SYMBOLISM AND LITERARY ANALYSIS: THE SYSTEM OF SYMBOLS AND THEIR IDEOLOGICAL LOAD IN WILLIAM GOLDING'S *LORD OF THE FLIES*

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Abstract: *Article explores the key symbols and content of William Golding's novel Lord of the Flies. This literary analysis examines the role of symbols such as shells, pig farmers, creatures, and signal flames in expressing civilization, intelligence, fear, and human nature. The findings demonstrate how Golding reveals the weakness of social order and the destructive characteristics associated with human natural instincts through symbolism.*

Keywords: *Allegory, Civilization and savagery, Conch shell, Human nature, Ideological meaning, Literary analysis, Lord of the Flies, Morality, Piggy's glasses, Power, Signal fire, Symbolic system, Symbolism, The beast.*

RAMZIYLIK VA BADIIY TAHLIL: UILLIAM GOLDINGNING "CHIVINLAR HUKMDORI" ROMANIDAGI RAMZLAR TIZIMI VA ULARNING G'OYAVIY MAZMUNI

Annotatsiya: *William Goldingning "Lord of the Flies" romanidagi asosiy ramzlar va ularning mazmun-mohiyati tadqiq etiladi. Adabiy tahlil orqali chig'anoq, Piggy ko'zoynagi, maxluq va signal olovi kabi ramzlarning sivilizatsiya, aql-idrok, qo'rquv va inson tabiatini ifodalashdagi o'rni o'rganiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari Golding ramziylik vositasida ijtimoiy tartibning zaifligi hamda insonning tabiiy instinktlari bilan bog'liq vayronkor xususiyatlarini qanday ochib berganini ko'rsatadi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *allegoriya, sivilizatsiya va vahshiylik, chig'anoq, inson tabiati, g'oyaviy mazmun, adabiy tahlil, Lord of the Flies, axloq, Piggy ko'zoynagi, hokimiyat, signal olovi, ramzlar tizimi, ramziylik, maxluq.*

СИМВОЛИЗМ И ЛИТЕРАТУРНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ: СИСТЕМА СИМВОЛОВ И ИХ ИДЕЙНОЕ СОДЕРЖАНИЕ В РОМАНЕ УИЛЬЯМА ГОЛДИНГА «ПОВЕЛИТЕЛЬ МУХ»

Аннотация: исследуются основные символы романа Уильяма Голдинга «Повелитель мух» и их содержание. Литературный анализ изучает роль таких символов, как раковины, свиноводы, существа и сигнальные пламя в выражении цивилизации, интеллекта, страха и человеческой природы. Результаты исследования показывают, как Голдинг раскрывает слабость социального порядка и деструктивные особенности, связанные с человеческими природными инстинктами через символизм.

Ключевые слова: аллегория, цивилизация и дикость, морская раковина, человеческая природа, идейное содержание, литературный анализ, Повелитель мух, мораль, очки Пигги, власть, сигнальный костёр, система символов, символизм, чудовище.

INTRODUCTION

William Golding's "*Lord of the Flies*" published in 1954, is a deeply symbolic novel that explores the conflict between civilization and savagery[60]. At the surface level, the novel tells the story of a group of British schoolboys who are stranded on a tropical island after a plane crash. Without adults, laws, schools, or state authority, the boys attempt to organize their own society. However, their temporary community gradually collapses into fear, violence, tribalism, and murder[61]. This simple plot becomes the foundation for a complex literary and philosophical investigation into human nature.

The central importance of *Lord of the Flies* lies in its symbolic method. Golding does not present the island merely as a physical setting; he turns it into a symbolic laboratory where the moral structure of civilization is tested. Every major object, character, and event in the novel carries a deeper ideological meaning. The conch shell symbolizes

[60] Eagleton, T. Literary Theory: An Introduction. Anniversary ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008, p. 104.

[61] Golding, W. Lord of the Flies: A Novel. London: Faber and Faber. Chapter 8, "Gift for the Darkness".1954, pp. 136-159.

democratic order and collective speech. Piggy's glasses represent reason, science, and technological power[62]. The signal fire symbolizes hope, rescue, and connection with civilization[63]. The beast represents fear, irrationality, and the darkness within human beings. The island itself symbolizes both paradise and the fallen human world[64]. Ralph, Jack, Piggy, and Simon are not only individual characters but also symbolic forces representing different aspects of human society and consciousness.

Symbolism in literature is the use of concrete objects, characters, places, or actions to express abstract ideas[65]. In *Lord of the Flies*, symbolism is not decorative; it is structural. The entire novel is built on symbolic contrasts: order versus chaos, reason versus instinct, morality versus violence, civilization versus savagery, and truth versus illusion[66]. These symbolic oppositions allow Golding to develop his ideological argument about the weakness of civilized behavior when it is not supported by moral discipline.

The topic of symbolism in *Lord of the Flies* remains important because the novel continues to speak to modern society. The boys' descent into violence reflects not only childhood cruelty but also the darker side of political power, mass fear, war, and social collapse. Golding wrote the novel after the Second World War, and its symbolic world reflects the historical trauma of that period. The novel questions the optimistic belief that human beings are naturally innocent and that civilization automatically improves morality[67].Instead, Golding suggests that evil is not only external; it exists within human beings themselves.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the system of symbols in *Lord of the Flies* and explain their ideological load. The article aims to show how Golding's symbols create a complete vision of human nature and society. The research questions are: What are the major symbols in *Lord of the Flies*? What ideological meanings do these symbols carry? How do these symbols contribute to the novel's central themes?

METHODS

[62] Bressler, Charles E. Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice. 5th ed. Boston: Longman, Pearson Education.2011. p 1-18.

[63] Golding, William. Lord of the Flies: A Novel. London: Faber and Faber.1954. pp. 1-29

[64] Golding, W. Lord of the Flies: A Novel. London: Faber and Faber. Chapter 1, "The Sound of the Shell"; 1954 p.203

[65] Abrams, M. H. A Glossary of Literary Terms. 7th ed. Boston: Heinle & Heinle. 1999. pp. 311-314

[66] Bressler, C. E. Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice. 5th ed. Boston: Longman, Pearson Education. 2011. pp.48-84

[67] Golding, W. Lord of the Flies: A Novel. London: Faber and Faber. Chapter 12, "Cry of the Hunters". 1954, pp. 183–208.

This article uses symbolic literary analysis as its main method[68]. Symbolic analysis examines how objects, characters, events, and settings function beyond their literal meanings. In *Lord of the Flies*, the literal story is inseparable from symbolic meaning. Therefore, the analysis focuses on the relationship between the surface narrative and the abstract ideas represented by the novel's symbols.

The study also applies interpretative analysis[69]. This method allows the researcher to examine how different symbolic elements contribute to the ideological message of the text. The novel is interpreted not only as a story about children but also as an allegory of human society. The characters are analyzed as symbolic representations of political, moral, psychological, and philosophical forces[70].

Elements of structuralist reading are used. Structuralism studies how meaning is created through relationships and oppositions within a text[71]. In *Lord of the Flies*, meaning is often created through binary oppositions: Ralph and Jack, Piggy and Roger, the conch and the spear, the fire and the darkness, civilization and savagery. These oppositions help organize the symbolic system of the novel.

The analysis is based on close reading. Close reading means careful attention to repeated images, symbolic objects, character behavior, narrative development, and thematic patterns. The selected symbols are analyzed according to three aspects: their literal role in the plot, their symbolic meaning, and their ideological function[72]. This approach helps to avoid simple summary and allows a deeper understanding of Golding's artistic purpose.

RESULTS

The analysis reveals that "*Lord of the Flies*" contains a highly organized symbolic system. The symbols are connected to one another and develop throughout the novel[73]. They do not remain static; their meanings change as the boys' society changes. As order collapses, the symbols of civilization lose their power, while the symbols of violence and fear become stronger.

[68] Barry, P. Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory. 2nd ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002. p. 87.

[69] Barry, P. Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory. 2nd ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 2002, pp. 1–240.

[70] Tyson, L. Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge. 2015, p. 214.

[71] Tyson, L. Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge. 2015, p. 470.

[72] Abrams, M. H. A Glossary of Literary Terms. 7th ed. Boston: Heinle & Heinle. 1999, p. 366.

[73] Golding, W. Lord of the Flies: A Novel. London: Faber and Faber. Chapter 1, "The Sound of the Shell"; Chapter 12, "Cry of the Hunters". 1954, p. 183.

The first major symbol is the conch shell. At the beginning of the novel, Ralph and Piggy discover the conch and use it to call the boys together. The conch becomes a symbol of order, communication, law, and democratic authority[74]. Whoever holds the conch has the right to speak. In this way, the conch represents civilized procedure and respect for collective decision-making. It gives the boys a structure through which they can organize themselves.

However, the power of the conch depends on the boys' belief in it. It has no physical force. Its authority is symbolic and social. As Jack's influence grows, the conch loses its meaning. The boys no longer respect discussion, rules, or rational speech. When Piggy is killed and the conch is shattered, the destruction of the shell marks the final collapse of civilized order. Ideologically, the conch shows that democracy and law are fragile. They exist only when people collectively respect them.

Piggy's glasses form another important symbol. Literally, the glasses help Piggy see. Symbolically, they represent intelligence, science, rationality, and technological progress. The boys use Piggy's glasses to make fire, which connects the glasses to survival and rescue. Piggy himself is physically weak but intellectually strong. Through him and his glasses, Golding presents reason as necessary for civilization.

The ideological meaning of the glasses becomes clearer when Jack's tribe steals them. Jack does not value Piggy's intelligence or scientific thinking; he values the practical power of the glasses to create fire. This shows how knowledge and technology can be separated from morality. In civilized society, science can serve human progress, but in the hands of violent power, it can become a tool of domination. Piggy's broken glasses also symbolize the weakening of rational vision. As the boys become more savage, they literally and symbolically lose the ability to see clearly[75].

The signal fire is one of the most dynamic symbols in the novel. At first, it represents hope, rescue, and the boys' connection with the adult world. Ralph insists that maintaining the fire is their most important responsibility. The fire is a sign that the boys still want to return to civilization. It represents discipline, cooperation, and future-oriented thinking.

However, the boys often neglect the fire because they become absorbed in hunting and immediate pleasure. This conflict between the fire and hunting expresses a deeper ideological conflict between civilization and savagery. Ralph thinks about rescue and

[74] Bloom, H. (Ed.). William Golding's Lord of the Flies. New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism, Chelsea House Publishers. 2008, p. xx

[75] Golding, W. Lord of the Flies: A Novel. London: Faber and Faber. Chapter 4, "Painted Faces and Long Hair". 1954, pp. 58-75

responsibility; Jack thinks about meat, power, and violence[76]. When the fire goes out, the possibility of rescue is delayed. At the end of the novel, ironically, the fire that brings rescue is not the careful signal fire but the destructive forest fire started by Jack's tribe to hunt Ralph. This irony is central to Golding's vision: destruction accidentally produces salvation. Human beings are saved not because they remain morally disciplined, but because their violence attracts outside attention.

The beast is one of the most powerful symbols in the novel. At first, the younger boys imagine that there is a frightening creature on the island. The fear of the beast spreads among the boys and becomes a collective obsession. Literally, there is no external beast. Symbolically, the beast represents fear, irrationality, evil, and the darkness inside human beings.

Simon is the only character who understands the truth about the beast. He realizes that the beast is not a physical monster but something within the boys themselves. This idea is one of the most important ideological statements of the novel. Golding suggests that evil is not simply an external enemy that can be hunted and killed. Evil is internal; it belongs to human nature. The boys' fear of the beast allows Jack to control them. Politically, the beast becomes a tool of manipulation. Jack uses fear to create obedience, loyalty, and tribal unity.

The "Lord of the Flies" itself, the pig's head placed on a stick, is the darkest symbol in the novel. It represents corruption, death, primitive worship, and the presence of evil. The title refers to this symbol, giving it central importance. When Simon encounters the pig's head, it seems to speak to him, revealing that the beast is part of the boys. This symbolic scene is almost religious and psychological. The pig's head becomes an image of demonic truth: civilization hides evil[77], but isolation and fear reveal it.

The island is also symbolic. At the beginning, it appears to be a paradise. It has fruit, water, trees, beaches, and natural beauty. For the boys, it seems like a place of freedom without adults. However, this paradise gradually becomes a place of fear, violence, and death. The island therefore symbolizes the fallen world. Golding reverses the traditional adventure story. Instead of showing children mastering nature and building an ideal society, he shows them destroying their environment and themselves.

[76] Golding, W. Lord of the Flies: A Novel. London: Faber and Faber. Chapter 3, "Huts on the Beach". 1954, pp. 48-57

[77] Bloom, H. (Ed.). William Golding's Lord of the Flies. New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism, Chelsea House Publishers. 2008, p. 176

Ralph symbolizes democratic leadership, responsibility, and the desire for order. He is not perfect, but he understands the importance of rules, shelters, meetings, and the signal fire. Ralph's leadership is based on discussion and collective agreement. He represents the civilized impulse in human society. However, Ralph's weakness is that he cannot fully understand or control the irrational desires of the group. His authority depends on reason, but reason becomes less attractive than excitement, violence, and belonging.

Jack symbolizes authoritarian power, savagery, and the desire to dominate. At first, he is the leader of the choirboys, already associated with discipline and hierarchy. As the novel develops, he becomes a tribal chief. His power is based on fear, hunting, violence, and ritual. Jack understands the emotional needs of the boys better than Ralph does. He gives them meat, excitement, identity, and a common enemy. Ideologically, Jack represents the dangerous appeal of authoritarian leadership. He shows how easily people may abandon democratic responsibility for the emotional satisfaction of power and violence.

Piggy symbolizes intellect, rationality, and marginalized truth. He often understands practical problems better than the others. However, because he is physically weak, overweight, and socially awkward, the boys reject him. His marginalization is significant. Golding shows that society often depends on reason but does not always respect rational people. Piggy's death is not only the death of a boy; it is the symbolic murder of reason.

Simon symbolizes moral insight, spiritual truth, and natural goodness. Unlike Ralph and Piggy, Simon's wisdom is not political or scientific but ethical and intuitive. He helps the younger boys, walks alone in nature, and understands the truth about the beast. His death is the most tragic event in the novel because he is killed while trying to bring truth to the group. Symbolically, Simon resembles a prophetic or Christ-like figure. His murder shows that truth and goodness are often destroyed by collective fear and violence.

Roger symbolizes cruelty without moral restraint. At the beginning, he still feels the invisible pressure of civilization. He throws stones near a younger boy but does not hit him because the memory of adult punishment still controls him. Later, as social rules disappear, Roger becomes openly violent. His killing of Piggy shows the complete release of sadistic instinct. Ideologically, Roger represents the terrifying possibility that some human beings enjoy cruelty when there is no law to restrain them.

DISCUSSION

The symbolic system of *Lord of the Flies* is not random. Golding constructs a complete ideological model of civilization and its collapse. Each symbol belongs to a larger structure of meaning. The conch, Piggy's glasses, and the signal fire are symbols of civilization. The beast, the pig's head, the painted faces, and the spears are symbols of savagery. The movement of the novel is the movement from the first group of symbols to the second. In other words, the plot is also a symbolic transformation.

The conch is especially important in this regard. It has authority only because the boys agree to respect it. Once they stop respecting it, it becomes only a shell. This reflects a larger political idea: law and democracy are symbolic systems that depend on collective belief. They cannot survive when people prefer violence, fear, and immediate desire. The destruction of the conch is therefore a political symbol of the death of democratic culture.

Golding's treatment of the beast is central to the novel's philosophy of human nature. Many adventure stories present danger as something external: wild animals, enemies, storms, or unknown lands. In *Lord of the Flies*, the real danger is internal. The beast is created by the boys' fear and then becomes a justification for their violence. This is psychologically realistic. Human societies often create imagined enemies in order to explain anxiety and unite groups. Jack uses the beast as a political instrument. By promising protection from the beast, he strengthens his leadership.

The beast also shows how fear destroys rational thought. The boys do not investigate their fear carefully. They transform uncertainty into myth. The more they fear the beast, the more savage they become. This suggests that irrational fear can produce the very evil it imagines. The beast is not real as an animal, but it becomes real as a social force. It changes behavior, creates rituals, and leads to murder.

The signal fire represents another important ideological conflict: long-term responsibility versus immediate desire. Ralph's insistence on the fire shows his ability to think beyond the present moment. Jack's obsession with hunting shows his focus on immediate satisfaction. This opposition is still relevant in modern society. Civilized life requires delayed gratification, planning, and responsibility. Savagery is connected with impulse, appetite, and domination.

The symbolic contrast between Ralph and Jack is also a contrast between two types of leadership. Ralph's leadership is democratic, rational, and future-oriented. Jack's leadership is authoritarian, emotional, and violent. Ralph asks the boys to work; Jack offers them pleasure and power. Ralph speaks of rescue; Jack speaks of hunting. This explains why Jack becomes attractive to the boys. Golding suggests that authoritarian power can be emotionally seductive because it simplifies reality. It offers clear enemies, strong identity, and freedom from moral responsibility.

Simon's role complicates the novel's symbolic system. He is not simply another representative of civilization. Unlike Ralph and Piggy, Simon does not rely on rules or reason alone. He represents spiritual and moral insight. He understands that the beast is within human beings. His death shows that truth is dangerous when society is controlled by fear. The boys kill Simon not because he is evil, but because they cannot recognize truth in the middle of collective madness.

The killing of Simon is one of the novel's most important symbolic scenes. It shows how ritual can transform ordinary children into a violent crowd. In the dance, individual responsibility disappears. The boys become part of a group body. This scene suggests that evil is not only individual but also collective. People may do terrible things in groups that they would not do alone. Golding therefore connects symbolism with social psychology.

The ending of the novel is deeply ironic. Ralph is saved by a naval officer, a representative of adult civilization. However, the officer himself belongs to a world at war. This means that the adult world is not truly innocent or civilized either. The boys' violence on the island reflects the larger violence of the adult world. The island is a small version of human history. The rescue does not completely solve the problem; it only returns the boys to a society that may contain the same darkness in more organized forms.

Thus, the ideological load of the symbols in *Lord of the Flies* is pessimistic but not simplistic. Golding does not say that all human beings are always evil. Ralph, Piggy, and Simon show that reason, order, and goodness exist. However, the novel argues that these qualities are vulnerable. They must be protected by moral discipline and social responsibility. Without them, fear and power can easily dominate.

CONCLUSION

William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is a powerful symbolic novel that explores the collapse of civilization and the darkness within human nature. Through symbols such as the conch shell, Piggy's glasses, the signal fire, the beast, the island, and the Lord of the Flies, Golding creates a complete ideological structure. These symbols are not decorative details; they are the main instruments through which the novel communicates its meaning.

The conch represents democratic order and the fragile authority of law. Piggy's glasses symbolize reason, science, and the danger of knowledge without morality. The signal fire represents hope, discipline, and connection with civilization. The beast symbolizes inner evil, fear, and irrationality. The island symbolizes the world itself, beginning as paradise and ending as a place of destruction.

The characters also function symbolically. Ralph represents responsible democratic leadership. Jack represents authoritarian power and savagery. Piggy represents rational intelligence. Simon represents moral and spiritual truth. Roger represents cruelty released from social restraint. Together, these characters form a symbolic map of human society.

The article has shown that the ideological meaning of *Lord of the Flies* is centered on the fragility of civilization. Golding suggests that civilized behavior is not permanent or automatic. It depends on moral self-control, respect for law, rational thinking, and collective responsibility. When these values collapse, human beings may quickly return to violence, fear, and domination.

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