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Topic 2

Faces of Human Nature

Literary Analysis of *The Lord of the Flies*

*The Lord of the Flies*, written by William H. Golding, describes how human nature can be under different factors of influence through the story's main characters, Ralph, Piggy, Simon, and Jack. As the story develops, Golding presents the descent of human nature through the characters' developments in the story, which he had presented as the main idea throughout the story as his philosophy of human nature is affected by his real-life experiences. Golding's experiences of real life as a combat veteran and his philosophy of human nature provided him with many revisions of his philosophy on human nature, which he references and resonates with the children in the story and makes the story honestly believable.

One factor that makes the story believable is Golding's reference to his experiences as a naval combatant in WWII in the British Royal Navy in the story's theme. Through WWII, he realized how human nature is in its native form: darkness and evil. As a reference from his quote: "Human nature was inherently evil, that destruction is sown within societies and the human mind; that evil is not beset mankind but created by mankind."(*Golding, study.com*) Golding's philosophy is as concluded, that human nature is evil natively that is not taught by others. His philosophy is a simple summary of what he had experienced in WWII when humans brought out the worst in each other, which is portrayed through how the children's development of their behaviors and actions had led to a further descent into the revelation of the darkness of human nature in *The Lord of the Flies*. Golding's real-life experiences in WWII are referenced in his writing to fully provide and emphasize his philosophy about how human nature is dark natively in the story.

Another factor that makes the story believable is the gender of the characters in the story. According to an excerpt in one of Golding's interviews regarding *Lord of the Flies*, he states: "I have never been a sister, or a mother, or a grandmother. That's one answer. Another answer is if you land with a group of little boys, they are more like a scaled-down version of society than a group of little girls would be."(*Goodreads*) In summary, Golding has no experience of being a female so he cannot write from experience, and also he thinks boys would better represent society than girls if either were to be stranded on an island. From his preference, if girls are included in the story, it would lead the story in a whole other direction other than its originally intended purpose. It would be the opposite of what Golding wants, which is to portray 'the darkness of human nature.' Also, Golding stated that "Sex is too trivial a thing to get in with a story like this, which was about the problem of evil and the problem of how people are to live together in a society, not just as lovers or man and wife."(*Goodreads*) If boys AND girls were included in the story it would not only bring the story in another direction but would also bring up a sensitive topic of 'sex'.

In addition, Golding's description of the boys in the story also contributes to the believability of the story. When the group of boys first 'arrived' on the island, they did not hunt but instead picked fruit to eat. They ate the fruit, spoiled or not, even when they got diarrhea from it. If there were adults to tell them what to do, then they wouldn't have had to eat the fruit and get diarrhea. Children rely on what they're told to do and what they're told to not do, which in this case no one told them to stop eating the fruit when they're infected with diarrhea. Another good example is how realistic these children interact with each other. When Jack picks a fight with Piggy in Chapter 5, Jack was trying to bully Piggy to gain attention and admiration from others. Or when Roger threw a rock at the little boy on the beach and deliberately misses, he was doing that for fun because he knew it would've startled the boy without hurting him, which is what an adult(which there isn't) would consider dangerous and stop Roger from throwing the rocks. All of these behaviors are realistic interpretations of children's manners in real life, which contributes to the believability of the story.

The honest believability of *The Lord of the Flies* is credited mostly to Golding's experience in real life as a WWII combat veteran and choice of gender and imitation of the description of boys compared to real-life children, which he expressed perfectly around the plot and male characters throughout the story. His experience as a combat veteran provided much extent to the story corresponding to his philosophy, moreover the purpose and theme of the story. His choice of gender made the story to be solely about the presentation of the 'darkness of human nature,' while avoiding sensitive gender-related topics. His fit description of the boys is life-like while in a succeeding attempt in making the story believable. All of the references and attempts contribute to the believability of the story and enhance the impact of the story and Golding's purpose in writing the story, which was done successfully.

## Works Cited

“A Quote by William Golding.” *Goodreads*, Goodreads, https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/595023-girls-say-to-me-very-reasonably-why-isn-t-it-a.

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