



-Tikrit University\ College of Education for Women

-English Department

-Fourth Stage

-Modern Novel

- Themes in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*

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The Major Themes of *Lord of The Flies*

Lord of the Flies" explores several themes that shed light on the complexities of human nature and society. Some of the key themes in the novel include:

1. Civilization vs. Savagery

This theme is central to the story, depicting the struggle between the instinctual, savage tendencies of human beings and the principles of civilization and order. The boys' descent into savagery on the island highlights the fragility of societal norms and the ease with which individuals can abandon rationality and moral values when faced with a lack of authority and structure.

2. Man vs. Nature

The struggle of man versus nature is the first theme that becomes obvious in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, since the story opens with a group of schoolboys getting stranded with no means of survival or reaching out to help. They have to rely on their limited survival skills to figure out how to get food, water and shelter while staying safe in an unfamiliar and undeveloped place. Their focus is on how man can survive in nature, and they figure that out. It doesn't take long of being in that survival situation, though, before nature starts to change the boys. Or, one might argue that being on their own in the natural world lets the boys' true natures emerge. That's when the next theme starts to emerge.

3. Loss of Innocence

At the beginning of the story, the boys are innocents. As they learn to survive at all costs in the savage world of the jungle, though, this starts to change. Civilization had allowed them to remain innocent, but once that structure was gone there was no room for the wide-eyed wonder of childhood. Instead, as a natural part of learning to survive in the jungle, the loss of innocence was a natural part of the process. As they adapted, their more basic impulses took over and impacted their outlook on the world around, them, each other and what they were willing to do in order to survive.

4. Power and Leadership

The novel delves into the dynamics of power and leadership. It explores the different approaches to leadership embodied by Ralph and Jack, highlighting the consequences of authoritarian rule versus democratic principles. The struggle for power and the abuse of power are examined, revealing the inherent tensions and conflicts that arise within a group of individuals vying for control.

5. Fear and Paranoia

Fear and paranoia pervade the novel, driving the boys to irrational behavior and the creation of imaginary threats. The fear of the "beast" represents the primal fears that reside within human beings and the destructive effects of unchecked fear on individuals and society.

6. Human Nature

"Lord of the Flies" examines the inherent nature of human beings, suggesting that there is both good and evil within each individual. The novel explores the capacity for cruelty, violence, and the loss of moral restraints

when societal constraints are removed. It raises questions about the true nature of humanity and the forces that shape human behavior.

6. Loss of Identity

As the boys dissociate from their previous lives and the rules of civilization, they begin to lose their individual identities. They adopt new roles and personas, often defined by their primal instincts and the group dynamics on the island. The loss of identity reflects the dehumanizing effects of the descent into savagery.

7. Good vs. Evil

Good versus evil is one of the primary themes in *Lord of the Flies*. In this story, behaviors that align with what would be considered moral in civilized society fall on the side of "good." Alternately, behaviors that are more associated with man's primal urges would be considered "evil." This aligns with the theme of civilization vs. savagery, in a way that judges actions based on whether they are consistent with order and societal norms (good) or the chaos of the jungle (evil). There are many examples of both within the book, from the beast warning Simon that what the boys really have to fear is the beast that lies within each of them. The boys have long viewed the beast as evil and dangerous, yet what they fear lives within them.

These themes in "Lord of the Flies" offer a profound exploration of human nature, society, and the fragile balance between order and chaos. The novel serves as a cautionary tale, highlighting the potential for darkness and the challenges of maintaining civilization in the face of adversity.