

Savagery triggered  
by the incessant  
presence of the id



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Lord of the Flies, an emblematic novel written by William Golding in 1954, is often interpreted as an allegory of the human psyche. For example, in a literary criticism of Golding's Lord of the Flies Diane Andrews Henningfield, a professor at Adrian College, states: " According to Freud the id works always to gratify its own impulses...Golding seems to be saying that without the reinforcement of social norms, the id will control the psyche. (Novels for Students 188) In Lord of the Flies Jack, the conch shell, and Piggy's glasses descend into savagery when detached from the manacles of civilization because they are dominated by selfish desires and desperately seek to gratify them without considering the well-being of anyone else. Finally free from the shackles of civilization, Jack is only governed by the incessant presence of the id in his own mind.

Jack appeared to merely be a strong-willed young boy when the plane first crashed on the island, but by the time the British navy arrives to rescue the boys Jack proves to be the epitome of savagery and violence viciously seeking to fulfill his own aspirations. For example, when electing a leader at the first meeting of all the boys, Jack states: " I ought to be chief...because I'm chapter chorister and head boy. " (Golding 22) Here Jack demonstrates his longing for power by pursuing a position of authority among the boys, yet he clearly has no concern for their well-being.

Furthermore, when Jack is denied the position of power, he becomes increasingly obsessed with hunting pigs. For example, Jack suggests that the hunters wear dazzle paint, and he chants: " Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood! " (Golding 152) Jack blatantly ignores the rules of civilization, and pursues his selfish quest for power and totally disregards the well-being

of the rest of the boys. In addition, Jack establishes his own tribe that is based upon savage rituals such as hunting pigs, killing boys from the opposite tribe, and sacrificing to deities such as the lord of the flies.

Jack's actions prove that once released from the restraints of civilization, he only seeks to gratify his own power-hungry desires. Although the conch is an inanimate object unlike Jack, it still similarly descends into savagery as a direct result of the incessant presence of the id all of the boys. While exploring the island after the crash, Ralph and Piggy discover the conch in a lagoon, and they use it to summon the boys together. In the first meeting of all the boys, Ralph states: " We can't have everybody talking at once...I'll give the conch to the next person to speak. (Golding 33) Thus the conch shell becomes a powerful symbol of the remnants civilization as well as order, and all structure stems from the conch. However, when Jack creates his own tribe he states: " We don't need the conch any more. " (Golding 192) As Jack becomes consumed by his egocentric desires he neglects the conch's authority, and he persuades the rest of the boys to do the same. Consequently, the conch loses its significance, and is eventually crushed signifying the demise of civilized behavior among the boys.

The conch begins as a symbol of order; however as the boys become immersed in satisfying their own yearnings, and the conch is destroyed by the effects of the boy's innately savage nature. Like the conch, Piggy's glasses are an inanimate object that descends into savagery as a direct result of the persistent presence of the id in all of the boys. While attempting to make a signal fire on top of the mountain, the boys use Piggy's glasses to ignite the tinder-wood.

For example, while on top of the mountain Jack states: " His specs use them as burning glasses! " (Golding 40) Because the boys use Piggy's glasses to create a signal for their rescue the glasses become a powerful symbol of rationality, intellectuality, and the power of science. However, as Jack becomes completely absorbed in his selfish desires he destroys Piggy's glasses, for example: " The chief led them, trotting steadily, exulting in his achievement...from his left hand dangled Piggy's broken glasses. (Golding 168) Piggy's glasses are broken because Jack believes that their destruction is necessary in order for him to maintain power over the island. Throughout Golding's Lord of the Flies Jack, the conch, and Piggy's glasses descend into savagery when detached from the restraints of civilization, for they are dominated by selfish desires that arise from the primitive instincts and impulses that compose the id. However, the id is part of the unconscious and once detached from the manacles of civilization one cannot resist