

## PRIMAL INSTINCTS AND SOCIETAL CONSTRUCTS: A THEMATIC STUDY OF WILLIAM GOLDING'S *LORD OF THE FLIES*

Shokhan Mohammed Fatah, Yadgar Faeq Saeed

Charmo University, Chamchamal, Iraq

E-mail: yadgar.fayaq@chu.edu.iq

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### Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the portrayal of human nature's mystique through theoretical analysis. Using a fabulist, mythological approach, William Golding delves into the complexities of human psychology. This study explores the novel's thematic examination of civilization and savagery, demonstrating how the boys' descent into chaos reflects both innate human wickedness and the fragility of social conventions. By analyzing characters, symbols, and narrative structures, the research clarifies the intricate relationship between civilization and barbarism through the lens of primal instincts and societal norms. The study reveals that Golding's depiction of human psychology effectively illustrates the tension between civilization and savagery. The primary text analysis shows how Golding portrays fundamental human characteristics, highlighting the inherent darkness within and the struggle to maintain societal order. Secondary sources are also carefully examined to support this argument. The significance of this study lies in its depiction of the duality of human nature as represented in the novel, offering insights into the delicate balance between our civilized veneers and underlying primal instincts.

**Keywords:** *civilization; instinct; savagery; susceptibility of civilization.*

### 1. Introduction

The Nobel Prize-winning writer, William Gerald Golding was born in 1911 in Cornwall, England. Up until his second year of college in Oxford, when he made the decision to forgo physics and read English literature instead, Golding was a science student in school. Upon his return to England following World War II, he saw the superpowers of the Cold War threatening to destroy one another with nuclear weapons. He was compelled by this to consider the fundamentals of human nature. Golding affirms, "I am becoming more convinced that humanity - the people we are, those we meet - is suffering from a terrible disease. I want to examine this disease, because only by knowing it, is there any hope of being able to control it" (Walker, 2006). He learned from the atrocities of World War II that evil was always there in people and would only surface when it was most convenient. His earliest and best-known book, *Lord of the Flies*, was inspired by these reflections on the inevitable nature of violence.

The novel was eventually published in 1954, having been turned down by 21 publishers before then. The demon Beelzebub, who is linked to both pride and war—two

concepts that are central to Golding's work—is the source of the title. The book was a depressing parody of the traditional island adventure tale, a kind of popular fiction in which young boys face air collisions in far-off places. *Lord of the Flies* is a dramatization of evil. Golding creates an ironic effect that highlights the falling condition of humanity. His perspective on evil is significantly more subjective than societal, having little to do with the worldly concepts of good and bad. The novel chronicles the transformations of a group of schoolboys who survived a plane accident on a remote island. This book's primary themes are civilization and barbarism. Civilization demonstrates leadership and order, whereas savagery is a symbol of the thirst for dominance.

*“Lord of the Flies, (...) points to three basic sources of that evil: man's untrammelled fear of the unknown and unnameable, his limited ability to see himself and his situation clearly, and his basic instincts, or more accurately, his inherent savagery.”* (Farley, 1964: 39)

Through the gangs of schoolboys, novelist William Golding cleverly depicts human nature's propensity towards savagery and the loss of civilization in society. The protagonist and primary character of this book, Ralph, stands in for civilization's desire to establish a functioning system and depart the island. Conversely, Jack, who seeks to dominate and lead others by force, is a symbol of savagery. These two characters and their followers are at odds with one another because of their divergent philosophies and social mores. The author makes it incredibly evident that savagery would gradually take the lead in human behavior if human civilization vanished overnight. Despite living in a world of civilization, humans have a natural tendency to mirror savagery. Herman Melville in *Moby Dick* states, “Long exile from Christendom and civilization inevitably restores a man to that condition in which God placed him, i. e., what is called savagery” (Melville, 2015: 270). When considering Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, one might infer that moving away from a regulated society and unchecked freedom can lead to the collapse of civilization and replace it with barbarism.

Ralph was chosen as the boys' leader after gathering them. Using the conch, a symbol of civilization, he initially attempts to recreate the island's social structure to make it resemble English culture. He assigns tasks sequentially. For example, Jack and his gang hunt, while others are in charge of building the huts. Ralph makes use of his position of power to set guidelines, guard the group's interests, and uphold the moral and ethical standards of the English culture the boys grew up in. In addition, he makes sure the fire is lit. This is because fire is their only means of communication with civilization and serves as a symbol of hope. The boys' connection to society is gauged by the signal fire. Jack and his tribe missed their opportunity to leave the island due to their failure to follow the signal of fire, which sparked the fight between civilization and barbarism between Ralph and Jack. Ralph is adamant that there is no such thing as a "beastie." He thought that the young boy's perception of the beast was limited to his dreams. He tries to persuade the young kids that the beast is limited to larger regions, “You couldn't have a beastie, a snake-thing, on an island this size,” Ralph explained kindly. “You only get them in big countries, like Africa, or India.” (Golding, 2001: 28).

The adversary Jack in the novel is a symbol of ferocity. He is the one who argues that one's desires are far more important than those of others. He leads a team and seeks to utilize authority to compel others to follow him. Due to his rough, harsh, and barbarian nature, he prefers hunting over building shelters or tending to the signal fire. He justifies his own barbarism. He makes use of the beast's existence to retake control and his brutality. He

gives those young children instructions on how to deal with and endure their concerns. According to Golding, the human psyche's instinct for savagery is far more basic and primal than its instinct for civilization. At the end, Jack and his tribe—who originally came from a civilized world—turn aggressive, ferocious, and cruel because of their desire and bloodlust. While hunting the pig, they experience excitement, satisfaction, and enjoyment. They get more violent and have even killed their companions the longer they are isolated from civilization. There are unmistakable clues from Golding's novel that he tends to link the act of savagery with the end of civilization when Piggy (rationality) is murdered and the conch (civilization) is damaged, "The rock struck Piggy a glancing blow from chin to knee; the conch exploded into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist" (Golding, 2001: 163).

While some of the boys are adamant about leaving the island, in the end they go with Jack because they fear the beast—which is savagery—that lies within them. The equality of savagery and civilization on the island will shift as time goes on. Golding uses those youngsters to illustrate how, while living in a civilized environment, humans still tend to reflect savagery. Golding picked a group of young lads because of their immature and unadulterated outlook. Humanity has a feral side by nature, but it is also unable to acknowledge its own inner voices and cravings. Because of their innate psychology, humans are difficult to entirely manage, hence, systems are necessary to guide them in the right direction.

## 2. Literature Review

Since its 1954 release, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* has enthralled readers and spurred critical discussion. Readers are challenged by Golding to consider important issues pertaining to power, morality, and the human condition. The novel has become a literary classic throughout the years, eliciting a variety of interpretations and fostering interdisciplinary discussion in disciplines including sociology, psychology, and literary criticism. The goal of this literature review is to investigate the various facets of Golding's work by looking at its narrative devices, topic diversity, and ongoing significance in relation to different studies.

John Peter, in his essay "The Fables of William Golding" (1957), calls Golding the preeminent writer of fables among his British contemporaries. Calling *Lord of the Flies* a fable is to some degree problematic as Golding taps into nature and the darker facets of human psychology to exemplify how people's intrinsic innocence is tested when faced with their primal instincts. Peter writes, "His party, soon habituated to the shedding of animal blood, recedes farther and farther from the standards of civilization that Ralph and Piggy are straining to preserve, and before very long it is transformed into a savage group of outlaws." (Peter, 1957: 582).

John F. Fitzgerald and John R. Kayser, in their article "Golding's *Lord of the Flies*: Pride as Original Sin" (1992), elucidate the human condition, examining how environmental factors can shape a person, pushing them towards savagery rather than civilization. As the novel nears its end, and after the death of his closest friend and guru, Ralph is consumed by disappointment and melancholy, mourning the loss of innocence. "Ralph at the end of the novel (...) stares uncomprehendingly into the irrational darkness of his soul. He cries for the loss of innocence. He cries for the loss of his rational friend Piggy, who also denied the irrational." (Fitzgerald and Kayser, 1992: 72). This highlights the delicate nature of civilization and human backgrounds, showing how they can be profoundly affected by the environment.

The renowned literary critic and biographer John Carey explores William Golding's life, motivations, and inspirations in detail to give readers a thorough picture. Golding in "William Golding: The Man Who Wrote *Lord of the Flies*" (2010). An excellent feature of Carey's biography is its examination of the creation and reception of *Lord of the Flies*. Carey offers insightful background information that helps readers comprehend the themes, characters, and novel's lasting relevance in the canon of literature. He looks at the social and historical factors that influenced Golding's depiction of human nature and the frailty of civilization, providing new insights into the novel's continuing significance.

One of the main themes of the novel is power and the lust for it. This has been clearly examined by David Spitz in his article "Power and Authority: An interpretation of Golding's *Lord of the Flies*" (1970). The study provides a thorough examination of Golding's well-known book, with a particular emphasis on how it examines authority and power dynamics. The paper explores the complex web of connections that exist between the people who are marooned on the island and looks at how their power struggles influence how they behave and interact. The writer utilizes an array of literary and theoretical frameworks to analyze the intricacies of power and authority in *Lord of the Flies*. The article also presents a sophisticated analysis of the novel's themes, shedding light on its larger implications for comprehending society and human behavior. It does this by drawing on insights from political theory, sociology, and psychology.

In 2020, Abd al-Rahman Sulayman has written about good and evil in *Lord of the Flies*. His article is entitled "The Dichotomy of Good and Evil in William Golding's the *Lord of the Flies*." Sulayman believes that the questions posed by Golding in *Lord of the Flies* are not easily answered and Golding's prediction might be partially true; the major conflicts of the century provide ample evidence. He also argues that readers expect Golding to make his protest more audible to those governments and institutions that are practicing all sorts of brutality, possibly more freely than ever before, assuming he wrote his novel after being inspired by the events leading up to and following World War II. In an unprincipled world full of deliberate atheists, he writes with a revolutionary spirit, seeking to restore ideas of belief, free choice, personal accountability, forgiveness, and principles. Whether Golding intends it or not, the three main characters in the book—Piggy, Ralph, and Simon—represent a hopeful note that defies any interpretation of the story that is overly negative. The concept of civilization and savagery and the conflict between the two in the novel have also been matters of exploration. Nivedita Sinha is a scholar who has tackled this argument in her article, "Conflict of civilization and savagery in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*" (2020), which aims to analyze William Golding's fictional portrayal of the mystique surrounding human existence.

The concept of good and evil is retackled in 2022 in another article entitled "The Symbolic Representation of Evil and Good in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*" (A. Al. Sobh et al., 2022). William Golding's ideas about evil and good in *Lord of the Flies* are clarified by this study. Many authors, commentators, and theorists believe that good is an internal concept and evil is a byproduct of society. Both are shaped by outside forces. However, William Golding feels that, contrary to popular belief, man cannot be a product of culture and possesses an innate capacity for evil. On the other hand, man's capacity for good is limited by the law, common sense, culture, and the reality that social interaction with other people is a given. According to the researchers in the article, the main thrust of Golding's thesis is his critique of man's innate propensity for evil when there is no established system

of rules and regulations. Their study analyzes Golding's gloomy conception of good and evil in the context of contemporary literary definitions of these opposites.

### 3. Research Method

In this paper, researchers employ thematic analysis as a method for analyzing qualitative data. Thematic analysis is a flexible and systematic approach that allows researchers to gain deep insights and examine intricate occurrences in detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method is particularly well-suited for exploring subjective experiences, viewpoints, and interpretations within a specific context (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). The primary goal of qualitative research is to identify significant patterns that describe a particular phenomenon through the analysis and interpretation of texts, interviews, and observations. Qualitative data is typically rich, subjective, and composed of detailed information expressed verbally (Patton, 2015).

The analysis process involves reading multiple transcripts and searching for patterns or discrepancies. Once themes are identified, categories are created to organize these themes (Clarke & Braun, 2013). This systematic approach ensures that the data is thoroughly examined, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the research subject. Thematic analysis thus enables researchers to capture the complexity of qualitative data and draw meaningful conclusions (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013).

### 4. Results and Discussion

#### 4.1 Susceptibility of Civilization

The novel's portrayal of civilization by Golding emphasizes how civilization unstable and prone to erosion it is. The boys' initial efforts to create structure and order are represented by Ralph being chosen as the leader and by them adopting democratic values. The conch shell is a powerful representation of politeness and authority that highlights the value of communication and cooperation in preserving societal cohesiveness. "Shut up," said Ralph absently. He lifted the conch. "Seems to me we ought to have a chief to decide things." (Golding, 2001: 15).

Throughout history, it has been proven that in any place and at any time, the life of humanity requires ushers to run communities, lead towards progression, and crop out crises with remedial measures. The quotation mentioned exposes the willingness of human beings to gain authority with the hope of eternity and protection.

"Let's have a vote."

"Yes!"

"Vote for chief!"

"Let's vote—"

"This toy of voting was almost as pleasing as the conch. (15)

This argument initiates the base of democracy as an affective mechanism to select the worthy leader among the island boys to run their life affairs. Besides that, they were army members, they have been taught the disciplines and policies of the military, as obviously there are no military groups without a chief. The story portrays the harsh reality of the boys on the island due to the destruction between their past lifestyle and their current setting in a way that the effect of militarization is still obvious in their thinking, disregarding their personal perspectives.

"Him with the shell."

"Ralph! Ralph!"

"Let him be chief with the trumpet-thing."

Ralph raised a hand for silence.

"All right. Who wants Jack for chief?"

With dreary obedience the choir raised their hands.

"Who wants me?"

Every hand outside the choir except Piggy's was raised immediately. Then

Piggy, too, raised his hand grudgingly into the air.

Ralph counted.

"I'm chief then." (15)

According to the lads' concord and the democratic process of election, Ralph has been elected to lead, run, and represent the boys' daily affairs. He was expected to be a character to maintain the safety, unity and fraternity of the group, although, one of the opponents of Ralph is a character whose name is Jack, he is powerful, dominant who inherently desires to get power in order to run the boys' society because he sees himself as the only one to lead and care about the other boys. This attribution is mainly seen in the dominant leaders, who believe in no one except themselves.

Scholars from a variety of disciplines have investigated the idea that civilization is a basic component of human nature, as a force that both constructs and destroys. Historian Arnold Toynbee is well-known for his seminal work, *A Study of History* (1972) which followed the development and collapse of civilizations across human history. Civilization is a basic feature of human nature and is an intrinsic drive inside humans that manifests as a response to opportunities and difficulties, nevertheless, the failure of individuals to act rationally can result in the decline of civilization as stated by Toynbee in his book, "(...) this time it is human nature that threatens mankind with extinction (...)." (Toynbee, 1972: 47). Author and historian Yuval Noah Harari, in his book *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, also discusses how human nature is shaped by civilization and how our minds are made to be easily deceived into doing actions that may be like those of our ancestors:

The flourishing field of evolutionary psychology argues that many of our present-day social and psychological characteristics were shaped during this long pre-agricultural era. Even today, scholars in this field claim, our brains and minds are adapted to a life of hunting and gathering. (Harari, 2011: 45)

In *Lord of the Flies*, William Golding deliberately omits female characters, which is a noteworthy choice. This is reminiscent of Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*, which premiered in 1953, a year before Golding's novel, and lacks female characters (Berlin, 1999), maybe both authors intended to make men the villains in all the hideous things that have occurred to humanity. Pieter Spierenburg, in his article "Masculinity, violence, and honor: An introduction" (1998), believes that:

(...) notions of honor and shame are characteristically gendered. In almost every society, male honor is considered to be quite different from female honor. Men may take pride in attacking fellow men, whether they use this force to protect women or for other reasons. (Spierenburg, 1998: 2)

In *Lord of the Flies*, the conflict is not about protecting women or any gender-based cause. Instead, it's a clash among a group of unsupervised young boys, each determined to assert their perspective, even if it means resorting to extreme measures.

With Ralph chosen as the leader, laws established, and the conch shell serving as a sign of power, the boys in the novel begin with a semblance of civilization. Notwithstanding, as the narrative goes on, the lads progressively give up on these frameworks. For instance, anarchy results when Jack defies Ralph's authority and the group separates. This breakdown of authority and order illustrates the weakness of civilization by demonstrating how quickly social standards can disintegrate in the absence of outside pressures. The boys in *Lord of the Flies*, on the island, gradually manifest themselves as savages rather than human beings who transcended a civilized community:

"All sit down."

The boys ranged themselves in rows on the grass before him, but Ralph and Piggy stayed a foot lower, standing on the soft sand. Jack ignored them for the moment, turned his mask down to the seated boys and pointed at them with the spear.

"Who's going to join my tribe?"

Ralph made a sudden movement that became a stumble. Some of the boys turned toward him.

"I gave you food," said Jack, "and my hunters will protect you from the beast. Who will join my tribe?" (134)

Jack's tribe symbolizes a break from civilization. As the lads on the island become undomesticated, Jack's tribe becomes increasingly primitive and disregards the laws and order of civilization, as represented by Ralph. This transformation highlights the novel's examination of the fragile pretense of civilization and the intrinsic human fondness for violence and brutality. The delicateness of civilization is revealed more and more as the story goes on. The boys' natural inclinations, which are personified in Jack, and the temptation of hunting progressively undermine the status quo. Jack's defiance of Ralph's leadership represents a turn towards barbarism since he values dominance and power over cooperation and reason.

"I'm chief," said Ralph, "because you chose me. And we were going to keep the fire going. Now you run after food—"

"You ran yourself!" shouted Jack. "Look at that bone in your hands!" Ralph went crimson.

"I said you were hunters. That was your job." Jack ignored him again.

"Who'll join my tribe and have fun?"

"I'm chief," said Ralph tremulously. "And what about the fire? And I've got the conch—"

"You haven't got it with you," said Jack, sneering. "You left it behind. See, clever? And the conch doesn't count at this end of the island—" (134)

Different scholars have contributed their own perspectives to the civilization topic in *Lord of the Flies*, which has expanded readers' comprehension of Golding's complex portrait of human nature. Harold Bloom, a literary critic, for example, claims that the book is a warning against the innate savagery of humans, that civilization is just a thin veneer hiding our primitive tendencies, and that history does not exist and humans are always willing to

revert to primitive beings, "Golding once said that the dead parachutist in *Lord of the Flies* was meant to represent 'History' in the adult sense" (Bloom, 2010: 8). In addition, Bloom states, "At the end, Golding tells readers that "Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart." (*Ibid*) The fact that we still question the relevance of history is a clear indication that humanity determinedly sticks to the notion of survival of the strongest, neglecting the invaluable lessons that are waiting to be learned from our past. Furthermore, those who still believe in humanity, like Ralph, may express disappointment for the ways human beings are utilizing to harm one another and undermine civilization, ultimately moving towards barbarism.

Moreover, psychological analyses of *Lord of the Flies* have explored the innate human tendencies that contribute to the breakdown of civilization. Psychologist Sigmund Freud's concept of the id, ego, and superego provides a framework for understanding the boys' behavior and motif, with the id representing their primal desires, the ego symbolizing their rational selves, and the superego embodying societal norms and morality (Freud, 1960). Golding's depiction of the boys' internal struggles mirrors Freud's theory, highlighting the constant battle between instinctual drives and societal constraints.

Jack stood up as he said this, the bloodied knife in his hand. The two boys faced each other. There was the brilliant world of hunting, tactics, fierce exhilaration, skill; and there was the world of longing and baffled commonsense. Jack transferred the knife to his left hand and smudged blood over his forehead as he pushed down the plastered hair. (60)

In the exposition of the story, everything looks safe, and the boys try to protect a peaceful life by following the commands of the group's leader who is Ralph. He resembles the rational mind of the group, who devotes his efforts to guarantee the safety of the group, while Jack represents the irrational mind that always examines his intentions to decentralize himself and others from obeying the group's leader. He keeps seeking every opportunity to defame and degrade the role of Ralph as a leader to gain the attention of the other lads and show that he is no longer affective to them because he thinks that the nature of the island's life is not soft and needs a tough leader to overcome the calamities and challenges. In this regard, he initiates his first tension by showing a knife, which metaphorically predicts the devastation of peace and embracing bloodshed: "He (Jack) snatched his knife out of the sheath and slammed it into a tree trunk. Next time there would be no mercy. He looked round fiercely, daring them to contradict." (23)

William Golding portrays the conflict between civilization and savagery through Ralph and Jack, who symbolically depict the clash between rationality and irrationality in human nature. Jack begins to frustrate the situation and uses his anger to project his utopian authority. As an initial step, he starts to tease Ralph's right-hand character, Piggy, by slapping his face, which resulted in the breaking of Piggy's glasses. It is worth mentioning that the glasses symbolically stand for the group's mastermind and a tool for civilization in *The Lord of the Flies*, and while the glasses are damaged, the journey of civilization is questioned and reshaped.

Ralph made a step forward and Jack smacked Piggy's head. Piggy's glasses flew off and tinkled on the rocks. Piggy cried out in terror:

"My specs!" (...) Piggy grabbed and put on the glasses. He looked malevolently at Jack.

"I got to have them specs. Now I only got one eye. Jus' you wait—" (60)

The boys try to create structure and order right away, trying to emulate the social institutions they were brought up in. As the chosen leader, Ralph stands for reason and democracy, seeking to establish a structure centered on collaboration and the greater good. He leads them to build shelters, establish guidelines, and make the signal fire priority so that it might serve as a beacon for possible rescuers. Nonetheless, as the narrative goes on, gaps in this veneer of civilization start to show. Jack serves as a metaphor for humanity's innate tendencies. His preoccupation with dominance and hunting exposes the innate need for strength and control. Jack establishes his tribe through the attraction of hunting and brutality, weakening Ralph's authority and causing havoc on the island.

They spread out, nervously, in the forest. Almost at once Jack found the dung and scattered roots that told of pig and soon the track was fresh. Jack signaled the rest of the hunt to be quiet and went forward by himself. He was happy and wore the damp darkness of the forest like his old clothes. He crept down a slope to rocks and scattered trees by the sea. (119)

Golding skillfully demonstrates how quickly civilization's flimsy exterior can be destroyed. The island becomes a miniature representation of civilization's decline into savagery as the boys give in to their baser impulses. The boys' rejection of rationale for barbarism causes the conch, a symbol of democracy and order, to lose its significance. The steady erosion of morals is shown in significant incidents like Simon's murder and the death of the sow. These behaviors show how a hunger for violence and power has replaced empathy and compassion. The eerie cry, "Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!" (168), represents the transition from reason to brute force in primal savagery.

It becomes clear that fear is a powerful factor in the collapse of society. The boys' spiral towards barbarism is fueled by their fear of the unknown and their innate fear of dying. Their invented concept of the "beast" becomes an expression of their inner darkness, controlling their behaviors and hastening their plunge into barbarism. In addition, Jack rebels against Ralph's leadership out of a fear of losing power and control, sparking a bloody war for supremacy. Fear sets the boys against one another and ultimately seals their fate by acting as a catalyst for division.

"Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!" said the head. For a moment or two the forest and all the other dimly appreciated places echoed with the parody of laughter. "You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are?" (128)

Golding fashions Simon into a saint who resembles Jesus and bestows upon him all human virtues. The only youngster who embodies goodness, truth, and beauty is Simon. Simon exhibits the essence of Christian affection. His generosity comes from his pure, selfless heart, which is driven by his love for all people. While God is silently watching over humanity, Simon is deliberately trying to distance himself. After realizing the beast's true nature, Simon descended the mountain to tell everyone, but the youngsters lost all sense of reason during the violent and bizarre dance, and Simon was killed as a beast. Simon is committed to morality and the truth. His demise represents Christian redemption. Jesus gave his life to rescue all people. In addition, Simon sacrificed his own life to make amends for the island's children.

But the island was scorched up like dead wood—Simon was dead—and Jack had. . . . The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too. And in the middle of them (...) Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy. (182)

#### 4.2 Savagery's Triumph

The evil side of humanity and the cruelty that lurks beneath even the most civilized people are explored in *Lord of the Flies*. William Golding wrote this novel with the intention of portraying the fundamental evilness of humanity through a tragic parody of the boys' adventurous stories. He gives the reader a timeline of the incidents that take a group of young boys from hope to tragedy while they try to survive in their primitive, unattended, and isolated surroundings until they are rescued. "What are we? Humans? Or animals? Or savages? What's grown-ups going to think? Going off—hunting pigs—letting fires out— and now!" (79)

This speech by Piggy, who addresses Ralph as the group's leader in one of their meetings as he undermines the fire as the signal of rescue because he predicts the boys' thirst for violence and chaos. He supports his claim with his vivid experiences back home. This discussion is essential to understand that savagery is ahead and civilization is in danger.

Theodore Dalrymple, in his article about the novel reflects on human depravity in the novel suggests that William Golding, having served as a naval officer and a schoolmaster familiar with boys, had a deep understanding of war and human nature. Discussing the depiction of unthinking evil in the novel, Dalrymple highlights Jack as the prime example of totalitarianism and savagery, even going as far as labelling him a 'tiny Hitler' during his analysis:

In the book, it is precisely Jack, the boy who leads the rest of the marooned children into the paths of unthinking evil, who says near the beginning of the book, "We're English; and the English are best at everything. So, we've got to do the right things." He ends up as a tiny Hitler. So, it could happen here after all. (Bloom, 2010: 85)

The First World War, Hitler's rise to power, the Second World War, and America's demoralizing use of nuclear weapons in Japan all profoundly impacted William Golding, leading him to reconsider the Western world. He anticipated a consequence where white people could descend into savagery given the "right" circumstances. Golding assumed that any 'English' individual had the potential to become a Nazi, a disturbing forewarning that literature must convey:

*Lord of the Flies* was simply what it seemed sensible for me to write after the war, when everybody was thanking God, they weren't Nazis. And I'd seen enough and thought enough to realize that every single one of us could be Nazis. . . . Nazi Germany was a particular kind of boil which burst in 1939. That was only the same kind of inflamed spot we all of us suffer

from, and so I took English boys and said, 'Look. This could be you.' This is really what that book comes to. (Biles, 1970: 3-4)

Philosophical, psychological, sociological, and theological debates concerning the intrinsically evil character of man have persisted for ages. For instance, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) disagreed with Hobbes in his essay "Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men." He thought that although society and its institutions corrupt people, people are decent in heart. He maintained that human depravity develops because of civilization itself:

Nothing is so gentle as man in his primitive state when, placed by nature at equal distances from the stupidity of brutes and the fatal enlightenment of civil man, and limited equally by instinct and reason to protecting himself from the harm that threatens him, he is restrained by natural pity from harming anyone himself, and nothing leads him to do so even after he has received harm. (Rousseau, 1992: 116)

In addition, the father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, examined the darker sides of human nature in his book *Civilization And Its Discontents* (1909). He proposed the existence of the id, a metaphor for humanity's primal and instinctive tendencies, which are frequently expressed as violence and greed. According to Freud's views, humans are born with these natural inclinations towards aggressiveness and self-preservation, but he also argues that human beings are good and friendly at heart, but systems and circumstances will affect their behaviour:

The Communists believe they have found a way of delivering us from this evil. *Man is wholeheartedly good and friendly* to his neighbour, they say, but the system of private property has corrupted his nature. The possession of private property gives power to the individual and thence the temptation arises to ill-treat his neighbour; the man who is excluded from the possession of property is obliged to rebel in hostility against the oppressor. (Freud, 1909: 87-88).

At the novel's peak, the boys fully give in to their animal impulses, and the island devolves into anarchy. The vicious killing of Piggy, the breaking of the conch, and Ralph's unrelenting pursuit are the perfect examples of how savagery has triumphed over civilization. Anarchy and savagery supplant the once-cherished ideals of democracy and collaboration. Ralph's confrontation with the navy officer in the book's last moments serves as a moving reminder of how fleeting civilization is. The lads' blood-stained faces are a horrifying reminder of the depravity that exists inside us, but the officer's entrance represents the return of reason and order.

The rock struck Piggy a glancing blow from chin to knee; the conch exploded into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist. Piggy, saying nothing, with no time for even a grunt, traveled through the air sideways from the rock, turning over as he went (...) Piggy fell forty feet and landed on his back across the square red rock in the sea. His head opened and stuff came out and turned red. Piggy's arms and legs twitched a bit, like a pig after it has been killed. Then the sea breathed again in a

long, slow sigh, the water boiled white and pink over the rock; and when it went, sucking back again, the body of Piggy was gone. (163)

Jack was a classic example of a wilderness representative. In the meantime, youngsters were powerless to resist the seduction of the wilderness, which lurked in everyone's deep hearts. Thus, when Jack activated, the wildness that lay dormant in children's hearts was reawakened. Eventually, the wilderness's authority grew and assumed a dominant position. Jack's triumph represented the wilderness's victory over civilization.

Golding intends for these kids to be left on a secluded island and allowed to follow their own impulses for development. After seeing the experiment, Golding came to the conclusion that human nature is wicked and immoral. The type of self-interest in this group is quite evident and has very serious consequences since people and groups are united in a single impulse instead of carefully articulating their interests independently. Like how these kids used their cunning brains to overcome every obstacle in their way of life, they were unable to subdue the evils that came from their own instincts, which led to several disasters. Throughout the entire tragedy, the shadow of western civilization persisted, with war serving as the central institution of civilization. Children who were trying to flee the fighting fell onto the desolate island. All the plots' growth progressed from desire to authority and gore, which was comparable to the circumstances of battle. Like Golding's address following his Nobel Prize win, he conveyed his optimism for humankind's future. More love and humanity are needed by humans. Some wish to accomplish all of this through a political system, while others wish to build such a system through love, which will determine the fate of humanity.

Ralph took the conch from him and looked round the circle of boys. "We've got to have special people for looking after the fire. Any day there may be a ship out there"—he waved his arm at the taut wire of the horizon— "and if we have a signal going, they'll come and take us off. And another thing. (34)

The Native Americans were referred to as savages. This word was included in *Lord of the Flies* as well. Ralph is shown in one scene frantically attempting to elude capture by Jack's tribe. "A smallish savage was standing between him and the rest of the forest, a savage striped red and white, and carrying a spear" (195). Jack's society has devolved into a gang of boys who kill for fun, put animal blood on their faces, and execute anyone who disagrees with their beliefs. Put differently, being raised in a civilized environment does not guarantee that a child will remain so at a later age when they are more changeable. When the kids are reintegrated into civilization, the "savage" side of them will vanish.

However, after Roger brutally killed Piggy in front of numerous witnesses—who may or may not have protested—because Piggy disagreed with the ideas of the new tribe led by Jack, the aftereffects would still be traumatizing and might lead the kids to wonder what is right and wrong. Depending on who you ask, *Lord of the Flies* might have multiple themes. The topics could include civilization versus savagery, sensibility versus impulsiveness, and good versus evil. The whole plot of *Lord of the Flies* revolves around the fight between two sides: civilization and savagery. In *Lord of the Flies*, civilization is the embodiment of good, and barbarism of evil. Civilization is the sensible decision made by man to live by the law, submit to authority, behave sensibly, and coexist peacefully with others. Savagery is the evil

that results from choosing to live aggressively and in conflict with others rather than simply coexisting with them and following the law.

However, following the law and abiding by authority does not necessarily lead to peace, and using violence does not characterize someone as a savage. The boys in *Lord of the Flies* demonstrate how they must choose between following the rules and using violence to further their own authority; this illustrates how their attitude has changed from being civilized and well-behaved to being untamed and aggressive, as demonstrated by Jack and Ralph, the two major protagonists, and the boys' loss of innocence. In *The Lord of the Flies*, the conflict between civilization and barbarism is explored.

According to the novel's synopsis, Ralph led the kids in starting a fire in the hopes of drawing passing ships' notice with the smoke they produced, but they ended up burning the entire forest due to careless fire management. The kids did not feel bad about the harm their own missteps had done on the island. Rather, they expressed amazement at the power they had liberated. Screams and joy suddenly broke out. According to ecologists, man's dominance and control over nature reinforce his dominance and control over other people (Wang, 2003). Jack's party switched from hunting wild boar to hunting people, and when they finally set the island on fire, the process of gradually alienating humans into beasts was completed. The vicious and inhumane Jack is a symbol of the struggle between nature and humanity. The island's natural beauty eventually faded as the two children groups vied for dominance and the pursuit of ever-intense rivalry. Readers can observe from Jack's different actions that his sole motivation for hunting wild boar is to satiate his ferocious inclination and experience the thrill of defeating nature. The way Ralph and Simon approach nature is very different from that of the youngsters, who are led by Jack and who hunt, slaughter, and torture animals. They are remarkably vicious when they murder elderly sows.

According to Golding, when people are not constrained by social norms, their inherent nature leads them towards savagery rather than common sense. His fundamental claims are that people are inherently violent and driven by desires to rule over others, making them savage by nature. In *Lord of the Flies*, Golding used several literary techniques, including characterization, symbolism, and character development, to show how all people are naturally bad. One of the many aspects that Golding uses in *Lord of the Flies* to try and challenge the idea that all people are savages by nature is Jack. At the start of the book, Jack is driven by a desire for power and becomes enraged when he is not chosen to be the chief. As a result of growing up in society, Jack understands the necessity of creating order. He tries to kill the pig when he initially comes across it but fails. The sophisticated Jack is the one who finds it unbearable to consider hurting the pig. After that, he spends all his time hunting and attempting to kill the pig, which alters the perception of him. very much from the start, gradually turning feral as he gets joy from murdering the pigs. As more time passes, the group is affected by his cruelty since he and others killed Simon.

Due to his superior intelligence compared to the other boys, Piggy is the only one who does not participate, even if Ralph does. He still possesses intelligence and a moral sense of right and wrong. The fictitious creature is one emblematic of a character who Golding uses in *Lord of the Flies* to illustrate how human nature changes as one travels further from society. Because of the physical forms they have witnessed, like the dead parachutist, most of the lads assume that there is a horrific beast on the island. They also think that the beast hides in the ocean during the day and only comes out at night. The first character to realize that the beast is a part of human nature rather than an outside force is Simon.

“You shut up, young Simon!  
Why couldn't you say there wasn't a beast?” “I'm scared of him,” said Piggy, “and that's why I know him. If you're scared of someone you hate him but you can't stop thinking about him. You kid yourself he's all right really, an' then when you see him again; it's like asthma an' you can't breathe. I tell you what. He hates you too, Ralph—” (88)

This argument among the children shows that their lives is not secure due to their unsympathetic environment, this leads them to face psychological issues such as the traumatic image of the beast, it is worth to explain that in reality there is no such creature on the island, it can be summed up that they have internal fear rather than external, which is the colossal trigger behind the boys clash.

Golding employs the metaphor of the "beast" to allude to the primal tendencies that are ingrained in all people. The purpose of civilization is to subdue the beast. Civilization encourages people to act responsibly and logically, as boys like Piggy and Ralph do in *Lord of the Flies*, by limiting the basic human urge for violence and dominance. When civilization gives up stifling the beast, the beast is released, which leads to savagery. The beast is not only acknowledged by savages; they feed off it and revere it as a deity. As Jack and his tribe become savages, they start to think the beast exists, and they even give it gifts 'sacrifices' to gain its favor and secure their safety. People are compelled by civilization to conceal their worst tendencies. People are forced by civilization to repress and hide their deepest desires. Savages give in to their deepest desires, which they justify as divine commands that must be obeyed.

## 5. Conclusion

Renowned for its sharp commentary on the state of humanity and the precarious balance of society, *Lord of the Flies* is still regarded as a timeless classic of literature. The story of William Golding takes place on a secluded island where a bunch of adolescent boys become stranded without adult supervision. Primitive instincts and moral ambiguity replace the facade of civilization as they try to create order and survival mechanisms. This paper examined the issues of civilization's fragility in the novel, illuminating the socioeconomic dynamics and psychological complexity that Golding portrays. Ultimately, *Lord of the Flies* presents a thoughtful analysis of civilization and its fragile relationship to human nature. William Golding examines the brittleness of society's norms and how quickly they can be undermined in the face of innate instincts and the lack of authority in the microcosm of the deserted island. This study also explored the multifaceted nature of civilization in the novel, highlighting its eternal relevance as a testament to the complexity of human behavior and the never-ending struggle between civilization and savagery. It has done so by drawing on scholarly interpretations and critical perspectives. A potent allegory, *Lord of the Flies* illuminates the ongoing conflict between civilized and barbaric aspects of human nature. Golding examines the frailty of social standards and how quickly they can be undermined in the face of fear and instinctual behavior through the microcosm of the abandoned island. Ralph acknowledges the innate darkness of humanity as he looks out at the burning island; this darkness can only be overcome by a resolute dedication to reason, empathy, and the upholding of moral integrity. Finally, readers end up witnessing a warning story that

challenges them to face their own inner darkness and work to protect civilization's delicate fabric.

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