

GOLDING, William (1911-1993, Nobel 1983) , England

Lord of the Flies (1954)

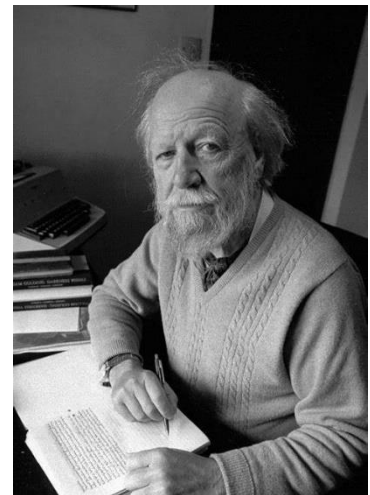
Dt Herr der Fliegen

Üb: Herbert Stiehl (1964), Peter Torberg (2019)

Simon, der klarsichtige, kritische Einzelgänger in der Gruppe der auf einer einsamen Insel gestrandeten Jungen leidet an Anfällen mit Zungenbiß. Er fällt der Massenhysterie zum Opfer.

Zum Autor (Wiki 15.1.25):

„**Sir William Gerald Golding** CBE FRSL (19 September 1911 – 19 June 1993) was a British novelist, playwright, and poet. Best known for his debut novel *Lord of the Flies* (1954), he published another twelve volumes of fiction in his lifetime. In 1980, he was awarded the Booker Prize for *Rites of Passage*, the first novel in what became his sea trilogy, *To the Ends of the Earth*. He was awarded the 1983 Nobel Prize in Literature. As a result of his contributions to literature, Golding was knighted in 1988. He was a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. In 2008, *The Times* ranked Golding third on its list of "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945".



Biography

Son of Alec Golding, a science master at Marlborough Grammar School (1905 to retirement), and Mildred, née Curnoe, William Golding was born at his maternal grandmother's house, 47 Mount Wise, Newquay, Cornwall. The house was known as *Karenza*, the Cornish word for love, and he spent many childhood holidays there. The Golding family lived at 29, The Green, Marlborough, Wiltshire, Golding and his elder brother Joseph attending the school at which their father taught. Golding's mother was a campaigner for female suffrage; she was Cornish and was considered by her son "a superstitious Celt", who used to tell him old Cornish ghost stories from her own childhood. In 1930, Golding went to Brasenose College, Oxford, where he read Natural Sciences for two years before transferring to English for his final two years. His original tutor was the chemist Thomas Taylor. In a private journal and in a memoir for his wife he admitted having tried to rape a teenage girl (with whom he had previously taken piano lessons) during a vacation, having apparently misinterpreted what he had perceived as her having "wanted heavy sex".

Golding took his B.A. degree with Second Class Honours in the summer of 1934, and later that year a book of his *Poems* was published by Macmillan & Co, with the help of his Oxford friend, the anthroposophist Adam Bittleston.

In 1935, he took a job teaching English at Michael Hall School, a Steiner-Waldorf school then in Streatham, South London, staying there for two years. After a year in Oxford studying for a Diploma of Education, he was a schoolmaster teaching English and music at Maidstone Grammar School 1938 – 1940, before moving to Bishop Wordsworth's School, Salisbury, in April 1940. There he taught English, Philosophy, Greek, and drama until joining the navy on 18 December 1940, reporting for duty at HMS Raleigh. He returned in 1945 and taught the same subjects until 1961.

Golding kept a personal journal for over 22 years from 1971 until the night before his death, it contained approximately 2.4 million words in total. The journal was initially used by Golding to record his dreams, but over time it began to function as a record of his life. The journals contained insights including retrospective thoughts about his novels and memories from his past. At one point Golding described setting his students up into two groups to fight each other – an experience he drew on when writing *Lord of the Flies*. John Carey, the emeritus professor of English literature at Oxford University, was eventually given 'unprecedented access to Golding's unpublished papers and journals by the Golding estate'. Though Golding had not written the journals specifically so that a biography could be written about him, Carey published *William Golding: The Man Who Wrote Lord of the Flies* in 2009.

Marriage and family

Golding was engaged to Molly Evans, a woman from Marlborough, who was well liked by both of his parents. However, he broke off the engagement and married Ann Brookfield, an analytical chemist, on 30 September 1939. They had two children, David (born September 1940) and Judith (born July 1945).

War service

During World War II, Golding joined the Royal Navy in 1940. He served on a destroyer which was briefly involved in the pursuit and sinking of the German battleship *Bismarck*. Golding participated in the invasion of Normandy on D-Day, commanding a landing craft that fired salvoes of rockets onto the beaches. He was also in action at Walcheren in October and November 1944, during which time 10 out of 27 assault craft that went into the attack were sunk. Golding rose to the rank of lieutenant.

"Crisis"

Golding had a troubled relationship with alcohol; Judy Carver notes that her father was "always very open, if rueful, about problems with drink". Golding suggested that his self-described "crisis", of which alcoholism played a major part, had plagued him his entire life. John Carey mentions several instances of binge drinking in his biography, including Golding's experiences in 1963; whilst on holiday in Greece (when he was meant to have been finishing his novel *The Spire*), after working on his writing in the morning, he would go to his preferred "Kapheneion" to drink at midday. By the

evening he would move on to ouzo and brandy; he developed a reputation locally for "provoking explosions".

Unfortunately, the eventual publication of *The Spire* the following year did not help Golding's developing struggle with alcohol; it had precisely the opposite effect, with the novel's scathingly negative reviews in a BBC radio broadcast affecting him severely. Following the publication of *The Pyramid* in 1967, Golding experienced a severe writer's block: the result of myriad crises (family anxieties, insomnia, and a general sense of dejection). Golding eventually became unable to deal with what he perceived to be the intense reality of his life without first drinking copious amounts of alcohol. Tim Kendall suggests that these experiences manifest in Golding's writing as the character Wilf in *The Paper Men*; "an ageing novelist whose alcohol-sodden journeys across Europe are bankrolled by the continuing success of his first book".

By the late 1960s, Golding was relying on alcohol – which he referred to as "the old, old anodyne". His first steps towards recovery came from his study of Carl Jung's writings, and in what he called "an admission of discipleship". He travelled to Switzerland in 1971 to see Jung's landscapes for himself. That same year, he started keeping a journal in which he recorded and interpreted his dreams; the last entry is from the day before he died, in 1993, and the volumes-long work came to be thousands of pages long by this time.

The crisis did inevitably affect Golding's output, and his next novel, *Darkness Visible*, would be published twelve years after *The Pyramid*; a far cry from the prolific author who had produced six novels in thirteen years since the start of his career. Despite this, the extent of Golding's recovery is evident from the fact that this was only the first of six further novels that Golding completed before his death.

Death

In 1985, Golding and his wife moved to a house called Tullimaar in Perranarworthal, near Truro, Cornwall. He died of heart failure eight years later on 19 June 1993. His body was buried in the parish churchyard of Bowerchalke near his former home and the Wiltshire county border with Hampshire and Dorset.

On his death he left the draft of a novel, *The Double Tongue*, set in ancient Delphi, which was published posthumously in 1995.

Writing success

In *William Golding: A Critical Study* (2008), George states that, "Golding experienced two things that he counts the greatest influences on his writing—first, the war and his service in the navy and second, his learning ancient Greek." While still a teacher at Bishop Wordsworth's School, in 1951 Golding began writing a manuscript of the novel initially titled *Strangers from Within*.

In September 1953, after rejections from seven other publishers, Golding sent a manuscript to Faber and Faber and was initially rejected by their reader, Jan Perkins, who labelled it as "Rubbish & dull. Pointless". His book, however, was championed by

Charles Monteith, a new editor at the firm. Monteith asked for some changes to the text and the novel was published in September 1954 as ***Lord of the Flies***.

After moving in 1958 from Salisbury to nearby Bowerchalke, he met his fellow villager and walking companion James Lovelock. The two discussed Lovelock's hypothesis, that the living matter of the planet Earth functions like a single organism, and Golding suggested naming this hypothesis after Gaia, the personification of the Earth in Greek mythology, and mother of the Titans. His publishing success made it possible for Golding to resign his teaching post at Bishop Wordsworth's School in 1961, and he spent that academic year in the United States as writer-in-residence at Hollins College (now Hollins University), near Roanoke, Virginia.

Golding won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for *Darkness Visible* in 1979, and the Booker Prize for *Rites of Passage* in 1980. In 1983, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, and was, according to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, "an unexpected and even contentious choice".

Having been appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 1966 New Year Honours, Golding was appointed a Knight Bachelor in the 1988 Birthday Honours. In September 1993, only a few months after his unexpected death, the First International William Golding Conference was held in France.

Fiction

His first novel, ***Lord of the Flies*** (1954; film, 1963 and 1990; play, adapted by Nigel Williams, 1995), describes a group of boys stranded on a tropical island descending into a lawless and increasingly wild existence before being rescued. *The Inheritors* (1955) depicts a tribe of gentle Neanderthals encountering modern humans, who by comparison are deceitful and violent. His 1956 novel *Pincher Martin* records the thoughts of a drowning sailor. *Free Fall* (1959) explores the question of freedom of choice. The novel's narrator, a World War Two soldier in a German POW Camp, endures interrogation and solitary confinement. After these events and while recollecting the experiences, he looks back over the choices he has made, trying to trace precisely where he lost the freedom to make his own decisions. *The Spire* (1964) follows the construction (and near collapse) of an impossibly large spire on the top of a medieval cathedral (generally assumed to be Salisbury Cathedral).

Golding's 1967 novel, *The Pyramid*, consists of three linked stories with a shared setting in a small English town based partly on Marlborough where Golding grew up. *The Scorpion God* (1971) contains three novellas, the first set in an ancient Egyptian court ("The Scorpion God"); the second describing a prehistoric African hunter-gatherer group ("Clonk, Clonk"); and the third in the court of a Roman emperor ("Envoy Extraordinary"). The last of these, originally published in 1956, was reworked by Golding into a play, *The Brass Butterfly*, in 1958. From 1971 to 1979, Golding published no novels. After this period he published *Darkness Visible* (1979): a story involving terrorism, paedophilia, and a mysterious figure who survives a fire in the Blitz and appears to have supernatural powers. In 1980, Golding published *Rites of Passage*, the first of his novels about a voyage to Australia in the early nineteenth century. The novel won the Booker Prize in 1980 and Golding followed this success with *Close*

Quarters (1987) and *Fire Down Below* (1989) to complete his 'sea trilogy', later published as one volume entitled *To the Ends of the Earth*. In 1984, he published *The Paper Men*: an account of the struggles between a novelist and his would-be biographer."

Literatur