



The Dichotomy of Good and Evil in William Golding's The Lord of the Flies

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As old as Abel and Cain the dichotomy of good and evil has been concentrated on. Such a dichotomy is repeated throughout history, specifically during and after wars. As a result of World War II, abhorrence and violence are shown in people's behaviour broadly. It is thought that people's behaviour is affected by the nature of the environment they live in. However, other factors like the political system or the society are blamed for these evils too. Good and evil are represented in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1951) in a unique way to prove that the eternal battle between them continues. The two concepts are first introduced, followed by analyses of the most important characters and the impact of nature and nurture on the events. The purpose of such analyses is to discover and comprehend the background of people's behaviour and the motives that lead people to behave badly. Hence, through a critical analysis to the novel, the individual's responsibility towards evil will be expressed and a society change by transforming the individuals will also be shown

Good and evil are two concepts dealt with by each person every day; often unconsciously. However differently each person perceives them, sometimes one happens to wonder where one's sense of morality comes from, and what the source of one's particular actions or beliefs is. Furthermore, there is a question of why one should try to be good, for every person has limitations and somewhat tends to act wrongly. As Oswald Chambers remarks: "All noble things are difficult," and one naturally and inevitably fails in one's struggle for goodness. Nonetheless, it seems that it can provide one with a sort of deep, inner happiness—it seems to be worth it, although it is impossible to achieve. Morality is one of Golding's concerns; good and evil are most visible in the actions of characters. Golding states in his essay *Fable* that "man produces evil as a bee produces honey." Evil is a part of man's nature.(73)

The genre of *Lord of the Flies*: fable-like—or parable-and mythic-like—narrative, presents a challenge both to the reader and the critic regarding content. With some unanswered questions, with difficult symbols, and with no clear conclusion, it is not easy to decode William Golding's specific message of a story like this. Nevertheless, this does not have to be a bad thing, for this kind of writing, demanding the reader's part in interpreting the story. Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor comment that "even in his first novel, it is not explanation and conclusion, but imaginative impact which is finally memorable" (64). Without imagination there will be no clear comprehension to the whole events. Golding's writing as well as his life experience will be explained further.

To begin with, Golding's intention of writing *LORD OF THE FLIES* is to shed light on "an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature. The moral is that the shape of a society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system however apparently logical or respectable" (qtd. in Spitz 22; Epstein). In other words, man must be aware of different kinds of powerful effects. Likewise, man, to Golding, has to be ethical by himself; his morality must not be imposed upon him by any social, political, or religious authority.

William Golding was convinced that humanity is suffering from a terrible disease and his aim as a writer was to examine that disease and rouse the consciousness of people. Love and charity have ceased to have any meaning in the present day. Man has fallen to the level of animals in the ruthless pursuit of his wants. All life's values have been buried in the process. There is little respect for ideals, mutual affection or sense of fellow-feeling.

In *LORD OF THE FLIES*, GOLDING ISOLATES HIS BOYS ON AN ISLAND, WHICH APPEARS TO BE AN IDYLIC PLACE IN TERMS OF RESOURCES and safety, so that the true nature of the boys is shown by itself, not interrupted by any external factors. He keeps them minor in order to focus on other factors. Golding also "exclude[s] too private property and the struggle for survival" (Spitz 23). Gradually, the boys abandon the ethical background of the society, which is a long way away, and almost all of them submit to the evil—the beast—hidden within them. The conclusions Golding reaches about the nature of man are very pessimistic; however, these assumptions come from his World War II experience, which had a deep influence over him, particularly at the time he wrote the novel, for he had seen many brutalities a man was capable of doing to another man during his service in the Navy. Later, his attitude somewhat softened. As he once stated in a lecture:

Before the Second World War I believed in the perfectibility of social man; . . . It is possible that today I believe something of the same again; but after the war I did not because I was unable to. . . I am thinking of the vileness beyond all words . . . They [the bad things] were not done by the head-hunters of New Guinea, or by some primitive tribe in the Amazon. They were done, skilfully, coldly, by educated men,

doctors, lawyers, by men with a tradition of civilization behind them, to beings of their own kind. . . . I believed that the condition of man was to be a morally diseased creation . . . (qtd. in Spitz 22-3).

Golding models his story on CORAL ISLAND, AN IMPERIAL AND IDYLIC STORY BY R. M. BALLANTYNE: THERE IS ALSO A GROUP OF ENGLISH BOYS SHIPWRECKED ON AN ISLAND; HOWEVER, THE BOYS ARE "WITHOUT MALICE OR WICKEDNESS," AND THE EVIL COMES FROM THE OUTSIDE BY SAVAGE CANNIBALS AND PIRATES (NIEMEYER 242). THE ENDING IS POSITIVE, WITH THE VICTORY OF ENGLISH ORDER AND RELIGION ENRICHING THE LIVES OF THE BARBARIANS. IN LORD OF THE FLIES, THE STORY IS ALLUDED TO A FEW TIMES, AND GOLDING EVEN BORROWS THREE CHARACTERS FROM THIS NOVEL: JACK, RALPH, AND PETERKIN (WHOSE NAME HE CHANGES FOR PIGGY). THE AIM OF GOLDING IS TO "[CORRECT] BALLANTYNE'S OPTIMISM" (243) AND HIS "WORLD OF BLACKS AND WHITES" (245), WHICH HE CONSIDERS TO BE A "FAKE" (KINKEAD-WEEKES AND GREGOR 21). Golding is disturbed by the inability of man to understand and control this nature of his, which ultimately results in disaster for mankind. Golding is unique in comparison to his contemporaries in handling of the form of the genre and its content. Golding insists that evil is inherent in man; it is a terrifying force which mankind must recognize and control.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE NOVEL ARE REVELATION AND TRANSFORMATION (KINKEAD-WEEKES AND GREGOR 17; 22). AT THE BEGINNING, THE BOYS OBSERVE THEIR CONDITION AS A GAME: "THIS IS OUR ISLAND. IT'S A GOOD ISLAND. UNTIL THE GROWN-UPS COME TO FETCH US WE'LL HAVE FUN" (GOLDING1965, 34). KINKEAD-WEEKES AND GREGOR CALL THIS STAGE A "GLAMOUR" STAGE: THE BOYS ARE EXCITED ABOUT THE ISLAND, AND BY THE "REAL EXPLORING"—THE REAL ADVENTURE (IBID 26). IN THIS STAGE, THEY ELECT THEIR CHIEF, DIVIDE THE RESPONSIBILITIES AMONG THEMSELVES, AND ESTABLISH SOME RULES, FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF THE SOCIETY THAT IS LEFT BEHIND THEM. SOON, HOWEVER, THEIR OPTIMISM IS OVERSHADOWED, AND EVIL IS SLOWLY REVEALING ITSELF: BY SHEER IRRESPONSIBILITY, THE BOYS BURN PART OF THE WOOD WHILE MAKING A SIGNAL FIRE, AND A LITTLE BOY DISAPPEARS WITHOUT TRACE. HERE, "we ARE MADE AWARE THAT INNOCENCE WHICH CONSISTS LARGELY OF IGNORANCE AND IRRESPONSIBILITY MAY BE FAR FROM HARMLESS" (KINKEAD-WEEKES AND GREGOR 26). NIGHTMARES AND FEAR TOO ARE INTRODUCED MATCHLESSLY. SOON AFTER, THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE BOYS' CHARACTERS AND INTENTIONS APPEAR: WHEREAS RALPH CARES FOR THE SIGNAL FIRE SO THAT THEY CAN BE RESCUED, JACK IS ONLY INTERESTED IN HUNTING. THUS, THE CONCEPT OF FELLOWSHIP IS GRADUALLY WEAKENING, WITH RALPH AND JACK BECOMING "TWO CONTINENTS OF EXPERIENCE AND FEELING, UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE" (IBID 53).

THE TURNING POINT COMES WHEN THE HUNTERS KILL THE SOW AND SHED HER BLOOD IN A RATHER BRUTAL WAY: IT IS THEN THEY FINALLY AND OPENLY OVERCOME THE INABILITY TO DO HARM TO A LIVING CREATURE, WHICH HAS BEEN GRADUALLY REVEALING ITSELF—NOW THEY ARE TRANSFORMED. THE KILLING IS DESCRIBED IN TERMS OF BLOODLUST—IN THE LITERAL MEANING—KILLING IS NO LONGER A MEANS TO GET MEAT, OR A TENDENCY TO DO HARM, BUT ALSO A MEANS TO SATISFY THEIR "BLOODTHIRSTINESS" (KINKEAD-WEEKES AND GREGOR 42-3). WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO THIS TRANSFORMATION ARE THE MASKS THAT THE HUNTERS WEAR: "[THEY ARE] SAFE FROM SHAME OR SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS BEHIND THE MASK[S] OF [THEIR] PAINT" (GOLDING1963 , 134). WITH THIS PAINT ON, THEY ARE able to do what they would not be able to do without it.

It is worth noting that the boys tend to act recklessly as a crowd on several occasions; as Piggy puts it, they act "like a crowd of kids" (Ibid 171). When Ralph tells the others Piggy's nickname, "a storm of laughter arose and even the tiniest child joined in. For the moment the boys were a closed circuit of sympathy with Piggy outside" (21). When Ralph mentions making a fire on the mountain top, everybody goes there without thinking whether it is wise enough or not except for Piggy. Next, when Jack asks the

others to vote for him as a new chief, nobody does so, for they are afraid. However, Jack persuades the boys individually, as it is easier to persuade one than to persuade the whole group with the chief present, whatever his authority. Next, there is the death of the sow and the bloodlust, strengthened by the common excitement: "we see how ritual motion and corybantic chanting bring about the psychological birth of the aliens" (Baker 322). Crowd's folly reaches its peak with the death of Simon—one beats because the others beat as well, that is the justification. This tendency is only confirmed by the further development of the story.

Children, particularly the younger ones, were terrified in *Lord of the Flies*, that the island was being haunted by a beast that was big and horrid. Ralph called together the boys to tell them that there was nothing to fear but it was not convincing. Piggy adopted a scientific approach and gave a rationalistic answer: "I know there isn't no beast-but I know there isn't no fear, either...Unless we get frightened of people." (Golding 1965, 91). Simon too tried to help the children to get over their irrational fear: "'Maybe,' he said hesitantly, may be there is a beast....'What I mean is ... maybe it's only us'." (Ibid 97) Both Piggy and Simon had, in their own way tried to bring out the bitter truth that man himself was the beast; having fallen to such a low level because of his corrupt nature, and more frightening than any other living thing. But, the children, like their elders, were not prepared to acknowledge this fact, and, continued to debate.

The children in the *Lord of the Flies* had to suffer because of the doings of Jack and his followers. They made hell out of a lovely island and reduced it to ashes. Their mutual disagreements, misunderstandings and conflicts split them apart. Jack and his boys had spelt their own doom-they had set the island, where Jack wanted to rule supreme, itself on fire. The children repeated the acts of their elders, who themselves, with the aid of their new found skills, were engaged in a self-destructive war. When rescue arrived at last, Ralph could not help recollecting their days in the island and the sad events that had taken place, all because they had failed to remain together, as they had been when they crash landed, on the island: "Ralph looked... dumbly. For a moment he had a fleeting picture of the strange glamour that had once invested the beaches. But the island was scorched up like dead wood-Simon was dead- and Jack had... The tears began to flow and sobs shook him... Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy." (Ibid 230).

Because the characters are all children, an extra dimension is added to our understanding of the term "evil". Children are usually represented as innocent creatures in literature. In *Lord of the Flies* the seemingly innocent boys end up committing murder and wreaking havoc on the entire island. We also commonly envision children as acting according to their natures to a larger extent than adults, who are usually more determined by society's rules. If this interpretation is brought into *Lord of the Flies*, does that mean that the boys' actions are "true" to their innate behaviour? Is that also why Ralph, Piggy and Simon, who seem the most mature, are the ones who resist this behaviour?

Golding seems to imply that what we might call the boys' "evil actions" occur when they abandon their civilized ways and start acting according to their primal instincts. To what extent are the characters responsible for their actions if they all have evil within them from birth? We would find it absurd to point to a pack of wolves, and call their behaviour "evil". Perhaps we expect humans to enter a position in which they critically consider their own actions and choices, rather than being dominated by their own impulses. Ralph makes up new rules, like the rule about having to hold the conch in order to speak in assemblies, and probably expects others to be kept from the society they left, like the rule that you should not kill or steal. Ralph and most of the boys see the importance of these rules, because they are enforced so naturally where they came from. In society you must act according to certain rules and laws, and if you break the rules, you are punished. But on the island, there are no consequences if you break the rules. In the case of the boys on the island, they lose their sense of what is right and what is wrong when their own remodelling of society crumbles.

It seems that Golding considers evil to be part of what is to be human, and that an evil streak can be found in us all. Perhaps he also implies that society functions as a constraint to keep our innate savagery at bay, and that our true nature is similar to that of wolves. Then it might be even more important that the characters are all children, because they have yet to understand the workings of society to see why certain rules and norms are necessary.

Golding provides the reader with a few episodes on the "natural man," showing that the nature of man is corrupt without exception; that even small children tend to behave badly (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 32). First, the older boys destroy the sandcastles built by the smallest boys, and one of these boys,

Percival, is crying because Maurice has thrown some sand into his eyes. Then, another one of these boys, Johnny, who is “well built, with fair hair and a natural belligerence,” starts to throw sand as well: “Percival finished his whimper and went on playing, for the tears had washed the sand away. Johnny watched him with china-blue eyes; then began to fling up sand in a shower, and presently Percival was crying again” (Golding 57; my italics). Then Henry, who is a little older than Percival and Johnny, plays with small sea-creatures: “This was fascinating to Henry. He poked about with a bit of stick . . . and tried to control the motions of the scavengers. . . . He became absorbed beyond mere happiness as he felt himself exercising control over living things” (58).

Finally, there is Roger, throwing stones at Henry: this time, he does not aim at him, for he is bound by the norms of society: he does not—and cannot—throw stones at him because it is wrong, but, at the same time, he plays with the thought of doing so: “Roger’s arm was conditioned by a civilization that knew nothing of him and was in ruins” (59; my italics). “[T]hat last sentence shows that the restraint is only a taboo, a social conditioning or superstition, not anything innate” (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 32). However, Johnny is too small “to have been conditioned” (31).

The point of these episodes is to show that there is a tendency towards evil in every man, however young he might be—evil is present within as if it was sleeping, and the only way to prevent it from waking is to cultivate natural morality, i.e. good for the sake of good, not social conditioning. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind that Roger’s behaviour is only a stronger version of Johnny’s and Henry’s (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 32).

According to Spitz, Ralph presents the voice of democracy; he is the “symbol of consent” (26): “there was a mildness about his mouth and eyes that proclaimed no devil” (Golding 10). There is goodwill in Ralph’s actions, “charm and warmth”, and respect for the rules that have been established. He tries to maintain this order within the group, cares for the common good, and is anxious about being rescued (which requires an active and pragmatic approach). He feels responsible for the “littluns”—i.e. little ones—and is capable of being a good leader—he has a “gift for leadership”. These qualities—of responsibility and capability—are, however, limited, “incomplete” (Niemeyer 243-4). For Ralph is not more intelligent nor is he more capable than the other boys; the aura that surrounds him is the result of him blowing the conch, the symbol of “democracy” (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 21).

Ralph does not promise the boys an easy life; he keeps reminding them about the necessity of maintaining the fire burning, and of work to be done. Many times, he is not successful in attracting the boys to his objectives—they soon disappear to play or enjoy themselves. This, together with the fading importance of the conch, and a strange “veil” obscuring his ideas, cause the boys to leave not only him, but also his principles of democracy, favouring Jack’s promise of food and fun (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 18; 21; Spitz 26-7).

On the other hand, Ralph is not always kind and “warm”: at the beginning of the book, he appears to be quite proud: he neglects Piggy quite openly, not paying attention when he is speaking, and judges him by his appearance. When he expresses his initial dislike of the boy on a couple of occasions, it seems that he does so in order to impress the others (e.g. when he reveals Piggy’s offensive nickname despite his wish). In other words, he belittles Piggy in order to be enlarged himself. This is a rather common device of (school)children. Moreover, in the mock hunt with Robert playing the pig, “Ralph was too fighting to get near, to get a handful of that brown, vulnerable flesh. The desire to squeeze and hurt was overmastering” (Golding 109). Similarly, Ralph is present at the murder of Simon, though he is outside the circle of the beating boys: “Piggy and Ralph, under the threat of the sky, found themselves eager to take place in this demented but partly secure society” (144). These examples, again, show Golding’s assumption that there is a capacity for evil in every man. What is important, however, is that Ralph chooses civilization—he prefers to be good.

Piggy has been described in a variety of ways. Undoubtedly, he represents intelligence, reason, and common sense; he is very practical. Unlike Ralph, who sometimes does not know what to do, he can appreciate the situation, and does not hesitate to make quick decisions, or to give advice. According to Spitz, Piggy resembles Socrates: “he is ugly, fat, and—to men unappreciative of reason—a bore, with a disinclination for manual labor” (26). He continually seeks inspiration and advice in the adult world, and in what he thinks adults would do under such circumstances. He tries to persuade the others that there cannot be any beast on the island, as this is purely irrational, “unless we get frightened of people” (Golding 80). Little by little, Ralph is able to see this intelligence in him, and at the end, he realizes that Piggy was a

“true, wise friend” (192). For Golding, however, Piggy is of a different kind: “Piggy isn’t wise. Piggy is short-sighted. He is rationalist. My great curse, you understand, rationalism—and, well he is that. He is naïve, short-sighted and rationalist, like most scientists” (qtd. in Baker 319).

Furthermore, Piggy is unpopular—an outsider—due to his appearance, and physical limitations: “he is forever being betrayed by his body”. Therefore, his ideas can only be realized through Ralph; without him, “he is powerless” (Niemeyer 243). He knows the dark side of man since he has experienced bullying, derision, and injustice before; thus, his compassion for the “littluns”, eagerness to be accepted, and, conversely, his indignation, stubbornness, and fear of Jack.

He is a “tragic hero”, but still, there is a good deal of ambiguity surrounding the significance of him as a character: on the one hand, he represents Golding’s criticism of scientific humanism; Baker even argues that there is a lot of “misunderstanding” on the part of the reader and the critic, who—generally—wrongly perceive Piggy as a positive character (318-9). However, this might be too strong a claim, as there should definitely be some space left for the reader’s interpretation. As Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor comment, “like the other characters Piggy does embody meaning of various kinds, so that we become aware through our imaginative response to the boy of wider horizons and deeper problems beyond him” (20).

In Spitz’s terms, Simon is “the voice of revelation” (25). Unlike Ralph, Piggy, or anyone else, he is the character who is good by nature. He tries to do good simply because it is good, not for the sake of other people or society. He is a gentle and sensitive boy: he somewhat helps Jack and Piggy to be more united, and the “littluns” like him, not only because he provides them with the fruit from tall trees. He is always referred to as a “saint”, a “mystic”, or a “Christ-figure” (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 21; Spitz 25; Niemeyer 243; Baker 317), for he can appreciate the beauty of nature, even if its only purpose is to please one’s eye—he has the sense of the “poetic and mystical” (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 29). Furthermore, he devotes his time to contemplation in a serene place in the jungle he likes, which is often perceived as a prayer. Also, he has a “quality of sheer faith” (40): he lifts Ralph’s spirits by assuring him that he will certainly come home safe. According to Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor, “he is outside the hunter mentality [Jack’s], the leader mentality [Ralph’s], outside even himself. He exists in terms of his sensitivity to what is outside him. This allows him to know comprehensively” (30; my italics).

This knowledge is a crucial factor in his understanding of the true nature of the beast that troubles the boys: he has the inkling that the evil is not external, but rather internal, which is later fully revealed to him by the Lord of the Flies: “‘Maybe,’ he said hesitantly, ‘maybe there is a beast What I mean is . . . maybe it’s only us’” (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 35; 38; Golding 85). Similarly, he does not believe in the alleged beast, the dead parachutist—whom Spitz calls “the false god”—at the top of the mountain (25).

Nevertheless, he is not understood by the boys when he mentions his view on the nature of the beast during the assembly; he is not able to express himself clearly, and the boys laugh: “Simon became inarticulate in his effort to express man’s essential illness” (Golding 85). Even Piggy, who thinks that one might be “frightened of people” (see above), despises his remark. “. . . Simon, the dreamer who bashes into a tree because he isn’t looking where he’s going, cannot be accepted uncritically” (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 38). This non-acceptance leads the boys into the fatal error on the night of the storm. “. . . Simon’s failure is the inevitable failure of the mystic—what he knows is beyond words; he cannot impart his insights to others” (Niemeyer 243).

It is quite remarkable that Golding somewhat hides the true nature of Simon: who is too often referred to as “batty”, and his “black coarse hair” tends to be more memorable than his sensitivity and natural goodness. When he is killed, Piggy raises the issue by saying “He was batty. He asked for it” (Golding 149). Is it a deliberate choice on the part of Golding, or does it express the idea that the saint cannot be understood by the common folk? That is the question (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 55). One explanation for Simon’s extraordinariness might be his way of seeing—“he exists in terms of his sensitivity to what is outside him”—which differs from the others’ view, which appears to be much more self-centred.

Jack might be the most experienced of the boys since it is only him whose surname is referred to. However, he is “arrogant and lacking in Ralph’s charm and warmth” (Niemeyer 244). He seeks such power and authority that Niemeyer calls “naked ruthless power, the police force or the military force acting without restraint” (244). He is obsessed with hunting—the idea of exercising power over living creatures. First, he obeys the rules as he is satisfied with leading the hunters; later, however, he breaks them to the point of leaving the group entirely, making his own tribe with his own rules. He knows how to influence

the crowd, but despises the "littluns" since they are "useless" for him (Spitz 27). According to Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor, he has the "knowledge that Ralph singularly lacks and would be better for having": Jack can imagine himself in the shoes of the others, who have troubles with nightmares—this quality later helps him persuade the boys to join his tribe: unlike Ralph, he manages to attract them by promising meat and fun, which are definitely more enjoyable than working (29). It is then that he can finally exercise his authority, achieving his objectives because the boys fear him.

Sometimes, Jack is called a "Satanic" and devilish "figure", "a villain", or "a personification of absolute evil" (Spitz 27; Niemeyer 244). Given his red hair, an ugly face, and a black choir uniform, it seems to be an apt description. What might be more important, however, is the cause for his transition from a schoolboy to a savage. First and foremost, it is the mask: "He looked in astonishment, no longer at himself but at an awesome stranger. . . . He began to dance and his laughter became a bloodthirsty snarling. He capered towards Bill, and the mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness" (Golding 61). Thus, Jack is able to kill once the mask is on. Nevertheless, first, "his face-painting starts off as a reversion to civilization, not to savagery" (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 33; my italics).

Second, his violence and hatred can be partly caused by rejection: when the first pig is killed and everyone enjoys their chunk of meat, Jack's success is not—for him—acknowledged sufficiently: "Jack looked round for understanding but found only respect" (Golding 71). When Jack parts after having been rejected with his idea of a new election, "the humiliating tears were running from the corner of each eye" (121). However right Jack is in feeling this, this rejection hardened his mind, changing the feelings of hurt into a desire to hurt in turn. Unlike Simon, who pays attention to what is outside him, Jack is too concerned—or obsessed—about being recognized himself, which makes him blind and mad. At the end, with the arrival of the naval officer, the reader suddenly sees that Jack is only "a little boy" as the perspective shifts from Ralph's to the officer's. Thus, the officer embodies a "superior power", which defeats Jack's (Niemeyer 244).

What may be quite ambiguous is the nature of the Lord of the Flies. Literally, "Lord of the Flies" means Beelzebub. Rather than the Devil, however, he is the very "personification of evil" that is within man. According to Spitz, "he is the beast that is part of man. Having rejected God, man can look only to himself. Having rejected reason [Piggy] and consent [Ralph], what remains within himself is only savagery and force [Jack]. The boys are [both] the flies and the beast, the evil, the senseless passion that is in man; in each and every man . . . is the Lord" (28). As the Lord himself says to Simon: "this is ridiculous. You know perfectly well you'll only meet me down there [in the boys] – so don't try to escape!" (Golding 137). Correspondingly, Baker notes that "Beelzebub, the fly lord, [is] present in the 'buzz' of conflicting voices at the parliaments on the platform rock" (321). In Epstein's view, the Lord of the Flies represents a modern Devil rather than the one "in any traditional religious sense"—"the anarchic, amoral driving force that Freudians call the Id" What is relevant, however, is that "the pig's head is not a symbol of anything abstract or outside the boys . . . ; it is, like the parachutist, a solid object with a history . . ." (Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 43). The Lord of the Flies, therefore, cannot be the Devil because the Devil is the incarnation of evil that is external. At the same time, the Lord of the Flies is not abstract, for he is concretely manifested in the actions of man.

The sudden ending of the story—when the reader is still in tension—presents a challenge to them: what is the conclusion? According to Baker, "Golding's allegory, Lord of the Flies, offers no real hope for redemption. Golding kills off the only saint available (as history obliges him to do) and demonstrates the inadequacy of a decent leader (Ralph) who is at once too innocent and ignorant of the human heart to save the day from darkness" (325).

Although there is not any clear conclusion on the part of Golding, his intention was probably what Baker suggests. However, as Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor remind us throughout their study, it is the reader who is to decide what the conclusion is for them: Ralph's weeping, they argue, might be Golding's "response, [but] not an answer" (64). Some scholars, however, consider the end to be positive, e.g. Niemeyer who sees the arrival of the naval officer as the force of civilization that is stronger than the beast as it is mentioned above. Baker's essay, nevertheless, continues with the comment that Golding himself later reconsidered his view, coming close to what Niemeyer believes. Let this discussion be ended with Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor's note: "both too much and too little has been claimed for Golding's first novel. That is why it is often so difficult to be fair to it (20).

It is thought that the struggle for goodness is worth it despite the fact that a substantial difficulty. It is not the political system or the society that is responsible for the evil, but some individuals within the society or in the political system that perpetrates evil. Therefore, it is the individual who needs to bring forth the change in oneself which leads to change in society, and not any political system however apparently rational or reputable they may be. In *Lord of the Flies* Golding shows that this evil must be accepted, not ignored. No society is bad in itself, it is the defective human nature that makes the defective society.

It might be said that the beast, a *Lord of the Flies* is in all of us which is our potential for evil. This is controlled by our intellect and our sense of responsibility towards each other. The island is therefore a microcosm, a small version of a bigger world. Or as Frederick Jackson suggests: it might also be a macrocosm, a bigger version of the human character. Similarly:

The symbolic encounter between Simon and the *Lord of the Flies* represents the conflict between good and evil as it occurs in every man. . . . analyse any individual and you find in him Ralph' tendency to adventure and common sense, Piggy's intellectualism, Simon's religious and poetic feelings, Roger's willingness to torture, Jack's appetite for destruction, Sam'n'Eric's desire to please other people. How these different elements are oriented in the individual decides his moral outlook. But they are present as impulses in the human personality. Thus at the same time that this is a novel exploring the disintegration of a society, it is also a study of the identity of man. (45)

Conclusion

Golding, as I mentioned earlier, does not provide easy answer the the questions he raises in *Lord of the Flies*. He keeps his distance from his material and does not interfere or preach, and the novel is worked out to speak for itself. His vision may somehow be accurate for the great wars of the century are proof enough. We may not agree to all he says, but knowledge of the problem is a great step towards finding a solution. Therefore, such reminders as Golding's are sometimes necessary, and it is only through paying attention to the warnings of such people that we shall ever be able to evolve to a more mature state of being. Yet, if Golding has written his book after being inspired by the events prior and after world war II, we except him now to make his protest more audible to those governments and institutions who are practicing all sort of savagery, perhaps more freely than ever before. We deduce that in this novel, Golding is reacting strongly against disagreeable aspects of life as he sees them. He writes with a revolutionary heart, aiming at restoring concepts of belief, free will, individual responsibility, forgiveness and principles in an unprincipled world of willful unbelievers. Whether Golding means it or not, he provides a hopeful note in the characters of Piggy, Ralph and Simon who represent the major characters in the novel and who defeat any explanation of the novel in totally pessimistic terms.

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