

შვიდი მომაკვდინებელი ცოდვის განსახიერება უილიამ გოლდინგის „ბუზთა ბატონში“

Embodiment of the Seven Deadly Sins in William Golding's *“Lord of the Flies”*

ლევან ტოზაშვილი

თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი

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მოცემულ სტატიაში განხილულია უილიამ გოლდინგის რომანი „ბუზთა ბატონი“, რომელიც პოსტმოდერნისტული ლიტერატურის ეპოქაში რომანტიზმისთვის დამახასიათებელ ღირებულებებს - ინდივიდუალიზმს, ბავშვურ მანკიერებას, ემოციურ ფონსა და პროგრესისადმი კრიტიკას წინა პლანზე წევს. გემოხსენებულის მეშვეობით იხსნება ერთგვარი კარიბჭე საზოგადოების იმ ნაწილისთვის, რომელიც ომიანობის კვალობაზე მორალურად დაცემულია და შვებას ვერაფერში პოულობს. „ბუზთა ბატონი“ მისი მთელი არსით წარმოადგენს სამყაროს ბნელი ნაწილის ალეგორიულ სახეს, რომელიც უკვდავია და ნებისმიერ წამს შეიძლება აბსოლუტური გახდეს. ამრიგად, მოცემული სტატიის მიზანია გოლდინგის მიერ ტექსტში უკანა ფონზე ჩამოყალიბებული ჩარჩოებში მოქცეული იდეების გახსნა და მათი ალეგორიული კავშირის დადგენა შვიდ მომაკვდინებელ ცოდვასთან, რომელთა მთავარი დანიშნულებაა წარმოადგინონ ჯერ კიდევ გამოუცდელი ეტაპზე მყოფი საზოგადოების ქვეცნობიერის არასტანდარტული განვითარების პროცესი. განვითარება, ამ შემთხვევაში, ირონიულია, რადგან იგი რეგრესული ხასიათისაა. მასში მოიაზრება პერსონაჟებში პირველყოფილური ხასიათის, სისასტიკისა და ქვეცნობიერში ჩაბუდებული სიბოროტის გამოვლინება, რომლის განვითარების საბოლოო ეტაპამდე მისვლა გარე ფაქტორების მიერ არის უზრუნველყოფილი. სტატიის ასევე არანაკლებ მნიშვნელოვანი მიზანია მოყვანილი ცოდვებისა და მათთან ასოცირებული დემონების პერსონაჟებთან და რომანში არსებულ

მოვლენებთან დაკავშირება და განხილვა, რაც ნაწილობრივ დაგვეხმარება გავშიფროთ მალული თემები, რომლებიც იმდროინდელი საზოგადოებისთვის კარდინალური მნიშვნელობის მატარებელი იყო. ადამიანის ზნეობა, მენტალური სიძლიერე, მორალი და ემოციური მდგრადობა ტექსტში წარმოადგენენ თვისებებს, რომლებიც მეტწილად ახერხებენ ზემოხსენებული კატასტროფის ჩარჩოებში მოქცევასა და მის დაბრკოლებას - თუმცა რა მოხდება, თუ საზოგადოებას არ ექნება ხსენებული ღირებულებები? სწორედ ამ კითხვაზე პასუხის დისტოპიურ ვარიანტს გვთავაზობს გოლდინგი. ავტორის მიერ შექმნილი მინიატურული საექსპერიმენტო საზოგადოების მთავარ მანიპულატორად გვევლინება ხორცშესხმული ცოდვა, რომელიც რამდენიმე ინდივიდის ქვეცნობიერში მყისიერად იდგამს ფესვს, რის შემდეგაც იგი მესამე პირი ხდება და სხვა პერსონაჟებზე უკვე მალულად მოქმედებს. ყველაფერი ბუნებრივია ზრდადია და დანესებულ კანონებსა და მის ფარგლებს არ ექვემდებარება. ამ ზრდას გარკვეულ კონტექსტში გარე-ფაქტორები უწყობს ხელს, რასაც საბოლოოდ, სავალალო შედეგამდე მივყავართ და გვაფიქრებინებს, რომ იმდროინდელი ომგამოვლილი საზოგადოება პირველყოფით გაუღიანოებული ედემის ბალის რეინკარნაციაა.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: გოლდინგი, მოდერნიზმი, ცოდვა, დემონები, ცნობიერება, საზოგადოება.

Key words: Golding, Modernism, Sin, Demons, Conscience, Society.

Introduction

Postmodern literature, in contrast to Modernism, challenges the concept of fixed meaning and instead embraces unpredictability and chaos through techniques like metafiction, unreliable narrators, self-awareness, and intertextuality (Kuiper, 2024). These methods often explore historical and political themes. Amid inevitable societal disorder influenced by continuous change, William Golding, driven by his disenchantment with the violence and brutality of war, revives romantic values in society through his novel *Lord of the Flies*. Romanticism focused on emotion, individualism, reverence for the past, and nature (Matthias, 2024). Intense emotion was seen as a source of Aestheticism, emphasizing feelings of sympathy, awe, wonder, and terror, often dotting these to the concepts of the "beautiful" and the "ugly". In "Lord of the Flies," William Golding adopts a straightforward writing style that hides the novel's allegorical nature and imbues the characters and objects with symbolic meaning for the sole purpose of conveying the central themes and concepts essential to his contemporary society. The main topic of concern for Golding turns out to be the transcendence of human nature that amalgamates according to the state of the world. Allegorical symbols from the book deceptively, but rightfully speak on behalf of the individuals who were amid war-induced crisis. Terror, fear, panic, and regression of human conscience drive the plot of the

story to ultimately paint a realistic picture that some may eventually relate to. The turning point for society always turns out to be the actions of their representative leaders, thus, if we look at the matter from that perspective, Golding's island and our war-induced world have much in common.

The plot of “Lord of the Flies” follows a group of young boys stranded on an island following a plane crash. Initially, they try to democratically establish norms, order, and rules, however, despite their efforts, the situation deteriorates as they indulge in savagery, slowly moving towards darker impulses. The brutality generated by the island unmasks the primal nature of humankind, which eventually paves the way for the author to introduce the phenomena of sin to the matter.

The Sins of Pride and Wrath

The seven deadly sins (pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth) are naturally connected to their representative demons (Colón, 2024). According to my personal interpretation, configuring each sin and demon to apply to characters that resemble them the most will elucidate the matter of the textual importance of sin to the human conscience. The first sin, the sin of pride, connected to Lucifer, is what acts as a leitmotif for the actions that start the degradation of the bunch. Character-wise, the ones that resemble Lucifer the most are Jack and Ralph and the first trait to underline that fact is their leadership capabilities. Both boys step forward to take on the challenges that accompany the process of survival and without any contemplation try to strengthen their position as headmen, but, at last, the deciding factor is the allegorical shell they found ashore, which is symbolic in many cases to come. As the voice of Lucifer was the symbol of unity for demons, the sound of the shell united the inhabitants of the island under their newly elected leader – Ralph. Even from the first pages of the book, we see the arrogance and pride of Ralph overtake his conscience, making him appear more reliable to the children and boys of the island. As for Jack, his pride is seen in his reaction to Ralph's commanding attitude toward the group. It affects his ego and plants a seed of envy in his conscience that will eventually start to grow on his personality and alas regress his moral sense, which results in creating chaos. Besides their persona, the resemblance between the characters and the mentioned demon can also be seen in their physical traits - Ralph was a handsome boy with long golden hair and Jack was a red-haired, blue-eyed boy, and from different sources, both descriptions can be aligned with the appearance of Lucifer.

The reason Jack was brought as the prototype of Lucifer in this paper isn't only because of his pride, but also because his character development resembles the fall of Lucifer accompanied by his metamorphosis to Satan, which, according to the seven deadly sins, is connected with the sin of wrath (Colón, 2024). The character worthy of that position is Jack if we take into consideration his savage and unethical ways of survival. Taking the life of a living being, even under extreme circumstances, triggers a reaction within the human mind, leading to a divided conscience: one aspect justifies the action, while the other condemns it. The surrounding environment often serves as a mediator, influencing our judgment of whether our actions are morally right. In Jack's case, the corruptive influence of the island led him to moral

banishment, pushing him towards doing acts that bring dishonour. External factors can manipulate our thoughts and actions, much like how Cain's wrath led to him becoming history's first murderer (Gaur, 2024). Jack, similarly consumed by his inner desires and outer voices, transformed into what others could not – a killer. Fueled by rage, Jack's once-promising persona begins to crumble, tampered by sin he starts to encompass the other boys in his corrupted will. Like Lucifer's fall from grace, Jack transitions from the protagonist to an antagonist, which is symbolized by the moral transformation he undergoes, which is even reflected in the paint he applies to his face – “he capered toward Bill, and the mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness” (Golding, 1954, p. 75).

Tribunal of Sins

As for the five other sins, their presence is best seen in the actions the boys take and not in individual approaches as was the case with Jack and Ralph. For the sin of sloth, we may target the attitude of boys towards the things that need to be done to thrive on the island, but on the contrary, responsibilities sometimes are hard to meet even for adults. As for the sins of lust and greed, they are realized in situations where the phenomena of power are at hand. Of course, power was necessary for the survival of the bunch but in the end, it resulted in the degradation of the conscience and well-being of the whole group.

To solve the sin-filled puzzle that acts as a leitmotif of the book, we can interpret the sins as a trial that forces the attending crowd to indulge in its art of treachery. The complex nature of a grown human's mind creates some kind of an outer barrier for our conscience that filters out the inferior concepts of brutality, sin, and forced degradation. Its existence would naturally act as a beacon of salvation in this situation and all of the above said wouldn't materialize itself, but for the plot to adopt a demonstrative sense, Golding implemented kids as the target for sin. I quote: “Among adults, the tree we call “life force” grows through the body like a tree. The condition of this life force trees and humans are direct reflections of each other. Thus, if the branches of this tree are broken, or the trunk starts to rot in the early stages of human development, the person is weakened and is susceptible to all kinds of afflictions” (Holmberg, 1990) – Golding chose children as targets to vividly illustrate the dreadful impact of sin. Their vulnerable nature served as an ideal canvas for the author's ideological expressive means. The mentioned is often felt throughout the text – ““grownups know things”, said Piggy. They ain't afraid of the dark. They'd meet and have tea and discuss. Then things 'ud be all right” (Golding, 1954, p.114). The innocence of the boys is swiftly overshadowed by the harsh reality they encounter, leaving no room for speculation. Each sin serves as a lesson, yet the ability to learn from them relies on the individual's conscience. In this case, the sinners are children whose moral values are still developing. As they progress from one stage of the trial to the next, they descend to a primal state, amalgamating and merging their mind with the main entity of the island.

The introduction of only boys to the text brought forth another significant notion to the dilemma: the accusation that Golding displayed sexism towards women. Initially, there's a stereotype that associates boys with violence and girls with a peaceful, docile nature.

Considering this, Golding's choice to feature solely boys in the narrative can be interpreted as a deliberate act to emphasize the themes encountered throughout the book.

The Sin of Gluttony

During the part of the discussion focused on sins, the sin of gluttony was left out due to its pivotal association with the primary hostile force in the book—the beast that terrifies the young boys. The reason gluttony is linked to the beast is because the text later describes it as the "Lord of the Flies," a reference to Beelzebub, a demon associated with the mentioned sin. "Beelzebub, in the Bible, the prince of the devils. In the Old Testament, in the form Baalzebub, it is the name given to the god of the Philistine city of Ekron" (Lotha, 2024). A question that may arise among readers is why the book features Beelzebub as the central figure. The answer lies in the background of this particular entity. According to his many aliases, Beelzebub is an alternate name for Satan, Therefore, if we logically intertwine the facts, it can be inferred that only Satan would manipulate the vulnerable minds of individuals to acquire pleasure from their suffering. In addition, we can attach a healthy amount of significance to the fact that Beelzebub is explicitly the lord of the Flies. Flies, in general, are associated with rot, thus, the expected cynical decline of the boys' pure nature can be foreseen if we emphasize the significance of the mentioned fact – as they move further into the depths of sin, the more they rot from the inside.

Moreover, when examining specific details within the text, such as the children mistaking various objects for the beast — firstly as a snake and secondly, as a toad —the parallels with Milton's "Paradise Lost" become evident. In "Paradise Lost", Satan initially takes the form of a snake and then a toad. Additionally, the narrative implicitly underlines the presence of Beelzebub when Simon experiences an epileptic seizure – "there isn't anyone to help you. Only me. And I'm the beast... fancy thinking the beast was something you could hunt and kill!... you knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's a no go? Why things are the way they are?" (Golding, 1954, p.176). Seizure is a phenomenon historically associated with demonic possession in medieval Christianity (Owczarek, 2013).

The symbol of the pig's head represents the embodiment of evil within the boys' conscience. Realization of evil in the sense of Christianity solely depends on the strength of our beliefs. Given that the boys lacked significant life experience and acted on primal instincts they were morally under-equipped to resist an entity like Beelzebub. These circumstances gradually shape the boys' perceptions and behaviours. As they strive for "salvation," their descent into corruption becomes more evident as sin starts to compel them to commit atrocities unimaginable to their former selves - The longer you stare into the abyss, the stronger it stares back at you.

The Garden of Eden

The potential allegorical connection the island may have to the Garden of Eden further underlines the importance of the phenomena of sin in "Lord of the Flies". Just as Adam and Eve intended to establish a paradise for survival per set rules, the boys on the island restrained themselves from anything but the vegetation of the island, consuming fruits, berries, and such.

However, their innocence was ultimately corrupted by a malevolent influence—analogous to Satan in Milton's narrative and Beelzebub in Golding's tale. The pig meat can symbolize the apple that led to Eve's temptation, resulting in the collapse of their societal structure. Furthermore, the appearance of Satan in the forms of a toad and a snake, as it was previously mentioned, speaks for itself.

So, why did the thematic connection between the Garden of Eden and Golding's island captivate the interest of his contemporary audience? Besides exploring the metamorphosing nature of the human mind and its sensitivity to external influences, the book delves into the challenges faced by people in the dark 20th century, particularly being in the midst of war-thirsty rulers. The island could be interpreted as a vivid interpretation of the battlefield Golding experienced during his military service. The depravity of the society from its life source finds its embodiment in the figure of Beelzebub, while the individuals forced into war mirror the boys on the island—some meet tragic fate, while others emerge alive but forever changed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, William Golding's "Lord of the Flies" serves as an exploration of the human condition amidst chaos and societal breakdown. Through the allegorical framework of sin and the metamorphosical portrayal of characters, Golding masterfully illustrates the descent from innocence to transgression in the face of external influences. The sins of pride and wrath, embodied by characters like Ralph and Jack, serve as a core for the moral degradation witnessed on the island. Moreover, the presence of other sins such as sloth, lust, and greed further complicates the moral landscape, ultimately leading to the collapse of societal norms. The symbolic significance of Beelzebub, portrayed as the lord of the flies, representative of gluttony, adds layers to the narrative, drawing parallels to biblical themes and highlighting the darkness within humanity. Golding's choice to focus solely on boys in the narrative creates discussions on gender issues and societal expectations, while also emphasizing the vulnerability of youth to external influences. Furthermore, the thematic connection between the island and the Garden of Eden underlines the timeless nature of the novel's message. Just as Adam and Eve succumbed to temptation in the garden, the boys on the island are lured into darkness by the malevolent force of Beelzebub, mirroring the challenges faced by humanity in the 20th century. In essence, "Lord of the Flies" serves as a tale about the fragility of civilization and the potential for moral decay in the face of misfortune. Golding's primary objective, in his own amalgamous way, was to convey the idea that the sins and their symbolic demons dwelling within our minds serve as hurdles on the path to salvation. The principal thing is to not trip on them, because we never know when our demons might come to life. The alienation we feel from external influences underscores the importance of maintaining our integrity and manipulating these challenges as opportunities for personal growth.

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ავტორის შესახებ:

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