

Research Paper

'Golding's Women': Free Fall 1 and The Spire 2

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William Gerald Golding, the Nobel Laureate of the year 1983, wrote novels in the Post-World war II period. His war experiences taught him '---- not fighting, politics or the follies of nationalism, but about the given nature of man.'3The war shattered his faith in humanity. He was shocked to see cruelties and atrocities committed by elites. He saw morality disappearing from the social life Golding thought it is the duty of writer to make people understand their own self. He became introvert. His Free Fall appeared in 1959 and the Spire in 1964.

Golding projects in Free Fall the story of Samuel Mountjoy. He is a P.O.W. in a Nazi concentration camp. His loneliness reminds him of his past. He reviews his life and his childhood flashes before his eyes. He lives in slum area, called Rotten Row. He lives there with his mother. She is 'enormous'. He does not remember his father who is 'like a tadpole invisible to the naked. eye'(14) nor does his mother tells him about him. Only in his Ma's stories father's 'identity ranges from parson to Prince of Wales'4 appears. Sammy's mother is the only reality for him. Sammy's mother is rather enormous and he tells about it as 'apetite and a baby blew her up into an elephantine woman' (15) she is an alcoholic. Further Sammy describes her nature15as, 'she terrifies, but she does not frighten. She neglects, but she does not warp or exploit.'(15) She is not cruel. Though she is a fallen woman, she is not aggressive. In that slum she is the only guardian for him. He feels her presence like, 'The warm darkness between me and the cold light.'(15) Sammy is innocent. After Ma's death, Sammy becomes orphan and lives with Father Walts-Watt.

Golding projects Jocelin, the Dean in the novel The Spire. He is possessed with vision of a spire. He wants to build a four hundred –feet high spire on the old cathedral which is 'a bible in stone, and the spire his prayer rising from it.'5 The vision of the spire is man's vision, and, hence, it is tainted by man's motives. These motives emerge from his self regard. He chooses men for construction, and, he further, exploits them all. His chosen men are: the master – builder, Roger Mason; his 'dark haired, dark eyed and energetic' (43) wife, Rachel; Goody Pangall' 'daughter – in Good' (11) and lame care – taker, Pangall. Jocelin constrains them all to translate his vision into reality. Later he realizes his own folly and dies miserably.

There are two major women characters in the novel : Lady Alison, and Goody Pangall. Lady Alison is an aunt of Jocelin. She is a mistress of the old king. Jocelin does not like her. He always thinks himself as a chosen man, but he is 'guilty of pride, that first and deadliest of sins. He is riding for a fall.'6 Paradoxically enough, he does not hesitate to accept money from her 'sinner' aunt Alison. But finally he is shocked to discover that “...his aunt Alison, a favoured mistress of the old king, had urged the king to 'drop a plum is his mouth' out of no better motive that the whim to be generous to a sister

she really despised."7 She expects a place for her bones in the church grave yard. She often writes to Jocelin about this, but he remains passive to her queries. She notices that he sends replies to her questions regarding money. She understands her nephew. She thinks perhaps her immoral traffic with the king might have created a problem for Jocelin. Hence, she directly asks him: 'Are all the bones in your church sacrificed?'(28) Perhaps Jocelin does not find any answer to this question. She tells him that, 'I know and the world knows and you know, what my life has been. But all that ended with his death.'(27) Lady Alison is hopeful. She writes to Jocelin, 'you may say I have a small prospect of heaven, but my hope is better –' (28) She knows the power of many. She is sure that money can buy anything---- even a place for her bones in the church grave yard. Though churchmen assume that, 'women are dangerous and incomprehensible' (29) yet a 'sinner' (Lady Alison) helps to the cause of religion, and a 'saint' (Jocelin) accepts money from a sinner.

Goody Pangall '--- irresistible sexual charm'8 is another women character in the novel. Jocelin knows her from 'Preconstruction days as a shy, demure girl whose presence around the cloisters he enjoyed.'9 He keeps his lust for Goody to his heart only. He likes to keep it a secret. When he arranged Goody's marriage ' he had concealed from him it was the knowledge that Pangall was impotent and that he was delivering Goody over to him not as a husband but as eunuch commissioned to protect the object of his master's lust.' 10 Jocelin wants to keep her chaste. She has no choice but to accept. Egocentric, monomaniac, Jocelin wants to complete his spire. He notices that the master – builder is not willing to do the work. But Jocelin tries to persuade him by telling that they are chosen by God for this vision. Still Roger Mason expresses his inability to continue the work Jocelin then uses the card of Goody Pangall. She has a secret affair with the master- builder. The Dean thinks that she will keep Roger Mason at work. Their affair later turns into a death of Goody Pangall, in a child birth. Roger becomes alcoholic. His relations with his wife Rachel are like ' Keeper and Kept.'11 Ma, Lady Alison, Goody Pangall and Rachel have distinct role to play in the life of the protagonist. Ma is not aggressive, and she is not going to upset others. In her slum she goes on living with her son Samuel Mountjoy. She is a prostitute but

nowhere has she made any fuss about it. Goody Pangall and Lady Alison have some influence on the protagonist, Jocelin. Lady Alison is a mistress of the old king, and she becomes the source of money for the construction of the spire. She is benevolent and gives a lot of money for the construction. Goody Pangall to whom Jocelin has seen from her childhood days, is the wife of Pangall the caretaker. She remaining passive contributes her share for the construction of the spire. Golding's women characters are not aggressive, nor do they rebel against male dominated system. Like Henrik Ibsen's Nora (A Doll's House), Goody never acts against Jocelin. Even Lady Alison does not stop paying for the construction. In fact, she knows that Jocelin would not accept her request for a burial place, yet she continues her help. It seems that, Golding's women do not want to disrupt the pattern existed. Moreover, it seems that they are not free to act on their selves. They are controlled by others. It shows that they are selfless women characters in the novel.

References:

1. William Golding. Free Fall. Faber and Faber, London, 1959.
(Further parenthetical numbers refer to this text)
2. ----- The spire. -----; ----- 1964
(Further parenthetical numbers refer to this text)
3. Afterwards. Lord of the Flies. New York, 1962. iv
4. Jack I. Biles and Robert Evans. William Golding; some critical considerations. University Press of Kentucky, 1978, P. 119.
5. Bernard S. Oldsey and Statnely Weintrab. The Art of William Golding. Harcourt Brace and World Inc; New York, 1965, P. 136.
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8. Bernard S. Oldsey and Stanley, Weintrab. The Art of William Golding. Harcourt, Brace and word Inc. New York 1965, P.134.
9. ----- Ibid ----- P. 129.
10. Crompton Don. A View from the Spire: William Golding's Later Novels. Basil, Blackwell, Oxford, 1985, P. 35.

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