

The nature of evil in "lord of the flies"?

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



What does William Golding have to state about the nature of evil in

"Lord of the Flies"?

William Golding was born and brought up in the early 1900's in England, where he led a well informed youth under the assistance of his scientific and reasonable moms and dads. However his moms and dad's influence was frequently in vain, as the darkness and unidentified created a barrier of unreasonable ideas.

He then went on to serve the Royal Navy during the Second World War (1939-1945), where he experienced for himself the scaries committed by the Nazis, the dropping of the first atom bomb and the cruelty and cruelty of fight.

These memories had actually certainly touched Golding, who revealed this modification by his pessimistic view that " anyone who moved through those years without understanding that male produces evil as a bee produces honey, need to have been blind or wrong in the head."

After the war, Golding resumed his normal profession of teaching at a young boy's school in Salisbury, after which he composed and published his very first book in 1954- " Lord of the Flies".

This was based on the plot of R. M. Ballantyne's text " The Coral Island". The same plot is used by Golding, in which 3 kids have been shipwrecked on an island and like real " British gentlemen" work as a group in order to survive. They eventually leave death from vicious cannibals, the outside wicked existing on the island, since of their miraculous conversion in Christians.

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"Lord of the Flies" dramatizes an essential human struggle; the conflict in between the desire to follow rules, behave morally, and act legally and the desire to seek brute power over others, act selfishly, act in such a way that will gratify one's own desires, reject ethical guidelines, and delight in violence. The very first set of impulses might be believed of as the "civilizing instinct," which encourages people to work together towards common goals and behave quietly. The 2nd set of impulses might be thought of as the "barbarizing impulse," or the instinct towards savagery, which urges people to rebel versus civilization and rather seek anarchy, turmoil, despotism, and violence.

But Golding wanted to express to the world how real boys would act in these circumstances, thus he wrote this novel, in which he expresses his thoughts that "evil doesn't come from outside; it is inside all of us." This narrative is an adventure story about a group of boys who are unfortunately marooned on a deserted island on one level, but can be seen as an allegorical fable at another level, displaying the philosophical explorations of life created by Hobbs and Rousseau and even using representational characters, locations, objects and events to explore each of theirs and Golding's view of evil.

On one hand, Hobbs believed that mankind would deteriorate into the "leviathan", unless it were under the influence of rules and punishment, while on the other hand, Rousseau believed that mankind was "the noble savage" and would always act democratically.

The reader is immediately introduced to this un-named island in the beginning of chapter one, and immediately damage is caused as we can see

a " long scar" and " broken trunks scattered around this part of the island. This is because the marooned students were attacked and therefore crashed into the island. In reference to the cultural context, they may have been attacked by an enemy aircraft because this was a cautious period of time after the Second World War. The boys slowly unite to the call of a conch, discovered by the chubby, nagging yet insightful Piggy. The conch shell represents law, order, and political legitimacy, as it grants its holder the right to speak and summons the boys to democratic assemblies.

Jack and his troop of choirboys are next introduced. Wearing black capes and caps, they march on to the beach in military style. Aggressively and demandingly, Jack immediately asserts his authority and takes his place beside Ralph. The protagonist and antagonist are, thus, brought together in the opening pages of the book and depicted as opposites in nature. Jack represents the world of hunting, tactics, and skill; Ralph represents common sense and sensitivity to the natural world. The reader senses an immediate rivalry between them.

His negative nature is justified as he cruelly as he reacts to the passing out of the one of the members of his choir and says that " He's (Simon) always throwing a faint." This then follows a public mocking of Piggy as he immediately draws the rest towards him creating " a closed circuit of sympathy with Piggy outside." Piggy feels embarrassed because he is ostracised, and ashamedly walks away.

After the election of Ralph as the chief, he tells the others to wait on the beach while he, Jack, and the shy Simon go off to explore the island and

search for inhabitants. It is obvious that the three boys, at this point as they play games in the jungle and climb the mountain, they seem to bond with the beauty of the island and one another.

Another precursor is put forward by Golding to display how the boys might deteriorate, as they come across a huge boulder which catches the attention of them. They together heave the great rock resulting in its noisy fall, disturbing the nature around and giving the boys a sense of pride and victory. They excitedly describe the crash as if it were "like a bomb", which clearly mirrors the conflict in World War two and highlights just how evil can influence even the most youngest and innocent children.

The trio's first encounter with a pig will significantly contrast to later scenes of the hunters living for "the kill". When Jack spies the piglet caught in the undergrowth, he brings out his knife in readiness, but something stops him from killing the pig. He is obviously still held back by the laws of the civilized world he has left behind and, as a youth, has no natural instinct for the hunt and its brutality and bloodiness.

The beginning of chapter two marks the first rules created by Ralph, to which Jack, uncharacteristically, agrees readily. But it was the punishment part that of more interest to him, again displaying his violent nature yet again. For the first time in the text, a little child, significant due to his "mulberry birth-mark", raises the topic of the "beastie". This beastie turns out to be an allegory for irrational fear, as it even catches on to one of the most sensible members- Ralph. This displays that fear is contagious, and despite age and

knowledge, humans are always vulnerable to it. But he childishly explains that such monsters could be found only in big countries such as " Africa".

Jack's action justify my identification of his character, as he arouses excitement amongst the assembly by assuring the group there wasn't any " snake-thing", and even if it did exist, they would " hunt it and kill it." His violent proclamation and use of propaganda clearly creates a link between him and a famous dictator who also used the same methods to captivate his inhabitants- Adolf Hitler. But the conflict continues, and just as Jack seemed to increase his popularity, Ralph puts down the claims and repeats, " there isn't a beast"

But the first real evidence of the boys' gradual savage deterioration is when Jack leads the very first hunt into the jungle, accompanied by his hunters. They return bearing a corpse of a hunted pig. This, in itself is a very brutal act for boys of such youth to be carrying out, and this act is supported by the savage chant, which is repeated to the pleasure of the dehumanising group- " Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Spill her blood" .

Such an act send's shivers down the innocent Piggy, who snivels' at the sight of this mutilated pig. Simon sensibly consoles him, displaying his inner strength to hold his nerve in such an extreme situation but also begins to see for imself how Jack has become fearless and unconscious of rules, and that sooner or later, they would be vulnerable to his savagery as well. But Jack still hasn't totally lost his mind, as he shudders at the sight of his bloody hands - ' He noticed blood on his hands and grimaced distastefully'.

They set out on another hunt, and this time they really show their orgy savagery by separating a sow from its family, and then sticking a spear up its anus in jubilation. This rape of nature is juxtaposed with the beautiful location where it takes place, which incidentally is Simon's special place and he is a silent witness to yet another evidence of the boys' decline in sanity. The boys place the sow's head on a stick and leave it on that spot, as a sacrifice to the beast so that it wouldn't attack them, showing that their carrying out of this savage ritual was proving that they really had got carried away amongst the excitement and hunting.

This scene would not be so shocking if it were adults instead of such innocent children, but the fact that it is children and that they 'hurl themselves at her' is a certainly a shocking thing. Another thing that is worrying is the fact that Jack Merridew no longer cares about the blood on his hands- 'Jack began to clean his bloody hands on a rock...Then he started work on

the sow and paunched her, lugging out the hot bags of coloured guts.'

The sudden ignorance of civilization begins to further represent the group's dehumanisation, as they begin to roam around without clothes, filthy with long, dirty nails. Jack has now put a "mask" in front of his face, "behind which he hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness." This mask seems to allow Jack to do things that would have been frowned upon by adults if there were any around the island. It gives him a new identity as a warrior that is allowed to hunt and kill without the fear of laws and being disciplined by anyone superior to him.

At first it is just the painted face but gradually he removes all of his clothes and is no longer Jack Merridew but just a savage. Eventually all of his followers stop being called 'hunters' and are called 'savages' instead. This loss of identity gradually increases with the level of savagery.

' Stark naked save for some paint and a belt.'

Simon sits down to rest near the decapitated sow's head which had flies swarming around its blood and filthy- but Simon restrained this and still sat down despite the fact that they were attacking him as well. He begins to communicate with the sow's head, which designates itself as " The Lord of the Flies". The voice mocks Simon that he ought to go back to the rest because they might feel that he was " batty". But Simon still doesn't fear the head, as it speaks on and continues to taunt him, causing his head to throb and ache. He threatens Simon that if he attempted to inform the rest that the beast didn't exist, he too would be killed as the beast could be found even " down there".

Here Golding uses the authorial voice to explain his opinion that evil was in everyone, and wasn't created by outer forces such as the beast in this text. Simon eventually is terrified' and troubled by the apparition, and he collapses into a faint. This meeting again is similar to the confrontation between Jesus and the Devil in which Satan, who is in the wilderness, tempts Jesus. This biblical allusion is representational of a battle between good and evil. Simon recovers from unconsciousness though and as considerate as he has been throughout this text, he returns to inform the rest that the so-called " beast" wasn't harmful.

Suddenly out of the forest, a crooked figure crawled out, and the boys presuming it were the beast amongst their savage and tribal dance, made a ring around the painful Simon, who tried to pass the message on about the corpse on the hill. But his talk couldn't be heard by anyone as their dehumanised ritual had now begun to become a real one, as the "tearing of teeth and claws could be heard" viciously amongst the desperate cries of Simon.

Then the clouds gave way, releasing all the water which it held and let it down the mountain like a waterfall, making the "struggling heap" stagger away from its original landing point, while Simon was now assassinated in the sand, blood stains slowly being created around him. A great wind moved the corpse from the mountain down to the beast, making littleuns shriek with fear on its arrival, but it then slowly set out to sea, and left them.

As night beckoned, Simon's death was imminent now, as the flies surrounded him this time, and he turned gently in the water and moved slowly out to sea. He was an innocent martyr, who died for a animalistic and religious belief of Jack, amongst which all of their sanity had been demolished and they crazily dug deep into Simon's body and ripped him. But his silvered cheek and the shape of his shoulder turning into sculptured marble, just highlights how he is made beautiful even after this wretched death, which seems to be like a Halo.

Piggy's extremely violent death is followed shortly, as Roger shoves a massive rock down the mountain slope. Piggy hears it thundering toward him, but he cannot see it. The rock explodes into many pieces, and the

conch shell shatters. Piggy plunges onto a red rock forty feet below and dies, taking with him the only hope and traces of democracy and sanity with him. Jack even bullies Ralph's only companions, Samneric, leaving the leader isolated.

At the very end of the novel, the savages try to hunt down and kill Ralph and in doing so, burn down the forest. This final descent into outright savagery is an exclamation mark to everything that had led up to this. But he is rescued when he bumps into a naval officer, who thinks that this was "all fun and games". But when he heard of the two deaths, he too was shocked and surprised, and couldn't put into words the amount of disbelief that had arose in his head.

Thinking back to this, and recalling all that had happened with the murders and breakdown of the society he had tried so hard to maintain until their rescue, Ralph begins to cry; the others all join him and the sobs rise up, overwhelming the officer who turns his back to glance at the naval cruiser out in the water.

No longer savages, the arrival of a grown-up and "civilization" turns them from savages back to what they were in the beginning—a group of lost boys. "Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy." Piggy's name, the voice of reason, is invoked here one last time, counterbalanced by the mention of "the darkness of man's heart." Everything returns to what it was and, at last, the boys are rescued by naval officers who came across their ruined island in a British ship of war.