

REFERENCE NOTES: LORD OF THE FLIES

WILLIAM GOLDING

William Gerald Golding, who began his career as a novelist quite late in his life, was a poet at beginning. Later his love for novels bloomed and prose became poetic in expression. Within the span of twenty years of his writings, Golding became the recipient of Nobel Prize for literature in 1983. Since his childhood, he developed his love for words. He used to play with words, which ultimately became the power for him to convey his ideas. He was convinced the novel was the best medium of communication.

It was the period of post World War II when Golding started writing. The end of world was two brought about the end of certainties and beliefs, faithlessness, treachery, debased society, and ruined the fabric of human mind. The explosion of atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought about the end to the war, but it gave an impetus to another war in minds of people. The very act of bombardment reveals sufficiently the evil motives, not of the uneducated masses but the educated elites of the civilized society. It was really ‘a modern Apocalypse’.

Golding lived through these years of turmoil. He saw the whole truth of Nazism and Stalinists Russia of 1940's and early 1950's. He belongs to the generation that had its roots in disillusionment which prevailed after World War II. The war brought about a total change in our outlook towards life: “nothing was as it was before”. Malcom Bradbury comments on the changes that came after war the end of war. The end of war brought about:

New forms of society, new balances of power and new

Patterns of politics, it also brought new functions, new

Difficulties, new species of exploration for the arts.

Golding started writing in the atmosphere of disillusion and disenchantment. Assessing Golding's contribution to the development of the English novel of the twentieth century, Walter Sullivan observes:

*..besides Golding all other post-war English novelists
Seems to participate in certain sameness.. Golding a man
Of spirit, stand firmly in the middle of an old tradition and
Diligently works against the present grin.*

Golding is different from his contemporaries not only in handling the form of genre but content too! Bernard S. Oldsey and Stanley weintraub observe that Golding does not follow any school but 'he is to found one'.

Golding is a religious writer; but his religion is not based of dogmas and doctrines. His religion is based on man his relation to the society and God. He tries to probe deeper into the reasons of the fall of man and suggests some easy to 'regain the paradise'. He expects the world o be formed with full understanding of human beings. He expects saints to walk on earth and bring with them peace of mind, faith among the minds of people. Philip Redpath comments on the art of Golding and says:

*“Golding's art is an art of discovery: but not the art that,
Seeks to explain. The discovery it makes is that the universe,
Is inexplicable and cannot ne wholly described in words,
And yet words are all the novelist has with which to describe
The universe”*

The Swedish Academy praised Golding and his art in the citation as:

*“..a perspicuity of realistic narrative art and a diversity
And universality of myth illuminates the human condition
in the world to-do”*

Further in the citation it is observed that:

*“His (Golding’s) fabled world is tragic and pathetic, yet
Not overwhelming and depressing.”*

Golding is a visionary novelist, and his vision may be characterized as ‘apocalyptic vision’. Apocalypse means ‘foretelling the destruction of the wicked, the overthrow of Satan and establishment of Christ’s kingdom on earth’. Apocalyptic vision is an expression of the dark forebodings like “the end of the world of is nigh”, “the end of an epoch”, death, destruction, sin, and the eschatological imagery.

Golding suggests that man is responsible for his fall. He is responsible for his fallen state and his mismanagement of his affairs on the earth throughout history and which is a cause of his certain doom. Golding is preoccupied with apocalyptic themes such as widespread death in war, personal tragedy, pride, monocentricism, ego, lust and then a possibility of revival of faith.

The ‘hunters’ in *Lord of the Flies* Kill Simon and Piggy and pursue to kill Ralph. Simon and Piggy represent spiritualism and rationalism in the society respectively. By killing those two pillars, the ‘hunters’ paved their way towards hell- full of horrors, fears and distraction. Their dream of creating an orderly society comes to an end. The only symbol of democratic pattern... the conch is broken. The fear of ‘beastie’ captures their minds. Only Ralph is saved. In fact, Golding saves Ralph in

order to suggest an emergence of new world of understanding after destruction. *Lord of the Flies* is a novel which actually deals with the aftermath of war suggests widespread destruction and explores the future possibilities of survival of human civilization on earth. In this sense the novel provides a great deal of apocalyptic data which seems to be Golding's preoccupation throughout the novel. The images of the 'bestie', of killing of Simon and Piggy and the end of rationality in the breaking of the glasses... all suggest the extinction of human life. The final act of rescue appears to be gratuitous, to round off the narrative or it may faintly suggest 'the renovation of faith' and 'hope for mankind'.

Golding examination of the modern man's predicament expressed in his apocalyptic narrative highlights man's 'fall from grace', his 'destructive impulses' and his search for more and more destructive weapons provided by modern science. His novels reveals a cosmic vision embracing the historical (and even pre-historical) past and the present and the future. However, he does not rest satisfied with only the analysis and diagnosis of this situation; but he extends hope for the future which is also the part of apocalyptic vision. For instance, 'the renovation of faith' in *Lord of the Flies* is suggested when Ralph, who represents rationalism, is saved on the lonely, remote, island.

We may conclude that Golding's world view bears a silver lining of hope in the present analysis.