Louis Savinien Dupuis Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, 2025: V(4) 108–110
DOI: 10.21839/lsdjmr.2025.v4.259

Research Article

STRANDED IDENTITIES: ROOTLESSNESS AND ALIENATION IN WILLIAM GOLDING'S *LORD OF THE FLIES*

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(Received: 09-04-2025; Accepted 08-06-2025; Published Online 03-11-2025)

Abstract

This study explores the theme of human nature in *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding (1954), focusing on how a group of British schoolboys stranded on a deserted island struggle to survive after a wartime plane crash. Initially, the boys attempt to establish order by creating rules and electing Ralph as their leader, using the conch shell as a symbol of authority and unity.

However, as time passes, their civilized behavior gradually breaks down, and they begin to give in to fear, power, and primal instincts. The conflict between Ralph and Jack represents the clash between civilization and savagery, while the fear of the "beast" leads to chaos and violence.

This study highlights important themes such as human nature, leadership, survival, morality, and the loss of innocence. It concludes that in the absence of societal control, the darker side of human nature emerges, resulting in moral decline and destruction.

keyword: Human Nature, Civilization vs. Savagery, Leadership, Survival, Morality

Introduction

Sir William Gerald Golding (1911–1993) was a British novelist, poet, and playwright, best known for his significant contribution to modern literature. His most famous novel, *Lord of the Flies* (1954), explores themes of rootlessness, alienation, and the darker aspects of human nature. Golding was born on September 19, 1911, in Cornwall, England, into a family that valued education and social awareness. His father was a schoolteacher with strong scientific beliefs, and his mother was actively involved in the women's suffrage movement. He studied English Literature at Oxford University, where he began developing his interest in writing.

Golding's experiences during World War II, where he served as a lieutenant in the Royal Navy and participated in significant events such as the D-Day invasion, deeply influenced his worldview. Witnessing violence and human cruelty led him to question the idea that humans are naturally good. Instead, he believed that every individual possesses an inherent capacity for evil.

After the war, Golding went back to his teaching career while also pursuing his writing. His novel *Lord of the Flies* presents a powerful allegory about a group of boys After a plane crash, a group of boys finds themselves trapped on a remote, uninhabited island. Without adult supervision, they attempt to create order through rules and leadership. Ralph represents democracy and order, while Jack symbolizes savagery and the desire for power. As fear and conflict grow, the boys gradually descend into chaos, revealing the fragile nature of civilization.

The novel uses powerful symbols such as the conch shell (order and authority), Piggy's glasses (knowledge and clarity), and the "*Lord of the Flies*" (inner evil). Through these elements, Golding suggests that savagery lies within all human beings and can emerge when societal structures collapse. The island becomes a microcosm of the world, reflecting the conflict between civilization and barbarism.

Lord of the Flies remains a timeless and thought-provoking work that continues to be relevant in modern society. It highlights themes of power, morality, fear, and human behavior, reminding readers that the struggle between order and chaos exists within every individual and society.

STRANDED IDENTITIES: ROOTLESSNESS AND ALIENATION IN WILLIAM GOLDING'S LORD OF THE FLIES

Rootlessness and alienation are important themes in literature that describe the experience of individuals who feel disconnected from their home, culture, society, and even their own identity. Rootlessness refers to the loss of connection with one's cultural, social, or familial roots, while alienation refers to the feeling of isolation or estrangement from others and from oneself. Together, these concepts reflect a deep sense of displacement and the struggle to find meaning and belonging.

In the modern world, these conditions are often caused by migration, war, social change, and technological development. People who are separated from their familiar environment may find it difficult to adapt to new surroundings, leading to confusion and identity crisis. Alienation is not only social but also psychological, as individuals may feel like strangers in their own lives. This sense of disconnection can result in loneliness, despair, and loss of purpose.

Philosophically, alienation has been widely discussed by thinkers such as Karl Marx, who explained how individuals become disconnected from their work, society, and even themselves in modern industrial systems. Similarly, in literature, characters experiencing rootlessness often struggle between different identities and cultures, especially in postcolonial and modern contexts. These themes help us understand the emotional and psychological challenges faced by individuals in a rapidly changing world.

In *Lord of the Flies,* William Golding presents rootlessness and alienation through the experiences of a group of boys stranded on a deserted island after a plane crash. The absence of adults and established authority removes the structure and discipline of civilized life. As a result, the boys become rootless, lacking the social and moral foundations that once guided their behavior.

Initially, the boys attempt to recreate order by forming rules and electing Ralph as their leader. The conch shell becomes a symbol of authority and unity. However, this order is fragile because it lacks strong cultural and moral roots. Over time, fear, desire for power, and survival instincts weaken their sense of unity. Jack, driven by ambition and savagery, challenges Ralph's leadership and forms his own group, leading to division and conflict.

Alienation becomes more visible as the boys grow apart from one another. They also become alienated from their own civilized selves. Fear of the "beast" symbolizes their inner darkness and growing psychological instability. Simon realizes that the real "beast" lies within them, but his truth is ignored, and he is tragically killed. Piggy, who represents reason and intelligence, is also rejected and eventually killed. These events highlight how alienation leads to violence, misunderstanding, and loss of humanity.

Golding uses powerful symbols to represent rootlessness and alienation. The conch shell represents structure, unity, and fair leadership among them.When the conch is destroyed, it signals the total breakdown of order and the end of civilized behavior. Piggy's glasses represent knowledge and clarity, and their theft shows the loss of rational thinking. The signal fire, which represents hope and connection to the outside world, gradually loses importance, reflecting the boys' detachment from rescue and civilization. The "*Lord of the Flies*," a pig's head, symbolizes the evil within human nature and the ultimate source of fear and alienation.

CONCLUSION

Lord of the Flies is not just an adventure story but a deep exploration of human nature and morality. The novel shows how the thin line between civilization and savagery can easily break when rules and order are lost.

Through characters like Ralph and Jack, Golding highlights the struggle between order and instinct. The idea of the "beast" reveals that evil exists within humans, not outside them.

The ending reflects that the violence on the island is similar to the real world, making the novel a powerful message about society. It also emphasizes the importance of leadership and responsibility in maintaining order. The loss of innocence among the boys further highlights the harsh reality of human nature. Golding suggests that fear and power can easily control individuals when morality is weakened.Overall, it warns that without discipline and values, humanity can quickly fall into chaos.

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