

A grim ending

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



Lord of the Flies ends on a bleak note in order to emphasize the recurring theme throughout the novel: the idea that every human contains the beast within him/herself. By making the finale of the book so depressing, Golding illustrates the transfiguration of the boys at the same time that he recalls to mind the incidents that were caused by the change. The grim ending of Golding's book is needed to clearly convey the evolution that has been observed in all the boys. By ending the book on the tone that it first began with, realization of the boys' immediate transgressions of British society begins to surface. When the boys first appear, they have the "obedience" (18) that has been trained into them, as obvious as the "uniforms" (18) that they wear as a badge of conformity. For them, uniforms represent "superiority" (21). It seems to be more than a coincidence that the rescuing officer comes in a neat outfit, complete with a "cap" (200) and "epaulettes" (200). This brings back memories of the fine group that Jack's capped choir first appeared as. By using parallel examples, Golding is able to translate the boys' appearances to others, a good way of making the reader realize that the island can be interpreted as a world unhindered by law. It can be noted that, after a short period of time, the boys are almost completely "naked" (48). The boys are stripping away their morals. When Golding brings out the well-dressed officer, the change that has occurred in the boys is more noticeable. There is now a standard of comparison which shows the boys to be completely inadequate. When observing other similarities between the boys and the officers, there comes the terrifying enlightenment that the beast is everywhere, not just on one isolated island. The end of the book also communicates how far the boys have strayed from British rules. At first the

boys still stick to the “hands up” (33) system of talking. This is the only instance where the boys do what would be expected of them. The officer thinks that British boys should have been able to put up a “better show” (202), once again a good reminder of how the boys first reacted to freedom, shouting of how much “fun” (35) they will have. In their “fun and games” (200), the boys managed to recklessly take three lives. By studying any number of characters, it is easy to trace the degeneration of socially adept boys into barbaric savages. Roger is a prime example of disregard for any rules. He starts off as a boy afraid to hit a smaller child with a rock, remembering the “taboo” (62) protecting the child. Later, Roger kills Piggy with a “monstrous” (180) boulder and doesn’t seem to regret it in the least. British government disappears. Another good example would be Percival Wemys Madison, who at first reverted to reciting the information about his house that was “rooted” (86) in his mind when he was scared. This data is completely forgotten by him when the officer comes; Percival can no longer remember the “incantation” (201) that used to be so elementary to him. The comforting disguise of discipline appears in the officer when Ralph calls out for “mercy” (200), a poignant reminder of what the boys used to be. In this way, the author makes the seemingly cheerful picture of rescue change to a frightening reality of no possible escape from the beast. It is a wonderful way to make any reader realize that the boys are reentering the world that they just destroyed and left behind. It also implies that, unless the uniformed and armed hunters of the real world are careful, the world could easily be devastated. This discouraging ending shifts the story of the boys’ inner feelings to the larger scale of the world. The conclusion is a culmination of

the sadness of the past and the things that have been discovered throughout the book, such as the true nature of humans, so of course it must be bleak to be potent. At the end of the book, Ralph reflects on the awful things that have happened, a very effective way to show the beast. He cries for the “darkness” (202) of man’s heart. This displays Ralph’s knowledge that the beast is in everyone, that it is actually indulgence, lack of control, corruption, perversion, lust for blood, envy, and other awful traits. Golding uses the ending of the book to remind readers of the horrible things that have already occurred. The first uncontrollable fire, the fire that took the boy with the mulberry mark, is remembered. That fire was really when the beast emerged through characteristic indulgence. Recapitulation has the result of making the reader come to the awareness that the beast couldn’t be repressed after it had been allowed to emerge. Simon was the character who really understood what the beast was, although Ralph was starting to come to realization at the very end of the novel. Simon knew he couldn’t fight it, so he instead gave in to it. When he looked at the Lord of the Flies, he felt overwhelming “recognition” (138). After he finally admitted that the beast existed, he began to beat with a new “pulse” (138), and he became the Lord of the Flies. He was also eaten by the “mouth” of the beast, a mouth formed by the circle of boys. Obviously, giving in to the beast didn’t save Simon. By looking at Ralph, it is observable that fighting didn’t get rid of the beast. When Ralph saw the “grinning” (185) pig’s head, he immediately smashed it, thinking that that would destroy it. Instead, the grin only grew to “six feet” (185). Neither becoming a friend or an enemy of the beast had any affect. Simon knew that the beast wasn’t something that one can “hunt and

kill" (143). In this knowledge he is almost completely correct; there is nothing to be done to save a person from the beast, because the beast is undeniably a part of every person. By putting in one small concluding paragraph, William Golding uncovered the nature of people while also revealing the extent of pain and misery on the island.