



M.A II-Semester
ENGLISH LITERATURE
FICTION (Unit –V)

LORD OF THE FILES

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WILLIAM GOLDING



- Born in Cornwall 1911
- His mother was a strong supporter of the suffragette movement
- His father, Alec, was a school teacher who was a believer of the philosophy of rationalism
- Rationalism is the idea that humans are capable of perfection.
- During his early years, William believed his father's theories.
- His father's theories would influence his writing, including *Lord of the Flies*.
- Golding attended Brasenose College at Oxford in 1930, studying science.
- He switched to literature in 1933 and graduated in 1935 with a B.A in English and a diploma in education.
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Continued



- During his Oxford days Golding began to disregard his father's philosophy. This can be seen in a series of his early poems.
- Golding cited Greek tragedies and Shakespeare as his literary influences.
- In 1939 began teaching at Bishop Wordsworth's School. He taught English and philosophy.
- That same year he married Ann Brookfield, with whom he had 2 children.
- Golding spent 5 years in the Royal Navy during WWII.
- Golding saw German submarines, ships and aircraft destroyed during his time in the navy, which also influenced his writing.
- Golding was involved in D-Day operations.
- He retired from the navy as a Lieutenant Commander.
- He died in Cornwall in 1993.

Notable Works



- Poems published in MacMillan's *Contemporary Poets series published between 1933-1935.*
- *Lord of the Flies published 1954*
- *The Inheritors published 1955*
- *Pincher Martin published 1956*
- *The Pyramid published 1967*
- *The Scorpion God published 1971*

LORD OF THE FILES

by William Golding

- A group of English schoolboys marooned on a tropical island after their plane is shot down during a war.
- Its exploration of the idea of human evil is at least partly based on Golding's experience with the real-life violence and brutality of World War II.
- Free from the rules and structures of civilization and society, the boys on the island in *Lord of the Flies* descend into savagery.
- In his portrayal of the small world of the island, Golding paints a broader portrait of the fundamental human struggle between the civilizing instinct—the impulse to obey rules, behave morally, and act lawfully and the savage instinct—the impulse to seek brute power over others, act selfishly, scorn moral rules, and indulge in violence.
- Island is a microcosm of society, politics, and human psychology.



Themes



- A number of themes run through the majority of Golding's works. The primary themes of *Lord of the Flies* are:
- Imperialism, human nature, the conflict between good and evil, civilization, savagery, spirituality, identity, loss of innocence, evil, fear, leadership, warfare, nature.
- Society holds everyone together, and without rules and order the basic concept of right and wrong are lost.
- People will abuse power when it's not earned.
- When given a chance, people often single out another to degrade to improve their own security.
- Inner savagery can only be suppressed for so long before it breaks out, given the right situation.
- The fear of the unknown can be a powerful force, which can turn you to either insight or hysteria.

Characters



• **Ralph – (protagonist)**

- Ralph has charisma.
- chosen as leader - many positive qualities
- conflict with Jack
- Wants to keep order and civilization.
- Ralph and Piggy together represent the struggle for order and democracy.

• **Jack – (antagonist)**

- about Ralph's age, a skinnier build and red hair
- emotions of anger and savagery.
- At first, he is the leader of his choir group, who become hunters as the book progresses. He eventually over-takes Ralph as chief/leader.
- Wears a cape with a snake clasp - evil

• **Piggy – Ralph's advisor**

- short and overweight, wears glasses
- represents order and democracy
- tries very hard to cling to civilization, and tries his best to keep peace
- smartest boy on the island, but he lacks any social skills - has trouble communicating or fitting in with the others – represent science and thought
- His glasses are a very important part of the book, as they are used over and over to start fires. Piggy's constant polishing of them shows his desire for clear-sightedness and civilization.

Continued



- **Simon – a choir boy**

- younger than the three previous boys, but older than other littluns
- He is very good and pure, and has the most positive outlook
- Simon often travels into his tranquil spot in the jungle, but also tries to help out when it is needed.
- Meditates – likes nature; has a spiritual; goodness
- He meets up with a pig's head skewered on a stick which leads him to an epileptic episode.

- **Sam and Eric – identical twins**

- **Roger – Loyal to Jack**

- **Percival Wemys Madison – one of the smallest boys**

Symbolism



- *Lord of the Flies* is full of symbolism and allegory
 - Symbolism is ‘the use of symbols (images/writing) to represent an idea or qualities’.
- E.g. A cross represents Jesus dying for peoples sins.
- Symbolism in LotF’s includes physical objects, the title of the novel, and the characters themselves.
 - *Piggy’s Glasses* = The last surviving evidence of the lawful, structured world
 - *Conch Shell* = New democracy on the island
 - *Snake* = Evil...reference to the serpent in the garden of Eden
 - The Beast = The imaginary evil that is projected onto the island by the boys’ paranoia
 - Pig Head = A pig’s head on a stick that becomes the physical acceptance of evil on the island

Allegory

Allegory

A work of fiction carrying two levels of meaning:

- (1) a surface plot/narrative (literal)
- (2) symbolic/metaphorical meaning in which everything in story symbolizes something greater



Political Allegory

-The world was divided into two camps, the free world and the Soviet Union, much like the camps of Ralph and Jack. In addition, the postwar Cold War Era suffered from fears of atomic destruction. *Lord of the Flies* shows the world at the brink of atomic destruction. The novel serves as a warning to the leaders of the world.