

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

According to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, human nature means “the nature of humans; especially the fundamental disposition and traits of humans” (“Human Nature”). There are many opinions regarding human nature and society, about whether it is good or evil and how society affects it. “For thousands of years, philosophers have debated whether we have a basically good nature that is corrupted by society, or a basically bad nature that is kept in check by society” (Stafford). There is one neutral view about human nature.

Human nature is not one thing, neither ‘good nor ‘bad’ overall. People in general have been genetically endowed by evolution with a wide variety of tendencies and capacities that respond to – but are not necessarily controlled or determined by – their environment. And so we see all sorts of

individual and cultural behaviors, providing evidence to defend virtually any assertions about 'human nature'. (Atlee)

Robert Michael Ballantyne and William Gerard Golding are two writers who discuss human nature through the novels they wrote. The novels which represent their different perspectives regarding human nature are Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* and Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, which I have chosen to analyse.

To show the basic human nature, Ballantyne and Golding wrote their books in typical Robinsonade. Robinsonade is "a fictitious narrative of often fantastic adventures in real or imaginary distant places; especially a story of the adventures of a person marooned on a desert island" ("Robinsonade"). The term Robinsonade was made after the success of Daniel Defoe's novel, *Robinson Crusoe*, published in 1719. Any novel written in imitation of it that deals with the problem of the castaway's survival on a desert island is included as Robinsonade ("Robinsonade"). Robinsonade book is "moderately common in literary criticism as a description of works in which a hero is snatched without warning from the comforts of civilisation and must attempt to survive in difficult circumstances through his wits and personal qualities" (Quinion). I believe the reason Ballantyne and Golding use this genre is to show the readers the basic human nature according to their perspective because the basic nature of human will shows up once they no longer bound by society.

Robert Michael Ballantyne is a 19th century British writer who is famous for his adventure stories and his thorough research before writing a book. The works of Ballantyne are also admired by other great writers; William Golding is one of them. Ballantyne wrote many works during his lifetime, but *The Coral*

Island is what most people remember him about, and this book has not been out of print since it was first published in 1857. It was adapted into children's television drama in the years of 1980 and 2000. The story is about three British teenagers who are drifted ashore after a shipwreck and they keep sticking together to make sure they survive. As the story continues, the teenagers experience many things, from intervening in a battle between the natives to being kidnapped by the natives. In the end, all of the experiences make their bond stronger and they become more mature when they go back home.

Sir William Gerald Golding CBE, known as William Golding, is a 20th century British writer and he has a great influence on the world of literature. *Lord of the Flies*, which is written as the counterpart of Ballantyne's *The Coral Island*, is considered his greatest work; he received many awards and recognition in the world of literature for this work. He was awarded the Booker Prize in 1980 and was given a Nobel Prize in Literature in 1983. Aside from his literary awards, Golding also received many other awards, such as the CBE (Commander of the British Empire) in 1966 and being knighted by The Queen in 1988. His *Lord of the Flies* was so popular that it was made into films twice, one directed by Peter Brook in 1963 and the other by Harry Hook in 1990. William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* tells about a group of British boys stranded on an island during a war. As the boys experience many incidents on the island they gradually lose their morality and most of them begin to act like savage men.

The Coral Island and *Lord of the Flies* are clearly seen as novels which discuss human nature. "*The Coral Island* attempts to demonstrate that humans are born good at heart and that evil is an external force present in the world which

tempts once innocent people” (“Lord of The Flies Themes: Human Nature, Society, Fear”). In *Lord of the Flies*, “Golding suggests that civilization can alleviate but never eradicate the innate evil that dwells in mankind. Under the proper circumstances, the innate evil can come out and transform the person into a brand new individual. This is how savagery lies within each boy, representing the evil that lives inside humanity” (Pomoni).

The two authors have different perspectives regarding human nature and they show them through the characters in each book. Thus, I would like to analyze the portrayal of the major characters. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, portrayal is “the act of showing or describing somebody/something in a picture, play, book, etc” (“Portrayal”).

Statement of the Problem

The problems that I am going to discuss are:

1. How are the major characters portrayed in *The Coral Island* and *Lord of the Flies*?
2. What are the authors’ purposes in creating such characters?

Purpose of the Study

Based on the above problems, the purposes of this study are:

1. To show how the major characters are portrayed in *The Coral Island* and *Lord of the Flies*.
2. To show the purpose of each author in creating such characters.

Method of Research

The method of research that I use is library research. I begin the research by reading R.M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. After this, I analyze each primary text by using some information and materials from the Internet that can support my analysis and can help me write a good thesis. Lastly, I draw some conclusions based on what has been discussed.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of four chapters, preceded by the Acknowledgements, the Table of Contents and the Abstract. Chapter One is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. In Chapter Two, I analyze the portrayal of the major characters in Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* in accordance with the purpose of the author. In Chapter Three, I analyze the portrayal of the major characters in Golding's *Lord of the Flies* in accordance with the purpose of the author. Chapter Four is the Conclusion. This thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, consisting of the Synopsis of the Novels and the Biography of the Authors.