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The Doctrine of Man in William Golding's Lord of the Flies

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THE DOCTRINE OF MAN IN WILLIAM GOLDING'S LORD OF THE FLIES

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by

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INTRODUCTION

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When William Golding saw the publication of his first novel, Lord of the Flies, in 1954, he could hardly have dreamed that the work would reach a distribution of three and one-half million copies within fifteen years. Actually, the book got off to a relatively slow start as far as sales are concerned; less than 2,500 copies were sold during the first year and only 65,000 during the first 8 years.[1] The adoption of Lord of the Flies as a required textbook for literature courses in many high schools and colleges is largely responsible for the millions of sales since 1962.

Since Lord of the Flies is so frequently found on the required reading list of English literature courses, it is to be expected that the theme of the novel is the subject of frequent discussions in literary circles and perhaps even in gatherings of much less sophisticated readers. One would, then, be inclined to examine seriously the theme of a novel as widely read and discussed as is Lord of the Flies. Since the theme of the novel involves so fundamental a concept as the doctrine of man, one may surmise

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[1] "Lord of the Campus," Time, LXXIX (June 22, 1962), 64.

that the average reader finds an unusual attraction in the subject matter of the narrative. Further, since the philosophy of man's nature which Golding espouses shows resemblances to the Christian doctrine of original sin, the student of theology finds himself almost compelled to make further investigation.

Chapter I of this study will attempt to define the Christian doctrine of original sin as a feature of the doctrine of man and will further attempt to illustrate the attitude toward human nature of selected theologians, philosophers and writers. William Golding is in the line of some prominent recent writers who have found the doctrine of an inherited tendency toward evil to be a plausible suggested cause of man's warlike bahavior down through the centuries.

Chapter II will illustrate Golding's masterful unveiling of man's innate tendency toward evil through the behavior of the boys in Lord of the Flies. Chapter III will show that Golding deliberately wrote Lord of the Flies to contrast strikingly with The Coral Island, a romantic nineteenth century novel. Chapter IV will reveal the basically different philosophies in Lord of the Flies and Dreiser's An American Tragedy, though both are twentieth century works. The concluding chapter will attempt to correlate all the information.

CHAPTER I

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN'S NATURE IN THEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE

The doctrine of original sin is a prominent feature of the biblical doctrine of man. Upon reading Ps. 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me," many Bible students have understood the words as a reference to the tendency toward evil found in man at the time of his conception. In this sense original sin is "the total corruption of our whole human nature"[1] which brings man into the world "without true fear, love and trust in God . . . without righteousness . . . inclined only to evil, and . . . spiritually blind, dead, and an enemy of God."[2] While the term "original sin" is not used in the Bible, many readers consider references to "the flesh,"[3] "the old man,"[4] "the natural man,"[5] and "the carnal mind"[6] as

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[1] A Short Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), p. 87.

[2] Ibid.

[3] John 3:6. (The King James Version will be used in all biblical references.)

[4] Eph. 4:22.

[5] 1 Cor. 2:14.

[6] Rom. 8:7.

references to the natural inclination toward evil which is called original sin.

While there is no unanimity in the Christian world on the subject of original sin, many readers of the early chapters of Genesis believe that while man was created in the image of God, he fell away from God and that the sons of that fallen-away Adam were born in the image of their fallen-away father,[7] that, in fact, the first son born to Adam committed fratricide.[8]

St. Paul appears to be quite conscious of the problem of the old nature when he exclaims:

> For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.[9]

It is apparent from the above passage that St. Paul strongly felt the force of the tendency toward evil which was somehow part of his nature.

Church fathers such as St. Augustine continued to hold to the belief that man by nature is inclined toward that which is evil. In his City of God Augustine comments that

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[7]Gen. 5:3.

[8]Gen. 4.

[9]Rom. 7:22-25.

Adam and Eve committed so great a sin "that by it the human nature was altered for the worse, and was transmitted also to their posterity."[10] He asserts that the life man lives in this world bears witness to the fact "that the whole human race has been condemned in its first origin."[11] Further, in a passage which almost perfectly anticipates events in Lord of the Flies, Augustine lists dozens of sins with which the world is afflicted, and concludes with this statement:

> For who is there that has not observed with what profound ignorance, manifesting itself even in infancy, and with what superfluity of foolish desires, beginning to appear in boyhood, man comes into this life, so that, were he left to live as he pleased, and to do whatever he pleased, he would plunge into all, or certainly many of those crimes and iniquities which I mentioned, and could not mention?[12]

About a thousand years later, Martin Luther continued to teach about original sin in the manner of St. Paul and St. Augustine. In his explanation of "The Magnificat" (1520-1521) Luther asserts that man is so completely "corrupted through Adam's fall that the curse is innate with him and become, as it were, his nature and being."[13]

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[10] St. Augustine, City of God, in The Political Writings of St. Augustine, edited by Henry Paolucci (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1962), p. 1.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., p. 2.

[13] Martin Luther, "The Magnificat," in Luther's Works, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), XXI, 352.

In reference to Romans 7 in which St. Paul speaks of the struggle within himself, Luther says:

> What else does St. Paul mean here except that although according to the spirit he would like to do good, that is, be without evil desires and inclinations, the flesh is nevertheless so evil and full of lusts that he does not do what he wants to do and cannot be without these lusts? For this reason he does the evil according to his flesh which according to his spirit he does not wish to do.[14]

The tendency toward evil, literally "incendiary" in Golding's Lord of the Flies, is interestingly called "tinder" by Luther. He explains that he calls it "tinder" because, "just as tinder easily catches fire, it is easily inflamed and excited to evil love, lust, and works, as everyone knows from his own experience."[15]

The Lutheran reformers of the sixteenth century reiterated strong, clear statements on the doctrine of original sin as in this passage from the "Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord":

> Original sin in human nature is not only a total lack of good in spiritual, divine things, but . . . at the same time it replaces the lost image of God in man with a deep, wicked, abominable, bottomless, inscrutable, and inexpressible corruption of his entire nature in all its powers, especially of the highest and foremost powers of the soul in mind, heart and will. As a result, since the Fall man

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[14]Martin Luther, "Defense and Explanation of All the Articles," in Luther's Works, edited by Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), XXXII, 19-20.

[15]Ibid., XXXII, 29.

> inherits an inborn wicked stamp, an interior uncleanness of the heart and evil desires and inclinations.[16]

While the conservative and traditional view of original sin which has been traced and explained in the preceding paragraphs may seem to present a very pessimistic view of man's nature, and while it is true that anyone who calls this a complete doctrine of man will certainly have a very pessimistic view of man, it is nevertheless also true that St. Paul, St. Augustine, Luther, and the sixteenth century reformers did not despair because of the severity of man's corruption. This is an important point to consider because some philosophers and writers whose works will be mentioned on succeeding pages give no evidence of moving beyond a philosophy of man's nature which considers him a hopeless creature inclined to all that is evil. Golding, too, takes the reader only as far as the climax of the degradation to which the boys come and he offers no optimistic forecast for man. This is to say that Golding does not present a completely rounded picture of man's nature in the sense of St. Paul, St. Augustine or Luther. Golding does not suggest that man is capable of willing and performing that which is

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[16]"Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration I," in The Book of Concord, edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 510.

noble and loving through the power of the living Lord Jesus Christ and the in-dwelling of His Spirit. He does not speak of beautiful qualities created in man by God which can be revealed and released by the power of God. He does not indicate a belief that God's Spirit makes man his "temple"[17] in order that the world may expect to see some of man's original potentialities for good. He does not seem to know that God can work through people to give them something of the beautiful and good.

St. Paul looks forward to the day when everything in the world will be restored to its original perfect state.[18] In the meantime he remembers that man has fallen, but also that God has raised him up with Christ and given him life and hope with the ability to be miraculously new. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."[19] To Paul, and to the Christian who holds his view, the motivating power of the Christian faith gives hope that citizens of the world may expect to see something other than the selfishness and ugliness of man's old nature.

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[17] 1 Cor. 6:19.

[18] Rom. 8:4.

[19] Rom. 6:4.

Luther also expressed the belief that by the power of faith in Jesus Christ the battle against the old nature is gradually won, and he showed his approval of St. Augustine by quoting him in his discussion of the manner in which the remnant of original sin continues to make a struggle against the flesh necessary even after baptism:

> Let us now conclude the discussion of this article . . . with the beautiful saying of St. Augustine, "Sin is forgiven in baptism; not that it is no longer present, but it is not imputed." The two reasons were mentioned above. First, because we believe in Christ, who, through faith, takes our place and covers our sin with his innocence; second, because we battle unceasingly against sin, to destroy it. . . . The joy, the comfort, and the blessing of the New Testament is this: We learn the benefits Christ offers us and why we need him. Out of this root grow love and delight, praise and thanksgiving to Christ and to the Father of all mercy. This makes for free, joyful, and brave Christians, whose love causes them to fight against sin . . .[20]

Just as some Christians may not hold the beliefs of St. Paul, St. Augustine and Luther on the matter of original sin and the manner in which man overcomes the tendency toward evil, so a difference is noted among philosophers who deal with the subject of human nature. Down through the centuries, some have tended to agree in essence with the view that man has an innate tendency toward evil. Obviously, the term "original sin" is not necessarily used by secular philosophers and writers, but one sees

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[20]Luther, "Defense and Explanation of All the Articles," pp. 28-29.

something similar to original sin in the writings of such men. On the other hand, it has been especially apparent since the eighteenth century that some philosophers hold that man enters the world essentially good and that he is made evil by his environment.

Thomas Hobbes, the prominent seventeenth-century philosopher, is counted among those who hold a view which is in essential harmony with the doctrine of original sin as we have defined it. In his well-known work Leviathan (1651) he wrote that the three principal causes of fighting among men are competition, diffidence and glory. In his view, the selfishness inherent in man's expression of these forces causes him to make war on everyone else:

> Out of civil states, there is always war of every one against every one. Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war, as is of every man, against every man. For WAR, consisteth not in battle only, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of time, is to be considered in the nature of war; as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather, lieth not in a shower or two of rain; but in an inclination thereto of many days together; so the nature of war, consisteth not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto . . .[21]

Hobbes' view as stated above was nothing new or shocking to the world in which he lived, but the views of Jean

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[21]Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1947), p. 82.

Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) provided a clearly divergent view of the nature of man. Rousseau singles Hobbes out as one of the philosophers with whom he disagrees when he urges that we must "not conclude, with Hobbes, that because man has no idea of goodness, he must be naturally wicked . . ."[22] Rousseau contends instead that man comes into life with the "pure emotion of nature."[23] It is his philosophy that from "society and the luxury to which it gives birth arise . . . all those superfluities which make industry flourish, and enrich and ruin nations."[24] What makes Rousseau an especially interesting philosopher to contrast with Golding (although other Enlightenment philosophers such as John Locke and David Hume likewise contradict him) is Rousseau's belief that children are good by nature, that they begin life as noble savages. Especially through his book Emile (1762) Rousseau expounded his view that "everything is good as it comes from the hands of the Author of Nature, but that everything degenerates in the hands of man."[25] In direct opposition to Rousseau's clearly-stated

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[22]Jean Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract and Discourses (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1950), p. 222.

[23]Ibid., p. 224.

[24]Ibid., p. 279.

[25]Jean Jacques Rousseau, Emile, translated by William H. Payne (London: Appleton and Company, 1908), p. 1.

position is Golding's assertion that society controls man's evil tendencies somewhat. According to Golding, laws and institutions inhibit the boys from acting as animals in the early portion of the novel. However, Golding clearly indicates his belief that the restraints of society are not strong enough to prevent man from doing that which his evil nature suggests.

Rousseau's romanticism was an influence on the thought of the century which followed him.[26] While twentieth-century philosophy and literature are very different from that of the romantic nineteenth century which found Rousseau so much to its liking, there are apparently still many followers of Rousseau, who with their belief in the natural goodness of children, continue to promulgate beliefs which dove-tail perfectly with his. An example is anthropologist M. F. Ashley Montagu. His views, those of one who studies man in relation to his environment and origin, deny that history proves man's innate aggressiveness:

> Indeed, it may unequivocally be stated that every human being is born <u>good</u>, good in the sense that every infant is born with all its energies oriented in the direction of conferring and receiving, of exchanging creatively enlarging benefits. The purposes of the infant are constructive--<u>not</u> destructive. He desires to live as if to live and love were one.[27]

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[26]Carlton Hayes, Marshall Baldwin and Charles Cole, <u>History of Western Civilization</u> (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), p. 490.

[27]M. F. Ashley Montagu, <u>Anthropology and Human Nature</u> (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1957), p. 40.

Montagu continues his argument in such a way as to make it absolutely clear that he stands with Rousseau and against anyone who, like Golding, holds that society is the restraining force which makes human existence bearable. He insists that it is human nurture and not human nature which is the cause of human aggression. Obviously, then, the "social experience through which the individual has passed will largely determine whether he will become a dominantly aggressive or a dominantly loving person . . . ."[28]

While anthropologist Montagu may represent the thinking of a significant portion of the world's population, it is nevertheless possible to demonstrate that Golding is in the line of a significant number of philosophers and writers who question or deny man's innate goodness. Events of the first part of the present century have been responsible for changing some minds in this direction.

The turn of the twentieth century found nineteenth-century romantics looking forward with hope for man. The scientific progress of the decades before 1900 provided part of the stimulus. The invention of the telephone and wireless excited people with the hope of communicating across long distances. Medical progress offered hope for the alleviation of pain and the lengthening of human life. The major nations of the world were living in peace. With young people going

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[28] Ibid., p. 41.

to school for four, six, eight and more years in larger numbers, many believed that better education would be a long step forward toward the elimination of the barbarism of war. With the eighteenth century dreams of peace and progress being realized, any prophets of war and revolution seemed to be pessimists from another era.[29]

World War I shattered the dreams of many optimists when thousands of civilized American, French, German and English boys and men were needlessly slaughtered. Perhaps some could still excuse it all and suggest thatit was simply man's last big mistake. Perhaps such romantics assumed that the power of education and scientific progress had not yet taken a firm-enough hold. However, thirty years later, World War II only improved on the destruction with the introduction of the atomic bomb. The possibility of a nuclear war between great world powers has been the subject of countless discussions, articles and books since that time. Men fear that nuclear warfare would destroy a large part of the world and its population. This theme appears in various areas of our culture, as, for example, in the motion picture "On the Beach." The setting of this film is a locality in which one finds the remnants of a society which destroyed itself in a nuclear war.

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[29]Hayes, Baldwin and Cole, p. 685.

While the events of the twentieth century have encouraged a pessimistic spirit, one cannot claim that all pessimists are such because they accept some concept of original sin. We have already shown that Christianity, although it holds the doctrine of original sin, does not therefore look upon man with pessimism. However, one who believes in original sin but who sees no hope of man's renewal will certainly remain in the pessimistic camp. Chapter IV of this study will show that some writers are pessimists for a reason altogether different from Golding's. Theodore Dreiser, in his An American Tragedy and other works, expresses his belief that environmental factors account for man's troubles in the world. Thus, Dreiser is as pessimistic as any writer one could mention, but he is not pessimistic for the reason that Golding is pessimistic. The subject is not pessimism, but the cause of the pessimism. The purpose of Chapter I, then, is to show that Golding is in the line of those who find the cause of man's problem and their reason for pessimism in man's natural tendency toward evil, that is, in a characteristic of man which he brings into the world at birth and which is an inherent part of his being. The remainder of this chapter will suggest names which can, at least to some degree, be associated with Golding's philosophy.

We begin this sampling of twentieth-century writings with reference to a poem which was composed for the very

beginning of the century. We make no attempt to define the cause of the pessimism in Thomas Hardy's poem "The Darkling Thrush," but, since it was written December 31, 1900, we consider it an appropriate representative of the literary mood of this century. The persona of the poem (probably the author himself) looks ahead to the dawning century and expresses amazement at a thrush through whose "happy goodnight air" there trembled "some blessed Hope, whereof he knew/And I was unaware."[30] Whatever the reasons for its dark mood, Hardy's poem is an example of the pessimism which has become more and more common in the literature of this century.

Of twentieth-century philosophers, Jean Paul Sartre gained considerable fame as spokesman for post-World War II intellectuals. He and his followers were greatly concerned about the problem of existentialism and the reason for man's existence. While there are various tenets of Sartre's philosophy, optimism does not appear to be one of them. Sartre spoke of man as being abandoned, forsaken, without hope and in anguish and despair.[31] For him despair means that man limits himself to a reliance upon that which is

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[30]Thomas Hardy, "The Darkling Thrush," in Poetic Design edited by James Hepburn (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), pp. 287-288.

[31]Jean Paul Sartre, "Existentialism," The Age of Analysis, 20th Century Philosophers, edited by Morton White (New York: Mentor Books, 1955), pp. 126-132.

within his will, or within the sum of the probabilities which render his action feasible."[32] He further laments:

> But I cannot count upon men whom I do not know, I cannot base my confidence upon human goodness or upon men's interest in the good of society, seeing that man is free and that there is no human nature which I can take as foundational.[33]

Such writing does not tend to support the beliefs of anyone who counts on man's innate inclination toward good.

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) may have ended his years of poetic expression on a more optimistic note, but whenever one sees representative works of this man of letters one sees his well-known "The Second Coming":

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drawned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity.
>
> Surely some revelation is at hand;
> Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
> The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
> When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
> Troubles my sight: somewhere in the sands of the desert
> A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
> A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
> Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
> Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
> The darkness drops again; but now I know
> That twenty centuries of stony sleep

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[32] Ibid., p. 132.

[33] Ibid., p. 133.

> Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
> And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
> Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?[34]

In this poem Yeats is expressing the view that the period of Christianity's influence is about to end and that a new two-thousand-year cycle is about to begin. With "anarchy" and "a blood-dimmed tide" loosed upon the world, with the best men "lacking conviction" and the worst of men overflowing with "passionate intensity," the reader gets at least some feeling that man's nature may be the cause of the "rough beast's" arrival at Bethlehem to be born.

T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) is another modern poet who has suggested that man's problem lies within his nature. Eliot converted to Christianity somewhere around the year 1927, but it is also true that his conversion was not so dramatic and complete that he immediately found himself freed from all doubt. Furthermore, even though he himself saw some hope for man through Christian faith, he continued to see the problem which results when man's old nature is permitted to have its way. Finally, Eliot's earlier works, those written prior to his conversion, are among those for which he is very well known. Among these are "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and "The Hollow Men." Eliot, considering his purpose in life, laments that he "should

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[34]William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming," in Poetic Design, p. 301.

have been a pair of ragged claws/ Scuttling across the floors of silent seas."[35] As he considers his attempts to find meaning in this kind of world, he closes the poem, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" with these lines:

> We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
> By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
> Till human voices wake us, and we drown.[36]

The opening lines of "The Hollow Men" give us another desolate picture of man in this twentieth century. Here Eliot says:

> We are the hollow men
> We are the stuffed men
> Leaning together
> Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
> We whisper together
> Are quiet and meaningless
> As wind in dry grass
> Or rat's feet over broken glass
> In our dry cellar
>
> Shape without form, shade without color,
> Paralyzed force, gesture without motion . . .[37]

Eliot, after his conversion, was a poet who believed in a doctrine of original sin. He took the doctrine to imply man's total corruption and the fact that "we are all, naturally, impure."[38] He lamented the fact that

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[35]T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," in Poetic Design, p. 322.

[36]Ibid., p. 324.

[37]T. S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men," in Poetic Design, p. 326.

[38]T. S. Eliot, After Strange Gods (London: Faber and Faber, 1934), p. 56.

literature had largely ignored this doctrine, and that, as a result, reality had been lost.

> With the disappearance of the idea of Original Sin, with the disappearance of the idea of intense moral struggle, the human beings presented to us both in poetry and in prose fiction today, and more patently among the serious writers than in the underworld of letters, tend to become less and less real.[39]

This statement is from After Strange Gods, a work published after Eliot's conversion. Eliot's insistence upon the importance of the doctrine of original sin places him in the camp of those who reacted against the romanticism of nineteenth-century thinking about the nature of man. While Eliot presumably saw hope for man as a result of the motivating power of the Christian faith, readers who are unwilling to accept the solution offered by Christianity will undoubtedly continue to see Eliot as a purely pessimistic writer because of his beliefs about man's nature.

Similar to Eliot in several ways is Wystan Hugh Auden. Auden changed in his philosophy to such an extent that his allegiance switched from Communism in the early thirties to a fairly conservative Christianity by about 1941, but he always showed concern for the same problems in man.[40] He

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[39] Ibid., p. 42.

[40] Howard W. Kramer, "Auden and the Magic Lamp," This Day, XVI (May 1965), 26-27, 57.

believed that man has an innate problem which prevents him from doing what is right. Even though he wrote the lines before his conversion and he does not call it by name, Auden is really speaking of original sin in the opening chorus of a work entitled The Dog Beneath the Skin:

> Stand aside now: The play is beginning
> In the village of which we have spoken; called Pressan Ambo:
> Here too corruption spreads its peculiar and emphatic odours
> And life lurks, evil, out of its epoch.[41]

It was in For the Time Being, a major work which came from Auden's Christian period, that Auden made some of his most important statements on original sin. In "The Temptation of St. Joseph," from For the Time Being, a Boys' Semi Chorus makes the following reference to man's helplessness as a result of original sin:

> Joseph, Mary, pray for us,
> Independent embryos who,
> Unconscious in another, do
> Evil as each creature does
> In every definite decision
> To improve; for even in
> The germ-cell's primary division
> Innocence is lost and sin,
> Already given as a fact,
> Once more issues as an act.[42]

Auden, quite aware of the way in which his philosophy contradicts that of Rousseau, calls the romantic philosopher

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[41] W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, The Dog Beneath the Skin or Where is Francis? A Play in Three Acts (London: Faber and Faber, 1935), p. 9.

[42] W. H. Auden, For the Time Being (New York: Random House, 1944), p. 82.

by name and claims that he unwittingly gives a helping hand to the devil because the devil would be victorious immediately if he could make men unconscious of the evil they are doing.[43] Auden thus appears to be a prime example of a modern poet who deliberately deals with man's innate tendency toward evil as man's fundamental problem. Again, as in the case of Eliot, one who accepts the idea of man's innate propensity toward evil but who is unwilling to believe man can be converted will come away quite pessimistic about man's chances under the circumstances.

A number of novelists of the present century are not unlike Eliot and Auden in their preoccupation with pessimism and their toying with the idea of something like original sin.

At the very turn of the century, Joseph Conrad published his well-known Heart of Darkness. This short novel gives the reader a look into the life of a Mr. Kurtz who has gone to Africa for a large European company which trades in ivory. The reader is taken on a journey to meet Kurtz down in the darkest part of Africa. As he notes the description of the jungle and follows the river farther and farther back into the area of the cannibals he is quite sure that the title of the book comes from its setting on the Dark Continent.

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[43]W. H. Auden, The Double Man (New York: Random House, 1941), p. 35.

But, to his surprise, the reader learns that the heart of darkness is not a geographical area; it is not the cruel black heart of the cannibal; the heart of darkness is in fact the heart of the ivory trader, Mr. Kurtz. Kurtz has had the usual cultural upbringing of the middle or upper class European. His friends at home think of him as having gone on some kind of "mission" with possible spiritual undertones. But in Africa Mr. Kurtz has reverted to a savage type himself. He treats the natives who work for him with inhuman cruelty; he takes advantage of everyone else in order to make as much money for himself as possible; he even begins to participate in unspeakable pagan rites. Mr. Kurtz, conditioned by a life in cultured society, eventually loses all the veneer of that society and shows that in his heart he is really an ignoble savage.[44]

From Heart of Darkness one gets the clear impression that Conrad disagrees with a philosophy which would suggest that society is the evil influence on man. For Mr. Kurtz, society was a helpful influence because it curbed the expressions of his evil nature. Once Kurtz was away from the influence of society, he showed what he really was. Rousseau and Conrad obviously have nothing in common.

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[44]Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967).

William Faulkner is a novelist of high repute, who, as he deals with the subject of man's nature, leaves one with the feeling that parts of man's troubles are inherited. Faulkner may present man both as victim of his nature and environment and at the same time as one who has the ability to prevail, but it is likely that the reader will come away from his books with a feeling of pessimism about man's nature. Randall Stewart, author of American Literature and Christian Doctrine, labels Faulkner's diagnosis of man's condition as original sin in these words:

> Let not the Mississippians suppose that Faulkner is writing about them in an exclusive sense, and let not the New Englanders or the Middle Westerners or the Californians, even, suppose that he is not writing about them, because he is. Faulkner is not reporting on "conditions"; he is reporting on the human condition. He is reporting on Original Sin . . .[45]

Again Stewart affirms:

> There is everywhere in his [Faulkner's] writings the basic premise of Original Sin; everywhere the conflict between the flesh and the spirit . . . Man in Faulkner is a heroic, tragic figure. He may on occasion rise to spiritual greatness. The greatness is measured by the distance between the heights he attains and the depth to which he descends . . .[46]

A look at Faulkner's most famous work, The Sound and the Fury, will illustrate how a reader might come to the conclusions reached by Mr. Stewart. The story of The Sound

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[45]Randall Stewart, American Literature and Christian Doctrine (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1958), p. 140.

[46]Ibid., p. 142.

and the Fury is the story of the Jason Compson family. The father is an alcoholic; the mother is neurotic; the oldest son is a suicide; a daughter bears an illegitimate daughter; a son steals his niece's support money; another son is mentally defective; and the illegitimate granddaughter is even more morally degenerate than her mother. As one observes the life of the members of this family one is struck by symbolism which suggests that this once proud Southern family is gradually deteriorating or decaying. The unpainted old mansion is becoming decrepit; the members of the family are trying desperately to give the impression of stability, but, the reader sees them all gradually becoming worse from one generation to the next. The feeling is that because of their heritage they simply will be unable to avoid the inevitable tragic end which awaits them. The feeling is heightened by lines like these, spoken by Jason IV of his promiscuous niece: "Like I say you can't do anything with a woman like that, if she's got it in her. If it's in her blood, you can't do anything with her."[47] Since Faulkner is thought to have intended that the characters of his mythical Yoknapatawpha County represent mankind, the references to the degeneration of a family certainly suggest an inborn tendency in man which causes him to sink rather than

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[47]William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury (New York: Vintage Books, 1929), p. 250.

rise as he meets the challenges of life. In any case, Faulkner certainly does not sound like a romantic philosopher as he looks at the nature of man.

As we prepare to investigate the theme of man's innate tendency toward evil in Lord of the Flies we cannot help but point out the very real connection between all that we have been saying and the philosophy of Golding. If twentieth-century man has second thoughts about man's ability to make the world a modern paradise, then Golding certainly is a leading doubter. If twentieth-century man has fears that a new war will bring nuclear destruction and the end of civilization, then Golding is one of the most fearful of men. Actually, that is where Lord of the Flies begins. The setting for the novel is an island upon which an airplane has deposited a number of boys who were being flown from the area of nuclear conflict to a place of safety.

One can never be sure about all the influences upon a writer, but we know that the events of World War II were one factor in the development of Golding's philosophy. In an interview with Douglas Davis, Golding said: "When I was young, before the war, I did have some airy-fairy view about man. . . . But I went through the war and that changed me. The war taught me different and a lot of others like me."[48]

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[48]William Golding as quoted in Douglas Davis, "A Conversation with Golding," The New Republic, CXLVIII (May 4, 1963), 28.

Golding, born in Cornwall on September 19, 1911, son of a schoolmaster father, studied science, switched to literature, and after experimenting with writing, acting and producing, accepted a teaching position at Bishop Wordsworth's School in Salisbury.[49] When World War II broke out he left teaching temporarily and served in the Royal Navy for the entire period of the war. He eventually became lieutenant and the command officer of a rocket-launching ship which participated in the D-day invasion of Normandy.[50] This is the war experience about which Golding speaks when he comments that the war changed him. His first-hand experience with the violence that accompanies war caused him to ask serious questions about the optimistic philosophy which he had learned from his father and his Oxford professors. At that point in his development he must have questioned romantic concepts about man's nature just as Sartre, Yeats, Eliot, Auden, Conrad, Faulkner and others had questioned and rejected them.

Because of his statement about the influence of the war on his philosophy, it would be dangerous to suggest that the writings of philosophers, poets and other novelists were a major influence on Golding, but there is no

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[49]Bernard S. Oldsey and Stanley Weintraub, The Art of William Golding (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1965), pp. 3-8.

[50]Ibid., p. 8.

question that, as he approached the writing of Lord of the Flies, Golding adopted an attitude toward human nature which placed him directly on the side of those who believe that man does not have the innate tendency to do what is constructive and loving. He undoubtedly began Lord of the Flies with a resolve to make clear his conviction that man's innate tendency is toward that which results in hatred quarreling and violence. Further, as the following chapters will illustrate, Golding made his point with such force and clarity that his philosophy sounds very similar to the biblical doctrine of original sin.

CHAPTER II

THE INNATE TENDENCY TOWARD EVIL AS UNVEILED IN LORD OF THE FLIES

Readers are sometimes perplexed by a novel which appears to have no clear theme or purpose. Critics have been known to carry on lengthy (in time and space) debates with others of their profession in an effort to establish the true meaning of such a piece of literature. One might question whether any work of art which requires lengthy debate as to its purpose is actually good in any sense. In the case of Lord of the Flies, however, the average reader will almost certainly finish the book with the assurance that, whether he agrees with Golding's philosophy or not, he knows what Golding is getting at. Golding apparently planned his novel so carefully that every paragraph, every sentence, in fact, every word, contributes to the single purpose he had in mind.

Golding has also spoken rather freely about the purpose and theme of Lord of the Flies in interviews and questionnaires. When the American publishers of the novel asked Golding a number of questions as they planned to prepare publicity material, Golding described the theme of Lord of the Flies in the following manner:

> The theme is an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature. The moral is that the shape of society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system however apparently logical or respectable.[1]

While the careful reader actually does not need it for an understanding of the theme, this helpful statement offers him additional assurance that his first reactions to the novel are undoubtedly correct. Now, let us permit the novel to speak for itself.

Since Rousseau believed that man is essentially good by nature, it is appropriate that Golding chose as his main characters, not grown men, but young boys. We are informed that Ralph, chosen as leader, was twelve years old.[2] While Jack and few others may have been as old as Ralph, we also know that many of the boys were definitely younger and were therefore called "little'uns." The choice of a group of young boys gave Golding the opportunity to make his point especially strong. He chose young children in order to have as his characters human beings who would be relatively close to Rousseau's idea of the state of natural innocence.

Golding now placed his boys on an island which was up to the time of their arrival "untouched by human hands." It

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[1]William Golding as quoted in E. L. Epstein, "Notes on Lord of the Flies," William Golding, Lord of the Flies (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1954), p. 189.

[2]Golding, p. 8.

was like the Garden of Eden, a kind of paradise or heaven. There is justification for this designation of the island because Golding wants the reader to think of the island as a veritable hell at the end of the story. In addition to the murderous activity of the boys, the fact that the entire island is in flames at the end of the story indicates a strong symbolism of hell. Further suggestions pointing toward a kind of ruined Garden of Eden are found throughout the book, even as early as the first paragraph which describes "the long scar smashed into the jungle" by the plane's passenger compartment. The "scar" appeared as soon as human beings touched the paradise. Frequent references to the scar emphasize this point. In any case, there is no reason to doubt that Golding meant to choose conditions which would permit him to deal with human beings who were relatively uncontaminated by what Rousseau and his followers considered the evils of society.

The reference to a symbolic heaven and hell will alert the reader to Golding's frequent use of symbolism as a means of emphasizing his theme. Golding himself explained that

> the whole book is symbolic in nature except the rescue in the end where adult life appears, dignified and capable, but in reality enmeshed in the same evil as the symbolic life of the children on the island.[3]

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[3]Golding in Epstein, p. 189.

That statement gives encouragement to anyone wishing to search for additional meaning in symbols.

The boys, then, are deposited on an island which shows no evidence of human occupation prior to their arrival. No human beings are present to give these fine Christian English boys any wrong ideas about life. Here is a perfect opportunity for relatively innocent human beings to live a "simple life" which will permit their innate goodness to show forth. As Ralph initially surveyed the situation on the island he "undid the snake-clasp of his belt, lugged off his shorts and pants, and stood there naked, looking at the dazzling beach and the water."[4] Golding is here attempting to make his point crystal clear. The snake, in Rousseau's view, is society. Society or civilization, is responsible for evil, says Rousseau. Ralph, upon beginning his stay here, gets rid of his clothes, the marks of a civilized culture and society. He stands there now with that old devil cast aside. Civilization will not hamper him here. He has perfect freedom. Golding describes Ralph's physical characteristics and adds that "there was a mildness about his mouth and eyes that proclaimed no devil."[5] Golding thus hopes to make the reader aware of the contrast between this scene and what we shall see later.

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[4]Golding, p. 8.

[5]Ibid.

Appearances can be deceiving. Is Ralph really a "noble savage," or is he a very ordinary savage?

Ralph and the other boys are anything but "noble savages." They are as inhuman as the savages who had to be fought in any uncivilized jungle. The signs of the devil, even in Ralph, make themselves evident early in the story. When Ralph and Piggy (the latter is Golding's symbol for reason) are getting acquainted, we find Ralph reacting to Piggy's name with an unkind, shrieking laughter. Piggy is somewhat apprehensive as a result of Ralph's reaction and asks him not to tell the other boys about his nickname. When Jack and the other boys arrive, however, Ralph very deliberately lets Piggy's odious nickname fall upon their ears.[6] Has society taught Ralph this unkindness, or is it a defect in human nature which causes him to be so unconcerned about the feelings of another? As the story unfolds we learn that Ralph's problem is the problem of all the boys.

Jack becomes the leader of the active opposition to Ralph's somewhat reasoned approach to life on the island. In fact, Jack's rather straight path to unreason and violence is easily traced. He is introduced to the reader as the leader of the choir boys. Actually, the choir boys came from one community and had respected Jack because he

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[6] Ibid., pp. 9-18.

was a good singer. Jack had even protested that he ought to be elected chief because he could sing C sharp.[7] Jack soon turns out to be a leader of the Hitler type. He marches his choir boys in formation and in the uniforms of their choir robes over the hot sand until they are all about ready to join Simon in fainting. As soon as he is away from the atmosphere of the church or cathedral in which they have been singing their anthems to the glory of God, Jack sees these boys as a kind of army which must march or halt as he orders with his sharp commands. Jack is immediately marked as a killer because he carries a knife in his belt and, by arrangement with Ralph, becomes the leader of the hunters. This pleases him immensely.[8]

As we trace the activities of the choir boys-turned-hunters we find them using their natural talents in new ways. Whereas they had sung to the glory of God, they now find it perfectly natural to sing a revised chant which was used for every pig killing and eventually for the hurting and killing of human beings. Their new chant (with variations) was "Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Spill her blood."[9] Golding certainly seems to be saying that man, once away from the restraints of society, will permit his innate tendency toward evil to show as he uses

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[7] Ibid., p. 19.

[8] Ibid., pp. 17-20.

[9] Ibid., p. 63.

his natural vocal gifts for something other than loving hymns of praise to God.

Animal Killing Gradually Easier

Jack's true nature is revealed on his path toward killing. When he, Ralph, and Simon were on their original trek to look the island over, they came across a small wild pig temporarily caught in a tangle of creepers. Jack raised his knife as if to kill the pig. But, after raising his arm, he paused just long enough for the pig to get loose and escape. As Golding describes it, "the pause was only long enough for them to understand what an enormity the downward stroke would be."[10] Furthermore, as the three discuss the event immediately afterward and Jack attempts to make excuses for not having struck the pig, Golding explains that "they knew very well why he hadn't; because of the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh; because of the unbearable blood."[11] Golding leaves no doubt in the mind of the reader that the boys' upbringing in civilized society had given them inhibitions about shedding blood, even the blood of animals.

Because of his initial failure to kill a pig, we find Jack's actual killing of a pig an event of major proportions

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[10] Ibid., p. 27.

[11] Ibid.

in the story. The first point of importance is the fact that Jack and his hunters looked for and killed this pig while they were supposed to be keeping the signal fire going. A reasoned approach to the boys' situation suggested that rescue was by all means the most important matter for them all. For that reason, boys were assigned to keep the signal fire on top of the mountain going at all times. While Jack and his hunters have permitted the fire to go out and are off on their hunt, a potential rescue ship passes the island without stopping.[12] Golding seems to be saying that, given an opportunity to do as he pleases, man will innately turn to that which is of less importance and permit the really important matters to go untended or unheeded.

As Jack and his boys come back with the pig they killed while the rescue ship passed by, they are quite elated and they show little concern about the passage of the ship. Yet, happy as Jack is about having killed the pig, some vestige of what civilization has taught him still clings to him. After reporting the killing, he shows signs of an uneasiness about certain features of the event, as, for example, the blood. "He noticed blood on his hands and grimaced distastefully, looked for something on which to clean them, then wiped them on his shorts and laughed."[13]

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[12] Ibid., pp. 60-62.

[13] Ibid., p. 63.

As he proceeds with his description and speaks of the "lashings of blood," Jack laughs and shudders.[14] And while Jack proudly relates how he cut the pig's throat, Golding adds that he "twitched as he said it."[15] It is clear that Jack is reverting to what he is by nature. Killing is something which he really finds enjoyable; it is part of his nature. Now he is still experiencing a few problems getting rid of the useful restraints which his culture has placed upon him. We observe the contrast between Golding's point and a philosophy which would suggest that man's nature provides the useful restraints which society manages to nullify.

After a relatively short period of time we find Jack and the other boys quite at home with this business of killing animals. Neither is it a matter of killing for the food value of the meat. We are eventually brought face to face with a thoroughly cruel and sadistic kind of pig killing as the innate tendency toward evil and violence further exhibits itself in the boys. In this case the boys attack a sow surrounded by her suckling young. After wounding the sow, the hunters are described as "wedded to her in

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[14] Ibid., p. 64.

[15] Ibid.

lust, excited by the long chase and the dropped blood."[16]

Finally, we have this description of the killing:

> Here, struck down by the heat, the sow fell and the hunters hurled themselves at her. This dreadful eruption from an unknown world made her frantic; she squealed and bucked and the air was full of sweat and noise and blood and terror. Roger ran round the heap, prodding with his spear whenever pigflesh appeared. Jack was on top of the sow, stabbing downward with his knife. Roger found a lodgment for his point and began to push till he was leaning with his whole weight. The spear moved forward inch by inch and the terrified squealing became a high-pitched scream. Then Jack found the throat and the hot blood spouted over his hands. The sow collapsed under them and they were heavy and fulfilled upon her. The butterflies still danced, preoccupied in the center of the clearing.
>
> At last the immediacy of the kill subsided. The boys drew back, and Jack stood up, holding out his hands.
>
> "Look."
>
> He giggled and flicked them while the boys laughed at his reeking palms. Then Jack grabbed Maurice and rubbed the stuff over his cheeks. Roger began to withdraw his spear and the boys noticed it for the first time. Robert stabilized the thing in a phrase which was received uproariously.
>
> "Right up her ass!"[17]

To dramatize the change even further, Golding now has Jack, who first could not bear the sight of blood, disemboweling the sow and "lugging out the hot bags of colored guts" as the other boys watch. Jack seems to be quite at home in a setting which involves sadistic killing and blood.

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[16] Ibid., p. 125.

[17] Ibid., pp. 125-126.

Obviously, such things were not a part of his life back in civilized society.

Diminishing Respect for Human Life

Killing pigs is one thing and killing human beings is quite another. Lord of the Flies shows us boys who, within a matter of months after having been isolated from society, no longer distinguish between killing animals and killing human beings. Golding is masterful in tracing the change that took place in the boys.

We find what we would call a civilized concern for human life in the earlier episodes of the story. The boys are "silent as death" when they realize that one of the small boys, the one with "the mark on his face," is no longer with them because he has probably been lost in the fire which they carelessly fed with so much fuel that it got out of control. As Golding describes the boys at this time, he further states that they "looked at each other fearfully [and] unbelieving" as Ralph, their chief, muttered his embarrassed replies to Piggy's questions.[18]

As the story progresses, Golding permits the reader to see that as the old inhibitions are gradually lost and the boys show that they really are ignoble savages, an attitude of less concern for human life also appears.

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[18] Ibid., pp. 41-42.

The first such insight strikes one when he hears the recounting of the story of the killing of the first pig. While the story was told,

> Maurice pretended to be the pig and ran squealing into the center, and the hunters, circling still, pretended to beat him. As they danced, they sang. "Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Bash her in."[19]

As he reads these lines, there comes to the reader the awful realization that the boys are singing their pig-killing chant around a human being. Would they ever do to a human being what they had been doing to pigs?

Golding believes that the boys would indeed do the same to human beings. We realize that they come dangerously close to murder when Ralph is exultantly describing the first time he threw a spear into a pig. On this occasion the episode is again dramatized with a human being playing the role of a pig. Robert is in the middle of the circle this time as all the boys jab at him and make mock rushes. It begins in a playful way, but soon Robert is squealing in real pain. Eventually the butt end of a spear falls on his back. Then Ralph, of all people, "carried away by a sudden thick excitement" grabs Eric's spear and jabs at Robert with it.

> All at once Robert was screaming and struggling with the strength of frenzy. Jack had him by the hair and was brandishing his knife. Behind him was

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[19] Ibid., p. 69.

> Roger, fighting to get close. The chant rose ritually, as at the last moment of a dance or a hunt.
>
> "Kill the pig! Cut his throat! Kill the pig! Bash him in!"
>
> Ralph too was fighting to get near, to get a handful of that brown, vulnerable flesh. The desire to squeeze and hurt was over-mastering.[20]

As the boys discuss this event immediately afterward, Robert suggests that for the future they should use a real pig because, to make it realistic, "you've got to kill him." In reply to this suggestion, Jack sets everyone laughing by suggesting that they use a small boy.[21] Though the remark is greeted with apparent levity, the reader shudders upon hearing that ominous suggestion.

The first real murder is not first degree murder in the sense of being premeditated. It happens as the result of some kind of hysteria which makes it impossible for the boys to distinguish properly between animal and human. The boys are frightened because of a storm and decide to do their dance, that dance which includes the familiar chant about killing the pig. This has now developed to the point that it speaks of killing the mysterious beast whom they fear. They sing of their desire to cut his throat and spill his blood. As they form their circle and begin their chant,

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[20] Ibid., p. 106.

[21] Ibid., pp. 106-107.

the boys find that the center of the ring "yawns emptily." Something comes "crawling out of the forest." The "something" is Simon who has come to tell them the good news that the supposed fearsome beast on the mountain is only a dead parachutist. The circle closes in, the chant continues, and Simon is quickly killed by "the tearing of teeth and claws."[22] As Ralph and Piggy discuss the episode later, both realize that they were indeed part of the murderous activity, but they try hard to justify themselves and deny their active participation.[23] Jack and his rebels also discuss the matter and similarly attempt to excuse themselves.[24] All boys know that a murder has been committed, yet it is clear that it was not actually premeditated. Some inexplicable force came over them and caused their violence.

Golding does not leave the reader to doubt that deliberate, premeditated killing is the next step. As Ralph and Piggy come to a confrontation with Jack and his rebel gang of savages, a physical struggle begins between Jack and Ralph. Piggy, standing with the conch, the symbol of authority, but without his glasses, is struck down and killed by a rock rolled down by Roger. This is a case of deliberate murder on the part of one individual.

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[22] Ibid., pp. 140-141.

[23] Ibid., pp. 144-145.

[24] Ibid., p. 148.

Piggy, the voice of reason, is now out of the way and all the boys begin to pursue Ralph with the single intention of killing him, cutting off his head, and placing it on a stick. The reader notices immediately that the boys had likewise sadistically killed the sow, cut off her head and placed it on a stick sharpened at both ends. This pursuit of Ralph, which finally involves burning up the entire island to flush him out of hiding, takes us to the end of the story and the rescue by an officer in charge of a cruiser. From boys who are first stunned at the thought that their carelessness resulted in the death of one of their group, they have, by the end of the story, become a group of savages with the single intention of murdering one of their group. Golding makes his point clear again. This is what human beings really are: lovers of violence and blood and killing. Every man is born a potential savage and murderer. The restraints of society are quickly forgotten when its influence is not immediate.

Golding's thoroughness and his clever use of symbolism provide the reader with another progression of events which emphasize his theme. In this case it is a series of events involving the use of rocks. The first of these is brought to our attention on the exploratory trip conducted by Ralph, Jack and Simon shortly after they have met. They come to the top of the mountain which overlooks the entire

island. Here they find a large rock which it is possible for them to dislodge and send on its course down through the forest. Golding's description, even at this early stage of the story, contains intimations of destruction and violence:

> The great rock loitered, poised on one toe, decided not to return, moved through the air, fell, struck, turned over, leapt droning through the air and smashed a deep hole in the canopy of the forest. Echoes and birds flew, white and pink dust floated, the forest further down shook as with the passage of an enraged monster: and then the island was still.[25]

As one considers this event he quickly realizes that Golding is suggesting the potentially destructive power of these boys. The scar made by the passenger compartment of their plane was not a willful act on the part of the boys, but the scar made by the passage of this large rock was directly traceable to their will and energy.

The destructive effect of the rock in that first incident was felt primarily by the inanimate objects in the path of its downward course. Soon, however, rocks are flying toward animate objects, in fact, toward human beings. Golding cleverly begins with a seemingly insignificant incident and with rather small rocks. As a matter of fact, the rocks in this case are actually merely sand arranged in the form of castles built by some of the small boys. Roger and Maurice deliberately walk straight through the sand

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[25] Ibid., p. 24.

castles "kicking them over, burying the flowers, scattering the chosen stones."[26] While the little fellows did not make a loud protest, we learn that

> Percival began to whimper with an eyeful of sand and Maurice hurried away. In his other life Maurice had received chastisement for filling a younger eye with sand. Now, though there was no parent to let fall a heavy hand, Maurice still felt the unease of wrongdoing.[27]

Whereas Maurice temporarily feels guilty, one of the small boys follows his example and begins to throw sand in showers until Percival is crying with another eyeful of sand. Thus, Golding twice hints at the potentially destructive effect when human beings begin to direct even sand particles in each other's direction.

The upbringing of the boys in a civilized society continues to restrain the destructive tendency in the boys only slightly. Roger, who appears in all scenes which involve violence toward human beings, observes another boy playing in the sand. His actions and Golding's comments follow:

> Roger stooped, picked up a stone, aimed, and threw it at Henry--threw it to miss. The stone, that token of preposterous time, bounced five yards to Henry's right and fell in the water. Roger gathered a handful of stones and began to throw them. Yet there was a space round Henry, perhaps six yards in diameter, into which he dare not throw. Here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life.

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[26] Ibid., p. 55.

[27] Ibid.

> Round the squatting child was the protection of parents and school and policeman and the law. Roger's arm was conditioned by a civilization that knew nothing of him and was in ruins.[28]

It is clear from the preceding passage that at this rather early point in the story, the restraints of society continue to protect the boys from the violence toward which they are all inclined. As the taboos of society lose their strength, the innate tendency toward violence exhibits itself to a frightening degree.

Roger is the leading character again when a rock is used to kill Piggy. He is situated high above on Castle Rock, the fortress of all the remaining boys except Ralph and Piggy, as he leans on the lever to move the great rock which comes crashing down on Piggy. But a short while later, all the boys apparently join Jack as another large rock is rolled down, this time in Ralph's direction. The intent of all the boys is to do to Ralph what Roger did to Piggy. The rock misses Ralph, but another attempt is made with an even larger earth-shaking rock which narrowly misses Ralph. The boys have now degenerated to the extent that they are deliberately using the full destructive power of rocks with murderous intent. Golding had earlier shown the reader the destructive power of a large rock against the trees of the forest, the discomfort that sand could

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[28] Ibid., p. 57.

cause human beings, and Roger's throwing to miss. Now he shows life as it would be lived without any restraints on man's innately evil tendency toward destruction and violence.

Golding's Emphasis Enforced by the Ending

The ending of Lord of the Flies strongly supports what has been said about Golding's main theme in the novel. As Ralph tries to escape the horde of savages pursuing him and observes the destruction by fire of the wonderful island which had all the resources necessary for the maintenance of life, he laments the foolhardiness of the destruction. For example, as he senses that the fire is closing in on the fruit trees, he wonders what they will eat tomorrow.[29] These musings lead the reader to wonder whether man's violent behavior and preoccupation with war and destruction may mean the annihilation of man himself.

As Ralph throws himself down on the beach fully expecting to be killed by the boys who are swarming toward him there in the only area safe from the fire, he is rescued by a naval officer who has come ashore because he saw what he supposed was a sizeable signal fire. The officer represents the average, ignorant romanticist who still

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[29] Ibid., p. 183.

imagines that Rousseau's philosophy could be correct. The officer cannot begin to understand what has been going on. He suggests that the boys have undoubtedly been enjoying "fun and games." While still grinning cheerfully at Ralph, he jokingly asks, "What have you been doing? Having a war or something?"[30] When Ralph nods in the affirmative, the officer becomes a bit more serious perhaps, but he is obviously taken aback when he learns that two boys have been killed in this "fun" war.

That the boys are not any longer what this officer supposes them to be is clear from the appearance of Percival Wemys Madison, one of the little savages with distended bellies, who comes to the officer as if to introduce himself. Percival had earlier introduced himself as follows when Ralph asked his name at the time of an assembly: "'Percival Wemys Madison, The Vicarage, Harcourt St. Anthony, Hants, telephone, telephone, tele--'"[31] Although Percival had already forgotten his telephone number at the time of that introduction, he has now lost all the trappings of civilized society. He stands there as nothing but the little ignoble savage that he is. As he tries to give his name to the officer, he says only, "'I'm, I'm--' But there was no more to come. Percival Wemys

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[30] Ibid., p. 185.

[31] Ibid., p. 80.

Madison sought in his head for an incantation that had faded clean away."[32] Percival and all the boys, free of the restraints of society, away from the influence of reason and education, have lost their status as human beings with names and have become as nearly like animals as one could imagine.

The officer remains incredulous as he learns that these boys have failed to put up the "jolly good show" one would expect from a "pack of British boys."[33] He remains ignorant of the real nature of man. Ralph, on the other hand, has experienced a shattering revelation. His feelings are described as follows:

> Ralph looked at him 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. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob, too. And in the middle of them, with filthy body, matted hair, and unwiped nose, 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.[34]

When Ralph breaks out into audible weeping we notice that he sheds his first tears "for the end of innocence." The

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[32] Ibid., p. 186.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., pp. 186-187.

officer is still ignorant of the true nature of man, but Ralph has been enlightened. No longer does he live in a dream world of romantic optimism. He now knows "the darkness of man's heart." He finds the truth very sad indeed; it is cause for weeping.

Ralph also laments the death of Piggy, who represented reason, intellect and education. Piggy was laughed at for his name, his asthma, his plump body, and his defective eyesight, but he was a wise and true friend to Ralph.

Just as the boys did not learn the truth until late, so mankind remains blind and ignorant. The officer is embarrassed by the crying of the boys, but waits, "allowing his eyes to rest on the trim cruiser in the distance."[35] This is Golding's way of reminding the reader that the real world is engaged in the violence and unreason which have been observed in the boys of Lord of the Flies. The officer should not have been surprised to find the boys on the island engaged in combat. His cruiser was no pleasure vessel. The deck was equipped with guns. He himself was dressed in the uniform of a modern warrior. His revolver held real live bullets. The reader recalls that the parachutist who came down earlier in the novel was a sign that the outside world was engaged in bloody conflict. After all, the boys were originally deposited on the island because they

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[35] Ibid., p. 187.

were being transported from the area of major danger and destruction. Golding makes clear his fear that as man ignores the voices of reason, education and civilization he is very likely inviting the end of man. Lord of the Flies presents man with an innate tendency toward evil which is clearly capable of destroying him.

CHAPTER III

GOLDING IN CONSCIOUS CONTRAST WITH A NINETEENTH-CENTURY ROMANTIC NOVEL

Although the theme of Lord of the Flies has been clearly established in the preceding chapter, Golding's philosophy comes through even more clearly when contrasted with specific authors who express a different viewpoint about the nature of man. In this chapter we propose to contrast Lord of the Flies with The Coral Island, a nineteenth-century romantic novel to which Golding refers in his novel. Golding permits the naval officer who rescues Ralph at the end of the story to suggest that during the boys' early days of cooperation everything had gone well, just as on the "Coral Island."[1]

The Coral Island is not particularly well known in America, but Golding knew that his English audience would have little trouble making certain associations between it and Lord of the Flies because The Coral Island has been standard fare for English adolescents for many years.[2]

The Coral Island (1857) by R. M. Ballantyne, expresses

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[1]William Golding, Lord of the Flies (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1954), p. 186.

[2]James R. Baker, William Golding: A Critical Study (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 4.

typical nineteenth-century optimistic philosophy about the nature of man. If Rousseau was not consciously in the mind of Ballantyne, then The Coral Island at least reflects the thought of an age which was impregnated with that philosopher's romantic and optimistic spirit.

Both Golding and Ballantyne introduce the reader to a number of young boys making the best of it after they have been marooned on an island far from civilization. There is also an obvious and deliberate similarity in the names Golding chose for the boys of Lord of the Flies. In The Coral Island we meet Jack, Ralph and Peterkin. The two main characters in Golding's novel are also Jack and Ralph. Peterkin becomes Simon in Lord of the Flies. (Peter and Simon are two names for the same disciple of Jesus.) Thus, all three boys from The Coral Island are the main characters in Lord of the Flies. There, however, the similarity ends.

The boys in Lord of the Flies ominously and selfishly exult that the island is all theirs[3] when they first realize that they are actually isolated from society. By way of contrast, we find the boys in The Coral Island, even after having lived on the island for some time, acknowledging their gratitude to God the Creator. As Ballantyne's Ralph describes the scene which greeted their eyes when

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[3]Golding, p. 25.

they first rowed their home-made boat out into the waters of the lagoon, he, as a good Christian English schoolboy, mentions various details of the beauties of nature and closes with these words:

> Oh, it was a sight fitted to stir the soul of man to its profoundest depths, and, if he owned a heart at all, to lift that heart in adoration and gratitude to the great Creator of this magnificent and glorious universe.[4]

Whereas the boys in Lord of the Flies soon overcame their inhibitions about killing, and eventually participated in the sadistic killing of a sow, we find the boys in The Coral Island beautifully humane in their conduct toward the wild life with which they come in contact. On one occasion, Peterkin could easily have killed a penguin which was bravely driving him backwards, "but as he had no wish to do so cruel an act merely out of sport, he let the bird escape."[5]

Golding emphasizes his thesis that the savagery on his island comes from the boys themselves, but Ballantyne lets the savagery come from the outside. The latter depicts savagery by showing cannibals who prepare to eat their vanquished foes. The three boys of The Coral Island, with the eventual help of fifteen released savages, are able by their cleverness and bravery, to defeat twenty-eight members of

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[4]Robert Michael Ballantyne, The Coral Island (London: Thos. Nelson and Sons, Ltd., n.d.), p. 143.

[5]Ibid., p. 182.

the cannibal tribe.[6] In this and in other episodes dealing with savagery, Ballantyne makes clear his belief that the forces of truth, light and love are always victorious over the forces of evil and savagery.

Ballantyne's boys always have the spiritual needs of their fellowmen in mind and, by the example of their love, are influential in converting many people to Christianity.[7] Such incidents only emphasize the inherent optimism of the book and the faith that Ballantyne has in man. That man is essentially good and able to conquer any forces of evil is clearly stated as Ralph muses:

> There is a power of endurance in human beings, both in their bodies and in their minds, which, I have often thought, seems to be wonderfully adapted and exactly proportioned to the circumstances in which individuals may happen to be placed--a power which, in most cases, is sufficient to carry a man through and over every obstacle that may happen to be thrown in his path through life, no matter how high or how steep the mountain may be . . .[8]

The key to the success of the boys in The Coral Island appears to be a beautiful spirit of cooperation which resulted from the peace and harmony in which they lived. As Ralph of The Coral Island tells the story he emphasizes that

> there was, indeed, no note of discord whatever in the symphony we played together on that sweet Coral

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[6] Ibid., pp. 194-203.

[7] Ibid., pp. 279-280.

[8] Ibid., p. 289.

> Island; and I am now persuaded that this was owing to our having been all tuned to the same key, namely that of love![9]

On another occasion he repeats this thought when he states that "we continued to live on our island in uninterrupted harmony and happiness."[10] The boys of The Coral Island work together like good Christian English schoolboys to supply nearly every need. They make themselves implements to be used for constructive purposes; they devise recipes for making various interesting foods, including even the stuffing for their meat dishes.

If peace, harmony and cooperation are the keys to the success of Ballantyne's boys in The Coral Island, then war, disharmony and lawlessness are the reasons for the failure of Golding's boys in Lord of the Flies. Without a doubt, Golding meant to write his novel in such a way that the contrast between the two sets of boys would be most apparent. Golding was asked about this particular point in an interview with Frank Kermode on a British Broadcasting Company program in August, 1959. Mr. Kermode asked Golding just how far and how ironically the connection between The Coral Island and Lord of the Flies ought to be treated. Golding responded as follows:

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[9] Ibid., p. 143.

[10] Ibid., p. 191.

> Well, I think fairly deeply, but again, not ironically in the bad sense. You see, really, I'm getting at myself in this. What I'm saying to myself is, "Don't be such a fool, you remember when you were a boy, a small boy, how you lived on that island with Ralph and Jack and Peterkin" (who is Simon, by the way, Simon called Peter, you see. It was worked out very carefully in every possible way, this novel.) I said to myself finally, "Now you are grown up, you are adult; it's taken you a long time to become adult, but now you've got there you can see people are not like that; they would not behave like that if they were God-fearing English gentlemen, and they went to an island like that." . . . I think it [Lord of the Flies] is a realistic view of the Ballantyne situation.[11]

Golding's "realistic" view of the Ballantyne situation may, then, be discovered in Lord of the Flies. Golding's boys have learned about cooperation from the society in which they had lived. They did not immediately rebel against Piggy's reasoned approach to the problems of man. Piggy believed in establishing a recognized authority, enforcing a reasonable set of laws, and confronting problems by democratically discussing them. This perfectly commonplace and logical view of the situation finds an enthusiastic initial reception by the boys, but gradually becomes a matter of mere words as the boys permit their selfishness and tendency toward disorder to lead them to ruin.

Toward the beginning of Lord of the Flies Piggy bubbles with excitement when the conch is discovered in the lagoon.

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[11]"The Meaning of It All," Books and Bookmen, V (October 1959), 10.

He speaks of it as "ever so valuable." The real value of the trumpet conch becomes apparent when its piercing blast brings all the boys together for the first time.[12] Boys come streaming toward Ralph from all directions and even Jack and his choir boys obediently come marching toward the authoritative sound. When the election of the chief takes place, we notice that their conditioning leads the boys to choose Ralph as leader. Piggy had shown the intelligence; Jack had shown certain leadership qualities,

> but there was a stillness about Ralph as he sat that marked him out: there was his size, and attractive appearance; and most obscurely, yet most powerfully, there was the conch. The being that had blown that, had sat waiting for them on the platform with the delicate thing balanced on his knees, was set apart.[13]

Thus, Ralph, associated with authority through the sound of the conch, becomes the elected chief who presumably will enjoy the full cooperation of his tribe in the spirit of The Coral Island.

Ralph makes an attempt, with Piggy's help, to set up a few fundamental rules. Someone will have to keep the fire going at all times, a certain group will do the hunting, certain areas will be assigned for toilet facilities, and the conch will be the symbol of authority which must be held by anyone wishing to speak in an assembly. The

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[12]Golding, pp. 13-15.

[13]Ibid., p. 19.

cooperation of everyone is obviously expected. Furthermore, Ralph, Jack and Simon immediately afterward begin an exploratory tour of the island and exhibit considerable enthusiasm as they speak of the anticipated success of their cooperative efforts.[14] So far, it is much like The Coral Island.

Within a very short time things begin to look like anything but The Coral Island. Although the boys had earlier shouted with glee at the idea of "lots of rules," it does not take long until we see, for example, the tragic failure to keep the signal fire going because of the preference for hunting on the part of most of the boys. Very few boys assist with the building of the shelters. The boys use any convenient spots as toilets, and the meetings become disorderly as the rule about the authority of the conch is disregarded. People speak when they feel like it. Ralph loses all authority over Jack and the rest of the hunters who split from the group and form their own tribe which eventually includes everyone on the island except Ralph. Jack rudely tears Piggy's glasses from his face in order to use the lenses for starting a disastrously large signal fire. Somewhat later, Jack strikes Piggy because the latter makes critical remarks about Jack's preoccupation with hunting when he should be keeping the signal fire going. In

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[14] Ibid., pp. 20-26.

this encounter Piggy's glasses fall to the ground and one lens breaks.[15] Golding says that the boys are now about half way toward complete disorder and anarchy. The spirit of cooperation has grown quite weak.

As Ralph considers the state of affairs at this point, he decides that drastic action is needed. He remembers his "first enthusiastic exploration" of the island "as though it were part of a brighter childhood" and he determines that the next "meeting must not be fun, but business."[16] In his meditation he comes to the realization that Piggy represents something which is very much needed on the island. "Piggy could think . . . Piggy, for all his ludicrous body, had brains."[17] Ralph will try to use the reasoned approach with the boys. They must see that only by cooperation can they succeed. Ralph carefully thinks through the points which he plans to make and he succeeds reasonably well in following his plan. But, after he makes a number of points, the boys begin to become restless and complain that he is talking too long and making too many criticisms. They take lightly his complaint about their using the fruit-tree area as an outdoor toilet. In a most

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[15] Ibid., p. 65.

[16] Ibid., p. 70.

[17] Ibid., p. 72.

unBallantyne-like manner several boys interrupt without having the authority to speak. Jack eventually causes the complete break-up of this important assembly with his interruptions. Ralph calls for order:

"Jack! Jack!"

"The rules!" shouted Ralph. "You're breaking the rules!"

"Who cares?"

Ralph summoned his wits.

"Because the rules are the only thing we've got!"

"Bollocks to the rules! We're strong--we hunt!"[18]

In the above passage we notice especially Ralph's statement that "rules are the only thing we've got." In his view, there must absolutely be a willingness to cooperate in keeping the established rules or there can be no hope. However, Ballantyne's spirit of respect and cooperation is not to be found in Golding.

Ralph is so demolished by the failure of his assembly that he feels there is almost no point in trying any longer. He considers blowing the conch once more in an effort to bring all the boys back together for another attempt at a reasonable discussion. Piggy's suggestion of toughness at this point is a clear admission that only force can make possible even the barest chance of survival. By way of

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[18] Ibid., p. 84.

contrast, there is never a hint of the possible need of force or coercion in The Coral Island.

The absolute hopelessness of the situation is clearly expressed by Ralph himself as he squirms in his dilemma. "If I blow the conch and they don't come back; then we've had it. We shan't keep the fire going. We'll be like animals. We'll never be rescued."[19] Piggy's only response to this is "If you don't blow, we'll soon be animals anyway."[20] There seems to be no solution to the problem. Blow the conch or not, the end result seemingly will be a group of human beings each of whom selfishly acts as he pleases. Golding's "realistic view of the Ballantyne situation" suggests that since the normal restraints of society are lacking here, the boys will not cooperate, but will only express the selfishness by which each is innately moved.

Cooperation is pretty well extinct as disorder and lawlessness lead to violence. Jack and his hunters forcibly steal Piggy's glasses, and Roger upon Piggy's return to claim them, rolls the stone down upon him and the conch he holds. "The conch exploded into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist."[21] From this point on, there is nothing

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[19] Ibid., p. 85.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., p. 167.

left to the story but the attempt to kill Ralph. By the time the reader reaches this point he realizes the full irony of Ralph's earlier statement in which he, together with the other boys, exults that "this is our island. It's a good island. Until the grownups come to fetch us we'll have fun."[22]

Ballantyne, writing in the romantic, optimistic nineteenth century, reflects the philosophy of Rousseau and posits his thesis that, without the help of the adult world, one should still expect a group of marooned adolescents to cooperate and enjoy themselves as God-fearing English schoolboys. Golding deliberately shows the reader a "realistic" view of the Ballantyne situation and pictures the ugliness and unhappiness which result when boys, without the beneficial restraints of society, follow natural human instincts. It is clear that Golding hardly believes that it would be "fun" to live in a world which permitted man to follow his innately evil tendencies.

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[22] Ibid., p. 30.

CHAPTER IV

LORD OF THE FLIES IN CONTRAST WITH A TWENTIETH-CENTURY NOVEL, DREISER'S AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY

We know of no evidence to suggest that Golding consciously attempted to contrast Lord of the Flies directly with any twentieth-century novel, but, since his theme is different from the theme of many current novels, it seems quite qppropriate that we should make Golding's beliefs about man's nature stand out even more clearly by contrasting them with those found in an important modern novel. For the purposes of this study we have chosen Theodore Dreiser's ponderous but popular An American Tragedy which appeared in 1925.

The primary basis for the contrast between Lord of the Flies and An American Tragedy will lie in the area of the source of man's problem. We have already clearly pointed to Golding's belief that the heart of man's problem is his innate tendency toward evil and we shall have more to say about this as we proceed with the study. According to An American Tragedy, man also has a problem and, in fact, finds himself somewhat in the position of a trapped animal without a way of escape. Dreiser, however, believes that our society or social structure is the main

culprit. Thus, we find society becoming the antagonist in this modern novel. The protagonist in the story, Clyde Griffiths, is in constant struggle against the powerful forces of his environment and he eventually loses the battle.

Clyde is the son of a street evangelist and his ignorant farm-girl wife. Since the boy has no love for the work engaged in by his father, he eagerly looks forward to the day when he will have a job and money of his own. He works as a drug clerk for a while and then gets acquainted with a glamorous world while he holds a job as bell-hop in a fine Kansas City hotel. His worthless companions steal a car for a good time, but kill a child and wreck the car. Clyde flees to Chicago where he meets his wealthy uncle who owns a collar factory in Lycurgus, New York. Clyde goes to Lycurgus, begins working in his uncle's factory and eventually is given charge of the stamping room where he is placed over twenty-five girls. Though it is strictly against company rules for a person in his position to associate with the girls under him, Clyde falls in love with Roberta Allen, a warm-blooded country girl with whom he has frequent meetings and by whom he is eventually given unrestricted privileges.

In the meantime Clyde has had opportunity to observe something about the social structure in the city of Lycurgus. He discovers that his uncle, by virtue of

his position, occupies such a high social status that for his poor nephew, he is practically unapproachable. Clyde observes what goes on in the neighborhood in which his uncle lives, he reads about the parties and trips of the socially elite, and he envies the wealthy. Here again he sees the life of which he wants to be a part, the life which he observed while he served as a bell-hop in Kansas City. By a strange set of circumstances Clyde gets acquainted with Sondra Finchley, a member of the social set, and he begins to believe that he might actually become part of that exciting way of life. Eventually, he even has hopes that Sondra may marry him and that her father will take him into the family business.

The attachment with Sondra immediately changes Clyde's relationship with Roberta. He believes that Sondra could be the means by which he might be all that he had dreamed of becoming. Roberta, coming from a poor family, cannot help him at all to attain wealth and social status.

To complicate matters, however, Roberta finds herself pregnant by Clyde and begs him to marry her. Clyde tries to discover a way by which to bring about an abortion but fails to find a drug or a doctor to help. Clyde asks Roberta to go home to her family for a month, after which he will marry her. During this month he and Sondra make plans to run away and get married in the fall. Roberta,

however, writes that if Clyde does not come to her rescue promptly, she will return and expose him.

Clyde happens to read a news item about a young couple who were apparently both drowned on a New York lake while boating. The body of the girl was found, but not that of her escort. Though he is not sure he can find the courage to do it, Clyde dwells on the thought of putting Roberta out of the way in the same fashion. He agrees to meet Roberta at Big Bittern Lake as a sort of prelude to the marriage. While they are in a very secluded part of the lake, Roberta suddenly senses that all is not well and rises, approaching Clyde. Clyde, who finds himself unable even to tell her that he is in love with Sondra, attempts to free himself of her touch, but in the process strikes her with his camera. Then "half to assist or recapture her and half to apologize for the unintended blow" he leans forward and capsizes the boat. As they go over, the boat strikes Roberta's head. Clyde, who might have rescued her since he was a strong swimmer, swims away from the drowning girl. Soon after, he is easily arrested by Orville Mason, the District Attorney.

The murder trial, fully detailed in over 100,000 words, shows Clyde as a mere pawn in the hands of attorneys, sheriffs, prosecutors, judges and juries. His uncle procures good legal advice for him, but no fair trial is possible. There is distortion of truth on both sides.

Politics become an issue. Hairs from Roberta's head are planted on the camera without the knowledge of the prosecutor himself, but he uses them as evidence against Clyde. Then the supposed facts of the case are presented to a highly-prejudiced jury which is made up of people completely unfitted for judging a matter of this sort. Clyde is condemned to the electric chair.

An analysis of the causes for Clyde's tragic end shows that Dreiser believes environmental factors to be the primary culprits.

Among the important environmental factors leading to Clyde's eventual destruction is the appeal of the material. It was not Clyde's fault that he was born of poor parents. The reader is always aware, however, that because of the poverty of his childhood, Clyde is impressed to such a degree by the material wealth around him that he makes unwise decisions. His first real contact with the world of wealth and pleasure came with his job at the Green-Davidson Hotel in Kansas City. He was deeply impressed with the luxury which the lobby of the hotel suggested. Even more arresting, however, was the gay life which he observed from time to time, a life of which he desperately wanted to be a part. Once, while taking an order for some drinks on his first day of work he noticed a group of young people in one of the rooms. As Dreiser describes it,

"Clyde stared, even while pretending not to. And in his state of mind, this sight was like looking through the gates of Paradise."[1] Again as he observed the people coming and going, Clyde saw them as

> imposing men and women, young men and girls all so fashionably dressed, all so ruddy and contented looking . . . Such grandeur. This, then, most certainly was what it meant to be rich . . . It meant that you did what you pleased.[2]

As one reads these passages, he is promptly impressed with the temptation value of such an environment. Clyde is impressed to the point of losing his balance completely.

When Clyde later moves to Lycurgus, the appeal of wealth and luxury again is an immediate and noticeable major influence upon him. Even before he makes his first contact with his uncle after his arrival, he walks about the streets of the city and sees the imposing residences of the wealthy along a tree-shaded thoroughfare. In the nearby shops he notices "displays of the things that might well interest people of means and comfort--motors, jewels, lingerie, leather goods and furniture."[3]

Clyde's impression of the advantage which wealth offers was heightened when he was first invited to the home of his rich uncle. His invitation to dinner there was

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[1]Theodore Dreiser, An American Tragedy (New York: The New American Library, Inc., n.d.), p. 46.

[2]Ibid., p. 47.

[3]Ibid., p. 178.

merely a matter of required courtesy on the part of his uncle, but for Clyde the experience was unforgettable, especially his observations upon the life of the young people in such families. Dreiser relates that Clyde looked at it this way:

> Clyde . . . was thinking what an easy, delightful world this must be--this local society. For here they were without a care, apparently, between any of them. All their talk was of houses being built, horses they were riding, friends they had met, places they were going to, things they were going to do. And there was Gilbert, who had left only a little while before--motoring somewhere with a group of young men. And Bella, his cousin, trifling around with these girls in the beautiful homes of this street, while he was shunted away in a small third-floor room at Mrs. Cuppy's with no place to go. And with only fifteen dollars a week to live on. And in the morning he would be working in the basement again, while these girls were rising to more pleasure.[4]

That was the environment which called to Clyde with its enticing voice. Dreiser permits Roberta herself to sense that this is the enemy which has pulled Clyde away from her when she notices a girl from the social set talking to Clyde on a city street. To now-pregnant and desperate Roberta, rich Arabella Stark

> appeared to be little less than an epitome of all the security, luxury and freedom from responsibility which so enticed and hence caused Clyde to delay and be as indifferent as possible to the dire state which confronted her.[5]

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[4] Ibid., p. 223.

[5] Ibid., p. 426.

Dreiser permits Roberta to analyze the situation correctly. Although she does not know the lengths to which Clyde will eventually go to become free of her, she clearly sees that she can offer Clyde none of the things which attract him so strongly. Clyde eventually plots the murder of Roberta because she is a threat to the realization of his dreams. Clyde casts his lot with a girl who presumably can offer him the life which he saw in the hotel rooms and lobby of the Green-Davidson Hotel and in the homes of the wealthy people of Lycurgus.

Dreiser also emphasizes the ignorance which his early upbringing had imposed upon Clyde. The latter did not know how to move in the world in such a way as to gain the advantages. He had never learned how to find the people who might be able best to help him in his difficulties. Dreiser lets the reader know that other people, from more favorable environments, would have known how to act under the circumstances. This is especially apparent in connection with Roberta's pregnancy. Dreiser explains

> that no time, owing to the inexperience of Clyde, as well as Roberta, had there been any adequate understanding or use of more than the simplest, and for the most part unsatisfactory, contraceptive devices.[6]

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[6] Ibid., p. 368.

The suggestion is clearly that, if Clyde had been privileged to learn the important facts of life from a more favorable environment, Roberta would not have become pregnant and the eventual tragedy might have been averted.

Once Clyde knows that Roberta is pregnant, he continues to act in his ineffectual manner. He goes to drug stores in neighboring cities to find something which Roberta may take in order to abort the child. He knows no druggist in whom he can confide. He has no friends of influence who can direct him to a doctor who might illegally perform an abortion. Clyde is trapped because his environment has withheld from him that which he now needs so desperately to know. Dreiser informs the reader of "the enormous handicaps imposed by ignorance, youth, poverty and fear" when he relates that Clyde "did not even know the meaning of the word 'midwife,' or the nature of the services performed by her" although there were three right in Lycurgus.[7]

The evils of the social class structure come in for their share of criticism by Dreiser. To him it is clear that Clyde's problems were multiplied because there was no free movement among persons of differing social status. Clyde's uncle and cousin represent the thinking which Dreiser finds so offensive at the time when they decide to give Clyde his first lowly job with the company:

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[7] Ibid., p. 384.

> As both saw it, there had to be higher and higher social orders to which the lower classes could aspire. One had to have castes. One was foolishly interfering with and disrupting necessary and unavoidable social standards when one tried to unduly favor anyone--even a relative.[8]

Not only are Clyde's job and salary determined by the social class in which he finds himself, but his living quarters are likewise selected for him by a similar logic. Cousin Gilbert's problem in selecting Clyde's room was

> that . . . Clyde was a full cousin and . . . it wouldn't do to have him live just anywhere. At the same time, he was greatly concerned lest Clyde get the notion that the family was very much concerned as to where he did live . . .[9]

When Clyde begins his work at the collar factory of his uncle, he begins to notice that he is in an ambiguous position indeed. Although his first job is menial, some of his superiors in the factory show him deference because he is a Griffiths, a relative of the head of the company.[10] He notices, too, that at a church social which he attends with a friend, the girls pay more attention to him because he is a Griffiths even though he has nothing of the status of the Lycurgus Griffiths family.[11]

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[8] Ibid., p. 176.

[9] Ibid., p. 182.

[10] Ibid., p. 186.

[11] Ibid., p. 205.

The details in the previous paragraph only illustrate the class consciousness of the city in which Clyde found himself. The real problem was, of course, that Clyde wanted to move into the social life which was closed to him. He read of the parties and trips of the young people of the social set and dreamed of becoming part of that supposedly happy existence. Even though he had the love and attention of Roberta, his later status as her supervisor at the plant prevented him from seeing her publicly and, at the same time, his lower social status prevented him from making any first approach in Sondra Finchley's direction. Dreiser clearly presents the dilemma into which social status places Clyde. He cannot openly move down to one girl he finds attractive and he cannot move up to another girl he finds attractive. In each case it is the same environmental evil.

Clyde eventually decides that he wants to move up the social ladder rather than down to Roberta's level. Dreiser devotes many pages to the manner in which Clyde manages to inch his way into the favor of Sondra. Only because his name is Griffiths and because Sondra wishes to get revenge on Gilbert, Clyde's cousin, does Clyde succeed in making even an initial move into the circle of Sondra and her friends. But, once having made some progress along the way toward this higher status, Clyde now begins to consider the absolute necessity of cutting completely his ties with

pregnant Roberta. His entire behavior seems to be determined by the snare in which he finds himself. Because of the strength of outside forces he must consider even the murder of Roberta.

Further contrast between what has already been said and what remains to be said about Lord of the Flies is found in Dreiser's manner of emphasizing that both Clyde and Roberta are forced into their actions although they resist strenuously. Clyde and Roberta have a moral strength which tells them what is right. But, according to Dreiser, even moral strength is not enough to resist the forces of environment.

It is the environmental evils about which we have already spoken which prevent Clyde from openly associating with Roberta in his early months at the collar factory. Where is Clyde to meet her privately? His only answer is her apartment with its convenient private entrance. Thus, the scene is set for the temptation. Roberta, a girl of religious convictions who knows that it is improper to have Clyde as her guest under these circumstances, resists the initial suggestion that her room is the best meeting place.[12] With considerable reluctance and a definite feeling of guilt she finally relents and permits Clyde to visit her there.

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[12] Ibid., p. 289.

As Clyde later contemplates a way by which to rid himself of Roberta, he feels revulsion at the thought that he could consider murder:

> But, no! no! The mere thought of an accident such as that in connection with her, however much he might wish to be rid of her--was sinful, dark and terrible! He must not let his mind run on any such things for even a moment. It was too wrong--too vile--too terrible! Oh, dreadful thought! To think it should have come to him! And at this time of all times--when she was demanding that he go away with her!
>
> Death!
>
> Murder!
>
> The murder of Roberta!
>
> But to escape her of course--this unreasonable, unshakable, unchangeable demand of hers! Already he was quite cold, quite damp--with the mere thought of it. And now--when--when--! But he must not think of that! The death of that unborn child, too!
>
> But how could anyone even think of doing any such thing with calculation--deliberately? . . . He was not that kind of a person, whatever else he was. He was not. He was not. He was not . . . Decent, sane people did not think of such things. And so he would not either--from this hour on.[13]

Clyde may fight the temptation to put Roberta out of the way by violent means but, although he is finally unable to perform the act, he is nevertheless carried along relentlessly step by step toward the circumstances which will make her death a reality and his guilt a probability. The pressures upon him are so strong that he cannot withstand them.

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[13] Ibid., p. 441.

Dreiser's emphatic reiteration of his theme is felt with full force in the lengthy final book of the novel. This is the portion which deals with Clyde's trial for the murder of Roberta. Prior to and during the trial Clyde appears to be absolutely nothing more than a pawn in the hands of people who have little or no interest in him, but considerable interest in furthering their own careers through their roles in the trial. Fred Heit, the coroner who examines Roberta's body, cooperates closely with the District Attorney because he is seeking a county judgeship in the next election. The District Attorney, Orville E. Mason, also has political aspirations and hopes to benefit from a conviction for Clyde. There is no suggestion that he should ever be concerned about any possible rights for Clyde. Further, Heit and Mason are Republicans opposed by defense lawyers Belknap and Jephson, who are Democrats. Thus Clyde's case immediately takes on political implications for the community, especially for the parties who are closely associated with the trial.

Falsification enters into the trial proceedings on both sides. One of the men who found the camera which accidentally struck Roberta in the face just before her death, took two hairs from Roberta's head while the body was still at the morgue and planted them on the camera.

The coroner and the prosecutor who had carefully examined the camera previously, immediately consider these hairs further irrefutable evidence against Clyde and decide to use them as part of the trial strategy. On the other side, the defense attorneys decide that the truth of what happened is too unbelievable to be usable and they coach Clyde in a fabricated account of the events which they consider more acceptable. In the middle of all these machinations is the tragic protagonist of the story whose life depends on what the others say and do. The truth of the matter appears to be of relatively little concern to anyone.

Once the trial is over and the death sentence has been pronounced, we continue to see Clyde as the helpless victim of powerful environmental forces. His deeply religious mother expends much energy and considerable sums of money to make an appeal possible. In spite of her efforts there is just too much inertia in the system of justice to make success possible. Mrs. Griffiths is fighting impossible odds. In the death house, too, one gets the impression that Clyde is moving irrevocably toward his day of execution. One by one, the other men on death row march down the hall to be electrocuted. As his mother's efforts fail and as the governor fails to pardon Clyde or to stay the execution, the reader senses that the machinery of justice is simply too ponderous to be halted at this late

hour. The reader feels the pressure of the forces through Dreiser's choice of words for that portion of the story. The trip to the chair is narrated in these words:

> And his feet were walking, but automatically, it seemed. And he was conscious of that familiar shuffle--shuffle--as they pushed him on and on toward that door. Now it was here; now it was being opened. There it was--at last--the chair he had so often seen in his dreams--that he so dreaded--to which he was now compelled to go. He was being pushed toward that--into that--on--on--through the door which was now open--to receive him--but which was as quickly closed again on all the earthly life he had ever known.[14]

Dreiser also suggests that the Christian faith as professed by Clyde's parents is in the last analysis unable to help. Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths offer many prayers for Clyde. Just as their religion failed to make their son value the spiritual over the material, so now their prayers to a supposedly almighty heavenly Father cannot hold back the massive environmental forces which unjustly bring his early end. Even the services of a sincere minister, Rev. McMillan, achieve questionable results. The reader is not certain, after it is all over, that Clyde goes to the electric chair as a penitent, believing Christian.

The helplessness of the situation is implied by an additional feature at the very end of the long novel. As he describes the current activity of Clyde's parents,

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[14] Ibid., p. 810.

Dreiser uses words almost identical to those originally used at the beginning of Book One. Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths continue to carry on their street mission work, still wondering where their next meal will come from. However, whereas the story began with Clyde as a young boy accompanying his parents in these embarrasing activities, we now discover that a substitute for Clyde has appeared in the person of an illegitimate son of the Griffiths' daughter, Esta. Everything else is quite the same. The forces which worked against Clyde are completely prepared to work against little Russell. Everything about the mood suggests that the story of Russell will be another American tragedy.

Golding's Enemy Within

The Dreiser emphasis upon man's environment as the enemy is directly contradicted by Golding who very powerfully emphasizes that the enemy is within man. A major portion of Lord of the Flies is concerned with the boys' mistaken idea that some fearful beast whom they might be able to kill is roaming their island to harm them. According to Golding, it is lamentable ignorance on the part of the boys that they imagine the beast to be some outside force. Golding makes much of the mistaken idea of the boys to impress upon the reader that society, reason and education are not the enemies, but that the enemy is a defect in man's nature.

Golding begins early to show the boys in their mistaken analysis of the problem. The problem shows itself in the fear which is noticed shortly after their arrival. Just after Ralph, Jack and Simon return from their exploration trip over the island and report back that it is a good island which will provide them with what they need for survival, a somewhat upsetting note is inserted into the assembly when a crying boy, barely able to speak, asks what is to be done about the "snake-thing."[15] Gradually, the little fellow changes his story somewhat and begins to call it a "beastie" which came in the dark and "turned into them things like ropes in the trees and hung in the branches."[16]

Golding's symbolism at this point is already sufficient to bring out something of his meaning. "Snake-thing" and later "snake" certainly have a way of making the reader think of the Garden of Eden and what happened there. The picture of the beastie turning into things like ropes in the trees, and hanging in the branches, brings to mind many an artist's conception of the temptation of Eve in the Garden with the snake speaking to her as he hangs from a branch. Thus, the beastie or snake-thing immediately takes on serious moral implications.

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[15]William Golding, Lord of the Flies (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1954), p. 31.

[16]Ibid., p. 32.

Not only are the small boys afraid, but Jack and Ralph themselves seriously discuss the beast or snake in a later conversation. They first hesitate to bring the subject out into the open. Both boys try to give the impression that fear of a beast is something that might bother silly little boys who do not think things through logically. Jack, however, eventually reveals the actuality of his own fear as he flushes and says:

> There's nothing in it of course. Just a feeling. But you can feel as if you're not hunting, but--being hunted, as if something's behind you all the time in the jungle.[17]

With this comment Jack attempts to play down his own fears even as he reveals them. He suggests that this strange feeling is somewhat helpful because with it he is able to somewhat understand the feelings of the other boys.[18]

The subject of the fear of a beast comes up again at the attempted major assembly which Ralph calls in order to get everything straightened out once and for all. He not only fails to discuss the matters on his carefully prepared agenda, but the subject of the beast and the fear of it come up spontaneously from the younger boys. The subject tends to bring chaos to the assembly, but Golding permits Simon, his Christ-figure in the story, to begin to suggest the truth about the beast.

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[17] Ibid., p. 47.

[18] Ibid., p. 48.

Ralph manages to bring order back to the meeting by blowing the conch, and Simon suddenly lays his hands on the conch to indicate his desire to speak. "'Maybe,' he said hesitantly, 'maybe there is a beast.'"[19] Piggy and Ralph are particularly vocal as they express their disbelief. They cannot imagine that Simon would believe in a beast at all. Simon, however, explains further that he really means "it's only us,"[20] but his efforts to explain that statement are met with riotous laughter. The reader, however, begins to see the point more clearly. Golding believes that the serpent, the snake, the devil, the defect, is in man himself. The beast to fear is the beast within man.

The fear becomes such a serious thing that Ralph, Jack and Roger decide to investigate the rumor of a beast on top of the mountain. They go at night and are paralyzed with fear when they get a glimpse of nothing more than a dead parachutist who has been deposited on the mountain after a dog fight high above the island. To these older boys, the thing before them seemed to be something like a great ape. As they described it to the other boys, they spoke of the teeth and the big black eyes of the beast. They also questioned their ability to fight a beast of this

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[19] Ibid., p. 82.

[20] Ibid.

type.[21] Through these episodes Golding is developing his idea of the mistake which is made by man. Just as the boys feared something other than the real beast, so man tends to fear something other than the real enemy.

The boys' fear takes on such proportions that they actually worship the beast in a pagan manner reminiscent of the savage tribes of the jungle. Having sadistically killed the great sow, they cut off her head and place it on the sharpened end of a stick which has been jammed into the crack of a rock. As all the boys stand there deeply impressed, Jack announces loudly: "'This head is for the beast. It's a gift.'"[22] Thus, Golding announces that the boys are living in superstitious ignorance. They now worship and serve a beast whom they do not really know, one which does not even exist. There is a real beast which causes their troubles, but in failing to recognize the real beast they are as benighted and pitiable as any heathen tribe anywhere.

Golding permits Simon to identify the beast for the reader. Simon's position among the boys is worth noticing. Although the boys never accept his statements, he is, like Christ, a bringer of truth and light to all who accept his message. Simon is connected with this prophetic role by a

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[21] Ibid., pp. 112-114.

[22] Ibid., p. 127.

variety of analogies. Simon goes into trance-like faints,[23] he makes prophetic announcements,[24] he goes to a quiet church-like place for meditation,[25] carpenter-like he helps in the building of shelters,[26] he helps to get and distribute food for the small boys until he satisfies them,[27] he has conversations with the pig's head in a Gethsemane-like encounter,[28] he is killed by the boys when he comes to tell them the truth,[29] and he experiences a kind of glorification and resurrection after his death.[30] By permitting Simon, a Christ-figure to tell the truth about the real enemy of the boys and of mankind, Golding is attempting to put the truth into the mouth of one who should be respected and believed.

Just as the witness to the truth is clearly identifiable as a Christ-figure, so the enemy is clearly identified as a devil. The pig's head is called "lord of the flies" because of the distinctive flies which crowd

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[23] Ibid., pp. 17, 127-133.

[24] Ibid., p. 103.

[25] Ibid., pp. 50-52.

[26] Ibid., pp. 73-74.

[27] Ibid., p. 50.

[28] Ibid., pp. 132-133.

[29] Ibid., p. 141.

[30] Ibid., p. 142.

around the decaying obscenity. "Lord of the flies" happens to be the English equivalent of the New Testament word "Beelzebub," a term for the devil.[31] As Simon views the pig's head during his trance, he imagines it calling him a silly little boy who should "run off and play with the others" lest they think him "batty." The pig's head (Beelzebub) continues the "conversation" with these revelatory statements:

> "What are you doing out here all alone? Aren't you afraid of me?"
>
> Simon shook.
>
> "There isn't anyone to help you. Only me. And I'm the Beast."
>
> Simon's mouth labored, brought forth audible words.
>
> "Pig's head on a stick."
>
> "Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill" said the head. For a moment or two the forest and all the other dimly appreciated places echoed with the parody of laughter. "You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are?" . . .
>
> "Get back to the others and we'll forget the whole thing." . . .
>
> "You know perfectly well you'll only meet me down there--so don't try to escape!" . . .[32]

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[31] E. L. Epstein, "Notes on Lord of the Flies," in Golding, p. 190.

[32] Golding, pp. 132-133.

The most significant feature of the above passage, for purposes of a contrast with An American Tragedy, is that part which states that the beast is part of Simon. This mysterious Beast which the boys imagine to be some fierce outside force is actually a part of Simon and the other boys. Thus, they are mistaken in looking for the beast someplace else. The lord of the flies, that is, the devil, says, "I'm the Beast." The real enemy is not the society which produced them, the education which they had, or the laws under which they have attempted to live, but the devil himself. And he is "close, close, close!" The contrast between Dreiser and Golding could hardly be more clear. Golding speaks of environmental forces pressing in upon the boys to make them do their evil. Things are as bad as they are because the beast is part of every man. The defects of society are caused by the defects of human nature.

Golding does not stop with only one statement of his position. The reader notices that he also attempts to connect the evil with human excrement in such a way as to suggest that the evil exists inside man and is the product of his activity. The revelation of this idea occurs in the following passage with Simon as the instigator of the idea:

> "Maybe," he [Simon] said hesitantly, "maybe there is a beast."
>
> The assembly cried out savagely and Ralph stood up in amazement.
>
> "You, Simon? You believe this?"

"I don't know, said Simon. His heartbeats were choking him. "But . . ."

The storm broke.

"Sit down!"

"Shut up!"

"Take the conch!"

"Sod you!"

"Shut up!"

Ralph shouted.

"Hear him! He's got the conch!"

"What I mean is . . . maybe it's only us."

"Nuts!"

That was from Piggy, shocked out of decorum. Simon went on.

"We could be sort of . . ."

Simon became inarticulate in his effort to express mankind's essential illness. Inspiration came to him.

"What's the dirtiest thing there is?"

As an answer Jack dropped into the uncomprehending silence that followed it the one crude expressive syllable. Release was immense. Those littluns who had climbed on the twister fell off again and did not mind. The hunters were screaming with delight.[33]

It is quite clear that Golding is discussing the very fundamental theme of the novel in the passage just quoted. To begin with, there is the subject of the beast. Secondly,

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[33] Ibid., p. 82.

there is Simon's suggestion that the beast is only the boys themselves. Finally, there is Simon's attempt to "express mankind's essential illness." The fact that Jack jokingly, but correctly, expresses it in the common four-letter word for dung only helps to make Golding's symbolism perfectly clear. There is an emphasis on dung throughout Lord of the Flies. We notice that the hunters follow the "droppings" of the pigs in their search for food and adventure. On one occasion when Roger called Jack's attention to pig droppings that steamed, "Jack bent down to them as though he loved them."[34] Further, the title "lord of the flies" itself can be translated not only as Beelzebub or devil, but also as "lord of dung." The beast, then, for all that it symbolizes the evil nature in man, is symbolized in turn by animal or human excrement. Thus, we see the boys loving the dung and, in serving the beast and offering sacrifice to it, actually worshipping dung itself.[35]

The use of dung as a symbol for man's essential illness again makes our contrast with Dreiser more emphatic. Hardly any other symbol could be as clear in suggesting that something dirty comes forth from the boys themselves, that is, right from their very being. Thus, just as the boys were

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[34] Ibid., p. 103.

[35] John M. Egan, "Golding's View of Man," America, CVIII (January 26, 1963), 140-141.

careless about using the appointed place as a toilet area and thus polluted the whole island, so their actions also polluted the society in which they found themselves.

To say that something from inside the boys polluted the society in which they lived is completely different from everything that Dreiser says in An American Tragedy. In Dreiser, society itself is the culprit. Clyde would not have the problems he has if it were not for the difficult position into which society has placed him. Clyde's natural inclinations are never considered inherently evil by Dreiser. Clyde likes the things money can buy, he likes pretty girls, he wants to rise on the social ladder and he wants to escape an unjust sentence. Clyde is treated sympathetically in all these desires of his. He has not polluted the earth. He has not made society what it is. But, according to Dreiser, society is the evil which forces Clyde to get into trouble when he tries to live a normal life. Powerful environmental forces press in upon him, make his position untenable, and push him relentlessly toward that electric chair. Clearly, Dreiser and Golding express views which are as different as day and night.

CONCLUSION

During the course of the previous chapters we have repeatedly used the term "man's innate tendency toward evil." We have observed references to this feature of man's nature in the writings of philosophers, poets and novelists. We have traced Golding's emphasis upon this characteristic of the boys in Lord of the Flies. We have contrasted Golding's theme with that of nineteenth-century romanticist R. M. Ballantyne in The Coral Island. Finally we have shown the striking contrast between the philosophy of Golding and that of Theodore Dreiser who, in his An American Tragedy, makes perfectly clear his belief that man's great enemy is the society in which he lives. What then is Golding's doctrine of man? We believe that Golding's doctrine of man is, in part, the biblical doctrine of original sin.

Admittedly, Golding does not use the term "original sin." Had he done so, critics would undoubtedly have called him unbearably "preachy" or "didactic." However, whether Golding actually uses the term or not, we feel perfectly justified in associating Golding with that doctrine. We refer again to the description of original sin which is found in the "Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord":

> Original sin . . . replaces the lost image of God in man with a deep, wicked, abominable, bottomless, inscrutable, and inexpressible corruption of his entire nature in all its powers, especially in the highest and foremost powers of the soul in mind, heart and will. As a result, since the Fall man inherits an inborn wicked stamp, an interior uncleanness of the heart and evil desires and inclinations.[1]

One has only to think of a few major events in Lord of the Flies to see the appropriateness of these words when applied to the novel. Without a doubt the boys are depicted as having an "inborn wicked stamp" and "interior uncleanness of the heart." The Formula of Concord's emphasis on the mysterious nature of the problem through the use of words like "bottomless, inscrutable, and inexpressible" also fits very well with elements in the novel. The boys on several occasions express their perplexity when it seems that everything "goes bad." The boys know that their fear is quite real. But, what is this mysterious beast which causes their problems and makes things go bad? As we have illustrated, the boys make an unfortunate mistake in attempting to find the difficulty in something outside themselves. Golding points to man's general tendency to search for the problem in the wrong places when he makes Lord of the Flies such a striking contrast to The Coral Island and to a large

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[1]"Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration I," in The Book of Concord, edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 510.

number of modern novels which castigate elements in the environment for their responsibility in bringing man to grief.

Various critics feel that it is appropriate to call Golding's emphasis upon man's innate tendency toward evil a statement of the doctrine of original sin. Edmund Fuller considers original sin a more appropriate term than the id:

> Golding is saying that the young are not better than the old. The seeds of our general behavior are in them already.
>
> Those who have heard of "original sin" (all too few) recognize the operation of it here. Those who have heard of the id (even fewer) see it in action. In his notes on Lord of the Flies, E. L. Epstein's emphasis on the id leaves gaps that the concept of original sin more fully fills.[2]

Peter Green is another critic who comes to the conclusion that what Golding is saying amounts to almost the same thing as the doctrine of original sin. He first points out that Golding is not primarily concerned about man's relationship with his fellow human beings, but rather about man's relationship with God. He goes on to say that

> it is a moral axiom of Golding's that Man, and Man alone, introduced evil into the world: a

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[2]Edmund Fuller, "Behind the Vogue, A Rigorous Understanding," New York Herald Tribune Weekly Book Review, XXXIX (November 4, 1962), 3.

> view which is hardly separable from the doctrine of Original Sin.[3]

As C. B. Cox analyzes Lord of the Flies, he also uses the term "original sin," noting that "the growth of savagery in the boys demonstrated the power of original sin."[4] E. M. Forster, who wrote the Introduction to the 1962 Coward-McCann edition of Lord of the Flies, says,

> He [Golding] believes in the Fall of Man and perhaps in Original Sin. Or if he does not exactly believe, he fears . . .[5]

The Time reviewer of Golding's most recent novel, The Pyramid, commented as follows on the contrast between Golding and Salinger (Salinger is the author of Catcher in the Rye, another novel which has been popular on college campuses):

> Each [Salinger and Golding] gave fictional form to contrary views of life--Salinger maintaining that youth, innocence and grace are corrupted by the cruel conventions of a corrupt society, and Golding demonstrating in fable after fable that man's heart inherits the evil of his ancestry. Wrote Golding in an essay: "Man produces evil as a bee produces honey."
>
> Golding's view of original sin as an anthropological fact is one that modern man would like to reject but that five decades of history have forced back into the forefront of the mind.[6]

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[3]Peter Green, "The World of William Golding," Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Literature, XXXII (1963), 40.

[4]C. B. Cox, "Lord of the Flies," Critical Quarterly, II (Summer 1960), 112.

[5]E. M. Forster, "Introduction," William Golding, Lord of the Flies (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1962), p. xii.

[6]"Human Geometry," Time, XC (October 13, 1967), 113.

Even as he acknowledges Golding's treatment of original sin, the Time reviewer above shows his awareness of modern man's natural tendency to reject the doctrine. Other writers hint at the same thing; they even suggest that the book is not popular with some people for the very reason that they do not like its theme. William R. Mueller, writing for The Christian Century, notes that

> those who affirm that man is basically and inherently good--and becoming better--may simply find the novel a monstrous perpetuation of falsehood.[7]

He further holds that it may be Golding's main offense

> that he profanes what many men hold most precious; belief that the human being is essentially good and the child essentially innocent.[8]

Golding's statement, referred to in Chapter I,[9] in which he affirms that the war changed his attitude about human nature certainly supports what we are saying here. Golding was distressed to find many people ignorantly following the philosophy of Rousseau. He must have intended Lord of the Flies (as well as some later writings) to be a means of enlightenment for man. Golding commented on this when he was asked whether the boys in his story are innocent of themselves or innocent of evil from without:

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[7]William R. Mueller, "An Old Story Well Told," The Christian Century, LXXX (October 2, 1963), 1204.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Supra, p. 24.

> A.: They're innocent of their own natures. They don't understand their own natures and therefore, when they get to this island, they can look forward to a bright future, because they don't understand the things that threaten it. This seems to me to be innocence; I suppose you could almost equate it with ignorance of man's basic attributes, and this is inevitable with anything which is born and begins to grow up. Obviously, it doesn't understand its own nature.
>
> Q.: Then it's more a combination of innocence of their own and other's attributes?
>
> A.: Yes. I think quite simply, that they don't understand what beasts there are in the human psyche which have to be curbed.[10]

The "beasts" in the human psyche which Golding wants understood can only be what in theological terms we call original sin. Golding intends to enlighten man on the existence of original sin.

Golding wants the reader to apply to himself everything that has been exposed in the case of the boys:

> First I originally conceived the book as a change from innocence--which is ignorance of self--to a tragic knowledge. If my boys hadn't been saved, I couldn't--at that time, at any rate--see any way of getting some one of them to the point where he would have this tragic knowledge. He would be dead. If I'd gone on to the death of Ralph, Ralph would never have had time to understand what had happened to him, so I deliberately saved him so that at this moment he could see--look back over

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[10]James Keating, "Interview with William Golding," in William Golding, Lord of the Flies, Casebook Edition, edited by James R. Baker and Arthur P. Ziegler, Jr. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1954), p. 190.

> what's happened--and weep for the end of innocence and the darkness of man's heart, which was what I was getting at. That's half the answer.
>
> The other answer is that if, as in that quotation there, the book is supposed to show how the defects of society are directly traceable to the defects of the individual, then you rub that awful moral lesson in much more by having an ignorant, innocent adult come to the island and say, "Oh, you've been having fun, haven't you?" Then in the last sentence you let him turn away and look at the cruiser, and of course the cruiser, the adult thing, is doing exactly what the hunters do--that is, hunting down and destroying the enemy--so that you say, in effect, to your reader, "Look, you think you've been reading about little boys, but in fact you've been reading about the distresses and the wickedness of humanity."[11]

Everything, then, that has been said by Golding himself in private statements and in interviews tends to support what we have found in the novel directly and by contrast: Golding believes that an innate tendency toward evil is to be found in man's nature and he wrote Lord of the Flies in a conscious effort to make man aware of that fact. Further, although he does not use the term, it is apparent that what he describes is, for all practical purposes, the biblical doctrine of original sin.

There is, however, one additional point. The doctrine of original sin is not the complete doctrine of man in the biblical sense. Chapter I illustrated that the Bible teaches both man's natural inclination toward evil and the Christian's regeneration by the power of the Holy

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[11] Ibid., p. 194.

Spirit. Thus, by God's indwelling, man's naturally evil inclinations are thwarted and man performs acts which are God-like. A complete doctrine of man will include both the doctrine of original sin and the doctrine of regeneration.

Golding makes no effort to go beyond the first part of the doctrine of man. As we also indicated in Chapter I, the result of an emphasis only upon man's tendency toward evil, will ordinarily be a rather depressing piece of writing.

Since Golding presents only the evil in man, the average reader comes away from Lord of the Flies viewing the future of man pessimistically. If, however, a reader, previously ignorant of his nature and now convinced of his innate tendency toward evil, cries out for help because he sees his inability to rescue himself, such a person may under those circumstances be unusually receptive to the plan of salvation which God offers in the work of Jesus Christ. If that reader then experiences the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and thus finds the power which overcomes the old nature, we may say that Golding has performed a valuable service with even a partial treatment of the biblical doctrine of man.

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