



## ‘Power and Militarism; A Machiavellian Study of Lord of The Flies’

Byash Jyoti Saikia,

M.A in English, University of Pune, Country-India, State-Assam,

Received 14 March, 2015; Accepted 26 March, 2015 © The author(s) 2015. Published with open access at [www.questjournals.org](http://www.questjournals.org)

**ABSTRACT:** *The study of the novel is from the political theory of Machiavelli with a view to unfold the power politics as reflected in the text. It will show the underlying devices of institution to get power and to maintain it. The text is re-reading of the Machiavellian principle in the modern context that reveals the relevant in modern power politics which becomes the subject of critical exposition here. Militarism is the only way to capture power which refuses the very base of democracy and right of individual. Ethic, religion and moral are discarded as far as to the grasping of the military power with the chief. The diplomatic strategy of Jack capturing power over the democracy and rationalism of Ralph and Piggy is his idea of Machiavellian notion of pragmatic concerning of power politics.*

**Keywords:-** Some of the key words are democracy, rationalism, Machiavellian, military, power, politics etc.

### I. INTRODUCTION

William Golding’s ‘Lord of The Flies’ is a post world war ii novel which reflects the contemporary politics of the world. It explores the nature of evil, the horror of the second world war and the crisis of the global situation. This becomes a kind of allegory of the power politics of the powerful nations which shows the Machiavellian notion of power and militarism to capture the authority whatever it may be the prince or democratic leader. The militarism becomes the main tenet of the powerful nation. It is a text which reads the 20<sup>th</sup> century governing rule of the powerful country where democracy and tyranny over the power struggle go parallel. The power struggle, the policy of dominancy, militarism, brutality and violence in the text is against the backdrop of the world war ii and political turmoil in the world. It shows the critique of the Machiavellian principle of power and militarism of contemporary politics.

### II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The paper is based on some important research questions to focus in the Machiavellian politics and military coup, which are enumerated below.

- 2.1. How far does the novel expose the Machiavellian notion in the characters of the novel?
- 2.2. Is there any relationship between power and militarism as reflected in the novel?
- 2.3. How far does the novel show that politics can affect the writing of the novel?
- 2.4. Is the novel a re-writing of the modern politics from the renaissance theory of Machiavellian notion of state and principality?

### III. HYPOTHESIS STATEMENT

The paper hypothesises that the politics of capturing power in the modern world is the militarism and autocratic where there is no value of religion and right of individual. The novel shows how the humanism is far from the power politics. It reflects the contemporary world of military coup which completely ruins the democracy. Thus, politics affects the writing of the novel which instead criticises and serves as defender of the victim.

### IV. RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To test the hypothesis, the study has to have the following aim and objectives.

- 4.1. To read the novel to show how it is influenced by the politics of power and power struggle?
  - 4.2. To study the novel from Machiavellian notion of power and strategy?
  - 4.3. To analysis the characters of the novel whether they were following the Machiavellian or the subversion of Machiavellian?
- So, the aim is to give the novel a Machiavellian study and to see how the novel is critical of Machiavellian.

## **V. SCOPE AND LIMITATION**

The text is a postmodernist which may be studied from various point of view, such as post-colonialism and historical materialism. But the present study is limited to the study of the text from of politics of Machiavellian theory of power and the strategy of powerful ruler.

## **VI. THEORETICAL CONTEXT**

Niccolo Machiavelli's 'The Prince' is the first discussion of the strategies of prince to capture the power and maintaining the law and order in a state from the practical point of view. It is unconventional as it goes beyond the role of ethics over the politics. His frank discussion of the successful political ruler goes deep into the nature of state, power, militarism and nature of principalities and even the colonialism.

The military technique of capture power and maintenance is here emphasised. The cruelty of extinguishing the family lines of the former prince when the usurpation is the matter is shown as legitimate. 'And anyone who acquires these lands and wishes to maintain them must bear two things in mind: first, that the family line of the old prince must be extinguished.' (The Prince 1984:9) In the chapter 'On New Principalities Acquired by One's Own Arms and Skill' the validation of violent means for the acquisition of power and militarism is re-emphasised. '...this act of transition from private citizen to prince presupposes either ingenuity or fortune, it appears that either the one or the other of these two things should, in part, mitigate many of the problems; nevertheless, he who relies upon fortune less maintains his position best.' (The Prince 1984: 20)

The use of force can be justifiable for the massing support from people or getting people's support. According to Machiavelli, 'what has been said, people are fickle by nature; and it is simple to convince them of something but difficult to hold them in that conviction; and, therefore, affairs should be managed in such a way that when they no longer believe, they can be made to believe by force.' (The Prince 1984: 22) In chapter 14, he talks about military role of state as 'a prince, therefore, must not have any other object nor any other thought, nor must he take anything as his profession but war, its institutions, and its discipline; because that is the only profession which befits one who commands; and it is of such importance that not only does it maintain those who were born princes, but many times it enables men of private station to rise to that position...' (The Prince 1984: 49)

Further, the political rival is another area of Machiavellianism. His suggestion for the protection of one's authority over the persons who may be his rivals is based on the notion of utilitarian. 'He who attains the principality with the aid of the nobility maintains it with more difficulty than he who becomes prince with the assistance of the common people, for he finds himself a prince amidst many who feel themselves to be his equals and because of this he can neither govern nor manager them as he wishes.' (The Prince 1984:34) The role of politics of common man is indicated here, which says that the manipulation of the mass support is the only weapon to uproot the noble who may be the potentiality to provide contrast against the ruler. '...the common people can certainly be satisfied their desire is more just than that of the nobles..' (The Prince 1984:34) In more clear term he adds 'They act in this manner out of fear and a natural lack of courage, in which case you should make use of them, especially those who are wise advisers.' (The Prince 1984:35) The acquisition of power is justifiable through use of military device. '...it can not be called ingenuity to kill one's fellow citizens, to betray friends, to be without faith, without mercy, without religion; by these means one can acquire power but not glory.' (The Prince 1984:31) Thus, power can be achieved through military device. '...a prince must not worry about the reproach of cruelty when it is a matter of keeping his subjects united and royal.' (The Prince 1984:55)

## **VII. MACHIAVELLIAN AND POWER STRUGGLE IN THE NOVEL**

After placing the boys in the marooned island, the novelist describes the entire structure of society, the form of government, the authority to organise the boys and rule over them. The conch became the symbol of authority. The blowing of the conch made the boys to come and organise the meeting for the selection of the chief. The main aim of their gathering together was 'to have a chief to decide things' (Golding:19) Ralph had the natural privilege over the other as he had the conch and blown for the first time. Piggy was also present when the conch was discovered. But, Piggy had not natural privilege to blow the conch for his asthma. So, he had infirmity to prevail over Ralph or compete with him for the authority. Ralph, Jack and Simon left him behind while they went in search of the island. He pleaded his latent right and power saying 'I was with him when he found the conch. I was with him before anyone else was.' (Golding:21) Even from

Ralph's point of view, 'Piggy could think. He could go step by step inside that fat head of his, only Piggy was no chief. But Piggy, for all his ludicrous body had brains.' (Golding:84) If questioning and asking acquaintance is a kind of authority, then Piggy tried to achieve his authority. But, the arrival of Jack Merridew deprived his right or privilege. 'Piggy asked no names. He was intimidated by this uniformed superiority and offhand authority in Merridew's voice. (Golding:17)

Jack, on the contrary, asserted his authority with his power and anger. His physique was depicted in a certain way that he wanted to grasp the power. '...inside the floating clock 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 face stared two light blue eyes, frustrated now, and turning, or ready to turn, to anger.' (Golding:16) He assumed his authority over the weak and infirmity of Piggy. At the very beginning, his rival with Ralph was shown where he tried to achieve the power position of the chief against Ralph. Thus, the struggle for power between him and Ralph dominated the novel and illustrates the principles of Machiavellian. He demanded in the first meeting to be the chief. 'I ought to be the chief,' said Jack with simple arrogance, 'because I'm chapter chorister and head boy. I can sing c. sharp' (Golding:19)

The democracy was the mere alternative to the autocratic claim of Jack. The tone of democracy became the appropriate form of government where every body's right would prevail. 'This toy of voting was almost as pleading as the conch. Jack started to protest but the clamour changed from the general wish for a chief to an election by acclaim of Ralph himself. None of the boys could have found good reason for this; what intelligence had been shown was traceable to Piggy while the most obvious leader was Jack. But there was a stillness about Ralph as he sat that marked him out; there was his size, and attractive appearance; and most obscurely yet most powerfully, there was the conch.' (Golding:19)

Politically, Ralph was elected by the majority of voters. His power as chief validated in the island, as all except the choir boys vested all their power and responsibility on him. He tried to make Jack friend and support for his position. His diplomatic way of suppressing the rival with provision of satisfaction was a peaceful partnership. He appointed Jack as the leader of the hunter group. Thus, it became the democracy for the boys.

The conch played significant role in establishing the authority, law and democracy. It gave opportunity to speak. '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.' (Golding:32) As Jack said, 'We'll have rules! ...Lots of rules! Then when anyone breaks 'em-' (Golding:35), there came the question of punishment. The small boy who 'held out his hands for the conch and the assembly shouted with laughter' (Golding:35) symbolised the triumph of democracy.

'Littluns' was the generic title for the small boys. It became a kind of collective force without any individual freedom and choice. They were unaware of any sort of responsibility. 'They obeyed the summons of the conch, partly because Ralph blew it, and he was big enough to be a link with the adult world of authority; and partly because they enjoyed the entertainment of the assemblies. But otherwise they seldom bothered with the 'biguns' and their passionately emotional and corporate life was their own.' (Golding:63)

Language became the instrument of power, which manifested control over the people, manipulating, legitimating and validating of one's control over the listener. In chapter 5, the meeting was a turning point in the rule of Ralph and Piggy, while it gave major impetus to the process of power capturing to Jack. The debate was a mimicry of parliamentary debate. The rhetoric of language and the manipulation of issues between Ralph, Piggy, and Jack showed who was the most talent politician and diplomatic one to amass support from majority of listeners. The platform of democracy turned to the advantage of politically cunning Jack.

The question of the chief was the major issue which prevailed as legitimate rule over the other. From the point of view of Ralph, the chief was to be wise, non-judgmental, and caring for the welfare of all boys. 'The trouble was, if you were a chief you had to think, you had to wise. And then the occasion slipped by so that you had to grab at a decision. This made you think; because thought was a valuable thing, that got result....' (Golding:84) Language and thought could validate the chief in democracy. 'One had to sit, attracting all eyes to the conch, and drop words like heavy round stone among the little group that crouched or squatted....Later perhaps, practised debaters\_ Jack, Maurice, Piggy\_ would use their whole art to twist the meeting.' (Golding:85)

The speech of Ralph in the assembly was interesting, which revealed his effort to capture the will of the boys. The speech was persuasive and constructive concerning the welfare of the boys. So, he drew the problems of sanitation, the necessary of shelters, lavatory, the importance of fire. He said, 'The fire is the most important thing on the island. How can we ever be rescued except by luck, if we don't keep a fire going? Is a fire too much for us to make?' (Golding:87) The 'self-conscious giggling' (Golding:88) reinforced Ralph's defending of his power as a chief. So, he had to say, 'Now I say this and make it a rule, because I'm chief. We won't have a fire anywhere but on the mountain. Ever.' (Golding:88) His losing of support was expressed in shouting, standing up and slowly questioning of boys, which led him to reemphasise his power as a chief, 'Now

I've said it. You voted me for chief. Now you do what I say' (Golding:88) He wanted to show his unquestioning authority and his over confidence as a chief that caused to lose his support. Here his voice became a kind of autocrat and he also became a Machiavellian in his power to overrule the will of the others.

Then Jack questioned over his grape of language to create power. 'But, you've talked and talked.' (Golding:88) His speech about the fear of the beast took the support and will of the boys what Ralph was losing. 'The whole assembly applauded him with relief' (Golding:90) when he made his confidence and definite solution of the fear of beast, 'Well then - I've been all over this island. By myself. If there were a beast, I'd have seen it. Be frightened because you've like that - but there is no beast in the forest.' (Golding:90) His physical strength over dominated in the assembly. He did not want to give the opportunity of speaking to Piggy. By force he tried to interfere encroaching other's right. He showed his physical strength over the feebleness of Piggy. He instigated the 'littluns' to make joke to Piggy's fatness and physical infirmity.

Piggy's speech reflected his true democratic attitude, scientific opinion, process for the participation from every 'littluns'. His scientific outlook represented his denial of the existence of the ghost and his glorification of science. He was aware of Machiavellian and military attitude of Jack. Despite the joke cast upon him, he tirelessly fought for his right. He was the only one who understood the cruelty of the boys. He knew the violence manipulated not only in the adult world but also in the world of the boys. He knew the growing power of Jack as he said, '...we get frighten of people.' (Golding:91) He tried to go depth into the analysis of the cause of fear for ghost by giving chances to speak to Phil and Percival regarding their attitude to fear. He tried to defend Ralph, but his more democratic attitude showed how he lost the controlled upon his supporting attitude.

Simon's philosophical notion also caused weakness to the party of Ralph. He lost because he had neither language to manipulate nor diplomatic strategy to voice his power over others. 'Simon felt a perilous necessity to speak; but to speak in the assembly was a terrible thing to him.' (Golding:97) Instead of denying the existence of the beast, he said, 'may be there is a beast' (Golding:97) 'Simon became inarticulate in his effort to express mankind's essential illness.' (Golding:97) But his religious idea and his Christ like teaching had no value to the principle of Machiavellian notion of the world. 'The hunters were screaming with delight. Simon's effort fell about him in ruins; the laughter beat him cruelly and he shrank away defenceless to his seat.' (Golding:98)

## **VIII. MILITARISM AND POWER**

Militarism is a part of Machiavellian as it says that war and military power provides the lowly man to the position of ruler. Ralph left the military power in the hand of Jack to punish the law breaker. He only took hold of the civil power, but his mistake was that he did not hold the military power to defeat any rival for his position. He possessed the conch in his hand but he would need to have the military force to preserve the conch intact.

Jack and his hunters were the military authority while the other did not have any access to it. His challenge to the chieftom of Ralph was his privilege of his military power over others. Jack used the dissident politics and his Machiavellian policy was his hidden motif to rebel against the democratic power of his rival. His splitting from Ralph made him dominance over the other as the boys were afraid of him and to break the law. His military punishment was known to all. When the military power of Ralph was withdrawn from him, there was no punishment back against Ralph's power position. When he went, Ralph had no power to hold the others as he had no force. The other followed Jack for the fear and defensive power. They needed the protection which was only in his hands. He became the person to pretend to safeguard the 'littluns' from the fear of the beast. He and his group personally attacked the remaining group so to infuse fear to them. That fear became the source of them to join him.

Bravery and undaunted power of Jack was always backed by his military power. He challenged Ralph on his courage alleging Ralph's inability to save the boys from the fear of the beast. 'He's like Piggy. He says things like Piggy. He isn't a proper chief... He's a coward himself.' (Golding:141) He, in the platform holding the conch, demanded confidence vote of Ralph. But, he could not acquire a single support for him by defeating Ralph. Democratic means did not provide him the chief except his military device. His military power of was a big hamper to the democratic mode of liberty. 'Piggy was so full of delight and extending liberty in Jack's departure, so full of pride in his contribution to the good of society..' (Golding:145)

Jack always wanted power. He acquired his power not through democratic process but by his military coup. When some group of boys came to the beach, he persuaded them for the hunting showing his paternalistic outlook regarding the fear of the boys for the beast. He knew that the continuity of support of the boys was not always with Ralph. As Machiavellian, he believed that the consistency of boys' minds did not remain same except the rule of severe punishment to keep them hold. Thus, he himself declared the chief. 'We'll hunt. I'm going to be chief. To make Ralph loosen of his support.' (Golding:150)

Jack and his group attacked on the 'littlun', Ralph and Piggy so as to infuse fear and violence to them. Through this military attack, he questioned the protective position of Ralph's chiefdom. His Machiavellian strategy was to the use of violence, force and punishment to get support. His rendering Piggy blind was his showing of power and example so that any one unsupported of him was to be punished in the same manner. Jack thus indirectly hinted that all of his boys had to blind to his principle. If any one questioned he would make him blind like Piggy. Wilfred, a boy, was punished without having any explicit cause. These 'possibilities of irresponsible authority' (Golding:180) of Jack were not to be questioned for the fear of punishment. His use of defenders in the gate showed his military policy at the front which was not with Ralph. Even not joining his tribe part was also offence. Jack demanded Sam, 'what d'you mean by coming with spears? What d'you mean by not joining my tribe?' (Golding:207) It was the military and Machiavellian which came over rationalism and democracy. 'Samneric were savages like the rest; Piggy was dead, and the conch smashed to powder' (Golding:212) He also set island on fire to search out Ralph, the only remnant of the lost chief to root him out as a part of family killing in Machiavellian principle.

## **IX. CONCLUSION**

The novel exposes how Machiavellian becomes the only way of rationalising one's thought and legalising one's power. Like Simon, Piggy's rationalism had no place in the politics of Machiavellian, for they did not have their force and military power. The 'littlun' were fickle by nature. They could be convinced of rationalism and religion but practically difficult to hold them for long except by force. The novel is very critical of the military coup, power struggle, Machiavellian motive of capturing power. The story of the boys is just an appropriate allegory which shows the world politics essentially as a Machiavellian. The modern politics is reconstructed from the Machiavellian ideologies and principality in the text. The text itself is a debate of power politics and the definition of the good ruler while covertly voices the possibility of power of the common to predict their future political course. While the politics affects the writing of the novel, the text is also writing the politics.

## **BIBIOLOGRAPHY**

- [1]. Golding, William. 'Lord of The Flies', New Delhi, UBSPD, 2005.
- [2]. Machiavelli, Niccolo. 'The Prince', trans by Peter Bondanella and Mark Mush, New York, Oxford University Press, 1984.
- [3]. Tiger, Virginia M. 'William Golding: The dark Fields of Discovery', London, Calder & Boyars, 1974.