

The lord of the flies

Literature



Right and wrong begin to fall to the wayside with the introduction of the hunt. Jack uses clay to disguise his face and trick the pigs, changing the visual representation of himself, moving further from society and rendering himself unrecognizable. Both Ralph and Jack still have some connection to the past, but Jack is moving away from it to create his own world governed by the laws of hunting and survival.

Without any adults on the island, the boys must learn to govern themselves; however, problems ensue. The youngest, the least influenced by society, are the first to run away, the first to show anarchy and the breakdown of societal control. The boys give up the chance to rescue for the chance to kill. Their value system has shifted significantly. The degradation of the natural world through burning fires or killing pigs mirrors the breakdown of the boys' socialized humanity. Roger throws stones near one of the younger boys, Henry. He aims a few yards away, still following the laws of society.

Civilization forces him to limit his primitive violent instincts, but these constraints no longer fetter him by the end of the novel. Jack claims he can save them from "the beast." He leads them on a hunt and the boys unleash "the beast" within themselves, attacking with lust and fury. Roger, cruel and sadistic in nature, impales a nursing sow with almost demented excitement. The boys "sharpen a stick at both ends" and leave the sow's head as a sacrifice to "the beast," a sacrifice that takes on the symbolic role of the beastly urges they have succumbed to within. (156; ch. 8) The hunters' decision to steal Piggy's glasses over the conch signifies the shift from reason and democracy to irrational dictatorship. In a dictatorship, they have no need for an object that allows all to speak. The boys ignore Ralph's conch signal: the rejection of the conch is a rejection of the rules of society. The <https://assignbuster.com/the-lord-of-the-flies/>

shell remains the symbol of society, but when the shell is destroyed that which it signifies is also shattered. Simon is killed by accident. Jack assumes control. Roger, the former "stone-thrower," kills Piggy with "a sense of delirious abandonment" by heaving a boulder onto him. (209; ch. 11) The boys have removed themselves from all semblance of civilization. They hunt Ralph like an animal. Even after Ralph finds the sow's skull on the stick and destroys it, the symbol of savagery, "the beast" still exists.

The fire, once signifying rescue and later used for destruction, becomes both. Ralph weeps for "the end of innocence, and the darkness of man's heart." (234-5; ch. 12) The novel ends with Ralph "grieving the indelible mark of evil in each person's heart, an evil he scarcely suspected existed before witnessing its effects on his friends and supporters." (CliffsNotes, 2005-2006) Golding is making a point about the hypocrisy of civilization. In reality, the world is just a larger version of the island. The Lord of the Flies is more than a book about a group of lost boys on an island - it is also a symbolic work of social commentary.