



RESEARCH PAPER**Uncovering the Debate of Nature and Nurture about Evil in Lord of the Flies through Diction****Inzamam Aziz**

BS Student Department of English, University of Kotli AJK, Pakistan

***Corresponding Author**

inzamamaziz763@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out whether the violent behavior of human beings is the product of their nature, or it is the nurture or atmosphere that forces them to engage in evil acts. Earlier on, this contrast had been touched by psychologists, philosophers, and researchers, but no one has explored this concept in Golding's use of diction in "Lord of the Flies." Through qualitative research methods, I have tried to explore the diction used by William Golding in his novel Lord of the Flies, in which he depicts that evil is in the nature of man, but civilization has masked it. When free from societal constraints, humans' natural impulse towards evil emerges, causing them to behave like beasts. These findings may help future researchers to delve deeper into understanding how different aspects of nurture, such as upbringing and social environment, impact the inherent evil nature of individuals.

KEYWORDS

Civilization, Human Behavior, Lord of the Flies, Nature

Introduction

For a really long time, researchers and scholars have been drawn in by the deep rooted conversation about the overall significance of nature versus nurture. This study focuses on the fundamental question of whether external factors or intrinsic biological characteristics primarily influence human behavior. This study gives a basic system to inspecting scholarly works like William Golding's notable book "Lord of the Flies." With a gathering of young men battling for their lives alone, and with no adult to supervise them, against the fruitless scene of a desolate island, "Lord of the Flies" gives a great idea to inspecting the challenges of human instinct and the collaboration between human instinct and external circumstances. Through the cautious choice of language, Golding makes a story that invites readers to think about the essential powers that shape human way of behaving and to consider how much individuals are results of their current circumstance or other outer factors. This study attempts to investigate the intricacies of the nature versus nurture contention as it is displayed in "Lord of the Flies," analyzing at what the creator's selection of words means for how we see the characters' development, interactions, and extreme fall into brutality. By carefully analyzing the diction used throughout Golding's novel Lord Of The Flies, this study aims to provide perspective on the ongoing philosophical inquiry of nature vs nurture into the roots of human behavior and this complex interaction between nature and nurture in "Lord of the Flies."

Literature Review

There has been various attempts to explore and learn about the role of nature and nurture in the growth and development of the character of human beings. McCrae (2000) Interventions in human development are best aimed at the culturally conditioned

development of characteristic adaptations that express personality, which enhance the inherent development of personality. Roberts, Walton, and Viechtbauer (2006) found that personality changes throughout the life span, but with more pronounced changes in young and old ages, and that this change is partly attributable to social demands and experiences.

Specht, Egloff and Schmukle (2011) explored ideas on the role of nature and nurture in human behavior. They observed that there was general agreement that everybody's behaviour is influenced to varying degrees by both genetic and environmental factors. Kandler (2012) found personality changes result from environment in the process of identity development with the passage of time as individual establishes relationship within society and also due to his individual experiences. These changes may also occur due to biological maturation.

Lebdeh (2013) observed that an examination of Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies* shows that Golding's Characters, Jack and Ralph, are embodiments of the primitive and the civilized boys. Both of these boys develop their own rules and regulations but they couldn't maintain them and hence they fall victim to their natural impulse of evil. Lebdeh (2013) humans are self-destructive by nature and the only thing that can save the world from falling is agreement to common sense. Mares and Moffett (2016) found out that with increase in temperature, the increase in violent activities such as killing of one person by another has occurred. They took the data from 57 countries for this purpose.

Kandler and Willems (2017) observed that People choose their own environments and choices based on their inherited personality traits when they are given equal access to environmental possibilities for development and growing levels of self-determination with growth. The personalities of the people might then be strengthened or even altered by these surroundings. In addition, environments offer a wide range of developmental chances, and individuals develop in different ways based on their genetic receptivity to environmental factors.

Material and Methods

This descriptive research describes *Lord of the Flies* through textual criticism. The actions and dialogues are used to describe the characters fall into savagery. The data collected and analyzed in this research is all textual content. Because of this, the novel has been studied with deep insight with concentration. It is qualitative research and thus the subject matter is explained accordingly.

Results and Discussion

William Golding's literary work *Lord of the Flies* provides a penetrating insight into man behaviour. The novel tells the fictional story of a group of English boys during the outbreak world war stranded on a deserted island with only themselves and no adults there will be an authoritative figure among them. Over time these boys demonstrate the elements of human nature beyond civilized human beings as embedded in a society and environment where there are no rules or politeness. Golding claims that human nature, when freed from the constraints of society, drives people away from common sense to savagery. His basic arguments are that human beings are wild by nature and are driven by the urge to brutality and dominance over others. Use of characterization, symbolism, and character development are various literary devices that Golding uses in *Lord of the Flies* to illustrate that all men are inherently evil.

Lord of the Flies delves into the deep philosophical debate of innate evil inside the heart of the boys through the dialogues of different characters. Through meticulous analysis I am going to explore through diction of the novel that what are the views of Golding about evil in human nature.

Initially, when the boys reach at the deserted island they look civilized. Jack, the antagonist of the novel utters following words;

““We’ve got to have rules and obey them. After all, we’re not savages. We’re English, and the English are best at everything.” William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, (Jack), Chapter 2.

Here, the use of word such as “rules” emphasizes that Jack and other boys belong to a civilized society and they have good nurture that is why he is focusing on the importance of rules to lead a life. According to Merriam Webster, rules the laws or regulations prescribed by the founder of a religious order for observance by its members. It means that Jack wanted to follow religious orders to live in community with peace and harmony by maintaining moral and ethical behavior. Moreover, Golding through the character of Jack says that they have to “obey” the rules that shows the civilized side of the boys. Furthermore, the use of Clause “After all, we are not savage” shows that as they belong to a civilized community that’s why they need to have hard and fast rules as rules are created for humans and not for the savage beasts. According to Collins Dictionary, to be “savage” means is to be extremely cruel and uncontrolled. By this definition, Jack wanted to control his behavior and not to be swayed by rage, fun and violence. Additionally, the use of clause “ we are English and English are best at everything”, shows that boys belong to a nation that is known as mother of civilization and that society has uplifted the oral standards of it’s inhabitants and so they are “best at everything”. This quote highlights that even if evil exists in human it is the good nurture that shapes the mind and behavior of it’s people to act good.

When Jack, the antagonist, sees the pig for the first time he could not kill it. Golding writes:

““They knew very well why he hadn’t: because of the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh; because of the unbearable blood.” William Golding, *Lord Of the Flies*, (Narrator), Chapter 4.

Here, the use of phrase such as “enormity of the knife”, symbolizes that Jack considers it unethical and even extremely monstrous act to use knife on “living flesh’. According to Merriam Webster, “enormity” means an outrageous and immoral act. So, by this definition, Jack showed high degree of morality by not killing the pig because it was an outrageous act to kill the pig. Jack can not bear the idea that knife would run on a living flesh. Furthermore, the use of words “ unbearable” and “blood” show that Jack can not bear that pig would bleed if he runs knife on it. It shows that the Jack and other boys who live in civilized society can not commit any offense because they are not savage and society has well shaped their behavior.

With the passage of time, the boys become increasingly savage and they display the elements of savagery. For example, the same Jack who could not bear the idea of killing a pig, says:

““Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Spill her blood.” ~William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, (Jack and his group of hunters), Chapter 4.

Here the use of words such as “kill”, “cut”, “spill” and “blood” show that they are going toward the fall of savagery. According to Merriam Webster, “to Kill” means to deprive someone of life, “to cut” means to hurt the feelings of someone, “to spill” means to cause (blood) to be lost by wounding and “blood” broadly means life. So, it means that Jack wanted to hurt the feelings of pig by taking its life. Jack gathers other boys and they paint their faces that show that they are going to kill not only the pig but as they have been divided into groups so they can soon target one and another, equally. This quote symbolize the concept that now they are no longer in a society and there is no adult to supervise them so they would make chaos because there is evil in their inner self and that they can not mask it any longer because they are away from a society that had made them civilized. On a deserted island where there is no civilization, the true self of the boys is exposed.

So far, I have described the dialogues and actions of Jack and his group. Let me divide them into two groups. The left hand side shows the words that describe Jack and his group before Chapter 04 and Right hand side shows the words that describe the group of Jack in chapter 04.

Table 01

Comparison of the dialogues of Jack and his group from first four chapters

| Before Chapter number 04 | In chapter number 04 |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Rules and obey | Kill |
| Not savage | Cut |
| Best at everything | Cut the throat |
| (can't Consider) Enormity of the knife | Spill |
| (can't Consider) knife cutting into living flesh | Blood |
| (can't Consider) unbearable blood. | |

This contrast shows the rapid descent of Jack and his group into savagery when just after the few days, they were not under the supervision of adults they started displaying the elements of evil in their behavior.

The other main character, Piggy, still displays the elements of civilization. He reminds the boys that they belong to a nation that is on the pinnacle of civilization and that they can not become beast. He says

“What are we? Humans? Or animals? Or savages? What’s grownups going to think?”
William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, (Piggy), Chapter 5.

Here, piggy compares three things that are “humans”, “animals” and savages”. He questions whether they should behave like humans or animals or like savages? He reminds the others that what “grownups are going to think?” Here the use of word “grownups”, shows that Piggy is of the view that soon they will be recovered then if they continue behaving like beasts what “grownups”, who live in civilized society will think about them. This quote shows the importance of a good nurture that those who live in a civilized world can not bear the concept of evil because their civilized society through civilization has masked the evil inside. As the boys are away from a civilized world and they are on a deserted island where there are no traces of civilization, they are becoming beasts. The fact is that with the chase of power and dominance, come bloodshed and violence. Man has inherent evil and when he has the desire to control and dominate others, his desire for building civilization vanishes. The best example of this case is evident from this book as all the characters on island are teenagers who can not be manipulated yet they chose to gain dominance and violence that is natural basic instinct of human.

"The world, that understandable and lawful world, was slipping away". William Golding, *Lord Of the Flies*, (Narrator), Chapter 5.

The narrator describes the thoughts of Ralph when he gathers the group of boys through conch shell for a meeting to encourage them to speedup the activities for being rescued. But the boys neglect their duties and indulged in dancing, hunting and chanting wildly. Ralph thinks that when they came here, they initially started working on being rescued by signaling a fire on mountains but with the passage of time, their focus shifted on fun and violence. Here the use of lawful world means the world where everyone follows rules and regulations but as the boys have forgotten about the rules of working together for rescue and the natural impulse of doing mischievous acts have overlapped them, so Ralph thinks that the lawful world is slipping away and it is replaced with violence.

This quote highlights the progression of savagery among boys and one can conclude that evil is present in human being but civilization has masked it and when boys get the atmosphere where there is no one to supervise them, they started behaving like beasts by ignoring law and order.

When the boys on the island get frightened of a beast living in the jungle, a character Simon says:

"Maybe there is a beast.... Maybe it's only us. " ~William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, (Simon), Chapter 5.

Simon acknowledges that maybe there is a beast on the island but his use of discourse "maybe it is only us", symbolize that the beast in the jungle is no other than the boys and the evil inside them. His use of word "us", symbolizes that boys are not afraid of beast present in the jungle rather they are afraid of one and another. They are no longer civilized Englishmen, rather they have become savage. They are afraid of one and another because every individual on island is trying to gain dominance and power over the other and they are afraid that anyone can be the victim of other boy.

When Simon sees the head of the pig on the stick, he utters following words to the Simon:

"Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill! . . . You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close!" William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, (Beast), Chapter 5.

The boys were bent on killing the beast present in the jungle that has frightened everyone but when Simon visit lord of the flies he identifies himself as the beast and asks Simon that why they were bent on killing the beast? The beast was not something to be killed as it was their own self. The use of clause "I am part of you" shows that beast resides inside the boys. Golding here says that beast that symbolizes evil is not something other than the true self of the boys. Golding here shows that evil is inside the man and upon appropriate settings it gets exposed.

As the time goes on, they become increasingly cruel and they try to gain power and dominance over the other. When there is a quest to attain power, there comes bloodshed and violence and every group tries to create chaos. Piggy asks:

"Which is better—to have rules and agree, or to hunt and kill?" William Golding, *Lord of the flies*, (Piggy), Chapter 11.

Here, Piggy compares two concepts, “rules and agree(ment)” and “hunt and kill”. Piggy asks them that which one is better. Piggy highlights two impulses that exist within human beings that are to live in peace under law and order and to act violent to gain power and supremacy by killing and hunting.

Golding through the character of Piggy shows that even in the mud of savagery a good nurture helps to mask the evil inside. It shows that if we resist against evil we can remain civilized, that is what society develops in us. If we live in a civilized society, our guardians instill values in us that align with societal expectations and societal pressures forces us to be conformist and thus one adopts ethical values.

“The rock struck Piggy a glancing blow from chin to knee; the conch exploded into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist.” William Golding, *Lord Of the Flies*, (Narrator), Chapter 11.

Here, Roger lets the rock roll down deliberately to kill Piggy or Ralph who are standing below a mountain. The rock hits Piggy and he dies then and there. Here, the death of Piggy symbolizes the end of reason and intellect on the island and the start of violence and power hunt. The destruction of Conch shell symbolizes the end of law and order because conch was the symbol of law and order as it was used to summon boys on island for meeting. As the conch is exploded now it means the aim of building civilization and working together for a common purpose have lost and so now everyone will try to gain power and dominance.

This quote symbolizes the natural impulse of man to do evil acts for personal benefits thus highlighting that evil exists in human and when constraints of civilization are not present, barbarism and violence take place.

At the end, when all of the boys have eventually plunged into barbarism, they get rescued by police officers and at that time, protagonist Ralph realizes what they have done with themselves. Golding writes;

“Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man’s heart”. ~William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, (The narrator: about Ralph), Chapter 12.

Here the use of phrase “end of innocence” highlights the fact that when they came here they were merely innocents who got lost on deserted island, they were civilized with no intentions of harming anyone, but at the end Ralph wept for “the darkness of man’s heart”. Here “the darkness of man’s heart” symbolizes the evil inside the man. Ralph is amazed at the current situation of the boys and who they have murdered his friend Piggy and what chaos they have created on the island.

Ralph weeps not only on the evil impulse of group of boys but on the fact that this evil impulse has misguided the boys on the island to ignore the original target of returning to civilization. Here, Golding highlights the special importance of civilization that it has reduced the savageness within the human beings but the fact is that the innate evil that man has can not be completely wiped out.

Conclusion

From the above discussions, it is proved that Golding through the use of character development, diction and events have portrayed that evil exists in human beings but good natures helps him to mask the evil inside. The quotes of piggy, Simon and Ralph suggest that although evil exists in man but civilization has masked it and when people have a purpose in life they create their own world that is free from crimes. On the other hand, Jack

and his group suggest that when man is free from the constraints of society he descends into savagery because at that moment man has no goal to achieve and he falls as victim to evil.

Golding has used the diction carefully to give an idea about evil in human nature. He has used the words like “wept”, “innocence”, “rules” and “obey” in the dialogues of the group of Ralph to describe the group of Ralph that represents good. On the other hand, he has used the words like “kill”, “pig” “cut”, “throat” and “blood” in the dialogues of Jack and his group that denote barbarism and violence to describe the group of Jack.

By creating two groups of teenagers, Golding gave an idea of human nature that has both the impulse of good as well as evil. Golding gave an idea that evil can be masked by being in good group or in civilization. Initially the boys displayed the elements of humanity just because they came from a civilized background but with the passage of time they fell to barbarism that shows the progression of savagery among them. When they forgot their basic purpose of being rescued they started having fun and hunt that led them to savagery. The group of Ralph kept on trying to be rescued and eventually it was Ralph and his group that caught the sight of adults who rescued them.

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