

Golding's *Lord of the Flies* as a symbolic novel

Mushtaq Awad Jabbar*

Omar R. Marzah

Ali Hasan Abed

University of Al Muthanan / College of Education for humanities

| Article Info | Abstract |
|--|---|
| <p>Date of Article</p> <p>Received : 2023/7/20</p> <p>Received in revised form: 2023/8/01</p> <p>Accepted: 2023/8/13</p> <p>Available online: 2023/12/31</p> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>William Golding, Symbolism, Ralph, The pig, the fire and the title</p> | <p>Golding's <i>Lord of the Flies</i> is full of symbolism. Every object or character in this novel has a symbolic meaning. Golding uses symbolism to send his message regarding his main themes in this novel like savagery and violence through recognizable symbolic characters such as Ralph, piggy, Jack and other boys in the island. The author employs many characters in the novel to have a notable symbolic meaning, symbolism within objects like the conch shell, the glasses, the fire, shelters and rocks. Symbolism within animals like a pig; The main purpose of this article is to find out the symbolism in this literary work, and to show what it stands for within the characters, inanimate things, animals and the title <i>Lord of the Flies</i>. The title of this novel is a Hebrew name for the chief of demons or literally the <i>Lord of the Flies</i> is a name sometimes used as an alternative phrase for the word "Satan", Golding employs it in the novel as a symbolic indication of the struggle for power in situations of chaos and turmoil, it also represents the physical manifestation of the evil that appeared to the boys, and it is the evil that Golding believes is present in each of us.</p> |

© All rights reserved to Muthanna University 2023

Introduction

As an important British writer, Golding was a noble prize winner in 1983. His novels are rich in meaning, and widely integrated into classical literature, myths, Christian society and allegory. The main subject of his work is generally associated with the evil, but his novels also express a little of optimism. His first novel, *Lord of the Flies* exposes and keeps exploring themes like brutality in human nature and civilization's rational conflict. The

novel also established the reputation of his scholar.

He born in Cornwall, England, of an intellectual family; he was interested in childhood and love of literature. In 1934, he released for the first time - a collection of poems. In 1935, he graduated from Oxford University with a Bachelor of Arts degree, then in a small troupe worked as a director and actor. He published the novel *Lord of the Flies* in 1954, and got a good reputation. Golding

was a prolific writer. In the aftermath of *Lord of the Flies*, he published his novels *Backward* in (1955), *Free Fall* in (1959), *Taper* in (1964), *Pyramid* (1967), *Darkness is visible*. His famous children's novel *Coral Island* (1857), and the outer form of the novel, Golding usually presented evil humanity and ideas. This novel was completed after the start of fate of the poor, it was rejected by twenty-one publishers, was not published until 1954.

1- Symbolism in literature:

Symbolism is an artistic imitation or invention that is a method of revealing or suggesting immaterial, also, it is one of the devices of writing any literary work. Symbolism will be examined in this article by many aspects and elements.

2- Symbolism in the characters

2.1 Ralph

He is an intelligent and rational kid; he is coming from a middle class family of England. Ralph is the hero of this novel who shows the type of civilization in that period of time; Ralph hopes to establish a civilized life for remaining boys on that island. He uses a conch as a tool and gathers all the boys. Ralph advises all the kids to select a boss with assistance of vote to achieve his goal. After being elected as a chief for the boys, he comes up with a strategy to speak. He wants all the kids to reach the principles of how to live civilized. When Jack stands against him, Ralph does not act aggressively with him even when Jack tries to take his position as an elected leader.

Golding drew the character of his protagonist "Ralph" to match the character of British prime minister called "Chamberlain" before the war time with Hitler, this prime minister

tried to follow the policy of settlement to solve the problem with Germany, this policy ended with a big tragedy of the Second World War, same attitude of Chamberlain followed by the Ralph on the island and ended with tragedy too.

The common factor between Chamberlain and Ralph that both of them are leaders, Ralph who is elected by the kids on the island, when Jack challenges him, he fails to use his power or authority to stop Jack's aggression; but he avoids the troubles with him. (Bahh, 1970:22)

2.2 Piggy

Piggy has identified as an intellect and rational person. He is the one who suggests on Ralph to call all the boys on the island to have a meeting, and he provides the idea of the conch to be as a tool to collect them on the beach. Piggy is the first boy who suggests igniting a little fire and grabbing the wood on the island to maintain it and to be considered at later to be a signal fire for any possible passing ship of rescuers to evacuate them from this island. Piggy attempts to establish an instrument to the kind as a sundial to recognize time. When the fear of the monster terrifies the kids on the island, Piggy tries to proof that the existence of the beast is not scientific. He looks to the surrounding things very simply. He recognizes the evil inside the people; anyway he is unable to do anything. His knowledge and science prevent him to follow the myths and illusion inside the other boys on the island. (Baker 1965:53)

He always supports Ralph and believes in his leadership, he represents order and law in this novel. He always coming up with new ideas to assist and help his group to survive and to improve their new life on the island as well.

2.3 Jack

Jack is a symbol of savagery, dictatorship and Ralph's antagonist, and plays a primary role to represent the instinct of savagery on the island, he starts his violence and shows his evil since the beginning of the novel, he pretends to hunt the pig for their meal, but in fact he is blood thirst. He is pleased to kill extra animals for fun and pleasure than eating meat as he pretends, "He has outwitted a living thing, imposed their will upon it, and taken away its life like a satisfying drink".

When the principles of the civilization are not any more have effect on the island, the evil reveals its actual face. Jack comes up with an idea of painting the faces of the hunter. With acceleration of the actions on the island regarding Jack's expansion of the bloodlust, Jack becomes more and more violent and full of evil. While Jack enforces his savagery on the island, he cannot distinguish between the pigs and human beings, and as result he killed Simon and Piggy and almost Ralph to be counted his third victim in the end of the novel.

He is trying to break any democratic roles and to finish any assembly to the boys on the island. To get that matter done, he believes in terrifying the kids and to raise the fear inside them to guarantee his domination on their thinking of how to defeat the imaginative beast on the island. Also, he uses his authority by his tyrannical beating to one of the kids called "Wilfred", and his way of stealing the fire from Ralph's camp, he stole the glasses of Piggy. He enlists the little kids Sam and Eric to participate in murdering of Piggy. All of that is just to satisfy his need of leadership. (Heynes, 1964:49).

2.3 Simon

He represents the religion and purification. Golding drew this character to match the same features of the savior "Jesus"; he stands on the opposite side of Jack. He is the different character in this novel due to his noble behavior and his innocence not anymore inquires on the island. He is the only one who acts morally and still up to the end of the novel without feeling of shame or committed any sin or guilt. His influence on the kids by no means reduced like a holy man. When the kids have brought themselves into the danger of disorder, he thought of the existence of the beast, at that time, he raised in his mind the picture of hero and sick human at the same time.

This refers to his vision of a man. To Simon, when man does the good deeds then man is a hero, but when devil control the human nature then this human will turn to be destructive and sick. With the expertise of human evil, Simon believes that he will face the same fate as Jesus. The most important is that he alone thinks to climb the mountain to find out the evil without any cognizance of dropping his life there. It is his faith of revealing fact that reduces his fear of death in his search for the beast. During Simon's conversation with the beast, he figures out that the beast never exist on the island, and it was only imaginative one, the beast was only dead body of Parachutist when he describes him as full of trouble but harmless.

In spite of Simon figures out the reality of the evil and the nature of the beast on the island, he meets his fate as all the saints, his end is more heroic. The goodness inside Simon led him to help the kids of disasters, and attempts to drive them to the safe side but the kids were

unconscious and lost their savior. (Chaima, 2014:79).

3. Symbolism in the animals

3.1 The Pig

One of the most important symbols in this novel is the pig that stands for the symbolic meaning. For example, the pigs are symbols represent many concepts including the loss of the humanity, morality and the good deeds inside mankind as well. After killing the first pig on the island by Jack's tribe, the head of the pig created to be as a symbol of the savagery on the island, the reason for that is the way of killing that pig when they decide to put that head on a stick. Since the group of the boys have a fear of the existence of the beast on the island, Jack tries to do something tricky with the boys, in order to convey that this head belongs to the beast, the head becomes surrounded with a lot of flies, that is what makes the head of the pig is the lord of the flies which is the alternative word of "Satan", a synonym word for the devil, and it is a word refers to human evil.

On the other side, readers to this novel will notify that Jack is the one who can be called *lord of the flies* since we see the boys as flies that want a vessel, for that, he is able to live his life as a leader, and the head of the pig assist him. The pig's head is considered as a symbol of devil there. Golding attempts to emphasize the existence of devil inside human and its part in the human condition, for every man, good and evil can be next to each other. The author tries to show the idea of writing this novel by using the pig's head which is considered as the most evil object on the island, and Simon who stands for goodness, all together on the same spot. (Xiaofang, 2009:109)

3.2 The beast

The beast on the island in this novel plays a significant role in both of the rising and falling actions in Golding's, but actually the beast here is an imaginative one, the boys on the island, specially Jack creates the story of the beast to scare the boys, the purpose of this notion is to enforce all the boys to obey and follow his instructions as he is the one who is able to protect them to gain their loyalty and to be their leader instead of Ralph.

In addition, there is another type of beasts in the novel, the innate evil inside the human nature. Golding wants to present this theme to the reader and to convey the idea that there is a beast inside anyone of us; this beast is the evil inside human being. The author selected the characters of this novel to be little kids to indicate that even the kids are not innocents and pure in the absence of law and order on the island. (Nurcahyo, 2007:15)

4. Symbolism in the inanimate things

4.1 The conch shell

The conch has a significant role in his novel; it refers to democracy and civilization. It is used by the boys to establish a civilized society on the island. It has a significant meaning on the island because it always reminds the boys by their roles in community in homeland. It also refers to the authority; it is also the tool that is used to assemble all the boys on the island, by all means, no one of the boys is able to speak unless he is holding the conch by his hand as a mark of authorization to speak. One of the signs of end the civilization on the island is by destroying the conch on the hands of Jack's tribe; the boys used the conch to discipline their manner if one of them wants to speak during the meeting. Ralph and Piggy find the

conch on the beach, they use it to assembly the boys after the plane crashes on the island. When the boys are separated into groups on the island, the conch shell loses its power and authority; it becomes useless except for Ralph and Piggy. (Tiger, 1976:58)

4.2 Piggy's Glasses

The glasses in this novel possess a significant role. The glasses of piggy refer to the science, cleverness and knowledge as well. The glasses also refer to many indications; it refers to the goodness and evil on the island. When the glasses used to ignite and maintain the fire on the island, it symbolizes the knowledge and science when Piggy discovered a scientific way to ignite the fire, also it has a significant role to Piggy, through the glasses; he was able to recognize the good and bad. When Piggy lost his glasses, he lost his ability to recognize the right or wrong, he missed his correct vision to the harmful or harmless.

The glasses of Piggy are a symbolic object in the novel, but these glasses generate another symbol "the fire" that stands for children's survival on the island.

There are many reasons to consider the symbolism of these glasses. Firstly, it is the hope to all the kids on the island to survive from this disaster, by using the glasses to ignite and maintain the fire on the beach of the island, the percentage of their survival will be increased by any possibility of passing ship to see the fire at night. Secondly, piggy is unable to see without his glasses, so he cannot recognize the things as before; Piggy here lost his power and influence on the boys. Golding makes the power of piggy on the island related to his glasses. Jack steals his glasses in the end of the novel; Golding announced the end of

civilization by the loss of Piggy's glasses. (Page 1985:33)

5. The title as a symbolic

In every aspect of this novel, readers can find the symbolism in Golding's' novel *Lord of the Flies*, Since the beginning of this novel, starts with its title *Lord of the Flies*, This title indicates Beelzebub on the island, as this beast is an imaginative one, then, it complies with the description of this novel as a symbolic novel due to allegory deals with the fictional stories.

The author of this novel gives a historical and religious background to his novel, by interpreting the meaning of the title of this literary work, the title indicates the story of the first creatures on this planet "Adam and Eve" and how the devil influenced and abandoned them from the paradise.

In addition, Golding takes this title *Lord of the Flies* from ancient Hebrew language as indication to word "Satan". So, the title itself is an indication to the source of evil on the island.

Conclusion:

As an important literary element, Golding uses symbolism in his novel to reflect his views about the human nature. *Lord of the Flies* is full of symbols within objects and characters which represent the themes of order and disorder, loss of innocence, and the struggle between good and evil. By using these symbols, he gives the readers the opportunity to live the life of his characters and let them experience the events of the war and gives the readers the possible circumstances of chaos and disorder on an uninhabited island.

In addition, The author uses multiple types of symbols in order to convey his ideas and

thoughts to the readers regarding the main themes of this novel, and show another type of struggle by employing the childhood in that struggle to prove the innate evil inside the human beings.

Finally, by following the analytical method, it was concluded that Golding succeeded in conveying his main idea centered on the conflict between civilization and barbarism to the reader by employing symbolism. We also conclude that encoding in Lord of the Flies is not only an aesthetic technique that gives the aesthetic character of the text, but it also has another function which is to clarify the core theme of the novel.

References

- 1- Bahh, Howard Simon. The Novel of William Golding, Columbu: Ohio state university press, 1970.
- 2- Baker, James Ralph. William Golding: A critical study, New York: St Martin's press, 1965.
- 3- Chaima, S. (2014). Symbolism in William Golding's Novel Lord of the Flies (1954).
- 4- Heynes, Samuel. William Golding. New York: Columbia university press, 1964.
- 5- Nurcahyo, W. (2007). A study of Symbolism in Golding's Lord of the Flies.
- 6- Page, Norman, Ed William Golding: Novels 1954-67: A case book, London ; Macmillan, 1985
- 7- Tiger, Virginia .William Golding. The dark field of discovery, London ; Calden and Boyars Ltd, 1976
- 8- Xiaofang Li & Weihua Wu. On Symbolic Significance of characters in Lord of the Flies,

Yan'an University, Yangjialing 716000, China, March 2009.

الرمزية في رواية سيد الذباب

مشتاق عواد جبار

عمر رؤوف ميرزا

علي حسن عبد

جامعة المثنى / كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية

الملخص:

رواية كولدن "سيد الذباب" فيها الكثير من الرموز، فكل غرض أو شخصية تجدها في هذه الرواية له مدلول رمزي، استخدم الكاتب الرمزية كاسلوب كتابي ليرسل رسالة المتعلقة بالافكار مثل الوحشية والعنف، والتي يريد ايصالها من خلال شخصيات معينة في الرواية ومنهم رالف، جاك وبكي وغيرهم على جزيرة نائية. وظف الكاتب العديد من الشخصيات في هذه الرواية ليعطي معنى رمزي مهم من خلالها. استخدم ايضا الاغراض مثل المحار والنظارات والنار والملاحي، والصخور كرموز ايضا في الرواية. اما من ناحية اخرى فقد استخدم الحيوانات للدلالة الرمزية مثل الخنزير. والغرض من هذا البحث هو للكشف عن الرمزية الموجودة في هذا العمل الادبي ولاظهار ما تعنيه رمزية الاشخاص والاشياء والحيوانات وايضا عنوان الرواية. فالعنوان في هذه الرواية هو عنوان مأخوذ من اللغة العبرية والذي يشير الى كلمة "الشیطان". استخدم الكاتب الرمزية للإشارة الى الصراع من اجل السلطة في ظل الفوضى والتي تمثل مظهر من مظاهر الشر والتي تجسدت في تصرف الاطفال، الشر الذي يؤمن الكاتب بوجوده فينا نحن البشر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: وليام كولدن، الرمزية، رالف، الخنزير والنار.