

"lord of the flies" by william golding essay sample

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



“ Lord of the Flies” by William Golding Essay Sample

There are many themes in Lord of the Flies, which can be explored on a deeper, more adult level than just the basic plot. Many of the themes explored in the book are deeply and disturbingly adult.

Lord of the Flies is an allegory. The ideas expressed are very complex and the story is told through a number of symbols. The adult themes, which run through the book, are hard to express in any other way than in a story, such as this. However, the text needs to be studied on a deeper level in order for these to show.

One of the main themes running throughout the book is the battle between good and evil. This is a theme, which can be explored on a deep, adult level. At the beginning of the book, when the boys meet for the first time, Jack says to Piggy “ Shut up, Fatty!” this is one of the first signs that evil is emerging. As time goes on, a clear division between the boys becomes apparent. Jack and his group are on one side, and Ralph and Piggy’s group are on the other. Jack’s group represents evil, as they are very savage and brutal. The quote “ Then Jack found the throat and the hot blood spouted over his hands” shows just how vicious and bloodthirsty he is. Jack’s group are only interested in killing, and the savage side of life on the island. The idea that evil lies within everybody and if people don’t foster the good inside them, evil will take over, is constantly mentioned and Jack’s group didn’t have the integrity to keep the evil inside them at bay, therefore separating them from Ralph’s group.

In comparison, Ralph's group is a symbol of pure goodness. Throughout the novel, Ralph tries to keep order on the island and to stop everybody forgetting civilisation and real-life. Piggy says, " How can you expect to be rescued if you don't put first things first and act proper?" which is showing that he realises the importance of order on the island. The boys had no idea how long they were going to be staying on the island so they needed to maintain some sort of order. As leader, Ralph knows the difference between right and wrong and the best way to keep everything together. Simon, who is a part of Ralph's group, was seen as a Christ-like figure, which enhances the idea of the group being ' good'.

As the two groups of boys are so different, a conflict naturally arises. Jack and Ralph are constantly fighting for leadership and authority, showing that the two sides, good and evil are very different. The dominating power constantly changes throughout the novel; at the start good prevails over evil, as the conch is a representation of law and order and Ralph remains in control of the whole situation. However, as time progresses, Jack tries to gain control over Ralph's group. When he realises he is unable to do so, he forms his own group, which resultantly opposes Ralph and his group, forming two very separate sides.

Another example of evil on the island is the ' beast'. In actual fact, it is not a creature as originally thought, but the dark side of human nature. Everybody was aware of the beast but they saw it more as being physical, rather than mental.

By the end of the novel, evil has taken over, as more people joined Jack's group and results in a vicious manhunt between Jack and Ralph. The idea of evil taking over in people even boys of such a young age is a very adult idea, which makes people think. If the novel were just read as a basic fable, this would not be so apparent. But when read 'between the lines' the adult theme becomes clear.

Another theme Golding discusses in Lord of the Flies is the issue of law and order. This is another adult theme, the text needs to be read on a deeper level in order to see this. Piggy and Ralph are the main believers in law and order on the island. Jack has no time to think about this, as he is always hunting and killing with his tribe. Ralph and Piggy think about the importance of keeping things together on the island. Ralph is constantly making rules for the other boys to follow; common sense rules. Piggy and Ralph systematically work together as a team. Piggy has a lot of knowledge, partly due to his upbringing and working together with Ralph helps him achieve his full potential. Together, they are able to come up with rules and ideas and put them into action.

Piggy's glasses are a symbol of law and order. The state in which they are in shows the state that civilisation on the island is in. At the beginning, when Ralph is primarily in control, they are a symbol of good, as they are used to start the fire. It was Ralph's idea to start the fire in the first place, in order to be rescued and it was Piggy's glasses that helped him achieve this. It was with Piggy's permission that this was allowed to happen as they rightfully belonged to him. Jack refuses to obey order, as he is on an entirely different

side to Piggy. He shows this by first breaking the lens then stealing them to make a fire.

A major symbol of law and order is the conch. It is used to call meetings, which are vital to maintain some form of order among the boys. In order to first gather the boys together, Piggy says, " We can use this to call the others. Have a meeting. They'll come when they hear us-." Nobody was allowed to speak unless they were holding the conch, therefore everyone's attention would be focused on the speaker, allowing them to share their views with the rest of the group without fear of being interrupted. Ralph and Piggy are strong believers in the conch, whereas Jack opposes it, he says " we don't need the conch no more." When in actual fact, the conch is a vital part of the law and order needed on the island. When the conch is smashed, life on the island begins to fall apart. Law and order is very much an adult theme, in the eyes of the boys it is more of a struggle for survival, but when we study the text, we see it is much more than that.

Another very adult theme discussed in Lord of the Flies is the idea that given the chance, people can degrade others in order to make themselves look better. Jack is a clear example of this. He constantly makes fun of Piggy. He starts off by calling him " Fatty" and in doing this " laughter arose." This shows that Jack got a response from the rest of the boys, making him feel more important. Jack then goes on to punch Piggy and break his glasses. He is making himself out to be a more important figure, to make himself look better and gain respect.

The fact that inner evil can only be covered up until it breaks free is another main theme running throughout the book. Ralph and his tribe were able to foster the good inside them and prevent evil from prevailing. They are strong believers that society holds everyone together and in order to maintain a level of integrity, order is needed. Jack on the other hand, didn't have enough strength and will power to keep the evil inside of him. His obsession with hunting, death and savagery brought out the evil within him. He insisted on hunting, even though it wasn't entirely necessary.

Overall, I think that the themes discussed in Lord of the Flies are deeply adult. The book can be read on two levels, one being the basic plot; a fable, and the other being an allegory, with hidden meanings and symbols, which is a more adult issue.