

THE RULE OF POWER IN WILLIAM GOLDING'S "LORD OF THE FLIES"

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The rule of power is the concept around which William Golding's Nobel Prize Winner novel *Lord of the Flies* turns. It is Golding's literary masterpiece which is translated into more than 30 languages and hailed as one of the classics of the 20th century. The novel which tells the story of a group of young boys who find themselves alone on a deserted island, develop rules and a system of organization, but without any adults to serve as a civilizing impulse. The children eventually become violent and brutal. In the context of the novel, the tale of the boys' descent into chaos suggests that human nature is fundamentally savage. Accordingly, Golding's boys keep on fighting and choosing one leader after another making their choices depend on the most powerful boy among them all to rule.

William Golding himself, as an allied officer who fought in World War II, experienced the destructive effect of the war first-person. After this devastation he witnessed, he published his first novel *Lord of the Flies*, which symbolically expressed his thoughts on human nature, rule of power, and the constant conflict between the good and evil. The aim of this article is to reveal the fact that according to Golding in the conflict between the good and evil, man's nature tends more toward savagery and evil. The methodology used includes basic criticism regarding the concept of good versus evil in the human nature according to philosophy as well as religion. The hypothesis that the article rests upon points out that although human beings might try to act in a good manner, yet they are often heartless evils. Thus, a human being is always in need of social rules to be tamed and is always ready to worship something/someone stronger than himself/herself until he/she is saved by the "Messiah".

Keywords: *survival, human nature, social system, democracy, dictatorship, civilization, Messiah.*

Introduction

Golding's haunting tale is one of the world's best-loved and most terrifying allegorical novels where a group of six British Schoolboys between the ages 6

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and 12 are shipwrecked on an isolated island for fifteen months somewhere in the Pacific Ocean where they try to create order and remake society. Golding creates a backdrop of global war where the boys attempt to build a civil society that is followed by the assumed destruction of civilization. The novel is an attempt to show two main points; first; the fact that the collapse of civilizations into war is unavoidable, and second; the fact that the evil forces within the human beings drive them towards self-destruction.

It is worth mentioning that Golding has written *Lord of the Flies* after his active participation in WWII where he has carved deep in the human soul finding out that man's origin is egoistic, self-centered, and that his evil nature is exposed in the form of power. Thus, he says, "I must say that anyone who passed through those years [of World War II] without understanding that man produces evil as a bee produces honey, must have been blind or wrong in the head" (Golding, 1965). To convey the idea that evil is an inborn trait of mankind, Golding purposefully uses children as his main characters where each boy tries to rule and dominate over the others in the absence of social rules and this allows them to commit violent acts.

War for power ended up by the appearance of the Messiah

Golding's Nobel Prize winning novel *Lord of the Flies* was written by virtue of two basic motives; the first being his work experience with unruly boys as a teacher and the second being his time experience as a combatant in WWII. Although Golding's debut came in 1934 with his poetry collection, yet, after World War II, he began working on his first novel called *Lord of the Flies*, which was published in 1954 and filmed by Peter Brook in 1963 (Tore & Allén, 1993). The novel is full of different issues such as the nature, society, good, and evil. It symbolizes the destruction mankind can ravage on nature and the Earth merely by coming into contact with it and destroying it because of his greed. The virgin island is a symbolic Garden of Eden which is untouched by man. However, as soon as the young British schoolboys arrive, its beauty begins to be destroyed quickly and it becomes corrupted. Each one of the six boys represents either a negative or a positive aspect of humanity and effects either the mother nature or the society in a different way. For example, Piggy and Ralph symbolize civilization and order. Whereas Simon symbolizes natural human goodness and is also a Christ figure (a literary technique that the author uses to draw allusions between the characters and the biblical Jesus). More loosely, it is a spiritual or prophetic character that parallels Jesus, or any other spiritual or prophetic figure.

In Golding's novel, Simon just like Christ, is tried out by the devil. When he was alone in the woods interacting with the lord of the flies (Devil in Hebrew translation) the Lord of the flies - a pig's head, called so due to the number of flies swarming the dead carcass – spoke to Simon, asking, “Aren't you afraid of me?... There isn't anyone to help you, only me. And I'm the beast” (Golding, 1980, p. 143). The pig's head stated that he should be the one whom Simon should fear, enhancing the allusion between the pig's head and the devil. The pig's head continues saying, “You know perfectly well that you will only meet me down there - so don't you try and escape” (Golding, 1980, p.143). Thus, the head of the pig – or the lord of the flies is a representative of the devil that tries out Simon the Christ figure that represents the good. Contrary to Simon, in the same group of boys, Jack and Roger symbolize evil, savagery, and bloodlust at their most extreme. The big kids symbolize the ruling classes and political leaders (those who have power in society), whereas the “littluns” symbolize common people (those who don't have power in society). In the course of his novel, through his characters, Golding shows the reality of both negative as well as positive instincts within the human nature. The relationships that develop between the older boys and the younger ones emphasize the older boys' connection to either the civilized or the savage instinct: civilized boys like Ralph and Simon use their power to protect the younger boys and advance the good of the group; savage boys like Jack and Roger use their power to gratify their own desires, treating the little boys as objects for their own amusement.

While depicting the children on the island, Golding describes how fearful they were while being parentless with no one defying for them. They were afraid of the wildness of nature while they saw pigs and beasts around them. When they didn't have any fruits left for them to eat, they killed the pig to eat its meat, however, they were afraid of its blood. At night they were afraid of sleeping to avoid seeing the nightmare of the beast. While many boys were afraid of a sea monster or some winged creature, Simon meditated on the metaphysical nature of the beast, wondering if they should fear their own nature instead of some outside force. According to Simon, there was a darkness lurking in the hearts of the boys on the island. Rejecting the notion of a beast Simon says: “Maybe there is a beast... Maybe it's only us.” (Golding, 1980, p.81) Thus, the real beast that the children were afraid of was not in the physical world around them on the island at night nor at daytime. The real beast was inside each boy who was thirsty for power to rule over his friends.

It is worth mentioning that, as England had entered World War II in 1941, Golding joined the Royal Navy, where he served in command of a rocket-launcher and actively participated in the invasion of Normandy. On August 6, 1945, during World War II, the American B-29 bomber dropped the world's first deployed atomic bomb over the Japanese city of Hiroshima and killed an estimated 80,000 people. Three days later, on August 9, 1945, a second B-29 dropped another bomb called "Fat Man" which exploded in Nagasaki killing an estimated 40,000 people. (Atomic bombings of Heroshima and Nagasaki). Having this in mind, some might claim that Golding's concept of evil is just the result of living during a war era. However, this cannot be true since many philosophers who had lived earlier during the 17th and 18th centuries have also considered the existence of evil in the human nature. For example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau had discussed the same belief much earlier in the 18th century. Rousseau, the Genevan philosopher, whose ideas and principles were influenced by the French Revolution, has claimed, "Man is born evil because every human being is born with a desire for possession and a hunger for power" (Philosophers and scientists views on humans good and evil, 2022). Accordingly, it was the desire of owning the shell, of leading and ruling along with the desire to eat enough and resist hunger that has made the schoolboys in Golding's novel behave as they had. Also, Thomas Hobbes, a 17th century philosopher who was effected by Niccolo Machiavelli and René Descartes has argued that as human beings, we need humans' culture, government, and laws to be implemented to control our inner evil (Lloyd, 2002). While the plane was taking the boys to safety following the outbreak of a nuclear war, it crashes on an unknown island and the boys' attempt to create civilization on the island ends in disaster, because of a battle for power (About William Golding, n.d.). Accordingly, even angelic beings like children can turn into brutal savages when there are no prohibitions that society dictates over them since evil is innate in a human being. Thus, both J. J. Rousseau and N. Machiavelli had supported the idea of evil in human nature. However, Golding's concept is slightly different in the *Lord of the Flies* since for Golding the innate evil power is not permanent in a man's life. According to the *Lord of the Flies*, evil will vanish as soon as the "Messiah" comes, that's why the children left everything behind and wanted to leave the island when, the "Messiah", the British naval officer came to take them home.

It is known that the setting of the novel enjoys an extraordinary natural bliss, which is disturbed by the arrival of human beings. This reminds us of the Garden of Eden from which Adam and Eve were dismissed and cursed by God because

of the original sin. While the boys were on the island they behaved like real children who suddenly become parentless facing new experience as an adventure, trying to find different means of survival. They started by eating fruits and when the fruits were over they started to hunt pigs and eat the meat in a festive atmosphere. They built huts on the beach to protect themselves from the beast by daytime. They also created different tasks for themselves to perform. They even tried to set a government the prime minister of which was at first Ralph who was the owner of the conch shell. Ralph is the primary representative of order, of civilization, and of productive leadership in the novel. While most of the other boys initially are concerned with playing, having fun, and avoiding work, Ralph sets about building huts and thinking of ways to maximize their chances of being rescued. With time, the shell effectively governs the boys' meetings, for the boy who holds the shell holds the right to speak. Thus, the shell itself becomes a powerful symbol of civilization and order in the novel. In this regard, the shell is more than a symbol, it is an actual vessel of political legitimacy and democratic power (Lord of the Flies Spark Notes Literature Guide). The children were first in need of only food, but later, after they had enough they thought of fighting with each other to have power on the other boys. As Mahatma Ghandi has once said, "The Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed". It was their greed of having more and their thirst for power that led them to fight.

After the conch shell is crushed, the children replace Ralph by Jack Merridew who gets involved in the politics of power and succumbs to evil practices. Jack enters into a power struggle with Ralph who embodies the positive side of human character. By virtue of a relatively older age, Ralph becomes the leader of the group. Unlike Jack who exhibits dictator-like behavior, Ralph is more of a democratic leader. He provides everyone the opportunity to express their opinion through holding the conch shell. His sole objectives for the group are: to survive, to have fun, and to maintain a smoke signal so that any passing ship may come to their rescue. This shows that there is a difference in the application of power which is relatively reflected in the actions of individuals, and also says quite much about the character of each child (Abhedananada, 1899, p. 157), thus, revealing both types of leadership – democracy and dictatorship. Ralph and Jack who kept on fighting and were always in a kind of conflict are symbols of democracy and dictatorship. Who will be the chief? Each of them tried to take more "littluns" (little ones) to rule against the other. The consequence of the use of power therefore, reflects the goodness or evil in a human being depending on his/her character. Ralph used his mindfulness and

ruled, making the good dominant, whereas Jack did his opposite. Ralph's power and influence over the other boys are secured at the beginning of the novel. However, as the group gradually succumbs to savage instincts over the course of the novel, Ralph's position declines hastily. Ralph peacefully approaches the boys, yet the once neutral companions turn on him due to Jack's militaristic orders. Golding portrays that while Ralph and Piggy's government may have been a morally sound solution, the boys' chaos is too strong to be controlled by democracy. Accordingly, since democracy failed against chaos, dictatorship and savagery must dominate. So, Golding has Jack's tribe transformed from a civilized group of schoolboys to an army of soldiers guided by fear. Along with the negative instincts, Golding also reveals the children's desire for eating, having fun, and being happy; for along with being afraid, pessimistic, and egoistic the children always tended to make festivals. This shows the fact that children like joyful situations even though they were sad deep inside. Among the positive instincts, Golding shows the children's love of nature and dependence on the environment they had lived in earlier. Every time Ralph slept he dreamt of his ponies, his football games, and his storybooks being always eager to meet his parents. This need for being protected is obviously seen in the children who created an idol to worship. They created their own god, which was a severed pig's head mounted on a stick called lord of the flies. If we consider that the pig is a symbol of the darkness and evil that lurks inside of human nature as White (2021) claimed, then the lord of the flies may be read as a symbol of the innate evil lying within every human soul. The fact that it is a lord, but of the flies, undermines the connotation of the word *lord* which otherwise means 'one of noble rank' (Abhedananada, 1899, p. 156). Thus Golding has used the concept of evil that verses the good through the characters of the children and their immaturity expressing his ideas about the antagonism of the countries in WWII making the children the victims of adult self-destruction, and irresponsibility. This situation is definitely one related to what might follow an atomic war because war is the central theme of *Lord of the Flies* in many ways. Also, the experience of the boys on the island is an allegory for the adult war taking place "off the page". So, the atomic catastrophe, as well as WWII, seem to color the mood of Golding's novel. However, in spite of the overwhelming presence of evil forces, there is no dearth of goodness in the world. Ralph's survival amidst such trials and tribulations, wherein even friends turned foes, is suggestive of the triumph of good over evil or alternatively, of positive power over the negative. (Sharma, 2017, p. 154) Similarly, both Simon's and Piggy's death in the novel may be read as a kind of sacrificial redemption, as Christ had once done to save mankind. Considering the fact that certain ancient cultures practiced human

sacrifice wherein the best of the men was chosen to be sacrificed in order to appease their gods (Abhedananada, 1899, p. 162). After some time and after Piggy's death Ralph's dream of saving the boys was fulfilled as soon as the "Messiah" appeared and rescued the schoolboys ending up their war against nature, society, and evil for the sake of gaining power and authority.

Conclusion

Golding's protagonists were all afraid of the beast, they were all fighting for leadership, and creating gods for themselves; however, they were always eager to see someone coming and rescuing them from their miserable state. Although they fought against each other, tried to win "littluns" and fought to become the master, yet, as soon as the British naval officer came to save them they were all ready to leave with him. So, their desire for being the chief and the master of the island was vanished as soon as rescue came.

The boys wanted to gain power and be the chief on other boys like them but they couldn't stand against nature and its power, that's why when the "Messiah", the British naval officer came, they all left everything behind and went with him instead of remaining on the island and being the chief. This officer allegorizes the Savior most people in this world believe in and are waiting for. According to religious beliefs, the savior for the human race can be Jesus Christ, Prophet Mouhamad, the Buddha, or any other ... The naval officer is a representative of this "Savior," this "Messiah" people are waiting for to come and save them from the miserable life they are living in this world. During the time when Golding wrote his novel, after WWII, the two "chiefs" that represented the two great powers of the world were; the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR, Russia). Between the years 1945–1952, during the years of the Early Cold War, the United States took the lead in forming a Western alliance to counterbalance the communist superpower to contain the spread of communism. Meanwhile, the Soviets demonstrated a keen interest in dominating Eastern Europe (1945-1952: The Early Cold War). Each one of these two "chief" countries tried to take more ("littluns") small countries of Europe trying to gain power and be the leader. The question that is raised here is who is the naval officer that will save the people on earth today?

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ԻՇԽԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԿԱՆՈՆՆԵՐԸ ՈՒԻԼԻԱՄ ԳՈՒԼԴԻՆԳԻ «ՃԱՆՃԵՐԻ ՏԵՐԸ» ՎԵՊՈՒՄ

Վիքի Չափարեան

Իշխանության կանոնների հաստատումը առանցքային գաղափար է, որի շուրջ զարգանում է Նոբելյան մրցանակակիր Ու. Գոլդինգի «Ճանճերի տերը» վեպը: Վեպը Գոլդինգի գլուխգործոցն է, որը թարգմանվել է ավելի քան 30 լեզուներով և համարվում է 20-րդ դարի դասական ստեղծագործություններից մեկը: Վեպը մի խումբ երեխաների մասին է, որոնք

հայտնվելով անմարդաբնակ կղզում՝ կարգ ու կանոն են հաստատում, ստեղծում համակարգված կառույց: Այդ ամենը, սակայն, տեղի է ունենում առանց մեծահասակների վերահսկողության, որոնք երեխաներին քաղաքակիրթ վարվելակերպի օրինակ կծառայեին: Արդյունքում երեխաները դառնում են դաժան և վայրենի: Վեպի համատեքստում տղաների հայտնվելը քառսային իրավիճակում ենթադրում է, որ մարդն իր բնույթով ի սկզբանե վայրենի է, ուստի Գոլդինգի կերպարները շարունակ պայքարում են՝ մեկը մյուսի ետևից փոխելով առաջնորդներին: Երեխաների ընտրությունը պայմանավորված է իրենց միջից ամենահզոր տղային ընտրելու ցանկությամբ:

Ու.Գոլդինգն ինքը, լինելով երկրորդ աշխարհամարտում դաշնակից զորքերի սպա, անձամբ վերապրել է պատերազմի կործանարար ազդեցությունը: Լինելով այդ ավերածությունների ականատեսը՝ նա հրատարակեց իր առաջին՝ «Ճանճերի տերը» վեպը, որը խորհրդանշում էր իր պատկերացումները մարդկային բնույթի, իշխանության կանոնների, բարու և չարի միջև հավերժ պայքարի մասին: Սույն հոդվածի խնդրո առարկան է բացահայտել Գոլդինգի հիմնական տեսլականը՝ այն է չարի և բարու միջև պայքար մղելիս մարդ արարածը իր բնույթով հակվում է դեպի բարբարոսությունը և չարությունը: Հոդվածում կիրառված մեթոդական հենքը ներառում է հիմնարար վերլուծություն՝ նվիրված բարու և չարի հակադրությանը փիլիսոփայական և կրոնական դրույթների տեսանկյունից: Հոդվածի նախնական դրույթն այն է, որ չնայած մարդիկ կարող են փորձել ճիշտ վարվել, նրանք շատ հաճախ իրենց դրսևորում են որպես անսիրտ չարագործներ: Սա է պատճառը, որ մարդ արարածը միշտ պիտի ենթարկվի սոցիալական կանոններին որպեսզի դառնա հնազանդ, այլ կերպ՝ ընտելացվի: Մարդիկ միշտ պատրաստ են իրենցից ավելի ուժեղ մեկին պաշտելու մինչև որ Մեսիան չգա և նրանց չփրկի:

Բանալի բառեր՝ գոյատևում, մարդկային բնույթ, սոցիալական համակարգ, ժողովրդավարություն, քաղաքակրթություն, Մեսիա: