

Lord of the flies— sense of order



With reference to Lord of the Flies, discuss how the sense of order deteriorates on the island in the course of the novel. Support your views with examples. In the book, various symbols are used to represent the establishment and the gradual fall of law and order on the island. The most important characters and symbols to be considered in this case are probably Piggy, Piggy's glasses and the conch. The deterioration of the sense of order on the island is not caused by a single event, but is a step-by-step process that is marked by several milestones.

I believe that the development of the sense of order on the island can be divided into three main stages. In the first stage, the boys were conscious of the need of order in the society, and attempted to establish law and order on the island. It begins when Piggy discovers the conch, and advises Ralph to use it to call a meeting. It ends with Jacks breaking one of the lenses on Piggy's glasses. When the boys just arrived on the island, their memories of the civilised world were still fresh and clear, and they tried to re-create an orderly society by replicating the adult world.

Imitating the elections in the real world, they held an election for the chief, and to establish ' laws', Ralph, the chosen Chief set up rules on the island, for example, if the boys wanted to speak, Ralph will ' give the conch to the next person to speak. He can hold it when he is speaking, and he will not be interrupted, except by Ralph himself. In this stage, the two important symbols that represent law and order" piggy and the conch" were introduced.

Piggy, one of the first characters that appear in the story, is the person who was the most conscious of the need of social order and the most determined on setting up an orderly society on the island. Even from the very beginning, Piggy insisted that We got to find the others. We got to do something. ' stating his wish for organization and order on the island. Later, it was also Piggy who discovered the conch, and he realizes that " We can use this to call the others. Have a meeting". The conch was the object used to call for assemblies, an act of organisation and order; and it also granted the boys the right to speak in an orderly manner.

The conch represents the fragile system of law and order that the boys tried to create, and its status and physical state actually reflects the status of social order on the island. At this stage, the two important symbols" Piggys glasses and the conch" were in good conditions. Piggy's glasses were in the hands of their rightful owner, and the conch, fresh from the water, was still glistening and beautiful. The good conditions of these objects show that the sense of order on the island was still intact.

Although some of the boys, especially the littluns, were not always able to obey the rules and carry out orders because of the lack of self-control and responsibility, the sense of order was there in their minds, making them guilty for disobeying rules and orders, and restraining hem from doing ' bad' things. For examples, when the boys realised that the fire on the mountain got out of control and probably killed one of the littluns, all because When Ralph and Piggy gave talks on the incident, the crowd was as silent as death. ' Such shows that the boys did understand and agree with the need of having and following rules and orders.

This sense of order can also be shown when Roger, a bigun, was throwing stones at Henry, a littlun. Roger did not really dare to throw stones onto Henry, but only at a safe distance. Somewhere in his mind, ' Invisible yet trong, was the taboo of the old life. Round the squatting child was the protection of the law. ' However, as days went by, memories of the old days faded away; and on the island, without real fearful authentic figures, without punishments or penalty for disobeying the orders and rules, the sense of order started to diminish slowly.

After tasting the sweetness of freedom, it was difficult for the boys to return to obeying rules and orders. Finally, the boys' disobeying orders led to a dismal result" the signal fire went out because they did not keep watch over the fire, and a ship passed y without seeing the signal, in other words, in disobeying orders, the boys lost a precious chance of getting rescued. Jack, as the leader of the hunter camp, was blamed for letting the fire out. In a rage, Jack smacked Piggy, and one of the lenses on Piggys glasses was broken.

The broken lens marked the failure of the boys to establish order on the island, and thus, another phase begins. In the second stage, the sense of order on the island diminishes further, and such descend is catalysed by the boys' fear for the unknown. It begins with Ralph's calling a meeting after dark, and it ends with Simon's death. In the meeting after dark, after Ralph finished talking about the rules and orders that the boys should follow, the topic about fear and the beast was brought up. The topic raised heated arguments, and the meeting soon became out of order.

In the meeting, Jack confronted Ralph for the first time, and stated clearly his stance” using violence, not rules or order as the way to solve problems, ‘Bullocks to the rules! We’re strong” we hunt! If there’s a beast, we’ll hunt it down! ‘ The boys, all except for Simon, Ralph and Piggy, ran into a frenzy of savagery under Jacks lead. They chanted and mimicked the action of unting, all sorts of rules or orders behind their heads. In this stage, a very important milestone appears” the Beast from Air. The ‘ beast from air’ is a ‘ message’ from the adult world.

Its arrival echoes with the wish of the boys for the adults to send them a message to tell them what to do. However, the ‘ message’ showed that while the sense of order in the society on the island deteriorated, the orderly civilisation in the adult world was breaking down as well. In fact, not only did this ‘ message’ not help the boys, it created more fear among the boys, driving them further and further away rom law and order, and closer and closer to savagery and violence. Hunting became more and more of an engaging, pleasurable experience for the boys, and it became the first priority in the boys’ eyes.

The signal fire, the shelters, the rules and orders, all these were forgotten. The boys even started mock hunting games using people as prey. Jack, as a leader of hunters and a figure of strength, power and savagery, became more appealing to the boys’ fear for the unknown and their desire of a violent conquest with the beast. So, when Jack decided to leave Ralph’s society, the ociety on the island split into two, and in this new society, Jack leaves behind any sense of social agreement or moral order. It was evident

that the power and the conch here also reflects the downfall of social order on the island.

The conch is repeatedly described as 'White', instead of the original ' deep creamy color, showing how its color had worn off after long exposure in the air, just like how law and order diminished on the island after a period of time. The stage ends with Simon being killed. The boys were having a ' meat feast' on a dark, stormy night. After the meat, the boys played mock-hunting again. Just at that time, Simon emerged from the forest after the ' conversation' with the Lord of the Flies. In the darkness, the boys took Simon as the Beast, and Simon was killed brutally.

Till here, the society on the island has descended into chaos; savagery had become the majority. In the third stage, the sense of order on the island deteriorated completely. It begins in the morning after Simon's death, and it ends with the boys' being rescued. In the morning following Simon's death, the boys finally realised what they had done. To justify their doings" murdering, indeed" they used their fear and the beast as excuses, saying that the beast may take any forms. In the namesake of ' killing the beast', all actions were justified, all social or moral order was abandoned; they only listened to the spear.

The boys on the island descended not only into a chaotic society, but also into savagery. " they behaved more and more violently, and became like animals. In this stage, Piggys glasses fell into Jack and his boys' hands, symbolizing the even further deterioration of social order. Thievery is wrong and against social or moral order, but not only did Jack and his boys not feel

sorry or guilty, they were proud of this act. It shows that the sense of order no longer even existed in their minds. The complete breakdown of any sense of order on the island is marked by Piggys death.

When Piggy and Ralph came and confronted Jack and his tribe, Roger pulled the lever, and the rock came down, striking Piggy to death and breaking the conch ' into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist. ' When Piggy was dead and the conch was destroyed, any figure of order died away as well, and the boys no longer had any restraints from behaving lawlessly, savagely and animal- like. The boys started fires in the forest and hunted after Ralph as if he were a pig. Ironically, fire" the signal fire" was one of the signs of order, duty and linkage to civilization.

Yet at this final stage, where there was no longer any order, any sense of responsibility, and the civilization was abandoned by the boys, the fire and the smoke in the forest caught the attention of a new ship passing by, and the boys got rescued. Yet, here is a question left behind by the author" the new ship was on duty, going onto war. The boys might have been rescued, yet even in the adult society, in the ' civilised' world, the lack of order and savagery existed, how could that society be rescued?