

The Absurd Quest of Sammy Mountjoy in the Implied William Golding's *Free Fall*

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Abstract

This paper reads the autodiegetic narrator Sammy Mountjoy's retrospective and self-reflexive writing in William Golding's *Free Fall* (1959) as an absurd quest. Therefore, it centres itself on the concepts of free will and darkness, associating Sammy Mountjoy's darkness with the absurdity and darkness of the 20th century, in which the implied author wrote his work. What make this deduction possible are three components of the narrative: its binaristic nature, self-reflexivity and the repeating narratives. When construed through the concept the absurd, these elements allow demonstrating the implied author William Golding's design to represent the absurd world through Sammy Mountjoy's quest. Therefore, this paper firstly focuses on examining the narrative's binaristic nature, narrative self-reflexivity, and repeating narratives in order to study the narrator's desire for a pattern and his self-questioning as a reflection of the implied author's design to convey the absurd man's situation in the twentieth century world. After this discussion, it pays attention to the clash between two specific binaries of spiritualism-rationalism and innocence-experience, in terms of the concept of darkness, and attempts to observe how they lead to a bonding unreliability, which paves way to a bonding communication between the implied author and his authorial audience. Considering the fact that Sammy Mountjoy follows a subjective pattern of events and accounts in his absurdist quest, this paper aims to conduct its rhetorical narratological analysis in the light of the narrator's casual-temporal order in order to build a bridge between the narrator's choices and the implied author William Golding's design.

Keywords: Free Will, Darkness, Absurd, Implied Author, Bonding Unreliability.

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İma Edilen Yazar William Golding'in *Serbest Düşüş* Adlı Eserinde Sammy Mountjoy'un Absürd Arayışı

Öz

Bu makale, William Golding'in *Free Fall* (1959) adlı romanındaki otodiegetik anlatıcı Sammy Mountjoy'un geriye dönük ve öz-düşünümsel yazısını absürt bir arayış olarak okur. Bu nedenle, Sammy Mountjoy'un karanlığını, ima edilen yazarın eserini yazdığı yirminci yüzyılın absürtlüğü ve karanlığıyla ilişkilendirerek, özgür irade ve karanlık kavramlarına odaklanır. Bu çıkarımı mümkün kılan şey anlatının üç bileşeni, yani, ikili doğası, öz-düşünümselliği ve tekrar eden anlatıdır. Absürd kavramı ışığında yorumlandığında bu unsurlar, ima edilen yazar William Golding'in, Sammy Mountjoy'un arayışı aracılığıyla absürt dünyayı temsil etme tasarısını göstermeye olanak tanır. Bu nedenle makale, anlatıcının örüntü arzusunu ve kendi kendini sorgulamasını kavramak için öncelikle anlatının ikili doğasını, öz-düşünümselliğini ve tekrar eden anlatılarını ima edilen yazarın absürd yirminci yüzyıl insanının durumunu aktarma hedefinin bir yansıması olarak incelemeye odaklanır. Ardından, karanlık kavramı bağlamında spiritüalizm-rasyonalizm ve masumiyet-deneyim olarak adlandırılabilir iki ayrı zıtlık arasındaki çatışmaya yoğunlaşır ve bunların nasıl bağlayıcı güvenilmezliğe yol açarak ima edilen yazar ve yazar-okuyucularının arasında bir iletişim bağı kurduğunu gözlemler. Sammy Mountjoy'un absürd arayışında öznel bir olay ve anlatım örüntüsünü izlediği gerçeğini göz önünde bulunduran bu makale, anlatıcının seçimleri ile ima edilen yazarın tasarısı arasında bir köprü kurabilmek amacıyla retorik anlatıbilimsel analizini anlatıcının nedensel-zamansal düzeni ışığında yürütmeyi hedefler.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Özgür İrade, Karanlık, Absürd, İma Edilen Yazar, Bağlayıcı Güvenilmezlik.

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"Narrative always says less than it knows, but it often makes known more than it says." (Genette, 1980, p. 198)

William Golding's *Free Fall* (1959) emerged in the absurd twentieth century, which was an era that witnessed two world wars, made by rational men of rational causes. The author himself participated in the Second World War as a lieutenant. Usha George in *William Golding: A Critical Study* (2008, p. 6) explains that, "Golding experienced two things that he counts the greatest influences on his writing—first, the war and his service in the navy and second, his learning ancient Greek". The first influence mentioned here appears to have a significant impact on his creation of *Free Fall* (1959), as well. These wars, on the other hand, have not only destroyed the humanity, but also its faith in humanity since the mentioned period was also a time when man was engaged with a constant search of meaning of the world and events, breaking down all the settled institutions and conventions. Michael Gallagher (as cited in Gallagher, 1965) recounts Golding's own remarks on *Free Fall* (1959) as, "he said that *Free Fall* would 'show the patternlessness of life before we impose our patterns on it'" (p. 207). According to Golding, the man is in a continuous quest for a pattern to make sense of his life, despite the patternlessness of life itself. Another critic goes as far as to suggest that *Free Fall* (1959) can be read as a representation of Golding's own trauma, stating that:

Golding and Sammy, after all, share the history of having subscribed to a rational worldview, which they later come to

discover as distortive, selective and insufficient in capturing, explaining and dealing with the atrocities of the war... And most importantly, both are post-war artists who, though highly aware of the limitations of language as well as the patterning and distorting effects of art, are still compelled by the intensity of their trauma to create art and to seek a semblance of a pattern that could put their whole experience in perspective (Aljabri, 2016, p. 181).

Even though this paper does not take the narrator as a reference point for the real author's life and psychology, it suggests that the narrator Sammy Mountoy's retrospective, self-reflexive writing, which features his absurd quest, can be rendered as a reflection of this background. The actual author William Golding offers a method for analysing such a reflection, stating that, "We, the storytellers, must produce a more bumbling truth and it has to be sought for in that extended cooperation that must go on between the novelist and his reader" (as cited in Vomáčková, 2010, p. 9). Apparently, he emphasizes the cooperation between the real author and actual reader¹ to decipher the bumbling truth. Even though this paper will refer to the actual author's remarks on *Free Fall* (1959) at intervals, it ultimately aims to eliminate the unpredictable essence of a real (actual) author. Therefore, it adopts a rhetorical narratological approach and employs the concept of implied author² to shed

¹ According to James Phelan, the actual or flesh and blood reader is "each of us with our glorious (or nor glorious) individuality and common endowments" (Phelan, 2007b, p. 210).

² Although the concept of implied author firstly emerged in Booth's 1952 article "The Self-Conscious Narrator in Comic Fiction Before Tristram Shandy", its solid appearance was in Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, being referred as the author's "second self" (1961, p. 151). James Phelan continued the tradition with a larger perspective and he explained that real author's choices have made the implied author known from the text as "continuity without identity", which enabled creating several implied authors from a single flesh-and-blood/ historical author (Mihăeş, 2012, p. 1). Seymour Chatman's remarks seem to follow up these arguments: "... the implied author is the reader's source of instruction about how to read and how to account for the selection and ordering

light on the connection between the narrator Mountjoy's absurd quest and the absurd twentieth century world by centring itself upon the notions of free will and darkness.

Sammy Mountjoy is the autodiegetic narrator of Golding's *Free Fall* (1959), who attempts to rewrite his past in order to find the point where he has lost his freedom, and he admits re-arranging the events in accordance with his search for a pattern. Even though he is a great painter of his time, and a previous war-artist, he prefers to negotiate with his past not through drawing but writing. He expresses that he has grown up in the slums of Rotten Row with a single mother and gone to a middle-class school that becomes his second world in which he meets his future partner, Beatrice Ifor. However, his first approach to Beatrice occurs after he graduates from the middle school to continue an Art School. Beatrice is a milestone in his understanding of free will. As a result of Mountjoy's will to win her love, Beatrice firstly becomes a target to be seized, and later on, she becomes the cause of his guilty conscience. What triggers his awareness of that guilty conscience, on the other hand, is a cell in a Nazi Camp, where he has been imprisoned as a war artist. The Nazi Camp is the place he meets the rationalist psychologist Dr. Halde, who claims to know him as much as possible, and who reminds him of two significant people, his former teachers Nick Shales and Miss Pringle, who have played important parts in his opting for rational mode of thinking. Besides, the cell is a breaking point for his questioning of the notion of darkness by forcing him to meet with the absurdity of darkness closer than his eyes. It should be noted that Sammy

of components. It is these principles that readers reconstitute, not the real author's original activity" (Chatman, 1990a, p. 83-84).

Mountjoy always presents the concept of darkness as an epistemological matter. However, his writing does not offer a definite explanation on the ontology of darkness. Therefore, this paper examines the concept of darkness not with the same objective to find where he has lost his freedom. On the contrary, this paper sets off with an ontological perspective and regards the indefinite concept of darkness as the absurd which would consequently allow considering Mountjoy's quest as an absurd attempt.

The notion of absurd is inevitable to understand Mountjoy's struggle to find a pattern in the patternlessness of the world. The twentieth century's tendency to seek absolute solutions by choosing only one side of the binary in order to create certain patterns seems to have led to unforeseen disasters. For example, the desire for liberation ended up in Nazi Camps, or in general, search for freedom has caused loss of freedom. Mountjoy's absurd quest also contains binaries, such as innocence-experience or spiritualism-rationalism, and he tends to discriminate between them as a twentieth century man while interrogating his free will in order to find an absolute answer as to the inception of darkness. Nevertheless, darkness, namely, the absurd does not necessitate discrimination but acceptance of the simultaneous existence of both sides. French writer and philosopher Albert Camus (1965) explains its logic as in the following:

... the feeling of absurdity does not spring from the mere scrutiny of a fact or an impression, ...it bursts from the comparison between a bare fact and a certain reality, between an action and the world that transcends it. The absurd is essentially a divorce. It lies in neither of the elements compared; it is born of their confrontation (p. 23).

As Camus (1965, p. 23) points out, the absurd does not belong to a single binary; yet “it is born of their confrontation”. In a similar vein, at the end of his investigation, what Sammy Mountjoy will face is the inevitability of recognizing this confrontation. Nevertheless, binaries are not the only means by which the implied author creates an absurd search, which would reflect that of the absurd man in the darkness of the twentieth century world. The narrative self-reflexivity in Mountjoy’s writing and the implementation of repeating narratives also enable the authorial audience³ to figure out the narrator’s desire for a pattern in his self-questioning. To clarify, a self-reflexive text “unveils the mechanism of its own making” and this process helps to convey the design of the implied author (Jeevanlal, 2004, p. 45). Thus, narrative self-reflexivity helps to indicate “the author’s consciousness of the rhetoric of the text” (Kırca, 2009, p. 14). In this sense, implementation of self-reflexivity contributes to the objective of the implied author since the employment of “rhetorical devices used to create the illusion of external references” allow associating Mountjoy’s absurd quest with the absurd world (Kırca, 2009, p. 14). Likewise, repeating narratives facilitate the demonstration of the narrator’s self-enquiry and pattern formation process. These elements of text linguistics can be defined as the “type of narrative, where recurrences of the same statement do not correspond to any recurrences of events” (Genette, 1980, p. 116). Just like

³ As Phelan explains, the authorial audience is “the author’s ideal reader. The rhetorical model assumes that the flesh and blood readers seek to enter the authorial audience in order to understand the invitations to engagement that narrative offers. ...The rhetorical model also assumes that individual readers will then assess those invitations and accept or reject them in whole or in part” (Phelan, 2007b, p. 210). On the other hand, according to Wayne Booth, “the most successful reading is the one in which the created selves, author and reader, can find complete agreement” (1961, p. 138).

Gerard Genette's "children" who "love to be told the same story several times", the narrator Sammy Mountjoy repeats certain utterances in the narrative in order to find his way in darkness (1980, p. 115).

Although each of the devices mentioned above has their own contribution to the implied author's design, this paper pays a special attention to the conflict between two binaries, innocence-experience, and spiritualism-rationalism. As literary scholar James Phelan (2007b) explains,

The rhetorical approach conceives of narrative as a purposive communicative act. In this view, narrative is not just a representation of events but it is also itself an event—one in which someone is doing something with a representation of events (p. 203).

Similarly, combined with self-reflexivity and repeating narratives, the mentioned conflict leads to unreliable narration that generates a bonding unreliability, which would facilitate the implied author's efforts to communicate his design with the authorial audience. Literary critic Wayne Clayton Booth (1961, p. 158-59), who coined the term "unreliable narrator", explains that "I have called a narrator reliable when he speaks or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say the implied author's norms), unreliable when he does not". As a contribution to this discussion, Ansgar Nünning (Schellinger, 2014, p. 1398) suggests that after the WWII, the implementation of unreliable narration in fiction has gained popularity. However, this trend in contemporary fiction has challenged the common definitions of unreliable narration and produced new distinctions between the

reliable and unreliable narrator.⁴ He concludes that William Golding's *Free Fall* (1959) is among post-war works that would reinforce the said-challenge (Schellinger, 2014, p. 1398). When analysed within James Phelan's *bonding unreliability*, *Free Fall* (1959) can be considered to take the notion of unreliable narration to a step further. Phelan (2007a) clarifies his understanding of unreliable narration as follows:

Unreliable narration... is a mode of indirect communication. The implied author... communicates with his or her audience by means of the voice of another speaker addressing another audience... This model predicts nothing about the relation between implied author and narrator... but instead imagines a very wide spectrum of possible relations (p. 9).

Phelan states that implied author uses unreliable narration as a device to communicate with his authorial audience. He offers "three main axes of communication"⁵ that would help detecting the unreliable narration (Phelan, 2007a, p. 10). It should be noted that Phelan's taxonomy indicates "degrees of unreliability", which could occur in different combinations of these axes (Mihăeş, 2012, p. 6). Besides, his three axes appear in two types of unreliability, *estranging* and *bonding*, which are, as Phelan explains "adjectives [that] refer to the consequences of the unreliability for the relations between the narrator and the

⁴ Here, Ansgar Nünning refers to Kathleen Wall's article "The Remains of the Day" (1989).

⁵ Mihăeş puts forward that, "Phelan takes over the two Boothian axes of unreliability (events and values) and broadens the frame by adding a new axis: (knowledge and perception) (2012, p. 5). These axes are "the axis of facts and events (where we find misreporting or underreporting), the axis of understanding/ perception (where we find misreading or misinterpreting/under reading or underinterpreting) and the axis of values (where we find misregarding or misevaluating/underregarding or underevaluating)" (Phelan, 2007a, p. 10).

authorial audience” (Phelan, 2007a, p. 11). He further defines bonding unreliability as follows:

In bonding unreliability, the discrepancies between the narrator’s reports, interpretations, or evaluations have the paradoxical result of reducing the interpretive, affective, or ethical distance between the narrator and the authorial audience. In other words, although the authorial audience recognizes the narrator’s unreliability, that unreliability includes some communication that the implied author – and thus the authorial audience – endorses (Phelan, 2007a, p. 11).

In this sense, bonding unreliability approaches the narrator and the authorial audience, creating a bonding communication between the implied author and the authorial audience in that it enables the implied author to convey his design in a more efficient and impactful way. Phelan proposes six subtypes of bonding unreliability, one of which, “literally unreliable but metaphorically reliable” will be useful for this analysis⁶ (Mihăeş, 2012, p. 6). Phelan concludes that the rhetorical effect of bonding or estranging unreliability depends both on the axis of communication and “whether the particular communication indicates that the authorial audience needs to reject the narrator’s perspective or supplement it” (Mihăeş, 2012, p. 12). In the light of these explanations, the conflict between the binaries of innocence-experience and spiritualism-rationalism can be examined in terms of its bonding effect. These binaries can be regarded as one of the reasons why the concept of darkness can be considered as the absurd because they eliminate its centre of meaning. The first binary innocence-

⁶ Mihăeş explains that, in “literally unreliable but metaphorically reliable” type, “the narrator’s reports and evaluations may be unreliable but there are metaphorical perceptual truths behind this” (2012, p. 6).

experience allows the narrator Sammy to divide his writing into two periods, indicating the pre- and the post-inception of darkness. The narrator approaches to the concept of darkness from an epistemological perspective and asserts that after the darkness began in experience, free will led to loss of freedom. On the other hand, the second binary of spiritualism-rationalism introduces the authorial audience not only different understandings of darkness, but also an alternative to the narrator's problematization of free will. Ultimately, all these enable the implied author to create a connection between the narrator's absurd quest and the absurd world; thus, the unreliability brings the implied author closer to the authorial audience.

The autodiegetic narrator Sammy Mountjoy begins his writing by introducing certain tenets of his absurd quest. This introduction serves to comprehend the implied author's devices, as well. Since the narrator Sammy is "the only teller" of his story, both the authorial audience and his narratee witness the events through his gaze (Golding, 1959a, p. 9). Even though the narrator seems to privilege his younger self's perspective from time to time, the internal focalization prevents him from conveying the events without attaching them his "adult testimony" (Golding, 1959a, p. 60). Therefore, the narrator's search of a pattern in the patternless world is mainly narrated through the older Mountjoy's interpretation, evaluation and regarding.

As a "burning amateur, torn by the irrational and incoherent", the narrator begins his narrative asking, "when did I lose my freedom" (Golding, 1959a, p. 9). He positions this question as the departure point of his absurd quest. As an amateur, who is dedicated to find a pattern, the narrator

introduces the first sights of free will in his life to the narratee and authorial audience through a childhood experience. Stating that, "Free will cannot be debated but only experienced," he depicts a park where the younger Sammy Mountjoy felt "free" (Golding, 1959a, p. 9). Upon that he narrates, "I could take whichever I would of these paths... I danced down one for joy in the taste of potatoes. I was free. I had chosen" (Golding, 1959a, p. 9). At this point, the narrator uses gustatory imagery of potatoes as a line to be drawn between the binary opposition of innocence and experience. As his story continues, the image of potatoes becomes a repeating narrative that would indicate his subjective distinction between the said-binary. His interpretation and evaluation lead him to associate the times when he could still taste the potatoes with innocence, where, he believes, free will is a granter of freedom. Therefore, he moves to seek for the point of loss of freedom in the realm of experience.

In his interrogation of the point where he has lost his freedom, the second tenet of his absurd quest, narrative self-reflexivity, is introduced through his discussion of the nature of time. Arguing that "the time is two modes", he suggests that the chronological order is an "effortless perception native to us", whereas a memory is "a sense of shuffle fold and coil, of that day nearer than that because more important" (Golding, 1959a, p. 9). Therefore, he prefers to follow the non-linear order of memory in his narrative since he believes that it would show the point where free will has begun to bring loss of freedom. Making a second reference to "the taste of potatoes", the narrator Sammy Mountjoy explains that, "I put the day in the park first in my story, not because I was young, a baby almost; but because freedom has become more and more precious to me as I taste the potato less and less often" (Golding,

1959a, p. 10). This explanation on the subjective time order of his writing demonstrates the narrator's indefinite perception, as a reflection of his absurd quest.

Albert Camus (1965, p. 15) contemplates on man's aspiration to find a pattern, stating that "the mind's deepest desire ... is an insistence upon familiarity, an appetite for clarity. Understanding the world for a man is reducing it to the human, stamping it with his seal". In a similar sense, Sammy Mountjoy seeks for a pattern to find where he has lost his freedom. However, the absurdity of the narrator's quest becomes apparent in his contradictory remarks on certain patterns, which he sees "like a row of useless hats" (Golding, 1959a, p. 10). Those hats, hung on the wall to illustrate where he has lost his freedom prove "useless" to create a design when he considers "the thing happened—the decision made freely that cost my freedom" (Golding, 1959a, p. 10). Nevertheless, the completing analepsis where he tries to justify his aspiration for a pattern undermines these previous remarks, as he claims,

Not that I aspire to complete coherence. Our mistake is to confuse our limitations with the bounds of possibility and clap the universe into a rationalist hat or some other. But I may find the indications of a pattern that will include me, even if the outer edges tail off into ignorance (Golding, 1959a, p. 11).

This contradiction demonstrates that "Sammy is strongly aware of the danger of patterning and is conscious of his misguided but irrepressible desire to see structures in life" (Clements, 2012, p. 82). Another completing analepsis about their old lodger's breath-taking, which he resembles to a clock's tick-tocks,

shows the “uninformed” nature of his aspiration for a pattern as in the following:

As I remember him and his breathing it occurs to me that what he had was lung cancer; and I notice with a certain wry amusement my instant effort to fit that uninformed guess into a pattern. But then I remember that all patterns have broken one after another, that life is random and evil unpunished (Golding, 1959a, p. 22).

Awakening from his childhood fallacy, the older Sammy Mountjoy questions the feasibility of forming a pattern. The narrator Mountjoy’s interpretation that “all patterns have broken one after another” shows that the randomness of life goes hand in hand with irrationality and absurdity. In fact, the completing analepsis about his preference for writing instead of drawing hints beforehand that his only possibility of forming a pattern is to “find the indications of a pattern that will include me [him]” (Golding, 1959a, p. 11). Yet, he soon doubts the achievability of a pattern all together, asking to himself, “Then why do I write? Do I still expect a pattern?” (Golding, 1959a, p. 22). This question remains unanswered for a while demonstrating the narrator’s dilemma to the authorial audience.

The narrator aims to find a connection between “the little boy, clear as spring water, and the man like a stagnant pool” by writing his past (Golding, 1959a, p. 12). Yet, with the completing analepsis of a dangerous adventure with his friend Johnny in the darkness of the general’s garden, the older Sammy Mountjoy puts a sharp distinction between his innocent and experienced selves. The narrator states that, “I am not a man who was a boy looking at a tree. I am a man who remembers being a boy looking at a tree” (Golding, 1959a,

p. 38). This rupture prevents the narrator from feeling any responsibility for the deeds of his younger self. Since the narrator believes that in the phase of innocence, free will would not bring along darkness, he states, "I am looking for the beginning of responsibility, the beginning of darkness, the point where I began" (Golding, 1959a, p. 38). While the young boy belongs to innocence, the I represents experience, which consequently enables the narrator to divide his narrative into two periods.

In addition to finding a pattern, the narrator sees his retrospective writing as a means to communicate,

...the unnamable, unfathomable, and invisible darkness that sits at the centre of him, always awake, always different from what you believe it to be, always thinking and feeling what you can never know it thinks and feels, that hopes hopelessly to understand and to be understood" (Golding, 1959a, p. 11).

The narrator initially presents a central darkness that dwells inside him, which he tries associate with the universe. L. L. Dickson (1990, p. 72) makes a generalization suggesting that "images of blackness and darkness, recurrent in all Golding's novels symbolize the dark, irrational, self-destructive forces within oneself". However, some other presentations of darkness within the narrative of *Free Fall* (1959) demonstrate this concept as an external phenomenon. This shows that the narrator starts looking for the point where his darkness has begun without giving a clear definition of the concept, which leads this paper to define the concept of darkness as the absurd itself.

Upon this discussion of certain tenets that lays the foundations of the narrator's absurd quest, the paper will continue to focus on three repeating

narratives that are essential to comprehend the implied author's design to represent the twentieth century world and the absurd man through Mountjoy's search. The narrator at several points questions himself, asking, "There?" in order to determine the beginning point of the darkness (Golding, 1959a, p. 55). However, this question is continuously answered with "No. Not here" (Golding, 1959a, p. 99). The first incident where this repeating narrative appears is when the young Sammy Mountjoy bullies small kids to capture their fag cards. Following this incident, the narrator states that, "I can still sense my feelings of defiance and isolation; a man against society" (Golding, 1959a, p. 43). This confession not only foreshadows his later involvement in the war as an artist, but it also denotes his hidden evil at the phase of innocence. His situation mirrors the actual William Golding's remark in *Hot Gates* (1965b, 87) about the evilness of the twentieth century man, who has caused two world wars, as the writer remarks, "I must say that anyone who moved through those years without understanding that man produces evil as a bee produces honey, must have been blind or wrong in the head". The same repeating narrative appears for a second time after his friend Phillip persuades him to spit on the altar, and this action prepares the narrator's first affinity with the external darkness. When verger secretly catches him and hit hard on the head, the narrator remembers, "infinity, darkness and space had invaded my island" (Golding, 1959a, p. 49-50). After staying in a ward to get better due to the verger's harsh manner, the narrator Sammy Mountjoy says good-bye not only to the ward but also to the young Mountjoy, confessing that, "I have search like all men for a coherent picture of my life and the world, but I cannot write the last word on that ward without giving it my adult testimony" (Golding, 1959a,

p. 60). This confession not only shows the subjectivity of the narrator's recounting, but also poses a contradiction to his former claim that he did not look for a coherent pattern. The unreliability raising from this misreport presents the absurdity of his quest. Considering the contradictory nature of the narrator's accounts, it is not surprising that the answer of his question remains **not here**.

The narrator's phase of experience begins with his decision to make his former classmate Beatrice Ifor fall in love with himself. Even though the younger Sammy Mountjoy is immersed in a fantasy back then, the completing analepsis helps the narrator Mountjoy to see the irony of his commitment, as he thinks, "There was much to be achieved in those minutes, things noted down and decided, steps to be taken; she was to be brought—oh, irony! a little nearer to a complete loss of freedom" (Golding, 1959a, p. 64). At those days, Sammy Mountjoy has another commitment, the Communist Party, which reflects his ambitions about Beatrice from a larger perspective. Mountjoy's association of Beatrice with the Party evokes a general feeling about the twentieth century world's situation, where he thinks "The world around us was sliding on and down through an arch into a stormy welter where morals and families and private obligations had no place" (Golding, 1959a, p. 72). Twentieth century, not only in the narrator's world, but also in the implied author Golding's world is a century of turbulence and wars. In this sense, it can be assumed that "*Free Fall* becomes a platform in which [the implied] Golding reveals his views related to the war and its creators; it is the novel of epic fail of the twentieth century's pure rational modern man who is damning himself with his free actions in helpless and absurd universe" (Görgün, 2015, p. 83).

Another repeating narrative, **maybe**, also helps to observe the absurdity and darkness of the twentieth century world from the narrator Sammy Mountjoy's gaze. Remembering to hear maybe upon maybe from Beatrice as an answer to his demanding questions, the narrator makes a generalization, thinking that "...maybe was sign of all our time. We were certain of nothing" (Golding, 1959a, p. 82). The use of we as an indicator of all humanity shows the implied author's design to connect Mountjoy's absurd quest with the absurd twentieth century. As Mountjoy later on comments on the predicament of humanity, he states, "We are forced here and now to torture each other" (Golding, 1959a, p. 87). In fact, the narrator's confession about the humanity's brutality foreshadows his upcoming war accounts in the Nazi Camp. It is essential to emphasize, at this point, that neither in his participation to the war nor in his torture to Beatrice, he accepts that he has made a free choice out of his free will. He constantly accuses his free will as the bringer of darkness. After he achieves to win Beatrice's heart and her chastity, he begins to see her as a source of bore, which he cannot stand anymore. Remembering that he has left her without any excuses or explanations, he justifies himself stating that, "I had lost my power to choose. I had given away my freedom" (Golding, 1959a, p. 98). In fact, the narrator openly associates his action with the general spirit of the time, in order to use the evilness of the twentieth century as an agitator of his own evilness. He states that, "There was anarchy in the mind where I lived and anarchy in the world at large, two states so similar that the one might have produced the other... accept them as a pattern of the world and one's own behaviour is little enough disease" (Golding, 1959a, p. 98-99). In a way, "as a man who observes the awful conditions of the war,

Mountjoy reflects the influence of war into his world” (Görgün, 2015, p. 74). Once again, this chapter ends with the repeating narrative **no, not here**, which indicates that Sammy Mountjoy is still lost in his search for a pattern due to the patternlessness of world.

The repeating narrative “I know nothing”, which Sammy Mountjoy utters during his interrogation in a Nazi Camp as a war artist, is also a prominent sign of the absurd (Golding, 1959a, p. 105). In that camp, the narrator meets Dr. Halde, who is a significant figure in the binary of spiritualism-rationalism that directs Mountjoy to question the beginning of darkness not only in the phase of experience, but also innocence. During the interrogation, the repeating narrative **maybe** is used by the narrator this time, which is followed by his interpretation of the brutal war as in the following:

I could see this war as the ghastly and ferocious play of children who having made a wrong choice or a whole series of them were now helplessly tormenting each other because a wrong use of freedom had lost them their freedom. Everything was relative, nothing absolute (Golding, 1959a, p. 112).

At this point, Mountjoy’s under-evaluation becomes clear since the above statement shows that what has caused both him and the humanity to create wars has not been the use of free will at certain phases as in the binary of innocence-experience. Therefore, it is “a wrong use of freedom [that] had lost them their freedom” (Golding, 1959a, p. 112). As Görgün (2015, p. 74) suggests, “[The implied] Golding reflects how modern man has realized this tragedy with his own choices by means of Sammy Mountjoy’s own created hell in *Free Fall*”. Despite the fact that Sammy continuously accuses his free will as the

agitator of his deeds, as a prisoner of war who is suffering now, he seems to comprehend the actual underlying reasons of the whole torture of humanity. Following this comprehension, Sammy Mountjoy's quest for an absurd becomes one with the absurdity of war as he gives his one and only truth as an answer to Dr. Halde when he states, "But look. You want the truth. All right I'll tell you the truth. I don't know whether I know anything or not" (Golding, 1959a, p. 113).

The narrator's recall of the Nazi Camp drags him back to the phase of innocence, which his under-reading leads him to think that he would not be referring back to those days to figure out the inception of his darkness. After the narrator meets with the external darkness of "some soft, opaque material" covering his eyes and a hand pushes him into the darkness of a cell, he remembers "the generalized terror" of darkness in the verger's house (Golding, 1959a, p. 114). Asking himself, "How did I come to be so frightened of the dark," he questions the fear that darkness evokes in him (Golding, 1959a, p. 115). The self-reflexive narrative allows the narrator to ponder upon the external darkness in the verger's house since

"...bed meant darkness and darkness the generalized and irrational terror. Now I have been back in these pages to find out why I am frightened of the dark and I cannot tell. Once upon a time I was not frightened of the dark and later on I was" (Golding, 1959a, p. 122-23).

This demonstrates that despite the narrator's epistemological perspective towards darkness, he never gives a true description of what makes something the darkness. In this sense, how can darkness, as the absurd itself, be the starting point of the I, the narrator himself? This shows that the narrator's initial

equation between the I and the darkness makes him the absurd man as a reflection of the absurd, that is, the darkness.

The ambiguity of darkness leads to a repeating narrative, calling the narrator back into the cell in the Nazi Camp. The implied author uses the image of cell as the melting pot for several inner and external darkness of the absurd man and the twentieth century world. No matter what the narrator does, the cell's darkness does not leave the narrator Sammy Mountjoy. Upon tearing the bandage of his eyes, the narrator remembers, "Nothing happened at all. The darkness stayed with me. It was not only trapped under the fold of cloth, it wrapped me round... My voice was close to my mouth as the darkness was to the balls of my eyes" (Golding, 1959a, p. 124-25). His first instinct against darkness is to care "only to protect my [his] privates, our privates, the whole race" (Golding, 1959a, p. 124). The phallic symbol associated with the protection of the whole humanity in the face of "generalized" fear gives reference his **rational** torture to Beatrice, which he has demonstrated as a continuity of the twentieth century atmosphere (Golding, 1959a, p. 122). Yet soon enough, the terror of the cell seizes all his consciousness, making him notice the "woodenness" of the door, which he renders as a "prison inside prison" since the narrator realizes it is not the door itself that keeps him back, but his own prejudices (Golding, 1959a, p. 127). As J. Delbaere-Garant (1976) suggests,

As a modern hero he [Sammy Mountjoy] knows there is no use trying to open the wooden door because there will be another beyond. Faithful and Christian 'lived in a plain time when an open door was synonym for exit' but this is no longer true of twentieth-century man unsupported by

tradition, custom or belief and forced to make his own decisions by looking inward and exploring his inner self (p. 360).

In a similar vein, the realization of the woodenness of the door becomes the point where Sammy Mountjoy faces the absurdity of war. Reflecting the younger Sammy's gaze, the narrator comprehends that he would feel compelled to torture himself for the rationalist Dr. Halde. At the core of this torture, he knows that the "generalized dark" dwells (Golding, 1959a, p. 130). According to the younger Sammy Mountjoy, the torture is composed of four steps, which will trigger you to move to the centre of the absurd. Even though, Mountjoy continuously warns himself, "be reasonable", his rationality is replaced by blinding emotion of terror (Golding, 1959a, p. 130). Therefore, the narrator cannot resist taking the forth step and believe that even though "reason and common sense told me [him] there was no body hanging", there must be a phallic symbol at the centre, which according to his assumption, Dr. Halde has wanted him to find (Golding, 1959a, p. 136).

The following example of self-reflexivity opens a new page for his self-inquiry. The narrator slips himself off the darkness of the war in order to re-evaluate his previous thoughts on the point where he has lost his freedom as follows:

Let me be accurate now if ever. These pages I have written have taught me much; not least that no man can tell the whole truth, language is clumsier in my hands than paint. And yet my life has remained centred round the fact of the next few minutes I spent alone and panic-stricken in the dark... When a man cries out instinctively he begins to

search for a place where help may be found (Golding, 1959a, p. 136).

In a way, “Sammy-the-narrator not only searches for the point where he has lost his freedom of choice, he also attempts to gain a new perspective and freedom through the act of narrating” (Çıraklı, 2010, p. 125). Therefore, his need to refer to another point in his life in order to understand the beginning of darkness reminds Mountjoy his call for help from spiritualism in the cell, “where death is close as darkness against eyeballs” (Golding, 1959a, p. 137). Observed from a Camusian perspective, Mountjoy indeed calls for recovery to rebel against death. As the absurd man of the twentieth century, “he prefers his courage and his reasoning. The first teaches him to live without appeal and to get along with what he has; the second informs him of his limits” (Camus, 1965, p. 45). In other words, after his hearing of the “music” or call of recovery, the narrator’s discriminative attitude between the extremes of binaries becomes the idea that, “everything is related to everything else and all relationship is either discord or accord” (Golding, 1959a, p. 138). Sammy Mountjoy ultimately comprehends that “...what is absurd is the confrontation of this irrational and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart. The absurd depends as much as man as on the world. For the moment it is all that links them together” (Camus, 1965, p. 18). The Camusian absurd man attempts to ease the brutality of the twentieth century world; therefore, focuses on improvement. Similarly, the narrator explains, “There was so much to learn, so many adjustments to make that prison life became extremely busy and happy. For now, the world was re-orientated. What had been important dropped away. What had been ludicrous became common sense (Golding, 1959a, p.

139). At this point, his problematization of free will takes a new turn. He begins to look for the inception of darkness in the ignored phases of his life, considering that “Somewhere, sometime, I made a choice in freedom and lost my freedom. I lost nothing before the verger knocked me down; or perhaps that blow was like death and paid all debts. Between there, then and the boy on the bike, the young man—that was the whole time of the other school. There, somewhere there?” (Golding, 1959a, p. 142)

At this point, it would be best to move onto the conflict between the binaries of innocence-experience and spiritualism-rationalism and discuss how they lead to a bonding communication between the implied author and the authorial audience. As mentioned, the narrator’s absurd quest to find a pattern that would clarify the point where he has lost his freedom takes a different direction after his experience in the cell. Even though, this analysis has already shown several contradictions in the totality of the narrator’s accounts, the mentioned conflict offers a strong example of a bonding unreliability in the text. The following completing analepsis, which the narrator employs to reach an answer, demonstrate deviations in the axes of communication due to a subtype of bonding unreliability, which is **literally unreliable but metaphorically reliable**. The narrator remembers two teachers in the middle-class school, Nick Shales and Miss Pringle, as the two extremes of a spectrum, calling them “the virgin and the water-carrier” (Golding, 1959a, p. 143). Even though the young Sammy Mountjoy is more willing to choose the spirituality of Miss Pringles, her harsh attitude approaches him to the rationalist and good Nick Shales. A critic argues that “in equating Nick and his philosophy, Mountjoy mistakes love for his teacher as love for rationalism, a mistake

derived from a confusion between emotion and intellect” (Johnson, 1988, p. 63-64). However, the young Sammy, unlike the narrator Sammy, is not able to understand that his choice is based on the personality of Nick Shales. His under-reading leads him to choose rationality in an irrational mode:

The burning bush resisted and I understood instantly how we lived a contradiction. This was a moment of such importance to me that I must examine it completely. For an instant out of time, the two worlds existed side by side... I do not believe that rational choice stood any chance of exercise... Nick persuaded me to his natural scientific universe by what he was, not by what he said... In that moment a door closed behind me... I was not to knock on that door again, until in a Nazi prison camp I lay huddled against it half crazed with terror and despair (Golding, 1959a, p. 160).

Absurdity is born out of the contradictions of “two worlds”. Therefore, discriminating between them would not bring any salvation. On the other hand, the narrator Sammy Mountjoy understands that “rational choice stood any chance of exercise” since young Sammy must have under-interpreted the connection between Nick Shales’s goodness and his rational mode of thinking (Golding, 1959a, p. 160). This completing prolepsis also hints that the narrator Sammy Mountjoy has been hasty to leave the young Mountjoy behind while searching for the beginning of darkness. The use of repeating narrative, **here**, and, **not here**, by the implied author supports the implication of Mountjoy’s under-interpreting in his quest. For this repeating narrative demonstrates the absurdity of Sammy Mountjoy’s quest by creating a conflict between the said-binaries. In fact, it is questionable for the narrator that his quest for the

beginning of darkness can be solved without making a solid explanation on the darkness itself, which as he has already explained as the unfathomable.

Upon remembering the moment, he has chosen rational thinking, the narrator Sammy Mountjoy recalls the time when he first tried to draw Beatrice. In the middle school, in a drawing class, he scribbles the portrait of the young girl on behalf of his friend Phillip. Since his friend gets the praise and Beatrice does not show any interest to him, young Sammy develops an evil ambition to sacrifice everything for her. The word sacrifice symbolizes his misinterpreting and under-regarding of his objective while making Beatrice fall in love with himself. Even though, he adopts a rational perspective and approaches to her; first, he cannot immediately see the fact that Nick Shales' rational mode of thinking is not complemented by any evilness, but a generosity; second, he seems to ignore that the real sacrifice has been on the side on Beatrice, not on his. He reveals the comprehension of his under-regarding, stating that:

I transformed Nick's innocent, paper world. Mine was an amoral, a savage place in which man was trapped without hope, to enjoy what he could while it was going. But since I record all this not so much to excuse myself as to understand myself I must add the complications which makes nonsense again. At the moment I was deciding that right and wrong were nominal and relative, I felt, I saw the beauty of holiness and tasted evil in my mouth like the taste of vomit (Golding, 1959a, p. 167).

The self-reflexivity of narrative helps the narrator to understand his fundamental reason to write down his past. Even though he still accepts that he uses the writing as a tool to ease his guilty conscience at some point, he begins to focus more on understanding his previous inadequate evaluations.

Ultimately, the narrator comprehends that the obsession with one side of the binaries has caused his transformation of Nick's good-hearted rationalism. On the other hand, since young Mountjoy chooses rationalism due to the man who applies it, he cannot act like a pure rationalist Dr. Halde, either. Johnson argues that,

Dr. Halde is an incisive portrait of twentieth-century man whose villainy derives not from some innate absence of spiritual compassion [...] nor from a misunderstanding of his own inner nature (as Nick Shales), but rather from his deliberate choice to sacrifice his spiritual capacity and to serve only his reasoning faculty (1988, p. 64).

Therefore, the narrator's evil deeds gradually become the embodiment of his guilty conscience. That is why after the first scribbled portraiture, Beatrice becomes the symbol of the indescribable darkness, whose face Sammy Mountjoy can never draw again. The pure, good girl becomes the victim of a misguided rationalism. Since Mountjoy is neither a pure spiritualist nor rationalist, he ultimately regrets his mistakes. Even though he remembers that while making the decision to sacrifice everything for Beatrice, he could still taste the potatoes, the chapter ends with the same question in the form of repeating narrative, **here**. However, this time, the narrator is even doubtful that it is not the point where he has lost his freedom. Therefore, he cannot answer with a **not here**. Ultimately, the conflict between two binaries creates a literally unreliable but metaphorically **reliable** bonding unreliability that serves to embody the absurd itself, by which the implied author reflects the absurdity of the twentieth century to his authorial audience.

Eventually, the narrator's writing ends with three visits to three people, Beatrice Ifor, Nick Shales and Miss Pringles, which allow him to reconcile with the mentioned binary. All of these visits in general help him to understand that binaries do not bring forth discrimination but reconciliation, as he perceives that "cause and effect. The law of succession. Statistical probability. The moral order. Sin and remorse. They are all true. Both worlds exist side by side. They meet in me" (Golding, 1959a, p. 170). This reconciliation leads him to take a new perspective towards his understanding of a pattern. Indeed, his under-evaluation on the feasibility of a pattern turns into a multiplistic understanding as he reveals that, "Useless to say that a man is a whole continent, pointless to say that each consciousness is a whole world because each consciousness is a dozen worlds" (Golding, 1959a, p. 184). Seeing the simultaneous existence of multiple worlds, the narrator manages to turn his face to spiritualism in a rational way. This time, he does not depend on someone else but his free will since as the narrator has stated in the beginning "free will cannot be debated but only experienced" (Golding, 1959a, p. 9). Therefore, he accepts, "The innocent and the wicked live in one world... But we are neither the innocent nor the wicked. We are the guilty. We fall down" (Golding, 1959a, p. 187). Finally, he not only accepts his guiltiness, but also the simultaneous existence of two worlds. L. L. Dickson (1990, p. 73-74) suggests a reconciling interpretation of the novel's title "Free Fall", attributing both a theological and scientific meaning to it. As Dickson quotes Golding's own remarks on the title, it

is in fact a scientific term. It is where your gravity has *gone*;
it is a man in a spaceship who has no gravity; things don't

fall or lift, they flout about... Where for hundreds of thousands of years men have known where they were, now they don't know where they are any longer. This is the point of *Free Fall* (1990, p. 73-74).

In fact, it is deducible from this point that Mountjoy's amalgamation of innocent and wicked under the name of guilty and seeing the guilty man as falling can be a sign of not a real fall, but as the title suggests a free fall, where the man only flouts about. The same reconciliation can be seen in the narrator's following statements:

All day long action is weighed in the balance and found not opportune nor fortunate or ill-advised, but good or evil. For this mode which we must call the spirit breathes through the universe and does not touch it; touches only the dark things, held prisoner, incommunicado, touches, judges, sentences and passes on. Her world was real, both worlds are real. There is no bridge (Golding, 1959a, p. 188).

From these remarks, it can be suggested that his experience in the Nazi cell leads the narrator to comprehend his misguided rationalism and directs him to check the other side of the binary, spiritualism. Ultimately, the narrator understands that it is not until one loses the grip of one side of the binary that he turns his face to the other side of the binary. Just like free will that can only be experienced, the spirit must be experienced by "the dark things, held prisoner, incommunicado" (Golding, 1959a, p. 188). The fact that it "touches" and then "passes on" shows that clinging to the one side of the binary leads the individual to miss the meaning born out of their confrontation (Golding, 1959a, p. 188). As another matter of fact, even though it is possible to state that the conflict between the two specific binaries has clearly created a bonding

unreliability, the ending also makes the actual reader question the total reliability of the text. As Seymour Chatman (1978b, p. 233) explains, "The story undermines the discourse. We conclude, by 'reading out,' between the lines, that the events and existents could not have been 'like that,' and so we hold the narrator suspect". Similarly, this study shows that not only in the given conflict but also in various parts of the narrative, the narrator makes under-interpretations or evaluations of events.

As the narrative comes to an end, what Sammy Mountjoy illustrates as a phallic object at the centre of the Nazi cell turns out to be a wet tablecloth that has been forgotten by the soldiers. The fact that narrator continues to cast doubt on an evil intention behind the mistaken phallic image or the tablecloth might be taken as an implication of his unreliable narration from the beginning. The last sentence used in the narrative reinforces such a deduction as it shows in the most mimetic form, "the Herr Doctor does not know about peoples" (Golding, 1959a, p. 188). This ironic statement of the implied William Golding raises certain questions about the narrator's reliability as well as that of the twentieth century society since the narrator is a member of it. In an interview with James R. Baker (Golding & Baker, 1988, p. 141), William Golding repeatedly says, "To contradict is to be human". Underlining a similar notion of contradiction, this paper asserts that in *Free Fall* (1959) not only the unreliability of the mentioned conflict between two binaries but also the contradictions within the absurd man Sammy Mountjoy allow the implied author to create a bonding communication with his authorial audience. Concluding the study, it can be said that both the narrator Mountjoy's absurd quest for a pattern to find where he has lost his freedom and the plural

existence of unreliability serve to highlight the implied author's design to convey the absurdity of the twentieth century which saw both the destruction and deconstruction of the meaning of the "unfathomable darkness" that "sits at the centre" of the humanity (Golding, 1959a, p. 11).

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