

Character of Ralph as Seen in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*

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Abstract. *The purpose of the study is to find out the character of Ralph in William Golding's Lord of the Flies. This is qualitative research since the data collected is in the form of words rather than numbers. Data are taken from a primary source, which is the novel itself, and secondary sources, which are other books and relevant references, to support the analysis. In analyzing the data, the writer applies an objective approach. The results show that Ralph, as the major character in the Lord of the Flies novel, shows how a good leader should be. He displayed specific characteristics that define a good leader. By possessing the ability to show initiative, responsibility, courage, and determination on the island, he becomes the remarkable leader he is. The character of Ralph also showed his morality. He does not forget that he is a human being. He kept fighting so he could survive with his friends. He knows that he has to be responsible for his friend and never turn his back on him. His character in this novel reminds us that we should have a good sense of responsibility for ourselves, especially for others.*

Keywords: *Character, wise, novel*

Abstrak. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui karakter Ralph dalam Lord of the Flies karya William Golding. Ini adalah penelitian kualitatif karena data yang dikumpulkan dalam bentuk kata-kata bukan angka. Data diambil dari sumber primer, yaitu novel itu sendiri, dan sumber sekunder, yaitu buku-buku lain dan referensi yang relevan, untuk mendukung analisis. Dalam menganalisis data, penulis menggunakan pendekatan objektif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Ralph sebagai tokoh utama dalam novel Lord of the Flies menunjukkan bagaimana seharusnya seorang pemimpin yang baik. Dia menunjukkan karakteristik khusus yang menentukan pemimpin yang baik. Dengan memiliki kemampuan untuk menunjukkan inisiatif, tanggung jawab, keberanian, dan tekad di pulau itu, dia menjadi pemimpin yang luar biasa. Karakter Ralph juga menunjukkan moralitasnya. Dia tidak lupa bahwa dia adalah manusia. Ia terus berjuang agar bisa bertahan hidup bersama teman-temannya. Dia tahu bahwa dia harus bertanggung jawab atas temannya dan tidak pernah memungguni dia. Karakternya dalam novel ini mengingatkan kita bahwa kita harus memiliki rasa tanggung jawab yang baik terhadap diri sendiri, terutama terhadap orang lain.

Kata kunci: Karakter, bijaksana, novel

INTRODUCTION

A novel, as a literary work, contains some elements of fiction. The elements are generally divided into two major categories, which are the intrinsic and extrinsic elements. These elements will be found by a reader in a literary work such as a novel. The intrinsic elements, among others, consist of plot, character, theme, background, point of view, and figurative language. In this research, the writer only focused on analyzing Ralph's character from *The Lord of the Flies*. Ralph's commitment to civilization and morality is strong, and his main wish is to be rescued and returned to the society of adults. In a sense, this strength gives Ralph a moral victory at the end of the novel, when he casts the Lord of the Flies to the ground and takes up the stake, as implied by his decision to defend himself against Jack's hunters.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature

According to Wellek and Warren (1956: 3), the literature mirrors and expresses a life that is even more ambiguous. It means that literature is a product of societal events. In literature, the author presents a work to deliver his or her ideas to the reader. Here, we can understand that every work has its own characteristics and the authors' objectives. It is obvious that the author's ideas in a work can be very influential on the readers' mindset. Furthermore, definitions of literature cannot be limited to one person's viewpoint. The researcher will bring up some definitions from some experts in literature in this discussion.

In its broadest sense, literature is defined as compositions that tell stories, dramatize situations, express emotions, analyze ideas, and advocate for those ideas. Poetry, prose, and plays and dramas are the three types of literary works.

Based on those definitions, the writer conveys the idea that literature is more than just writing. It has a soul. The soul of literature is the author's ideas. The author's ideas can shape the minds of the readers. The author can use literature as a form of entertainment, a symbol of criticism, and a means of cultivating value.

Novel

A novel is a type of fiction that contains stories about the experience of human life and the people around him, typically through a connected sequence of events involving a group of people in a specific setting. According to Funk and Wagnall (1966:886), a "**novel**" is a fiction narrative of considered length, representing characters, and even as it is in real life, a plot or scheme of sections of greater or less complexity.

"A novel is a story in the form of prose in large measure," writes Jacob Sumarjo (1991: 29). "Wide of measure here can mean a complex story with immeasurable story atmosphere and immeasurable story setting."

If seen from the perspective of the creating factor, a novel can be interpreted as a master piece with intellect and image joining to depict life in the form of imagination and story, controlled and instructed by intellect. Imagination plays an important role in the creation of a novel. If that story can be accepted logically, this matter fully depends on the role of the intellect element. As a result, in order to create a novel with an interesting story at the same time, the story must be realistic, which necessitates the existence of a solid compound between intellect and imagination.

The Elements of the Novel

The elements of a novel-builder then combine to form a totality; in addition to the formal elements of language, there are numerous other types. The two divisions of the intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic elements (intrinsic) are the elements that build the literary work itself. Elements are what distinguishes a literary work as a martial arts work. Intrinsic elements of a novel directly participate in and build the story. Extrinsic elements are those that exist outside of martial arts works but have an indirect impact on the structure or system of the organism's martial arts. Extrinsic elements in a novel must still be regarded as significant.

Plot

According to Stanton (1965: 14), a plot is a story that contains a sequence of events, but each incident is only connected in cause and effect, that is, an event that caused or led to the occurrence of other events.

-Major Conflict. Free from the rules that adult society formerly imposed on them, the boys marooned on the island struggle with the conflicting human instincts that exist within each of them—the instinct to work toward civilization and order and the instinct to descend into savagery, violence, and chaos.

-Rising Action. The boys assemble on the beach. In the election for leader, Ralph defeats Jack, who is furious when he loses. As the boys explore the island, tension grows between Jack, who is interested only in hunting, and Ralph, who believes most of the boys' efforts should go *toward* building shelters and maintaining a signal fire. When rumors surface that there is some sort of beast living on the island, the boys grow fearful, and the group begins to divide into two camps, supporting Ralph and Jack, respectively. Ultimately, Jack forms a new tribe all together, fully immersing himself in the savagery of the hunt.

-Climax. Simon encounters the *Lord of the Flies* in the forest glade and realizes that the beast is not a physical entity but rather something that exists within each boy on the island. When Simon tries to approach the other boys and convey this message to them, they fall on him and kill him savagely.

-Falling Action. Virtually all the boys on the island abandon Ralph and Piggy and descend further into savagery and chaos. When the other boys kill Piggy and destroy the conch shell, Ralph flees from Jack's tribe and encounters the naval officer on the beach.

Characters

"Character is people who appear in a narrative prose or novel, and it is interpreted by the readers as a person who has moral quality and certain tendencies such as being expressed in what they say and do," says Abram (1981:76). Characters are the individuals who appear in a novel. We evaluate them based on the fundamentals of what the author tells us about them, as well as the fundamentals of what they do and say. Another point to remember is that the characters are part of a broader pattern. They are members of a society, and the author's distinctive view of how people relate to society will be reflected in the presentation of every character.

Ralph is the novel's protagonist, a twelve-year-old English boy who is elected leader of the group of boys marooned on the island. Ralph attempts to coordinate the boys' efforts to build a miniature civilization on the island until they can be rescued. Ralph represents human beings' civilizing instinct, as opposed to the savage instinct that Jack embodies.

Jack, the novel's antagonist, is one of the older boys stranded on the island. Jack becomes the leader of the hunters but longs for total power and becomes increasingly wild, barbaric, and cruel as the novel progresses. Jack, adept at manipulating the other boys, represents the instinct of savagery within human beings, as opposed to the civilizing instinct Ralph represents.

Simon is a shy, sensitive boy in the group. Simon, in some ways the only naturally "good" character on the island, behaves kindly toward the younger boys and is willing to work for the good of their community. Moreover, because his motivation is rooted in his deep sense of connectedness to nature, Simon is the only character whose sense of morality does not seem to have been imposed by society. Simon represents a kind of natural goodness as opposed to the unbridled evil of Jack and the imposed morality of civilization represented by Ralph and Piggy.

Piggy is Ralph's "lieutenant." A whiny, intellectual boy, Piggy's inventiveness frequently leads to innovation, such as the makeshift sundial that the boys use to tell time. Pig represents the scientific, rational side of civilization.

Roger was Jack's "lieutenant." a sadistic, cruel older boy who brutalizes the little huntsman and eventually murders Piggy by rolling a boulder onto him.

Sam and Eric are a pair of twins closely allied with Ralph. Sam and Eric are always together, and the other boys often treat them as a single entity, calling them "Sam and Eric." The easily excitable Sam and Eric are part of the group known as the "begun." At the end of the novel, they fall victim to Jack's manipulation and coercion.

Theme

Theme is a central idea in the work—whether fiction, poetry, or drama. The human condition is created by common work. It deals with four general areas of human experience: the nature of humanity, the maturity of society, the nature of humankind's relationship to the world, and the nature of our ethical responsibilities (Griffith, 49).

Setting

A setting is the environment or surroundings in which an event or story occurs. It may provide particular information about placement and timing, such as New York, America, in the year 1820. The setting could be simply descriptive, like a lonely cottage

on a mountain. Social conditions, historical time, geographical locations, weather, immediate surroundings, and timing are all different aspects of setting. It has three major components: social environment, place, and time.

In William Golding's novel, *Lord of the Flies*, weather plays a very important role, as it represents the mood, behavior, and attitudes of young boys throughout the storyline. During the day, the beach looks bright, while the ocean is calm and there is no conflict. The author describes the dense areas of the jungle as scary and dark. One night when Simon is killed, there is a violent storm, and the ocean looks very rough in that black night. Thus, its setting includes weather conditions and the ocean, which represent dark forces of nature present in human nature.

Personal Opinion

The narrator speaks in the third person, primarily focusing on Ralph's point of view but following Jack and Simon in certain episodes. The narrator is omniscient and gives us access to the characters' inner thoughts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research is qualitative in nature. According to Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009:7-8), qualitative research is research that produces narrative or textual descriptions of the phenomenon under study, so the researcher provides a richer and more in-depth understanding of the population.

For qualitative research, which is a textual description, this research used qualitative textual analysis because the data that were taken were texts or words. According to Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009:210), qualitative textual analysis involves the identification and interpretation of a set of verbal or non-verbal signs.

Data Collection

The writer used primary and secondary sources in order to collect the data or information needed. The primary source is the novel *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, and secondary sources are books, the internet, and other references that have something to do with the story to support the writer in completing the data.

The writer will be able to describe theories on literature, the author's life and background, as well as some other material that provides ideas and opinions relevant to the study, and finally answer the research question as expected, using those sources.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the writer will use an objective approach. The objective approach only focused on the literary work itself without looking at the external parts of it. This statement does not mean that the writer does not need to have other material, but it does mean that the central point of this research is in the novel itself.

ANALYSIS

The main character in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is Ralph. Ralph is among the oldest of the boys, at twelve and a half months, and has an air of strength about him. He acts as the initial leader figure and organizes the boys into some semblance of society. He wants the best for the tribe but is frequently perplexed because, unlike Jack or Roger, he derives his morality from society. He is often considered part of a triad with Piggy and Simon.

Ralph is the athletic, charismatic protagonist of *Lord of the Flies*. Elected the leader of the boys at the beginning of the novel, Ralph is the primary representative of order, civilization, democracy, and productive leadership in the novel. While most of the other boys are initially concerned with playing, having fun, and avoiding work, Ralph sets about building huts and thinking of ways to maximize the chances of all the boys. Ralph remains determined not to let this savagery overwhelm him, and only briefly does he consider joining Jack's tribe in order to save himself. When Ralph hunts a boar for the first time, however, he experiences the exhilaration and thrill of bloodlust and violence. When he attends Jack's feast, he is swept away by the frenzy, dances on the edge of the group, and participates in the killing of Simon. This firsthand knowledge of the evil that exists within him, as it does within all human beings, is tragic for Ralph, and it plunges him into listless despair for a time. But this knowledge also enables him to cast down the *Lord of the Flies* at the end of the novel.

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Showing good leadership

A leader is someone who directs or guides a group. However, good leadership is the ability to set priorities and accomplish tasks while keeping the group's feelings in mind. In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, the character of Ralph is a good leader. Ralph has the best conduct of a real chief, as he was initially voted for chief. He displayed specific characteristics that define a good leader. Without Ralph's leadership skills, the boys may not have been able to survive during their time on the island.

In *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph demonstrates many traits that would be considered good leadership. Ralph conveys his leadership by holding an assembly to discuss the necessary tasks to complete for survival and rescue. Ralph demonstrated his leadership skills by holding an assembly to address the fact that necessary tasks were not being completed. Ralph's original society is split because of a lack of interest among some of the individuals. "You hunters! You can laugh! But I tell you that smoke is more important than the pig, however often you kill one. Do all of you see? He spread his arms wide and turned to face the whole triangle. "We've got to make smoke up there, or die." (Golding, 86-87).

The quotation above displays how Ralph is attempting to maintain order and civilized behavior. By being the first to tell them what to do and showing initiative, and by setting goals for the boys to follow, he prepares practical plans that will help the boys get rescued. He is trying to tell them what to do to help save them so they will not die. Ralph also shows an immense amount of initiative when most of the other boys are concerned with playing, having fun, and avoiding work. Ralph decides to build huts as a

method of survival. For this reason, Ralph's authority and power over the other boys are secure at the start of the novel. This describes Ralph's idea and how he stuck to it for his own safety and the safety of everyone else on the island.

"We need an assembly." not for fun. Not for laughing and falling off the log"—the group of little ones on the twister giggled and looked at each other—"not for making jokes or for"—he lifted the conch in an effort to find the compelling word—"cleverness." not for these things. but to put things straight."

He paused for a moment.

"I've been alone. I went by myself, wondering what was going on. I know what we need. an assembly to put things straight. "And first of all, I'm speaking." (Golding, 60)

The quotation above shows that Ralph's opening statements are clear, direct, and effectively convey his purpose for holding the assembly. Unfortunately, Jack interrupts the assembly, and the hunters leave the meeting without being excused. Ralph reveals his authority and power by telling the group. Ralph tries his best to create a society based on survival. Ralph uses a repetition of hope towards being saved, while Jack's technique, with no thought, clearly flounders, creating savages out of the once civilized boys. "I'll give the conch to the next person to speak. "He can hold it when he's speaking" (Golding, 36)

The quotation above demonstrates how Ralph enforces his role as a leader by enforcing rules and providing the boys with the stability of an authority figure, primarily himself. By doing this, he wins the boys' respect and confidence in his abilities. Ralph uses his authority to try to improve the boys' society. By building shelters, he demonstrates his knowledge of the boys' needs. "Hasn't anyone got any sense?" We've got to relight that fire. You never thought of that, Jack, did you? Or don't any of you want to be rescued?" (Golding, 102)

The quotation above shows that Ralph consistently reminds the boys of the importance of maintaining a signal fire at all times. However, as the novel progresses, the boys choose to join Jack's tribe and dismiss the importance of a signal. Ralph expresses himself further when he states what should be done on the island in order to be rescued. "There's another thing. We can help them find us. If a ship comes near the island, they may not notice. So we must make smoke on top of the mountain. "We must make a fire." (Golding, 38)

The quotation above shows that, once Ralph's authority has been defined and accepted, he continues to lead the boys until Jack eventually challenges him. This results in Jack forming a breakaway group consisting of the choirboys and others. The only reason Jack's leadership was accepted was because he had offered the boys a more exciting alternative—hunting—and because they feared him. And so Ralph's dominance was broken. *"That's what this shell's called. I'll give the conch to the next person to speak. He can hold it when he's speaking. But, "Look," "and he won't be interrupted, except by me."* (Golding, 25)

Ralph's leadership finds further expression when he states what should be done on the island to be rescued. A great example of Ralph taking on tough situations as a leader is when the boys go in search of the beast, venturing into parts of the island they hadn't been to before. Ralph knows intrinsically that as a leader he must physically take the lead in the hunting party, despite his feelings of great trepidation. *"The storm broke." Sit down! Shut up! Take the conch! So You! Shut up! Ralph Shouted.* (Golding, 96)

The quotation above shows that it demonstrates Ralph's ability to take control in tough situations, act responsibly, and create a society filled with laws to follow. All the boys' problems can be easily resolved by his ability to keep them calm and protected.

Ralph, as a leader, possesses the quality of responsibility, which is a true factor in a leader's success. He also takes the responsibility to set appropriate laws on the island for all of them to obey, such as a designated toilet area, making sure the signal fire never goes out, building shelter, and gathering an abundance of food as well as water.

Having Charismatic

Ralph has charismatic and leadership qualities, but he bemoans that he cannot think as well as Piggy. Nevertheless, he compensates for his thinking ability by asserting himself when Jack and the hunters act on their own. *"I'm a chief," said Ralph, "because you chose me."* And we were going to keep the fire going. You're now chasing food. (Golding, 116)

Ralph is a charismatic and natural leader, as evidenced by the quotation above. He is empathetic, observant, and a problem solver. Ralph tries to assess problems intelligently and not emotionally, asking, for example, *"What was the sensible thing to do?"* His friendliness and logic make him a natural choice to assume a leadership role.

Initiative

It demonstrates Ralph's initiative. Ralph, as the leader on the island, shows much initiative. He wields considerable power and is usually the first to intervene in a situation that benefits the safety of everyone on the island. "Ralph, remember what we came for. The fire. My specs." Ralph nodded. He relaxed his fighting muscles, stood easily, and grounded the butt of his spear. (Golding, 140)

The quotation above shows that Ralph becomes significantly weakened and depends more and more on Piggy to help him remain focused. His fear and discouragement keep him from continuing to take initiative. Ralph always focuses on the goal, so they can be saved. "So we must make smoke on top of the mountain." We must make a fire. They tried with the light and smoke of the fire from the top of the hill, but it was too late. "Ralph, please! "Is there a signal?" Piggy cried out to Ralph. (Golding, 67)

The quotation above clearly shows Ralph taking initiative to run all the way to the top of the hill to signal the boat, whether it makes it in time or not. His one goal is to get rescued; therefore, to achieve that goal, he must show initiative.

Civilized Person

Ralph was a very civil person. He knew what was right and what was wrong. As the first leader, he set civil rules for living on the island. These were the basic rules for living on their own and getting along. He decided that the person talking must be holding the conch; this made everyone calm, so only one person could talk at a time, and there was no chaos. Unlike many other characters, Ralph was nice and helpful to the younger children and didn't beat them or act savagely towards them. This demonstrates his civilized character by proving he always tried to do the right thing. He also attempted to make sure everything was completed, like building the shelters and keeping a signal fire to increase the chance of getting rescued. These rules kept the boys civilized until their animal instincts overtook them and Ralph was powerless to stop them.

We've got to have special people looking after the fire. There could be a ship out there any day...and if we have a signal going, they'll come and take us off. And one more thing. We ought to have more rules. There is a meeting where the conch is. It's the same up here as it is down there. (Golding, 34)

The quotation above shows that Ralph tries to create an orderly civilization among the boys by prioritizing the signal fire and establishing rules about meetings and communication. Throughout the novel, Ralph insists on the need for an organized system of government, as symbolized by the conch. Ralph also prioritizes the need for maintaining the fire over the need for hunting, which leads to his eventual clash with Jack.

Showing Morality

In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, the character of Ralph also showed his morality. He does not forget that he is a human being. He kept fighting so he could survive with his friends. He knows that he has to be responsible for his friend and never turn his back on him. Ralph, as a great leader and a smart young boy, would be considered at a certain level on the moral development scale. He made and strictly followed rules for all the boys to participate in to help them survive and get rescued. He had respect for everyone; when respect was due and when it was not, Ralph showed morality throughout the novel. "He worms away, stiff like his own sweat, puts it on, not for decorum or comfort but out of custom, and discovers with a little fall of the heart that these were the conditions he took as normal now." (Golding, 97)

The quotation above shows that the deterioration of Ralph's and the other boys' clothing symbolizes a loss of self and morality. Ralph's struggle with morality and his effect on the other boys' morals align with the symbolic state of the conch and their clothing. "Piggy. That was Simon. That was murder. I wasn't scared. "I was; I'm not sure what I was."(Golding, 121)

The quotation above shows how Ralph is really sad about how his friends died. He was crying and feeling sorry for her. He felt sorry for how Simon died at the hands of his own friends. It shows how his morality is still there even though the situation on that island has already made Jake's group cruel and lacking in morality.

Symbolic Figure

The author, William Golding, wrote *Lord of the Flies* as an **allegory**, which uses a story to illustrate a deeper statement or moral. In this case, the novel is a cautionary tale, and we can take nothing at face value. This applies to Ralph as well. Remember the conch shell Ralph found on the beach? It's a **symbol**, or representation, of order and political

power. When Ralph establishes the rule that the boy holding the shell has the right to speak and that the others must listen, he is symbolically representing the role of democratic participation in a civilized society. "I'm chief. We've got to be certain. Can't you see the mountain? There is no visible signal. There may be a ship out there. Are you all off your rockers?" (Golding, 83)

However, just as power creates, it can also corrupt. Ralph soon learns that just assuming the role of "chief" does not automatically guarantee that people will follow your orders. The other boys want to let the signal fire go out, and Ralph becomes autocratic rather quickly.

Realistic

Ralph's character is very realistic in this book. He's always the one to bring reality to the island when it's greatly needed by the boys. For example, he was the only boy who believed that his father would find him and they would eventually be rescued. This is realistic because he knew that people would find out that the plane crashed and come looking for them. Another important factor is that he didn't believe in the beast.

Ralph was well aware that there was no such thing as a beast and that it did not exist. He realized that there had to be a sensible reason for the boys to believe that there was a beast living in the forest. "I was talking about smoke! Don't you want to be rescued? "All you can talk about is pig, pig, pig!" (Golding, 41)

The quotation above shows that Ralph angrily realizes that Jack and his hunters let the signal fire burn out while hunting a pig. As he believes the signal fire is their only legitimate means of rescue from the island, Ralph becomes furious with Jack's short-sighted obsession with hunting and killing a pig rather than focusing on getting rescued.

Ralph also knew certain things must be done for them to survive on the island without adults, like building shelters, keeping it clean, and having a set leadership and government. The other boys didn't think logically about what needed to get done every day in order for everyone to live a somewhat reasonable life.

Wise

He was always wise to try to keep order because he knew that if it was lost, there would be no way to regain it, and he insisted on everyone following the rules and doing their fair share. Also, one order was almost lost. Ralph knew not to call the boys back to the meeting when they went with Jack, because he knew if he blew the conch and it failed, the power of it would be lost forever to the boys on the island. In the beginning of the book, Ralph also knew that building huts should have been the priority over hunting. "If it rains like when we dropped in, we'll need shelters all right." And then another thing happened. We need shelters because of the (Golding, 52)

The quotation above shows that he is wise because he knows what should be the group's priorities. Throughout the book, Ralph is also hardworking. He always knew what had to be done and was willing to put in the work to do it. He knew that it was more necessary to build the huts than to hunt, and he worked hard, with only Simon's help, to complete the shelters. "They talk and scream." The littluns. even a little of the other."(Golding, 56)

The quotation above shows that Ralph is referring to why the boys need shelter. They are afraid, and Ralph understands that by building the shelters, the boys will feel more secure. This illustrates his superior knowledge of people, which makes him a better leader than Jack. Ralph's treatment of the boys also demonstrates his knowledge of human nature. While Jack considers the boys' inferior to himself, Ralph treats them as equals.

CONCLUSION

Ralph, the main character of the *Lord of the Flies* novel, shows how a good leader should be. He displayed specific characteristics that define a good leader. By possessing the ability to show initiative, responsibility, courage, and determination on the island, he becomes the remarkable leader he is. The character of Ralph also showed his morality. He does not forget that he is a human being. He kept fighting so he could survive with his friends. He knows that he has to be responsible for his friend and never turn his back on him. His character in this novel reminds us that we should have a good sense of responsibility for ourselves, especially for others.

SUGGESTION

The writer hopes this research will enrich readers' knowledge of science and be useful as a reading reference.

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