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William Golding’s *Pincher Martin* (1956) is a novel which poses a serious question about its status. At first glance, it is a realist fiction in the tradition of *Robinson Crusoe*. The attempt at surviving of Christopher Hadley Martin, an officer of a battleship in the World War II, is depicted vividly in a realistic way, so that the novel apparently reads a modern tragedy of a castaway. However, the novel does not allow itself to be treated as such. At the very end of the novel a surprising fact is revealed that Martin dies as soon as the novel begins. Then, he has struggled to survive not in the real world but somewhere beyond it. Before both the realistic description of events and the negation of their reality at once, our rational mind is bothered. Indeed, not a few reviewers and critics have showed puzzlement and disapproval, sometimes even offense, against the delayed revelation of the true condition of Martin. The novel seems as if it mocks and plays with our inflexible rationality.

Taking into consideration such receptions of the novel, the delayed revelation of Martin’s bodily death is, in effect, an attack on rationality. It is attacked by being perplexed with this rationally-inexplicable situation. This is a remarkably bold and dynamic maneuver, but is merely one of a number of attacks on rationality which are delivered in the novel. As Johnston Arnold rightly points out that in the novel “Golding’s concern with the dangers of rationalism appears at full force (38),” *Pincher Martin*, indeed, contains many expressions which can be interpreted as hostile to rationality or rationalism. Therefore, we can read the novel as a satire or satirical fiction against rationalism.

Although satire is one of the important aspects of *Pincher Martin*, the mainstream of criticism about it has not discussed it as a satire.
Describing the general tendencies of criticism about Golding, Crawford observes in his recent innovative work on the author that “Few critics have examined satire in Golding’s novels, or indeed referred to Golding himself as a satirist” (10). Some critics have, in fact, pointed out sporadically that Golding’s novels are satires, but few critics have analyzed their satirical aspects properly. However, in *Pincher Martin* the techniques of satire are used repeatedly and prominently to attack rationalism, so that they should be paid more attention. Hight suggests that one of standards for regarding a novel as satire is “the choice of a theme and method used by earlier satirist” (16). Rationalism is a theme which has been long attacked by satirists, and the techniques used in the novel are traditional ones. *Pincher Martin* does not limit the targets of its satire only to rationalism. The novel, as well as others by Golding, brings forth relentlessly before our eyes a more fundamental issue inherent in human nature which we tend to avoid facing at. Here again, the satirical techniques are used effectively, and such aspects of human nature are the familiar issues as well. This paper analyzes the satirical techniques used in the novel and would like to emphasize that the novel is one which links itself to the tradition of satire in literature. In the analysis four techniques for satire—exaggeration and caricature, grotesque, irony and scatology—are focused on in turn, but at first, we examine Golding’s negative outlook on rationalism, and treat one of his essays in particular.

1) Golding’s Negative Outlook on Rationalism: An Attack on “Reductionism”

The theme of rationalism has so much significance for Golding that it appears frequently in his novels, as well as its opposite, the irrational or inexplicable. His disapproval of a reliance on rationalism is an important motive which drives him to write. From his first novel it has been interwoven in his novels, and we can recognize that it is treated in a satirical manner. In *Lord of the Flies*, Piggy, one of main characters, for example, can be interpreted as a caricature of scientific rationalists, as the author himself indeed talks about the boy in these terms, because several characteristics of scientific rationalists are exaggeratedly embodied in his figure. The scene of his death with his head crashed on the rock also shows metaphorically the defeat of rationalism. Thus, rationalism is harshly attacked.

Apart from his novels, Golding actively displays his anti-rational attitude in his essays, interviews and speeches. In his well-known
biographical essay “The Ladder and the Tree,” we can meet his instinctive negative attitude toward rationalism. Though he had, the essay implies, his natural negativity to rationalism, he was brought up to understand and respect the way of rational scientific study, under the strong influence of his father, a science teacher. Then, in the early period of his life, Golding used to have a positive outlook on human beings and a trust in the progress of the human society based on scientific rationalism. His optimism, however, was obliged to alter fundamentally by his experience in World War II, and he came to have no doubt about the deficiency and viciousness of human nature. He also realized that a social system founded on such concept would not work as well as expected. He, thus, came to have a severely critical attitude toward rationalism.

As a typical example which shows his attitude, I would like to introduce here his essay “Belief and Creativity.” In the essay, Golding enumerates three thinkers who were enormously influential over the modern society, and attacks them bitterly. In the human society, he says, there appear “the phantasmata that condition our world,” which are generally derived from very influential persons, and Golding:

saw the Western world conditioned by the images of Marx, Darwin and Freud; and Marx, Darwin and Freud are the three most crashing bores of the Western world. The simplistic popularization of their ideas has thrust our world into a mental straitjacket from which we can only escape by the most anarchic violence. These men were reductionist, and I believe . . . that at bottom the violence of the last thirty years and it may be the hyperviolence of the century has been less a revolt against the exploitation of man by man, less a sexual frustration, or an adventure in the footsteps of Oedipus, certainly less a process of natural selection operating in human society, than a revolt against reductionism . . . . (186-87)

Golding denounces Marx, Darwin and Freud, calling them “crashing bores” and “reductionist[s],” for causing the cruel and disastrous world wars. He observes that the incidents more violent than anything else in the twentieth century resulted from the desperate attempt by people to free themselves from the mental constraint which is called “reductionism,” rather than from the problems in themselves which are the subjects of the theories by the three persons. He feels so great indignation at reductionism that he ascribes the catastrophe to .

In the following of the passage quoted above, Golding satirically describes in a metaphor how the “phantasmata” or the images of
the three persons are concerned with people. He evokes “Macey’s Parade” (sic), which he says is “a procession truly emblematic of the twentieth century” (187). Over the procession, balloon-figures, which are grotesquely huge and showy, float and proceed along the main street. They are supported and pulled with ropes by the people in the procession. The enormousness and gaudiness of those figures dominates the scene, so that in contrast to themselves they makes the people walking below look tiny, as if they were ants, and the buildings along the street look smaller as well. Golding compares the relation between the balloon-figures and the people in this sight to that between the images of the reductionists and people. He describes the large images of the reductionists proceeding in the broad street of lives of people. On the bodies of the images, a phrase is inscribed which summarizes their ideas in a rather too simple and one-sided point of view. Whatever situation people are placed in, their eyes are arrested by those images. Then, Golding goes on to represent the scene: “we all know to one degree or another— are forced to know to one degree or another [original italicized]—that these simplistic representations of real people are what goes on and what counts. They, inept, misleading, farcical, are what condition our communal awareness” (188). What people see are only simplified images of the three thinkers and their theories, and they do not have as much validity as the originals, but they are nevertheless recognized as so significant that they affect profoundly people’s minds.

Their theories, while they have been problematic or sometimes misapplied and now are partly doubted, have been enormously influential over society and have made a contribution to the development of various fields of study and the system of human society, but Golding does not conceal his indignation toward Marx, Darwin and Freud. For Golding the phenomena concerning with human existence is too complex to be explained rationally by theories, and such a principle as reductionism seems to be inappropriate and unfavorable. He is also resentful at the situation that their theories, even though simplified versions, have been so prevalent that people’s mental activities have been restrained by reductionism. Golding’s antipathy against reductionism and reductionists must be strong, since he attacks them severely again and again. His antipathy as above is reflected so noticeably also in Pincher Martin that we cannot miss it.
2) The Satirical Rendering of Martin’s Survival Story
   a) Exaggeration and Caricature

Both exaggeration and caricature are common devices in satire and they are closely related. Feinberg asserts that “All satire is exaggeration” (105). The employment of it is so plain to readers that it is a useful weapon for satirists, so that satire usually exaggerates its victim more or less. On the other hand, caricature, he explains, “operates by choosing an objectionable quality, attributing it to an individual or a group, then describing the victim only in terms of that disagreeable characteristic,” and in this process “oversimplification is the basic requirement” (117). Caricature necessarily includes exaggeration, and therefore these two devices are entwined closely and attack the victim.

*Pincher Martin*, as a satire against rationalism, also uses exaggeration and caricature. The elements of rational man in Martin are so exaggerated that he would appear a caricature of it. It should be remarked that in this caricature what Golding calls reductionism is recognizable.

Martin claims to himself that he has “education and intelligence” (77). His status, speech and behavior prove his claim. They are required for his career as an actor in civil life and an officer in the navy. We come to be acquainted with his knowledge of natural science, literature and classics. In the survival life on the rock he makes rational inferences and decisions on the basis of his knowledge of nautical astronomy and geography, and makes sound rules to be obeyed in order that he may be rescued. Therefore, it seems to be fair and reasonable to regard him as a rational man of intelligence and education. However, our estimation of Martin is forced to be modified as the novel progresses. His characteristics as a rational man are more than once described so exaggeratedly that he comes to seem ludicrous and silly. For example, he thinks that mental activity is fundamental characteristic of human beings and important in order for him to survive. He repetitiously insists on his intelligence and education, and importance of thinking. In addition, he shows his knowledge of literature and science, but they do not seem to be necessary or of much help in ensuring his survival. On the contrary, his excessive reliance on mental activity and display of his knowledge seem to be mere showing off, so that they present him as a shallow person.

Identity is a great worry for him. He is very eager to make sure of his identity and awfully afraid of losing it. A scene in which he notices
his ID disc hanging from his neck shows the importance of identity. When he finds his name and status on the disc, he cries out astonishedly, as if he had not known who he was so far, “Christopher Hadley Martin. Martin. Chris. I am what I always was!” and the narrator tells us, “All at once it seemed to him that he came out of his curious isolation inside the globe of his head and was extended normally through his limbs” (both 76). Now that he can be sure who he is, he feels as if his consciousness extended fully to the corners of his body, so that he perceives with reality his body and the environment as a substance. Thus, recognition of his identity is described as giving him assurance of his existence. As this scene shows, identity has a great importance for a person, and then, it is understandable that Martin is very concerned with his identity, because isolated on the rock he does not have as many means to make sure of it as before. His anxiety, nevertheless, goes to the extent of being extraordinary. His mention of identity is repeated more than once, as well as that of intelligent and education. When he comes into a hole in the rock, he finds that his voice is reflected on the wall. Then, he speaks out again and again because he thinks that he can be assured of his identity from the echo of his voice. At another place, he complains that he can neither look himself in a mirror or photographs nor see what kind of person other people regard him as, so that he cannot recognize his identity definitely. Moreover, because his blurred portrait in the booklet is useless, Martin tries in vain to reflect himself on the surface of some pools on the rock. His anxiety and behavior about identity as above seems to be excessive and obsessive. So much so that, he can be regarded as a caricature of people in the modern world who are too much influenced by the concept of identity.

Martin’s attitude toward religious matters represents another typical attitude of modern rational man. Martin does not at all believe in the existence of the God nor the afterlife and dislikes even talking about them. He seeks for pleasures which he can feel bodily in real life, but anything beyond actual matters never attracts his interest. His indifference to religious matters is shown clearly in his conversation with his friend Nathaniel, who can be seen as another exaggerated character at the opposite extreme, a caricature of a religious man. He eagerly advises Martin to convert his attitude to be more religious, but Martin scorns him and refuses indifferently his advice. Martin is a caricature of people who disregard God or religious matter. As we have examined so far, the characteristics of a rational man are satirized
by the use of exaggeration and caricature. In addition, an attack on reductionism would be recognized.

Since Martin relies greatly on rational and scientific knowledge, he often resorts to them as mentioned before. When he happens to see a nightmare-like vision, he does so again. He attempts, as if trying to overcome the fear of it, to explain it in a psychoanalytical manner. He says that: “‘Tunnels and wells and drops of water all this is old stuff. You can’t tell me. I know my stuff just sexual images from the unconscious, the libido, or is it the id? All explained and known. Just sexual stuff what can you expect? Sensation, all tunnels and wells and drops of water. All old stuff, you can’t tell me. I know’” (146). Such terms used here as sexual, unconscious, libido and id remind us of Freudian theory. It can be said that there is an effect of the theory or, at least, a similarity to it in his knowledge. At another place, he starts abruptly to lecture the definition of human being. What he chatters about is the process of human evolution, which is no doubt a simplistically popularized form of Darwin’s theory. However, because his knowledge which derives from the theory of reductionists does not seem to be useful for him in the scene but meaningless and ostentatious, he seems to be a satiric representation of reductionists or those people restrained by reductionism, which Golding describes in his essay quoted before.

b) Grotesque

As William Nelson, in his criticism about two Golding’s novels *Darkness Visible* and *Rites of Passage*, observes that “Golding’s use of the grotesque in his earlier fiction, starting with *Lord of the Flies*, has been well established (181),” the grotesque is an important element of his novels. Though it is considerably difficult to define it as a concept, in the criticism of the modern literature, it seems to be acknowledged as a phenomenon of “disharmony” which is produced when two opposite modes or atmosphere are placed together, which is suggested by Thomson to be “The most consistently distinguished characteristic of the grotesque” (20). However, in the following discussion in this paper, it is treated as more original sense of it as Bernard Mc Elroy introduces: [the use of] language to evoke for the reader a vivid visual image which is perceived as grotesque” (ix). In *Pincher Martin* aspects of a rational man are so much exaggerated that Martin looks more or less grotesque. Now, it will be examined that another aspect is described in visual grotesque manner, and consequently it is attacked
Martin is described as a horribly selfish and greedy person from the moralistic point of view. His fragmented recollections, which enable readers to judge his character, show the histories of his immoral deeds: he commits adultery with the wife of his friend and shows him the scene to mock him; he urges a girl to have a sexual relation with him, threatening to kill her if she rejects him; riding on a bike side-by-side with a friend, he attempts to kill him in the guise of an accident; he seduces the wife of the producer of the theater company in order to get a role. For him other people are nothing but objects of which he makes use at will, as he says to himself of her “You’re not a person, my sweet, you’re an instrument of pleasure” (95). Besides, in spite of the fact that he is placed in a dangerous situation on the rock, in his head the images of a woman’s white body and a boy’s body are circling. Furthermore, when he is cast as the role of Greed, the description of him by Peter illustrates his nature plainly: “[he] takes the best part, the best seat, the most money, the best notice, the best woman. He was born with his mouth and his flies open and both hands out to grab. He’s a cosmic case of the bugger who gets his penny and someone else’s bun” (120). As these recollections prove, he exploits others relentlessly, suffering no pangs of conscientious, in order to satisfy his own desires, sensual ones in particular. He is, by most ethical or moral standards, a grotesque person.

The grotesquely selfish and greedy nature of Martin is integrated, as a metaphor, in the figure of a crawling creature which devours endlessly. It is introduced impressively through Peter’s tale of a strange Chinese dish. He tells about it that in a tin box buried under the ground maggots emerge from the fish and eat it up, and then, they devour themselves each other until there survives the last one, “one huge, successful maggot” (136). It is easily compared to Martin, a greediest person. Thus, the figure of maggots which crawl and swallow one another ferociously is a metaphor for the selfish and greedy nature of Martin. Generally speaking, people would revolt at the sight of maggots. Moreover, their cannibal fight in the small tin box produces an impression of horrible and disgusting, even of the grotesque. Compared to the maggot, then, the figure of Martin emphasizes our perception of him as grotesque.

When we focus on the figure of Martin on the rock, its relation with the crawling creature becomes more obvious and direct. Just after he has drifted onto the rock, he is indeed reduced to the bare
minimum of existence. He shows himself before our eyes as a figure which crawls and moves instinctively about on the rock, seeking for a shelter, water and foods. Because he was exhausted in the sea, he cannot stir, even if slightly, let alone stand up and walk about, so that he is forced to crawl little by little. His actions are laborious and exhausting, but they are compared to the motion of crawling creatures on the ground. For example, when he is looking for a shelter, he is described as follows: “[his mind] shifted the arch of skull from side to side like the slow shift of the head of a caterpillar trying to reach a new leaf” (45). There is no image of human beings who stand up on their feet and walk about freely. In another part of the novel, Martin is described as a snake and lobster: “He lay flat on his stomach and began to wriggle weakly like a snake that cannot cast its skin. . . . The oilskin was hard and he backed with innumerable separate movements like a lobster backing into a deep crevice under water” (46). The comparison to such crawling creatures vividly evokes Martin’s figure which is crawling on the ground. Then, while it describes his physical condition, it also emphasizes his image of the grotesque creature.

Though the grotesque image which is superimposed on Martin works effectively for representing his nature as above, Golding’s method is sometimes criticized. Some readers blame him for only showing characters in the novel by expository prose without describing them convincingly. It seems that to them Peter’s description of Martin, the horrible image of maggots and his fragmented recollections, almost all of which show only his one-sided dimension of his life, are over-expository or too explicit. Indeed, for example, Ted E. Boyle bitterly criticizes the novel because “Golding never quite projects the viciousness of Martin’s ego except by the desperate device of asking us to transmute our loathing for maggots into our loathing for the character” (26). Boyle’s opinion sounds too severe, but it would be reasonable to observe that Golding did not describe the people in the novel fully.

This insufficiency in characterization is often pointed out as a defect of the novels of Golding. It is claimed that his novels, especially his earlier ones, do not represent characters of various aspects but rather simple and obvious ones. The settings of the novels have also been criticized for being narrowly limited or secluded both in time and place. Such criticism is acceptable to some extent, and therefore, it cannot be denied that Golding is not the type of novelist who elaborately depicts characters of various aspects in the complex social
setting. The criticism is also true of *Pincher Martin*, but it should be valid only when the novel is compared with traditional English ones. It is not appropriate to judge it by their standard because it does not seem to aim at describing characters in the same way as they do; it should instead be evaluated on the basis of satire. Satire usually chooses to describe simple characters, not complex ones, in an explicit and succinct manner. This approach is more suitable for the purpose of satire, since the form often expects readers to make a quick judgment about nature of the characters. By the standard of satire, it is reasonable to say that the method used in representing the characters in *Pincher Martin* is both effective and satisfying.

The grotesque which attacks Martin’s nature reaches its climax of power in the last scene of his survival story. His monstrously greediness is as well represented by another metaphorical figure as by maggots, and the narrator at this time goes further. Martin is presented as if he were his metaphor in itself, a large red lobster which clings with its two claws to a piece of the crumbling rock: “There was nothing but the centre and the claws. They were huge and strong and inflamed to red” (201). He, bared to be his basic component of “pincher,” no longer appears to be a human being but the very grotesque monster, and his claws, which the narrator describes clutch tightly, represent his tenacity. In this way, the use of visual grotesque shows Martin’s nature strikingly before our eyes.

c) Irony

It is common for us to use the word “irony” or “ironical” casually in our daily life, so that the general concept of irony apparently seems to be pervasively and widely established. Indeed, “a frequent and common definition” of irony is “saying what is contrary to what is meant (Colebrook 1),” but the concept of irony cannot be defined with such a simple phrase. However, to define it is not included in the purpose of this paper, and it is treated solely as one technique of satire. Irony as a weapon of satire, though, is not easy to deal with, either. It seems to be considerably difficult to explain the relationship of irony to satire. Irony must be a powerful device of satire, but the boundary between them is highly ambiguous. Sometimes irony is an element of satire, and sometimes almost the same as the other. George A. Test observes on this topic that “Satire and irony work together, but discussions about the nature of the irony and of the relationship have produced little agreement” (147). It is not certain that there is
a decisive explanation of the relation between them but irony surely affects satire. Then, putting aside the distinction between them, I would like to introduce the idea of “self-defeating” action, which Kernan suggests is conspicuously ironical. The actions are considered to be so, he explains, “not because we judge them by some outside standard . . . but rather because they always achieve the exact opposite of what is intended” (81). In Pincher Martin, the action of “self-defeating” is remarkably recognizable. Martin’s actions more than once are self-defeating, and consequently, a great doubt is cast to his self-assumption of existence.

From the beginning of the novel, Martin is grasped in the hands of the whimsical fortune. It is ironical for him that his ship is torpedoed and he is thrown out into the sea, because at the same moment when the accident happens, he is attempting to fling out his friend Nathaniel from the ship. He schemes to fling out Nathaniel, who is in prayer at the corner on the deck, by turning the ship suddenly in the guise of making an emergency maneuver to avoid the danger. However, it is ironic, at the same moment he makes the order, the ship really is torpedoed. This coincidence is doubly ironical because if his order had been made in time, it might, contrary to his intention to kill a person, have saved the crew. After all, though, his action ends up producing the result which he expected the least. Thus, he is played with by ironical fate.

After he is thrown out into the water, he cannot escape from irony. He is faced at an ironical picture of his childhood experience. At the moment he dies, he recalls a memory of a jam jar, a toy with which he used to play when he was a child. This memory has a profound significance from the satirical point of view because the picture of playing the toy shows us two figures of Martin at the same time. They make a dramatic contrast each other, and an irony is produced. Let us examine the memory of jam jar:

it was interesting because one could see into a little world there which was quite separate but which one could control. The jar was nearly full of clear water and a tiny glass figure floated upright in it. The top of the jar was covered with a thin membrane—white rubber. . . . The pleasure of the jar lay in the fact that the little glass figure was so deliberately balanced between opposing forces. Lay a finger on the membrane and you would compress the air below it which in turn would press more strongly on the water. Then the water would force itself farther up the little tube in the figure, and
it would begin to sink. By varying the pressure on the membrane you could do anything you liked with the glass figure which was wholly in your power. You could mutter,—sink now! And down it would go, down, down; you could steady it and relent. You could let it struggle towards the surface, give it almost a bit of air then send it steadily, slowly, remorselessly down and down.

The delicate balance of the glass figure related itself to his body. In a moment of wordless realization he saw himself touching the surface of the sea with just such a dangerous stability, poised between floating and going down. (8-9)

It is quite understandable to the readers that the glass figure can be related to Martin, who is also buffeted up and down by heaving water. The small world in his memory shows an ironical miniature version of his current situation. This irony is perceived by Martin himself, too. He observes the delicately balanced movement of the figure in his memory, and then, the narrator tells, he suddenly recognizes the resemblance between his condition and that of the figure. It is cruelly ironic of his memory that it, by reminding him of his long forgotten memory, suggests him the fatal situation under which he is now being placed.

The irony of this memory does not lie only in the comparison of the glass figure to Martin. An awareness of the fact that the toy provides two positions allows us to recognize another irony: the position of the glass figure or played with, and that of player. It is Martin who used to be in the position of player. He enjoyed arbitrarily controlling the glass figure by putting his finger on the membrane of the toy. His arbitrariness in playing the toy seems to suggest his behavior toward people in his life since for him they are only objects which he attempts to control at will. Therefore, the memory of the jam jar shows that he is the arbitrary player. However, through the comparison of Martin to the glass figure, it is plain that he, who is now struggling in the water, is no more than the played with. In this way, at the beginning of the novel, it is ironically revealed that he is not the arbitral player as he assumes, so that Martin’s arbitral and selfish nature is attacked. The ironical revelation similar to this structure is repeated through his self-defeating action later in the novel.

It is ironical for Martin as a rational man that he attempts to survive on the imaginative rock whose existence cannot be explained rationally. He has to make himself believe in the reality of the unreal rock because if it is doubted, his existence is also. However, on the
rock he encounters some impossible things: the guano is dissolved into water though it must be insoluble; a red lobster is moving around in the water though it cannot be redden before it is cooked; he thinks that the rock on which he struggles is a tooth. These things are imperfections which suggest the unreality of the rock. He must not acknowledge them; otherwise he cannot believe in its reality. When he notices them and his rationality insists on their strangeness, though he seems to almost understand why they exist there, he averts his glance from them and pretends that he does not know the reason. In this way, he prevents his rational mind from working as it does, but after all, his rationality does not let him ignore the unreal things against his will. However hard he tries to avert his notion from them, his sane and rational mind cannot help recognizing them, and his knowledge of science also insists that they cannot exist in the real world. Thus, his most reliable weapon of intelligence, education, and rationality prevents him from surviving.

To some readers, Martin may seem to be an admirable person of rationality and indomitable will, a type of Robinson Crusoe, but the frequent satiric representation is likely to diminish the admiration gradually. Moreover, his evasive logic, which we are going to examine, would degrade still more the estimation of him. When he cannot ignore the existence of the impossible things any longer, he attempts to deceive himself so as not to admit the logical incongruities in his world. This self-deception has two phases: at first, he compares the state of sanity and that of madness and decides which is better. Naturally, he as a rational man chooses the former and explains to himself that he did not really see the unrealistic things but only made a strange mistake that he saw them. However, when he finds the notion of their presence intolerable, he enters into the second phase. He, contrary to his previous approach, attempts to deny the sanity and rationality of his mind; that is, he pretends that he is mad. He explains that a mad man will see things which do not exist really, and concludes that any unreal things he has noticed on the rock are not real but only illusion. Madness is another role for him to play like “Poor Tom (178),” and it is, he says, “a refuge like a crevice in the rock,” and “A man who has no more refuge can always creep into madness . . .” (156). His evasive attempt is particularly ironical for him because when he establishes the rules to observe, he decides that he must be careful not to lose sanity, not to let madness sneak into his mind. Against his resolution, he makes an excuse logically and steps into
an irrational state of mind, that is, madness. Thus, his rationality and logical thinking corner him to contradict his own assumption that he is an intelligent and educated rational man.

The contradiction to his self-assumption is also observed in the dialogue with the god-like figure. It persuades Martin to give up surviving and points out that he has been dead and created his heaven as a form of the rock. When he is confronted with the fatal fact of his condition, he bursts out frantically: “I prefer it [his heaven]. You gave me the power to choose and all my life you led me carefully to this suffering because my choice was my own. Oh yes! I understand the pattern. All my life, whatever I had done I should have found myself in the end on that same bridge, at that same time, giving that same order . . .” (197). What he calls “the pattern” can be interpreted to be a pattern of behavior. It is, for Martin, the pattern of being selfish and greedy, which drives him to animalistic life and makes him cling to his life even after he dies. He means that he has always followed this pattern and, as a result, he is now inevitably placed in the tormenting situation. He admits that he is seized tightly by an animal pattern of behavior.

His admission here involves him in a self-contradiction once again. He thinks that animals “are caught in their patterns of behaviour, both mental and physical [sic]” (174). Then, when he hits upon an idea to make a pattern with seaweed on the rock in order to attract rescuers, he thinks to himself that “Men make patterns and superimpose them on nature (108),” and “to impose an unnatural pattern on nature [sic], a pattern that would cry out to any rational beholder—Look! Here is thought. Here is man!” (109). Thus, Martin assumes that human beings make and impose the pattern, which proves the existence of them. However, he exposes the fact that he is not such an existence as he assumed. Ironically enough, therefore, he proves by his own behavior that he is an irrational and patterned creature like an animal.

At this point, Martin’s vision of playing with the jam jar should be recalled. As we examined before, this image presents a figure which plays with others arbitrarily and is played with at the same time. In his memory, Martin is the player of the jam jar but he, who is caught in the wave movements, is also related to the glass figure which is played with in the pattern of up-and-down movements. On the rock, he at first assumes and pretends that he is a maker and imposer of a pattern but ends up exposing by his own behavior the fact that he is only the captive of a pattern.
Thus, the two aspects of his condition are presented with irony at the beginning of the novel, and then the presentation is repeated through the development of the novel. In this way, his conceited assumption that he is the maker and imposer of a pattern is attacked.

d) Scatology

Generally speaking, excrement is not favorable matter. Though it is inevitable for people as a living thing to be concerned with it, in a civilized society the act of excreting should usually be kept behind the door of the bathroom and such a topic is kept from the conversation. Therefore, referring to a matter of excretion or excrement will sensationally catch the attention of people and excite their discomfort, so that people cast their negative glances at the victim when it is associated with scatological references. Scatology also reminds people of a fact that they are not able to escape from being an animal. Because many people assume that they are superior to other animals and their mentality or mental activity is evidence of their superiority, they would avert their eyes from their animal nature. However, such an assumption is a suitable target for satirists to attack, so that while “proud, self-delusional man ever aspires to elevate himself and his dignity . . . the satirist destroys such upward mobility by reducing man to defecating animal before our eyes” (Clark 116). The use of scatology compels people to face their animal nature concealed behind the mask of civilization. If scatology, then, is applied appropriately, it can be an effective weapon to attack objects. Therefore, for satirists “Scatology is the logical choice (Lee 18),” so that it has been utilized as one of various weapons.

Scatology in literature has a long tradition and “literature’s concern with the scatological increases significantly in this [twentieth] century” (Clark 2). Golding is also part of this trend as a novelist of the twentieth century and tends to use the scatology, which sometimes critics have pointed out. Arnold Johnston, for example, suggests that Golding can be associated with Swift in the sense of their concern with both moral and scatological matter (48). Employment of scatology by Swift produces bitter satirical effect, and does also in the case of Golding. Indeed, he has employed the scatology in this way since his first novel. In Lord of the Flies, the scatology produces the implication of moral degeneration of the boys, according to Clark’s interpretation of the novel (121). In Pincher Martin the scatology is employed in a notable and aggressive manner, so that it attacks bitterly the proud
assumption that human beings are heroic and superior.

The rock island, illuminated by the morning sunlight, shows itself vested with various colors before Martin, who is nearly drowned. While waves gradually heave his body, his eyes catch various colors in the sea: green, red, white, yellow and brown. The colorfulness makes a remarkable contrast with the colorless of the darkness among which he has been struggling. The abundance of colors apparently shows the rock to be a hopeful place of beauty and even sanctity, which is offered by the grace of God. However, the rock is never such a place. Contrary to the beautiful impression of its emergence, what is particularly noticeable is its filthiness. The rock which welcomes a nearly drowned man is not a place of safety and comfort but one of dirtiness, dampness, and an offensive smell. A cleft of the rock is described like this: “the cleft was dripping, dank and smelly as a dockside latrine (30)”; “The dark, lavatorial cleft, with its dripping weed, with its sessile, mindless life of shell and jelly” (32-33). Then, Martin finds a sight: “the mouldering bones of fish and a dead gull [sic], its upturned breast-bone like the keel of a derelict boat. . . . There were the empty shells of crabs, pieces of dead weed, and the claws of a lobster” (59). Moreover, guano, which is the white accumulation of dried and stiffened dung of gulls, covers the surface of the rock. Though white usually has an image of the clean and pure, the whiteness on the rock does not have such an image at all. Thus, the rock is filled with such filthy matter as the derelict dead body of a creature, excrement and urine.

This dirty landscape of lavatory and cemetery can be interpreted to imply his nature and true condition. The rock is imaginatively created out of the memory of his own decayed tooth, so that the rock is, as it were, the remaining of his body or the inside of his mouth. The origin of the rock and its dirtiness suggest symbolically his voracity because mouth has much significance for him. Then, the lobster’s claws implies his hand as “pincher” and the bone of dead gull like the frame of a boat does that of his dead body, as he perceives that “my chest is like the ribs of a derelict boat . . .” (188). Thus, the description of the rock is apparently realistic, and at the same time, it is a satirical metaphor.

Understandably, the meaning of this metaphor might not be obvious because the truth about the origin of the rock is not easy to grasp. The concept of its origin is not real but fantastic, and the narrator never declares the truth definitely. Besides, Martin will not recognize
the truth because for him to recognize it means to admit that he is
death. However, his true nature is shown in his memory and his death
is frequently implied, if not apparent, so that the metaphor of the
dirtiness of the rock gradually becomes graspable. While this use of
scatology has rather bitter and serious mood, there is another type of
scatology. It produces a playful and funny mood and may provoke
laughter to contrast to the former.

The scene which depicts Martin’s administering an enema to
himself is the scene in which scatology is used most remarkably in the
novel. Martin suffers from constipation and food poisoning, so that he
decides to give himself an enema, which he produces from his lifebelt.
The sequence of actions concerning the enema is rendered with a rich
of imagination in mock-heroic manner. Let us examine that scene.
Martin sets a stage for himself. He compares the discomforting stuff
stagnant in his bowels with the evil serpent. He assumes himself to be
Atlas and Prometheus, the Titans who suffer from agonizing pains and
never give up with indomitable will, so that he gains self-confidence
and strength. His body is represented crawling forward in dignified
tones. The sounds which accompany his movements are compared
to the background music of the orchestra, and they accentuate his
bravery. However, in fact, he is not such a mythical hero as the Titans,
nor what he is doing is an admirable deed; he is only going to give
himself an enema. This incongruity between the heroic rendering
and the reality of what he is doing produces a comic atmosphere and
makes Martin look foolish. The moment of his operation is described
with a touch of Pope as follows:

He hunched himself back against a rock with his legs sprawled
apart. The music rose, the sea played and the sun. The universe
held its breath. Grunting and groaning he began to work the
rubber tube into his backside. He folded the two halves of the long
bladder together and sat on it. He began to work at the bladder
with both hands, squeezing and massaging. He felt the cold trickle
of the sea water in his bowels. He pumped and squeezed until
the bladder was squishily flat. He extracted the tube and crept
carefully to the edge of the rock while the orchestra thundered to a
pause. (165)

The surroundings are described as if they set a stage for him and
drew the attention of audience to it. The surge and pause of the music
expresses his strained nerves and concentration on his performance.
The analogy of music, however, produces a playfully comic effect
rather than improves his heroic image. Besides, the particularity of the description also contributes to produce the mood. The series of his actions is described in a detailed and precise manner, just as he is described when he struggles to crawl soon after he is cast onto the rock. However, the vulgar image of operating enema is unworthy of this strict preciseness and it represents the scene more laughable. The sequel to this scene is described as below:

And the cadenza was coming—did come. It performed with explosive and triumphant completeness of technique into the sea. It was like the bursting of a dam, the smashing of all hindrance. Spasm after spasm with massive chords and sparkling arpeggios, the cadenza took of his strength till he lay straining and empty on the rock and the orchestra had gone. (165)

In this manner, the moment of his evacuation is rendered splendidly with an abundance of music words. The last action of his self-enema is compared to the cadenza, a technical impromptu by the soloist before the finale, that is, a highlight of the performance. The choice and arrangement of words are remarkably imaginative, but they are totally unsuitable to describe the motion of evacuation and its sound. The incongruity between the description and the reality culminates at the moment of his evacuation, and so does the playful and funny mood. After he accomplishes his deed, he speaks out, as if he declares his conquest, to the excrement which he has assumed as the antagonist in this heroic though filthy stage, but his declaration only makes him appear to be more ridiculous.

The scatology produces ridiculousness again later in the novel. In the scene just before his imagined rock and its surrounding collapses radically, Martin is still more degraded. Caught in a furious storm, he, who is acting madman, in order to shelter himself jumps into a hole and crawls into the pool inside of it. The guano is dissolved into the water and it is clouded up dirty white. He plunges himself into the filthy white water, “among the slime and circling scum” (199). The sight of a disguised madman who is struggling in the dung dissolved pool produces perfect ridiculousness.

After Martin’s survival story is over, the satire is not yet. The last chapter is also a satirical representation of the modern rational world. The conversation between Davidson an officer and Campbell is a reenactment of that between Martin and Nathaniel, that is, a
rational man and a spiritual one. Campbell, who finds and keeps Martin’s dead body, feels something spiritual or mysterious about his death and asks the officer whether or not he believes that Martin experienced “surviving” of nonphysical sense (208). However, Davidson, who deals with dead bodies without sympathy day after day and is indifferent to anything other than collecting their ID discs, cannot understand what the questioner means. Campbell reluctantly gives up receiving an answer to his question. Their conversation, thus, shows again that the rational and the spiritual cannot communicate with each other. This is the reality of the society with which Golding, a moralistic and religious writer strongly against modern rationality, is dissatisfied.

Though, as Gindin observes that “The polarity between the rational and the imaginative or mysterious is always visible in all Golding’s work (12),” Golding repeatedly describes the incapability of communication, he does not dare to go further. He, as suitable to a writer of satire, restrains himself from presenting such an ideal vision as he favors and grimly confronts us with his observation about the real condition of human beings. This is also true of the characterization of Martin. While he is described as a man “fallen more than most (Meaning 10)” and his unfavorable nature is attacked thoroughly with the techniques for satire, any possibilities of his reformation in either moral or religious sense are not suggested in the least. Possibly, he might be regretful about his behavior, as he says “Because what I did, I am outsider and alone (181),” and then, his frequent reference to his boots may be interpreted to mean that really he is sorrow for starting his surviving after death, by kicking them off. He also knows that his persistence for life gives him nothing but pain. However, he rejects to reform his behavior or to give up his life; he is not described as a person who regrets his deed and changes his behavior. It is his unalterable disgusting nature that we can see in Martin, and in this point of view, Pincher Martin can be regarded as a satirical parody of its possible predecessors, Robinson Crusoe and Taffrail’s Pincher Martin. O. D. In his third novel Golding attempted an inversion which thoroughly deflates the optimistic view toward human nature as well as in his earlier two novels.

Davidson’s mention of Martin’s boots is truly surprising to most readers because though there are, in fact, many clues which imply that Martin is dead and surviving nonphysically on the imaginary rock, they are too subtle to grasp unless readers are very sensitive.
However, the effect of shock is neither permanent nor fundamental. As it wears off, readers’ observation of Martin’s story would be modified. Now that his early death is plain, it would be clearly perceived the fact that every objects appearing in his suffering are illusory in spite of their material reality, which Martin, a materialistic rational man, desperately makes himself believe in. This ironical fact can be interpreted to suggest the illusiveness and insignificance of physical things, and then attack the modern materialism. The fact that Martin’s suffering is nonphysical also suggests that it has no end. He has continued to exist by the power of his desire for life, so that he would not disappear unless he wants to submit himself to complete death, but he is the last person to do so. It is true that the climax of his survival story produces an expectation of its end, or his disappearance, but yet its fulfillment is not assured. The narrator avoids telling Martin’s death here again, and because his suffering is beyond the physical from the beginning, it cannot be certain whether or not it has end. He might be still suffering at the moment when Davidson is inspecting his dead body. Thus, Davidson’s mention of Martin’s boots is not simply an ostentatious surprise, “a trick,” but deepens the significance of Martin’s nonphysical suffering, and emphasizes horribleness of his nature at the same time.

Conclusion
We have been examining Pincher Martin from the point of view of its use of the technique for satire. We have recognized that in rendering Martin’s survival story, subjects which are profoundly concerned with people in modern society are satirized by the use of the four traditional techniques, exaggeration and caricature, the grotesque, irony and scatology. Those subjects seem to lack reference to particular or topical objects in the real society outside of the text, which someone regard as essential quality for satire. It is true that the subjects attacked in the novel are rather universal or perennial. However, satire does not always demand such quality as the former, and if it is necessary, the rationalism noticed in the novel has relation to what Golding calls reductionist and reductionism. Though Martin is completely isolated, he surely has his background of the society in the twentieth century. The techniques familiar to satire are effectively employed, and among them irony especially seems to have much weight. Therefore, Pincher Martin can be counted a fiction of satire.
Notes

1 *Pincher Martin* is a rather complicated and puzzling text, so that the author himself gives his explanation of the novel in a BBC radio program as below, which is quoted in an essay written by Kermode:

Christopher Hadley Martin had no belief in anything but the importance of his own life, no God. Because he was created in the image of God he had a freedom of choice which he used to centre the world on himself. He did not believe in purgatory and therefore when he died it was not presented to him in overtly theological terms. The greed for life which had been the mainspring of his nature forced him to refuse the selfless act of dying. He continued to exist separately in a world composed of his own murderous nature. His drowned body lies rolling in the Atlantic but the ravenous ego invents a rock for him to endure on. It is the memory of an aching tooth. Ostensibly and rationally he is a survivor from a torpedoed destroyer: but deep down he knows the truth. He is not fighting for bodily survival but for his continuing identity in face of what will smash it and sweep it away—the black lightning, the compassion of God. For Christopher, the Christ-bearer, has become Pincher Martin who is little but greed. Just to be Pincher is purgatory; to be Pincher for eternity is hell.

Needless to say nowadays, we should be cautious about accepting the authors’ interpretations of their own works and we do not have to agree with them entirely. However, it is true that this explanation is very helpful in understanding the novel, and we does not seem to me to be able to ignore it. Frank Kermode “William Golding,” *Puzzles and Epiphanies: Essays and Reviews 1958-1961*, Intro. William Phillips (New York: Chilmark, 1962) 207-08.


3 In this paper, the word rationalism is used in a rather broad definition which includes from rationality founded on intelligence and reason to what is represented by the theories of Freud, Marx and Darwin.

4 For example, McCarron regards *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors* as satire, though he does *Pincher Martin* and *Free Fall* as parody. Kevin McCarron, “‘In Contemplation of my Deliverance’: Robinson Crusoe and Pincher Martin,” *Robinson Crusoe: Myths and Metamorphoses*, ed. Lieve Spaas and Brian Stimpson (London: Macmillan, 1996) 286.


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7 Stinson also analyzes the use of the grotesque in Golding’s earlier five novels mainly from the visual point of view in his essay, but the most of his discussion is spent for *Free Fall* and *The Spire*. John J. Stinson, “Trying to Exorcise the Beast: The Grotesque in the Fiction of William Golding,” *Cithara* 11 (1971): 3-30.


10 Biles and Kropf, in their interpretation of *Pincher Martin* in comparison to *Robinson Crusoe*, suggest that they “certainly are connected as examples of the fictitious prose narrative dealing with spiritual experience (21),” and observe that while Crusoe converts himself to God, Martin rejects to. These critics also point out a rise of criticisms on *Robinson Crusoe* which regards the novel as “a story of spiritual experience” in the footnote (23). Jack I. Biles and Carl R. Kropf, “The Cleft Rock of Conversion: *Robinson Crusoe* and *Pincher Martin*,” *A William Golding Miscellany*. Spec. issue of *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 2.2 (1969): 17-43.


12 For example, Angus Wilson’s comment on *Pincher Martin* shows that he has clearly recognized that Martin is dead before Davidson mentions Martin’s boots. Biles, “Pincher Martin,” *Talk* 69.

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**Works Cited**


