

**WILLIAM GOLDING'S CRITICISM ON THE CULTURE OF VIOLENCE IN WORLD WAR II
PORTRAYED IN LORD OF THE FLIES.**

**(KRITIK WILLIAM GOLDING TERHADAP BUDAYA KEKERASAN DALAM PERANG
DUNIA II YANG TERGAMBAR PADA NOVEL LORD OF THE FLIES)**

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Abstract

Lord of the Flies is William Golding's novel. It tells a story about a group of young boys who lost in an uninhabited island after an airplane-crash. The boys hope to be rescued from the island but their hope is lost and barbarism takes over. Golding's background of knowledge to write this novel based on his own experience while he was in the World War II. This research uses qualitative research method. Qualitative method is effective to identify indefinable factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion. The main data are collected from library. Meanwhile other information are taken from books. The primary data is the novel itself which contents the facts and the information about violence portraying decadence through selected events and characterizations in *Lord of the Flies*. Meanwhile, Secondary data is the data which has already been collected and analyzed by somebody else. The data which is relevant gathered to support this analysis. In data processing, this thesis starts to analyze *Lord of the Flies* by close reading and understanding the novel. Then, next step is using a descriptive method to describe the facts followed by analysis activities. The writing of this thesis is to gain several goals. The first goal, to get some significant information about literary research and expected to be the reference for other researchers who concern with the same discussion about sociological approach in the context of World War II. The second, it is aimed to understand how violence as the human's latent desire points to the reason of survival. There will emerge a dystopian society. The last, this research is beneficial to know Golding's criticism about the act of violence. This research found that the act of violence in order to survive trigger political and strategy to gain power and authority as happened in World War II.

Keywords: *Violence, World War II, Sociology of Literature, William Golding*

Abstrak

Lord of the Flies adalah sebuah novel yang ditulis oleh William Golding. Novel ini bercerita tentang sekelompok anak laki-laki yang terdampar dalam sebuah pulau yang tidak berpenghuni setelah kecelakaan pesawat. Kelompok anak laki-laki ini berharap mereka dapat segera diselamatkan dari pulau, tetapi harapan mereka musnah dan kekerasan mengambil alih. Latar belakang Golding dalam menulis novel ini berdasarkan pengalamannya dalam Perang Dunia II. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Metode ini sangat efektif digunakan dalam mendeskripsikan faktor-faktor yang tidak terdefinisi seperti, norma sosial, status sosioekonomi, peranan gender, etnis dan agama.. Data primer dalam penelitian ini berasal dari perpustakaan dimana data dan informasi lain yang diambil dari buku. Data utama adalah novel itu sendiri yang berisi tentang fakta dan informasi mengenai kekerasan sebagai gambaran kemunduran dalam beberapa kejadian dalam novel *Lord of the Flies*. Selanjutnya, data sekunder adalah data yang telah di dikumpulkan dan di analisa oleh orang lain. Penelitian ini menggunakan kajian pustaka dengan mengumpulkan data yang berasal dari buku, jurnal dan informasi lain yang relevan dengan topik pembahasan. Data data yang relevan tersebut kemudian disatukan untuk mendukung penelitian ini. Dalam memproses data ini, Skripsi ini dimulai dengan menganalisis novel tersebut dengan cara close-reading dan kemudian memahami novel tersebut. Langkah Selanjutnya adalah menggunakan metode deskripsi untuk mendeskripsikan fakta-fakta yang diikuti kegiatan analisis. Penulisan skripsi ini memiliki beberapa tujuan. Tujuan yang pertama adalah, untuk mendapatkan informasi yang signifikan tentang pengkajian sastra dan diharapkan sebagai referensi bagi peneliti lain yang memiliki bahasan yang samamenengail pendekatan sosiologi dalam konteks Perang Dunia II. Yang kedua, memahami bahwa kekerasan sebagai hasrat bawaan yang digunakan dalam kelangsungan hidup akan menjadikan sebuah masyarakat distopia. Yang terakhir, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kritik Golding tentang sikap yang mencerminkan kekerasan dalam upaya mempertahankan hidup. Ternyata menciptakan strategi politik guna mendapatkan kekuatan dan otoritas terhadap yang lain seperti yang terjadi dalam Perang Dunia II.

Kata kunci : *kekerasan, perang dunia ke II, "sociology of literature", William Golding.*

Introduction

Written in 1954, *Lord of the Flies* is the memory of the destructiveness of World War II. This novel cannot be separated from the social and cultural conditions in World War II. Therefore this research goes with the analysis on sociological approach. According to Swingewood (1972:13), "literature is a direct reflection of various facets of social structure, family relationships, class conflict, and possibly divorce trends and population composition". Swingewood's theory views a literary work as a social documentation of social condition and situation when the literary work is written. The author may express his experience it becomes representation of his age and his society because a work of literature sometimes portrays real life. As Swingewood stated that "The most popular perspective adopts the documentary aspect of literature, arguing that it provides a mirror of the age." (1972:13). Literature is considered as a portrayal of social condition and showing the society and social life.

Through this novel, Golding portrays an allegory of World War II. Allegory is a story where the characters and setting represent other things, like political systems, religious figures, or philosophical viewpoints (<http://www.shmoop.com/lord-of-the-flies/big-massive-allegory-symbol.html>). He shows other fact that the wealth of progress is not in material accumulation but in freeing someone from the limits of the bonds. Therefore, Golding intentionally portray the goal of world war is not finding the utopia instead the dystopia world. It is, "An anarchic and undesirable society, referring to a bleak future in which things take a turn for the worse and which displays images of worlds more unpleasant than our own may be called a dystopian society. The inhabitants of such a society lead a dehumanized and fearful life; they struggle for survival (Stăncuța, 2011:1)

From this dystopia, *Lord of the Flies* shows a person who left his norms of society, becomes a more savage. Furthermore, this person has to be able to lead the ones around him to turn evil as him. Golding considers the desire for power and destruction as something essential and explains this by stating that "humans simply follow certain patterns in their behavior, which they have inherited from their ancestors" (Roberts, 1984:56). The boys in *Lord of the Flies* illustrate this clearly, copying the behavior of their parents in the situation of World War II, competing, fighting and even killing each other for power.

In the inhabited island, these boys divided into two groups. Each follows a different power system, which represent the Allie and the Axis in World War II. Golding's description of the boys' power systems and their situation on the island is very vivid. Golding to shows that this violence is "the essential nature of all human beings" (Roberts, 1984:151). Therefore, when violence is used as the way to survive, these boys consider it as normal. In *Lord of the Flies*, although this violence is a kind of pathology, when it becomes a habit as a way to survive, it is considered as the best way to life. It is because this violence is something unconscious or works in irrational sense.

In *Lord of the Flies*, the island is the representative of a microcosm of the adult world with its history and a

government in one unnamed island. Golding has shown the miserable world of the boys in the empty island. It portrays the world history they invent hunting and food gathering. Then, Golding develops his story when these boys are aware of the importance of power and domination. They create two different tribes where violence develops into political area. The increasing of the material and utility has increased the want of the world and their desires are never satisfied. In this phase, to survive in the island is done by showing their act of violence, both for getting food and achieving power or authority. To strengthen the analysis of the novel, Arendt's theory of violence is used to see that "violence fulfills the same function as authority—namely, makes people obey—then violence is authority (Arendt, 1954:5).

This violence which Arendt believed is "pathological and irrational" (Arendt in Capitolo, 1998:9). For the boys, firstly they do not apply violence for violent intention. "Violence emerges from non-violent intention and is therefore included in conflictive attitudes despite the absence of a self proclaimed intention to harm. Sixth, violence is latent as well as manifest" (Arendt in Capitolo, 1998:9). The need to survive becomes the main factor behind its violence. This condition then develops into dehumanization. From this novel, Golding obviously describes the decadence of civilization and the greed of humankind manifested in violence as the portrait of the decadence of World War II. This novel criticizes the situation in World War II which is seen by people that violence has definitely destructed human's survival.

Research Methodology

This thesis uses qualitative research method. Qualitative method is effective in identifying indefinable factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion. Qualitative method helps the researcher interpret and give a better understanding about the complex reality of a given situation portrayed in some textual data. As Bodgan stated "Qualitative research is descriptive" (1953:212). The quotation shows that qualitative method presents the research in form of words or text to describe something. Then qualitative method clarifies as descriptive.

In this research, the texts are taking from variety of documents which related to the topic. The data which are need in this qualitative research are in the narrations and statements form. Description and interpretation are the way to analyze this qualitative research. In other word, the data from *Lord of the Flies* are selecting and collecting by quotation. Then, those quotations are interpreted by using the writer's own sentences and explanation. In presenting the result of this analysis, it is described by taking some quotations from the novel and some of related data about the meaning of violence as the sign of decadence.

Result

The result of this article is to get some significant information about literary research and expected to be the reference for other researchers who concern with the same discussion about sociological approach in the context of World War II. The second result is to understand that when violence as the human's latent desire points to the reason of

survival, there will emerge a dystopian society. The last result, this research is beneficial to know Golding's criticism that the act of violence in order to survive has developed as a political strategy to gain power and authority toward others as happened in World War II.

Discussion

This article intends to presents the social condition during war time which is so difficult. Meat, bread, sugar, gasoline, and tobacco were in short supply. Those are categorized as luxury items. To solve the problem, the government applied nationalization policy for industries like coal, electric power, and gas companies. In 1950, the rise of the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the western power after the end of World War II signed a new phase in world geopolitics (Ishizu, 2004: 40). Golding wrote *Lord of the Flies* in this difficult condition.

War causes social changes in four different dimensions. The first dimension is the destructive dimension. Destruction urges people to emerge the reconstruction of society, to build a society better than the previous one. The second dimension is the test dimension where systems economy, and politics, will be tested as to their suitability and survivability for the conduct of war. The third is the participation dimension. War creates conditions which allow people in various social activities, to participate in them. Marwick argues that the fourth dimension is "the psychological dimension." People start to get the sense that war leads to something new (Ishizu : 43).

However, war is a great place for emotional experiences. During that period, people strengthen their integrity to a group to which they belong. They assimilate and intensify the hostility toward their enemy. Emotional experiences including fear for war are accumulated in the cultural sphere.

War is a phenomenon that forces people accept new thoughts and behaviors. There is no doubt that war is tragic which leaves people severe trauma. As a result, they change not only the individual mentality but also the culture. The irony of war has come to occupy the consciousness of people and points out that it is the biggest factor of putting an end to the faith in progress and optimism. Golding sees the end of optimism in European society. He writes his novel, *Lord of the Flies* on the concern of pessimism.

As a people who lived in terrible situation of World War, Golding tends to explore the absence of God from the centre of man's consciousness. The form and structure of Golding's works are designed to concentrate on the moral issues. His *Lord of Flies* sets on a desert island on which a group of boys from an English Choir-School gradually falls away from the civilized society. They regress into barbarism. The novel shows the essential human depravity. The island becomes a microcosm of the adult world. Ralph and Jack constitute two opposite poles. Ralph and Piggy want to establish democracy whereas Jack behaves in an autocratic fashion.

From the novel, Golding definitively creates a parallel between the world of the adults and the world of the children. The children, fortunately, escape from one war, but

begin to fight in another one. The child world is only a microcosm of the adult world. Though the children are finally saved from the horrors on the island, it is not a rescue, as a matter of fact. The naval officer takes them into the world that is full of evil, killing, and aggression, into the world at war. Thus the adult are also not able to save the world from destruction. The boys are for other cruelties. In fact, it is the war that causes the boys' shipwreck on this island-or to be more precise, the adults.

At the beginning, the children consider their actions, such as hunting a pig, as a game but it is no more game. But cruel reality. Piggy wants to stop the emerging savagery: "What are we? Humans? Or animals? Or savages? What's grown-ups going to think? Going off, hunting pigs"(Golding, 1954:99). Even the naval officer thinks they are playing a game when he catches sight of their painted faces. It is clear that the children are aware of the absence of their parents. Some of them also miss them: "I wish my auntie was here. I wish my father" (Golding, 1954:103). In one event of the book, a boy called Maurice thinks about his evil acts. He is touched with remorse and he seems to be insecure without the presence of his parents: "Now, though there was no parent to let fall a heavy hand, Maurice still felt the unease of wrong-doing" (Golding, 1954:64).

From *Lord of the Flies*, Golding shows the decadence of human being has become the main part to socialize in the island. As stated before, the island is the representation of adult life at that time where Second World War takes apart. This chapter is focusing on the problem of violence and how Golding sees violence as the matter of evil. The representation of violence act is linked with the character of Jack as the violence actor and Ralph's group as the victim of violence. The physical violence is supposed as the way to reach the power and authority in the island. Moreover, this violence does not emerge as a sudden violence but it hides in the human's psyche and raises with particular factors that is described follow. Implicitly, Golding also gives a solution to solve the problem of violence in *Lord of the Flies*.

Golding's novels are concerned with the problems of good and evil in human beings and with their sinful nature. His moral perspectives are always constructed in his novels. Golding's novels are pessimistic. Additionally, he discusses human existence, problems of civilization, and one's identity. His concept of evil is always projected into human beings, but the human beings usually consider it as an external factor until they comprehend the truth.

Lord of the Flies is a very pessimistic novel. Pessimistic here means that bad things are more likely to happen or emphasizing the bad part of a situation (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/pessimistic>). The purpose of the novel is to reveal the truth about real human nature. Moreover, he attempts to find a solution to the problems of good and evil in human beings.

Not only does Golding talk about the sinfulness and the evil nature of man in his novels, he also shows to the reader, what the life far away from the civilized society might look like. The behavior of the boys is due to the fact that they are not finally under the control of previous social habit or convention. Thus, evil arises from man's essential being. Humans have by nature a terrible potentiality for evil. This

potentiality cannot be controlled by a human political system. This implies that the animal instinct, or inherent evil, is stronger than any political system. The innocence and boys' good behavior change after the first killing of a pig. They become animal like creatures that are eager to act evilly.

This evil also arises out of fear from the Beast. It is obvious that the children still look for the evil in the outside world, not in themselves. Evil grows in the human brain, in human consciousness. It only depends on the people, whose consciousness can, or need not be controlled. It is clear that under certain circumstances the evil forces might be eliminated but it is impossible to eliminate them entirely.

When the animal instinct in the boys is still stronger, it makes them turn into savages. The intention of this novel is not that without adults the children always turn into savages. This is not any kind of experiment. It is reality. The justification of their behavior is that the children prefer acting according to their instinct to reasonable thinking and respecting moral principles. Golding's intention is to demonstrate what the world will look like without ethical norms and moral values that are not inherent within man.

Golding shows in his novel that evil appears in human beings instinctively. It cannot be controlled by any moral principle. Anybody can act evilly. It does not relate to his education. It only depends on the situation and the person's ability to distinguish between good and evil. The evil cannot be entirely eradicated. It can only be diminished. The three boys on the island who are aware of their acts are Ralph, Piggy, and Simon. They have a possibility to follow their evil instincts but they do not do it. Jack and Roger show their cruel acts in most part of the novel. Meanwhile, Ralph is aware of the fact that the hunters' behavior is an evil act. The life on the island is a picture of mankind that shows the evil side. It is the description of a destruction of the civilized world.

From his novel, Golding shows the decadence of his era at World War. He sees that "war is the old continuation of politics by means of violence" (Arendt, 1970:6). From the novel, he also gives an insight to his readers that the concept of morality is portrayed as an essential part of human existence that is not innate but has to be learned by means of education, or religion. Otherwise, human beings turn into savages, moral principles will come to be the basis for creating civilized behavior and civilized world. Without keeping to moral principle, the evil nature will come to the surface and the mankind will make for destruction.

Conclusion

From the analysis in the thesis, I conclude that Golding intentionally portrays an allegory of World War II. He shows other fact that the wealth of progress is not in material accumulation but in freeing someone from the limits of the bonds. The goal of world war is not merely finding the utopia instead the dystopia world.

Lord of the Flies shows some boys who turn away from the norms of society, towards a more savage way of life. Furthermore, the boys have to be able to lead the ones around them to turn evil with them. Golding sees the life of

the boys in the island is the representative a microcosm of the adult world with its history and a government in one unnamed island. Through the novel, he criticizes the culture of violence in World War II.

Not only does Golding talk about the immorality and the evil nature of man in his novels, but he also shows to the reader, what the life far away from the civilized society might look like. The behavior of the boys is due to the fact that they are not finally under the control of previous social habit or convention. Thus, evil arises from man's essential being. Humans have by nature a terrible potentiality for evil. The innocence and boys' good behavior change after the first killing of a pig. They become animal like creatures that are eager to act evilly.

Lord of the Flies is the social conflict, civilized society with savagery, Ralph's fight for civilization versus Jack's urge to hunt. It is related to the political conflict: democracy and dictatorship, Ralph's fight for democracy versus Jack's urge to rule.

After criticizing the culture of violence in *his Lord of the Flies*, he implicitly advises his readers that morality is not innate things but it has to be learned by means of education, or religion. Otherwise, when human beings turn into savages, moral principles will come to be the basis for creating civilized behavior and civilized world.

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