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Scriptural (Biblical) Delusions in *Lord of the Flies*

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الأوهام الكتابية (الإنجيلية) في رواية "أمير الذباب"

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الملخص :

مكن تحديد العديد من التوازيات الإنجيلية في رواية أمير الذباب، وقد اعتبرها العديد من النقاد بمثابة إعادة سرد لقصص من الكتاب المقدس. ورغم أن هذا التوصيف قد يُعد تبسيطاً مفرطاً للقضايا الاجتماعية المعقدة التي تتناولها الرواية، إلا أن النص بالفعل يستدعي توازياً مع موضوعات وصور مسيحية محددة. وتعمل الصور الإنجيلية في الرواية كرمز متكرر (motif)، نظراً لأن المؤلف لا يُشير صراحة إلى شخصيات أو أحداث إنجيلية بعينها. ومع ذلك، فإن تأويل النص يكشف عن عدد من الأوهام الإنجيلية. تستخدم هذه الدراسة تحليل المحتوى التقليدي لفحص رواية أمير الذباب والكتاب المقدس من أجل تحديد الأوهام الإنجيلية الواردة في الرواية. وتُظهر نتائج الدراسة وجود عدة أوهام إنجيلية في النص الأدبي. وتشير النتائج إلى أن النظر إلى شخصية سيمون باعتباره تمثيلاً للمسيح هو وهم إنجيلي، إذ إن الفروق الجوهرية بين سيمون والمسيح تُظهر أن غولدينغ لم يكن يسعى إلى إعادة سرد مباشر للإنجيل، بل إلى عرض سرد أكثر تعقيداً يتصل بطبيعة الإنسان. كما تخلص الدراسة إلى أن الادعاء بأن شخصية جاك تشبه يهوذا هو وهم إنجيلي أيضاً. فجاك شخصية مركبة تُجسد الآثار السلبية لغياب القوانين والنظام. وتُبين الدراسة كذلك أن اعتبار رأس الخنزير تجسيداً للشيطان يُعد وهمًا إنجيليًا، إذ توضح الشخصيات كيف يمكن استخدام الخوف لدفع الأفراد نحو ارتكاب أفعال شريرة. وأخيراً، تخلص الدراسة إلى أن الجزيرة لا تمثل تصويرًا دقيقًا لجنّة عدن. الكلمات المفتاحية: الوهم، الكتاب المقدس، الأدب، التفسير، الموضوعات

Abstract

Many Biblical parallels can be identified in *Lord of the Flies*. Many critics consider the novel as a retelling of stories from the Bible. While this may be an oversimplification of the complex social issues explored in the book, the text does draw parallels with specific Christian themes and images. The Biblical imagery functions as a motif in the novel because the author does not explicitly refer to Biblical figures or incidences. An interpretation of the text, however, presents several Biblical delusions. The study uses conventional content analysis to examine *Lord of the Flies* and the Bible to identify Biblical delusions in the novel. The study finds that several Biblical delusions occur in the literary text. The findings of the study show that the view of Simon as a representation of Jesus Christ is a Biblical delusion. The substantial differences between Simon and Jesus indicate that Golding aimed to display a more complex story relating to humanity and not merely retell the Bible. The study also determines that the claim that the character of Jack is similar to Judas is a Biblical delusion. Jack is a sophisticated character that demonstrates the negative effects of the lack of rules. The research further shows that the consideration of the Pig's Head as Satan is a Biblical delusion. The characters show how fear

can be used to drive people to engage in evil acts. The analysis also finds that the island is not an accurate depiction of the Garden of Eden. Keywords: Delusion, Biblical, Literary, Interpretation, Themes.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

A key feature of literary texts is that they are often open to different interpretations. The ability to draw various meanings from a specific literary text is further enhanced by the use of stylistic devices. Writers usually use stylistic devices to advance or emphasize certain themes. *Lord of the Flies* (1954) by the award-winning author William Golding is a novel that can be interpreted in different ways because the author uses a plethora of stylistic devices to explore multiple themes and issues in the text. Spitz (1970) argues that while only the author of a literary text can know the exact meaning of it, it is possible for third parties to interpret precisely the meaning of literary texts because the imaginary can disclose the real. In other words, it is possible to determine the meaning intended by the author by linking the imagined to the real. *Lord of the Flies* is a fictional novel that examines an array of real-life issues, such as civilization, savagery, and loss of innocence. Al-Saidi (2012) suggests that the novel may have been inspired by Golding's experience of battle-line action during the Second World War. Similar claims are made by Alnajm (2015) who argues that the novel was directly inspired by Golding's wartime experiences. These experiences drove the author to question the adverse impacts of war. Moreover, Golding also questioned the nature of the human soul. The novel has several Biblical parallels, an indication that the war experience influenced the author to look at religion to understand the motivations behind human actions. An analysis of the book should, therefore, be centered on comparing the themes identified in the novel and reality. Such an approach would ensure that the intended meanings by the author are identified and analyzed because literature is inspired by the society in which the author exists. *Lord of the Flies* observes contradictory human compulsions towards social organization and civilization and towards savagery or the desire for power. An important societal issue that the novel also examines is spirituality. A lot of Biblical parallels can be identified in *Lord of the Flies*. According to Fitzgerald and Kayser (1992), many critics consider the novel as a retelling of stories from the Bible. While it may be an oversimplification of the complex social issues explored in the book, the text indeed draws parallels with specific Christian themes and images. The Biblical imagery functions as a motif in the novel because the author does not explicitly refer to Biblical figures or incidences mentioned in the Bible. An interpretation of the text, however, results in several Biblical delusions. This study examines the extent to which the Biblical imagery in *Lord of the Flies* differs from the actual Biblical events. Given that the author does not make obvious references to Biblical incidences, readers are left to interpret the intended meaning themselves. This paper analyzes the text to establish how the Biblical imagery identified differs from the traditional understanding of the Bible. Biblical delusions can offer insights into how the author viewed human actions and religion.

1.2 Problem Statement *Lord of the Flies* portrays several Biblical allusions. However, they are embedded in a work of fiction, an indication that they might not be accurate representations of Biblical occurrences and incidences. This study, therefore, examines Biblical delusions in the novel, that is, the extent to which Biblical allusions in the text differ from the events documented in the Bible. The findings of the study can offer insights into the author's intended meanings in *Lord of the Flies*.

1.3 Research Questions

The following are the research questions that the study aims to answer:

- i. Are there Biblical delusions in the novel?
- ii. What are the intended meanings of these delusions if they exist?

1.4 Research Objectives

The following are the objectives of the study:

- i. To identify Biblical delusions in the novel.
- ii. To interpret the social implications of Biblical delusions in the novel.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study can be used to inspire positive behavioral change in society. The social implications of Biblical delusions can be a basis for self-assessment and personal development. Furthermore, William Golding wrote the novel after he experienced the adverse impacts of war. Thus, the social messages in the text can be used to adopt better solutions to human conflicts.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

The methodology is a critical part of a research study because it determines how effectively the identified research questions are answered. The selection of the research methodology should, therefore, be influenced by the primary research question that the study aims to answer. The methodology selected for this research must show whether there are Biblical delusions in *Lord of the Flies*. The methodology should also help to determine the intended meanings of these delusions.

2.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy employed in this study is interpretivism. While there are various research philosophies, such as realism and pragmatism, it is important to select a research philosophy that would effectively enable the researcher to examine the primary research issue. In this study, the primary issue to be investigated constitutes Biblical delusions in *Lord of the Flies*. Since it is mainly the author of the text that can know the implied meanings of certain events and portrayals, as claimed by Spitz (1970), readers must interpret them through social constructs to establish the implied meanings because literature is usually influenced by socialization and experiences. According to Thanh and Thanh (2015), the researcher must seek the experiences and perceptions of the author to understand the meanings that exist in texts. In this study, the experiences and perceptions of William Golding can affect the understanding of the novel and the importance of Biblical delusions in *Lord of the Flies*. Additionally, comprehension of the experiences and perceptions of the characters in the novel from the narrative can enable the researcher to interpret the text and derive the meaning. Thus, interpretivism as a research paradigm is appropriate for this study.

2.2 Research Design

Conventional content analysis was used as the research design for this study. Krippendorff (2018) states that conventional content analysis is a suitable research design for studies in which there is limited information concerning the investigated phenomenon. Fitzgerald and Kayser (1992) argue that many critics mainly consider *Lord of the Flies* a retelling of Biblical events. Al-Saidi (2012) and Alnajm (2015), on the other hand, suggest that it is a novel mainly inspired by Golding's wartime experiences. They also claim that the literary text is characterized by Biblical allusions. Biblical delusions in the text are, therefore, an issue that has not been explored. Given the lack of information about scriptural delusions, it was important to use conventional content analysis to scrutinize *Lord of the Flies* and establish how Biblical delusions occur in the text. The selected research design made it possible to identify important themes relating to the research topic.

2.3 Data Collection

The data collection method used in the study was document analysis. *Lord of the Flies* was analyzed to gather information relevant to the research study. According to Bowen (2009), document analysis is a data collection method in which texts or documents are analyzed to examine a particular research topic. Bowen (2009) further posits that the data collection method results in the identification of various themes, which are then analyzed to provide crucial insights into the research topic. The data collection method enabled the researcher to understand the narrative and the main characters in the book to interpret meanings in the text effectively. Apart from the book, the Bible was also analyzed to determine how scriptural parallels drawn in the novel differ from actual Biblical recordings of specific events.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

Information to be analyzed was obtained from *Lord of the Flies* and the Bible. Only these two texts were used as a sample because they contain information relevant to the study. Purposive sampling was, therefore, used to select the two texts. Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) argue that purposive sampling is an appropriate technique when selecting samples that contain information relevant to the research study. For instance, this research study aims to determine Biblical delusions in *Lord of the Flies*. Thus, only this novel can provide the information needed to answer the developed research questions. The Bible is required to compare the extent to which the scriptural allusions made in the text differ from Biblical events.

2.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through thematic analysis. As argued by Bowen (2009), information is categorized in the form of themes when using document analysis as a research design. Joffe (2012) suggests that thematic analysis is a means for identifying data patterns and analyzing them to offer important insights into the investigated issue. In this research, thematic analysis as a data analysis method was used to identify themes related to Biblical delusions and their meanings. The approach ensured that important information is obtained from the novel to show how Biblical delusions occur.

2.6 Ethics

Few ethical concerns were identified for this study because the research did not use human subjects to examine the issue. However, there was still a need to ensure that integrity is maintained throughout the research process to enhance the credibility and usability of the information collected. The researcher also made sure that the study was conducted rigorously to secure the validity and reliability of the findings.

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter analyzes important themes identified in *Lord of the Flies* to demonstrate various instances of Biblical delusions in the novel. The information identified is analyzed thematically to ensure that all the key issues in the novel are thoroughly examined.

3.1 Theme: Simon as Christ

Simon has many parallels with Jesus Christ. In the novel, the character represents morality and goodness. In a similar manner, Christ represents virtue and righteousness, owing to His role as savior of humanity. However, there are various Biblical delusions with regard to the consideration of Simon as Christ. Simon's death is foreshadowed by the Lord of the Flies, who represents the devil in the novel. The Lord of the Flies tells Simon: "I'm warning you. I'm going to get angry. D'you see? You're not wanted. Understand? We are going to have fun on this island. Understand? We are going to have fun on this island! So don't try it on, my poor misguided boy, or else—"... "—Or else," said the Lord of the Flies, "we shall do you? See? Jack and Roger and Maurice and Robert and Bill and Piggy and Ralph. Do you. See?" The conversation is mostly a threat because the Lord of the Flies warns Simon that if he does not do what he wants, the boys will kill him. The interaction between Simon and the Lord of the Flies depicts the interaction between Jesus and Satan when the devil tempted Him. While the conversation between Simon and the Lord of the Flies has some parallels with the temptation of Christ, there are also several Biblical delusions. The first delusion is how the Lord of the Flies attempts to convince Simon to do what he wants. The Lord of the Flies threatens Simon with death for his disobedience. In the Bible, however, Satan does not use threats to tempt Jesus but instead tries to tell Him about the benefits that He would attain by doing what he is asking Him to do. Mathew 4:9 states, "And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." The verse shows that Satan does not intimidate Jesus but attempts to show Him the advantages of doing what he wants Him to do. The conversation between Simon and the Pig's Head is also imaginary, which implies that it did not actually take place. However, the interaction between Jesus and Satan was real, as narrated in the Bible. Matthew 4:1-2 says, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward he hungered." The Bible shows that Satan took the initiative to seek Jesus and tempt Him. Simon, on the other hand, sought the Pig's Head and engaged in a conversation with it in his mind. The character cannot, therefore, be a representation of Jesus. Biblical delusion concerning Simon as Christ also occurs in the manner in which both die. While both Simon and Christ are killed, they are killed for different reasons and in different ways. Simon was not killed by nailing on the cross. Golding (1954) writes, "The body lifted a fraction of an inch from the sand and a bubble of air escaped from the mouth with a wet plop. Then it turned gently in the water." Jesus Christ, on the other hand, was crucified on the cross. John 19:23 states, "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout." The verse shows that Christ was crucified and that he died on the cross. Additionally, Jesus was crucified because His accusers claimed that He had declared Himself a king. Moreover, He was killed for His beliefs. John 19:12 states, "And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, 'If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar'". Simon, on the other hand, was killed because he had discovered the truth about human morality. In this regard, the consideration of Simon as Christ is a Biblical delusion. Jesus and Simon also differ in the power that they possess. Jesus possessed divine power and healed people in the Bible. He also died willingly, unlike Simon, who died because he did not have the power to stop his tormentors. Additionally, the death of Jesus was important because it brought salvation to humanity. Simon, on the other hand, died a pointless death in the novel. His death demonstrates the power of evil over humanity. Jesus, however, defeated sin through the death and rose from the dead to bring salvation to humankind. The significant differences between Simon and Jesus indicate that Golding sought to tell a complex story relating to humanity and not just retell the Bible. The author mainly focused on demonstrating the evil side of humanity through the actions of the children who became savages. The argument that Simon represents Jesus in the novel is thus a Biblical delusion, given the major differences between the character and Jesus as narrated in the Bible.

3.2 Theme: Jack as Judas

The consideration of Jack as Judas in the novel is also a Biblical delusion. While Jack has engaged in actions that can be equated to the behavior of Judas in the Bible, the claim that the character represents Judas is inaccurate and simplistic, as argued by Fitzgerald and Kayser (1992). Jack engages in an act of betrayal when he betrays the rules created by Ralph and causes the death of Simon. The character refuses to follow authority and opts for savagery, a factor that influences the children to embrace evil. The betrayal by the scriptural Judas is, however, different from Jack's betrayal. Judas betrayed Jesus by telling the authorities of His whereabouts. He also identified Jesus through a kiss when the authorities came to arrest Him. However, Judas did not influence people to kill Jesus in the same manner that Jack influenced the children to kill Simon. The claim that Jack is similar to the Biblical Judas is, therefore, delusional. Simon himself differs from Christ in different ways, as examined in the previous theme. Jack is a multidimensional character that demonstrates the negative effects of the lack of rules. He shows that without authority, human beings can resort to savagery even when there is no need for them to engage in such acts.

3.3 Theme: The Pig's Head as Satan

The novel portrays the Pig's Head as Satan because the character attempts to influence Simon to engage in certain behaviors or activities in the same manner that Satan tempted Jesus. The Pig's Head is named the Lord of the Flies, which is one of Satan's names in the Bible. Matthew 12:24 refers to Satan as Beelzebub, which means "Lord of the Flies" in Hebrew. The use of the name, therefore, indicates that the character represents Satan in some way. However, the Pig's Head is a Biblical delusion because the character does not behave in the same way as Satan. Satan had resources and power that he attempted to use to influence Jesus. On the other hand, the Pig's Head does not have any of that. The character mainly uses fear to attempt to influence Simon to do what he wants him to do. Based on this determination, the view that the Pig's Head alludes to Satan is a Biblical delusion. The character is important to the core message of the novel because it represents the struggle between good and evil. However, it is not an accurate representation of Satan.

3.4 Theme: The Island as the Garden of Eden

The narrative also portrays in some way the island as a representation of the Garden of Eden because it has many of the features of the Garden. According to Alnajm (2015), Golding uses the island to demonstrate the importance of authority because Jack and the children choose savagery even though they are surrounded by comfort. The depiction shows that human beings are inherently evil and thus require authority figures to behave with civility. The island is not, however, an accurate depiction of the Garden of Eden as narrated in the Bible. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve lose God's favor because Satan deceives them. However, on the island, Jack and the children ignore civility because they choose to. Thus, the view that the island is a representation of the Garden of Eden is a Biblical delusion.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

The study sought to determine whether there are Biblical delusions in *Lord of the Flies*. The research also sought to establish the meanings behind these delusions. Through conventional content analysis, the study identified several themes that present insights into the research questions. The findings of the study show that the view of Simon as a representation of Jesus Christ is a Biblical delusion. The substantial differences between Simon and Jesus indicate that Golding aimed to tell a deeper story relating to humanity and the loss of humanity. The results of the analysis show that the author mainly focused on demonstrating the evil side of the humankind through the actions of the children who became uncontrollable savages. The argument that Simon represents Jesus in the novel is a Biblical delusion, given the major differences between the character and Jesus as narrated in the Bible. The study also determines that the claim that Jack is similar to the Biblical Judas is a Biblical delusion. Jack is a complex character that demonstrates the detrimental effects of the lack of rules. He shows that without authority, human beings can resort to savagery even when there is no urgent need for that. Jack merely engaged in acts of incivility because he wanted to and not because he needed to. The implication of this finding is that human society requires rules and authority to ensure that people do not lose control. The research further shows that the consideration of the Pig's Head as Satan is a Biblical delusion. The character displays how fear can be used to drive people to engage in evil acts. The character is also important to the primary message of the novel because it represents the struggle between good and evil. However, it is not an accurate representation of Satan depicted in the Bible. The analysis also finds that the island is not an accurate depiction of the Garden of Eden. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve lose everything because Satan seduces them. However, on the island, Jack and the children ignore civility because they want to do that. The view that the island is a representation of the Garden of Eden is thus a Biblical delusion. Still, the island shows that even

when human beings have luxury, they can still engage in evil activities. Overall, Biblical delusions in the novel help the author to examine societal issues effectively. The meaning behind all of these delusions is that although the Bible accounts and *Lord of the Flies* possess certain similarities, intrinsically, the representation of events in the Bible greatly differs from that in the novel. It implies that the meaning of the delusions is presented from a different angle to understand the novel and the themes behind it on a more sophisticated level.

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