

William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* in Slovenia between Socialism and Post-socialism

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Abstract

This article compares the socialist and post-socialist reception of William Golding's classic novel *Lord of the Flies* (1954) in Slovenian serial publications. Taking the socio-political context into consideration, the reasons for the differences in responses to the novel at different periods of Slovenia's history are addressed. Furthermore, the Slovenian reception of *Lord of the Flies* is compared to the contemporary reception (in both 'mainstream' and socialist publications) in the English-speaking world.

Keywords: William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, reception, serial publications, ideology, English literature

INTRODUCTION

In *Lord of the Flies*, a novel about a group of pre-adolescent boys stranded on an isolated island somewhere in the Pacific Ocean, William Golding paints a rather bleak picture of human nature, i.e., that people are inherently evil. A similarly pessimistic assertion is frequently put forward by those who argue that socialism or communism could never work: they claim that people are not innately invested in the common good but rather motivated by self-interest. However, socialists have a different view of humanity, such as the view expressed by Adaner Usmani: “Humans are capable of many things other than simple selfishness. We’re capable of caring for others, we’re capable of empathy and compassion, we have the capacity to distinguish fairness from unfairness, and the capacity to hold ourselves to those standards. The bourgeois view inflates our selfish drives and ignores these other qualities.”

The protagonists of Golding’s novel experience ultimate freedom in the midst of nature; since food is abundant on the island and the boys are apex predators there, a possible Marxist perspective would be that the boys—freed of ‘bourgeois’ constraints—could have formed a society in which the communist slogan “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs” would be put into effect (cf. Tiger 158). In *Das Kapital*, Karl Marx touched upon *freedom* in relation to *Nature*:

In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; [...] Freedom in this field can only consist in socialised man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature.

Instead of “rationally regulating their interchange with Nature”, the boys in *Lord of the Flies* let Nature take its course with them—almost from the very beginning, the vast majority acts irresponsibly: they spend most of their time amusing themselves, neglect to keep the signal fire burning, do not help with building shelters, etc. Eventually, the social order agreed upon at the beginning totally disintegrates; the boys descend into a state of anarchy and turn into ‘savages’.

Given that Golding’s representation of human nature seems not to be in accordance with socialist/communist views, it can be presupposed that certain aspects of *Lord of the Flies* would be criticized by Marxists across the world, especially in countries with socialist systems. Since from 1945 to 1991, the Slovenian nation was part of socialist Yugoslavia, the present paper will try to establish the

differences between the reception of *Lord of the Flies* during Slovenia's socialist era and its reception after Slovenia declared independence and transitioned into a parliamentary democracy. In order to have a frame of reference, an overview of the reception (both in 'mainstream' and Marxist publications) of the novel in the source culture will be presented first.

SOURCE CULTURE RECEPTION OF *LORD OF THE FLIES*

Golding had offered the manuscript of *Lord of the Flies* to at least twenty publishing houses before it was published by Faber and Faber, and initially it only sold modestly (Wilson 83).¹ Its critical reception was also mixed; some critics had issues with the novel's tendentiousness (Haugrud Reiff 95) and criticized it for being "too facile and fashionable in its pessimism" (Wilson 83), while others praised *Lord of the Flies* for its originality and writing style (Haugrud Reiff 95). Its popularity eventually increased (especially in schools and universities across the English-speaking world), and it came to be regarded as a modern classic (Wilson 83).² However, artistic tastes changed, and Golding "was soon found wanting—an antique tragedian, a pessimist, a Christian moralist who would not let us transcend original sin and the disastrous history of the last 50 years" (Baker 63).³ While *Lord of the Flies* remains popular among readers (Tiger 133–34),⁴ during the 1980s, academic interest in it began to diminish (Haugrud Reiff 103); James R. Baker (64) remarked that "[s]ince Golding's death in 1993 his work has gone into partial eclipse".

Sceptical views of the novel continued to be voiced in recent decades, one ardent critic being the renowned literary scholar Harold Bloom (2), who expressed doubt about *Lord of the Flies* reflecting the human condition, instead stating that the boys may have turned out the way they did because they were brought up in the British school system. He criticized the book's tendentiousness and questioned the psychological representation of the characters; he found the Christlike

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- 1 For instance, one reader of the manuscript (qtd. in Tiger 142) gave the following verdict: "Absurd and uninteresting fantasy about the explosion of an atomic bomb on the colonies and a group of children who land in jungle country near New Guinea. Rubbish and dull. Pointless."
 - 2 According to Raychel Haugrud Reiff (96), some academics recommended *Lord of the Flies* to their students, and after the paperback version was published in 1959, it began to sell well. It eventually also became popular in Europe and Asia (Baker 63).
 - 3 In North America, there have been numerous calls for *Lord of the Flies* to be removed from libraries and reading lists in schools, with profanity, violence, racism etc. being given as reasons (Haugrud Reiff 97).
 - 4 Haugrud Reiff (102) claims that "[t]hroughout his life and to the present time, Golding's popularity has been almost totally dependent on *Lord of the Flies*."

figure of Simon to be especially unconvincing and went as far as to say that the main characters were mere ideograms, paling in comparison to some other juvenile characters, for instance Kipling's Kim or Twain's Huckleberry Finn. Bloom (ibid.) concluded that "*Lord of the Flies* matters, not in or for itself, but because of its popularity in an era that continues to find it a useful admonition". Similarly, Virginia Tiger (134) asserted the following: "Unquestionably, the novel's teachability has fostered—as well as sustained—its reputation. Some would argue that this pedagogic feature, 'rather than any clearly established merit,' was 'responsible for the general acclaim with which it has been received.'" While it is widely believed that Golding wanted to subvert some of the views propagated by many classic juvenile adventure stories from Britain's colonial era, reading *Lord of the Flies* from a post-colonial perspective, Stefan Hawlin (71–73; see also Tiger 138–39) asserted that

the novel reflects a profoundly conservative ethos. [...] Under a thin disguise it presents the cliché about the bestiality and savagery of natives, the 'painted niggers' in the forest, ready at a whim to tear each other to pieces in tribal conflict unless the white 'grown-ups' come to rescue them from themselves. It is, in its odd way, a defence of colonialism. [...] The text shows us white, respectable, middle-class boys—whose fathers, incidentally, were the kind that governed the Empire centrally and locally—becoming like tribesmen, 'savages', or to put it in overtly racist terms, 'no better than blacks.'

Socialist commentators were also frequently critical of the novel—many had an issue with its representation of human nature. For instance, in an essay, Paul O'Flinn expresses scepticism about Golding's view of humans being inherently bad; instead, he provides examples to the contrary and asserts that the human condition is one of constant improvement. He concludes with the following statement:

The point, to get back to *Lord of the Flies*, is that here as elsewhere what is presented as eternal, as a part of human nature, is in fact only temporary, a feature of the customs and beliefs of our own dearly beloved ruling classes. These customs and beliefs, as Golding magnificently portrays, are in important ways brutal, anti-life, dehumanising and degrading. The response of Golding and his fans is to fall on their knees before the everlasting horror of Man's Original Sin. We reject extreme solutions of this sort. Our response is much more moderate and sensible. We become revolutionary socialists.

Similar criticisms were expressed by socialists in the new millennium. For instance, in the *Socialist Worker*, the weekly of the International Socialist Organization, Paul D'Amato rejects the view that people's "default setting is barbarism", and calls *Lord of the Flies* "profoundly reactionary". *The Guardian* published an

excerpt from Rutger Bregman's book *Humankind: A Hopeful History*, in which the author rejects Golding's pessimistic view of human nature in *Lord of the Flies* and relates a real-life event similar to the plot of the novel, an event which did not end with the stranded boys descending into barbarism—quite the contrary. Although the book does not propagate socialism, Dave Kellaway reviewed it on the portal *Socialist Resistance* and discussed this chapter at some length; he remarked that one “could argue that Golding's story was taken up so enthusiastically, including in schools, because it chimed so well with dominant ideology.” In his review of Bregman's book for the newspaper *The Socialist*, Dave Carr discussed the chapter in a similar manner, and Anton Jäger also mentioned it in his review for the socialist-oriented magazine *Jacobin*.

RECEPTION OF *LORD OF THE FLIES* IN SLOVENIAN ETHNIC TERRITORY

Socialist period

Although no mentions of *Lord of the Flies* in the year of its initial publication could be found, in 1955 the novel was discussed in overviews of notable foreign literary works published the previous year. In the literary magazine *Knjiga*, an author credited as ‘Dr. Bran.’ (230) merely mentions that *Lord of the Flies* relates the adventures of a group of primary school boys stranded on a desert island, while in *Nova obzorja*, a magazine devoted to culture and politics, prominent translator Janez Gradišnik (664) does not present the novel as a run-of-the-mill adventure story; instead, he states that although the protagonists are children, the target readership comprises adults exclusively.

Lord of the Flies received considerable attention after Janko Moder's translation was published in 1965. In the note accompanying the translation, renowned writer and translator Mira Mihelič (220) remarks that *Lord of the Flies* is regarded as a modern classic and asserts that, with this novel, Golding warned modern society that it was high time to decide whether it desired bloodshed, which would ultimately lead to its downfall, or whether it wanted reason as its guiding principle. A short anonymous review in the regional weekly *Dolenjski list* states that by presenting the boys as an allegory of the nations of the world, the novel addresses the issue of whether humans will recognize that they have a common destiny and will try to help one another, or whether they will destroy each other.⁵ In an anonymous

5 *Dolenjski list*, 9/12/1965: Gospodar muh, 7.

review in *Knjiga* (N.N. 311), it is mentioned that Golding's experiences in World War II influenced his writing—the book is described as follows:

In the novel "Lord of the Flies", a group of boys finds itself on a desert island. There, in the wilderness, they try to arrange their everyday life, which causes all the primary instincts which are characteristic of the aspirations and clashes, the co-existence and conflicts of grown-ups to flare up. Golding masterfully portrays this dark essence of humanity—as one could call it—through a group of boys, who, when left to their own devices, start to wage war and nearly forget the friendships of yesterday—until they are rescued by a ship.⁶

In a review in the weekly *Tovariš*, an author credited as 'J. S.' (7) provides some information on Golding's background before going on to describe the plot of *Lord of the Flies* and stating that the veneer of civilization that covered the boys' primal instincts soon rubbed off; this—in Golding's view—supposedly proved that there was only a small step from civilization to savagery. At the beginning of a quite lengthy review in the most widely read Slovenian daily newspaper *Delo*, writer Jože Snoj describes *Lord of the Flies* as a thrilling book. He claims that when the killing begins, the boys are not actually killing individuals but the character traits or values that those individuals personify, for instance reason, democracy, etc., which are becoming increasingly unacceptable as the majority descends ever deeper into savagery. Snoj also expresses the opinion that these primitive instincts linger in everyone and that this can quickly turn humans into brutes; he interprets the boys as representing the nations of the world and the *deus ex machina* in the form of the navy officer as a symbol of the fact that "civilization can only be saved by civilization".⁷ The story is interpreted similarly by Slavko Rupel (credited as 'Sl. Ru.') in the regional daily *Primorski dnevnik*:

It is a tense, almost horrifying novel, which is more utopian [sic] than realistic; however, its principal meaning is broader than the story itself. It has a symbolic meaning; with the group of boys, the writer indicates the nations and countries in today's world, which are in conflict with each other, and which are threatened with annihilation if someone like the captain of the warship does not turn up to save them from quarrels, conflict and destruction. It is not without reason that the novel *Lord of the Flies* gained worldwide recognition. And Slovenian readers will certainly gladly take up reading this truly original and interesting book; the story itself—tense and interestingly told—will grab their interest.⁸

6 The Slovenian quotations were translated into English by the author.

7 *Delo*, 23/1/1966: William Golding: Gospodar muh, 7.

8 *Primorski dnevnik*, 1/2/1966: Zadnja dva zvezka zbirke *Zenit* in novi načrti za to zbirko, 2.

By interpreting the ending of the story this way, both Snoj and Rupel put a positive 'spin' on the appearance of the warship and the officer who saves the boys; both reviewers disregard Golding's implication that, while the boys destroyed the island and their community, the officer is taking part in destruction on a much larger scale.⁹

In the late 1960s, *Lord of the Flies* received only a few passing references. A short article in *Dolenjski list* announcing the Slovenian translation of Golding's novel *The Spire* mentions that in *Lord of the Flies*, Golding addresses one of the basic questions of the human condition; however, it is not stated which question this is supposed to be.¹⁰ In *Delo*, the novel is recommended as one of the books worth reading while on holiday and described as a modern-day *Robinson Crusoe*,¹¹ while in a later article in the same publication, someone credited as 'S. G.' remarks that the novel addresses the subconscious impulses leading young people to violence.¹²

In the 1970s—a decade during which Golding experienced years of severe writer's block—there was not much interest in his best-known novel either. The only notable exception we were able to find is an article in *Delo*, in which Jože Snoj names *Lord of the Flies* as one of the examples of juvenile literature that can at the same time be considered 'high art'.¹³

After Golding was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1983, several articles about him were published; most of them discuss *Lord of the Flies* to some extent. A short article in *Delo* announcing Golding as the laureate describes it as a novel with a simple plot addressing the circumstances of the basic human condition.¹⁴ In *Delo's* weekly supplement *Sobotna priloga*, Mitja Meršol published a longer profile on Golding, stating, among other things, that in *Lord of the Flies* the author "portrays a dark vision of evil in human nature".¹⁵ An article in *Primorski dnevnik* merely mentions *Lord of the Flies* as Golding's best-known work,¹⁶ while in the next issue of the same newspaper, an article about the responses to Golding's award asserts that the author owes his reputation to his best-selling debut novel, which became an instant classic, while his other works were not as

9 In 1963, Golding remarked about the ending of the story: "The officer, having interrupted a manhunt, prepares to take the children off the island in a cruiser which will presently be hunting its enemy in the same implacable way. And who will rescue the adult and his cruiser?" (qtd. in Tiger 160).

10 *Dolenjski list*, 13/4/1967: Goldingov zvonik, 5.

11 *Delo*, 8/6/1967: Prave knjige za počitnice, 9.

12 *Delo*, 6/3/1969: Pogled na platno, 6.

13 *Delo*, 18/11/1975: Zgled šablonizirane teze, 8.

14 *Delo*, 7/10/1983: Nobelova nagrada za književnost pripovedniku Williamu Goldingu, 3.

15 *Delo*, 8/10/1983: William Golding, 15.

16 *Primorski dnevnik*, 7/10/1983: Anglež William Golding je letošnji nobelovec, 12.

successful either with critics or with readers.¹⁷ In a further article in *Delo*, Meršol remarks that *Lord of the Flies* is widely regarded as Golding's best work.¹⁸ Mirko Jurak (694), a prominent scholar of English and American literature, published a quite extensive portrait of Golding and his work in the magazine *Naši razgledi*. In it, he discusses *Lord of the Flies* at some length, stating that with this novel, Golding rejected some literary works' idealized portrayal of young people who are put to the test; instead, the island in Golding's story becomes a place where the worst aspects of human nature prevail. After summarizing the plot, Jurak addresses the Freudian functions that critics have been ascribing to certain characters: Ralph is supposed to represent God or the *ego*, Piggy a father figure or the *superego*, and Jack personified evil or the *id*. Jurak claims that with *Lord of the Flies*, Golding implicitly warns readers to make informed and humane decisions even in the direst straits and regardless of the potential consequences.

Janko Moder devoted some attention to *Lord of the Flies* in the afterword to his translation of the novel *Pincher Martin*, asserting that Golding wrote a subversive version of classic adventure stories and substantiating this with statements from the author himself. Moder interpreted the novel as follows:

Golding is no longer merely addressing the question of survival and solitude à la Robinson Crusoe, but a deeper question of co-existence in the complete freedom of primal nature. His experiences on a large (global) and small (school) scale have led him to a fatal realization: humanity is not mature enough to survive in co-existence until society is made up of individuals who are all imbued with an ethical consciousness. (Moder: 387-88)

In the years leading to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, very little was written about *Lord of the Flies*. An exception was renowned writer Tone Partljič, who refers to it as 'legendary' while reviewing another book in *Delo*.¹⁹ Furthermore, in the same newspaper, Marko Crnkovič was dismissive of a paper on the reception of *Lord of the Flies* in Macedonia, which was presented at an academic conference in Ljubljana; he remarks that only Macedonian scholars of English could possibly be interested in this topic—and that even they might not be.²⁰

Post-socialist period

In an article in *Delo* marking Golding's 80th birthday, the plot of *Lord of the Flies* is summarized in one sentence, and the novel is described as a cult classic that

17 *Primorski dnevnik*, 8/10/1983: Polemike o nobelovcu Goldingu, 9.

18 *Delo*, 13/10/1983: Beseda o avtorju, 10.

19 *Delo*, 15/6/1989: Zadnje Dolenčeve knjige ali Mate in morje, 6.

20 *Delo*, 23/11/1990: Maček v žaklju ali simpozij o britanskem romanu na Univerzi, 7.

supposedly changed the cultural taste of a whole generation in the 1960s (similar to Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* in the 1950s).²¹ After Golding died in 1993, *Delo* published an obituary by Radovan Kozmos, who states that Golding tried to see the world through the eyes of others, and cites the conclusion of *Lord of the Flies* as an example: the officer of the Royal Navy who arrives on the island reproaches the boys for having behaved in an uncivilized way, while remaining blind to the fact that he is himself taking part in the destruction of civilisation. At the end of the article, Kozmos mentions that Golding was an admirer of classic Greek literature and proclaims *Lord of the Flies* to be Golding's *Iliad*.²² A profile on Golding published in the same issue of *Delo* states that with *Lord of the Flies*, which became a cult classic for a whole generation, Golding had written something quite different from traditional juvenile adventure stories, which are essentially coming of age stories enabling their young protagonists to reaffirm their human values; instead, the boys turn into monsters and kill the only one among them (i.e. the symbolic representation of Christ) who recognizes the truth about human nature. Furthermore, the anonymous author of the article uses the following quotation from Jurak's aforementioned article in *Nasi razgledi* (without giving the original author proper credit): "In this novel, Golding indicates the presence of evil in people, and leads readers to the conclusion that people should not give up, but should remain humane even in the most difficult circumstances."²³

Towards the end of the 1990s, *Lord of the Flies* again received some notable attention. The novel was mentioned in an academic article published in the journal *Otrok in knjiga*: in discussing the evolution of the adventure novel, Lilijana Burcar (30) states the following:

Instead of maintaining a democratic way of governing that would befit civilized individuals, the boys are increasingly regressing into an authoritarian and tribal way of regulating interpersonal relationships. This accentuates the weak nature of social rules in regulating behaviour; behind it, there is always the inclination to evil, which is additionally spurred on by the desire for power. Unlike Robinson [Crusoe] and the heroes of *The Coral Island*, Golding's heroes do not encounter a single native. This plays a key role in revealing evil, which is no longer something coming from outside and therefore comparable to the unruly Other, but residing within themselves. Golding transfers the established external bipolarity exclusively into the intertwining internal forces of each individual. Thereby, he ultimately undermines the foundations of the legitimacy of the conquering expeditions in British adventure novels.

21 *Delo*, 26/9/1991: Konservativni obstranec, 20.

22 *Delo*, 24/6/1993: William Golding – gospodar ustvarjalne domišljije, 51.

23 *Delo*, 24/6/1993: Umrli je William Golding, 60.

Also in 1999, *Lord of the Flies* received some attention in *Slovenski vestnik*, a weekly published by the Carinthian Slovenian minority in the Austrian city Klagenfurt. A play based on the novel was staged by a theatre group, and its premiere was announced in said newspaper; after summarizing the plot, someone credited with the initials 'K. J.' states that with this work, Golding posed the question whether people could co-exist in ultimate freedom and that the answer seems to be 'no', since evil lurks in everyone.²⁴ The play received a positive review in the same newspaper, written by an author credited with the initials 'S. W.', who in the first half the review has the following to say about the novel itself:

The powerfully convincing events, the allegorical simile of humanity, which has a choice between damnation or salvation, faith in a 'saviour', faith in the good in human beings in spite of pessimism, violence [sic] as the guiding star of society and human reason as the last hope—all of this is material for thick philosophical books. [...] The play/novel is, in essence, a deeply philosophical-religious discussion about the meaning of existence and human behaviour.²⁵

When in 2004 a new edition of Moder's translation was published by the newspaper publishing company Delo in the series *Vrhunci stoletja* [Highlights of the Century], Igor Bratož published a review of it in *Delo*. He recounts Golding's life story and the events that led up to writing the cult classic *Lord of the Flies*; however, the reviewer also mentions that upon receiving the Nobel Prize, Golding was attacked by certain critics for his alleged lack of artistry. Bratož concludes the review by quoting at some length from Jurak's 1983 essay on Golding.²⁶ The following year, Jurak published an adapted version of this essay in a monograph; he expanded it and made some changes to the part about *Lord of the Flies*, ascribing somewhat different symbolic meanings to the characters: Simon is supposed to represent a Christ-like figure or the human *ego*, Piggy a father figure or the *super-ego*, and Jack the subconscious part of the human psyche or the *id*. Furthermore, Jurak discusses Golding's writing style at greater length than previously, going so far as to state that nothing could be added to nor subtracted from the novel without damaging its artistic worth. The author concludes that although the novel is categorized as juvenile literature, its reach is far greater, and it is therefore not surprising that it is regarded as Golding's *magnum opus* (183).

In the following years, the novel was sporadically mentioned in the press. Among book recommendations in the magazine *26!*, Petra Žigon (29) presented *Lord of the Flies* as a well-written timeless story, which reveals the dark side of

24 *Slovenski vestnik*, 24/6/1999: Gospodar muh - Lord of the Flies, 4.

25 *Slovenski vestnik*, 1/7/1999: Osupljivo dobra predstava, 5.

26 *Delo*, 14/7/2004: Zlo je v nas vseh, 12.

human nature. On the portal *MMC*, Tina Tarter summarizes the plot and questions whether after a while the boys wanted to be rescued at all; furthermore, she poses the question whether a single one of the 'biguns' was capable of defeating the evil which—according to Golding—lies within each one of us. In *Otrok in knjiga*, Andrej Adam published an article in which he argues that *Lord of the Flies* can be used in secondary school to discuss issues related to democracy, and lists examples from the book that can be used to do so. In *Pogledi*, Tina Vrščaj remarks that *Lord of the Flies* shows us that in every society power relations develop: some become hunters, while others are hunted.²⁷

Lord of the Flies was again prominently featured in the Slovenian media in 2017, when Simona Hamer adapted it into a play entitled *Pošasti* [Monsters], which was staged by the theatre Slovensko mladinsko gledališče; unlike in Golding's novel, the protagonists in the play are adults. Writing about it in *Delo*, Ženja Leiler states that the potency of the novel was in its display of "ultimate evil, evil as an inevitable part of every society and thereby, of course, also of every individual". After describing the plot, in which the boys supposedly represent an allegorical representation of humankind, she concludes that evil is ever-present and that in the end, the surviving boys are robbed of their youthful innocence. In the continuation of the article, the play's director Vito Taufer is quoted as saying the following:

Golding's protagonists still had to act, they were part of historical events. In Simona Hamer's play, we witness a generation that has no purpose, it does not write history and is in a way excluded from it. Golding's characters are still archetypal, in a certain way clearly Manichean, while the characters in *Pošasti* are de-individualized and empty—subjected to every type of violence and extortion of power.²⁸

In a review published in the same newspaper, Anja Radaljac states that, while Hamer followed the basic plot of *Lord of the Flies*, certain deviations from it firmly root the play in the present. For instance, in the novel, humankind is threatened by atomic war, while in the play the world is on the verge of an ecological catastrophe; thus, both works address the danger of human self-destruction.²⁹ In the daily *Slovenske novice*, Andrej Predin provides background information on the genesis of the play, lauds it as excellent, and quotes Taufer as saying that while the novel deals with people torn between good and evil, the play addresses the conformism of today's society.³⁰

27 *Pogledi*, 14/9/2011: Ne preveč slasten zalogaj, 28.

28 *Delo*, 15/12/2017: Generacija, ki ne piše več zgodovine, 20.

29 *Delo*, 19/12/2017: Ocenjujemo, 16.

30 *Slovenske novice*, 24/12/2017: Pošast na odru Mladinca, 12.

In more recent years, there have not been many noteworthy articles on Golding. An exception can be found in *Delo*, where Zorana Baković mentions the novel in a political commentary; she states that *Lord of the Flies* addresses the issues of the *Rechtsstaat* and the complicated state of human nature.³¹ Furthermore, in the Catholic weekly *Novi glas*, Andrej Vončina remarks that with this novel, Golding shows us how quickly civilization can turn into barbarism.³²

CONCLUSION

Lord of the Flies barely received any attention in the Slovenian literary system before it was translated in 1965; it was then reviewed in several widely read newspapers and magazines. Most reviewers interpreted the boys' behaviour on the island as an allegory of what would happen to the nations of the world in the absence of civilisation. Virtually all the reviewers disregarded the fact that the representative of 'civilisation' who saves the boys in the end is taking part in the destruction of humankind in a similar manner to the boys destroying their microcosm of the world. Furthermore, none of the reviewers had an issue with how human nature is presented in the novel, which can perhaps be attributed to the fact that propagating the importance of having rules was also in the interest of the socialist regime. The same is true for the rest of the 1960s, when *Lord of the Flies* received only passing mention. In the 1970s there were almost no noteworthy mentions of the novel, but it received some attention after Golding won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1983, although in most of the articles no new insight into the novel was provided. Mirko Jurak's more in-depth analysis, which even discusses certain characters from a Freudian standpoint, is an exception.

After Slovenia declared independence, *Lord of the Flies* was sporadically mentioned in the press; some articles acknowledge the destructive element that the navy officer represents, the novel is once even discussed from a post-colonial standpoint, but questions regarding how the plot of the novel can be interpreted with a view to modern society (interpersonal relationships, people's conformism, ecological issues, etc.) received the most attention.

To some extent, the differences in reception can be explained by taking the contemporary socio-political context into consideration. *Lord of the Flies* was initially published in Slovenian only a few years after the Cuban Missile Crisis, which brought the world to the brink of nuclear war, and it is therefore not surprising that reviewers drew parallels between the conflict among the boys in the story

31 *Delo*, 31/8/2019: Vladavina muh ali kdo je Faust med politiki, 6.

32 *Novi glas*, 11/2/2021, Je Gospodar muh postal resničnost? (1), 4.

and conflict between nations in the real world. Furthermore, Yugoslavia was one of the founders of the Non-aligned Movement and perceived both the Eastern and Western blocs as potential threats. However, around the time that Slovenia declared independence, the Cold War also ended, and in the subsequent decades, the threat of an all-out war that could possibly destroy civilization seemed less imminent, which presumably somewhat influenced the reception of *Lord of the Flies*. The focus of interpretation turned not to the relations between nations but rather to the relationships between people within a certain society and people's attitudes towards the environment.

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Goldingov *Gospodar muh* v Sloveniji med socializmom in post-socializmom

Članek primerja socialistično in post-socialistično recepcijo klasičnega romana *Gospodar muh* (1954) izpod peresa Williama Goldinga v slovenskih serijskih publikacijah. Ob upoštevanju družbeno-političnega konteksta so obravnavani razlogi za razlike v kritiških odzivih na roman v različnih obdobjih slovenske zgodovine. Poleg tega je slovenska recepcija *Gospodarja muh* primerjana s sodobno recepcijo (tako v *mainstream* kot v socialističnih publikacijah) v angleško govorečih predelih sveta.

Ključne besede: William Golding, *Gospodar muh*, recepcija, serijske publikacije, ideologija, angleška književnost