



-Tikrit University\ College of Education for Women

-English Department

-Fourth Stage

-Modern Novel

- Maintaining control and order in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*

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Ralph's Challenges in Maintaining Order

Ralph faces numerous challenges in maintaining control and establishing order in "Lord of the Flies." The three most important obstacles Ralph faced in his efforts to govern the Island was, his fairness, fear and his morals. The first obstacle of his effort was his fairness. Ralph at the beginning of the story was voted on to be the chief. He however, saw how much it hurt Jack, that he was not picked. Ralph, trying to be fair, decided to let Jack have control of the hunters or the choir. "The choir belongs to you, of course," (pg. 23) Ralph said to Jack. This gave Jack power, and left him wanting more and because he wanted what Ralph had, power, there was a tension between Jack and Ralph.

The second obstacle Ralph had to overcome was his fear. Ralph had to overcome his fears of not being rescued, and the beast. Ralph had to overcome his anger, and realized keeping the boys together was the most important action. Ralph learned that he had to put others first before his own wants. If Ralph did not overcome fear of being on the Island forever, the boys would have been lost to savagery from that point. Meaning they would not be governed anymore. The last obstacle Ralph had to overcome was his morals in order to govern the boys. Ralph was a character based on civilization and morals but, because the boys were losing their morals, they were losing their interest in Ralph. The boys started to relate to the savagery of Jack, than the morals of Ralph. If Ralph would be switched from his morals to savagery he

would keep his power but, because he never got over this obstacle, he lost his power. The following are some specific instances where he struggles:

1. **The Conch Shell:** At the beginning of the novel, Ralph discovers a conch shell and realizes its potential for establishing order and facilitating communication. He uses it as a symbol of authority, and whoever holds the conch has the right to speak. However, as the story progresses, the boys become increasingly unruly and disrespectful of the conch's power. They interrupt each other, disregard its rules, and undermine Ralph's attempts to maintain order during meetings.

2. **Building Shelters vs. Hunting:** Ralph emphasizes the importance of building shelters to protect themselves and increase their chances of rescue. However, his efforts are overshadowed by the boys' growing fascination with hunting and the thrill of killing pigs. Despite his logical arguments, Ralph finds it difficult to convince the boys to prioritize building and maintaining the shelters, leading to a breakdown in order and the neglect of their rescue mission.

3. **The Beast:** As fear of the "beast" on the island intensifies, Ralph struggles to maintain rationality and calm among the boys. He attempts to dismiss the notion of a physical beast and encourages the boys to confront their fears logically. However, Jack exploits

their fears and presents himself as the leader capable of protecting them from the imaginary threat. This undermines Ralph's authority and creates division among the group, making it challenging for him to establish a unified front against the beast.

4. Fire Management: Ralph assigns the responsibility of tending to the signal fire, which symbolizes their hope for rescue. However, the boys become increasingly careless in their fire management, leading to missed opportunities for rescue and a loss of discipline. Ralph's attempts to enforce strict fire discipline are met with resistance and indifference from some of the boys, further eroding his control and the order he seeks to establish.

5. Jack's Rebellion: Perhaps the most significant challenge to Ralph's leadership comes from Jack, who leads a rebellious faction and gradually gains more followers. Jack's charisma, manipulation, and appeal to primitive instincts attract many of the boys, causing a schism in the group. Ralph struggles to counter Jack's authority and the lure of his savage lifestyle, leading to a power struggle that threatens the order and survival of the group.