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## THE REALITIES OF “LORD OF THE FLIES”

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**Abstract.** The uniqueness of William Golding’s work lies in the solidity and depth of its structure and organization. The writer carefully constructed his works, enriching them with “meaning” through the use of classical literature, symbolism, and mythology. Along with being a creator of myths, Golding is also recognized as an author whose works illuminate truths about human nature. At times, he reveals literary precedents by presenting them in new ways, while at other times he introduces specific details derived from his own experiences and interests. In an interview with the BBC, Golding himself admitted: “If someone replaced the word myth with the word fable, I would actually accept it as a compliment.” According to Golding, allegory is discovered in an environment where myth evolves from former belief into present creation, departing from its original version and transforming itself. It is a form that contains life and experience. Written in 1954 by William Golding, the novel *Lord of the Flies* remains highly significant today because of the underlying meanings embedded in its subject matter. The work is considered one of the most famous novels about human nature. “*Lord of the Flies*” is surrounded by myths and contains numerous references to mythological motifs. Besides being exciting and entertaining, the novel carries a profound philosophical meaning concerning human nature, power, fear, and the fragility of civilization. The work also contains plot motifs directly borrowed from myths. “*Lord of the Flies*” is regarded as one of the greatest modern English novels because of its timeless and socially relevant themes.

**Key words:** Myth, writer, literary work, society, civilization.

**Introduction.** Mythology is the beginning of science. Unfortunately, within today’s positivist understanding, mythology has not been placed at the foundation of the history of science. Mythology emerged as a product of humanity’s first curiosity and desire to understand its surroundings. Myth has existed in all societies. Indeed, it appears to be an essential component of human culture. Since myths possess numerous varieties, it is difficult to generalize about their nature. Nevertheless, it is clear that through both the common features and details of myths, peoples reflect, express, and over time explore human character. The study of myth is of great importance both for the study of individual societies and for the understanding of human culture as a whole. The use of myths in modernist literature emphasizes the classical tone of the era. Myth possesses a symbolic value; it condenses emotions and experiences. It may also be argued that mythology paved the way for modern literary works, or counter-mythologies, to be accepted as significant works of world literature.

One of the writers recognized as a creator of myths is William Golding. William Golding is known as an allegorical novelist, fabulist, imaginative anthropologist, and myth-maker. The fabulist nature of the writer becomes evident throughout his works. A close examination of his literary creations reveals his deep interest in the moral chaos and traditions of his era. When his beliefs are considered, it becomes clear that he was neither a Puritan nor a transcendentalist. The writer’s understanding of religion was based on the interpretation of his own life experience.

It is therefore no coincidence that, while explaining the events of the human world, Golding turned to myths. Likewise, many writers and philosophers before him also used mythical narratives to interpret various human conditions. In general, Golding examines moral difficulties by exploring the characteristics of human existence in his writings, and he portrays his characters in the most intense situations in order to explain their lives within a “mythological” dimension. Thus, according to Golding,

myth is not a relic of the past, but an inseparable part of our present life and modern age – an image and action through which truth is revealed.

**Discussion.** In the novel, two opposing forces within human beings, civilization and savagery, confront one another. The writer contrasts civilization with primitiveness. Through this opposition, Golding demonstrates that both civilized and savage aspects exist within every individual. At the beginning of the work, a group of boys, the oldest being twelve years old, survive a plane crash and find themselves on a tropical island. The children believe that adults will certainly come to search for and rescue them from their situation. Initially abandoned and left alone, the schoolboys realize the importance of choosing a leader, forming unity, establishing order, and obeying the rules set by their chosen leader.

The island on which they land resembles a paradise; everything necessary for survival is available there. At first, the boys think they will live comfortably until adults arrive to rescue them. The island appears to offer an opportunity to establish an orderly society. However, this “orderly society” begins to oppress the boys, and they gradually surrender to their instincts. In the novel, Golding shows that what protects human beings from savagery is the existence of social rules. In order to preserve these rules and organize life on the island, the boys choose the oldest among them, Ralph, as their leader. Yet another boy on the island, Jack, refuses to accept this decision because he considers himself more worthy of leadership. The main conflicts of the novel begin precisely from this point.

In the work, Ralph represents discipline, order, and democracy, whereas Jack symbolizes power, violence, and dictatorship. While Ralph is intelligent, brave, strong, and kind-hearted, Jack stands in complete opposition to these qualities. By depicting the boys’ ultimate defeat and destruction on the island, the writer conveys to the reader the message that all human beings bear guilt within themselves. Through this, Golding suggests that if society lacks order and law, people can very easily become savage.

It is clear that the novel is not merely a simple adventure story about boys stranded on an island. Golding combines twentieth-century methods of analyzing people and society and creates a theoretical situation through which these ideas can be tested. Through his novel *Lord of the Flies*, William Golding proved that mythological texts, as one of the most important cultural phenomena and primitive worldviews in human history, exert a decisive influence on all subsequent socio-cultural developments. As Abbasli notes, “Golding demonstrates that education not strengthened by moral upbringing is incapable of preventing savagery” (Abbasli, 2010, p. 9).

Furthermore, in the twentieth century, William Golding, through the use of myth in his novel *Lord of the Flies*, presents the boys on the island as a microcosm of the real world. Through this microcosm, Golding conveys the idea that human beings are inherently evil and capable of destroying society. By analyzing various events taking place in today’s world, the reader comes to understand the impact that a collective mentality can have on society. Through this novel, William Golding teaches us that the greatest horror does not come from evil originating in an external enemy, but from the evil that exists within each of us. The writer seeks to demonstrate that there is a devil hidden within every person, and that the power of evil desires prevents individuals from controlling their own greed and selfish impulses. Jack’s obsession with power gradually strips him of his humanity and transforms him into a devil-like figure. The novel also reveals how power can fundamentally change a person. In general, “...he convinces the reader that the fate of the present depends on the past” (Huseynova, 2018, p. 171).

Myth and mythological elements have been extensively studied by world literary scholars and theorists. If we pay attention, we can see that twentieth-century writers and theorists proposed their own interpretations of myths and produced works in this direction. In this regard, the German theorist Alfred Rosenberg’s work *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* may be cited as an example. Likewise, among such writers we may also include William Golding and his unique literary creativity.

Golding's works, especially "Lord of the Flies," have been translated into many languages around the world. It is precisely in this novel that William Golding explores the idea that "man is a fallen creature." In Azerbaijan, Golding's творчество and works were studied and translated by Ramiz Abbasli. In his book *Selected Works of William Golding*, Ramiz Abbasli provided information about the writer's life and творчество, translated his works, and included them in the collection.

**Purpose of the Research.** The purpose of this research is to clarify the principles of mythological plot motifs in the artistic structure of William Golding's novel "Lord of the Flies" and to determine the significance of myths in the works of the English prose writer. The study also aims to theoretically analyze mythological elements, demonstrate the methods of using myth in Golding's creativity, and conduct a mythological analysis of the novel "Lord of the Flies." The research is based on preliminary information about William Golding's personality, literary activity, and mythology, as well as on scholarly and theoretical studies concerning mythological elements in the writer's works. Since the purpose of the study is to clarify the principles of mythological plot motifs in the artistic structure of Lord of the Flies and to determine the significance of myths in the works of the English prose writer William Golding, the research first examines the initial theoretical approaches to mythology. As noted, "depicting the characteristic features of the era and time, as well as many important aspects arising in human psychology and inner spiritual experiences during this process, becomes the principal artistic purpose and intention" (Huseynova, 2024, p. 46). The life and literary creativity of the twentieth-century English writer, especially the mythological elements in his works, have been studied in detail. At the same time, this research has provided preliminary insights into the novel "Lord of the Flies," which constitutes the subject of the present study, and has led to an examination of the mythological elements within the work.

Mythology is the starting point of human culture. At present, it is impossible to understand anything beyond it, and perhaps this may never be possible. In general, the path toward human self-awareness passes through mythology. Without mythology, it is impossible to penetrate the ethnocosmic essence of any culture. As M. Ocal Oguz writes, "it is impossible for a culture to exist without mythology." Mythology is the starting point of humanity's need to learn. It represents the oldest knowledge that has survived to the present day through humanity's passion for understanding. Mythology is the beginning of science. Unfortunately, within today's positivist worldview, mythology has not been placed at the foundation of the history of science. Mythology emerged as a product of humankind's first curiosity and desire to understand its surroundings.

The irreplaceable English dramatist and novelist of the first and second halves of the twentieth century, William Golding, presents himself as a person of an entirely new era, whose perception was shaped by an understanding of the events of the two World Wars. Golding's works reflect a profound concern for humanity. Since he portrays the complex world of modern people, there is no expression of perfect freedom in Golding's literary universe. His characters submit to suffering without understanding its causes, and sometimes their entire lives pass in unbearable torment. Even when they understand the reason for their suffering, they often fail to find a way out. Golding's obsession with the dark aspects of human nature is not merely a literary claim. During his lifetime he was an extremely private individual, yet after his death his biography and personal documents became material for interpreting a man who struggled with his own dark thoughts and whose writings continue to serve as subjects of scholarly research. As Huseynzade notes, "one may conclude from the work that all deficiencies and ugliness are bestowed upon humans from birth, and if a human becomes savage, he may become worse than a predator" (Huseynzade, 2017, p. 30).

The uniqueness of William Golding's work lies in the strength and depth of its organization. He carefully constructed his works and enriched them with "meaning" through the use of classical literature, Christian symbolism, and mythology. At the same time, the writer, as a creator of myths, composes stories that illuminate truths about human nature.

It is therefore no coincidence that, while explaining the events of the human world, Golding turned to myths. Likewise, writers and philosophers before him also used mythical narratives to interpret various human situations. Thus, by examining the characteristics of human existence in his writings, Golding explores moral difficulties and portrays his characters in the most intense situations in order to explain their lives within a “mythological” dimension. According to Golding, myth is not a phenomenon of the past, but an inseparable part of our present life. It is the image and action through which truth reveals itself.

Thus, in his works William Golding portrays the complex world of modern human beings and, as a result, the writer is unable to find a perfect path to salvation within his own literary universe. These people suffer without fully understanding the reasons for their pain, and sometimes their entire lives continue in this manner. In reality, even when they do understand the source of their suffering, they are not always capable of finding a way out of their situation.

It is no coincidence that in the novel *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph, who symbolizes reason and common sense, despite being mistreated by his companions, resembles Prometheus in his attempt to guide his “savage” friends toward the right path while confronting the existence of a terrifying reality. No matter what happens, Jack constantly seeks different ways to discredit Ralph in the eyes of the other boys, who consider Ralph superior to him. The savagery within Jack gradually rises to the surface. Jack sets himself the goal of seizing power by portraying Ralph as a coward and a liar. Aspiring to leadership, Jack is skilled in hunting, and through this ability he provides the boys with meat. Since their nourishment depends on him, the children slowly begin to side with Jack. His arbitrariness becomes uncontrollable. Those who refuse to obey his commands are tied up and beaten, and the suffering inflicted upon them becomes endless. Jack transforms into a beast.

The beast itself symbolizes fear, and it becomes clear throughout the novel that the monster feared by the children is in fact the darkness within themselves. The beast exists inside every child. None of the boys around him understand this except Simon. Among all the children, Simon alone senses, feels, and comprehends this truth. Simon is wiser than the others; he understands and perceives reality more quickly than they do. Precisely because of this intelligence, he begins to think that perhaps the beast is actually the boys themselves.

Even at the very beginning of the novel, through the conversation between the fair-haired boy Ralph and the fat boy Piggy, the writer attempts to reveal the inner nature of these characters to the reader. While the two boys are walking together, Piggy proudly tells Ralph that he suffers from asthma, that he is the only one at school with this condition, and that he has worn glasses since the age of three because he struggles to breathe. In fact, the writer presents the glasses in the novel as a symbol of intelligence and science. The glasses represent humanity’s dominance over nature within the work.

The works of William Golding compel readers to “see the truth.” The characters he creates are rarely portrayed merely as victims of social or economic forces beyond their control. Rather, they are representations of human nature itself more than of individual personalities. The world they inhabit is tragic – a world in which human beings must both suffer and endure; a world in which they are forced to make choices, often choosing wrongly, and in almost every case leading toward the destruction of human life.

Finally, in the face of the manifestation of a human heart filled with so much hatred, the myth of the “Delphic Oracle” symbolizes the struggle between good and evil and expresses the moment of salvation by illustrating that these opposing forces always coexist together.

In the novel *The Spire* (1964), one of the central characters, Jocelin, experiences an intense inner struggle. As we continue reading the novel, we witness Jocelin arriving at new conclusions and gradually adopting a new way of thinking based on these realizations. The paradoxical tension between reason and faith is ultimately replaced by spiritual comprehension. Like his predecessors Ralph and Sammy, he pursues the goal of self-discovery. In the end, as a result of the struggle between the worlds of good and evil, he attains eternity in a state of spiritual peace and joy.



Thus, William Golding wrote *Lord of the Flies* after returning from the World War II, and his war-time experiences significantly influenced his perception of humanity. Golding came to believe that “man produces evil as a bee produces honey.”

“*Lord of the Flies*” is not merely a simple adventure story about boys stranded on a tropical island. Golding enriched his narrative through the use of religious themes, emphasizing humanity’s sinful nature and the constant need to establish a complete and harmonious connection with God. Throughout the novel, the characters, structure, themes, and references develop around the destruction of humanity, the problem of evil, and the consequences of sinful actions.

Golding emphasizes that the inner nature of human beings is hidden beneath the mask of civilization, yet this mask can easily be shattered. For many, humanity is imprisoned; for William Golding, however, humanity is diseased, and he expresses this conviction with certainty. Golding’s “*Lord of the Flies*” is a fascinating and thought-provoking novel that descends into the depths of human nature and analyzes human psychology in conditions where social laws and order disappear.

At the beginning of the novel, the children’s arrival on the island is itself the result of a military conflict. This symbolizes the way in which the chaos created by adults spreads even to innocent children. The author’s greatest “blow” lies precisely in his choice of children as the main characters: “Children represent a simple and raw model of adult society.” This serves as the clearest proof that the true mirror of any society is the behavior of its children.

In his Nobel Prize speech, William Golding emphasized the value of language and stated that the entire world remains connected through words and communication. As noted by Gıyas (2018, p. 17): “A word presented with passion, together with mastery, enthusiasm, and talent, may sometimes become an extraordinarily magnificent means of salvation. Words possess the power to encourage people to speak to one another, because the word that escapes from the writer’s mouth expresses not merely his own thoughts, but the ideas and reflections of the entire Earth. Words build bridges between human beings, between the traveler and his guide; thus nations are nourished by sound thought, equipped with wisdom, tyrants and merchants are defeated before their power, and nations find a common language with one another.” In “*Lord of the Flies*,” the writer likewise calls upon the reader, through the power of words, to move toward enlightenment and understanding.

With the words “All hostility melted before the flowers,” William Golding presents nature in the novel almost as a silent witness. It is an eternal force that observes human savagery while always preserving its own sublime harmony. The calmness of the flowers, the silence of the forests, and the light of the fire demonstrate that nature stands against all contradictions and evil instincts within humanity with generosity and inexhaustible harmony. Nature neither interferes with human savagery nor punishes it; it simply continues its existence, because the supreme order of nature ultimately prevails over human evil. Golding depicts nature not merely as a background setting, but also as a mirror of human nature and as an eternal poem reflecting humanity’s temporary struggles and conflicts.

*Lord of the Flies* is not simply a novel, but also a lesson about humanity itself. The greatest message conveyed by the work is the predatory potential hidden in the depths of human nature. The novel demonstrates that the rules and laws of civilization are in fact only a fragile covering that restrains humanity’s primitive savage instincts. Once these rules disappear or weaken, the primitive impulses within human beings emerge openly.

Essentially, everything that occurs on the island in “*Lord of the Flies*” may be interpreted as a projection of modern humanity’s spiritual quest, since “the darkness of the human heart” becomes the central theme of the characters’ experiences.

As noted by Gıyas (2018, p. 17): “We need more humanity, greater care, and purer love. Some people place all their hopes in political systems, believing that such systems can provide everything they desire; others assume that only love can create such a system. Personally, I believe that the truth lies somewhere in between. Even if we continue our path with foolish and irrational actions and stumble

along the way, the essential thing is to behave with dignity and goodness before humanity; otherwise, we will never fully understand the nature of the violence into which our planet is being dragged. For the human being is the crown of creation.”

The novel “*Lord of the Flies*” is also regarded as a literary text that embodies the artistic paradigms of postmodernism. In terms of both form and content, it represents a parody of earlier literary works and serves as an example of a text shaped by the interaction between the aesthetic principles of realism and postmodernism, combined with the author’s irony (Abdullayeva, 2019, p. 166).

**Conclusion.** Thus, it should be emphasized that in the novel “*Lord of the Flies*,” the manifestations of evil both outside and within humanity are represented through several symbolic images: the Lord of the Flies itself, symbolizing the devil as the source of original sin; Jack and Roger, whose “hunter” images reflect biblical representations of the Antichrist; as well as figures resembling the servants of Satan described in the Book of Revelation. William Golding primarily demonstrates that all humanity possesses a sinful nature and that this nature easily reveals itself whenever social order and stability disappear. In *Lord of the Flies*, the young boys symbolize humanity, while the adult figure represents God. Without the guidance or assistance of adults, the boys destroy both the island and one another. Undoubtedly, although at the beginning of the novel they attempt to preserve a civilized and orderly way of life, within a short period they abandon these values and become the cause of catastrophe. Through this work, Golding seeks to show that human beings are sinful by nature, and once humanity loses its connection with God, it becomes spiritually lost and ultimately destroys itself. Although the boys struggle to establish order and remain good after the crash, almost all of them eventually surrender to their inner savage instincts. Ralph, Piggy, and Simon are the only characters who refuse to follow Jack – the embodiment of evil – and throughout the story they represent faith and positive human qualities.

Ultimately, the universality of Golding’s message lies in the spontaneity of violence. Through “*Lord of the Flies*,” the writer demonstrates that education must be strengthened by moral upbringing; otherwise, preventing savagery becomes difficult or even impossible. The novel narrates how a group of schoolboys stranded on a deserted island during the age of atomic warfare gradually abandon all the customs and traditions of the civilized world from which they came and reveal the terrifying truth underlying human nature. By the end of the novel, the boys’ descent into savagery, their surrender to animalistic instincts, and their transformation into frightening human beings are vividly exposed by the author. This also serves as an indication of the extremes to which people may go in their struggle for power. As Abbasov states: “There is no essential reason for this other than the permanence of human desire and weakness. Even if we remove the influence of civilization and history, people will still create wars. Strip people of their education, culture, ideologies, political and religious loyalties, place them on a beautiful island free from enemies and ideologies, and they will still resort to violence in order to dominate one another, adopting the same desperation that motivates civilized societies on the island” (Abbasov, 2010, p. 289).

Through this work, the writer attempts to convey a message to the entire world: without the laws and culture established by society, human beings can easily become savage. Although children are traditionally regarded as pure and innocent beings, Golding’s novel destroys the idea of childhood innocence and replaces it with primitive instincts. On one side stands Ralph, who values justice and seeks order and discipline in everything; on the other side stands Jack, who tramples upon all rules and is prepared to “shed blood” without hesitation for the sake of his own interests. These two characters serve as the clearest proof of the writer’s ideas.

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