This thesis focuses on William Golding and his depiction of humanity in his three novels – Lord of the Flies, Pincher Martin and Free Fall. Primarily, I am interested in the way his characters undertake their journey to self-knowledge and thus establish their own identity. This process of self-exploring is then described in terms of innocence, experience, guilt, spirituality and darkness. By scrutinising three levels of these novels – moral, social and religious (mystical) – I am going to establish certain patterns of Golding’s philosophy, and thus reconstruct his view of mankind. As a result, I will present Golding as a moralist, sociologist and mystic.

Golding himself reveals that he is interested in conveying his message concerning these issues to readers. In his collection of essays called A Moving Target he writes: “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.”1 Therefore, Golding puts his characters in dangerous, psychologically and physically extreme situations to make them confront their selves and describe their moral, social and religious attitudes. Virginia Tiger remarks on this technique: “A direct confrontation is made to occur between a character’s centre (roughly intelligence or ‘consciousness’) and his darkness.”2 Thus, the bridge between the material and spiritual world is built not only by the author himself but also by the reader, whose experience with the story makes him confront his own spirituality, and I believe, this is the result Golding wants to achieve.