

## USE OF SYMBOLS IN *LORD OF THE FLIES*

*Renukadevi Devidas Sargaiyye, Department of English, Shri.Dnyaneshwar Mahavidyalaya, Newasa, Dist. Ahmednagar, Maharashtra*

### **Abstract:**

*Society without rules and restrictions this world may be turned into complete anarchic states. William Golding's 'Lord of the Flies' (1954) is the fine example of above statement. It is published during the first decade of the cold war. It depicts parallels to the struggle between liberal democracy and totalitarianism. The two main characters Ralph and Jack represent the liberal tradition and military dictatorship respectively. Golding presented numerous themes in the novel which gives us to think something about every once togetherness in society and loneliness and savagery without society. It throws light on the morals come directly from our surroundings and if there is no civilization around us, we will lose these values. The writer explains these ideas through various symbols in the novel. The present paper is a short attempt to collect these symbols to clear these ideas.*

**Key Words:** *Anarchic state, totalitarianism, dictatorship, tradition, savagery.*

Symbols are objects, characters, figures and colours used to represent abstract ideas or concepts. According to M. H. Abrams, 'Symbol is anything which signifies something. In discussing literature, the term symbol applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, or has a range of reference, beyond itself (pg 311).

Lord of the Flies is the story about the school boys who accidentally found on an Island where 'no grown ups' were present. They were isolated from society and now have to create their own. Firstly the boys tried to imitate the society in which they have grown ups but after sometime they lost interest in their civilized life and moved towards savagery.

The symbolism in the story lends a deeper meaning to the chain of events that take place one by one. Golding uses the names of boys which are symbols of human values, for example Samneric (good and evil), Ralph (the person), Piggy (reason), Jack (pride) Simon (love) Roger (lust) and Maurice (joy). The narrator introduces Ralph who is not yet old enough for adolescence. He is twelve years and a few months old. "You could see now that he might make a boxer, as far as width and heaviness of shoulders went, but there was a mildness about his mouth and eyes that proclaimed no devil." (pg. 10-11) Here Golding shows human nature. Next he introduces a fat boy 'Piggy' who is clever and whose actions and words reflect man's intellect and reasoning power. He imitates adults but grammatically uses poor English. Later on Golding introduces Samneric, Jack, Simon, Roger and the other boys in the novel.

Ralph and Piggy found a conch in the sea which is symbol of order and authority. It is used to regulate the assemblies which are the symbol of democracy and free speech. It holds little power when confronted with violence and tyranny. This is shown to us when Roger destroys the conch with the same bolder that kills Piggy.

The boys decide to light up the signal fire for rescue. They use Piggy's glasses for it. The signal fire and Piggy's glasses are symbols of civilization. The signal fire represents rescue, but it is also a distant end that will only be reached at the price of an everyday effort. Piggy's glasses serve as a marker for their society's progression into darkness. As Piggy loses his sight, the boys also lose sight of their original goal; rescue from the island. Jack, symbol of pride is obsessed with power. He breaks one of the lenses of Piggy's

glasses and let the signal fire die out while a ship was passing and the boys lost the hope of rescue.

Jack begins to form his own society which is interested in hunting the pigs and bloodshed. Roger his henchman, symbol of lust has a sadistic soul and delights in tormenting others. He throws stones at a younger child when nobody is watching. He kills Piggy and tortures Samneric. He gladly acts the evil deeds that help the story progress in its downward spiral towards savagery.

In the beginning of the novel, some little boys dream a nightmare in the form of 'beast'. The 'beast' becomes a sign of children's unrest. It requires sacrifice if one is to be safe. It also represents the children's superstitious fears. Jack and his team hunt pig. Golding names the pig head that Jack puts on the stick as a sacrifice for the beast, '*Lord of the Flies*,' It symbolizes the anarchic amoral, driving force of Jack's tribe. Only Simon (love) knows the reason why the beast cannot be found outside is because it lives inside all of us. We all have a little of lord of the flies in us. Simon is the Christ figure of the novel and the voice of revelation. He reveals a kindness that no one else possesses. He offers food for Piggy and fruits for the younger children. He is the most self-conscious of the boys. He prefers to live lonely for meditations, wanders lonely. He wants to save others so he tries to find 'the beast'. When he finds the truth about the beast he comes back to explain to the rest of the children what he found and ironically killed by those he wishes to save.

Before he killed, he has a bout with the lord of the flies. Simon has communicated with nature, but now 'even the butterflies deserted the open space where the obscene thing grinned and dripped'. (pg.152) *Lord of the Flies* says, "Don't you agree? Aren't you just a silly little boy?" ..... "There isn't anyone to help you. Only me. And I'm the Beast." "Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!" said the head. "You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it is no go? Why things are what they are?" (pg.158) It shows that the devil who gets ultimate control is through man's total pursuit of pleasure through materialism. The devil (lord of the flies) wants no part of love.

Another symbol Golding used is 'the mask'. The mask that Jack wears takes away his self-consciousness by stripping him of his individuality. When the rest of the group begins to wear masks, they cease being individuals and become a mob. By destroying their personal identity they lose their personal responsibility. Thus by using various symbols in the novel William Golding teaches us that the most dangerous enemy is not the evil found without, but the evil found within each of us. Evil will always be a part of man's nature. Golding's novel shows us that this evil must be accepted nor ignored, but it depends on us how we face the problems.

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