

Lenka Vomáčková, *The World of Lost Innocence in William Golding's Novels* (BA thesis)
Supervisor's Report

In her BA thesis Lenka Vomáčková focuses on three early novels by William Golding: *Lord of the Flies* (1954), *Pincher Martin* (1956), and *Free Fall* (1959). Her aim is to examine the process in which Golding's characters strive after self-knowledge and establishing their own identity, and to find out how this applies to three basic levels of discourse, moral, social, and spiritual (religious or mystic). Her analysis is based on close reading of key motifs of the three texts, confronted with the ideas from the most important critical sources.

What I find absolutely important and valuable about a thesis of this sort is the author's good acquaintance with a large number of critical writings on Golding and her ability to reflect on the ideas she draws from them. Due to this she is able to provide a relatively complex picture of aspects which pertain to Golding's early work, avoiding shallow, simplified reading and allowing for different planes of interpretation, as in the case of children's games in *Lord of the Flies*. At the same time, she does not hesitate to judge the critical sources critically and reject far-fetched interpretations (Piggy representing Jews). What also seems praiseworthy is the fact that she does not divide the three levels of discourse strictly but is able to see, very sensitively, where they overlap and merge. In all these respects the thesis goes far beyond the BA stage of study requirements.

My reservations are minor: I lack a discussion of the genre of "fable" or allegory and its relevance for the spiritual meaning of *Lord* (allegorical representation of fall and salvation), especially in relation to the novel's irony: what is the position of the final scene with a navy officer appearing as a *dies ex machina* or as a very problematic Saviour figure?

I would also recommend to put more stress on the ontological clue to the situation in *Free Fall*, as expressed in the following: "I am not a man who was a boy looking at a tree. I am a man who remembers being a boy looking at a tree." This split between man's present and past, by which the hero defines himself, makes the very concept of becoming problematic and raises the question what actually is the point of Sammy's effort to find the roots of his guilt. Formally, I find the Conclusion being a variation of the Introduction; this should possibly be avoided. There are occasional language errors, surprisingly more in the Czech abstract than in the thesis itself, but their character is not such as to disqualify the thesis. Therefore, I recommend the thesis for defence and suggest the classification "excellent" (výborná).

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