Chapter III: Justice and the Implications of the Off-Campus History

The understanding of the patterns of subjugation based on the psychological defect of humanity, leads Golding to examine the role of history in perpetuating oppression and hatred against the other. Golding shows a fine judgement and insight when he divides history into two categories: the academic or campus history and the off-campus history. Golding's sense of justice emanates from this crucial categorization of history, the sense of justice that should be the cornerstone of our understanding of the human condition. The narrative of the oppression of the other is incomplete without this sense of justice. The pedagogical or academic knowledge is hollow without the virtue of justice. Golding's main thesis in his post-empire fiction is to point out the ignorance and arrogance of the British in their conception of evil as lying somewhere else, like in Germany or in other human beings. This conception of evil lying somewhere else and not within also creates the folly of nationalism. This is another way to wedge a division between us and them. The nationalistic jingoism is the real bane and obstacle in the way to understand humanity as an international or universal entity. In his essay "Fable" he tells in details about the nature and functioning of the campus and off-campus history, and it is necessary to quote him in details so that his idea of justice becomes clear. This is necessary because justice is a vital component in his postimperial melancholia, and his take on the role of off-campus history diagnoses the real malaise behind human cruelty and savagery which occupies the central place in the postwar and postimperial historical reality. His elaboration on the off-campus history is authoritative and definitive. History, according to Golding, the academic history is more or less objective in its evaluation of humanity's past, its past mistakes, past glories and this objective evaluation has the potential to lead the stability of humanity's future. But the off-campus history is subjective and is based on prejudice, and he says,

> Let us take, for example, the word 'history'. It seems to me that the word has two common meanings, each of them of awful importance. First there is what might be called academic, or if you like campus history. To my mind this is not only of importance, but of supreme importance...But there is another kind of force which we call history; and how

> uncontrollable that force is, even in the most detached of men was amusingly demonstrated to me only the other day...This is a different force from campus history. It is history felt in the blood and bones. Sometimes it is dignified by a pretty name, but I am not sure in my own mind, that it is ever anything but pernicious. However this is a political and historical question which we need not settle here and now. My point is that however pathetic or amusing we find these lesser manifestations of prejudice, when they go beyond a certain point no one in the world can doubt that they are wholly evil. Jew and Arab in the name of religion, Jew and Nordic in the name of race, Negro and white in the name of God knows what. (Golding *Hot Gates* 91-92)

The purpose of this lengthy quotation is to show how Golding articulates the pernicious qualities and practices of the off-campus history. If campus history universalises man's predicament and contributes to self-knowledge, off-campus history is based on prejudice and contributes to divisions in the name of religion, colour, race, creed and various conditions that man develops and faces on the face of earth. If campus history is fair-minded and of academic interest, off-campus history is felt in the blood and bones, like the operation of some internal or psychological mechanism of superiority and prejudice. It is because of this off-campus history that a sense of justice is well-nigh impossible. The whole rotten psychology of racial prejudice, hatred is a legacy of this off-campus history, which prevails behind our education and culture, as a way of judgement and behaviour of the other. Citing an anecdote of his visit to America and his interaction with his cab driver who was a Southerner on the history of American civil war and how the Southerner reacted indignantly to the fateful defeat of the American South to the American North, Golding shows the invariable and subterranean operation of the off-campus history in every culture and in every society, of the past wrongs and indignities that have no connection with today's reality, yet strongly manifested in people's attitude and behaviour.

> I am aware in myself of resents, indignations and perhaps fears which have nothing to do with today, with the England and Germany of today, in a word, with reality, but are there, nevertheless. I got them from off-

> campus history; and unless I make a conscious effort I shall hand them on. These impulses, prejudices, even perhaps these *just* hates which are nevertheless backward-looking are what parents luxuriating in cheap emotions can wish on their children without being properly conscious of it and so perpetuate division through the generations. (Golding *Hot Gates* 92)

In Golding's opinion, off-campus history is responsible for the racial or communal bias and thus it is harmful in its working. It is because of the lessons of the off-campus history that the divisions in the human ranks are perpetrated and perpetuated. When the defects of the society are traced back to human nature, they are found embedded in the psychology of hatred, prejudice and fear; created and cultivated by the sheer force of the off-campus history. If history is designed to create an atmosphere of sympathy and justice, the forces of off-campus history are against sympathy and justice, "They are a failure of human sympathy, ignorance of facts, the objectivizing of our own inadequacies so as to make a scapegoat" (Golding *Hot Gates* 94). The whole issue of savagery, a burning topic in his fiction, is an illustration of this. This polemic about savagery is well investigated by Alan Sinfield in his book *Literature, Politics and Culture in Postwar Britain* of which mention has been made in the 'Introduction'. The post-empire adjustment of the Orientalist technique in attributing savagery to the other as a yardstick to judge the European self is itself a part of the off-campus history of exonerating itself in the face of the campus history of the European savagery against the other. The relentless Orientalist blame game and campaign to undermine the other/Third World is pointed out by Stefan Hawlin in his analysis of *Lord of the Flies* which has already been referred to in earlier discussion in the previous chapters. Like Hawlin, Sinfield also finds the agenda of off-campus history in Golding's treatment of savagery. Sinfield's observations and arguments are interesting because they are capable of throwing Golding's view of bias back to Golding himself. Discovering the off-campus element in Golding's fiction may be a way of showing him as a colonialist writer, but at the same time what cannot be ignored is that his acknowledgement and theorizing of the off-campus history itself is a way of showing how an understanding of justice and morality can be formed from the manifestation of off-campus history, and even shows the way to get rid of its foul and troubling presence. The dead

parachutist in *Lord of the Flies* is Golding's figure of off-campus history, which maintains its disturbing presence on the mountaintop, until Golding's saint-figure Simon disentangles it from the indignities of air, releasing it to be flown into the ocean; with a necessary demonstration of sympathy and love, but for which he has to sacrifice his own life, a worthy role for a modern Christ in a chaotic world, thus helping to redeem the world of ignorance and fear. Golding further elaborates his view of the off-campus history in a pertinent manner with illustration from his own novel.

> The whole point about off-campus history is that it is...What the grown-ups send them[the boys in *Lord of the Flies*] is indeed a sign, that arbitrary sign stands for off-campus history, the thing which threatens every child everywhere, the history of blood and intolerance, of ignorance and prejudice, the thing which is dead but won't lie down...it is perhaps worth noticing that this figure [the dead parachutist] which is dead but won't lie down, falls on the very place where the children are making their own constructive attempt to get themselves helped...The great effort at international sanity fell before the pressures of nationalism which were founded in ignorance, jealousy, greed – before the pressures of off-campus history which was dead but would not lie down. (Golding *Hot Gates* 94-96)

The development of thought in this quotation leads to a clarity of our understanding regarding why human society fails in stopping the grim human condition that recurs in the European history. Golding's point is all too clear. The boys try to build a civilization, but that ends up in blood and terror because of the pressures of off-campus history. History provides a direction towards controlling our future, but the off-campus history although dead, refuses to lie down and raises its ugly head to disrupt all hope and sympathy. Wisdom is murdered, like Simon and Piggy. Golding's insight into the evil of off-campus mindset helps to understand how and why the beast rises in all of us, nobody is exempt from this. Writing against the backdrop of Nazi savagery, holocaust, atom bomb, he probes deeper into the very malaise of human nature; he is not content with depicting the symptoms. In his Aeschylean pursuit of the truth, he reads into the images of life in order to get to the

signified, even though he considers the signs arbitrary. This comprises the optic and semiotic in his novels. Kenneth Woodroofe in his article "*Lord of the Flies*: Trust the Tale" however raises a point on the arbitrariness of Golding's figure of the off-campus history, and his objection has some merit of justification. Woodroofe points out the weakness in Golding's argument regarding the dead parachutist being the figure of off-campus history.

> But how many readers would guess that this is what it symbolizes? Would they not conclude that the sign coming from the adult world does in fact represent that the adult essentially is, not wisdom or commonsense, but rottenness and disease? But what might have happened if the wisdom and commonsense that Golding acknowledges is to be found in the world of grown-ups had arrived instead? Is there nothing in man that can deal with this monster of prejudice and ill-will? If there is not, then we are doomed to despair. (Woodroofe 51-52)

There is no doubt that despair about human nature is one key element in Golding's fiction. And he assumes the role of a fabulist and moralist in his fiction in order to overcome this pessimism by didacticism. The prime motive of his didacticism is to let the wind of self-knowledge blow all around the individual and this self-knowledge will be the basis of a moral human being, whose only justification will be justice and sympathy. Referring to Sylvere Monod's analysis of *Free Fall* Woodroofe comments that Monod

> has pointed out that for the awareness of the evil in man to be a gain and not a dead loss we must step beyond the desolate perception. Monod rightly declares that "in the face of evil in man and doom in the world little can be done. But that little must be done." It must. (Woodroofe 52)

This emphasis on the precious little that must be done to improve the human quality index by incorporating a sense of justice and compassion that may transform the ugly world into a beautiful place to live in, makes Golding an optimist and he calls himself "a universal pessimist but a cosmic optimist" (Golding *A Moving Target* 201) although the two terms universal and cosmic carry the same meaning. In order to make the two terms distinct he offers this explanation.

> ...when I consider a universe which the scientist constructs by a set of rules which stipulate that his constructs must be repeatable and identical, then I am a pessimist and bow down before the great god Entropy. I am optimistic when I consider the spiritual dimension which the scientist's discipline forces him to ignore. (Golding *A Moving Target* 204)

Reclamation of the spiritual dimension that is lost to the scientific humanism and restoring it to its rightful place are what Golding aims at in his fiction. This is the way of the human redemption from the savagery and atrocity, and the hell that is unleashed by the off-campus history. One sign of this spiritual dimension is goodness, and the belief in goodness is necessary for creativity, and creativity is the way out of the hell we inhabit (Golding *A Moving Target* 201-202). It is in this affirmation of the ultimate and absolute Good, however metaphysical it may sound, that Golding shows a way out from the dystopia of our postmodern times.

The sense of justice is connected with the creative spirit of mankind, as artistic sympathy leads to a cathartic world of purgation, purification and clarification. The Aristotelian vision of the emotional involvement with the human tragedy results in an emotional equilibrium necessary for perspicuity that leads to proper understanding of the self, so that one becomes sadder and wiser. Golding's novels are tragedies, laced with savagery and death, and these thematic strands indicate conflict, or a world at war with itself, and in need of equilibrium in the sense of parity, equality and even poetic justice. The wounds, the scars need a healing touch and the artist makes do through his artistic representation what is lost and gone. The preservation of the sense of goodness and justice is what one looks for in art and this quality renders art its true merit from the perspective of the oppressed and subjugated. This becomes clear in the way all great art dwells on the theme of death. And it is useful to look into how and why Golding depicts death in his novels.

There is no doubt that Golding's novels are the artistic way of taking cognizance of the crime and punishment, of injustices and wrongs, of trials and unmitigated deaths, done in human history by the superior to the inferior. Like T. S. Eliot, Golding makes war a metaphor for all these, collating colonialism with expansion and war. Writing from the post-empire context, Golding however makes

the World War II as a frame of reference for all the savagery and atrocity done in human history. He himself took part in the war and saw war first hand. So it would not be wrong to say that his fictional world is the cathartic world of a World War II veteran. Like all sensitive beings of his time, he was most probably repelled by the genocide and holocaust of the war that were perpetrated not by primitive savages but by the civilised and educated people like him (Golding *Hot Gates* 87). By blaming the atrocities committed by the educated civilised men, Golding puts the onus of the wrongdoing on the enlightened centre rather than the unenlightened margin. Repelled as he was by the morbidity of atrocity, Golding did not swing into political activism to correct the historical wrongs done by men on other men. But unlike his contemporaries, unlike writers like Gunter Grass in Germany or Kenzaburo Oe in Japan who preferred to swing into political activism, Golding preferred to look at the saga of atrocity as symptomatic of the fallen nature of man because, in his now-famous words, any sensitive person who experienced the war must have felt the that man is fallen and therefore evil (Golding *Hot Gates* 87). So he did not write vivid political allegories, rather he veiled them with the disintegration of man's rational intelligence, with the help of the Christian myth of the Fall that came to him handy as the central metaphor of a violent spatio-temporal dislocation/displacement of man that in his view permanently separated the physical world from the spiritual. By carefully developing the image of man in a free fall condition, Golding was able, on the one hand, to provide the objective correlative of the violence and monstrosity that usually characterised the postwar literature, and on the other hand, to explore the darkness which is "the central symbol for the spiritual dimension" (Tiger *Dark Fields* 16) in Golding's fiction. Death becomes the interface between the physical and the spiritual, between the scientist's world and the artist's. The entropy of the scientist's created universe points towards a thermodynamic equilibrium, whereas death in the artist's world brings about a thermodynamic disequilibrium, a world of chaos and disintegration. Moreover there is another dimension in Golding's treatment of death, as life is viewed as an island – surrounded by the darkness of water and there appears a curious connection between death and water in his fiction. It may be part of the island complex of the British psychology. As Gillian Beer in an essay on Virginia Woolf entitled "The island and the aeroplane: the case of Virginia Woolf" points out that the "unborn child first experiences itself as surrounded by

wetness, held close within the womb" and then becomes "an island, an isolation, in the severance of birth" (Beer 271). Death seems to return the being to the primal water. This is true with the violent deaths of Simon, Piggy and Pincher Martin. Moreover, There is a connection between womb and the tomb in Golding's fiction, which is a recurrent motif in the poetry of Dylan Thomas. The death of Lok and Pangall connect the being with the womblike pit or the hollow in the earth.

Golding's emotional involvement with the saga of oppression is evident in the death scenes in his novels. Gathering the pathos with his linguistic capacities he makes himself a collector of deaths, even when the deaths are unaccounted for, like the death of the Mulberry boy in *Lord of the Flies*, and the death of Pangall in *The Spire.* Death becomes a subtext in his fiction, a subtext of protest against man's inhumanity, against what a man can do to another man. Ironically, those who raise a voice of protest like Simon, Piggy and Pangall are ritually murdered. Or hunted down like Ralph, by a mob. The mob mentality and lynching is another point of study in his fiction. Pangall the old caretaker of the cathedral, physically deformed and misshapen, and who raises a voice of protest against the intrusion into his cottage – his kingdom – by the masons, a kingdom that he preserves like an old guard, is mocked, bullied and finally killed in a riot, and his body is thrown into the pit below the spire. His name is a pun of Pan – the Greek god of lust and fertility, and gall – which means bitterness and rancour. Pan and gall are antithetical, and he is chosen a fool by the workmen. The death of Pangall is viewed from various angles. The mistletoe at his chest evokes the Nordic myth of Balder who was slain by his opponent cunningly. The kingdom of which Pangall is fiercely protective makes him a pagan king who is overthrown by the expansion of Christianity; that Pangall is a killed like a pagan is also another angle of his death. His physical deformity makes his role that of a Fool who is sacrificed for the sake of a lucky charm needed by the masons whose death may bring to them good luck in the construction of the spire, "feeling the need for more potent magic to keep their luck going on the insane project, have ritually slaughtered Pangall and thrown him as an offering into the pit at the crossways" (Boyd 99). What is so important in the treatment meted out to Pangall by the masons is the abuse of Pangall. The jeering and hounding of Pangall is not unfamiliar in society, by which the subaltern members of society are opressed in a systematic way, either overtly or covertly. The

masons are outsiders, they not only take possession of Pangall's cottage, but also make him homeless in his own home. The severity of Pangall's fate reminds us of the helplessness of a marked-out victim in the face of superior tactics and mob mentality.

Thus Golding's novels give the impression that man has reached a moral dead-end and his life is a matter of sheer grief. However, Golding is not an utter pessimist, but like Thomas Hardy, is a meliorist. His sense of justice that he brings to bear in his fiction helps him to move in the direction of meliorism. As a fabulist, his avowed mission is to inculcate the truth that "man suffers from an appalling ignorance of his own nature" (Golding "The Writer" 46). Self-knowledge is essential for man's moral evolution and Golding firmly believes that the evolutionary process would produce *homo moralis*, the ideal moral human being who will neither grab nor rob nor kill (Golding *Moving Target* 184). If there is a question of change, then man has to change his nature for better, only then society will be perfect. Golding's message appears to be simple and vehement because without the moral people society will neither be perfect nor any social system will ever succeed to work effectively (Golding *Moving Target* 184). Once society is perfected, the shadow of war and oppression that always looms large over humanity may also be removed, the patterns of subjugation will get blurred, and there may be no more genocide and holocaust, or unnecessary sad and wilful destruction of human lives. As a meliorist and a devotee of justice, Golding believes that an effective moral order produced through *homo moralis* may be the real antidote to all the social and political ills that always beset humanity.

The novels are studies of human criminality and human propensity for evil. Elements of criminality and trial happen in his novels. In one sense the novels are centred on human trial either for survival or for punishment. As Lucy E. Haagen in her essay "English Class as Courtroom" observes,

> Trials do not always occur in courtrooms, and frequently in literature. We encounter characters judged by extralegal courts...Literature offers characters who, though their creators choose not to have them tried, perform deeds which qualify them to stand trial...Jack, leader of the

> hunters in Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, could be tried for theft, arson, and murder. (Haagen 77-78)

Criminality is part and parcel of the characterization as well as of the action in Golding's fiction. And like death, trial is also a conspicuous element in his fiction. The boys in *Lord of the Flies* have a free run of the island, first indulging in games and fun, and gradually shedding their civilized inhibitions to become ruthless killers. Only at the end they are put to trial by the naval officer who cannot understand what they did and what they underwent during their stay on the island. However, the naval officer comments on their plight with the observation that they should have put up a better show as British boys, like the boys in R. M. Ballantyne's 1885 novel, *The Coral Island*. Ballantyne's boys are made a yardstick to judge Golding's boys to prove their failure to live up to British expectation. The boys also do not divulge the violence and deaths they witnessed. Possibly they will not be a part of a formal trial unlike the children in Richard Hughes's 1929 novel, *A High Wind in Jamaica.* "One of the curious features of the twentieth century," writes Philip Thody, "has been the way in which the authors have, in a sense, gone back to a pre-Rousseauist view of childhood which sees children as capable of all the unpleasantness of adults, though on a smaller scale" (Thody 83). Perhaps that is why the naval officer as an adult does not enquire deeper into the mess the boys made, but looks away smugly at his cruiser. Similarly in *The Inheritors*, if a trial had to take place, the new men like Tuami would not have been able to look at the eyes of the Neanderthals whom they exterminated. It is in *Pincher Martin*, a moral trial takes place on an afterlife rock, where Pincher is broken down part by part, or rather uncreated, to reveal all his crimes. Pincher in his trial is pitted against the black lightning which acts like an elemental judge and priest who presides over Pincher's disintegration. The novel is like a confession extracted out of a dead man's consciousness. A proper confessional novel happens in *Free Fall* in which Sammy Mountjoy confesses all his past experiences in order to know his own main transgression in life that has cost him his moral/spiritual freedom. The confession climaxes in its central scene which comprises his interrogation by a German psychologist Dr. Halde in a Nazi prison camp. Dr. Halde tries to make him betray his fellow prison inmates. This incident is interpreted by the critics as a parallel to the temptation of Jesus by Satan. However one can see the shadow of the Spanish inquisition in the interrogation of Sammy by

Dr. Halde. As Sammy refuses to obey Dr. Halde, he is thrown into a dark cell for further torture, where he undergoes the terror and revulsion of his life and also the epiphanic moment. In *The Spire*, Jocelin is interrogated by the Visitor who enquires about his state of mental health and the state of affairs at his cathedral. And Jocelin understands the full implication of this interrogation – that he is on trial. The Visitor takes note of the situation of chaos at the cathedral and blames Jocelin for it. He calls the workmen criminals, although Jocelin tries to defend them, and also tries to defend his action. By siding with the workmen, Jocelin finds himself on the side of the oppression and sin. The Visitor stands for the sane and rational voice, that shows Jocelin in the grip of madness. In Golding's fiction, there is always a voice of sanity and reason – however weak and misplaced – which is either trampled or silenced, and oppression prevails. Facing their forms of trial, Pincher Martin, Sammy Mountjoy and Jocelin show signs of mental illness and insanity. Possibly one purpose of trial and interrogation in Golding's fiction is to put the oppressor in the place of the oppressed, the master in the place of the slave, the victimiser in the place of the victim, in the way of the table turned.

There is another aspect of this sense of justice, the balancing of science and technology by belief and faith. Science and technology is an extension of reason, and comes handy to save man caught in a struggle for survival. The boys in *Lord of the Flies* feel the need to light a fire, and use Piggy's glasses to create a fire, exhibiting great faith for humanity. But ironically those who lack faith in humanity eventually become the possessor of it, to become destroyer of nature and culture. The new people in *The Inheritors* use tools and weapons, but they show no faith in humanity, and become the destroyer of both nature and humanity. Pincher Martin, a war victim in the sense he got killed in a war, shows capacity to use science and technology in order to survive on the rock, but he has no faith in humanity or God. Jocelin in his fanatic bid to erect the spire on his cathedral at all cost, compels Roger the master mason to follow his risky job. And Roger mason uses steel contraption to keep the pillars at their place so that they may be able to carry the load of the spire. More and more Roger uses science and technology to keep the whole structure stable, the more and more he starts to lose faith in humanity, and becomes an inhuman alcoholic. Jocelin on the other hand, turn to sheer superstitious faith of getting a nail from Rome in order to keep the tottering spire stable by fixing it on the

top of the spire. It is in the figure of Jocelin that faith and love in humanity is reinstated and reasserted, as he gradually sees himself one with the spire, and also one with the workmen. Redolent with this faith and love, the spire becomes the upward waterfall and an appletree, all suggestive of a paradise regained. And the death of Jocelin also affirms in this faith in humanity and God, "Father Adam, leaning down, could hear nothing. But he saw a tremor of the lips that might be interpreted as a cry of: *God! God! God!* So of the charity to which he had access, he held the Host on the dead man's tongue" (Golding *Spire* 223).

Finally, what we can see emerging from his fiction is a form of apology, an apology for human weakness and wickedness, that bring about cruelty and suffering to the innocent and the meek. His observation that the beast that arose in Nazi Germany, might well have arisen in England or in any other place, can be extended and be held true to the post-empire world. That Golding is not merely committing himself to the cause of the empire, but in the post-empire time also registering a voice of apology for the misdeeds done to the colonized world; and his conception of justice is not merely metaphysical but also political. One way to read his fiction is to read it as a well-meaning response to evil in order to eradicate it. Considering the fact that literature is always doing penance for evil done to man by man, there is enough reason to read Golding as a post-empire novelist who is offering apology for the atrocity of the British colonialists. The late Twentieth Century has witnessed a steady stream of apologies from world leaders and others related to the generation of the perpetrators of crimes done to another nation. As Janna Thompson has pointed out in her essay "The Apology Paradox" that an outbreak of apology has since swept the globe which is symptomatic of the cultural atmosphere of apology and forgiveness (Thompson 470).

> An outbreak of apology has swept the globe. Bill Clinton has apologized for slavery, Tony Blair for British policy during the Irish potato famine. The Canadian Government has apologized to indigenous communities for breaking up their families and to Japanese Canadians for putting their families in internment camps during World War II. The Vatican has apologized for its failure to condemn the Nazi treatment of Jews, Queen Elizabeth for the British exploitation of the Maoris. The Japanese

> government has apologized to Korean women who were forced into prostitution during World War II, and some former government officials in South Africa have apologized for their behaviour during the period of apartheid. (Thompson 470)

Thus historically it becomes clear that there is always a need for rendering apology in order to keep the record clean in the changed situation in the wake of decolonisation, and also to clear oneself of the mortification of guilt. The unburdening of the memories of atrocities and guilt takes the form of either a political apology or a literary apology as happens with Golding and many other postwar writers. This rendering an apology, direct or indirect – political or literary, connects apology to trauma. Trauma becomes the essence of the contemporary sensibility and historical context, and war becomes the metaphor of all atrocities committed against the weak, meek and the colonized subaltern. Virginia Tiger finds that Golding's fiction is written "under the indirect presence of such great traumas as Belsen, Dachau, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the direct presence of the Cold War" (Tiger *Unmoved Target* 24). Since Golding's unique experience regarding the Holocaust formed the genesis of *Lord of the Flies*, the novel can properly be categorized as what Laurence Langer calls 'the literature of atrocity.' Paul Crawford also finds the Holocaust as "central to Golding's early fiction" (Crawford 77) and groups *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors* together under the heading 'Literature of Atrocity.' According to Langer, the significance of the Holocaust on European literary imagination is immense, because of its high symbolic value. Nicola King has similar opinion, as she sums up the significance of the Holocaust as a momentous event in human history that "even after Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, seems to stand, at least in the West, as the paradigm of atrocity" (King 94). For Langer also, Dachau, Auschwitz or Hiroshima are no longer just place names with grim historical associations, because they

> have been absorbed into the collective memory of the human community as independent symbol of a quality of experience more subtle, complex and elusive than the names themselves can possibly convey. The existence of Dachau and Auschwitz as historical phenomena has altered not only our conception of reality, but its very nature. (Langer xii)

It can be pointed out here that these observations made by Langer and King are later articulation of the effects of the Holocaust on next generations, whereas Golding's observation on the holocaust is rather direct and heartfelt experience of it. According to his own admission, this colossal event prompted him to a kind of soul-searching regarding human nature and also to question the efficacy of all social and political systems which were supposed to perfect most people and reduce aberrance. Golding however refuses to be biased and provincial in his attitude towards the rise of a particular evil called off-campus history that got manifested through Hitler and the Nazis. This is clear from Golding's *Lord of the Flies* as the novel seems to expose the futility of racial chauvinism and smugness which often make history biased and provincial. The naval officer appears to come out straight from *The Coral Island* to Golding's island with an air of smugness to snigger at the boys, with a tone of disapproval of what the boys have done on the island, that should have rather thought that a pack of British boys could have done better than what they actually have done, and questioned their British origin in an emasculating manner (Golding *Lord* 248). In the aftermath of the World War II and the loss of Empire, Golding has no hesitation in condemning the *The Coral Island* type of British mentality and jingoism that produced the naval officer's smugness and sniggering attitude. Golding makes an emotional assessment of this British attitude in "Fable" by saying that this British propensity of attributing evil to some external source or another nation is grossly unjustified. The British tend to think that as Germany or the beast is defeated, they are safe because they are not cruel and selfish like the Germans. But according to Golding, the beast or evil may rise its ugly head anywhere, even in his own country, nobody is immune or safe from this evil (Golding *Hot Gates* 89).

It is now understood that the eschatological experiences and imaginings of the contemporary history inform the teleology of Golding's fable in *Lord of the Flies.* Henri Talon comments perceptively, "Morally wounded by the extreme barbarity and sadism that the Second World War disclosed in the heart of supposedly civilized Man, Golding chose to project his spiritual uneasiness into a picture of children's hatred and deadly combats" (Talon 296). It is also historically true that Hitler's unparalleled cruelty stemmed from his greed for power and false notion of superiority of the Aryan race over the Semitic race, a classic example of

off-campus history. Thus as a demonstration of the ill-effects of the off-campus history, Hitler's greed for power and false sense of superiority that led to the Holocaust also becomes the pattern of the story of Golding's first novel which can be seen basically as a story of power struggle between Ralph, who acts like a democratically elected leader and Jack, who acts like a dictator. Virginia Tiger has also pointed out the historically grounded nature of the novel's story, which vindicates that the social traits and habits of the boys make Golding's island-world "a microcosm of *middle-class* wartime 1940s English society" (Tiger *Unmoved Target* 30). The novel is highly successful in highlighting the social dynamics of the British people that contribute to their narrow, sectarian, partisan and insular ideas regarding their own moral superiority and the moral inferiority of the Other. It is the background of war that brings into focus the role of these social dynamics and class values in the novel. Regarding the use of war, it can be said that war is used as a frame in the novel very schematically, with the war elements playing a major role in the background, like the atomic war in Europe, the evacuation of the boys in the midst of it, their plane which was carrying them coming under attack over the Pacific, the release of the passenger tube and the remaining wreckage of the plane falling on the island, the disruption in the boys' society caused by the dead parachutist, and the arrival of the naval officer in full battle gear. These war elements provide the novel a science-fiction quality and a contemporary look. Considered from the thematic point of view also, the novel takes up the theme of war – however limited in scope, as is seen in the story of a group of boys aged between six to twelve. The boys are affected by fear in a vicious manner, suffering from paranoia and undergoing mindless violence and an embittered struggle for power. This aspect of the novel make it a parable of war-ravaged modern world where cruelty "as a byproduct of the struggle for survival has been replaced by manifestly senseless savagery" (Tallis 11). However there is a twist regarding savagery, as the war theme is manifested in Jack and his tribe's literally reverting to savagery by painting their bodies with war-paints and rending the air with their terrifying war-cry 'Kill the pig! Cut the throat! Spill her blood!' Like in any real war, here in the novel the word 'kill' becomes an intransitive verb for them. Golding's savages carry about them an infected gusto and callous abandon of the martial air and their attitude to death is epitomized in the passage in which they

recount the event of a pig killing, which is one of the key passages in the novel. And ironically from pig hunting they are soon graduated to the hunting of enemies. Hunting thus becomes a metaphor for war; the arrival of the naval officer in the *deus-ex-machina* god-like role of a saviour also widens the moral dimension of the boys's story from the boys' world to the adult world in general, because the naval officer may play the role of a saviour of the boys, but he and his trim cruiser as part of the war machinery will be going on hunting the enemies, with all the moral smugness of the adult world which the boys are not capable of showing. Thus war becomes an oblique but necessary story element that connects with the thematic manifestation of evil in order to show one important aspect of the human nature – human aggression which is both an evolutionary trait in the face of fear and also the senseless outcome of hatred and anger; the hatred and anger are driven by man's propensity to bow down to the off-campus history and be ruthlessly directed against the Other. The novel becomes a veritable critique of the folly and atrocities of war.

Golding's intent of apology is much more embedded than obvious, his novels can be read as an objective corelative of the apology in the same way that the poetry of Walt Whitman can be read as an objective corelative of the apology on the white atrocities done against the black people of America. This is corroborated by the oblique references to the holocaust. Thus in *Lord of the Flies*, the rational fire dies down, the irrational fire engulfs the entire island, a reminiscent of the Holocaust which literally means 'whole burning'. The Holocaust is a deep psychological scar and according to Nicola King, it "seems to stand at least in the West, as a paradigm of atrocity" (King 94). The shadow of the Holocaust looms large in Golding's fiction. In *The Inheritors*, Golding moves from a science fiction background to the prehistoric times to show how the whole Neanderthal race is exterminated, wiped out of existence by superior new people. The whole novel is a chronicle of death, with each death contributing to the final moment of atrocity in the death of Lok, the last Neanderthal. The story begins with a group of Neanderthals moving to their summer-time location near the water. The ice-age is coming to an end and the new people have already arrived to pose a threat to their habitat. That their habitat has undergone a change in the meantime is indicated by the disappearance of the log that they used in the past to cross over a stream and which has been taken away by the new people for making a canoe. In

the absence of the log, the young ones cross the stream by jumping. Mal, the old Neanderthal, cannot jump and enters the water. Since water is harmful for these furry creatures, Mal falls ill and suffers a slow agonizing death. The death of the most experienced Mal puts the entire herd into jeopardy. Even before they can settle down in their new location, Ha disappears mysteriously leaving behind only her scent and the scent of another man. Tracing Ha's scent, Fa, the most intelligent woman in the group, becomes aware of the presence of the other. But it is only after Liku is carried away in a canoe, and Nil and the old woman are killed, Fa is able to articulate her fear about the new people (Golding *Inheritors* 133). In their effort to rescue Liku and the new one that Fa and Lok learn the ways of the new people. In a botched attempt to rescue Liku, Fa is shot with an arrow and later falls into the water of the fall. Fa's death marks the end of the Neanderthals, since she is the last surviving woman of theNeanderthals. Alone and doomed, like Ralph in *Lord of the Flies*, Lok accepts his own death as no god is present to save him. His death becomes the most poignant scene in the novel. With his death, the Neanderthals are taken back into Oa, the Mother Goddess, who is responsible for their existence. Lok's dying in a foetal position is symbolic of their merging into Oa. The death scenes in Golding's fiction is both graphic and poetic, as seen in the case of Simon and Piggy's death, and Lok's death is especially designed to be quite poignant, as he lies inside the earth and gradually inhibits his breathing (Golding *Inheritors* 221), is sure to arouse sympathy of the reader at the helplessness of the mortals. Through depicting the death of Lok, Golding is clearly in sympathy with the Neanderthals, the pre-rational and pre-fall innocent creatures who are taken for devils by the new people and are mistakenly represented as monsters by H. G. Wells in his *Outline of History* and his short story "The Grisly Folk". In their uncorrupted innocence, the Neanderthals are inclined to love the Other, which is not reciprocated by the paranoid new people. Golding ridicules Wells's assumptions that the Neanderthals were gorilla-like monsters with possibly cannibalistic tendencies (*Outline of History*), and that almost certainly the Neanderthals and the true men must have met and fought ("The Grisly Folk"). Let alone warfare, the thought of resistance against the new people's aggression is absent in the mind of Neanderthals; they cannot even understand bow and arrow, or any other tool used by the new people. They eat

their own dead people, but more as an "act of love" (Medcalf 17) than to satisfy their hunger. They do not kill because, unlike the new people, they can live on eggs, reeds and the frog jelly, whereas the new people kill the Neanderthal girl Liku to eat her. The shift of the narrative viewpoint from the Neanderthals to the new men in the last chapter encapsulates the irony embedded in Wells's theory of the Neanderthals, for it is the inheritors who are suffering from paranoia and aggression and who inherit the earth from the innocent and the meek in a violent and insensitive way, constantly fearing them and mindlessly killing them. The recurring pattern of subjugation of the other from the beginning of human history prompts Golding to look at the problem closely and he absolves the Neanderthals from the charges of aggression and cannibalism. The reader is also left to sympathise with the helplessness of the big, furry creatures who are constitutionally incapable of understanding what peril they are now in. The history of their decimation closely resembles the history of Europe's colonization of the American continent and the eventual destruction of the indigenous people. Writing about the childlike gullibility and the helplessness of the native Americans and their predicament, Robert E. Spiller comments,

> It seems to be a law of nature that any species will rapidly become extinct when confronted with a sudden change in environment or with a new foe whose ways it does not understand. The fact that the American Indian retreated and suffered is not necessarily an evidence of his inferiority. He left an indelible stamp upon the imagination of his conqueror. (Spiller 3)

This is also true of Golding's Neanderthals. That they have left an indelible stamp upon the imagination of the new people is evident from the brooding thoughts of Tuami at the end of the novel. Golding's moral tale is concerned with the paranoia and aggression which are inherent in human nature and are responsible for what in postcolonial theory called the 'Othering'.

It is against this role of the off-campus history that Golding's sense of justice comes handy as the eternal spirit of cosmic optimism, always keeping a vigil against the universal pessimism. It is this fine sense of differentiation that prevents Golding's stated difference between universal pessimism and cosmic optimism

from getting reduced to a mere quibble. The sense of justice in Golding's fiction opens up a moral and spiritual dimension outside the smugness of scientific humanism and the prejudice of the off-campus history. The spiritual dimension that is lost to the modern man is recovered and kept alive by placing faith in humanity, and the ambience of goodwill is created by the judicious act of apology underlying in his fiction. If his treatment of nature is designed to sympathise with the oppressed and subjugated, the moral circuit of his fiction that makes the oppressors come face to face with their true being and see their true murderous/fallen nature, is corroborated and upheld by his saint-figures, which is the point of discussion in the next chapter. As an embodiment of love, Golding's saint-figures constitute a message of truth, love and peace in the chaotic age of end of innocence, atrocity and oppression. The message fails in the short run, but in the long run, it delivers a sense of hope and faith in the recovery of fallen humanity; as Kenneth Allsop ends his book *The Angry Decade* with this line. "Love has a wider application, and it is that which needs describing wherever it can be found so that we may all recognise it and learn its use" (Allsop 208). Tracing the defects of society back to human nature leads Golding to understand the failure of sympathy in a godless world of cruelty, savagery, aggression and domination – the loss of innocence and the darkness of the heart. The heart of light is provided by the saint figures, and Golding's message is almost religious – the violence and aggression cannot be repelled by violence and aggression, or by revenge, but by true understanding and sympathy, mercy and love. A better world order is possible only by a change of heart and with justice, apology and understanding. The moral lesson in his fiction is not merely that of evil, but of the flicker of goodness, so long the novelist turns a fabulist, and journeys from pessimism to meliorism/optimism. Golding's dystopia also contains a utopia, in which the sense of justice and sacrifice becomes a key to the preservation and continuation of humanity.