Flaming fire is 'alive', and running water is 'awake'. The earth goddess 'Oa' manifests herself in the expressions of spring.

In The Inheritors William Golding provides a situation very skilfully designed where cosmic piety, rites, rituals, belief, faith all merge together — that is the scene of Mal's burial. With a stroke of dexterity Golding brings to life a lost episode in the history of mankind :

'Oa is warm sleep.'

The movements of his body become spasmodic. His head rolled sideways on the old woman's breast and stayed there.

Nil began to keen. The sound filled the overhang, pulsed out across the water towards the island. The old woman lowered Mal on his side and folded his knees to his chest. She and Fa lifted him and lowered him into the hole. The old woman put his hands under his face and saw that his limbs lay low. She stood up and they saw no expression in her face. She went to a shelf of rock and chose one of the haunches of meat. She knelt and put it in the hole by his face.

'Eat Mal when you are hungry'.

She bade them follow her with her eyes. They went down to the river leaving Liku with the little 'Oa'. The old woman took handfuls of water and dipped their hands too. She came back and poured the water over Mal's face.

'Drink Mal when you are thirsty.'

One by one the people trickled water over the grey, dead face. Each repeated the words. Lok was last, and as the water fell he was filled with a great feeling for Mal. He went back and got a second gift.

'Drink Mal When you are thirsty'.

The old woman took handfuls of earth and cast them on his head. Last of the people came Liku timidly and did as the others bid her.

Then she went back to the rock. At a sign from the old woman, Lok began to sweep the pyramid of earth into the hole. It fell with a soft swishing sound and soon Mal was blurred out of shape. Lok pressed the earth down with his hands and feet. The old woman watched the shape alter and disappear expressionlessly. The earth rose and filled the hole, rose still until where Mal had been was a little mound in the overhang. There was still some left. Lok swept it away from the mound and then trampled the mound down as firmly as he could.

The old woman squatted down by the friendly stamped earth and waited till they were all looking at her.

She spoke : "Oa has taken Mal into her body."¹¹

As we observe the above passage the narrative shows how much of care has gone into the making of the primitive world in terms of an anthropological scheme. Even then it fails to offer an inward recreation of the primitive that we find in Lawrence.

A less successful work by Lawrence is The Plumed Serpent which invites comparison with works of conscious primitivism. Unlike The Rainbow this novel has been shaped and designed in a very conscious and purposeful manner as far as the primitive material is concerned. While describing pagan religious feeling in relation to animistic sense and sensibility, Lawrence makes Ramon say :

The earth is alive, But he is very big, and we are very small, smaller than dust. But he is very big in his life, and sometimes he is angry. These people, smaller than dust, he says, they stamp on me and say I am dead. Even to their asses they speak and shout Harreh ! Burro !

But to me they speak no word. Therefore, I will turn against them, like a woman who lies angry with her man in bed and eats away his spirit with her anger, turning his back to him.¹²

This is a very fine example of external assertion of primitive modes of response or of ancient life feeling. The animistic belief has been expressed by Ramon who makes a clumsy personification of the earth. It becomes a flat narrative description of the response that is devoid of any power or potency. D.H. Lawrence asserts the primitive belief of an animated world but, it does not express itself in a very latent and inherent manner. In a sentence like, 'These people, smaller than dust, he says, they stamp on me and say I am dead.' the factitious quality about it becomes obvious.

So the passage quoted earlier by William Golding and these kinds of passages in D.H. Lawrence try to capture the ancient life feeling but in (these kinds of passages) what becomes most important is the preoccupation with the scheme of presenting the primitive material in the different contexts of the text. That is where conscious primitivism fails. It fails to offer a psychologically convincing ancient response to life. It is conscious in its designing and it makes the readers conscious of its conscious expression.

From among the three novels considered, The Inheritors provides another area of ancient life feeling and response

that makes obvious the consciousness involved in the making and shaping of the novel; that is the area of language and communication. We find the purposeful use of simple syntax that expresses the minimally developed consciousness of the primitives. That is a convincing stylistic device. Often the word 'picture' has been used. This particular phrase relates to the limited imaginative status and instinctual response of the characters. And we are always of the deployment of the stylistic mechanism. M.A.K. Halliday in his inquiry into the language of The Inheritors remarks how the language stands out in the novel, "In The Inheritors it is the linguistic representation of experience through the syntactic resources of transitivity, that is especially brought into relief, although there may be other themes not mentioned here that stand out in the same way".¹³

Mostly Golding's Neanderthals live through their senses. At an imaginative level we perceive everything as the Neanderthals might have seen and observed. Therefore, in the description the point of view always makes us conscious of a kind of dissociation and distancing. There lacks a sense of keen involvement and assimilation. In the following example we find one of the most spectacular passages in this regard :

"I have a picture —"

Then the people laughed too because this was Lok's picture, almost he only he had and they knew it as well as he did.

" — picture of finding the little Oa".
 'Fantastically the old root was twisted and bulged and smoothed away by use into the likeness of a great bellied woman.'

" — I am standing among the trees. I feel with this foot I feel —".

'He mimed for them. His weight was on his left foot and his right was searching in the ground.
 ' — I feel what do I feel? A bulb? Of stick? A bore?' His right foot seized something and passed it up to his left hand. He looked. 'It is the little Oa!' Triumphantly he summed himself before them. 'And now where Liku is there is the little Oa.'¹⁴

Having the knowledge that the primitive people had a keen sense perception Golding exploits modern resources of language, 'where these are exactly descriptive of what the people see, feel, hear or touch, without themselves having words or images to express their activities.'¹⁵

Looking into the different strategies involved in the shaping of the novel Mark Kinkead Weekes and Ian Gregor aptly comment that 'one could approach the novel as a fictional essay in prehistory, based on considerable knowledge of Anthropology, and seeking to substitute a truer picture of Neanderthal Man for one distorted by faulty assumptions'.¹⁶

Pincher Martin offers the same narrative method that we find in his other novels. The emphasis here lies on the complexity of characterisation. Pincher Martin has been hurled into an absolutely extreme situation where his normal

personality is completely dislodged under the severely trying circumstances, the character's buried self has been brought out, and in that Golding demonstrates the dark underside of civilized human nature.

Pincher Martin is about Pincher Martin's dead body and his indestructible consciousness. Virginia Tiger comments that, "the protagonist's particular history of guilt and greed is intended to stand as a fable for contemporary man".¹⁷ It studies a man left alone on a rock in Mid-Atlantic.

Just like The Inheritors, Pincher Martin has got an ideographic structure. In The Inheritors the whole setting has been taken from the pre-historic times as Golding analyses an episode from those days. Here the setting is different but the different strains at the level of imagery and ideas build up the primitive atmosphere and mood. In this novel Golding considers with emphasis the imperfection of man, and associated good and evil. The presentation has chosen a very appropriate moment for consideration, which is the moment of the character's death. The purpose behind the fiction is to discuss issues concerning human follies, failures etc. In order to analyse and understand all these issues Golding fashions this fable. Virginia Tiger states, "The fable then is the report of some after-death hallucination; its events are taking place in the mind of a dead man."¹⁸

At one level it is a story of struggle for survival at another level it is just like a 'morality play'. Pincher Martin is greed personified and starting from his sex escapades to his violent wishes to eat and kill confirm that.

In a markedly different manner from his other novels, in this work Pincher Martin, we find strains of primitivism consciously built into the warp and woof of the text by a set of imagery which is ostensibly primitivistic in tone. By the deployment of the images of old and extinct creatures he seeks to recreate the primitive atmosphere which is quite in keeping with the contexts where helpless Martin is seen fighting against the elemental forces. Martin, though a character from the modern times, is reduced to the primitive state. In Chapter-IV, we find^a superb example of the contrived use of the primitive material in the scene where the sea-gull come skimming over Martin as he clings to the rock threatened : They rose clamorously wheeling, came back till their wings beat his face. He struck out again in panic so that one went drooping off with a wing that made no more than a half-bet. They retired then, circled and watched. Their heads were narrow. They were flying reptiles. An ancient antipathy for things with claws set him shuddering at them and thinking into their smooth outlines all the strangeness of bats and vampires. "Keep off ! Who do you think I am ?" Their circles widened. They flew away to the open sea.¹⁹

These metaphoric expressions have been used quite in keeping with the situation, but the authorial intervention in the making of the scene is quite obvious in that it is an external assertion rather than an internal response. The beautiful narration remains a purposeful contribution to the conscious use of primitive material.

In the making of the structure of the fiction that organises the theme and the content, we come across a number of elements that do not separately emphasize the fact of conscious use of the primitive material, but together they succinctly contribute to that factor. As in the previous example we observed how he has made use of many metaphoric expressions, so also on many occasions we encounter passages where Golding brings into use animal imagery pertinently related to the making of the ancient mode of repose. In Chapter-III, we find Pincher Martin struggling among the rocks, trying to locate a better place like a caterpillar trying to reach a new leaf.²⁰ But the narrative structure does not leave Martin at that, it further reduces him and transforms by likening him to other creatures :

He began to turn his body in the trench, among a complication of sodden clothing. He said nothing but breathed heavily with open mouth. slowly he turned until his white seaboot stockings were towards the crevice. He backed to the triangular opening and put his feet in. He lay flat on his stomach and began to wriggle weakly like a snake that cannot cast its skin. His eyes

were open and unfocused. He reached back and forced the oil skin and duffle down on either side. The oil skin was hard and he backed with innumerable separate movements like a lobster backing into a deep crevice under water.²¹

In the whole range of animal imagery from the image of the caterpillar to that of the lobster, we find the invocation of the primal modes of response in the likening. But the fact is obvious that it is not the projection of the characters' mood or response from within. Here what we find is the writer's conscious use of similes welded into the trellis of the text that overtly characterise the response and mood of the character involved. The primitive material could be located in the description of the characters. It is the contrived motive of the author that stands out over and above the portrayed characters inner expressions.

How does the handling of the primitive material become conscious, becomes conspicuous when Golding tries to depict the landscape with anthropological designs in mind. The different primitive concepts like animism appear on many occasions in the narrative. They are very objective descriptions and in the narrative the landscape that should appear normal with its sound and fury emerges with the anthropological patterns imposed. As here in this novel the character is long dead but the surviving consciousness has been dealt with, we don't find Pincher Martin much in

conversation or spoken interaction. That apart, the surviving consciousness of Pincher Martin is the hub of the fiction which results in brief monologues. Naturally therefore, the narrative structure carries the burden of reflecting the mood of the character and the content. Thus, the text in its structural contrivance and management of the primitive material becomes poetic and the anthropological motifs stand out. Here is an example from the second chapter of the novel:

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 — and how many miles from dry land? An evil perversion, not the convulsive panic of his first struggles in the water, but a deep and generalized terror set him clawing at the rock with his blunt fingers. He even got half up and leaned or crouched against the weed and the lumps of jelly.²²

In this narrative passage the primitive motif of animism, fear of the incomprehensible and unknown, and the elements get lumped together. Particularly the line, 'one tooth set in the ancient jaw of a sunken world', carries a world of meaning. It carries the resonances of the anthropological concept of 'animism' that all the objects in nature are imbued with a power. The rock has been described as a 'tooth' and it is in the 'ancient jaw of the sunken world' where Pincher Martin finds himself. The dashing waves the rock that he clings to — all take a menacing dimension and threaten his very existence. The description is quite

befitting for the depiction of the precarious situation of Pincher Martin, but the fact that the images have not been recreated from within, rather they have been imposed and the situation has been contrived, is pronounced. The primitive material remains but remains ancillary to the other paramount considerations of the author.

III

Analysing the three novels taken for the purpose of locating conscious primitivism' we come to the conclusion that essentially Golding's use of the primitive material is symbolic in nature. Though the primitive elements have been profusely used in the warp and woof of his novel, they do not remain in focus, they only remain subservient to the major concerns of the author.

As Golding himself claims, his fictions are fables in which his purpose is to drive home certain ideas and ideals. In Lord of the Flies the story of the boys' gradual regression to savagery in The Inheritors, the story of the Neanderthal man and their encounter with the Homo-sapiens and in Pincher Martin the portrait of struggle for survival make the story lines. It is to be acknowledged that the specific stories don't hold much concern for Golding. Golding has written these stories for the purpose of building up a myth of his own. In the construction of his fiction the used primitive material puts things to patterns.

NOTES :

1. H.J. Blackham, The Fable as Literature (London : The Athlone Press, 1985), p.IX
2. Michael Bell, Primitivism (London : Methuen & Co.Ltd., 1972), p.54
3. William Golding, Lord of the Flies (London : Faber and Faber, 1954), p.80
4. Ibid., p.80
5. Ibid., p.86
6. Ibid., p.87
7. Ibid., p.110
8. Ibid., p.217
9. Ibid., p.219
10. D.H. Lawrence, The Rainbow (New York : The Modern Library, 1943), p.34-35
11. William Golding, The Inheritors (London : Faber and Faber, 1955) p.90-91
12. D.H. Lawrence, The Plumed Serpent (London: Heinemann, 1955), p.194
13. M.A.K. Halliday, 'An Inquiry into the Language of William Golding's The Inheritors' Literary Style : A Symposium. ed. Seymour Chatman. (London and New York : OUP, 1971), p.360
14. Kinkead-Weekes, Mark and Gregor, Ian, William Golding : A Critical Study rev. edn. (London : Faber and Faber, 1984) p.15
15. Ibid., p.71
16. Ibid., p.68
17. Virginia Tiger, William Golding : The Dark Fields of Discovery (London : Marion Boyars, 1974), p.225

18. Ibid., p.107-108
19. William Golding, Pincher Martin (London : Faber and Faber, 1956) p.60-61
20. Ibid., p.49
21. Ibid., p.34
22. Ibid., p.34

CHAPTER-IV

A REVEALING GLIMPSE

Only once in a thousand years,
From hanging cliffs and desolate streams
A Crag falls into the moving sea
And a sea-bird screams.

William Golding - "THE LONELY ISLE".

A Revealing Glimpse

I

In this chapter an attempt has been made to examine the views and vision that Golding offers through the use of primitivistic motifs and material. In the earlier chapters we have analysed the use and organisation of the primitivistic material and here the focus is on the achievement of the desired goal by the use of anthropological ideas, belief, faith and philosophy. Out of the three novels taken for consideration Lord of the Flies enacts a situation of our times and so does Pincher Martin but ostensibly enough The Inheritors seeks to recreate an episode in the pre-history of man and that is why The Inheritors makes use of the primitive material profusely and boldly whereas in the other two novels the primitive material comes somewhat muffled.

"Variously hailed as a fabulist, marginal anti-realist, philosophical novelist, and anthropologist of the imagination, William Golding who moved into the hallowed precincts of fiction relatively late in life, has come to occupy a unique place defying classification and categorisation,"¹ remarks V.V.Subbarao aptly enough.

In his fiction many strands of ideas could be marked well, woven into the texture of his texts with technical virtuosity and commendable imaginative power. In order to

hammer out his vision of things, he has taken the help of many original texts and has worked out his vision through them which could be termed as violation of the original texts. For Lord of the Flies he has chosen Ballantyne's The Coral Island as a point of departure, for The Inheritors he has inverted Wells' Outline of History and for Pincher Martin one can always look back into Taffrail's 1916 survival tale, Pincher Martin, OD. Even some critics have gone to the extent of tracing the origin of 'Pincher Martin' to Ernest Hemingway's The Snows of klimanjaro. He takes up these texts and fashions them in his smithy in such a way that the original works are completely transformed. They break new grounds and open up new vistas of thought. Pertinently enough it has been commented that "his originality in prose is much like that of Eliot's in verse. Tradition ... leaves its mark on his work, but his work leaves its individual mark, and sometimes excoriatingly on tradition."²

He looks deeply into human predicament and seeks to assess man's alienation, free will, guilt, primacy and universality of evil and in that he comes closer to writers like Conrad, Melville and Joyce. His vision is basically 'a vision of paradox', he does not say anything conclusively about his truth as he explores the anomalies and paradoxes of human existence.

Golding drives home his themes through myth, archetypes, symbols and metaphors. His works could be located in a realistic tradition but his technical strategies like the use and deployment of symbol, imagery, myth, metaphors and archetypes approach the lyrical mode. Golding's novels through the use of myth-imagination transcend the limitations of fabular patterns thus endowing greater depth, and significance on the texts. The texts operate at a number of levels and the utilisation of mythical imagination is one of the paramount strands.

II

In Lord of the Flies all the boys are left free in the island without any restriction of civilisation. And there the boys get an opportunity to liberate themselves to their natural state. In the violence and natural belligerence of Henry, Roger and Johnny, we get a glimpse of basic human nature. The trappings of civilisation could have kept them within limits. In other words, 'nurture' as opposed to 'nature' keeps the 'natural man' suppressed to a great extent. The moment the inhibitions are lifted the suppressed sadism and nihilism manifest themselves. Taking a deep look into a situation in Golding's Lord of the Flies Rene Dubos poses a different view other than the instinctivist view. His view might be brought into consideration for a broader understanding. He says :

... the behavioural defects described by William Golding may not have their origin in human nature but rather in the system of values taught to the English schoolboys. Boys from other parts of the world might not behave as William Golding imagined on the basis of his English experience. A few years ago, indeed a group of Micronesian children were actually marooned by accident for several months on an isolated atoll, yet there was no violence or terror among them. They survived the experience without physical or emotional stress. Their fortitude was probably due to the fact that, whereas Western culture is dominated by the competitive spirit, Polynesian culture makes children aware of their dependence on the community and therefore, makes them socially tolerant of each other.³

The above mentioned argument (much relates) to the 'Nature-Nurture', 'Raw-cooked' controversy in Anthropology. Salinger's novel The Catcher in the Rye draws our attention in this connection. Salinger's novel lays emphasis on social depravity whereas Golding's Lord of the Flies lays emphasis on natural depravity. Golding traces the flaws of society back to the defects of human nature and Salinger to defective education and institutions. In Golding's critical outlook the children are already fallen having all the potentialities for evil like the adults but to Salinger the childhood stage is a stage of innocence, and The Catcher in the Rye describes the fall from adolescence into adulthood. Golding's view falls in line with that of Pandergast. He says :

Even if a new Adam and Eve were to start a fresh on some distant earth, like planet, it seems virtually certain that descendents would face essentially the same problems as we do.⁴

One is reminded of Simon's "picture of a human at once heroic and sick"⁵. In fact, the novel Lord of the Flies turns out to be a critical commentary on the so called civilised adult world where there is insidious politics, power struggle and the threat of a nuclear war.

Golding in 'The Inheritors' brings into focus the primitive and thus annihilates the view of civilized man's superiority. In accordance with the rationalist view of the Fall of man, Adam's act of disobedience is the most important progressive step, "it is the first expression of man's spontaneous activity the first daring act of reasoning ... the most fortunate and greatest event of the human history ... Kant sees in the story the progress from instinct to reason."⁶ Darwin's theory of evolution too placed man at the top and equated evolution with progress. But the growth and development of civilization has been held upto suspicion by many authors like Golding. Golding points out man's "appaling" ignorance of his own nature."⁷ It is a recognition and understanding of the whole human situation through one's creative imagination. In a moment of revelation Simon in Lord of the Flies comes to realise that the beast is 'only us'.

Just like Lord of the Flies, Pincher Martin narrates the story of infinite regression. At the moment of Pincher

Martin's death we see glimpses of his life revealed to us in cinematic flashbacks and that explains the nasty and brutish state of his life. In William Golding's theological understanding of the situation, Pincher Martin does not have a long plot-line. It is the story of Christopher Hadley Martin, who gets blown off the bridge of the ship. His struggle for survival on a rock at sea becomes the hub of the novel.

If we look into the cast of the character Pincher Martin, he appears as the archetypal man. When he fights with the hostile elements in a titanic effort he compares himself with Ajax, Atlas and Prometheus. However, when Martin is struggling for survival, he is haunted by primal fear. It is a fear that springs from his consciousness which suffers fragmentation and alienation. An example might be picked up in this context :

It's like those nights when I was a kid, lying awake thinking the darkness would go on forever. And I couldn't go back to sleep because of the dream of the whatever it was in the cellar coming out of the corner...⁸.

As it has been said in connection with The Pyramid that Golding is conscious of the relevance of ancient Egypt to our plight. He also believes that in our age of 'fragment and wreckage' the relics of that hoary civilisation might, "convey by a meta language what we have left for a future and what we

may build on. It may be that in a reading of these broken stones lies an image of a creature maimed yet engaged to time and our world and enduring it with a purpose no man knows and an effect that no man can guess."⁹ The same could be said of Lord of the Flies, The Inheritors and Pincher Martin in their use of primitive material.

In his quest for an order and understanding in 20th century life, we find in his fiction a multiplicity of ideas woven together and through them he seems to say so many things though his beliefs are ambivalent and tentative in their conclusions. He states his position like this: 'My mind is all at sea. Here is no sage to bring you a distilled wisdom. Here is an ageing novelist floundering in all the complexities of twentieth century living all the muddle of ^{S?}part beliefs.'¹⁰

III

Lord of the Flies, The Inheritors and Pincher Martin are all definitions about the nature of man. Centuries ^(back) Shakespeare made Prospero, in The Tempest, speak of Caliban "this thing of darkness I, acknowledge mine".¹¹ In Conrad's Heart of Darkness, Kurtz says in a moment of revelation, "Horror! Horror!" and it comes almost parallel with the situation in the novel Lord of the Flies where "Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart".¹² These words do not only indicate certain views, they also

provide revealing glimpses of man's mind, psyche, and soul. These narratives have been structured around these apocalyptic visions.

The narratives, ^{with} (by) the help of the literary paraphernalia and primitivist material, work out in a well-structured manner the hidden truth about human nature. Nietzsche rightly comments : 'The sad truth is that we remain necessarily strangers to ourselves, we don't understand our own substance, we must mistake ourselves, the axiom 'Each man is farthest from himself', will hold for all of us to all eternity. Of ourselves we are not knowers.¹³

In Lord of the Flies, the boys begin with order, but the order could not be retained very long. The democratic set up breaks down and the boys regress to the state of savages. It is disorder that prevails and the heart of darkness that remains within is revealed. The concealed and camouflaged primitive urges are let loose which completely transform the state of the boys. In other words the novel seeks to recognise the muffled and unrecognised emotions of man.

In the short-story 'The Grisly Folk.' H.G.Wells explores a conflict between Neanderthal' man and Homo-sapiens, and says, "We cannot conceive in our different mind the strange ideas that chased one another through those queerly shaped brains."¹⁴ Golding on the other hand, advances an altogether

different view of the Neanderthalers which undermines Wells' view. Though The Inheritors seeks to recreate a lost episode of pre-historic times, in his critical consideration of good and evil, goodness is a quality that Golding endows on the Neanderthalers. In this connection Samuel Hynes' view might be brought into consideration. He says :

The moral of the novel is not a very complicated one ... It offers an anthropological analogue of the fall which distinguishes between prelapsarian and postlapsarian man in terms of knowledge of evil and capacity for thought.¹⁵

In theological terms the Neanderthalers are unfallen people. In their primitive community, in accordance with William Golding's vision, they have a reasonable order, they do not go unruly, Unmistakable glimpses of their moral standard could be marked from their belief in the earth goddess 'Oa'. Diametrically opposite are the new people who are killers and hunters. They are considered as post-lapsarian men who have lost their innocence. Taking into consideration the antithetical structure of Lord of the Flies and The Inheritors Philip Redpath observes :

In Lord of the Flies reason is linked to civilisation and goodness while evil is linked to goodness or innocence and evil linked to unreason. But in The Inheritors unreason is linked to goodness or innocence and evil linked to reason and the beginnings of civilisation clearly, if we wish to be consistent, the novels defy any simple moral definitions.¹⁶

There are many points and counterpoints in these novels. But so many shallow readings of the novels could be found that do not look deep into the structures of the novels. Ted E. Boyle, for instance, says while commenting on Lord of the Flies that 'without the restraint of social order the human being will sink below the level of the beast.'¹⁷ But this view is refuted by the fact that the more civilized create the beast and kill the innocents. In the line of Boyle Ralph Freedman renders a reading as follows :

It would seem ... that light does not triumph in Goldings universe. But in each novel ... light is restored in a counterpoint. In Lord of the Flies the rescuing naval officer restores identity and order ... In The Inheritors our attention shifts from the 'people', corrupted at last, to the jumans, who though corrupt are rationally aware and capable of taking over control and reorganisation of the world.¹⁸

In Lord of the Flies civilisation is required, as it works against the corruption of the savages and in The Inheritors civilisation is a need though it is degraded in itself. It, therefore, becomes difficult to define both sides of the antithesis. In Lord of the Flies when the savages meet the naval officer, it becomes a symbolic encounter of the savage and the civilised. The reasonable naval officer and the unreasonable savages could also be critically described as reflections of each other. All the three novels conclusively don't say that man is good or evil. They rather lead us

towards a conclusion that human nature endlessly contradicts itself. If the thrusts of the three novels are brought to bear on the relative modern contexts, then we find the civilised as well as the primitive together.

In these novels Golding does not intend to analyse good and evil, he rather wants us to look into situations in a more comprehensive manner. Pertinently enough Redpath states. "The novels are maps of man's inner nature and to experience the resolution of the antithesis is to trace human nature in all its indefinability."¹⁹ He further argues that it is not possible to remain on one side of the antithesis and that man's position is just at the dividing line where both the sides merge and become one and the other.

IV

Here none of the considered novels promotes primitivism in the sense of a return to earlier human states. In modern primitivism the design and account of the primitivist impulse remains the central question which is explored in the given texts.

The primitivist impulse manifests itself in the works of authors like Lawrence, Conrad, Golding and some others, as a corollary to dissatisfaction with the civilized state of human existence. The use of anthropological motifs and primitive material in T.S.Eliot's The Waste Land demonstrate a clear

cognizance of the socio-cultural bearings that lead to such a phenomenon. However, the fact remaining that this kind of a realisation is a product of civilized self-contemplation.

In Lawrence we find a bold expression of the rejection of the civilized and the acceptance of the primitive. Conrad strives to find a right attitude towards the primitive which he considers a human potentiality. Be it in Golding or Conrad or Lawrence an orientation towards the primitive or even a distaste for it is counted as an abnormal phenomenon. The whole phenomenon finds a suitable expression in these words of Micheal Bell : " Primitivism is born of the interplay between the civilised self and the desire to reject it or transform it.²⁰

With reference to the earlier considerations Golding's vision could be termed as a vision of paradox in the sense that he does not show a solution in the primitive modes of response on the one hand, and he does not approve of the modern man's nature and traits on the other. In other words he holds upto suspicion both the primitive and the civilised.

Notes :

1. V.V.Subbarao, William Golding : A study (New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987), p.1.
2. Bernard S. Oldsey and Stanley Weintraub, The Art of William Golding (New York : Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1965).p.34.
3. Rene Dubos, "Man's Nature and Social Institutions", Man and Aggression ed. Ashley Montague (London : OUP, 1973) p 86-87.
4. Pandergast, Cosmos (New York : Fordham University Press, 1973), p.162.
5. William Golding, Lord of the Flies (London : Faber and Faber, 1954), p.113.
6. Theodore Raik. Myth and Guilt : The Crime and Punishment of Mankind (New York : George Braziller Inc.,1957), p.28.
7. Douglas A. Davis, "A Conversation with William Golding," The New Republic, CKIVII (May 4, 1963), p.30.
8. William Golding, Pincher Martin (London : Faber and Faber, 1956), p.142.
9. William Golding, A Moving Target (London : Faber and Faber, 1982), p.198.
10. William Golding, A Moving Target (London : Faber and Faber, 1956). p.192.
11. William Shakespeare, The Tempest in The Complete Works. ed. Peter Alexander (London : ELBS, 1964), p.26.
12. William Golding, Lord of the Flies (London : Faber and Faber, 1982), p.198.
13. Quoted by Philip Redpath. William Golding : A structural Reading of his Fiction (London : Vision and Barnes & Noble, 1986), p.78.
14. H.G.Wells, "The Grisly Folk", Selected Short Stories (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1981), p.289.
15. Samuel Hynes, William Golding (New York : Columbia University Press, 1964), p.22.

16. Philip Redpath, William Golding : A Structural Reading of his Fiction(London: Vision and Barnes & Noble, 1986),p.85.
17. Quoted by Philip Redpath. William Golding : A structural Reading of his Fiction (London : Vision and Barnes & Noble, 1986), p.86.
18. Ralph Freedman, "The New Realism : The Fancy of William Golding". Perspective, 10. (Summer-Autumn,1958), p.125-26.
19. Philip Redpath, William Golding : A Structural Reading of his Fiction(London: Vision and Barnes & Noble, 1986),p.97.
20. Michael Bell, Primitivism (London : Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1972), p.80.

CONCLUSION

In the earlier chapters, I have studied, analysed and assessed certain pronounced features of primitivism, some modes of its presentation and ideas that require attention for the ever-shifting concept of primitivism (all) in relation to the three novels by William Golding, namely, Lord of the Flies, The Inheritors and Pincher Martin. However, for a better understanding I have brought into my purview works by a number of authors like Joseph Conrad, D.H. Lawrence, (Mark Twain), Melville, T.S. Eliot and others by way of comparison and associations. Though there are various stand-points from where one can look into the primitivist material widely distributed and used in the considered works, my attempt has been made from the Anthropological perspective which I believe throws sufficient critical light on the issues compelling attention.

The different salient features of primitivism like rites of passage, rituals, natural piety, animism, animatism, beliefs, attitudes towards time, life and death; all these elements assume significance in accordance with the views and visions of the writer, otherwise they themselves don't have any absolute meaning. They can gather a very wide range of meaning, and the range could very well be marked in its manifestation in the works of D.H. Lawrence., Golding, Conrad, Melville and T.S. Eliot. Sometimes the assumptions are moral,

sometimes philosophic and artistic on still another occasion.

In the present study much attention has been devoted to the new ways of rendering primitivism in the works of different authors generally and in Golding's works specifically. It does not close the views with the assessments carried out, rather the possibilities remain open. It makes an assessment of the present way of presentation or rendering primitivist material in literature and art. The range can be gauged from Melville's Moby Dick to Bellow's Henderson the Rain King. Conrad's very conscious use of Africa and Lawrence's very conscious use of Mexico indicate a strategy that could be traced in many other works in modern literature. E.M. Foster and Joyce Carey for that matter make use of Italy and Africa. The use of national culture and psychology stems from an impulse similar to that of the primitivist. This use of foreign cultures has got an affinity with primitivism.

In the later works of D.H. Lawrence we detect two primitivist features from the American literary tradition : the presentation and acceptance of a sprawling and untamed natural world, and the 'theme of the interrelations between the white man and the older races of continent.' These features find their manifestation in the works of Fennimore Cooper and Melville, as well as, in the works of William Faulkner.

As we try to understand the concept and assess its diverse manifestations, we further the inevitable impression that 'primitivism' stems from a crisis in civilization. Bell comments, "Primitivism, then, is born of the interplay between the civilized self and the desire to reject or transform it."¹ This sort of an interplay or interpenetration may take a positive direction, as in Lawrence's recreation of primary levels of feelings from within, or it may take a paradoxical direction as in Golding. In Golding's fiction there is nothing very conclusive about it, as for instance the different modern equipments, which in themselves are not primitivistic, but through them the primitive urges and impulses could be expressed. It can be a clash, a collision or simply an interplay of the civilised and the savage, but the fact remains that they are not compatible. It's the naked encounter of the civilised with the barbarian within.

But one thing is certain : Golding does not set up a primitive alternative to the civilised, he does not carry the reader to conclusions, rather he prefers to keep questions, issues open or 'suspended'. In his works like 'Heart of Darkness', Conrad opposes the savage, as well as, the civilised, the restrained and the unrestrained. Golding puts his works in a visionary frame-work much in relation to many psychomystico-religious issues.

As far as the primitive dilemma is concerned, on the one hand lies the modern rendering of it by the use of the different features of primitivism that is assimilated into the work, and on the other hand there is the purely conventional, metaphorical use of the primitive. Looking forward to its use Bell aptly says, "A full discussion of primitivism as a cultural phenomenon could properly lead to such topics as the twentieth century popularity of sun-bathing or the contemporary phenomenon of the hippie commune and as in particularly evident in the case of Lawrence, there is considerable interplay between such sociological tendencies and the insights of imagination literature."²

The limitation of the thesis does not permit further elaborate exploration of the anthropological manifestations of the primitivist impulse.

The problems and perspectives of primitivism keep changing but they endure. The very concept and the other features that it enshrines keep moving progressively inward — that is towards the heart of the civilised dilemma.

NOTES :

1. Michael Bell, Primitivism. (London : Methun & Co., 1972), p.80.
2. Ibid. p.82.

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