

Golding's Pincher Martin: Morally Degraded Modern Man

Abstract

This Paper will focus on degraded moral aspects of modern man in reference with Pincher Martin 1956 by William Golding. As man born with the gift of free will to do anything; they are free agents in the hands of their instinct too. Man in modern era was a heap of illusion, sufferings, frustration and agony. The main reason behind their evil and degraded nature was loss of faith in God and human values in modern era. William Golding portrayed a true picture of modern man with the help of his novels and analyzed man's instinct and nature. Golding concluded that men produce evil. They fall prey to evil side instead of good side. Moral and ethical aspects were diminishing from the lives of modern man. This gave birth to human sufferings. Man becomes selfish creature in human body; man for his own pleasure can go to any limits without any fear of God.

Keywords: Modern Man, Evil, God, Nature. William Golding.

Introduction

The modern age is an age of anxiety and endless chaos. Rapid changes can be seen in social, political, industrial area and in society. These changes in society and religion were due to advancement of science; man lost faith in divinity and church. Science changed everything; man taking interest in science considering them as God. With the help of science they become physically powerful but mentally weak. Science on one hand gave many good things but on other hand it gave very shocking effect on them. Advancement of Science is the main reason of man lost faith in God and followed wrong path in their life; which is the real reason behind two World Wars. Science gave security, pleasure, comfort but danger, destruction too. The two World Wars effect human psychology so deeply that man became mere puppets in the hand of their free will. As many great philosophers and literary man gave their own views regarding the wretched effects of war on human society, as Nietzsche said God is dead in the hearts and minds of his own generation of modern men¹. He believed that at the time of war civilization and religion lost faith due to which man become blind and they lost their rational thinking in modern era. Men were trapped in their own web; which is hard to entrap. He further talked about human behavior and said, we are heirs to the conscience vivisection and self- crucifixion of two thousand years.² Many other theories prevailed in philosophy and in literature such as existentialism, absurdist, expressionism and surrealism all these talk about man in centre. Further man became an empty vessel without any hope, who are fighting for their existence in this cruel world of negation; which is the root cause of man's destruction. According to Jean Paul Sartre, God does not exist and that man has to face all the consequences of this.³ He said that modern man is subtotal of his acts and deeds. So this is a simple phenomenon that whatever man do he will be the only sufferer of that thing, as in novel Pincher Martin protagonist suffered due to his evil deeds. He became morally insane modern man.

Aim of the Study

The main purpose of this paper is to analyze the forces and aspects which influence man's moral nature as well as nature itself. The general meaning of moral degraded nature of Pincher Martin (protagonist) in the context to his character will be explored. And which will help to implicit the ability to discriminate between what is right and what is wrong in context with modern man.

Man lost their innocence in two World Wars they forget their true self and started following evil path to fulfill their desire. Men are born to live a good, simple, happy life and they can do anything to get all this. On the other hand this change has taken their peace of mind, happiness and which became the major cause of modern man frustration, alienation and



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depression. Science discovered weapons, atom bombs and rockets for man to protect them; then again they were using it to display their supremacy. During the time of World Wars many weapons were used to eradicate millions of innocent people. All these things are beyond human imagination. They started playing the game of these weapons as they playing video games. Human character totally changed in modern age as modern novelist Virginia Woolf proclaimed . . . on or about December, 1910, human character changed. . . . All human relations have shifted—those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature. Let us agree to place one of these changes about the year 1910.⁴

William Golding was one of the prominent modern novelists of modern age. His novels are the study of human mind and society in context with religion and science. Golding was born and brought up between two World Wars. At this time human beings are in their worse nature and circumstances; they became true devil. According to him science was the main reason behind two World Wars. Due to this Golding used his pen to portray the true human nature of his time. What are the causes behind man's fall and immorality? His work presents the actual condition in which man compelled himself for this fall. As Peter Green describes him, William Golding, one of the most religious novelists of the age began to write in the middle of the twentieth century. His voice, however, was not that of traditional or orthodox. Christian as a modern man, he could not afford to follow any established religion, though he made liberal use of Christian symbols, ideas and motifs in his work. It the world of William Golding' Peter Green calls him "a spiritual cosmologist."⁵

Golding also remains as a Naval Officer at the time of war; he was puzzled by his own act and nature; how he bombed against his fellow men, whom he never encountered. Though he has no valid reason behind his act; all this is cruel decision of barbaric Army heads and leaders of country. He also has a faith on man that God has chosen him for the upliftment of society; but he who falls prey to evil and commit this sin. World War shattered Golding thoughts towards man nature; how anyone can kill his fellow men without any grimace on his face. Golding view towards mankind seems to be very pessimistic and this put light on his fiction. Modern man violent nature become universal phenomena as John Fraser said about violence, Violence...demonstrates the 'real' nature of man, his fundamental disorderliness and will to destruction, his hatred of constraints, his resentment of ideas and ideals and all the other artificial constructions. Hence the artist who deals honestly with violence becomes a kind of nose-rubber or mirror-holder, someone rubbing the spectator's nose in the disagreeable, and holding up a mirror in which he can contemplate the essential filthiness, nastiness, and beastliness of mankind.⁶

Golding's characters in every novel are violent, morally degraded and fall prey to evil easily.

Golding came to know about the main reason behind human evil nature and causes of war. He knows why human beings are suffering in modern age. This paper put light on the novel Pincher Martin as a morally degrade man in reference with modern man. How Martin fall and how he suffered in the novel; once who was living a good life. What are the main reason behind his sufferings and pain? Why he chose bad side of human nature against good side of divinity? These entire questions will be answered in this paper.

Pincher Martin is a story of protagonist Christopher Hadley Martin. He was a self-created egoistical man. The first chapter shows us how he drowned on the Atlantic Ocean and struggling hard to get rescued. After some struggle he was saved by his life belt. The hard waves thrown him on the rock and till the end of the novel he was on rock six days alive. Golding beautifully showed his heroic fight with pain, suffering, hunger and sickness. How selfishly he fought against all these calamities for his survival. He challenged everything nearby him, even God too. He doesn't want to surrender his will in front of God, death and nature.

In the state of insanity Martin was hallucinated by his past. He went into flashbacks and recalls his entire friends and dear one. How he used to be with them. For his rescue he remembers all his victories and triumph; how he used to win whatever he want to. He recalls his friend Nathaniel Walterson; whom he tried to murder. He remember chaste Mary Lovell girl; to her he was sexually attracted, and tried to molest her in his car. Lovell marries Nat who was a good man; due to this Martin started hating Nat. He recalls his carrier as an actor in the studio of Pete; where he has sexual relationship with Pete's wife for his selfish motive to get better role in the play.

Martin was a greedy, selfish, and sexually corrupt man; who only get pleasure in physical intimacy, his lust is only for self-gratification. His greed is lie on eating image in this novel is the maggots image. Pete another character is discussing on an uncommon Chinese dish which begins as a group of maggots place in a tin box with a fish,

Well, when they've finished the fish, Chris,

They start on eating one another.

"Cheerful thought old man."

"The little ones eat the tiny ones. The middle-sized

Ones eat the little ones. Then the big ones

Eat each other. Then there are two and then one

and where there was a fish is now one huge, successful

Maggot. Rare dish.⁷

Martin ways of life is based on to eat or be eaten by others. Here, eating symbolically represents destruction. He is excusing self-aggrandizement by finding examples in this world of others who commit same evil. On other hand love, feeling, and emotion are not his cup of tea. He saw every woman as an object to fulfill his evil desire of his flesh. His thoughts can be compared to Nietzsche thoughts as he said for women, we take pleasure in woman as in a perhaps

daintier, more delicate, and more ethereal kind of creature. What a treat it is to meet creatures who have only dancing and nonsense and finery in their minds! They have always been the delight of every tense and profound male soul⁸ He was hallucinated by God but he cursed him and rejects. He stands firm against God he neglects all heavenly powers and against it he followed his ego and will. This was the biggest mistake done by him and was the cause of his doom. In Christian religion though man has done numbers of crime and sin; if man will surrender in this birth in front of God he will be pardoned and can redeem his life. Christian follows Bible; in which man knows how to live a moral life and way to heaven. Golding created Martin as a morally degraded man and Nat (his friend) as morally good man. Here, Golding has focused on religious, spiritual consciousness of modern man.

Both Martin and Nat are opposite characters. Symbolically we can say good for (Nathnaiel) and evil for (Martin) as embodied greed in any morality play. Golding has chosen Nat as his mouthpiece in the story. Nat was also a religious man who follows preaching's of Bible; he says that man will die after he complete his life circle. As man passes through childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age same way death is also ultimate truth of life. After death man will enter heaven; if he has redeemed all his sin in this life.

But those who are sinner as Martin; they never follow any Biblical preaching's. And this is the main cause behind their miserable fall in life. Nat always teaches Martin about the ultimate truth of life that man will die one day. Martin did not care about any danger and Nat's saying. He lives his life as a selfish, greedy, self-centered man without any worries. Nat told him that he will never live like this forever; he has to pay for his sin in future. Nat as a good disciple of God tells Martin to learn about the heaven and redeem his sin before his death so that he can get heaven not hell. When Martin said you will be dead in future he shouted loud and said, 'I'm damned if I'll die⁹. Here, Golding not only is trying to warn Martin but indirectly to modern man also. Those who follow divinity their soul will lift upward in heaven and those who adhere it they will fall in hell and suffer. Martin is fighting against God just because of his egoistical will for his existence like Satan. When he dies then also he rejects God. This is modern man became due to advancement of science he think himself superior to God. He was not ready to get dejected in front of anyone not even to death in his insanity he murmurs these words.

I won't die.

I can't die.

Not me-

Precious¹⁰

Martin is an anti-hero; a man of his own greed and will. His greed ditched many friends of him as Nat, Pete, Marry Lovell, Helen. He used people for his selfish motive and he hurt them once he fulfills his evil desire. For Martin human values doesn't matter. He is selfish self-centered man of modern era. Martin was sexually corrupt man who raped many girls as discussed in starting of paper. This shows that

modern man forgets every good part of humanity; they became selfish, greedy and cruel just to satisfy evil desires.

Modern men are becoming individualistic; they lack common brotherhood feeling, compassion and love. To become strong and powerful they blindly play the game of bloodshed. Martin is a very strong character and the fallen man; who not ready to follow God and his preaching's as Satan done. Here, we can easily compare him with Satan; who also discard God and stand against him with same characteristics an evil man resides. His firm determination not allowing him to realize his death same way when Satan lost fight against God he didn't accepted his defeat. Martin himself created his own hell in shape of decayed tooth. Satan also created his hell in Hades.

All these memories of his life show us the true picture of Martin's character and nature. He was an atheist, cheater, rapist and treacherous, morally fallen modern man. His selfish greed to get rescue for his personal identity is found in every modern man. Egocentric nature is one of the most important causes of evil in man. God has given man a power of free will to choose according to their wish. But modern man used free will against God too by negating supreme power. In novel also Martin follows wrong side of his free will and goes against God. He suffered a lot because he chosen his ego against God. As Golding himself has noted,

He's a fallen man, yes. Very much fallen--

he's fallen more than most, you see....I

went out of my way to damn Pincher as much

as I would by making him the most unpleasant,

the nastiest type I could think of, and I

was interested to see how critics all over

the place said, "Well, yes, we are like

that."¹¹

The choice of man plays an important role in his life. If he has chosen wrong side then he has to suffer and pay. Martin also suffered because he discarded everything related to cosmic chaos of death, because death is submission to god. Golding through the character of Martin wants to show to reader that it is very important to man to be good and pure by his heart. Man should use his free will to become virtuous and control his evil desires and selfish motives. If he continues to live a life of morally degraded man then surely he will suffer in future. His existence will be of no use; that has to die and went into hell as Martin. As Gautam Buddha said, because you love pain, and your love of life is a sham. But those who really love life would be happy as no one can be happy in the world as it is.¹²

Conclusion

Golding's moral vision on man valuable side is his darkness of his soul with in us. This darkness and evil nature of man is related with the realm of the spirit. Thus they are directly related to evil, morally degraded side of humanity. Wicked and religious man (Nat) lives a happy life while morally degraded man (Martin) has to suffer. The guilt to recognize their true self is more important thing for their existence.

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