

THE INHERITORS
BY WILLIAM GOLDING

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ÖZET

Lord of the Flies (Sineklerin Lordu, 1954) romanı ile tanınan William Golding 1911'de doğdu. Yaşamının büyük bir kısmı İngiltere'nin güneyinde geçti. Henüz Salisbur'de, Bishop Wordsworth School'da öğretmenken adı geçen romanı onun ünlü bir romancı olarak tanınmasını sağladı. Golding romanlarında insan doğasını, insanın içindeki iyi ve kötülüğün mücadelesini ve var oluş savaşını konu alır.

İkinci romanı olan The Inheritors (1955) da ilkel insan toplumunun var oluş mücadelesi ele alınır. Dört ayağı üzerinde koşan ve alnı maymun gibi dar ve düz olan ilk kavmin insanları doğal bir cennet ortamında yaşarken, buldukları yüzeye iki ayağı üzerinde yürüyen ve alnı dik ve geniş olan bir başka kabile gelir. İkinci kabile birincisinin yer yüzünden silinmesine neden olur. Darwin'in mesajı olan 'en güçlü yaşar' kuralı burada da geçerliliğini göstermiştir. Var oluş savaşı maymun insan türünün yer yüzünden silindiğini göstermiştir, ancak yazarın sempatisi daha acımasız olan ikinci kavimden yana değil, birincisinden yanadır, çünkü bu ilkel kavim henüz ruhsal saflığını ve temizliğini yitirmemiştir.

SUMMARY

The writer of the novel called Lord of The Flies (1954), was born in 1911. He has spent most of his time in southern England and earned his life as a teacher. His novels relate the fight between the evil and the good in human nature as well as the fight for existence.

His second novel The Inheritors (1955) reveals such a fight of existence among two primitive clans. The first clan represents the Neanderthal man who walks on four legs, the second clan which is more aggressive, is Homo Erectus. Homo Erectus survives reminding us Darwin's rule, the fittest would survive. Yet the sympathy of the writer goes on the side of the Neanderthal man who is yet innocent of the evil that destroys another living being which is inherent in the nature of Homo - Erectus.

The Inheritors

The Inheritors is William Golding's second novel. In this novel Golding depicts first a community of Neanderthal men living joyfully in an Eden-like place composed of forest mountains, rivers or waters, fields of flowers and an island. There is no worry for the tomorrow. They live day by day. When hungry, one would pull a berry off the bush to put it into her mouth. They would collect honey, shoots, grubs and bulbs.

Sometimes they would eat the meat of a deer raw or roasted on fire, hunted by a wild cat. They would find eggs, reeds and frog jelly. There is no indication in the book that these people perform organized hunting. They rather collect food when they find it. They are not agricultural people planting wheat or vegetables. They do not build shelters. They are a small community of apes. They are concerned with their young and the old. They speak in a simple language, each opening their statement with 'I have a picture' to mean that they have an idea or thought to tell the other. They are naked people, hairy and mostly red haired. They run on all fours-on their legs and hands. One of the men called Lok who was noted also as 'the red creature', is described in chapter 11, in a definite manner, but Lok was not called 'the red creature' before that chapter, because until that part of the book, it was an identified being, belonging to a community, but since all the members were lost or died one after another, he was left by himself and was about to die in loneliness. Here is the description of that sample of man or the sample of his race given by the writer in an indifferent scientific tone:

"It was a strange creature, smallish, and bowed. The legs and thighs were bend and there was a whole thatch of curls on the outside of the legs and the arms. The back was high, and covered over the shoulders with curly hair. Its feet and hands were broad, and flat, the great toe projecting to grip. The square hands swung down to the knees. The head was set slightly forward on the strong neck that seemed to lead straight on to the row of curls under the lip. The mouth was wide and soft above the curls of the upper lip, the great nostrils were like wings. There was no bridge to the nose and the moon-shadow of the jutting brow lay just above the tip. The shadows lay most darkly in the caverns above its cheeks and the eyes were invisible in them. Above this again, the brow was that there was nothing." (1)

This seems like the description of a strong, well-built male ape. The head is forward on a strong neck. The mouth is wide and soft and the nostrils are big and open like wings. He has hairs all over his body. His arms are long so that his hands would touch his knees. The nose is flat and the brow is shining and flat on the top. The eyes are buried in the caves of the front upper face so that they are invisible and small. The brow is cut with hair as if with a straight line. This must be the description of the figure of how a Neanderthal man must have been in the paleolithic times.

It is further explained in the following quotation how this creature, once called Lok, uses its limbs in a movement:

"The creature stood and the splashes of moonlight stirred over it. The eye-hollows gazed not at the bone at an invisible point towards the river. Now the right leg began to move. The creature's attention seemed to gather and focus in the leg and the foot began to pick and search in the earth like a hand. The big toe bored and griped and the toes folded round an object that had been almost completely buried in the churned soil. The foot rose, the leg bent and presented an object to the lowered hand. The hand came down a little, the gaze swept inward from that invisible point and regarded what was in the hand. It was a root, old and rotted, worn way at both ends but preserving the exaggerated contours of a female body.

The creature looked again towards the water. Both hands were full, the bar of its brow glistened in the moonlight, over the great caverns where the eyes were hidden.

There was light poured down over the cheek bones and the wide lips and there was a twist of light caught like a white hair in every curl. But the caverns were dark as though already the whole head was nothing but a skull.

The water rat concluded from the creature's stillness that it was not dangerous. It came with a quick rush from under the bush and began to cross the open space, it forgot the silent figure and searched busily for something to eat." (2)

As it is clear in the quotation, the ape man can use its foot like a hand. The foot picks and searches the soil. The toes can grip and fold round an object as easily as a hand can. The foot rises and gives the object upwards to the hand. It is a foot resembling a female body. The hand of the ape man is already like a skull indicating that death is very near. The water rat is aware of this and concludes that the ape man is not dangerous for him and continues to search for something to eat. The rat plops into water not caring any more for the tired old ape man. The cheeks are pulsed and drops come down from its hair and beard. The ape man is nothing more than the water rat that plopped into the water. It had lost its identification, its name and its social significance. Once upon a time it was called Lok, but now it is nothing but a creature. There is a certain touch of pity and sympathy for this creature on the part of the writer as it is also felt by the reader. The old fellow was supposed to be the ancestor of mankind after all, although it looked like an ape or an animal covered up with long red curly hair. The following quotation indicates its motion of running not on two legs but on all fours:

"It started to run along the track and it was blue and grey in the moonlight. It went laboriously, slowly, with much bobbing up and down of the head. It limped when it reached the slope up to the top of the fall, it was on all fours... It turned, came back, and crept on all fours into the hollow where the other figure was. The creature wrestled with a rock that was lying on a mound of earth but it was too weak to move it. At last it gave up and crawled round the hollow by the remains of a fire. It came close to the ashes and lay on its side. It pulled its leg up, knees against the chest. It folded its hands under its cheek and lay still. The twisted and smoothed root lay before its face. It made no noise, but seemed to be growing into the earth, drawing the soft flesh of its body into a contact so close that the movements of pulse and breathing inhibited." (3)

The beginning of this quotation shows that the creature runs faster on all fours. It is too weak to move a rock and it gives up the struggle. It came close to the remains of a fire and stayed there pulling its legs and knees to its chest. The root which he took was still not dropped. The body of the creature became noiseless and it attracted hyenas which sniffed curiously at the earth, but did not dare to approach nearer. This indicates that the ape man is not going to wake up again and that it must be dead. A great rolling noise frightens the hyenas away. The coming of an avalanche is indicated. It closes the era of the Neanderthal man in the novel.

Going back to the very beginning of the novel, Lok was running with a girl on his back called Liku. Liku is beating his belly with her feet and she is carrying the little Oa, the baby toy. There are dangerous places such as an onyx marsh and a fall, but these people are happy and joyful. Lok worries because the log in the river is gone. They would be using the log to pass the river to the other side, perhaps to seek food. A woman called Fa comes. A baby indicated as 'the new one' is on her back, gripping her hair at the neck. Liku is a child with red curls and she commands Lok to swing her. He approaches the group. He is described as a

man for emergency. He would search the forest with his ears to be sure that it is safe. He is very careful. Nil approaches them. She is a woman with a heavy body. Her breasts are full of milk for her baby and she feels tired and hungry. A grey, tiny, withered old woman comes. The young are respectful and they greet her in silence. She is always called 'the old woman'. It is clear that she is the grandmother of this small Neanderthal clan. Lok is joyful, he wants laughter and plays with Liku, while Nil continues to moan for food. An old man named Mal approaches the group. He is always coughing and leans heavily on his thorn bush. Their bodies are sturdy and naked under the sun. Mal announces the group that he has a picture indicating that he has an idea. He orders: "find a tree that has fallen!" They obey him and start to work. They are to use a tree trunk as a log to cross the water. Finally the man named Ha is successful in pulling a trunk. The trail is joined across the water and the people can cross to the other side. They cry for joy and applaud Ha by beating their thighs with the flat side of their hand.

When Mal falls down into the cold water as he was crossing the trunk, the group instantly crouches around the shivering old man to console his distress. In that way they show their concern and love for the sick old man. However Lok and Liku and the others forget the old man for a while and continue to be happy. They feel the pang of hunger often but they are always hopeful. Ha comes near Lok and Liku and gives Liku a handful of berries to eat. He is concerned with Liku and sees that the little girl should not go hungry. In the same way, Nil Moans for hunger, but sees that her little baby should not be left hungry.

Lok has a picture of honey, young shoots, bulbs and grubs. He dreams of 'wicked meat'. The meat is wicked because it is scarce and it means the death of another animal. Lok seems to forget his hunger only when he is interested in the nature around him and in Fa and her new one. Fa and her baby have red curly hairs like Lok and Liku. Lok tells Fa that they would find food and make love. Lok is interested only in Fa as a female around him. It seems that Fa, Lok, Liku and the baby must be a family naturally married. Lok thinks that Fa has an air of the old woman around her head. It may be that Fa is a daughter of the old woman. However this is not very important. Lok is always an imploring male and Fa seems to be a disinterested female. Lok is concerned with Fa like a lover and a husband and he is concerned with Liku like a father.

The winter is over and the season is early spring time. The snow is melting, the waters are running from the slopes through the splits and the cracks. However there is still some old snow left in a gully, where the sun could not reach. There is rain and ice altogether and the remaining snow and ice would be hanging dangerously in great loads, ready to fall down. The nature would be just awakening and therefore the food would not be abundant for the clan. They would have to go along almost always hungry until the late spring and the summer. The nature around Lok and the others is beautiful. The air is fresh and full of the mixture of smells coming from the mist of the fall. The rain deepens and distinguishes the colours of the field of flowers as Lok breathes in the freshness and the smells of the air. Liku starts to howl because Lok was not interested in her. Another woman, namely Nil consoles Liku by taking her head between her breast and stroking her curls soothingly. Both Ha and Nil show their concern and sympathy for Liku.

The group is led by Mal to the mountains. They come out from their winter caves by the sea and move up to the mountains, but they realize that they have come too early. Seeing the gully full of old snow being compacted into ice, they shout at it and call that perilous sight "ice woman". They walk to the rocks by the fall and see the clear water with weeds moving slowly. There is a cliff, a terrace and an unvisited island, as they think, hidden beyond the smoke and the spray of the fall. Lok thinks that the terrace, that they are on, is safe and nothing could come to them out of the water, because the current was strong enough to

snatch it over the fall. The cliff above the terrace was the home of foxes, goats, the people, hyenas and birds. There was a forest from the terrace, and this thick forest was defended by such a narrow entry from which a man could hardly pass by himself. On this cliff above the spray of waters coming from the fall, there was nothing but human feet. The people felt safe on the terrace on which they stepped. Collecting branches and twigs, the old woman arranges the fire and begins to make a dish from clay.

A baby boy called only 'the new one' is Nil's baby. He is taken care of by Fa and Nil both. At first he is at the back of Fa sleeping. Later on, in the second chapter, 'the new one' is at Nil's back and he is treated there very gently. 'The new one' encloses himself in his mother's curls and he feels safe there. Much later in the last chapter, chapter 12, 'the new one' is in the hands of the new clan. His mother and Lok is dead. Now 'the new one' is named 'the little devil', because he is the only red, hairy creature left, but he is treated very sympathetically as Liku does not exist any more, who was also in their hands. Now 'the little devil' is on Vivani's breast, a woman from the new clan. The following quotation designates this little devil:

"Vivani bent down and twitched aside the fold of bearskin. The little devil was there on a pelt, hands and feet holding tight. As the light poured over him he lifted his head off the fur and blinked his eyes open. He got up on his forelegs and looked round, brightly, solemnly, with quick movements of his neck and body. He yawned so that they could see how his teeth were coming and then a pink tongue whipped along his lips. He sniffed, turned, ran at Vivani's leg and scrambled up to her breast. She was shuddering and laughing as if this pleasure and love were also a fear and a torment. The devil's hands and feet laid hold of her hesitating, half-ashamed, with that some frightened laughter, she bent her head, cradled him with her arms and shut her eyes. The people were grinning at her too as if they felt the strange, tugging mouth, as if in spite of them there was a well of feeling open and in love and fear. They made adoring and submissive sounds, reached out their hand, and at the same time they shuddered in repulsion at the too-nimble feet and the red, curly hair. Tuami, his head full of swirling sand, tried to think of the time when the devil would be full grown." (4)

Both Vivani and Tuami are from the new clan. Tuami is a man and a friend of Vivani. More likely he is her lover and he is jealous of Marlan who is an old man and a previous lover of Vivani. Tuami is sharpening an ivory dagger and intends to kill Marlan with this, but the thought frightens him and he decides to wait until they are out of the devils country. According to his point of view the devil's country is the land of the first clan.

From the first clan Mal is dead and buried by the old woman. They put water and meat into his grave so that the dead man would eat and drink, as they think he would. They say that 'Oa' has taken Mal into her belly. 'Oa' is the soil god. Just before Mal is dead, the man Ha is lost and the people are aware that the new people are there and they came over from the island in their logs or by leaping from rock to rock to the other side, to find food as it was urgent in spring time. Lok is aware that the new people are hunting for food. They see fire and smoke rising from the island which was covered with many trees and thick bushes. They are sure that the other people are on the island. Liku's dreadful scream indicates that she is captured by the new people. Fa and Lok trace and follow the scents. They understand that Nil and the old woman were killed and Liku and the new one of Nil were taken by the new people. Fa understood that Nil and the old woman were thrown into the river. 'Little Oa' is only a toy that Liku carried wherever she went. This is indicated in chapter 2 in the following quotation when Lok takes up the thing into his foot and carries it up to his hand:

"I feel. What do I feel? A Bulb? A Stick? A bone?" His right foot seized something and passed it up to his left hand. He looked "It is the little Oa!" Triumphantly he sunned himself before them. 'And now where Liku is there is the little Oa' "(5)

Liku carries 'the little Oa' in her mouth and drops it. There is no movement in the little Oa to think that it is an alive baby, but the baby is Nil's new one. Fa does not have a new one. She has lost a baby, but Fa carries the new one of Nil and she takes care of him. Liku is probably Fa's daughter. The loss of her baby is indicated in chapter 5 in the thoughts of Lok, when he compares Liku's scream with Fa's scream:

"The screaming tore him inside. It was not like the screaming of Fa when she was bearing the baby that died..."(6)

Fa dies a tragical death. Both Lok and Fa are chased by the hunters of the new clan. Fa is hurt as they tried to rescue Liku and 'the new one'. They could not succeed, but they eat honey with pleasure in chapter 10. As Fa is sitting by the water, the branches take her. She moves with the branches towards the fall in chapter II. Lok could not do anything but watch her go. The tree moves to the edge of the fall, the branches are up and down goes the great root with Fa. The incident is seen by Tuami of the other clan and expressed through his point of view much later in chapter 12;

"He looked away at the miles of new visible grey water and there was a monster sliding past, not a half cable to the starboard, the root lifted above the surface like a mammoth's tusk. It was sliding towards the fall and the forest devils." (7)

In Tuami's view Fa is nothing but a monster, but neither Lok nor Fa see the new people with scorn. They are not filled with disgust or hate. Lok even sympathizes with them. In the same manner Liku adores Tanakil, the girl of the other clan, who keeps Liku tied from her neck like a dog and beats her. It is in chapter 7 that Lok and Fa hear Tuami's name called by another. From then on a definition of the physique and the identification of the new people is clearly given one by one.

Lok observes the new people and calls some of them, 'Fine tree'. 'Chestnut-head', and 'Tuft'. 'Chestnut-Head' is Tuami who is a broad man of the new clan. The new people are Homo-Erectus. That is they are not on all fours. They walk upright. They are very thin so that Lok thinks that they are starving. Lok therefore observes their faces with affection. He is unsuspecting and not aware that these people have already eaten Liku in chapter(8) From then on Tanakil is always alone and seems sorry for Liku.

There are two main definitions of the new people in the novel. Both of these descriptions are in chapter 7, one following the other. Let us see the second one first:

"Now Lok could see two other things. The new people did not move like anything he had ever seen before. They were balanced on top of their legs, their waists were so wasp-thin that when they moved their bodies swayed backwards and forwards. They did not look at the earth but straight ahead. and they were not merely hungry. Lok knew famine when he saw it. The new people were dying. The flesh was sunken to their bones as Mal's flesh had sunken. Their movements, though they had in their bodies the bending grace of a bough, were dream slow. They walked upright and they should be dead. It was as though something that Lok could not see were supporting them,

holding up their heads, thrusting them slowly and irresistibly forward. Lok knew that if he were as thin as they, he would be dead already." (9)

Lok comments on these people very innocently, since he is not aware yet that they are cannibals who seem very graceful to his eye. They are very thin due to scarcity of food in the spring time, but at the same time they eat whatever animal comes up. They do not eat roots like the first clan. An old woman gets furious when Liku gives Tanakil to eat a root or a bulb.

Here is the previous description given, concerning the physique of the second clan;

"There was hair growing thickly over their bodies about the waist, the belly and the upper part of the leg so that this part of them was thicker than the rest. Yet Lok did not look directly at their bodies; he was far too absorbed in the stuff round their eyes. A piece of white bone was placed under them, fitting close, and where the broad nostrils have shown were narrow slits and between them the bone was drawn out to a point. Under that was another slit over the mouth, and their voices came fluttering through it. There was a little dark hair jutting out under the slit. The eyes of the face that peered through all this bone were dark and busy. There were eyebrows above them, than the mouth or the nostrils, black curving out and up so that the men looked menacing and wasp-like. Lines of teeth and sea shells hung round their necks, over grey, furry skin. Over the eyebrows the bone bulged up and swept up and swept back to be hidden under the hair. As the log came closer, Lok could see that the colour was not really bone white and shining but duller. It was more the colour of the big fungi, the ears that the people ate, and something like them in texture. Their legs and arms were stick-thin so that the joints were like the nodes in a twig." (10)

To this description it may be added that these people have two sharp teeth in front and Lok likens them to wolves sometimes and calls them 'wolves in cry', 'famished wolves', 'people like Oa', 'like the river', meaning that nothing stands against them. To him these people are like honey that smells of dead things and fire. In comparison with the old clan, the people of the new clan are more savage and wolf-like when hungry, because they do not think that meat is wicked to eat. They would not make a discrimination between a doe, a stag or a human being of the first clan, as a choice for food. Neanderthal man thus falls a victim to a more savage clan, of Homo-erectus as described in the above quotations.

The people of the new clan are wearing skins and furs. There is an old man who is not so thin as the others. His hair is white. This man is Marlan whom Tuami was jealous, because he was the previous lover of the fat woman named Vivani. Vivani is a dark haired woman. Her body is covered with rich furs. Her body is white. 'The new one' is kept in one of the furs behind her back. 'The new one' is sucking her breast. It is clear that she is a new mother, but later we learn that her baby was dead. She had not saved her baby in the storm on the salt water in Tuami's terms. Tuami thinks that Vivani wanted the child as a play thing and he saved 'the new one' for her, as a joke. It is indicated that Tuami is the master of the new clan. Vakiti, the other man is respectful and obeying in his manner. There is another woman called Twal, she is Tanakil's mother. Once Tanakil calls the name of Liku and no more out of sorrow for her. There is a feeling of mystery in her indefinite manner. When Lok seizes Tanakil in chapter 10, her screaming brought the other men around. Lok is terrified to see the wolfish teeth of these men. Lok asks again for Liku. He only sees

blood in the grinning teeth of Tanakil which is a definite indication of cannibalism of the new clan. There is nothing that Lok could do now but to go away.

Twal now complains that Tuami and Vakiti has given her child to the devils and had taken a changeling who does not see or speak. Marlan is sure that the other tribe cannot follow them to rescue the kidnapped; because they cannot pass over the water. Marlan reveals that the devils would keep to the mountains and that they would stay on the place by the water. Vivani is pleased with the red haired new one. Nil's baby has become one of the new clan for the time being. Vivani adores him, but Tuami seems to worry and tries to think of the time when the red devil would be full grown. He holds the ivory dagger in his hand and goes to see what lay on the other end of the lake. Marlan speaks or thinks in silence about the old:

"They live in the darkness under the trees" (II)

It may be derived from this comment and from the existence of the red new one, that there is still some small hope for the existence of the old clan namely the Neanderthal hairy man, who uses both his hands and feet alike and who run on all fours. The ending of the novel is open to argument however. We know that Neanderthal man is extinct or modified in the history of nature and Homo-Erectus had replaced the ape man long ago. Whether William Golding defends Darwin and the evolution of species may be the question as it comes to the mind. The novel has given the description of a beautiful Eden like green country of waters, flowers, mountains and rivers with its strange and mysterious creatures inside it. The air is fresh, and clear. The flowers seem beautiful, but there are dangers such as the bog, the fall and the avalanche. Life is a clear reality as well as death and love. There is no organized fight between the two clans which seems unreal, but death and extinction is still inevitable for the Neanderthal man as well for the new very hairy Homo-Erectus, who may be later modified into a more civilized man. In spite of all the dangers the beauty of the nature gives the glimps of nostalgia for the utopian dream of the Eden. Sympathy for the Neanderthal clan is clearly understood on the part of the writer, because they are victims of a more savage clan and they represent innocence and purity untouched by evil until the new clan arrives. The members of the first clan are not intriguing as the members of the second clan. Their minds are therefore pure. It is a pity that this innocence is apt to loose.

William Golding is a hard writer to understand. The names of the people chosen are sometimes hard to discriminate as which is male and female. The facts are scattered and not easy as a fact like Liku's death is vague and not definite for a clear understanding. However it is not so difficult to understand the Darwinistic message through a simple plot: The fittest would survive.

NOTES

- 1-William Golding *The Inheritors* (Faber and Faber, 1981)
- 2-Ibid. chapter 2, pp. 219-220
- 3-Ibid. chapter 2, pp. 220-221
- 4-Ibid. chapter 12, pp. 230-231, 232-233
- 5-Ibid. chapter 2, p. 33
- 6-Ibid, chapter 5, p. 105
- 7-Ibid. chapter 12, p. 224
- 8-Ibid. chapter 8, p. 166
- 9-Ibid. chapter 7, p. 143
- 10-Ibid, chapter 7, p. 138
- 11-Ibid, chapter 12, p. 233

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