HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND FREEDOM IN LORD OF THE FLIES

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The issue of human rights, equality and freedom has begun when people started with the idea of having property. It goes back far to cavemen who were the first ones with the title owner of something; cave, farms, animals etc. But at that time they had no idea what being an owner means. Even at this moment; the era we are living in, all people are so crazy about owning something. It was okay until we went mad and thought that we could own other people and we created superiority, slavery, subalternity. As Indian Philosopher Gayatri Spivak says in her article “Can subaltern speak?” there is the difference between people; some declares themselves as masters and don’t let subalterns speak for their own sake. This goes against democracy because the idea of democracy stands for having equal rights and having the same quality of life standards. But there are some people who think they are more equal than others, like in the book Animal Farm by George Orwell who claims that some animals like pigs think they are superior to others so they must be more equal in the society, which is the exactly violation of democracy or as we call it showing favor. And these people believe they can run the democracy on their own and can ‘have’ the rest of the world. In literature there are so many examples about these natural rights of human beings but I’m going to tell you the best book about it in my opinion, Lord of The Flies by William Golding. Because this book shows what owning something means in society and what’s the effect of it to equality and human rights when we look at this idea through conch in the book.

First of all I’m going to talk about this conch which is found in the first couple of pages of the book by Piggy and Ralph who is the protagonist, to summon other boys. At first it seems a good thing to gather all the boys around and be united. Here is my point, that conch was the first thing they owned on the island and they sort of build a parliament with it. Everything is okay until here because this is our nature; humans can’t survive in wilderness without standing together. So we need democracy, we need our rights and we need (unfortunately) some classes to prevent everyone from falling apart. But it also represents the power because the conch functions like a microphone on the platform in the parliament which stands for power since the one who owns the conch has a right to speak. Of course it was for everyone. I mean, every

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single person has a right to take the conch and speak how they like. It is only because those boys in the island built up the exact system they used to see every day in their normal lives. Unfortunately they even took the corruption of the system when they let the power in. This situation here shows us how literature reflects the reality; boys have a plane crash, they find themselves in an isolated island then finds a conch, they builds a parliament, creates job opportunities for themselves such as hunting, cooking and ‘ruling’ which means they re-creates the reality of society; the world they have been living in. But as what it is in our world, one character who is called Jack in this book, wants to take the crown of the king or let’s say wants to take the conch for himself forever, so that we call it a dictatorship. Others don’t let him take it; they fight for it; and they finally get separated. I’m telling you this because from the beginning of the time when Ancient Greeks created democracy, there have been so much fights for it to make it happen; to give the public what they deserve. That’s why this significant topic became a main event in our lives, because this world is full of greedy people who are hungry for power. I want to give one more example for this parliament and creation of democracy from Midnight’s Children by Salman Rushdie. In his book Rushdie gathers all the events and serves them to us on a delicious dinner plate. For example in some parts of the book the main character Saleem who is also part of the Midnight’s Children Society, creates a telepathic conference with other kids and discusses about important issues, like the future of the kids. The relation of this situation with Lord of the Flies is, just because Saleem owns the power of creating a conference in his mind he becomes the conch itself. I mean he becomes the superior and the spokesperson of the Midnight’s Children. But like what happens in Lord of the Flies, here we also have another antagonist who is called Shiva. Towards the late middle of the book similarly to what Jack has done in Lord of The Flies, Shiva tries to take the control of the Midnight’s Children and eventually creates a chaos out of chaos, because there is also another war going on between Pakistan and India in the background for the sake of Pakistan’s freedom. My main point in this paragraph is, I believe that all of the problems about democracy, human rights and equality has started with the idea of ownership, because as I said before; once we begin to own something we want always more.

The second point about this topic is equality which is an even bigger issue than democracy. This issue is related with all of the events if we are dealing with humans. All around the world we have always dealt with the equality problem because of what I said at the beginning; we went mad and thought that we could own other people. In early ages people thought about this idea as a matter of their causes, which were basically war treasures. All
countries have always thought that they were superior and the rest of the world is either their ally or enemy. I mean we were only good or bad, it was that simple. But after sometime we evolved and started to create new classes like; rich and poor, literate and illiterate or even we couldn’t keep our pants tied and created such disrespectful titles, legitimate and illegitimate. This is where authors run the show and let us know how this is shown in literature. William Golding shows us some quite good examples about this in his book. In Lord of the Flies, these kids are just schoolchildren which means they only learn being equal in their classes because that’s what teachers tell them. But the society they live in, teaches them to treat ‘others’ as if they are in the lower class; similarly to how white parents taught their children how to act against black people during the time of slavery. Even today some people still do it. So here our children in the book come to the island with the knowledge of how to treat and mistreat others.

Actually there is one problem here which is that some of these kids are doing this like they are bullying other children in school, as in our time right now. This might be something they are learning from their parents or just some kind of a trauma which isolates them and limits their communication with others, so they are acting angrily instead of speaking properly. I don’t know which one is this in here but in the island, what Jack and his Boy Scout group is doing is just bullying others because they are using force and trying to dominate the rest of the children. This is where William Golding shows the violation of equality in his book. As I said at the beginning about pigs in the book Animal Farm, Jack and his group thinks they are more equal than others so they must rule the island. And also because they are stronger, they have the power which leads the division of the island society. With this power and ego of the group, they take this ruling business on the other part of the island and make a rival sort of country. So with this example we see two types of regime; democracy and tyranny. Ralph and his group are representing democracy because they have all the elements such as parliament, public, equal rights. But in Jack’s tyranny there is one supreme leader and his warriors like in North Korea.

The third and the last part of my article is about freedom which is still a dream for most of the world. We always think in our minds that we all are free and we can do whatever we want to do but this is wrong because we have boundaries and responsibilities against the society. I mean sometimes forget talking about someone we can’t even imagine them. And most importantly, we can never be free if we don’t leave things behind. What I mean by that is that we are stuck in some point and as human beings we can’t get rid of anything. This is what’s happening in the island also. According to William Golding, kids in the island are reflecting these ideas, life styles, actions of their parents which means they can’t think by themselves,
they need to build up a distraught copy of the life they used to live in order to be able to survive. Because their parents or the society didn’t teach them to imagine something or didn’t give them the idea of creation but they just gave the order; follow. This is the main problem about freedom because as long as we follow traditions blindly, we live our lives without asking anything or just do whatever the stronger ones tell us to do. And you know what will happen if we live like that, we will exactly live as the quotation of Orientalism by Edward Said shows, “They can’t represent themselves. They must be represented.” This is what all of us do actually because we created the classes as human beings and we labeled everyone like white, black, yellow, slave, crippled, normal and abnormal etc. And because of these labels we took the freedom of other people. For example in the book there is one point, where mean boys bully Piggy just because he is the only one who wears glasses and eventually one of the boys kills him by rolling a big rock onto him. Piggy is the other. First they take his freedom by forcing him to do something for them and then they kills him like it’s normal. I don’t think that children can be that cruel but I believe this cruelty comes from their parents or the society, because even if sometimes children can do wrong things they can’t really think the idea of killing. Adults are the ones who corrupt children and awake the monster inside of young generations. I know this, because William Golding also shows us kind of the Switzerland of the kids; Simon. He is the representative of the neutral side on the island. He is just a regular kid who doesn’t want to get involved in any of the fights. He just wants to be free and out of corruption. But here is the point, corrupted minds don’t allow him to live his life. There is a good side where the civilization grows and there is a bad side where everyone acts with primordial instincts. Both sides want him but he can’t fit into either group and it costs his life. This is what happens when you seek your freedom; it happened before and it’s happening still. So, either we stick to one view or the world devour us.

To sum up what I have been saying, in the book Lord of the Flies, William Golding serves us the real meanings of democracy, human rights, equality and freedom. Only establishing a parliament doesn’t shows the real democracy, we also chase the rights of all public; giving their birth rights to the people won’t be enough alone, we should also protect these rights; only saying to the people ‘we are all equal’ doesn’t mean that we are equal, we also act as if we are equal by not bullying others or not starting war or not treating others like they are not from this world; and lastly even in the 21st century real freedom shouldn’t be like this, we should break the boundaries to be totally free but we shouldn’t violate other’s freedom while doing this.
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