Microcosm In Lord Of The Flies By William Golding

“A novel ensures that we can look before and after, take action at whatever pace we choose, read, again and again, skip and go back. The story in a book is humble and serviceable, available, friendly, is not switched on and off but taken up and put down, lasts a lifetime.” William Golding said this in his lecture for his Nobel Prize in Literature in 1983 after writing several pieces including the Lord of the Flies novel which was published in 1954. The novel follows the characters Ralph who is blessed in looks but not brains, Piggy who is intelligent but ignored, Simon who is conscientious but contemned, and Jack who is malicious but minimized whilst they wistfully dream of pasts that are no more while waiting for salvaging from the satanic island turning them all savage alongside their accomplices. In William Golding’s novel, microcosm is illustrated between the mentally troubled boys and the real world. It is exhibited through Ralph and Jack’s conflict, the symbolism of Ralph’s group representing the Allies and Jack’s group the Axis, as well as Golding’s personal history with World War 2.

To begin, whether the battle is for the boy-king of an island or a conflict between virtually every part of the world, both events don’t just share a timeline; they also share personality types clearly illustrated by Ralph and Jack: the antagonist and protagonist. Primarily, Sigmund Feud theorized the mind consists of the Id which is driven by pleasure, the Ego which functions according to the reality principle, and Superego which operates according to the moral principle that unitedly influences our behaviour. Jack represents the Id as shown on page seventy-three, “I cut the pig’s throat”, Ralph the Ego verified on page seventeen, “He’s not Fatty! He’s Piggy!”, and Simon the Superego displayed on page fifty-seven, “...Simon found for them the fruit they could not reach...”. This is not only one case on an island deserted and desolate but can be seen throughout in influential people that make the rulings that change the future and manipulate the past of the world. Equally important, is that throughout the book, Jack and Ralph struggle to choose between proper and primitive, the latter more as Jack accepts his hereditary want for pleasure while Ralph cannot choose: “He looked from face to face. Then, at the moment of greatest passion and conviction, that curtain flapped in his head and he forgot what he had been driving at.” (Golding 181). This ‘curtain flap’ refers to Ralph losing his train of thought because he himself is no longer convinced by his own words just as many individuals are not certain of whether their side is the “right” side similar to many soldiers, some even at war fronts. To conclude, the novel illustrates the difference between personalities in dire situations compared to those in normal day-to-day life. As quoted in the article At a Public School: “By the social standards that prevailed about me, I was no good, and could not be any good. … That was the pattern of school life — a continuous triumph of the strong over the weak. Virtue consisted in winning: it consisted in being bigger, stronger, handsomer, richer, more popular, more elegant, more unscrupulous than other people — in dominating them, bullying them, making them suffer pain, making them look foolish, getting the better of them in every way. Life was hierarchical and whatever happened was right. There were the strong, who deserved to win and always did win, and there were the weak, who deserved to lose and always did lose, everlastingly.”. The beginning of the novel described them as English schoolboys whom social standards prevail to be rich and proper; the future leaders of the country, not ungroomed boys traipsing around in knickers yet the island boys experience personality change because of circumstance but are not the only ones who change, once man gains new perspective, the mind transform. It is clearly no coincidence that William Golding put such

weight on the dispute for director; it correlates to the Earth-wide issue of influence and power management that shows itself through destructive movements from the beginning of time and, most significantly in World War 2.

To strengthen the argument, it is justifiable to postulate that the two groups in The Lord of the Flies are not just an example of anarchy but have a greater purpose; representing the two sides of the second world war: Allies and Axis. When it comes to, Ralph's group represents the Allies, and, more specifically, Britain as they are attempting to be the literate and sophisticated schoolboys they are meant to be. Ralph's speech is to put everything straight; he talks about following orders (keeping coconut shells full of water under the fresh leaves; making the huts to sleep in and protect from tempest; using the rocks beyond the bathing-pool as a lavatory which is naturally cleansed by the tide instead of omnipresent; and keeping the fire going to get rescued (Golding 84-86). This shows that he stands for instruction and following a structured routine. Britain's and the Allies wanted to win the war and in a way, leave the unsettled disputes unsettled and move on rather than bring them into the open and cause further destruction to the crumbling world. On the contrary, Jack's group represents the Axis, specifically, Germany as they submit to savagery and have intricately sworn to slay on sight any enemy or pig: "We'll hunt. I'm going to be chief… we aren't going to bother about the beast… we shan't dream so much down here… we'll kill a pig and give a feast…" (Golding Page 146). The Axis is the part of people who want to go into the unknown and chase after their wants, following their gluttonous side clearly demonstrated by Jack and his lot. Regardless, it is clear to see the members of each party have contrasting ideals; Ralph's wanting discipline: "Hear him! He's got the conch!" (Golding 96) and Jack's wanting pleasure "It's time some people knew they've got to keep quiet and leave deciding things to the rest of us." (Golding 110). In the war, the only thing that separated good from bad was morals connected to the island between conglomerates. The factions are a clear depiction of the two parties of World War 2.

To conclude, it is essential to highlight the river of memories Golding has related to the war and how it's changed the landscape of his mind. In the case of, William Golding, he has a personal connection to World War 2. Instead of teaching, Golding enlisted in the Royal Navy. During the five years in the Navy, Golding served on minesweepers, destroyers, and cruisers. He took part in the sinking of the Bismark, the D-Day invasion of Normandy, and the attack Walcheren. Of his World War II experiences, Golding has said, "I began to see what people were capable of doing. Anyone who moved through those years without understanding that man produces evil as a bee produces honey, must have been blind or wrong in the head." (https://www.biography.com/writer/william-golding) showing how he views the human condition as life-taking rather than life-giving. He also had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder influencing his mind and creative endeavours. When he began his dream diaries in 1972, Golding addressed what he called his 'crisis' on the first page: 'I find it difficult to decide when the crisis began… But by 71, it was unendurable. Not only did life seem pointless, there was a kind of raw intensity about daylight." (https://www.theguardian.com). Post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms include depression and trying to avoid the real reason behind it just like Golding says he is experiencing which would affect day-to-day life including his writing. Ultimately, even his family was concerned as voiced by his daughter, Judy Carver: 'Yes, he was a very complicated man, with a deep self-loathing, which I cannot really explain. I loved him very much, more than anyone, until I had children. But he was ruthless, and that ruthlessness impacted on all of us. He refused to look away. He was alert to the darkness and this came from the war and it stayed with him. A lot of people, veterans in the 50s, took a different attitude to the war. They said: 'Well, that was then; this is now,' and got on with their lives. Daddy didn't do that. The war

cropped up, as an experience, all the way through my childhood.' (https://www.theguardian.com). A peek into his home and what it was like to be with him is a clear indication of what his thinking process was and how he wrote is a reflection of it. It is easy to see that war changed Golding's perspective on mankind and not necessarily for the better yet certainly on his writing style and novel The Lord of the Flies.

The dispute between Ralph and Jack, the representation of Allies and Axis by Ralph and Jack's groups, and memories of World War 2 that Golding holds near all prove that the novel revolving around psychologically disturbed English boys is a scaled-down version of the real world. After examining the deeper messages in The Lord of the Flies by William Golding, outlooks on the topic of thought process are surely very present. However, it leads to the question: what does this mean, how to make decisions, and whether you have biases as well as their consequences.

Works Cited

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