

Detailed analysis of ralph's entrance in lord of the flies essay sample



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Ralph's portrayal in the first chapter of the novel is one of complete naivety and innocence. He is described as "fair-haired" with a "golden body," the combination making him seem almost angelic. However, Golding shows a potential for violence as Ralph has "width and heaviness of shoulders" however Golding stresses "a mildness about his mouth and eyes that proclaimed no devil," setting Ralph up as a character who does not resort to base savagery later, unlike Jack and others. Ralph is clearly contrasted to Piggy who is "shorter, and very fat."

Ralph is also far more playful, for instance, when it dawns on him that there are "no grown ups" on the island, he stands on his head, "the delight of a realised ambition" having overcome him. He seems eager to be free of his clothing, which could be seen as representative of the shackles of civilisation. Golding describes the way he "kicked his shoes off fiercely and ripped off each stocking." The use of language such as "kicked", "fiercely" and "ripped", which have connotations of violence and urgency, emphasize the need Ralph feels to be free, unbound by the restrictions of society.

However, it is interesting that later on in the novel, Ralph is the most determined to remain civilised and so - set against this early joy at being stranded his transformation is especially shocking. Ralph does not seem to see the actual situation he is in, and tells Piggy, "", this vagueness, coupled with his child-like attitude to rescue on discussing the whereabouts of the pilot ("he'll be back alright"), gives the reader a strong impression of Ralph from just the first few pages.

Further in the chapter, after the discovery of the conch, where Ralph sees it as “ a worthy plaything”, (again a contrast to Piggy: “ ever so expensive”), he calls a meeting. Ralph's desire for democracy shown through his initiation of this meeting is later backed up when sees the need for fair leadership, and wants a vote to be taken, where as Jack a new character just introduced is much more tyrannical in his view on leadership, and thinks he should be chief purely on the fact he is head chorister, and can “ sing C sharp. Golding plays on this, and emphasises these two opposing views throughout the novel.

Ralph's understanding of voting is very clear to him, there can be no doubt in his head after he is voted chief that he ought to be chief. His naivety is really shown in his conversation with Piggy, in which Ralph is trying to convince everyone, and himself, that they will be rescued, despite being unable to answer satisfactorily Piggy's question as to who he thinks knows where they are marooned, Ralph tries to convince Piggy: ‘ The man with the trumpet thing... y dad’ . At this point Ralph runs out of ideas and resorts to the knowledge that it is a ‘ good island’ and ‘ while we're waiting we can have a good time’.

This shows extreme innocence and misunderstanding from Ralph; the idea that they just have to ‘ wait a bit’. This point is emphasized further on in the chapter where, in front of everyone he talks of his father in the Navy and how there are no unknown islands left, and shows a rather naive patriotism about the Queen having “ a big map. “ It might even be daddy's ship... sooner or later we shall be rescued. ” All this from the meeting, as life on the

island starts, leaves the reader with a sense of Ralph as the traditional
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English schoolboy of that time, (emphasized from a first image of him, “pulling up his socks as though he is in home counties”), with no understanding of the seriousness of their current situation.