
**How Innocence and Experience Connected Thematically with Meaning in
Golding's Novel *Lord of the Flies***

Nivedita Lahkar MA Ph.D

Bezera Anchalik College, Bezera Gauhati, Assam

Paper Received on 16-12-2024, Accepted on 12-01-2025
Published on 15-01-25; DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2025.10.1.97

Abstract

Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is based on Ballantine's novel of adventure, the coral island but the thrust of Golding is different from that of other novelists. His theme, he himself states, is an attempt to trace the defects of society back to defects of human nature. There can be no happy solution to the problems of human society because the defects of human nature are responsible for the determination of the character of human society. The cardinal meaning of Golding's novel lies in the progression of fear which appears to be the motive power behind the action of the boys in the Island. Fear is the product of distrust or a type of complex that finds its manifestation in violence, the play of mischief, and evil and destruction. At the same time, the novel reminds us of the truth of innocence in man, which is lost in the experience of the dark ways of the world, the reality of the force of evil, which predominates the force of good. Thus, the paper is an attempt to discuss the various symbolisms used by William Golding to represent many incidents that took place in the novel and how innocence and experience are connected thematically in the novel.

Keywords: Innocence, experience Evil, society, conch shell, flies, etc.

1.0. Introduction

Sir William Gerald Golding (Born: 1911, 19th September- Died: 1993, 19th June) was a British novelist, poet and playwright. He was one of the greatest British writers who contributed to the development of English literature since 1945. He has published many novels like "The Inheritors," "Pincher Martin," "Free Fall," "The Pyramid" but He is known for his best and debut novel "The Lord of the Flies" he was awarded the Booker Prize in the year 1980 and the Nobel Prize (Literature) in 1983 for

his excellent contribution in the field of literature. John S. Whitley examines Golding's novel as follows: "The true power of Golding's novel lies in the consistent presentation of the boys on the most realistic level"(p 24).

The title "Lord of the Flies" is a literal translation of the word Beelzebub, lieutenant of Lucifer, the most stunning and depraved of all the devils, who represent the propensity of bellicosity and mischief, violence, and evil. The novelist attaches the name to the head of the pig hunted and torned and hung on a stick of Jack and Roger on the island as their new God of worship and service. It is paced to symbolize the evil of sin and unreason, primitive, barbarity, and lust for blood, while the flies that buzz over the guts of the killed pig represent the primitive urges that began to drive boys like Jack from the path of innocence and simplicity to experience.

1.1. Review of Literature

The available literature on this present topic is as follows:

Tianyue Wang's (2021) "Discourse Analysis of Lord of the Flies: A Systemic Functional Approach ."He interpreted in his paper that "the current study focused on the author's lexico-grammatical choices in the transitivity system, mood system, and thematic structure of the clauses and revealed that different choices encode different meanings, all contributing to the manifestation of the theme: without proper constraints, human's inner evil will be magnified indefinitely and their reversion to savagery will be inevitable" (p 114). Maurice L. McCullen's (1978) "LORD OF THE FLIES: THE CRITICAL QUEST" In his paper, he clearly describes "the critical reception of Golding's most popular novel. With the hindsight of two decades, the quest for understanding, for the best critical approaches and perspectives, has an interest all its own." (p 204). Xiaofang Li & Weihua Wu's (2009). "On Symbolic Significance of Characters in Lord of the Flies." They have mentioned that "The characters in Lord of the Flies possess recognizable symbolic significance, which makes them the sort of people around us. Ralph stands for civilization and democracy; Piggy represents intellect and rationalism; Jack signifies savagery and dictatorship; Simon is the incarnation of goodness and saintliness. All of these efficiently portray the microcosm of that society" (p 119). Jeanne Delbaere-Garant's (1978) . "Rhythm and Expansion in Lord of the Flies." In this paper, the author mentions that "The rhythm of life is complemented by a rhythmic use of gradation suggesting the constant progress of evil. The killing of pigs and the throwing of rocks, two important activities of the boys on the island, provide a metaphorical structure for the illustration of the author's theme." (p 72).

1.2. Objectives

The objectives of this research paper are to highlight the action behaviors of the boys on the coral island and how innocence and experience connected with the theme of the novel "Lord of the Flies."

1.3. Methodology

The present research work is based on secondary sources, mostly books, research papers, magazines, etc, which were concentrated on understanding and extensive reading. The primary data was collected from my colleagues through oral and group discussions, and some retired Professors from Kolkata and Assam Universities were also interviewed directly to learn more about William Golding's "Lord of the Flies."

2.0. Theme of Innocence and Experience

It is the gamut of the meaning of the novel Lord of the Flies, which is related to comparative actions and behaviors of the standard of boys like Ralph, Piggy, and Simon on the one hand, Jack, Roger, and their influenced group on the other. They reveal how innocent values gradually give way to those of experience. Infact, the novel shows the passage of the boys from innocence to experience, the replacement of simple and harmless ways of life, thinking, and playing by proceeding from mistake complexity and insolence. The very theme of innocence brings to our mind the association of the Biblical Eden Garden, where Adam and Eve were placed by God to bask in the sunshine of blessed innocence. But as they fell under the temptation of Satan and were inclined to taste the apple of the tree of knowledge against the command and instruction of All Mighty, they forfeited their innocence immediately and faced the fatal punishment of expulsion from the eternal paradise to mortal earth of labor, struggle for existence, decay, and death. The theme of " Lord of the Flies" novel illustrates the falling down of innocence of the boys of Coral Island under the weight of their inborn brutality; rather than obey rules and regulations and work hard; they follow amusement and fun, submit to fear, and fall to aggression and violence. Haddad (2024) has mentioned that "Golding's underlying argument is that human beings are savage by nature and are moved by primal urges toward selfishness, brutality, and dominance over others. Though the boys think the beast lives in the jungle, Golding makes it clear that it lurks only in their hearts" (p 15).

As we go through the bare-out times of the present novel, we can, at once, take note of the state of innocence of a number of boys who find themselves left on their own on an uninhabited coral Island in the specific. In Chapter II, Ralph speaks of the

existing prospect of the boys having the whole island to themselves without adult control or supervision. At first, the actions and conduct of the boys were steeped in childlike innocence, carefree life, freedom from adult restriction, and scope of joy and dance and thrill against the backdrop of the open sea, land, and sky. They were so happy to find themselves far away from the mending crowd of din and bustle and complicity, enchanted by the beauty and mystery of their surroundings. Everything appears to them like a jolly game, a picnic-like affair for amusement and enjoyment. Their simple and innocent mind found expression in the building of huts and sandcastles, merrymaking, search for food, showing merriment in the form of dance, firekeeping, and liking, and exploring new rocks and hills and mountains. Their innocence was evident in their fear of ghosts, strange beasts and jungles, and the unknown, as well as in their pleasure hunting.

Gradually, Ralph, Piggy, and Simon's innocence are challenged by Jack and Roger and their group, who appear to be the speakers of the force of evil and lust for power. The very hunting led by Jack, which was a childlike childish game, turns out to be the manifestation of premise violence and morbid pleasure. The hunting of the sow exposes the boys to the reality of violence and blood, the sense of lust for murder, and so forth. The placing of the head of the sow on a stick planted on the ground of the island by Jack and Roger signals the beginning of the worship of Beelzebub, the Lord of the Flies around whom they dance wildly with a sadistic sense of pleasure. By and by, the innocence is drowned in the frenzy of destructive games. Then, a time comes when Jack, with his aggressive group, becomes predominant in asserting himself against the simple and innocent administration of Ralph and Piggy. The first product destructive group of boys under Jack is the miserable murder of the visionary boy, Simon. Next comes Piggy's turns, which are representative of wisdom and intellect. His spectacles are smashed, leaving him almost blind, and finally, he is driven to death. Ralph now finds himself to be the target of Jack's party, but miraculously, because of the arrival of a naval officer by a fleet, he is saved from the jaws of death, and others are restored to their normal life.

3.0. Conclusion

Throughout the novel, Golding tries to present before us how innocence turned to experience through Lord of the Flies". Giri (2021) rightly observed that "The story concludes with the pathetic image of Ralph crying for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy" (p 53). Thus, it is clear from the above fact that innocence and experience are widely

connected to the theme of the novel "Lord of the Flies."

References:

- Bloom, Harold. (Ed). William Golding's Lord of the Flies. Infobase Publishing. 2008.
Delbaere-Garant, Jeanne. "Rhythm and Expansion in Lord of the Flies". In Jack I. Biles & Robert O. Evans Eds. *William Golding: Some Critical Considerations* Published by University Press of Kentucky.1978.
- Giri, Pradeep. Kumar. "William Golding's Lord of the Flies: A Study of Evil in Man"
THE BATUK: A Peer Reviewed Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies Vol. 5
Issue No.1. Jan,2019.
- Haddad, Hamza, Sajad. "An Analysis of the Themes in William Golding's Lord of the Flies." BA Dissertation, College of Education. Dept of English University of Misan, Iraq. 2024.
- Li, Xiaofang. & Wu, Weihua. "On Symbolic Significance of Characters in Lord of the Flies.". English Language Teaching. Vol 2, No. 1. 2009 .
- McCullen, L. Maurice. "Lord of the Flies: The Critical Quest" In Jack I. Biles & Robert O. Evans Eds. *William Golding: Some Critical Considerations* Published by University Press of Kentucky.1978 .
- Wang, Tianyue. "Discourse Analysis of Lord of the Flies: A Systemic Functional Approach" *Advances in Literary Study* Vol 9. 2021.
- Whitley, John. S. *Golding: Lord of the Flies*. London: Edward Arnold, 1970

How to cite this article?

Nivedita Lahkar"How Innocence and Experience Connected Thematically with Meaning in Golding's Novel Lord of the Flies " *Research Journal Of English (RJOE)*10(1),PP:93-97,2025,DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2025.10.1.97