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Chapter 1: Background on William Golding 20

1. The Life of William Golding
   Michael C. Prusse
   Golding's critics come in two categories. The first herald him as one of the greatest twentieth-century British writers. The second dismiss him as having a single theme—human frailty—which he returns to again and again in his fiction.

2. Golding Took Many Years to Find His Voice
   William Golding, Interviewed by Jack Biles
   In this interview with BBC interviewer Jack Biles, Golding calls Greek literature the greatest literary influence on his writing.

3. Golding's Novels Are Serious in Theme and Exciting in Plot
   Lars Gyllensten
   Golding's works are both deep and entertaining. At the heart of his works is the belief that there are two forces in man—one that leads him to violence and another that leads him to God.

4. Golding Was a Major Novelist Who Took on Important Themes
   The Times of London
   William Golding was a versatile writer who tackled weighty themes, mastered a range of styles, and covered diverse subjects in his fiction. Although some critics believed that other British authors were more deserving of the Nobel Prize for Literature, he was considered an acceptable choice.
Chapter 2: Violence in *Lord of the Flies*

1. *Lord of the Flies* Is About Mastering the Conflicts of Puberty
   
   Jerome Martin
   
   Ralph is not only the main character in *Lord of the Flies*, he is the only character. The other characters are meant to represent aspects of Ralph's personality.

2. *Lord of the Flies* Is About the Male Tendency to Violence
   
   Paula Alida Roy
   
   The symbolism in *Lord of the Flies* suggests that feminine traits are overpowered by masculine violence. Women ultimately have little impact on civilization, and male dominance is responsible for the violence that has characterized history.

3. Law and Order Can Control Humanity's Evil Nature
   
   Kathleen Woodward
   
   Golding believes that violence occurs in society because human nature is essentially evil. A democratic system is necessary to control the natural aggression in humans.

4. Civilization Is No Protection Against Humanity's Evil Nature
   
   Patrick Reilly
   
   Golding's theme in *Lord of the Flies* is that the defects in society have their origins in the defects in human nature. There is no promise of rescue for the boys in the book—the civilization they are returning to is as violent as the island they are leaving.

5. Even Children Are Innately Corrupt
   
   Paul Slayton
   
   *Lord of the Flies* is a parable of modern civilization that depicts the capacity for violence existing within the human heart—even of children.
6. Human Nature Is Not the Sole Cause of Social Evils

David Spitz

Based on the atrocities he witnessed during World War II, Golding came to believe that humanity was inherently evil. He wrote *Lord of the Flies* to illustrate the theme that no political or social systems can prevent humans from reverting to their own bestial nature. Golding ignored, however, the fact that the boys on the island were the product of an established, middle-class British society and that they brought with them to the island the trappings of that society and that not all societies have the same level of evil.

7. Golding Warns Against Racial and Class Violence in *Lord of the Flies*

Paul Crawford

Golding criticizes both the English class system and the fascism present in English society in *Lord of the Flies*. He takes issue with the complacent view that Nazism could not have taken root in England.

8. The Human Spirit Can Triumph over Barbarism

Bernard S. Oldsey and Stanley Weintraub

*Lord of the Flies* is part of the literary tradition that began with Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*. Both Swift and Golding write of the precarious balance between civilization and barbarism. Simon, who represents mysticism, realism, logic, and compassion, is the hero of *Lord of the Flies* and demonstrates Golding’s belief that the human spirit can triumph over the forces of evil.


Minnie Singh

In *Lord of the Flies*, Golding parodies R.M. Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island*. While Coral Island is an idyllic place, Golding’s island becomes a place of savagery.
10. *Lord of the Flies* Is a Political, Psychological, and Religious Allegory

*Diane Andrews Henningfeld*

*Lord of the Flies* works as an allegory on the political, psychological, and religious levels.

11. The Violence in *Lord of the Flies* Results from the Failure to Accept Responsibility

*Kenneth Watson*

*Lord of the Flies* is a moral, social, and political fable where the civilization created by the boys on the island serves as a microcosm for the adult world. Civilization ultimately is reduced to savagery, not because of original sin, but because of man's refusal to take responsibility for his actions.

**Chapter 3: Contemporary Perspectives on Violence**

1. The War on Terror Is Described as a Battle Between Good and Evil

*David R. Mandel*

By portraying the war on terror as a battle between the forces of good and evil, both Osama bin Laden and the George W. Bush administration contributed to the escalation of violence. Both sides used nationalism to stir feelings of engagement and hatred of the enemy. While the United States needs to defend itself against terrorism, inciting violence through vilifying the enemy can be counterproductive.

2. Young Males' Attraction to Risk Makes Them Prime Recruits in the War on Terror

*Cheryl Benard*

Research in brain development shows that the slow maturation of young men's brains causes them to seek out situations of risk and danger and to exercise poor judgment about the consequences of their actions. These tendencies make teenage and young adult males an ideal target for recruitment into terrorist groups.
3. *Survivor* Makes Aggression Attractive

*Christine McGovern*

An English teacher is concerned about the impact that the television program *Survivor* will have on students reading *Lord of the Flies*. In the past, her students had been surprised by the evil in *Lord of the Flies*. After viewing the greed and treachery practiced on *Survivor*, however, she wonders if the novel's impact will suffer.

4. Alienation from Peers Can Lead Teens to Violence

*Antonius H.N. Cillessen*

Studies indicate that teenagers at risk of engaging in violent and antisocial behavior are those who are perceived as outside their peer group, who have poor anger management skills, and who have distorted views of society.

5. Violent Behavior by Teenage Girls Needs to Be Taken Seriously

*Georgie Binks*

Violent behavior by teenage girls has increased significantly over the past two decades in Canada, although it has stabilized recently. There are multiple causes for violent behavior; however, the influence of the media is definitely a contributing factor.