

SYMBOLS AND INNOCENCE LOSS IN WILLIAM GOLDING’S “THE LORD OF FLIES”

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Abstract: *This article explores intricate themes of civilization and savagery in The Lord of Flies, examining how the writer reveals complexities of human nature and tensions between man’s urge for savagery, controlling and also loss of innocence. Novel was first published in September, 1954. Lord of Flies is the most banned or challenged book in USA, however it has not been sixteen years. William chooses the title “The Lord of Flies” because it is a direct translation of biblical term “Beelzebub”, a name associated with demon, and the pig’s head becomes symbol of the boy’s descent into savagery and evil. British airplane crashes on isolated island, the only survivors were schoolboys. Ralph is the protagonist and other boys elect him chief over Jack, and he does his all best to keep things civilized. Jack Merridew is the main antagonist; he loses vote for chief to Ralph and he adopts authoritarian style of leadership. The boys soon forget their plans for rescue, silences the few voices of reason, and blindly follows Jack to the edge of sanity, and edge of island. Novel also portrays the tension between group and individuality, rational and emotional reactions, between morality and immorality. There so many symbols in this novel, Piggy’s glasses, the conch shell which it could be the symbol of unity and democracy. Lord of Flies categorized as an allegorical, philosophical and adventure fiction.*

Key words: *human nature, barbarism, human instinct, societal norms, themes, symbols*

Introduction: William Golding a British novelist, playwright, poet and school teacher born in 1911 New quay, Cornwall. His dad was master at Marlborough Grammar School, when he was twenty, he decides teaching at Bishop Wordsworth’s

School in Salisbury. He works here for twenty years, he did take break to World War 2, after war he grew beard, and his students nicknamed him as a ‘scruff’. One of his former students described him as a ‘the wroth person to be as a school teacher’. He was more interested in writing and he spend his free time with typewriter, he hands out of pages of his work to his students and count the number of words on each page. He took a group of pupils to the nearby iron age hill fort while others defended its grassy ramparts. Golding was shocked at how quickly the schoolboys morphed into ferocious warring tribes: ‘my eyes came out like organ stops as I watched what was happening. (1) His research was the fundamentals for his masterpiece ‘The Lord of Flies’. Two elements of Golding’s life and experience are powerfully reflected in Lord of Flies – his pessimism after the 2nd world war and his insight- as a schoolmaster into the way children behave and function; (2) His time in British Royal Navy during 2nd World War impacted his view into world, leading him to question the nature of humanity and violence and savagery. He saw human cruelties to each other and darker, horror sides of humanity himself. His experience in school teaching, he observed the behavior an interaction of youngsters, including savagery and violence.

Materials and methods: The themes of the loss of innocence are a central aspect of the novel, when the boys first arrive on the island, they are excited about their freedom and new adventures. At that time their initial innocence, as they are still untainted by the harsh realities of the adulthood, their playful behavior and the idea of creating their own society with pure naivety. First significant loss of innocence can be Jack and other boys killing the pig, it is turning point, their behavior shows violence and brutality. Jack’s chant,

‘Kill the pig! Cut her throat! Spill her blood!’ symbolizes their embrace savagery, and stepping towards chaos and immorality. Their another step is painting their faces, it symbolizes their transformation and the loss of their civilized selves. This makes they act violence without any guilt and remorse, this steps away them actual original instincts. Next is Simon’s death represents innate goodness and moral compass of the group. Jack’s tribe hosted a feast to entice members of Ralph’s tribe to join them. Jack promises to protect his group members from beast to gain their support. Simon came to tell them beasts does not exist, boys mistakenly believe Simon is beast, it shows that how naïve schoolboys went so far, and horrifying truth

is Jack and his group does not felt guilt, they overcome this as victory and power. In final chapters, Ralph realizes their loss of innocence and he comperes one he knew have become something, monstrous and beastly, he finally understands what they got is destruction and barbarism, what they lost is their childhood, humanity and civility. These scenes illustrate gradual but profound loss of innocence among the boys, revealing the darkness of human nature.

Results: Theme of civilization versus savagery is illustrated through Ralph and Jack. Ralph represents order, democracy, while Jack embodies chaos, authoritarianism, and primal instincts of human nature. Ralph embodies the ideals of democracy, cooperation and his primary goal is to ensure the boy’s rescue by a signal fire, but his authority gradually weakens as boys’ attention changes wanting from rescue to hunting savagery. Jack become hunter, and symbol of descent into savagery, he uses manipulation to control his choirboys, paying with their fears and insecurities.

Discussion: The Lord of Flies reveals how children easily devolve into savagery when stripped of societal constraints, this aligns with psychological theories, such as those proposed by Freud, that posit an inherent conflict between primal instincts (ID) and societal norms(superego) that controls human behavior.

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