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BACHELOR THESIS

Savagery in *The Inheritors* and the *Lord of the Flies*
by William Golding

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis, titled “Savagery in *The Inheritors* and the *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding”, is completely my own work and I used only the sources that are listed on the works cited page.

Prague, April 10, 2016

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ABSTRACT

William Golding dedicated his life's work to an exploration of man's nature. The primary themes of most of his novels are the conflict between civilization and savagery, good and evil and the question of the source of evil within man. This thesis focuses on his first two and most well-known novels: *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*. The objective of this thesis is to analyse the theme of savagery in these books.

The aim of this thesis is to infer what Golding intends to convey concerning the nature of man and to analyse how he understands and views savagery. The theoretical foundation of this thesis is based on a comprehensive definition of the terms civilization, savagery and barbarism derived from their etymology and their meaning within various social sciences; and Golding's own ethical doctrine established in his works.

Other sources include works focused on literary analysis of Golding's novels, interviews and articles written about Golding's life and work and naturally both the novels analysed.

Key words: savagery, savage instinct, civilizing instinct, civilization, barbarism, morality, innate evil, man's nature, cruelty, William Golding, Lord of the Flies, The Inheritors

ANOTACE

William Golding věnoval svou celoživotní práci zkoumání lidské přirozenosti. Stěžejním tématem jeho románů je konflikt mezi civilizujícím a divošským instinktem, dobrem a zlem a otázka odkud zlo v lidech pochází. Tato práce se věnuje literární analýze jeho prvních a nejznámějších románů, *Pán much* a *Dědicové* a rozboru tématu divošství v těchto dvou dílech.

Cílem této práce je dovést a doložit Goldingovo chápání divošství a jeho náhled na lidskou přirozenost. Teoretická část této práce je založena na souhrnných definicích termínů civilizace, divošství a barbarismu, a to na základě etymologie a jejich významů v rámci různých společenských věd; zároveň se opírá o Goldingovu vlastní etickou doktrínu tak, jak ji implikují jeho romány.

Mezi další použité zdroje patří práce, které se věnují literární analýze Goldingových děl, rozhovory a články o Goldingově životě a práci a samozřejmě oba romány samotné.

Klíčová slova: divošství, divošský instinkt, civilizační instinkt, civilizace, barbarismus, etika, vrozené zlo, lidská přirozenost, krutost, William Golding, Pán much, Dědicové

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INTRODUCTION

Sir William Gerald Golding is one of the most prominent 20th century British writers. Given the time period he lived and wrote in, his works are mainly focused on moral concerns, the nature of man and his propensity for evil. He was a novelist, playwright and a poet and was awarded a Nobel Prize in Literature. *Lord of the Flies* is his first and also best known novel, his second novel, *The Inheritors*, was published a year after and while it is not as well-known it was Golding's personal favourite.

Lord of the Flies is a novel I first read when I was thirteen years old and since then I read it again many times. It is a short, entertaining and adventurous novel that subtly but inevitably changes the way one thinks about human nature. It is a story that stayed in the back of my mind ever since that first read and still provides me with insight about morality and expected human behaviour. When thinking about a topic for this thesis I was recommended another novel by Golding – *The Inheritors*. Given my fondness of the *Lord of the Flies* I was sceptical at first about the possibility of another novel's ability to stand up to par in comparison to it; but Golding's second book is just as brilliant and view-changing as his first one, if not even more so. While both novels provide many themes, motifs and ideas to be analysed, each and every one deserving of the reader's consideration; I chose to explore the theme of the savagery of man. It may seem an obvious choice and perhaps it is, but it was obviously a topic, or a concern, Golding himself was most interested in – and as an admirer of his work it seems only right I give it my attention.

The theoretical part of this thesis consists of considering the term savagery, and consequently the related terms civilization and barbarism, from different angles in an attempt at a comprehensive definition of the word, to facilitate the analysis of it in regards to Golding's novels. The definitions provided are based on social sciences such as anthropology, philosophy and history and for a complete understanding a linguistic and etymological origins and the modern dictionary definition are also presented. William Golding was preoccupied with morality and ethics to such an extent, that it would not be completely amiss to say he established his own ethical doctrine of sorts, although because he is a writer and not a philosopher it is not formulated. It is, however, present and so the theoretical part constitutes a brief summarization of Golding's moral framework.

The practical part is based on a separate analysis of each of the novels and their comparison. The aim is to consider the theme of savagery in the analysed novels and infer what William Golding intended to convey in regard to this theme both in each novel separately and as a whole.

THEORETICAL PART

Civilization, barbarism and savagery

The three terms, civilization, barbarism and savagery, while central to our perception of the world we live in and its history and seemingly easy to comprehend, are in fact very hard to define. Firstly, because their meaning is continuously shifting in the passage of time and secondly, because their definitions depend heavily on the point of view of either the person defining them, or in the broader term, the human science that provides it. “If we judge the achievements of other social groups in relation to the kind of objectives we set ourselves, we have at times to acknowledge their superiority; but in doing so we acquire the right to judge them, and hence to condemn all their other objectives which do not coincide with those we approve of. We implicitly acknowledge that our society with its customs and norms enjoys a privileged position, since an observer belonging to another social group would pass different verdicts on the same examples.” (Lévi-Strauss 386)

In the context of history, civilization is the umbrella term for humanity's progression and achievements in time as well as a descriptive term for an organized society used to distinguish it from other (organized) societies. In the same context, barbarism and savagery are almost interchangeable terms coined for comparison to the term civilization, used to indicate inferiority and/or a lower level of organization and technological advancement.

Linguistically the terms originated in Latin and Greek. Civilization is derived from the Latin noun *civis* meaning citizen, therefore indicating a member of a certain society. Barbarism is derived from the Latin noun *barbaria* meaning a foreign country and from a Greek onomatopoeic word *barbarus* which is mimicking a foreign language and means foreign and uncivilized and it was used as a term for people that spoke an unintelligible language. Lastly, the terms *savage* and *savagery* come also from Latin and originate from the word *silva* meaning a forest or *silvaticus* meaning of the forest. As per their origins both terms have been created to serve as an antithesis for civilization, in the simplest terms describing the Others. (Online Etymological Dictionary) However, the term *savagery* and *savages* became more widespread notably during the Age of Discovery both in the scientific field and in the vernacular of the general public as a descriptor of the inhabitants of foreign lands. “[...] the term *savage* came to be linked more tightly than the term *barbarian* to the peoples of the lands

of “exploration” and “discovery”, notably Africa and North America. In this way it seems, savages became the more extreme contrast with civilized society.” (McNeill 358)

These three terms were established and formalized in the nineteenth century for the purposes of social and cultural anthropology and served to distinguish the stages of human development. Savagery as the earliest stage, followed by barbarism. “In Victorian anthropology, savagery and barbarism were differentiated as sequential stages of social evolution.” (McNeill 359) This notion of the terms savages, savagery, barbarian and barbarism being used to establish a relation of superiority and inferiority was challenged by Franz Boas, a German-American anthropologist, commonly referred to as the “Father of American Anthropology” and his students. He disparaged the use of these terms in such a context and based his criticism on an extensive study of non-European languages, concluding that while the linguistic differences are indisputable, their capacities for effective communication are equal, therefore the original meaning of the terms barbarian and savage, but barbarian in particular is an ethnocentric illusion. (McNeill 359) This conclusion gave way to cultural relativism that has effectively rendered these terms unusable in the field of anthropology as they depend on the distinction between One and the Other, which was no longer its objective.

Another definition of the term savagery is provided by philosophy. The idea of a “noble savage” a sharp contrast to the accustomed association of savagery and violence, cruelty and evil, developed in the philosophy of the eighteenth century. Although the term noble savage originated in 1672 in John Dryden's *Conquest of Granada* (*Encyclopedia Britannica*) this concept belongs mainly to the period of the Enlightenment and is predominantly connected to Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The concept of the noble savage proclaims man's innate goodness. It is a notion that humans are inherently good and it is civilization and technological progress that gives way to evil. “Nothing is so gentle as man in his primitive state when, placed by nature at equal distances from the stupidity of brutes and the fatal enlightenment of civil man, and limited equally by instinct and reason to protecting himself from the harm that threatens him, he is restrained by natural pity from harming anyone himself, and nothing leads him to do so even after he has received harm.” (Rousseau 116) In this context, the attributes of savagery are harmony, selflessness, innocence and innate wisdom. Rousseau also theorized in *The Social Contract* that we as a society are no longer able to go back and repossess that innocence and goodness of a man unbridled by civilization and therefore we must put in place strict rules that would ensure that we as a society will not revert to a fight for survival. While

Golding does not share Rousseau's viewpoint about man's innate goodness, his and Rousseau's remarks about civilization serving as a tool to temper man's savage nature are in consensus.

The contemporary definitions of civilization barbarism and savagery are vastly different from their original meaning and from the idea of the noble savage. Savagery and barbarism in particular have taken on a derogatory connotation and have been related to dullness of mind, cruelty, violence and even outright evil. This shift in meaning is essential when discussing the works of William Golding and therefore must be noted. When looking up a definition of savagery in contemporary dictionaries the most prominent definitions are a cruel or violent act or action and an act or state lacking the restraints normal to civilized human beings. (Merriam-Webster)

William Golding contemplates savagery, civilization and their relation to good, evil, cruelty and innocence in the majority of his works. To analyse his standpoint we must perhaps reject any one definition of savagery and instead formalize it as an antonym of civilization, devoid of any connotations and apply the same treatment to the term civilization itself – effectively going back to their original etymology. Meaning, savagery being the state of humans removed from any and all rules and regulations of civilization. “Long exile from Christendom and civilization inevitably restores a man to that condition in which God placed him, i. e. what is called savagery.” (Melville 270) Which incidentally is the main storyline of the *Lord of the Flies*.

William Golding

Sir William Gerald Golding was born on 19 September 1911, in Cornwall, England and died on 19 June 1993, shortly after he began working on a novel he never finished. He was a British novelist, playwright and poet. He studied Natural Sciences and English Literature at Brasenose College in Oxford. He then worked as a teacher until his first active service in World War II. In 1940 he joined the Royal Navy and served in HMS Galatea in the North Atlantic. He participated in the invasion of Normandy on D-Day.

In September 1945 he left the Navy and returned to his teaching position at Bishop Wordsworth's School. His best known work is the widely recognized novel *Lord of the Flies*, written in 1954. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1983 and the Booker Prize for literature for his novel *Rites of Passage* in 1980.

William Golding was a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and in 1988 he was knighted by Elizabeth II.

His first work, *Poems*, was published in 1934, 20 years before the release of his second, and most recognized work, *Lord of the Flies*, in 1954. He went on to publish thirteen novels, a drama and three works of non-fiction. (W.G. official website)

Moral framework

"I'm not saying anyone is evil. I set out to discover whether there is that in man which makes him do what he does, that's all. When I was young, before the war, I did have some airy-fairy views about man [...] But I went through the war and that changed me. The war taught me different and a lot of others like me." (Davis 29)

His experiences during the war as well as his experience as a teacher greatly influenced his writings. The predominant themes of most of his novels are the conflict between civilization and savagery, innocence and sin and the overall question of the source of evil within man. His first novel, *Lord of the Flies*, is a moral fable about schoolboys who are shipwrecked on an uninhabited island. It is in sorts a response to a classic of juvenile fiction: *The Coral Island: A tale of the Pacific Ocean* written in 1858 by Robert Michael Ballantyne. However, instead of an idyllic portrayal of innocent children marooned on an island Golding delves into a crude depiction of a battle for survival. "Wouldn't it be a good idea to write a story about some boys showing how they would really behave." (King) His second novel, *The Inheritors* was published in 1955 and deals with very similar themes in a very different setting, as it depicts the extinction of a group of Neanderthals at the hands of the Homo sapiens. Other novels and essays written by Golding all deal with the theme of evil within man.

William Golding's main objective in his works is an analysis of the inner workings of man, of his moral nature and its influences. Golding focuses on the question of what is innate to this nature and what comes from the outside. "He is concerned not with man in relation to society but with man in relation to his universe, and to himself." (Hynes 674) Both novels, and many others written by Golding centre on the morality of its characters that is their ability to distinguish between right and wrong and good and evil and consequently their capacity to adhere to these constructs. He analyses the human nature and the forces that affect it. The most important aspect of the moral framework Golding works with in his novel is therefore choice. "Morality for Golding is a matter of the crucial choices men make between what is good and what is evil." (Farley 4)

Coral Island

When one is analysing *Lord of the Flies* it is essential to mention another book, as most literary critics do when they talk about it - *The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean*, a novel written in 1858 by R. M. Ballantyne. It is one of the first books for children that features exclusively young heroes. Akin to *Lord of the Flies*, it tells a story of three boys shipwrecked on a deserted island.

The story of *The Coral Island* is written in a first person narrative, from the point of view of one of the boys, Ralph Rover. While the story deals with evil and cruelty, none of these concepts are found in the child heroes. It is for all intents and purposes an idyllic retelling of a childhood adventure. "I was a boy when I went through the wonderful adventures herein set down. With the memory of my boyish feelings strong upon me, I present my book specially to boys, in the earnest hope that they may derive valuable information, much pleasure, great profit, and unbounded amusement from its pages." (Ballantyne 3)

The relation between *Lord of the Flies* and Ballantyne's book is not coincidental. Apart from the apparent similarities of the setting of both novels, as well as the names of the main characters, Golding even refers to *The Coral Island* twice in the novel – first at the beginning when the boys are discussing how long it will take until they will be saved and praise the beauty of the island "It's like in a book." (Golding, LOTF 33), and then it is referenced by the officer in his talk with Ralph: "I know. Jolly good show. Like the Coral Island" (Golding, LOTF 224). But while the setting is analogous the books and their author's viewpoints could not be more different and the direct references by the characters themselves only make this difference more tragic and painful.

Both novels present evil but the contrast is in its source. The children in Ballantyne's novel are innocent, pure and untainted and while the book features savagery, cruelty and evil it comes from the outside and never from within the heroes. "Ballantyne's children are children free of Original Sin" (Tiger 49) In contrast, Golding's children are everything but. They exercise freedom without any rules or boundaries and showcase evil in its many forms. "Ballantyne's story raises the problem of evil, but whereas Golding finds evil in the boys' own natures, it comes to Ballantyne's boys not from within themselves but from the outside world." (Neimeyer 242) Consequently, the difference is clear even in the description of the respective islands in both novels. While Ballantyne focuses on the beauty of the island, Golding does not refrain from depicting the horrors and unpleasantness of the surroundings.

The Alignment System

Both novels analysed in this thesis focus on the moral nature of its characters. These characters are not only important to the story, but they each represent a different set of moral values and attributes greater than personality traits. Notably the protagonists of *Lord of the Flies* represent much more than just their identities. An analysis of these characters is therefore essential to understanding the author's intent.

For this analysis I have chosen to employ a method of categorization of ethical and moral perspective called the Alignment System. The Alignment system was created by Gary Gygax, author of the role-playing game *Dungeons & Dragons*. Unconventional as that may be, this system is very useful for classifying characters and it will provide significant help in understanding the characters in Golding's books, *Lord of the Flies* in particular.

The Alignment system features two axes: law vs. chaos and good vs. evil and in addition both axes feature neutrality. The distinction between law and chaos is described as follows: "the belief that everything should follow an order, and that obeying rules is the natural way of life", as opposed to "the belief that life is random, and that chance and luck rule the world" (Gygax) Neutrality in respect to this axis means nor a compulsion to follow rules neither a compulsion to rebel unconditionally. As for good vs. evil - good implies altruism, respect for life, and a concern for the dignity of sentient beings while evil implies hurting, oppressing, and killing others whether for a purpose or without a tangible reason. Neutrality in respect to good and evil signifies either the lack of commitment to either or the lack of capacity of distinguishing between these two concepts.

The two axes allow for nine alignments:

LAWFUL GOOD	NEUTRAL GOOD	CHAOTIC GOOD
LAWFUL NEUTRAL	(TRUE) NEUTRAL	CHAOTIC NEUTRAL
LAWFUL EVIL	NEUTRAL EVIL	CHAOTIC EVIL

LORD OF THE FLIES

Lord of the Flies is a dystopian allegorical novel written by William Golding in 1954. It is both Golding's first and most recognized novel, even though it was not a success at first, it went on to become a best-seller and it was even adapted into films in 1963 and 1990.

Lord of the Flies narrates a story of a group of English schoolboys cast away on a tropical island after their plane crashes after being shot down during a war. After the plane crash, the boys quickly realize they are left to their own devices and as there are no adults present they have to take care of themselves. Since not all the boys are the same age they decide to establish a society of sorts and set out to elect leaders amongst themselves. They choose Ralph, one of the older boys, to be their leader and he appoints Jack, previously leader of the choir, as the one in charge of providing food for the whole group. At first their newfound arrangement works without any major problems, however, soon disagreement and a fight for power between Jack and Ralph starts to slowly cause tension within the group and ultimately leads to an astoundingly tragic descent of the children into savagery. The novel ends with Ralph desperately running from the rest of the boys to save his life and he is saved by a British naval officer landing on the beach. The end of the novel is, however, very bittersweet by the irreversible loss of innocence and the implications about the nature of man the events that transpired on the island hold. It should also be noted, that while what happened on the island is terrible in itself, the ending, while seemingly a salvage for the remaining boys, is not as clear cut as it would seem, because the reader is acutely aware of the fact that there is still war going on outside the island, and therefore it is very questionable if the boys can be considered saved not only in the figurative sense but also in the literal one.

Law vs. Chaos

In the *Lord of the Flies* Golding uses the characters as personifications of various degrees of civilization, savagery or the lack of either. They each manifest traits and behaviour distinctive of the savage instinct and the civilizing instinct. In order to analyse the novel and its inference it is necessary to examine and classify these characters.

Using the Alignment system, we can categorize these characters and their motivation. The first and important matter that should be noted is that between the two sides of the first axis, law is significantly more prominent than chaos. Both main characters, Ralph and Jack, while being on the opposite sides of the second axis fall under the characterization "lawful". This

heavily implies, that civilization does not and cannot equal goodness. This is especially clear when one considers the character of Jack, who is without a doubt one of the main forces of evil in the book. Jack is the source of evil and savagery, yet his particular flavour of evil is closely connected with the laws and workings of civilization that he abuses to his benefit and these constructs of society are precisely what facilitates his evil in the first place. Seeing as laws, rules and established practices of society can indeed assist the progress of evil it is doubtful at best that, at least according to Golding, civilization means goodness.

Civilizing instinct

In the novel civilization is represented mainly by Ralph and Piggy. Ralph is the novel's protagonist, a main representative of the civilizing instinct. He is established as the leader of the boys on the island. As he represents the values of civilization he is the one that tries to establish rules and continuously thinks of ways for them to survive and eventually be rescued. He is strong-willed and firmly believes that they should maintain all semblance of normalcy and wait for rescue, to the point that he does not understand the other boys willingness to give in to savagery. He is driven by a fierce determination not to succumb to the chaos and finds strength in the hope of rescue and return to civilization. By the end of the novel, although he had his wish granted as they are being rescued at last, he is overwhelmed by the knowledge of evil within man, as he himself tasted the thrill of giving into savage instincts when he participated in the murder of Simon, and by the knowledge that what transpired on the island cannot be taken back. This is important, because it shows, that while there is goodness in civilization, it can be in certain situations overpowered by the savage instinct. He represents the "lawful good" because he for the most part acts with honour and sense of duty to himself and other individuals. Piggy is Ralph's second in command and he continuously provides support, information and inventions essential to Ralph's rule. Due to his constitution he is forced to rely on his intellect and resourcefulness and he always represents the orderly, rational aspect of civilization. He is in many ways a more precise representation of civilization, because his belief in the rules of the civilized world is fundamental to him, for exactly the reasons these rules were created – to prevent a fight for survival that disadvantages the weak.

“How can you expect to be rescued if you don't put first things first and act proper?” He took off his glasses and made as if to put down the conch; but the sudden motion towards it of most of the older boys changed his mind. He tucked

the shell under his arm, and crouched back on a rock. "Then when you get here you build a bonfire that isn't no use. Now you been and set the whole island on fire. Won't we look funny if the whole island burns up? Cooked fruit, that's what we'll have to eat, and roast pork. And that's nothing to laugh at! You said Ralph was chief and you don't give him time to think. Then when he says something you rush off, like, like -" He paused for breath, and the fire growled at them. "And that's not all. Them kids. The little 'uns. Who took any notice of 'em? Who knows how many we got?"

(Golding, LOTF 46)

However not even he is impervious to the temptation of the savage instinct, and he too participates in the murder of Simon. He can be classified a "lawful neutral" as he is a character who believes strongly in rules, order and tradition because he is well aware of the position of weaker individuals within society who respect no such things. The difference between these two characters lies precisely in their respective belonging to the second axis. While both of them represent corresponding set of values, they exercise them differently. Even though Piggy's morality and adherence to rules are stronger and more deeply founded, he does not possess the power to put them into practice, while Ralph does. This is why Ralph is type-casted as "good" and Piggy as a "neutral" both within the context of the alignment system and in the mind of the reader as Piggy never reaches the hero status of Ralph despite his obvious importance and moral strength.

Savage instinct

The novel's second most prominent character. Jack, is generally perceived as an antagonist as he stands opposed to Ralph and embodies the savage instinct and by extension evil. However, at the beginning of the novel Jack seems to have very similar qualities to Ralph; he is strong-willed and a natural born leader. Be that as it may, it becomes quite clear rather quickly that while he does possess many good qualities he lacks the moral code and substance that Ralph has and it results in him standing as his opposite in every way. Jack desires power and from his first killing of a wild boar in the woods he continually gives into the blood-lust and brutality. He can be considered a "lawful evil". He is indeed savage, however, his savagery is based on the very rules of the civilization that he rejects as he abuses the authority he naturally possess and learns how to control others to his own advantage. Similarly to Piggy, Roger is Jack's second in command and he represents the unrestrained evil and brutality of the

savage instinct. Akin to Piggy who embodies the orderliness of the civilizing instinct, Roger represents complete savagery. Where Jack, while disregarding most of the rules of the civilized world, still benefits and goes along with many of its concepts and his transition to savagery is gradual, Roger appears as if he was never civilized at all. He does not care for anyone but himself and relishes in brutality and cruelty and experiences pleasure in instilling fear in the little boys. He represents “chaotic evil”, he has no respect for rules, has no regard for others and does not seem to have any issues with killing his fellows.

Neutrals

Three or as the case may be, two important characters both story-wise and for the sake of the argument Golding is making fall beyond the two sides of the civilization/savagery coin. Simon stands right in the middle of the equation. He does not represent either instinct. Rather he is the embodiment of everything that is truly and incorruptibly good. He is kind, sensitive and wise beyond his years. The goodness he possesses comes from his connectedness to nature and to others. He is the one boy on the island that exercises empathy and true morality regardless of the rules imposed by civilization. By this nature of his goodness he stands in opposition to both Ralph and Jack and their followers because his kind behaviour does not stem from pressure of society, nor does he have any inclination towards savagery. If he should be classified by the Alignment system he falls under the “true neutral”. He seeks balance and peaceful resolutions. Sam and Eric are twins who are at first allies to Ralph, but are eventually drawn to Jack's side. Although they are brothers they are almost indistinguishable to the other boys, who are referencing them as a single entity Samneric. The fact that they are twins is important to the narrative, because they represent civilization in itself. By the nature of their relationship they have no other choice than to work in a group, be a part of a society, albeit a small one – them being the only members. They represent an individual within a society that is subservient to whoever is in charge even if they do not agree completely. They can be characterized as “chaotic neutral”, because their sole drive is security, which comes first even before good and evil, right and wrong. In this regard Sam and Eric are a little closer to the savage instinct as their primary drive is survival, just as Simon is a little closer to the civilizing instinct as his primary motivation is harmony and well-being of everyone on the island.

When looking at the characters that are classified as neutrals, we can infer that civilization does not equal good. Simon is without a doubt the one character in the book that is genuinely

good, yet he does not exhibit any attributes specific to either law or chaos, or alternatively civilization or savagery. This is important, because it is a point that Golding elaborated on and finalized in his second novel, *The Inheritors* that perhaps the only genuine goodness comes from an absence of both instincts.

Savagery of the absence of civilization

William Golding was heavily influenced by the horrors and brutality of World War II while writing the *Lord of the Flies*. The novel is an attempt to pinpoint and explore the nature and roots of evil within people. The choice of children as the protagonists of an allegory of the battle of good against evil makes his remarks about human nature that much more powerful and frightening. In the novel, Golding focuses on answering the question of where the root of evil is in human beings, does it come from within us, or is the source external? Or perhaps more bluntly stated, are we as humans evil and cruel by the nature of our instincts, that is to say is the animal in us by its essence evil, and did we suppress these inclinations by establishing a society based on moral values and rules that are not intrinsic to us?

Golding contemplates the two instincts considered fundamental to human beings – the civilizing instinct and the savage instinct and tries to come to a conclusion about which one of these is the stronger one and which one of these is the one that comes from within.

Golding's main point in this novel is an attempt at a presentation of what life without the bounds and rules of society might look like. The question is whether everything we generally associate with goodness, such as good intentions, selfless actions, pity, kindness or courage can occur without the pressure and boundaries of civilization. This question is made obvious by the fact that the brutal events of the book are enacted by children that are generally perceived as innocent and inherently good.

There are many occurrences that facilitate savage behaviour and many different symptoms that make up the savagery described in the novel. A useful and comprehensive approach to understanding the nature of savagery in *Lord of the Flies* is an analysis of its manifestations. A helpful and thorough classification of these manifestations is provided in Kristie Langlow Farley's thesis, *Moral world of William Golding* as follows: cruelty, ignorance or unawareness and the abuse of power.

Cruelty

The first, basic and most prominent evil in the novel is cruelty. Cruelty occurs in many instances throughout the book and is present in many forms. None of the boys on the island save for Simon are impervious to acting in a cruel manner. Even Ralph, who is generally perceived as a moral hero of the story, and who largely represents the good in man is seen acting cruelly many times throughout the novel, even from the very beginning before the plot takes a dark turn, as for instance he treats Piggy with mockery, is in fact the reason the other boys learn his nickname and of course he participates in the murder of Simon.

“I don't care what they call me,” he said confidentially, “so long as they don't call me what they used to call me at school.” Ralph was faintly interested. “What was that?” The fat boy glanced over his shoulder, then leaned towards Ralph. He whispered. “They used to call me ‘Piggy’.” Ralph shrieked with laughter. He jumped up. “Piggy! Piggy!” “Ralph – please!” Piggy clasped his hands in apprehension. “I said I didn't want -” “Piggy! Piggy!”

(Golding, LOTF 6)

The most notable character associated with cruelty is Roger, who represents it at its most untamed and unbridled, as he is the one without any conscience or any semblance of empathy and care for others. But cruelty comes in many shapes and forms and Golding stresses the reasons that make it possible. Cruelty arises when morality, reason and the ability to distinguish between right and wrong has been abandoned. This is the principal idea behind the story featured in the novel – a depiction of a society removed from its own constructs.

Perhaps the most obvious cruel acts, represented by Roger, are not what Golding wants the reader to focus on; the true nature of evil is the enabling of such acts and negligence in preventing or punishing such behaviour, which is exactly what happens when the forces that ensure adherence to certain behavioural patterns are removed. This is notable after the disappearance of the small boy in the first forest fire and also after the gruesome murder of Simon, when all of the boys fail to come to terms with what exactly transpired, going as far as to dismiss it completely in the first instance “How could I with them little 'uns running round like insects? Then when you three came back, as soon as you said make a fire, they all ran away, and I never had a chance -” (Golding, LOTF 46) and lying to each other and to themselves in the second, to save themselves the shame and guilt of their negligence and

brutality. “‘That was murder.’ ‘You stop it’ said Piggy shrilly. ‘What good are you doing talking like that?’” (Golding, LOTF 172) The first incident shows the danger of such dismissal, it in a way allows for the murder of Simon to happen, because when we do not learn from our past mistakes we are bound to repeat them. Even the reasoning of the boys after both situations is eerily similar. “It was an accident [...] that's what it was. An accident. [...] Coming in the dark – he hadn't no business crawling like that out of the dark. He was batty. He asked for it.” (Golding, LOTF 173) True evil then lies not only in evil acts, but also in the neglect of recognizing these acts and sweeping them under the rug. The selfish acts and negligence of the boys’ assigned duty causes many cruelties. For instance Piggy's murder is prompted by his demand that they adhere to their responsibilities, and because he is regarded as the voice of reason, that reminds the boys of their expected behaviour and gives way to feelings of guilt. “There was no Piggy to talk sense. There was no solemn assembly for debate nor dignity of the conch.” (Golding, LOTF 218) And while he is killed by an individual act of Roger he is also killed because he is what stands in the way of the hunters' selfish desires. “Cruelty is possible only when the individual either neglects his individual human responsibility for other individuals or else neglects his social responsibility for the welfare of his entire group.” (Farley 9)

Ignorance

Closely tied to cruelty in the *Lord of the Flies* is another evil, Ignorance. Ignorance is what enables the cruel acts and also provides shelter from feelings of guilt and shame about what has been done. While ignorance in itself is not evil, its implications are. Ignorance begets evil. The evil of it lies in rejecting the reality of a situation and therefore allowing for it to be dismissed. Most of the tragic events that happen in the novel happen because the boys choose to ignore Piggy's, Ralph's and Simon's demands and remarks, simply because they stand in the way of their fun. “I was talking about smoke! Don't you want to be rescued? All you can talk about is pig, pig, pig!” (Golding, LOTF 55) Notably, Piggy's ideas while providing the island society crucial help for survival are often brushed off in favour of making fun of him and eventually, as they succumb to savagery, in favour of taking his life and therefore erasing the last voice of reason that stood between them and chaos. Ignorance is comfort, it is what allows the boys to abandon all strains civilization put on them. It could of course be easily filed away as children being children, of course they would prioritize fun over responsibility, but when one keeps in mind that these are characters and situations Golding uses to convey a certain message regarding human nature it is clear that dismissing it would do his work a

great disservice. “Ideally, society should serve all men; *Lord of the Flies* demonstrates that it often does not.” (Farley 12)

Abuse of Power

The underlying point of concurrence of all the evils presented in the novel is the abuse or perversion of constructs commonly not associated with evil. These constructs include for example power, intellect, language and authority. None of these are essentially evil when used properly, but they are nonetheless powerful tools when they serve evil purposes. The abuse of power and authority is quite clear in the distinction between how Ralph tries to use power in a way that is beneficial for every member of the makeshift society, while Jack, power-hungry, takes advantage of his previous authority as a choir leader and by the end of the novel establishes himself a dictator and uses his authority to organize a hunt for the last person who refuses to pledge allegiance to him, Ralph. This distinction is especially pronounced in each character's approach to the conch, a symbol of democracy and equality. “‘I got the conch,’ Said Piggy indignantly. ‘You let me speak!’ ‘The conch doesn't count on top of the mountain,’ said Jack, ‘so you shut up.’” (Golding, LOTF 42) Intellect, or more precisely implements of intelligence, is also misused severely and causes great evil in the end. Piggy's glasses provide the boys with fire that is crucial to their survival as well as their hope of flagging down help and they are also essential to Piggy's own existence as they provide him with sight. At the same time, however, they are also an instrument used to set fire to the forest, effectively trapping Ralph in the inferno he barely escapes. “Fire, the glasses [...] are in themselves, amoral. It is their perversion by man for evil purposes to which Golding objects.” (Farley 15)

Another construct severely abused in the novel is language. Golding often uses language to underline the points he is striving to make, and as such, the language used in both *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors* plays an important part, even if it is more subtle in the first novel. It is used to distort the reality of the situation to either provide comfort or deniability. Many statements throughout the book are carefully worded to provide excuses or dismiss the tragic truth of what had transpired. For instance, the murders of Piggy and Simon are only ever referred to as deaths and when Ralph thinks about them in the midst of fearing for his own safety he calls the other boys savages, rather than boys, to distance them and himself from the horrors, before once again calling it an accident.

“He argued unconvincingly that they would let him alone; perhaps even make an outlaw of him. But then the fatal unreasoning knowledge came to him again. The

breaking of the conch and the deaths of Piggy and Simon lay over the island like a vapour. These painted savages would go further and further. [...] “No. They're not as bad as that. It was an accident.”

(Golding, LOTF 204)

Even Piggy who is usually the voice of truth and reason purposefully misuses language and lies after the murder of Simon in order to relieve his conscience. ““It was dark. There was that – that bloody dance. There was lightning and thunder and rain. We was scared!’ ‘I wasn’t scared,’ [...] ‘We was scared!’ said Piggy excitedly. ‘Anything might have happened. It wasn’t – what you said.’” (Golding, LOTF 173) Jack also misuses language for his own purposes when he speaks about the non-existence of the beast in the woods for his own benefit, which is to demonstrate his bravery, rather than calming the frightened boys. “I've been all over this island. By myself. If there was a beast I'd have seen it,” (Golding, LOTF 77)

Civilization vs. Savagery

As the *Lord of the Flies* is an allegorical novel, the central theme of the book, the battle between good and evil, or more specifically the battle of civilization and savagery, is epitomized in a literal battle between the two protagonists, Ralph and Jack. These two characters represent the fundamental clash of two basic instincts found in humans, the civilizing instinct and the savage instinct. It should be noted, that in the *Lord of the Flies* Golding repeatedly associates the instinct of savagery with evil, and in contrast, but to a lesser degree the instinct of civilization with goodness, with one noteworthy exception which is Simon. Every important character in the book, or at least every character individually mentioned by a name and that plays a larger role in the events on the island, represents a specific trait that can be attributed to some degree to either one of these instincts, or lack of thereof. Each of these boys also represents a different degree of commitment to these instincts. For instance, while Jack and Ralph are embodiments of civilization and savagery, they themselves are not positioned on the extremes of the scale. These positions are occupied by two secondary characters – Piggy and Roger. Roger represents a being that is completely savage, without any attributes of a member of a civilized society, while Piggy does not seem to have any savage inclinations whatsoever throughout most of the book and he represents the voice of reason until his tragic death. This is interesting, because given the fact that Jack and Ralph are the principal characters, they should be expected to be the representatives of each side. The Alignment system can be helpful in providing insight as to why Golding assigned

these positions to the secondary characters. As has been previously stated, Golding does not believe that civilization necessarily equals good, and that is why Jack and Ralph are opposites by their belonging to either good or evil but are similar by their approach to law and rules. On the other hand Roger and Piggy are completely different and the only thing that they have in common is that they are both the extremes of the civilization vs. savagery, or law vs. chaos axes. The reason why Roger and Piggy are blatant personifications of savagery and civilization is because it encourages Golding's point: Roger is undoubtedly "the evil one" in the book, but Piggy, his opposite in every way, does not fit the label "the good one" as could be expected and this position is occupied by someone completely removed from the equation - Simon.

In order for Golding to get his point about the nature and source of evil across, the characterization of his heroes is in all respects simple. This polarization of characters and their clear links to specific aspects of the two basic instincts could lead to a pretty straight-forward analysis of the novel, there is however one notable discrepancy and that is the character of Simon. Simon is the only one on the island that does not seem to be affected by any sort of innate evil whatsoever. But his goodness strikingly does not come from him being civilized, but rather from him being almost astonishingly in sync with the natural world, which gives him almost a transcendental aura as he seems to possess the knowledge the other boys do not and cannot reach. This is an important detail, because while Golding repeatedly stresses that savagery is the source of evil and cruelty, it is according to him the natural state of human constitution before the boundaries of civilization were constructed to control these animal impulses. Therefore it is quite remarkable that Simon is the only one impervious to evil and he does so by tapping into the very essence of human nature that enables the other boys' brutality.

Savagery in the *Lord of the Flies*

Lord of the Flies is a novel predominantly occupied by answering one question. What is the source of evil within man? In the novel Golding attributes the root of evil to man's savage nature. That is to say, he implies that the evil is etched into our very essence and the only reason people do not act in a cruel, selfish or brutal manner all the time is because we had to establish rules in order to be able to live with each other in relative peace. "*Lord of the Flies*, [...] points to three basic sources of that evil: man's untrammelled fear of the unknown and unnameable, his limited ability to see himself and his situation clearly, and his basic instincts,

or more accurately, his inherent savagery.” (Farley 39) Golding sets out to explore man's propensity to evil and the role civilized society plays in its existence.

The conflict between civilization and savagery is expressed by each of the main character's approach to power and authority. Ralph's idea of government closely follows what he is used to from his upbringing in Britain, while Jack opts for a decidedly totalitarian type of leadership, one which allows him to control a large portion of the group and gives him the power to reach his own goals. At the beginning of the novel Golding puts emphasis on one specific function of civilization that is that it provides us with means to keep our savage instincts in check and even to use them productively. Within the bounds of civilized society Jack is not a threat, because all of the attributes that make him the villain of the piece in the end, are used in moderation and towards productive goals (he used to be the leader of the choir before the plane crash). It is therefore not savagery in itself that is the problem, because as long as we still recognize it and decide to suppress our urges for the benefit of the whole group, savage instincts are what drive us forward. This is the main point Golding wants the reader to understand, evil does without a doubt come within, it is perhaps inevitable, but civilization, while not being able to eradicate it completely, not even in children, can subdue it.

Savagery is instinctual then, and for the most part inescapable as it is the very base of our nature. What contributes to this fact is that other basic instincts and needs are closely connected to it, such as hunger, fear or the need for self-preservation. For example, striving for self-preservation is partly what drives most of the boys to associate themselves with the strongest group on the island, the hunters, partly it is their hunger.

Golding does not mean to imply that human beings are inherently completely evil and that goodness is only a construct of civilization, he does however stress that violent inclinations are, and in some instances they simply cannot be controlled nor bound by any kind of rules or external circumstances. Anybody can act cruelly in a situation that puts them out of their customary setting regardless of their education, intelligence or upbringing. Savagery is our predisposition and it cannot be weeded out, just suppressed.

The novel also features many symbols and tools that facilitate the susceptibility to savagery. The most notable being the face-paint, or the masks the hunters put on when they hunt. They allow the boys to give in to their inner beast without facing the consequences of what they have done, and they also serve as a tool of lessening the humanity of the boys as well as

making the whole situation seem like a harmless game. These masks are a bridge over the rules of society that the boys have been taught, by hiding their faces they effectively become hunters rather than schoolboys that are expected to behave in a certain way. Additionally, the masks also provide a certain level of anonymity, making it simpler to spread the guilt and responsibility of an individual amongst the whole group, diminishing it in the process. They allow them to take on a new identity and facilitate acts that are savage at best and heinous at worst.

Above all else, the novel states quite clearly that savagery, brutality and cruelty stem from fear. This is very meaningful, because it consists of a rejection of the Christian concept of the roots of evil. In the *Lord of the Flies* the Beast within the woods, which many believe to be a personification of Satan, feared by the boys is not actually the source of any evil, because the source is within the boys themselves. It is the fear and the inability to recognize this that drives the boys into savagery. "Simon became inarticulate in his effort to express mankind's essential illness." (Golding, LOTF 89) Neither Ralph nor Piggy, while maintaining their civilized moral code, are impervious to evil acts, they simply choose for the most part not to follow their instincts and instead focus all their will and hope in the possibility of rescue and return to civilization, but it is arguable whether this resolve would stand had Piggy not been killed and Ralph saved by the naval officer. It is their ability to recognize the evil that lurks within them that prevents them from giving into it, an ability the other boys, consumed by the irrational fear of the Beast, do not have.

An important theme connected to that of savagery is the role of an individual within a group. One of the main reasons the boys revert to savagery is the reluctance to put the needs of the whole group above individual desires. This is perhaps the only part of the novel where Golding's choice of children as protagonists allows for a certain lenience. In general the setting of the novel is what attributes to the frightening urgency of Golding's conclusions about human nature, but in this case there is room for reprieve. In this context, Ralph's idea of how the makeshift society should cooperate and work towards their survival and rescue requires hard work and sacrificing of individual pleasures. On the other hand, Jack's approach to the time spent on the island offers for the boys, at least at first glance, an easy and pleasurable way to spend time doing whatever they want, which, because they are children, includes games and previously unimaginable adventures, such as hunting for wild pigs. While it is hardly an excuse considering what Jack's leadership eventually precipitates, it allows at least for an easier understanding.

Given the fact that excluding Ralph, Simon and Piggy all the boys on the island eventually succumb to savagery completely, the conclusion that Golding, and by extension the reader, arrives at is that the savage instinct is fundamental to man's nature, and that the only thing standing between us and evil is the rules we make for ourselves.

THE INHERITORS

The Inheritors is the second novel by William Golding, published in 1955. The novel recounts a fictional scenario of the extinction of a group of Neanderthals at the hands of a group of Homo sapiens.

It explores the fall of Neanderthals and their replacement in the world by the more advanced, intelligent and more sophisticated species: Homo sapiens. Within the context of the book, the Neanderthals are referred to as the people and the Homo sapiens are referred to as the new people. While the plot line is easy to follow and its characters are relatively simple, the message it carries is anything but and the novel is in fact very far from being an easy read.

The majority of the book, save for the last two chapters, is narrated by one of the Neanderthals, Lok. Considering this, the reader faces a great difficulty at the beginning of *The Inheritors*, because the narration is limited not only by the fairly primitive perspective of Lok's mind but also by the simplicity of the language the Neanderthals use. Moreover, even though Lok is the main character of the book, he is very simple even within the context of his own species. Therefore the reader must draw his own conclusions out of a very limited description of what is happening. Another important detail is that the characters are not overly developed and given their vague and similar names it is very difficult to distinguish one from another, especially at the beginning.

In the first half of the book Golding explores the nature of the life of the people. The people use very simple language that reflects their way of thinking, which is heavily based on images and emotions. The story follows their journey to a cave where they spend most of the year, excluding the winter, and the reader is as the story unfolds acquainted with their way of life. Contrary to the general perception of Neanderthals, the people in the book are loving and peaceful, rarely expressing any sort of violent emotion. For example, they are incapable of killing an animal, even though they are almost starved to death. They eat meat when they find an animal killed by another in order to survive, but even then they are disgusted by the sight of the cadaver.

The second part of the book introduces the new people, the Homo sapiens. The breaking point of the book their presence brings, however, comes much earlier, without the knowledge of the people and the reader respectively, at the beginning of the novel with the disappearance of the log the people use to cross the river. By the time they are introduced to the story, the new

people, although inadvertently, caused the first death of one of the people. From the point the two species meet, the fate of the Neanderthals is sealed.

The Inheritors explores similar themes to the *Lord of the Flies*. That is the concept of man's innate nature and whether evil comes from within or whether its source is external. Moreover, it contemplates the nature of savagery, although the conclusions this novel draws are perhaps slightly different than those in the previous one. "Both are about an encounter between civilisation and savagery, and both suggest new ways of interpreting those terms. Both recount the killing of the innocent." (Carey)

Language of the Neanderthals

"In a tour de force of narrative subtlety, my father uses our language to show the lives of people who don't really have it." (Judy Golding)

The language Golding used in *The Inheritors* is important and therefore should be discussed. While the main characters of the book, that is to say, the group of Neanderthals speak in short sentences and their communication skills are very simple and lack any advanced constructs, they at the same time speak in such a way that effortlessly communicates their connectedness to the world they live in. "the people communicate by "sharing pictures" or imagining simultaneously images of events. Through these "pictures" the reader has access to the Neanderthal's past and tradition." (Tiger 81) The narrative style of the novel is difficult for the reader to follow, as it is at times too simple and vague to properly describe the events that transpire. But it is perhaps the novel's greatest asset as it provides an interesting exercise in imagination, because it allows the reader to experience the story in the mind-set of its protagonists. "The greatness of *The Inheritors* does not depend, however, on Golding imagining what Neanderthals might have been like. It depends on the language he fashions to express it. He accepts the colossal stylistic challenge of seeing everything from a Neanderthal point of view. By feats of language that are at first bewildering, he takes us inside a being whose senses are acute, but who cannot connect sensations into a train of thought. This is a being whose awareness is a stream of metaphors and for whom everything is alive." (Carey) It also stresses Golding's point, that while the people are undoubtedly a less advanced species than the new people, they act and think like a community in a way the new people are unable to. The instinctual and pictorial way the people think and speak in determines the way they behave towards each other and the way they see the world and act. Golding avoids any future or past tenses in their speech and instead employs a trait akin to telepathy and has the group

share pictures in their minds of events, usually based on emotions and senses. This attunement to each other's emotions is the cause of their peaceful nature.

He looked at the water then at each of the people in turn, and they waited. "I have a picture." He freed a hand and put it flat on his head as if confining the images that flickered there. "Mal is not old but clinging to his mother's back. There is more water not only here but along the trail where we came. A man is wise. He makes men take a tree that has fallen and – "His eyes deep in their hollows turned to the people imploring them to share a picture with him. He coughed again, softly. The old woman carefully lifted her burden. At last Ha spoke. "I do not see this picture." The old man sighed and took his hand away from his head. "Find a tree that has fallen."

(Golding, TI 16)

They only recognize violence common in nature, one that has purpose, such as animals killing and eating each other, but they are unable to comprehend arbitrary acts of evil, as is clear in Lok's inability to recognize he is being attacked. "His ears twitched and he turned to the tree. By his face there had grown a twig: a twig that smelt of other and of goose, and of the bitter berries that Lok's stomach told him he must not eat. [...] His nose examined this stuff and did not like it. [...] He was lost in a generalized astonishment and excitement." (Golding, TI 16)

This is one of the many differences between the two groups that ultimately lets Golding develop his argument about savagery and the nature of man.

The People vs. the New People

In the *Lord of the Flies*, each character represents a distinct aspect of human inclinations and is used to orchestrate the clash between the civilizing and savage instinct that allows Golding to draw a conclusion about human nature. Such is not the case in *The Inheritors*. The characters in the novel are not developed enough. There is however a character study in a manner of speaking to be done. While the main conflict between savagery and civilization in the *Lord of the Flies* is personified in the battle between Ralph and Jack, it is embodied in the fight for survival between two separate species in *The Inheritors*.

The Noble Savages

Golding references the Neanderthals in the novel as the people, they are the main protagonists and most of the book is written from their perspective. There are only eight people left from what it is implied was once a much larger group, due to an event they call the Great Fire. The members of the group are not all introduced and described at once, they are revealed as the story progresses. Even though their names and appearances are quite similar, and not every member of the group is described in such detail that the reader would be able to envision him or her completely, some members are noteworthy. Mal is the oldest and the leader of the tribe despite his age and despite the fact he is clearly not the strongest one, he is said to be able to see the most pictures, which implies he is one of the wisest. Opposed to Mal, Lok, the principal character of the book, is arguably the least intelligent one amongst the adults. He is described as strong and fast, yet cowardly at the beginning of the book and very child-like. Other members of the people are the Old Woman, a guardian of the fire and knowledge, presumably at least as wise as Mal, if not more, that is to say, able to see many pictures in her head, Nil and Fa the two young women of the tribe, both implied to be mothers of the children, Ha a fairly unspecified male and two children, Liku and the New One.

The language, the names and the way the people think, communicate and make sense of the world around them is written as very simple, giving the reader an immediate source for comparison, when the new people are introduced. Yet considering this, they are in many ways more advanced than the new people. Most importantly, they are kind. Kindness is not a trait commonly associated with primitive cultures and less advanced societies, but Golding makes a point of showing their imperviousness to cruelty and violence, generally speaking, all the traits associated with savagery.

Using once again the Alignment system, the whole group of Neanderthals fall somewhere between “true neutrals” and “neutral good”. They are innocent, compassionate, kind and guided by instinct rather than conscious decision. The notable aspect of their characteristics is that while they are guided by instinct, which would typically imply ruthlessness and even viciousness for the purposes of survival and other personal benefits, they are completely peaceful and benevolent creatures. They are good by their nature, they lack both the civilizing and savage instinct and instead their primary predisposition is harmony.

The savage individuals

The new people, are obviously more advanced, be it in speech, in the complexity of their thinking and language, names and in general being the more developed species. However, it is clear, that they lost the innate goodness of the Neanderthals. The kindness and peacefulness of the people stems from their instinctual and spiritual way of living, which is something the new people are not capable of.

Above all the inner workings of the new people's society is fundamentally different from that of the people. The people live together and understand each other completely without any kind of advanced communicative skills, they truly function as a homogeneous group, one can even make a point about a collective consciousness "The three of them stood and looked at each other. Then, as so often happened with the people, there were feelings between them. Fa and Nil shared a picture of Ha thinking." (Golding, TI 14). On the other hand, the new people's community is structurally more complex, a certain hierarchy can be inferred, their names are more distinguishable from one another as is their gender. As elaborate as their social system may be, unlike the people, they are incapable of the same level of togetherness, that is to say the ability to function as one entity. They are first and foremost individuals which consequently means their primary instinct is to care for themselves, and the concern for the well-being of the group comes second to this tendency.

What was a sail, thought Tuami bitterly, when Vivani wanted to be comfortable? What a fool Marlan was, at his age, to have run off with her for her great heart and wit, her laughter and her white, incredible body! And what fools we were to come with him, forced by his magic, or at any rate forced by some compulsion there are no words for! He looked at Marlan, hating him, and thought of the ivory dagger that he had been grinding so slowly to a point. [...] Not long now, thought Tuami, when we are safe and out of the devil's country I shall dare to use the ivory-point.

(Golding, TI 226)

The individual identity of members of the new people's tribe brings many advantages, the most obvious is that it is precisely the reason for their structural superiority. Be that as it may, it offers many impediments also. As their leading drive is self-preservation, they cannot reach the same level of comfort the Neanderthals can. In other words, the Neanderthals live and

function as one, all their experiences are shared, that also means that the impact of these experiences is distributed between them and is therefore less harsh. “people understand each other” (Golding, TI 71) The new people go through everything separately and therefore when fear grips them it drives them to panic and they are unable to cope in any other way than to violently lash out, which ultimately leads to the main conflict of the book and the demise of the Neanderthals.

Aligning the new people is a little trickier than in the case of the Neanderthals, because of their individuality. Some members of the group, for example Marlan, Tuami or Vivani could be classified individually, however, it is unnecessary, because unlike the respective characters in *Lord of the Flies* their characterization has very little impact on Golding's main objective. As a group they can be considered “chaotic evil”. This is because, while they are a civilization, their actions are not governed by reason or rules, they are completely arbitrary and even though it seems contradictory, savage.

Savagery in *The Inheritors*

In *Lord of the Flies* Golding writes about good and evil by telling a story about a fight between groups of children, each embodying various degrees of characteristics associated with civilization and savagery. Similarly, in *The Inheritors*, Golding stages a fight between two groups, this time however, these groups are (seemingly at least) direct representatives of the contemporary understanding of savagery and civilization, even though the latter is only in its beginnings.

In the terms of modern vernacular, the Neanderthals are what we call savages. They are by all means the less evolved species, inferior to the new people in their abilities, intelligence and speech and they lack the skill-set necessary to survive the overtaking of their territory by another, more advanced species. The new people represent the first instance of the origins of civilization, evident for example in the organization of their group and in the way they behave within the community. That being said, Golding attributes to each group exactly the opposite features that one would expect based on our present understanding of the terms civilization and savagery.

None of the instances of evil present in the book are attributed to the Neanderthals, in fact, they are time and time again described as incapable of any violence or cruelty whatsoever, not even for the purpose of their own survival. “Lok is coming back to the fall. He runs along the

side of the mountain. He carries a deer. A cat has killed the deer and sucked its blood, so there is no blame.” “This is bad. But cat killed you so there is no blame.” (Golding, TI 37) Moreover, they are shown to not even be capable of understanding violence, as they lack the motives and impulses that would propel such an act. “[...] evils such as cruelty, anger and hate are utterly incomprehensible to one who has never encountered them before.” (Farley 21) This can be seen when Lok mistakes arrows shot at him as presents of some kind from the new people. “He looked towards the island, saw the bushes move, then one of the twigs came twirling across the river and vanished beyond him in the forest. He had a confused idea that someone was trying to give him a present. He would have smiled across at the bone-faced man but no one was visible there and the open space was still full of the faint excruciating echo of Liku screaming.” (Golding, TI 111)

In the minds of the people, the only situation that they associate with violence or cruelty is an animal stalking and slaying its prey. However even when Lok traces the steps of Ha and catches the scent of the new people, immediately liking it to a scent of an animal hunting: “With the scent of other I am other. I creep like a cat. I am frightened and greedy. I am strong.” (Golding, TI 97) he recognizes that it is not a scent of an animal, but rather a being similar to himself and is unable to link the two experiences together, meaning he cannot imagine a creature like him, but with the capacity for evil. ““He is like a cat and he is not like a cat. He is also like, like -’ The picture went out of his head for a while. He scratched himself under the mouth. There were so many things to be said. He wished he could ask Mal what it was that joined a picture to a picture so that the last of many came out of the first.” (Golding, TI 94) On the other hand, the new people exhibit characteristics commonly associated with what we now label as savagery or savage behaviour. In the simplest terms, the new people, unlike the people, are capable of evil. And not just any kind of evil, but wanton evil, evil without purpose.

While at the first look, the novel seems to follow the same pattern as *Lord of the Flies* and recounts the clash between civilization and savagery, it in fact tells a different story. This is because while the people are what we call savages in our time, they do not display any traits attributed to savagery, be it savagery according to the general understanding of the word, or savagery as Golding sees it. Rather it is a commentary about the savage nature of humans seen through the eyes of beings completely devoid of such a nature.

Golding's aim in both novels is to make an argument about the root of evil. By extension, is evil inherent to the savage parts or the civilized parts of humans. Despite the modern

understanding of the term savagery, it is clear that Golding sees it not in the primitive and uncivilized Neanderthals, but in the group of Homo sapiens. Savagery is an ambiguous term, because its meaning is constantly changing and everybody interprets it differently. One thing that is a constant to this term, however, is the link between savagery and evil, these two concepts are firmly linked. To understand why the savages in *The Inheritors* are in fact the civilized (or good) ones and vice versa, we must discern what savagery means for Golding.

WILLIAM GOLDING'S UNDERSTANDING OF SAVAGERY

What then can we infer about Golding's definition of savagery? When comparing the novels it would at first seem that they convey two opposite messages. In the *Lord of the Flies*, savagery manifests itself when the children let go of the shackles of civilization and revert to their natural unbridled instincts. In *The Inheritors*, savagery and savage acts are attributed to the more evolved species, and is closely tied with their superior intellectual capacity and technological advancement, that is to say, with their higher level of civilization. It would seem that these ideas are polar opposites. However, that is decidedly not what Golding meant to say. The confusion probably lies in the fact that, while it is clear Golding writes about Neanderthals, thus not our direct predecessors, he references them as the people, which makes the reader identify himself with them. However, they are not people and their role in the novel is not to serve as the epitome of savagery to be compared to the new people – the epitome of civilization. *The Inheritors* is not about the clash of civilization and savagery, but rather about the existence of these two instincts within man recounted by beings lacking both of those instincts.

According to Golding then, savagery is not at all related to a lack of intelligence, technological advancement or higher level of social organization. In fact it can very well be argued that it is precisely the complexity of mind where evil lurks. Both novels are teeming with scepticism about the value of intelligence and the goodness of civilized people, which is something Golding acquired during his time serving in the World War II.

I had discovered what one man could do to another. I am not talking of one man killing another with a gun, or dropping a bomb on him or blowing him up or torpedoing him. I am thinking of the vileness beyond all words that went on, year after year, in the totalitarian states. [...] but there were things done during that period from which I still have to avert my mind lest I should be physically sick.

They were not done by the headhunters of New Guinea, or by some primitive tribe in the Amazon. They were done, skilfully, coldly, by educated men, doctors, lawyers, by men with a tradition of civilization behind them, to beings of their own kind. [...] anyone who moved through those years without understanding that man produces evil as a bee produces honey, must have been blind or wrong in the head.

(Golding, THG 87)

The essence of savagery as reported by Golding is precisely what he talks about in regards to his experiences during the war. It is above all cruelty of man towards his fellow man. And this cruelty, as can be inferred from both novels, comes mainly from three sources that generate savage behaviour, or in other words evil acts: fear, abuse of power and the inability of understanding the situation one is in clearly. These three sources are intertwined and out of them fear is the most prominent one and it is more specifically fear of the unknown. It is ultimately fear that drives most of the boys on the island to side with Jack and it is fear of the unfamiliar beings that prompts the new people to wipe out the Neanderthals. This fear directly leads to the abuse of power by those who exercise in savagery; fear generates unsolicited and undirected hatred that leads to cruelty. Moreover, it is important to note once again that both fear and abuse of power, or even the striving for it, are products of higher intelligence, something attributed to civilization and civilized society. "Man fears because he imagines or recognizes that he is personally threatened. Man grasps for power only after he has foreseen or imagined the rewards that power will bring him." (Farley 48)

However, while fear and abuse of power are the dominant sources of savagery and evil in both Golding's novels, it is the inability to understand or see the situation clearly, that truly sets apart the savage instinct from the civilizing one, the good from the evil. Innately good and innocent beings are present in both novels, Simon in *Lord of the Flies* and the Neanderthals in *The Inheritors*. For the sake of the comparison, the whole tribe can be treated as one character, not only because they all present the same innocence and kindness, but because they are so connected to each other they largely behave and feel as one entity. Both these characters are impervious to evil, in the case of the Neanderthal family to such an extent it is clear they are immune to even the understanding of it. The reason for their innate goodness that they share lies in their understanding of themselves and the world around them. They exhibit empathy and harmony with everything that surrounds them, which both grants them the capacity for kindness and prevents them from acting cruelly. While Simon's

complete understanding of man's nature is not directly explained and is mostly attributed to his prophet-like status within the symbolic context of the book, the reason for the tribe's awareness of the world surrounding them is simple. The Neanderthals are in sync with the world around them, because they cannot live any other way. As animals they live and die, sleep and wake up to the rhythm of nature, with the exception of fire that provides them with warmth and light. Their position of coexisting with the world around them results in an unyielding respect for others. In addition, the Neanderthal family also benefits from their inferior intelligence, the lack of elaborate linguistic and cognitive abilities. Golding demonstrates by the way in which he writes their speech that they do not think the way we do, they only visualize and their language constructs reflect this limited cogitation – they only share pictures with each other. Given that they themselves have no capacity for evil, they are unable to understand and recognize it even when faced with it, simply because they lack the necessary skill set.

On the other hand, the new people as well as all the boys on the island apart from Simon do not understand the world around them and are incapable of such empathy that would prevent them from acting cruelly towards others. Moreover, the issue is also that while the reader knows that their understanding of the situation is limited – as for example the reader is aware of the fact that the Neanderthals do not pose any threat to the new people – the characters themselves are oblivious to this fact. It is the impression that they are fully conscious of everything pertaining to the situation that contributes to their willingness to act, because consequently their actions seem entitled and warranted. This is, albeit it is less obvious than in the case of the new people, also true of both Jack and to a lesser degree Ralph. It should, however, be noted that this does not apply to Roger.

CONCLUSION

“What are we? Humans? Or animals? Or savages?” (Golding, LOTF 98)

The term savagery is considered to have a very clear meaning and is used frequently in our day to day conversations, yet its meaning escapes clear definition and has shifted many times since its conception. The general notion of savagery implies cruelty and violence, which falls in with Golding's understanding of it, but it also heavily implies cognitive, evolutionary and technological inferiority, which is something the novels analysed in this thesis notably contradict. The theme of man's propensity for evil, that is his savage nature, is the main theme of two of his earliest novels: *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*. William Golding is an author who was deeply interested in human nature. He witnessed the extreme and terrible acts man is capable of first hand when he served during World War II, this experience marked him deeply and coerced him to a lifetime of contemplation about the nature of man and evil.

Lord of the Flies is an allegorical battle of good against evil enacted by children. In this novel Golding argues that human beings are naturally savage, and therefore evil, capable of nearly unimaginable cruelty and violence and are very scarcely behaving benevolently. Civilization and the civilizing instinct is what prevents us from being savages and also allows us to be kind to one another, however it is reasonable to question whether such kindness and goodness is substantial, when it only occurs when we restrict ourselves. Golding does just that, when he emphasizes, that even though Ralph and Piggy are without a doubt the civilized and therefore the good ones when compared to the savage and evil Jack and Roger, their goodness pales in comparison to Simon, that possesses a complete untainted innate goodness that does not come from restriction by any societal rules, but from his own nature.

In *The Inheritors* Golding elaborates on his contemplation about savagery and civilization by comparing two societies – one akin to Simon, completely devoid of any evil intent, and one riddled with it. He also furthers his point about savagery not being synonymous with a lesser level of evolutionary development, because those considered savages by us and also by the humans in the novel are in fact not savage at all. While the pattern of the novel is similar to the previous one, as it is a battle between two groups and also ends with the survival of only one member of one of these groups, *The Inheritors* is not about the battle of savages and civilized people. The Neanderthals serve as a point of view, they enable the reader to look at

the origins of our society and the essence of our nature through the eyes of innocence and goodness, while Golding once again considers man's savage nature and its roots and causes.

In both works Golding contemplates whether evil in man is inherent or external and portrays the battle between savage and civilizing instinct within humans. His works are marked by extraordinary understanding of the inner workings of human beings and an exceptional ability to illustrate the darkest parts of human nature in such a way that is understandable for everyone in years to come.

Evil is for Golding almost synonymous with savagery, good on the other hand is not strictly one and the same as civilization. Goodness stems, according to Golding, either from the rules and restrictions of civilized society that keep savage instincts of human beings in check, or conversely lies in the complete lack of both savagery and civilization. The latter is, according to Golding, the true source of goodness, because it comes from within and cannot be corrupted, lost or forgotten when the boundaries are broken or removed. The lack of both instincts can only be found in beings that are far too simple to do anything but exist peacefully within the world, as are the Neanderthals, or beings that are able to emulate such peaceful innocence by means of spirituality and empathy, as is Simon. This notion about innate goodness and innocence references Rousseau's Noble Savage Myth.

What then can be inferred from analysing the novels by William Golding about the savage and civilizing instincts within man? Man is without a doubt evil by nature. The source of evil within us is never external, it only comes from within. "Maybe it's only us." (Golding, LOTF 95) Goodness, on the other hand, stems in most of humanity from the outside, it is an imperative if one wants to live among others, but without the force that dictates this goodness, meaning civilization, man quickly reverts to his savage nature. There are many reasons for his intrinsic savagery, fear, striving for power, inability to understand oneself and others completely and the inevitable surrender to basic tendencies that are by nature selfish, because they are driven by the overpowering instinct to survive. However, this inclination of man does not allow for him to coexist with others, at least not for long, therefore the more advanced the society became, the more tamed the savage instinct of humans had to be. In other words, bar the rare individuals like Simon that are good without any motivation and/or fear of consequences of acts of evil, mankind created civilization in order to subdue its savage nature by rules and restrictions, in order to be able to live beside each other. "We've got to have rules and obey them. After all, we're not savages." (Golding, LOTF 42) Nevertheless, on account of the civilized goodness of man not being innate, the moment civilization is out of the picture,

man naturally reverts to his savage nature – order and rules are not sources of good, but because most of humans are unable to reach the true source of innate goodness, we must rely on them.

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LOTF – *Lord of the Flies*

TI – *The Inheritors*

THG – *The Hot Gates: And Other Occasional Pieces*

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