

# A Reflection on the Relationship Between Individuals and Institution in the Novel of “Lord of the Flies”

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## ABSTRACT

“Lord of the Flies” inherits the narrative mode of traditional British desert island literature: the protagonist accidentally lives on the desert island, and the protagonist struggles to survive on the desert island and finds a way to return to society. But its narrative themes and characters’ personalities are different from works such as Robinson Crusoe and Coral Island. Defoe created a rational society in his works, while Ballantine portrayed a group of outstanding young people, praising the optimistic and cheerful national spirit. “Lord of the Flies” subverts the perfect image of children in traditional desert island literature and explains the consequences of the conflict between individuals and social systems. The disharmonious relationship between man and social system is doomed to collapse the civilization and system established by the boys on the desert island. This paper analyzes the abstract relationship between people and social systems through the relationship between individuals and the environment and the relationship between people.

**Keywords:** “Lord of the Flies”, individuals and social system, individuals and environment, interpersonal relationship

## I. INTRODUCTION

“Lord of the Flies”, is an important text of British desert island literature, Golding followed the desert island literary tradition, setting up an isolated desert island as the background of the story, with the British boys as the protagonist, following the inherent plot: the traditional trilogy model of desert island literature: floating on desert Island — survival on desert Island — Return. [1], [2] However, unlike the desert island texts such as Robinson Crusoe (1719) and Coral Island (1857) with the type of turning a desert island into a rational paradise, Golding broke through this type. The myth of the natural Eden in the traditional desert island literature was deconstructed in “Lord of the Flies” (1954). In this novel, the desert island is gradually reduced to hell on earth under the destruction of boys.

The two world wars in the 20th century brought disaster to human society. The wars made people’s spirit lost and lack of value. The belief in the natural superiority of the rational western man which had framed the colonial model of desert island fiction imploded. In this situation, the modern literature began

to seek new artistic ways to explore people’s hearts. In “Lord of the Flies”, Golding creates a story that is different from Coral Island but is a realistic version.[3] The story of “Lord of the Flies” revolves around the children living on the desert island, electing Ralph as the leader and establishing the desert island system. However, the conflict between personal desires and the desert island system made the civilization established by the boys on the desert island collapse. But the relationship between individuals and society is abstract. This paper uses intertextual analysis and text analysis to express the relationship between individuals and society through the relationship between people and the environment and the relationship between people. People are in a state of being dominated by fear in the natural environment, which just shows the inharmonious relationship between people and environment. The titles of the novel from Chapter five to Chapter nine, “The Beast from the Water”, “The Beast from the Air”, “Twilight and the High Tree”, “Offering to the Darkness”, and “Seeing the Dead” are all around the boys. It is difficult to restrain the “fear” and unfold the narrative. In addition to the boys’ fear of unknown beasts, another clue to the story of “Lord of the Flies” revolves around the struggle between Ralph and Jack. Whether it is the disharmonious relationship between people and the environment or the contradiction between people, it reflects the inherent tension between personal desires and social systems.

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## II. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND ENVIRONMENT

Deserted island literature refers to literary works that explore the social values of reason and order by being set a deserted and remote island far from human civilization and society. In the 18th century, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) was one of the first: an enlightenment narrative — a positive, optimistic, and courageous. Even when he encountered many difficulties on the desert island, the protagonist also showed an invincible spirit and the life values he showed to worship and pray to God. When Crusoe is left alone on a desert island due to a shipwreck, he not only has no fear, but also overcomes all difficulties on the desert island with a reasoned and constructive attitude. As soon as he arrives at the desert island, he moves the daily necessities and other materials on the boat to the desert island, building a solid material foundation for his civilized life. By using tools salvaged from the ship, and some which he makes himself, he hunts, grows barley and rice, dries grapes to make raisins, learns to make pottery and raises goats.[4] When a prisoner is escaping from native cannibals, Crusoe helped him and named him Friday. More importantly, Friday was taught to speak English and converted to Christianity by Crusoe. The two of them lived like paradise on a desert island. Robinson will use this civilized model to repay the gift of God.[5] This pattern reflects the values of the era in which Defoe lived. It was a portrayal of the real life of society at that time, and also a reflection of the writer's world outlook and outlook on life. In Defoe's novels, both the characterization of Robinson and the plot description show a rational society. Robinson Crusoe represents the age of the Enlightenment. People believe that human beings can build the world and wealth with their own inherent wisdom, reason and creativity.

Two centuries later, Golding continues Defoe's writing on the subject of desert island literature. But his "Lord of the Flies" does not inherit the spirit of the protagonist of Defoe's text. Natural science developed rapidly in the 20th century. The advancement of science and technology has brought about material prosperity, but it has aggravated the sense of human spiritual crisis. People are confused when faced with issues such as faith and value. At this time, Golding boldly innovates on the theme of desert island literature, developed in reverse, and rewrites the traditional "desert island paradise" as "barbaric desert island". In the novel, he portrays a group of boys living on desert islands due to war. When they first arrive at the desert island, they temporarily surrender to Ralph's unified leadership and works hard to build an orderly life. However, this short-lived unity is soon replaced by barbarism, selfishness, and killing after the appearance of "The Beast". The children quickly tore apart under Jack's encouragement. They extinguish the signal of rescue fireworks and kill

each other, and finally the desert island becomes a sea of fire.

But "Lord of the Flies" (1954) is not only a critique of Robinson Crusoe (1719). It is modeled directly on a boys' story that promoted the values of colonialism to its readers. *The Coral Island* (1857) tells the adventures of three boys marooned on a South Pacific desert island. They are the only survivors of a shipwreck. This text uses the typical island environment to shape three brave, smart and charismatic teenagers.[6] They witness two groups of Polynesians landing and fighting on the beach. The winner group want to kill and eat one of fifteen prisoners. However, when they threaten to kill one of the three women and two children who are captured, the three protagonists follow the sense of justice born in their hearts and rescue the prisoners with their ingenuity. Faced with pirates, they bravely challenged. The author R. M. Ballantyne endowed them with the fearless character, making them ideal youngsters with excellent characters.

"Lord of the Flies" (1954) inherits the narrative mode in the *Coral Island* (1857). The boys in both novels are trapped on a desert island by accident. After landing on the island, the boys in the *Coral Island* immediately inspect the island. They find abundant foods such as fruits, fish and wild boar. Three boys establish an idyllic life on the island. They build a shelter and built a small boat with their only property. Regarding the plot of survival on the island, the boys of "Lord of the Flies" are originally developed according to the footprints of the predecessors in the *Coral Island*, growing fruits for hunger, making fires, building huts, hunting wild boars. And at the end of both novels, the boys are rescued by passing boats. But the characters of "Lord of the Flies" and the *Coral Island* are totally different. The three boys in Ballantine's *Coral Island* are optimistic, courageous, resourceful, and friendly. They are a symbol of good character in British society in the 19th century. Among them, 18-year-old Jack is the leader of the three. He is calm, smart, common sense and far-sighted, and worth relying on. In the face of the ship about to sink, Jack does not panic. Instead, he calmly comes up with a solution. He is a leader with vision and vision. Ralph is the narrator of the story. Although he is a little silent, he is firm and cooperative. Peterkin is an outgoing boy who often makes jokes. With multiple skills, He is good at killing pigs. The three people help each other on the desert island, united and cooperated to overcome all difficulties. The novel "Lord of the Flies" borrows the name of the protagonist from *Coral Island* (1857) and rewrite it. Jack in "Lord of the Flies" is a determined but extreme self. He is eager to control everything, constantly reveals brutality, violence and evil in his human nature, and finally gives up social morals and becomes a murderous executioner. Ralph, at the beginning, very enjoys the feeling of being elected as a leader, trying to lead the children for

help, but his cowardice and the evil hides deep in his heart made him defeated, and finally becomes the target of Jack's pursuit. Piggy is rewritten from the homonym of Peterkin Gay in the Coral Island. He is rational and knowledgeable.

In terms of the environmental description of the text, the island in the Defoe text is a beautiful place. Robinson found many fruit foods here, and found some animals such as goats to make them domesticated. Ballantine describes a lot about the natural scenery of Coral Islands. The island is surrounded by coral reefs, the sea water in the coral reefs is calm like pool water, and the bay grows strange corals and water plants. The description of this beautiful scene originated from the beautiful imagination of people's overseas world at that time, which reflected people's enthusiasm for migration, adventure, colonization, and fascination of nature.[7] But in Golding's novel, the natural scenery of desert islands is full of anxiety. When they arrive on this Coral Island, they marveled at the paradise-like beauty of the island. In the eyes of Ralph, who had just arrived, tall palm trees grew on the coast, and the sea was blue in the distance. But in fact, the atmosphere of fear has long been buried in the story. In the first chapter of the novel (*The Sound of the Shell*), it is not difficult to find that dark images are hidden everywhere. When Ralph started to climb the atoll rock, the weather was very sultry, brightly colored bird monsters called to rise in the sky, the ground on the coast was scattered with rotten vegetation, and in the distance was a dark forest. The lake water where Ralph swimming is warmer than blood. The horrible images of sultry, strange birds, rotten trees, black forest, blood and water are hidden in the description of the beauty of the desert island, which paved the way for the fear and killing among them. Afterwards, the desert island gradually showed its ugly face, the sea was keeping roaring. The trunk was skewed gray, the wind roared, the forest was always gloomy, the desert island was always hot and unbearable in the daytime. All of those in the island create a fearful and panicked atmosphere. When Ralph saw the "monster" at the top of the mountain, the wind gusted in the forest, and the night was chaotic. The boys' fear of monsters is like an explosion in the air at any time. When the children danced savagely under the leadership of Jack, the desert island had been transformed into a terrible space like hell. The sky was dark, and the thunder with sulfur smelled like a giant whip hitting the ground, lightning and thunder, and heavy rain. Golding writes about the violent side of nature, and the ghastly natural scene arouses the inner fear of the children in the novel, which exposes the boys' mistrust of the environment and expresses the disharmonious relationship between people and the environment. it also reveals that there are problems and contradictions in the desert island society where the boys live.

### **III. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP IN THE "LORD OF THE FLIES"**

Themes of Golding's novel "Lord of the Flies", include the tension between groupthink and individuality, between rational and emotional reactions, and between morality and immorality. This novel makes an appalling story: in World War III, a group of boys aged 6 to 12 who fly to Australia to escape the war, but unfortunately is shot down by the enemy and arrives on a coral reef island. When they first arrived on the island, in order to survive, the children worked together, pitched tents together, and cared for the fire that served as a distress signal. Soon, however, contradictions and fears breed among them. Jack extinguished the fire because he took his twin brothers, Sam and Eric, on a hunt when a boat passed by and they lost a chance to be rescued. [8] Thus, the conflict between Ralf, the island's leaders, and Jack broke out completely and formed them into two opposing camps. Consequently, the struggle continued, and all the rules, institutions, hopes that had been established on the island collapsed.

As Golding himself explained the theme of "Lord of the Flies" as an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature. The moral is that the shape of a society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system however apparently logical or respectable. According to Golding, what he wants to emphasize is how to find the root of social defects from the defects of human nature. The moral is that the social form depends on the nature of the individual in it. Golding's interpretation shows that the effectiveness of the establishment of a social system will be reflected through the relationship between the person and the social system. So in the "Lord of the Flies", what is the relationship between man and system? In this article, I try to transfer the relationship between people and social systems in the text to the relationship between people and the environment and the relationship between people. Its purpose is to study the civilizations and institutions established by the boys on the island, why all of them inevitably face the fate of collapse.

In this novel, as the main representative of the brutality, violence, and with a strong instinct for power, Jack is uncompromising, conceited. In short, the opposite of Ralph. Jack is the character who has experienced the most change. Jack started the novel with a somewhat arrogant chorus boy, and he cried when he was not selected as the leader of the island. At the beginning of the novel, Golding emphasized Jack's dictatorship before the meeting. As head of the choir, Jack marched their team to the meeting in an organized way. The Author described Jack's description as "Inside the floating cloak he was tall, thin, and bony; and his hair was red beneath the black cap. His face was

crumpled and freckled, and ugly without silliness. Out of this face stared two light blue eyes, frustrated now, and turning, or ready to turn, to anger.” Jack gradually became a vicious killer who did not respect human life. After a series of stages, such as leading the choir, leading the hunting tribe, wearing a mask, killing Simon, separating from the team and deliberately killing the piglet, Jack fell from a normal arrogant boy to a brutal beast.

Jack’s changes in this text can be summarized as: a change from an arrogant personality to a violent personality (personality defect), which will be analyzed in detail below. As Gary Watt said in *The Law of Dress* in “*Lord of the Flies*” “The form of the dress may change from clothes to painted masks, but the fundamental fact of the dress remains... the form of the rules changes, but the essential fact of government by rules remains.” The commonality between the two lies in the invariable internal principles. It is argued that dress and law are constant in the novel and that Golding is warning us, through the parallel performance of law and dress, that we should suspect that external indicators of civilization are hollow; that we should be cynical about all systems of norms established by society and look, instead, to be saved by individual insight and self-sacrifice. [9] Comparing Ralph, it can even be said that Jack’s personality is the key to the rise and fall of civilization across the island. In the text, with the great changes in Jack’s thoughts and behavior, the island’s institutional development has gone through different processes: from establishment to operation, to contradictions and crises, and finally completely destroyed.

As a metaphor of personality, the images of animals run through the novel, forming a delicate pattern of boys. These images describe the behavior or appearance of many boy comparing animals, especially as they become more brutal. Golding usually uses similes for comparison because he wants to compare specific aspects of the character to the animal in question. Jack and Ralph, as two opposites, are among the boys who Golding frequently compares to various animals. Especially, I am going to talk about the image and its analysis of Jack here, which aims to study the human defects of Jack and the conflict between Jack and the civilization built on the island.

“Only when Jack himself roused a gaudy bird from a primitive nest of sticks was the silence shattered and echoes set ringing by a harsh cry that seemed to come out of the abyss of ages. Jack himself shrank at this cry with a hiss of indrawn breath, and for a minute became less a hunter than a furtive thing, ape-like among the tangle of trees.” (Chapter Three Huts on the Beach) Here, Golding makes an image of ape for Jack, which shows that Jack has descended into a primitive state[10]. He even lost his basic ability to judge the

situation of the environment. But this is just the beginning for Jack to be as an image of ape. As the story progresses, this ape grows.

Golding emphasizes the behavior of the ape: Jack, ape-like explores the still forest. As a human being, Jack should have immediately determined that this was nothing more than an animal’s harsh cry and echoes in the forest. But at this time, the animalized Jack was panicking. This fear is not only the scare of the forest, but also shows that Jack at this time is not clear about his way out and what he wants to pursue. In Chapter Nine, Golding rises from describing animal behaviors of apes to calling for rights at the ideological level. This is a clear line of evolution of the ape-man evolution: revealing Jack’s exploration and understanding of his own personality. In contrast to Jack’s evolution of the ape-like image, the development of the “civilized system” on the island has stalled. [11]

Forest, harsh cry and echoes constitute an intention that symbolizes nature. As early as the ancient Greek drama was prosperous, one of the themes was human exploration and struggle against nature. Golding fictionalized the story of the “*Lord of the Flies*” in World War III, and we know that during World War II, the real society has already been deeply modernized. By turning Jack’s image into apes, Golding describes a regressive social civilization. At the same time, following the growth of Jack/ape, we see the most paradoxical space in modern society, modernism, and modernization.

More importantly, Jack is the representative of the individual, and Golding describes Jack as the ape analogy. This not only implies a certain degree of separation between man and the environment, but also an irony of the decline of civilization on the island. At the end of the novel, in order to capture and kill Ralph, Jack set fire to the entire island. In the bushes, Ralph ran, and he understood what was going on in the woods. Jack’s group was going to smoke him out and set the island on fire. The roar of the forest turned into a thunderous sound, and Jack saw a cluster of tall shrubs blocking the road in front of him, burned like a huge fan by the blazing flames. The built shelter was also burned into a fireball. The fire trembles the whole island. When the signal fire went out, we realized that the boys had lost their hope of being saved and accepted their barbaric life on the island. Eventually the signal fire was extinguished, replaced by a fire large enough to destroy forests, islands, and companions. The fire that Jack set not only showed his complete break with Ralph, but also his complete abandonment of the environment. The fire caught the attention of a cutter, and the naval officers come to rescue them. But ironically, this distress signal was not sent by the signal fire, and was replaced by a brutal fire, the fire that Jack want to pursued and killed Ralph.

In Chapter One, *The Sound of the Shell*, Jack expresses his wish to be the chief. But some boys there put forward to vote for chief. And the rest boys all agree and vote. Consequently, Ralph is voted to be the chief. Jack is assigned to take charge of the choir. When Ralph asks Jack what he wants the choir boys to be, he answers without hesitation "Hunter". At this time, Jack still abides by the election system that the boys on the island initially established. After Ralph was elected as the leader, he followed the rules and assumed the tasks assigned to him by the newly elected chief. At this time, there is a cooperative and harmonious relationship between Jack and Ralph.

Putting aside the relationship between Jack and Ralph, let me first talk about how Jack's emotions have undergone dramatic changes in the process of participating in the election chief. While trying to accept the fact that Ralph was chosen as chief, he tried to cover up his inner anger. Golding skillfully uses biological reactions "freckles", "a blush of mortification", "started up, then changed his mind and sat down" to reveal Jack's suppressed personal desire at this time. And this repressive biological response also predicted the animalism that Jack later showed when he was not restricting his desires.

Jack at that time was giving up his initial thoughts and instincts to become chief. He obeyed Ralph's leadership and organization. With their joint efforts, an orderly system was being established. As Marcuse pointed out that "The vicissitudes of the instincts are the vicissitudes of the mental apparatus in civilization. The animal drives become human instincts under the influence of external reality. The instincts must therefore be deflected from their goal, inhibited in their aim. Civilization begins when the primary objective, namely, integral satisfaction of needs is effectively renounced." [12] The initial results of the establishment of the system are often reflected through the interpersonal relationship under the system. At this time, Jack and Ralph each do their responsibilities, and they are in a cooperative interpersonal relationship. As Golding writes "The suffusion drained away from Jack's face ... Jack and Ralph smiled at each other with shy liking." The effectiveness of this transfer is that Ralph, who owns conch, represents the civilized system on the island. [13] The relationship between people and social systems is transferred to the relationship between people. In this article, the relationship between Jack and the system on the island is evaluated by evaluating the relationship between Jack and Ralph. The effectiveness of this transfer is that Ralph, which owns the conch, himself represents the civilized system on the island.

The conch is encoded as the symbols law and order, democracy and civilization. But the dominance of these things like the order or democracy is ultimately for humans. Ralph as the leader on the island blows the

conch and gives the order. He insists that the boys must have and follow rules. [14]

In this scene in Chapter 3 of "Lord of the Flies", Ralph and Jack started arguing. Their conflict gradually became tense. The agreement between them slowly became invalid from here. Jack began to be reluctant to obey Ralph's instructions, and he neglected the work of the caretaker who was initially assigned. Ralph and Simon were busy on the shelters all day and night, and Ralph began to complain that other people were not going to work. And Jack insisted that he was also busy. At this point, Ralph expressed his dissatisfaction with the hunters in the Jack team, he said "the rest of your hunters came back hours ago. They've been swimming", Jack immediately refuted "I let them go...", and Jack emphasized Keep working: "I went on. I thought, by myself". On the surface, the two of them tried to communicate politely, but in fact Jack was restraining his anger. In this Chapter, Golding described Jack's emotions in several places, suggesting that he will be completely out of control in the near future. Any frustration, Jack's first reaction is always angry. For example, when hunting in the forest, he encountered difficulties in determining the location of his prey. They were bright blue, eyes that in his frustration seemed bolting and nearly mad. He passed his tongue across dry lips and scanned the uncommunicative forest. Furthermore, when he was unhappy with the conversation with Ralph, Jack's angry emotions besieged him again". He tried to convey the compulsion to track down and kill that was swallowing him up... The madness came into his eyes again."

#### IV. CONCLUSION

As Josef Nguyen said "in R. M. Ballantyne's "The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean (1858)", three boys mature into young men as they learn to cooperate to survive on an island. However, in a direct attack on the heroic Robinsonade, generally, and Ballantyne's version, in particular, William Golding's "Lord of the Flies" (1954) depicts a group of British schoolboys marooned on an island. Unable to cooperate to maintain both social order and a signal fire, the boys slowly turn against one another, revealing innate tensions between individual desire and social accountability that result in two gruesome deaths at their own hands". [15]

Transfer the abstract relationship between people and social systems to the relationship between people and the environment, and the relationship between people, so that the relationship between people and social systems becomes concrete and accessible. This is also the reason why the text carefully reads the relationship between people and the environment and the relationship between people in "the Lord of Flies".

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