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**PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN NATURE PRESENTED BY WILLIAM  
 GOLDING IN HIS CREATIVE WORKS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*In this article, the author analyzes William Golding's creative works in which he draws attention to Human Nature. Golding was a contemporary English writer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who through his literary works tried to express his thoughts and ideas that were clearly acknowledged by critics as philosophical,. He wrote a lot of significant works, particularly novels, which contain extravagant philosophical concerns about human's true essence. The purpose of the article is to analyze Golding's literary works which highlight philosophical problems such as human nature, evil essence, existence, and the meaning of the life. In the article, the author presents several famous novels written by Golding, and shows his philosophical inclination by thoroughly analyzing them.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Philosophy, Human nature, Evilness, Goodness, Existence, Egoism, Absurdity.*

**INTRODUCTION**

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century philosophers and writers thought that a person was born good and virtuous and it was the ugly environment that could sometimes spoil him/her. Yet they believed in the ability of man's reason to defeat Evil. The complicated atmosphere of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the two world wars, the moral crisis of society, violence, and crime characteristic of the modern world

led some people, Golding among them, to see the cause of evil in man's nature. The experience of Golding in World War II had a deep impact on his understanding of society and the horrors it was capable of. Golding continued teaching after the war and began to write novels. "Lord of the Flies" (1954) was his first novel, and the work immediately brought him fame when it finally was published after several rejections. The benefits got by Golding after the novel being sold, enabled him to stop teaching. Then he was able to concentrate his attention fully on writing. Golding was productive; he wrote notable novels that contain philosophical views about searching for the true essence of human nature. But still, he is mostly remembered for his novel "Lord of the Flies" which contains allegorical dark irony.

### MAIN PART

William Golding was born in Cornwall, England, on September 19, 1911. Beginning with the age twelve, he wanted to be a writer, but his parents encouraged him to practice natural sciences. Even though he agreed to study natural sciences, he turned his attention to English literature when he was a second-year student at the Oxford University. He took a job as a theater, actor and producer after graduating from Oxford and then finally became a schoolteacher. Golding joined the Royal Navy in 1940, where he served in command of a rocket-launcher and fought in the Normandy invasion. Almost all associations with existentialism were rejected by William Golding, but his views are related to that philosophy. His works are dynamic and full of involvement. Modernist elements go next to each other with realistic elements, in which realistic images contrast with allegorical images. His works were called fables by Golding himself, hence emphasizing their didactic essence. His experience in the World War II pushed him to focus on human nature. As he became the witness of the horrors of the war, he came to conclusion that a human being is an evil and cruel creature who collapses anything on his way.

William Golding began writing in the middle of the twenties, and immediately chose "human nature" as the key question of all his works, a question which he answered pessimistically. He asked himself what a man could hope for, and came to the conclusion that a man can really only hope for God's grace, nothing else. Even though Golding's views can be referred as theological, most of his works have another tradition – modernism. Golding himself may not acknowledge this fact as he refused to call his books philosophical. Thus, William Golding makes no claims to be a leading modernist and denies having any connections with the modernists, and yet they regard the principles underlying his works very favorably.

"The Lord of the Flies" considered to be his most famous work, and ideas shown in this book furnished the key to understanding all of his novels, or at least their philosophical basis. William Golding took an idea to write this renowned book while he was giving a lecture at the University of California, USA (1962).<sup>1</sup> Golding terms all his books "fables" or "myths" thus stressing their didactic function. Everything that William Golding created so far are philosophical and at the same time, allegorical "fables". Nevertheless, they differ from each other by style and theme. Golding wrote in his article: "It is a thankless task, to be a fabulist. Why this is so is clear enough. The fabulist is a moralist. He cannot make a story without a human lesson tucked away in it.... By the nature of his craft then, the fabulist is didactic, desires to inculcate a moral lesson."<sup>2</sup>

William Golding showed the moral idea of his famous work "The Lord of the Flies" in his article "The Fable". He confidently states that a man produces evil as a bee produces honey, and if

people after witnessing the catastrophes of wars including fascist savagery don't realize that, they are absolutely blind or wrong in the head. He believed that his task as a writer is to explain people the true nature of humankind. He speaks of man's innate greed, cruelty, and egoism. Also, he declared that a man was sick and not exceptional man, but average man. Golding wrote: "To many of you, this will seem trite, obvious and familiar in theological terms. Man is a fallen being. He is gripped by original sin. His nature is sinful and his state perilous. I accept the theology and admit the triteness; but what is trite is true".<sup>3</sup>

"Lord of the Flies" tells of a group of civilized boys who find themselves shipwrecked on a deserted island in the middle of the ocean, and of their return to an animal state. These schoolboys try to construct a civilization on the island, but it falls apart because the boys are "suffering from the terrible disease of being human". In the same article, Golding attempts to persuade the reader that the basic thesis of "Lord of the Flies" may be applied to all events of human history. If one takes this into consideration, there can be no doubt about the nature of his philosophical conception of the world. The naturalism of the characters in his first novel only underlines his biological conception of man which in no way contradicts the theological concept of original sin. Man is therefore by nature an animal, and the human predicament is very grave. The only thing man can hope for is God's mercy. On the other hand, we can't state that William Golding's philosophical approach is totally pessimistic, because he alleged that the main task of the writer is to warn people about their nature, prevent the evil they produce.

The novel's title can be traced back to the Jewish legend of evil presence, where the devil Beelzebub is named 'Lord of the Flies'. The central representative of the phony supernatural beings should be him. The title is most suitable because Golding tries to express morals such as – the world is not the best place to be bound to, authority distorts anything and humanity must bear the life surrounding with cruelty.

We can comprehend when the civilization and order fades away, and evil "Lord of the Flies" takes control over us, then the wars begin, people start fighting each other, killing and exterminate each other, innocent children who by fate find themselves on the island begin to quarrel, and slowly turn to animals who worship the Lord of the Flies. Once the Beast becomes a reality for youngsters, Jack Merridew, by penance, tries pacifying him. He left the head of the pig which he had cut as a sacrifice to a beast. He believes that the Beast doesn't touch them in this case. This was the tradition of ancient savages who, by religious offerings, come up with their idols. Jack establishes a new system where murder and torture are practiced. Simon and Piggy are killed, and children hunt down Ralph. The Lord of the Flies takes control over the youth souls. Only Simon remains free from the enchanting power of the Beast. When Jack slaughtered the sow and offered its head to the Beast, Simon sickened. The sow's head became the Lord of the Flies, comes to life and makes a conversation with weak Simon. It reveals that the true evil can't be vanished, because it is in the soul of men. Thus, the Best is the children themselves, generally all the humankind.

Jack reflects a profoundly ingrained, primal aspect of human nature in "The Lord of the Flies". His acts illustrate how quickly a logical person can revert to animalistic behavior. His earliest entry in the book appears with his greed and lust for power. The leadership that Ralph gains over him in the early election makes him envious. With an appeasement from Ralph to let Jack manage the hunters, his impulses are only somewhat minimized. Darwinism may clarify Jack's

eagerness to become the boys' leader, the principle of sustainability and competitiveness is Jack's driving force. The origins we depend on to live millions of years ago are now deceased, and we are now special. "Lord of the Flies" is an undertaking to follow the deformations of society back to the blemish of human nature". As the tale unfurls all to viciousness on the friendly island of the half-educated English students, the peruses observe the tales of the human condition, in which the light still can be seen by a few shielding hopes.

"The Lord of the Flies" is like a horrible nightmare. As the reader slowly prepared to acknowledge that things could end up that way and there are not many moves from civilization to tribal savagery and decline. Golding faces the philosophical questions. Golding faces the existential challenges of his storyline openly and boldly with romantic creativity, and "Lord of the Flies" becomes an allegory of regression, which leaves anxiety, cruelty, and destruction as it falls. It's a novel with tragic intensity and overwhelming moral influence. In the novel "Lord of the Flies" Golding wanted to show that evil is present in every human and everywhere. William Golding desperately believes that human being is evil, without civilization and order, they will return to their initial animalistic form. Golding roots our evilness to selfishness and ignorance. In the Second World War, as we mentioned above, Golding served in the navy army, and saw all terrible things that people did with each other, he rethinks his ideas and puts a question in his book, how can people be so evil when they call themselves civilized, but act even worse than animals? (None of an animal kills its own kind on purpose). The beast presence in every child in "Lord of the Flies", except Christ-like Simon. Simon becomes a chance of humanity, that goodness still can exist, but unfortunately, he is killed which symbolizes that the last goodness in people disappears.

Golding during his lifetime wrote six novels (from 1954 to 1967), and all of them are dimensional. Golding's second novel, "The Inheritors" (1955) is the most philosophical among the others. Again, William Golding tried to proof that nature of a human being is initially dark. By using parody, he compared civilized people to Neanderthal men. New people appeared on the Earth, which until then had been inhabited by primitive Neanderthal people. The new arrivals are cunning, greedy, and evil. The primitive creatures that had lived a simple and innocent life, making use of nature's gift, are superseded by these new beings that learn to subjugate nature to their own needs, bloodthirstily killing animals and their own kind. These more highly perfected specimens of mankind represent a step forward in human civilization. In Golding's interpretation, they are in fact, a step toward evil. The new men mercilessly clear their path of everything and everyone that stands in their way, and receive cruel satisfaction from blood and murder.

In this novel Golding wanted to highlight the "absurdity" of the existence and how the human nature shows its authentic state, so Golding conclude that it raises step by step and eventually shows itself. William Golding portrayed this situation presenting men's evolution. Dark image of a human being and the primitive portrait of Neanderthals are brilliantly created.

Golding denies the presence of any philosophical coating, exactly existentialism in his works. However, this trend influenced his next work, "Free Fall" (1959). From the very beginning, the novel develops an inner argument about the limitations to man's freedom of choice and this argument acquires most force in the episodes that take place in the Nazi concentration camp when Sam Mountjoy gives way under torture and is ready to betray everyone, even telling his

tormentors about “facts” which have been his entire invention. William Golding presents his novel in a unique way – either they are isolated individuals or a group of people surrounded by challenges and struggles, which reveals their inner identity. The main hero of the novel “Free Fall”, Mountjoy analyzes his whole life and comes to conclusion that moral decadence he experienced is the result of the wrong “choices” he had made.

“The Spire” (1964) is the fifth novel written by William Golding. The characters of the novel are accepted as highly symbolic, at the same time interpreted by critics in different ways. Jocelyn, the main hero of the novel suffers from the fixed idea to construct the high spire above the church. To embody his ambitious, he sacrifices people and even his own life. Valentina Ivasheva, a literary critic, explained the symbolic meaning of this character and wrote: “How can be Jocelyn’s crime comprehended: this building “on the sand” which cost so dearly in human life? It can be seen as a manifestation of man’s genius and labor that withstood all despite the human sacrifices it required and the natural condition that the “madman” Jocelyn ignores. The building of the spire is called “Jocelyn’s Folly”, but Jocelyn himself, a religious fanatic and dreamer, calls it “God’s Folly”: God pushes a man to do “mad” things in his praise. This is how Jocelyn understands his task in building the spire, against the wishes of the builders and clergy, and despite the obvious absurdity of the task.”<sup>4</sup> The insane actions of Jocelyne remind the myth of Sisyphus and show the absolute absurdity of the life.

“Darkness Visible” William Golding’s 1979’s novel about terrorism, multiculturalism, and spirituality It is set in present Britain, and characters which are portrayed in this novel are not so pleasant. Golding portrayed psychopaths, maniacs and thieves. The protagonist of the novel is Matti, who saw the bombing of London by Nazi army. Matti is a man of honor, but at the same time he is very lonely. His face is burnt and became ugly, and most people scare him because of his appearance. Matti departs for Australia in grief. A far bigger tragedy hits him there, and he goes half-crazy. He returns to England believing that he is a prophet now. Matti dies rescuing a child from fire, but still he can’t be considered as a fully good character. He commits a crime with an old man whose intentions are not good. The bad side of the essence of a man will quickly prevail over the virtuous one, Golding emphasizes. On the contrary, we can see in the life of Matti – the portrait of English social life. It is characterized by economic instability, moral depravity, abuse, and terror. The novel was called by critics "a picture of England in the dark surrounding darkness".

Golding's major work of the last period is the “Sea Trilogy” which consists of “Rites of Passage” (1980), “Close Quarters” (1987) and “Fire down below” (1989) set on an old ship bound for Australia during the Napoleonic wars. Like his other works the trilogy combines elements of several genres: a sea novel, a historical and a psychological one. At the same time, it is a profound philosophical fable dealing with such problems as a man versus society and the contradictory prospects of human progress. For his contribution to world literature William Golding was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1983.

Golding announced that his task is to reveal the dark essence of the human nature, to warn people about their inner substance which is made of evil, admonish them to fight it in order to make their life better.

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