

Chapter II: Nature and the Elemental Return

As we have seen in the previous chapter that the centre-margin relationship is one important aspect of Golding's novels. In one sense, the representation of this problematic makes him a post-empire colonialist writer. The much-vaunted position of Europe as the centre of civilisation undergoes a radical change in the wake of the loss of Empire. The post-empire dislocation and decentring of the colonialist self is a common thematic strand in his novels. The resultant scenario of chaos and confusion becomes the central point of description. The imperialist journeys of the seventeenth century get repeated and sometimes reversed in Golding's post-empire imagination. The journey from centre to margin which was earlier a matter of colonialism is now a matter of survival in a new time of dislocation, and what comes to the fore is the dismantling of colonialist pride. The pride in culture and civilisation is as deadly as the seven deadly sins. The central sin in Golding's novels is pride, and the agony of the loss of it is scripted through geographical imagination. The British boys in *Lord of the Flies* are evacuated from Britain and are being taken by plane to the antipode (Australia or New Zealand) over the Mediterranean Sea, Addis Ababa, Gibraltar, and finally over the Pacific their plane is attacked and destroyed. The passenger tube is released and the boys land safely on an uninhabited island which they, Crusoe-like, try to convert into a civilisation. However their effort fails and their project ends in "blood and terror" (Golding *Hot Gates* 89). The whole novel is a beautiful evocation of the interaction and interconnection between man and nature, and it is through nature that margin rises in the form of the painted savages. With the loss and emasculation of centre, the margin is empowered. Geography becomes the locus of power struggle, scarring, mutilation, killing and destruction. In *The Inheritors*, the new people arrive at the prehistoric habitat of the Neanderthals and cause historic displacement and destruction. Golding seems to say that it is the new people who brings history to the world by their superior tools and art, whereas the Neanderthals live in static geography and start to lose their struggle for survival the moment new people arrive. The old people or the Neanderthals are shown to be pro-nature, pro-earth and matriarchal, whereas the new people are the bearer of culture and they are able to control nature. The novel is a poignant example of how a superior centre can marginalise the margin. The novel is a re-enactment of the Christian myth of the Fall, presented in terms of an anthropological fall, but finally

emerges as a fall in the wake of colonialism, much in the sense what Chinua Achebe means by 'fall' in *Things Fall Apart*. *Pincher Martin* is a post-empire version of Robinson Crusoe. Pincher is the epitome of the die-hard colonialist mind that refuses to die even when he is already dead, and like the boys in *Lord of the Flies*, engages in colonising the tooth-shaped rock in the middle of the Atlantic, torpedoed and ship-wrecked. Thus Pincher is the symbol of pride, and the tooth-shaped rock he conjures up by his pride is a symbol of greed, the driving impulses behind colonialism. The whole existence is constructed by Pincher Martin's overwrought traumatised psyche with the help of the images of pincher and tooth. The centre tries to control the margin, only to be challenged and put out of existence by the margin of nature. Pincher's dark centre of being is set up against the black lightning which is usually taken to be God but in the new context of his post-empire post-mortem life, represents the margin. In his madness of ego Pincher defies the black lightning and disintegrates like the disintegration of the colonies, gradually getting diminished to the claws which finally explode. The novel becomes a parody of the Christian creation myth. In seven days God created the universe, and in seven days Pincher is uncreated. The lust for life is neither undermined nor vindicated, but is shown misplaced and mistaken, and the final discovery about Pincher comes in the revelation that he had no time to kick off his sea-boots. *The Spire* also shows the human vanity for power and domination, embodied in the vision of building a spire on earth that lacks foundation. However the sheer vision of human will and ego to dominate nature by construction prevails and the spire is built by Jocelin at great human cost, both the vision and the human cost of implementing it haunt Jocelin. The spire as a symbol of imperialism and culture remains precarious, but in Jocelin's vision it is no more a spire, he starts seeing it as an appletree, an upward waterfall and a kingfisher, the images of nature. Culture and nature are balanced and Jocelin starts feeling love and sympathy for the subalterns and the oppressed like Coleridge's ancient mariner. The opposite and the other or the margin cannot be ruled out from the centre, eliminating the Other may also render the whole structure or the structure of the whole precarious. With the end of the pride of centre, there comes the humility of the margin, and the courage to ask forgiveness from the oppressed.

Elemental imagery and symbolism are used to maintain an ambiguity and open-endedness; to capture the process of dehumanization on the one hand and on the other to mitigate the chaos and disorder and strive towards a new order and reconciliation. Dehumanization is one major aspect of Golding's novels. Like pride, fear plays a dominant role; as the pride is dismantled, fear is allowed to build up in its place. The fear of the margin defeats reason and rational way of dealing with it. The boys in *Lord of the Flies*, so apocalyptically displaced by an evacuation from centre to margin, are soon overwhelmed by the fear of death and annihilation symbolised by the emissary of a brutal war for power and domination – a dead parachutist. In Golding's own explanation, the dead parachutist represents 'off-campus history' which is more psychological kind of history than real kind of history which is called academic or campus history. Fear tears apart the semblance of normality and the veneer of civilization and reason, and the boys regress into savagery and primitivism. The psychological field of the novel is naturalised by the metaphor of the beast representing the macabre and the bizarre manifestation of power. The boys divide into two groups, one group led by the elected leader Ralph who tries to maintain their civilized European identity in the face of the rise of the beast; and another group led by the military leader Jack who tries to be at par with the beast by worshipping it. In the central scene of the novel, Simon the visionary has a morbid vision of the beast, the lord of the flies that teaches the saint and the redeemer the nature of evil manifestation. But the visionary is mistaken for the beast and is lynched by the primitives in a ritual dance to propitiate the beast. Then Piggy, the embodiment of reason is killed and Ralph, the embodiment of good sense is hunted down; the novel shows the failure of reason and good sense in a world that has lost the moral power of humanity. The novel uses animal imagery like pig, flies, butterflies and fireflies to the special effect of dimming of reason and humanity. *The Inheritors* has a similar motif of dehumanization. The Neanderthals are brutalised and dehumanized by the colonialist new people. Reminiscent of the holocaust and genocide, the novel depicts how power obtained through science and consciousness can be used for dehumanizing the Other. Golding clearly comes out as an anti-progress and reactionary writer in this novel. The major theme of the novel, as in *Lord of the Flies*, is human domination of the Other. Paul Crawford calls these novels 'literature of atrocity' (Crawford 50). The two novels are a severe indictment

on reason and civilization that lead to human pride and fear. The yahoo nature of man has been long ago pointed out by Jonathan Swift in *Gulliver's Travels*. Golding's Neanderthals come close to Swift's vision of Houyhnhnms, the noble creatures who are examples of perfection of nature. Golding's attempt to "trace the defects of society back to the defects of the individual" (Biles 41), posits the check and balance provided by nature; that enables the symbiotic "relationship between the individual and the community, between microcosm and macrocosm" (Granofsky 62), that prevents dehumanization. The rejection of nature brings about dehumanization, as happens with most of Hardy's major characters who remain outsiders to nature. *Pincher Martin* is also a novel of dehumanization. Christopher Martin, whose Christian name means Christ-bearer, is a degenerated creature of greed and lust; now on the rock of survival he uses pride to preserve his human identity, but he becomes engulfed by fear and is made to merge with the elements of nature. In the process he is stripped of his civilized garments – stripped down to the dehumanized version of the elemental being, of the unaccommodated being in nature. Explaining how the two poles of pride of culture and fear of nature are manifested in *Pincher*, Irving Malin comments,

Golding dehumanizes him (according to our usual definitions of "human"). He becomes it – another element. The transformation is unpleasant because it is so radical. But only after we see this thing closely, do we realize that it was always less than human. Again Golding makes us ambivalent. We fear this grasping thing – is it us too? – and admire its desire to survive. But he is less successful when he introduces *Pincher* as a former actor, potential murderer, an adulterer. We are startled. We lose our ambivalence. We are so accustomed to the elemental *Pincher* that we cannot accept his previous life as real. (Malin 42-43)

Golding's other novel *Free Fall* is a story of dehumanization as well in which both the perpetrator and the victim, Sammy Mountjoy and Beatrice are dehumanized, both physically and psychologically. The dark cell of the Nazi prison camp in which Sammy is lodged, is the locus of his dismantling of pride; and gripped with fear, he loses self-dignity to become a dehumanized creature. His trial and punishment in the

Nazi camp reduces him to the elemental level of being, so that when he goes to meet his victim Beatrice in the mental asylum, he is fully conscious of what it is being like to be dehumanized. This motif of dehumanization is continued in *The Spire* which is a bizarre story of the Dean of a cathedral and who is obsessed by his vision of building a spire on a cathedral which has no foundation for such a massive construction. The spire is built by manipulating and sacrificing people, both literally and figuratively. During the construction the army of workmen employed to carry out the work degenerates and gets dehumanized, becomes riotous and pagan, and the holy place starts reeking with their unholiness and profanity. Not only that, Jocelin also degenerates, gets dehumanized, condones the sins by reasoning it as a necessary cost of building the spire, as the work progresses he is burdened with physical decay and meets eventual death; but before his death he learns the state of contamination and discord in the building of the spire. The novel uses nature imagery like mistletoe, kingfisher, appletree to explore the complex psychology of the central consciousness.

Nature provides Golding with an intricate and complex symbolism to examine life and reality of the postwar and post-empire Europe, the way T. S. Eliot examines life and reality of postwar Europe in his poetry, especially in *The Waste Land*. The holy grail of life can be found in ‘Shantih, Shantih, Shantih’, which probably is the message that Golding arrives at in *The Spire*, the beatitude and blessedness is to be achieved by a sense of forgiveness, a condition that *Free Fall* demonstrates, and which Pincher Martin denies, to his utter destruction. Ronald Granofsky comments, “It is form of integration, figured in the use of the elements and possible only after some form of revelation, which Pincher Martin so savagely rejects: ‘I shit on your heaven!’” (Granofsky 54). The psychological necessity of this balance is expressed through his use of nature. Irving Malin finds in Golding’s fiction “the need for elemental return” (Malin 37). According to Malin,

Golding’s psychology shapes his novels. He wants to give us the “poetry of disorder” (Richard Chase’s phrase), not the science of order....He believes that science – any logical pattern – cannot comprehend reality: it is seduced often unwittingly, by what is “out there”; it disregards the elemental nature of life. “Fire is no longer a

reality for science” because it – like earth, air, or water – becomes a simple datum of experience, not a complex object of reverie. Poetry, on the other hand, refuses to settle for deceptive measurement: it does not assume that “out there” can be separated from “in here”; it constructs an intuitive *field* of subject and object, reverie and element. *Golding’s novels question and construct this same field.* (Malin 37)

It is because of this implicit mechanism of “poetry of disorder” that his fiction becomes stunningly poignant and psychologically realistic. This psychological realism helps his fiction mitigate the artificiality of the fable mode. The elements of nature in his fiction are deeply symbolical of the psychological predicament of dislocation, displacement and disintegration, the psychological necessity to come to terms with the broken reality and to achieve a seamless and holistic balance between ‘out there’ and ‘in here’, what Virginia Tiger calls ‘an effort of bridge-building’ is realized through the elements of nature, and further, they make Golding’s unrealistic tales psychologically convincing. The reader can feel that what is emphasised in his fiction is the psychological realism of a particular state of affairs, seen and perceived from a political point of view.

This concept of elemental return in the framework of centre-margin paradigm in his novels is a corollary of human isolation in the wake of the rise of Renaissance humanism and individualism and their disastrous consequences. The return to the myth is a return to nature, away from sinful humanistic individualism to a more collective sense of humanity, as evident in *The Inheritors*. The modern man’s folly of pride is a result of European individualistic humanism and it is this pride that is exploded in novel after novel. In his celebrated essay ‘Fable’ he exonerates the primitive savage head-hunters, and holds the civilised European accountable and culpable for all the wrong-doings and the international mess that Europe has created. He calls *The Inheritors* his most significant novel. It is because he draws a picture of collective people who with their innocence and natural reason are able to create a harmonious heaven of existence. The new people, on the other hand, resemble the Renaissance men with their individualism and a competitive progressivist way of life, and they make their life a disharmonious picture of pridefulness, savagery and paranoia. It is this comparative study of the two kinds of people and their ways of

life that is the key to understand Golding's point of view and vision of life in all his novels. The log-bridge is unfortunately lost and with it is also lost the means of reconciliation between nature and culture, except the fact that it is through the art of ivory that Tuami can combine the two modes imaginatively and perceptively. Circularity and synchronicity mark the elemental return. The elemental return to a state of nature is outlined and made possible by the ambiguous use of the antithesis between reason and unreason, the centre and the margin, and the antithesis is linked to the antithesis of good and evil. Reason marks the horizontality of history, whereas unreason marks the verticality of geography. In his essay entitled "The Resolution of Antithesis in *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*" Philip Redpath points out that there are two ways through which this antithesis of reason and unreason in the first two novels is broken down. The first way is to provide the reader with a character in each of the novels who masters an inclusive vision of man having both reasonableness and unreasonableness, both goodness and evil – which is perfectly envisioned in Simon's understanding of the nature of beast as imbibed by us, and in Tuami's crafting of the ivory butt of his knife in which the new people woman Vivani is fitted together in a single design with the Neanderthal baby (Redpath 48). This is a tour de force in Golding's vision of the harmony and balance between reason and unreason, the antithesis does not remain at the level of Manichean binary, but gets resolved into some sort of liminality or hybridity. If the first way is to follow a character that possesses such inclusive vision, the second way of the resolution of the antitheses of reason and unreason, and good and evil, is by using natural images. Analysing the tropes of nature in their horizontality and verticality like the clear space where the boys in *Lord of the Flies* hold six assemblies and the mountain where they make six trips, and also the seashore from where the Neanderthals move to the vertical fall and the overhang, Redpath comes to the conclusion that it is obvious that Golding creates a world in these novels in order to demonstrate how this verticality may be giving way to horizontality and this is the movement which becomes a symbol of the vision the novelist prescribes the reader to adopt (Redpath 49). The topographical images contribute to this resolution of the opposites. Thus the beach and the sea are images of horizontality, whereas the mountain is verticality that reflects and acts as the dividing line between reason and unreason, as the fire is lighted and extinguished on the mountain and it is the

mountain that Simon climbs up in order to know the truth about reason and unreason. Similarly in *The Inheritors* the Neanderthals are shown moving from the horizontality of the sea to the verticality of the waterfall and the cliff where they meet the new people and also meet their fate, or their doom (Redpath 49-50). Thus one can say without any doubt that the moral and psychological history of the modern man, as depicted through the ambiguous antithesis between reason and unreason, is organised in terms of natural objects on the basis of their horizontality and verticality. The resolution of this antithesis is part of Golding's vision of the ironic discord at the core of existence, and can be considered as an effort to overcome the insurmountable impasse between culture and nature, by way of dislocating and superimposing culture back into the nature, or dislocating the centre back to margin. It is also the way to overcome the imbalance created by the rise of Renaissance individualism or the "rise from undifferentiated humanity to rational, differentiating man" (Freedman 124).

Ralph Freedman however does not think that natural symbolism works in the direction of a breakdown of the antithesis between reason and unreason in the way of resolution, rather on the contrary, the unconscious natural symbolism only affirms and heightens the antithesis;

The eighteenth century conflict between reason and passion is thus translated by Golding into a tension between the undifferentiated basic human impulse (man's nature conceived in anthropological terms) and individuated man...for Golding the "state of nature" (of dissolution and unconscious symbolism) is exclusively chaos which must be overcome. (Freedman 124)

Citing the example of *Pincher Martin* Freedman shows that the natural symbolism of orifices, sea weeds, gull, women-shaped rocks and vaginal crevices "are made meaningful with the aid of memory and reason. Rendering unconscious symbolism conscious is in all three novels the attempt to rise from undifferentiated humanity to rational, differentiating man" (Freedman 124), and that through the distortions and changes in the external universe "Golding reveals a fancy which rests on the separation of subject and object, quality and substance, self and other" (Freedman 128). The journey on the road of progress from nature to culture is thus marked by a

transition from oneness of nature to binary division, from innocence to experience, from a pre-fallen to the fallen condition, and from a semiotic order to the symbolic order.

There is no doubt that the tropes of nature play a significant role on the basis of this mechanism of horizontality and verticality. The novels are built around the movement from horizontality to verticality, and vice versa, based on the movement from reason to unreason, good to evil, or from innocence to experience. In the context of decolonization, and the post-empire decentring and displacement, the problematic of horizontality and verticality is as ambiguous as the 'ambiguity of the fall'. According to Janet Burroway, this ambiguity of the fall is 'central' to Golding's thought (Burroway 55). This ambiguity is evident in the most epiphanic experience in *Lord of the Flies* in which at his final moment Ralph is shown breaking down in tears, unconsciouable and mortified at the death of Piggy by a fall from above to the rocks beneath (Golding *Lord* 248). The novel plays the topographical horizontality and verticality like the chiaroscuro of light and darkness. The horizontality of seashore, the clearing in the forest, the lagoon is pitted against the verticality of the mountain, cliff, castle rock as the boys engage in climbing up and down the scale of civilization, or move from centre of pride to the margin of fear. As a matter of fact the whole island becomes an item of displacement, claustrophobia and subject to scarring and destruction. In *The Inheritors*, it is the image of the waterfall that manifests the ambiguity of the fall. In the words of Janet Burroway, "the image of the waterfall dominates the setting as the action of falling dominates events. The ubiquitous presence of the waterfall, and the people's awareness of it, are made strongly evident early in the novel, and they never diminish" (Burroway 55). According to Jeanne Murray Walker, "Before the New Men arrive on the scene, a huge waterfall roars in the background of the People's summer home. The non-static life of the river and the spectacular motion of the water's plunge over the falls is Golding's dramatization of the continual need for change" (Walker 303). Thus the image of the waterfall creates the tension between the static and the flux. In *Pincher Martin*, the torpedoed and shipwrecked Martin falls on the verticality of a tooth-shaped rock which becomes a matter of life and death for him. Following the footsteps of Robinson Crusoe, he engages himself in building a civilisation on it to survive. On the verticality of rock-cum-death, he holds

on for his dear life with the horizontality of his pinchers, like a crab. The resolution of the antithesis between horizontality and verticality comes in *The Spire* where Jocelin is obsessed with erecting a vertical spire on the foundation-less horizontality of the cathedral. The cultural artefact of the spire is likened first to the erected penis, then it is likened to the spine, then to an upward waterfall and finally to the appletree. As a cultural image, the verticality of the spire moves towards recognising the Blakean experience, “*There is no innocent work. God knows where God may be*” (Golding *Spire* 222). As a natural image, the movement it builds up is like the upward progress of the spire, reverting the earlier images of the fall, now falling upward towards heaven from where man was displaced in the first place. As a final vision of forgiveness and attaining innocence, the verticality of the spire triumphs over the horizontality in spite of its precarious condition. *The Spire* in many ways shows the culmination of Golding’s final vision of postimperial neurosis, and carries tell-tale similarities with Shakespeare’s final play *The Tempest* which also carries a culmination of Shakespeare’s vision of life.

The tropes of nature in Golding give the glimpses of a natural state of reason and love from which man fell to the modern state of unreason and violence because of ego, domination, and subjugation of the other. The dislocation of the centre to the margin is a matter of suffering and penance, and at the same time a matter of guilt, expiation and redemption. The violent and traumatic dislocation is fraught with the dangers of dehumanization or getting dehumanized on the one hand, and on the other with enlightenment of the self, a revelation of the truth and reality, a removal of self-centric myopia and learning a lesson of humanity. It is at this margin of nature that the egotistical blindness of the centre is tested with delusion and madness, a failure to learn humanity and accept the changed situation and background in the post-empire time leads to the annihilation of the self in *Pincher Martin*; a successful transition towards acceptance and blessedness is effected in *Free Fall* and *The Spire*. Coming to know the self in terms of anagnorisis like self-realisation, revelation and learning the lesson of essential humanity is a major aspect of Golding’s novels. Golding writes about the disoriented colonial self in the aftermath of the loss of the empire, and his focus is on the development of the central consciousness. By the methodology of displacement of the central consciousness to a traumatic existence in an isolated background that the means of

self-discovery and self-realisation are effected. Most of the novels take up and extend the survival motive to an issue of survival of the central consciousness in a changed scenario as he turns towards an elemental return.

The ambiguity of the fall provides Golding the right analogy for weaving a fable of loss of innocence which is in fact a way of examining the historical context of the loss of empire, and the loss of the status of the colonial self as the master. The changefulness of history and the state of ironic discord appear to be the most important thematic pattern in his novels. And this thematic pattern of change and fallen condition is explored and worked out by means of conventional tropes of culture and nature. Because of their fabular intention, the novels heavily rely on the elemental imagery as noted by Irving Malin and Ronald Granofsky. The four elements of nature, ie, earth, air, water and fire, play an important role in determining the significance of characters and events. These elements are not kept pure in Golding's fiction, because the elements conform to the state of contamination and irony. The elements are subject to Heraclitean change, they change into one another to form an essential unity. "Golding's fictional imagination", writes Ronald Grafonsky, "seizes upon the powerful and ancient associations of the four elements, and, in particular, the Heraclitean view of elemental cosmic process, in order to relate microcosm to macrocosm symbolically and to suggest that transcendence is possible after a revelatory experience" (Grafonsky 62).

For Golding, the Fall of Man is a fall into the realm of matter represented by the four elements and characterized by an overbearing egotism and a reductive rationalism. The fragmented nature of this world is brought home to the protagonist at a time of crisis when the threat to his existence may nullify the stranglehold of his ego and allow for a spiritual revelation. As the irreducible constituents of the physical world, the four elements suggest at one and the same time a fragmentation and a potential unity analogous to the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm which the revelation attendant upon the testing experience helps to establish. (Grafonsky 50-51)

The problematic of loss and separation as encapsulated in the idea of fall and its potential unity or recovery and rehabilitation of the central consciousness is worked out in terms of culture-nature dichotomy. *Lord of the Flies* shows the fall from culture into nature which is deemed a regression from civilization to primitivism and savagery. The boys are shown fusing into the elements of nature in a journey from self to non-self, so much so that the four major characters can be associated, although imperfectly, with the four elements, Ralph with water, Piggy with fire, Jack with earth, and Simon with air, based on their easy oneness with the elements. Their cultural conditioning does not get in the way of total fusion, but what gets in the way is their manipulation and domination of the elements, in the way of the golden bough, leading to a dystopia, as the “paradisial spot gradually being laid waste” (Talon 299). The life-giving water becomes filthy brine, clean air gets foul, sacred fire becomes profane, and the earth is scarred. In *The Inheritors* innocent primitivism of the Neanderthals meets the cultural superiority and savagery of the new people. The first eleven chapters elaborately show the primitives’ oneness with the mother earth as represented by goddess Oa, and their harmony with nature. Like the four boys of *Lord of the Flies*, “the “people” – Nil, Mal, Lok, Fa, and the old man – are fascinated by the elements, trying to understand them... They worship these; they are grateful to Oa. The elements are ritualized, not manipulated” (Malin 40). In the final chapter, the new people are shown to be capable of mastering the elements, and capable of destroying both nature and nature-worshippers. *The Inheritors* brings into sharp focus two modes of being and two forms of religion, one is the earth religion or the religion of the earth, that does not have any sense of differentiation or othering, or to be more precise, does not create any entity of the devil, and it makes a harmonious and peaceful static living in nature possible; the other is a different religion, that is built on differentiation and othering, that creates an entity of devil and the propitiation of devil, as Jack and his tribe do in *Lord of the Flies*, and this religion makes existence a matter of paranoia, aggression, bloodshed and sacrifice for the propitiation, a matter of constant anxiety, dissension and conflict. The domination of nature becomes the central issue in *Pincher Martin*, as Pincher refuses to be one with the elements. He is surrounded and encircled by water, and like the new people of *The Inheritors*, becomes a person of the fall. He

tries to master the earth, air and water, and is reduced to a sad parody of King Lear's 'unaccommodated man', and is finally destroyed by the forces of nature.

The resolution or the heightening (as the case may be), or the attenuation and accentuation, of the antithesis of reason and unreason, or good and evil, generated by means of horizontality and verticality, can be extended to the issue of masculinity and femininity which is intimately connected with Golding's exploration of nature. Nature, according to Peter S. Alterman, is either conceived as male or female, "The Neanderthal Nature is female, generative, kind. The human Nature is dark, destructive. It demands painful human sacrifice and is occupied with death and hunting: nature is not praised, but controlled. This is magic, not true religion" (Alterman 8). This masculine manipulation of nature is reminiscent of the same in *Lord of the Flies*. The stag totem cult of the new people and the pig's head on the stick of Jack and his tribe are same in their manipulative principle. They are rituals intended to bring good luck to the hunters with abundance of food and protection from the beasts. The elements of good and evil, moral and immoral are organised along the line of feminine and masculine as is evident in the experience of the boys, "There was the brilliant [masculine] world of hunting, tactics, fierce exhilaration, skill; and there was the [feminine] world of longing and baffled common sense" (Golding *Lord* 77). Talking to James R. Baker, Golding explains the earth-religion of the Neanderthals whom he considers to be more like *Homo moralis* than *Homo Neanderthalis* (Baker "An Interview" 140). Turning the Neanderthals into *Homo moralis* leaves the new men in the category of *Homo immoralis*. Golding's almost poetic rendering of the life of the Neanderthals makes his liking for their earth-religion clear. So his criticism of the destructive religion of the new people is also made obvious. Golding's vision of natural morality and reason makes him side with natural justice which is connected with his vision of innocence. Ralph weeps for the end of innocence, this weeping is broadened into unconscionable pathos and dead-end of the realm of Innocence in *The Inheritors*. The bitterness of this experience leaves him in the realm of Experience; both dystopic and ironic about the Enlightenment values. However, his view of nature follows the view of the ironic discord that lies at the heart of existence. At the borderline between the feminine and the masculine comes the understanding of oneness with nature and alienation from it. Oneness with nature and alienation from it are marked by the feminine and the

masculine orientation of nature as expressed through the Neanderthal Oa, the earth goddess, and the new people's anti-Oa cultural invasion. Yasunori Sugimura studies this earth goddess from a semiotic-symbolic perspective and finds that although "the depiction of a Neanderthal people is based mainly upon the author's imagination" (Sugimura 279), the symbolic value of their belief system and their ways of worshipping Oa the mother goddess remains immense in Golding's overall understanding of nature. According to her, the maternal image of Oa, the protector of the tribe – an ice-block in the shape of a woman and the little Oa – a replica doll given to Liku by Lok as a talismanic figure in order to protect her from evil, are symbolical of placing the maternal in a signifying system (Sugimura 279). The purpose of Golding's use of the maternal is to show the symbolic function of Oa the earth goddess, and Sugimura finds the efficacy of the maternal that renders the 'natural language' so important in the life of the Neanderthals. Following Julia Kristeva's interpretation of Freud's Fort/Da methodology in which "the child cries 'o-o-o-o' ('fort') when the reel disappears and 'da' when it reappears" (Sugimura 279), Sugimura observes that the notes 'O' and 'A' play the similar role of Fort/Da and their combined sound 'Aaaa' constitute a sign/code dissolving semiotic sound (Sugimura 280).

The juxtaposition of the Neanderthal maternal religion and the new people patriarchal religion represent the two contrary states of the semiotic and the symbolic. In contrast to Neanderthal sign/code-dissolving semiotic sound of 'Aaaa', Sugimura finds the 'A-ho A-ho' sound made by the new people is a violent disruption of Oa (Sugimura 280). The destruction of Oa is the destruction of the entire signifying system, to cut off the flow of mother nature and to stop the poetic from making holistic and meaningful signification. There is a significant shift and orientation from the feminine/poetic/regenerative signifying practices of the Neanderthals towards the masculine/violent/degenerative practices of the new people. The trajectory of this shift is captured in the transformation of Lok. The Neanderthals speak through 'pictures'; and "The pictures are of course visualizations, not conceptualizations. If they are part of the People's abnormally rich life of sense and instinct, they are also part of their incapacity for abstract thought" (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 73). Living a life of senses and instincts, they live a life of unified sensibility, there is no division between the outside and the

inside, because it is the epitome of an undifferentiated condition of living, and this is reflected in their language. This symbiotic relationship between man and nature is destroyed when Lok experiences division of himself between an 'outside-Lok' and an 'inside-Lok', and he comes to discover the force of 'like', and he becomes in essence one of the new people. This transformation of Lok brings about a consciousness of the new people's destructive power hunger, a masculine force that brings to an end the feminine regime of Oa. The horizontality of the culture of fear and separation of the new people is pitted against the verticality of love and oneness of the Neanderthals. This analysis of oneness and separation works as a fundamental key to understand the basic dichotomy in Golding's analysis of the human condition. The loss of the semiotic oneness is a terrible loss that led to the production of human creature which is paranoid and ruthless in its suppression of the Other. What is important is that the destruction of Oa is also the destruction of the last surviving members of the Neanderthals, and this destruction also coincides with the end of the ice age. The confrontation between the 'people' and the 'new people' happens at the juncture of the end of the ice age (the Pleistocene epoch) as represented by the melting of the ice-woman and the beginning of Holocene epoch, ushering in the 'age of man', as represented by the waterfall and the river, "The dark period of the race of Homo neanderthalensis is over; the [so-called Wellsian] "enlightened" period of Homo sapiens has begun" (Bufkin 573), ironically setting in the gap between self and the other, which was non-existent in the Neanderthals. Similarly, the verticality of time is replaced by its horizontality. The frozen/static slice of Neanderthal history as represented by Oa and the ice age shows time in a synchronic/vertical position in which "To-day is like yesterday and to-morrow" (Golding *Inheritors* 46). With the end of the ice age and the melting of ice and Oa as represented by the waterfall and river, we are already ushered into the diachronic/horizontal history of the new people. The novel becomes a dramatic representation of the two ways of life caught at the crossroads of these synchronic/static and the diachronic/progressive modes. Unable to adapt to the geographical and anthropological changes, the feminine/maternal life of the Neanderthals suffers doom and is replaced by the masculine/paternal life of the new people, following the evolutionary process. However, a sense of change and adaptation is dimly perceived in the behaviour of Fa who becomes the most outstanding and resourceful character in dealing with the

new situation, and in the process is sharply contrasted with Lok the fool. Virginia Tiger finds a gender reversal in the role of Fa and Lok, “Gender reversal is the first and most notable mutation, with Fa leading (yesterday is *not* like today and tomorrow). Developing a logical capacity, Fa (not Lok) invents transport, leverage, agriculture, and retaliation, the building of bridges and hostage exchange” (Tiger *The Unmoved Target* 68).

The feminine/maternal is characterised by the bond of oneness, a “sense of belonging in a living world of Mother Nature (Oa) and of belonging one to another in the extended self of the people” (Boyd 36), as Lok’s tribe demonstrates. It is this exploration of the loving oneness of the Neanderthal that makes Golding a science fiction writer. In their loving oneness with nature, they feel sheltered and are unable to perceive any danger, even when changes happen in their habitat. Their very thinking process involves nature and they think all phenomena in terms of nature. When the new men shoot arrows at Lok, he sees them as trees growing twigs (Golding *Inheritors* 111) and considers them as a gift from the Other (Golding *Inheritors* 111). Peter S. Alterman finds telepathy as the most prominent special ability that marks out the Neanderthal relationship which is based on their natural oneness. Deliberating on the telepathic relationship that distinguishes the Neanderthal group or communal awareness, Alterman cites the example of their picture sharing ability, as in the case of Mal’s death because sharing Mal’s picture of his own death allows the members of the group to meld into one organism. This is an instinctive or unconscious oneness, and not an intellectual or conscious experience, because here no personality is created but a quality of ‘Neanderthalness’ (Alterman 4). Thus their unique ability of oneness with Nature by means of sensations and telepathy is also indicative of their freedom. They are therefore characterised by freedom, un-possessiveness, undivided and undifferentiated oneness and openness in their relationship with mother Nature and also in their reaction to the Other. This is the true paradisaical experience, even when their environment becomes hard, rugged and inhospitable. As S. J. Boyd points out, “The world of the people is...much less idyllic than an island in the sun. It is cold, hard and hungry place” (Boyd 30). This paradisaical experience in spite of their hard life indicates their truly free and innocent state of mind which is in sharp contrast with the new people. This is also in contrast with the physical environment in *Lord of the Flies*, in which the boys are provided

with a paradisaal island. But lacking a feminine/maternal orientation (and interestingly there is no female presence in the novel), the boys, like the new people in the *Inheritors*, turns it into a hell. Interestingly, the reader may find the two groups of boys, the lotos-eaters and the hunters, are transformed into the Neanderthals and the new people in *The Inheritors*. When nature is conceived as feminine, it connotes freedom and a natural existence, like a life that is lived in precolonial time, whereas masculine/patriarchal is also Oedipal and therefore prohibitive. The exorcistic religion of the new people is prohibitive and acts like a colonialist disruption of the natural. To move from the Oa-religion to the stag-cult religion is to move from the pre-colonial to a colonial disruption. According to Virginia Tiger, entering into the new people's mind brings pain, "For the knot binding the people together 'by a thousand invisible strings' (104) has been supplanted by the 'strips of skin' (208) tying the groaning men to their log/canoes and by the 'long piece of skin' (159) which leashes Liku to Tanakil" (Tiger *Dark Fields* 84). Masculine/paternal/Oedipal/colonialist in nature, the life of the new people is characterised by repression. Nature is female for the oppressed, it is male for the oppressor. Endowed with an 'organic' consciousness (Alterman 8), the Neanderthals are selfless, loving, caring, gentle, religious, accommodating and innocent of all evil, "They are more than Noble Savages: they are Christ-like" (Alterman 7), whereas the new people are dominating, cruel and cannibalistic. No reader can miss the feminine nature of the aggressed, and the masculine nature of the aggressor. Taking advantage of this unpreparedness of the Neanderthals, the new people become the prototypes of the modern-day European colonisers and usurpers. Although fraught with idyllic possibilities, this feminine dependency of the Neanderthals makes them quite vulnerable, whereas the masculine mastery of the nature puts the new men in a dominating position. The value of the graphic quality of the novel is very high because it lays bare the central ideological position of Golding as a postcolonial thinker. The theme of vulnerability of this kind is also played out in *Lord of the Flies*, in which Ralph, Simon and Piggy are placed in the position of the Neanderthals, and Jack and his tribe are placed in the position of the new men; the hunters, warriors and killers but now conveniently disguised as painted savages. The pig's head and the Castle Rock become the metaphor of this domination and mastery over nature, whereas the conch and the glass become the

metaphor for vulnerability. Although not exactly like Lok, Piggy becomes the mouthpiece of good sense and harmonious living, as he raises his rational voice of good sense and commonweal, ““Which is better – to be a pack of painted niggers like you are, or to be sensible like Ralph is?”... “Which is better – to have rules and agree, or to hunt and kill?”... “Which is better, law and rescue, or hunting and breaking things up?”” (Golding *Lord* 221-222). But there are no takers of his plea, both the new men and Jack and his tribe hunt and kill the Other, scar the landscape and turn the islands into hell.

The manifestation of the feminine is also visible in matter of death also; death is another form of oneness with nature. As Oa the earth goddess is the universal womb, death is viewed as a going back to the womb, this also symbolically heralds new birth. When Mal dies, his body is placed inside the earth in a foetal position. “Mal, in fact, never intends to alienate the mother from the child, or the maternal from the people, as we infer from the posture of his body at his burial service” (Sugimura 284). Lok’s curling himself in a foetal position to invite death also emphasises the bond with the maternal. This primordial posture of birth and death is extended to modern man’s island existence. Island is not merely a setting in Golding’s novel, it is emblematic of essential human condition. The fear of separation from the mainstream or the loss of the symbolic order is part and parcel of the post-empire British psyche. This is evident in Pincher Martin’s struggle for survival on his imaginary rock, “As Martin’s struggle continues, it becomes clear that the watery element symbolizes his alienation from the heart of humanity, an alienation which his present physical separation serves to highlight and focus” (Granofsky 53). The repeated allusion of the cellar and pit in *Pincher Martin*, *Free Fall* and *The Spire* also points to the loss of the symbolic order that the new men in *The Inheritors* suffer. The new people’s departing boat in *The Inheritors* and the boat-shaped island of the boys in *Lord of the Flies* are both engulfed either by water or by fire, and so is Pincher Martin’s tooth-shaped rock-island, which is threatened by the sea and the black lightning. Jocelin’s island of the spire is engulfed and threatened by the element of air, and Jocelin tries to mitigate the ‘onslaught of the semiotic violence’ by viewing it as an upward waterfall. Directly standing over a pit, his spire is erected like a blatant phallus of masculine/paternal/symbolic order, and the pit is virtually filled with human sacrifices, sacrifices of the Other. This

association of the pit /womb with the repressed Other also indicates to the pitfall of the destruction of the feminine/semiotic order, leaving the symbolic order tottering in a perpetual state of collapse. If the spire is taken as a colonial structure, then the pit resembles the colonised Other, forming a semiotic-symbolic bond envisaged in the figure of Oa the earth goddess.

The curious episode of Lok's self-division is central to the understanding of this semiotic-symbolic disruption. Lok becomes one of the new people, and along with Lok, we also identify ourselves with the new men and realize what it is to be a new man, as Lok proudly asserts, "I am one of the new people" (Golding *Inheritors* 204). According to Virginia Tiger, it is an ironic evolution "from People to New People, from a kind of pre-lapsarian [precolonial] to a post-adamite, from a primitive to a contemporary mentality" (Tiger *Unmoved Target* 73). Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor comment, "In a tragic novel this is a finely comic scene; unique in Golding" (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 105). According to V. V. Subbarao, "Lok can be seen as a link between the two tribes. His agonizing experience – the feeling of strangeness and terror and the "convulsion of the understanding" (p. 194) – is, as it were, a primal breach in man's original spirit" (Subbarao 30). The original feminine spirit is lost, and in its place rises the sheer dominating pride of masculine spirit. With the collapse of the semiotic, symbolic functions in the realm of masculine nature, pointing towards a new order. As the Neanderthal child is accepted by Vivani and also by the new tribe, so also Tuami understands the futility of violence and cruelty. If Lok becomes a new man, so also Tuami becomes a Neanderthal to carry along the Neanderthal vision.

Through the transformation of Lok Golding is able to conflate the primitive with the natural, and is also able to posit a difference between the natural and the unnatural in human psychology. Golding's interest in primitivism as a counterpoint to twentieth century European civilization is as strong as the other modernist writers like Conrad, Eliot, Joyce, Lawrence and Yeats. Both *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors* are important studies in primitivism. In *Lord of the Flies*, primitivism is connected with savagery, but this savagery is a by-product of civilization, a civilization that constructs savagery as an attribute of the primitivism. In *The Inheritors*, primitivism is used to highlight the modern consciousness of paranoia

and guilt. Moreover, primitivism helps Golding to explain the Christian myth of the Fall in terms of nature, that the dissociation of sensibility with nature brings about the end of an epoch of communal/natural life, and brings in an epoch of egotistical communication with nature. As Virginia Tiger comments, “Egoistic communication and communal life are two of the alternatives which are dramatized here in *The Inheritors* as the tension between two different stages of human growth” (Tiger *Dark Fields* 98).

Thus nature becomes a witness and focal point of Golding’s thinking about postimperial human condition – of linking the primordial with its modern manifestation; and also the resolution and heightening of man’s duality, his sanity, probity and humanity, in the form of oneness with nature; and at the same time his alienation from nature, his essential illness, his insanity, his will to power and domination, worked out in terms of the feminine and the masculine, and also in terms of verticality and horizontality. Of course Golding does not celebrate the triumph of man over nature, rather he dwells on the vulnerability and hopelessness in the face of cruelty and brutality. By documenting the fall, chaos, loss and disintegration, Golding is able to turn his fiction into literature of evil, trauma and pathos, and the moral message that he posits conveys the sense of sheer grief. His treatment of nature shows him to be on the side of the oppressed Other, and a strong reminder of all the wrongs done to the Other in the history of colonialism. The elemental return is a lesson that man has to learn in the aftermath of the calamitous world wars and also of the liberatory decentring movement like decolonisation in the twentieth century European history.