

Lord of the flies



Through out William Golding's Lord of the Flies there is a constant struggle for leadership between Jack and Ralph. When Golding identifies the boys as "two continents of experience and feeling, unable to communicate" he highlights the key differences between the two characters and how they represent opposing modes of thinking. Ralph is a rational thinker and believes in a civilised society with " Rules, lots of rules" and that if they can obey this order they will be rescued. On the contrary Jack is aggressive, causes anarchy with in the island " bollocks to the rules! and uses fear to manipulate the boys. Besides this he does provide security, food and comfort for the group of boys.

The question posed here is who is the better leader? From the start, Ralph tries to keep the fire as the key-stone in the group. He knows that " the queen has a map of these islands and knows where we could be" also that fire and smoke is used best to signal ships at a distance. This is what actually saves the stranded boys. As soon as Ralph is elected as chief, he concentrates all of his newly acquired authority to being rescued.

He assembles a small group of boys to go on an " expedition" to see if they actually are on an island. " If this isn't an island we might be rescued straight away. So we've got to decide if this is an island, three of us will go on an expedition and find out. " This demonstrates that Ralph's qualities allow him to make decisions that benefit everyone. Whilst Ralph was leader he made shelters and called assemblies, this method of bringing civilisation to the island allowed the boys to remember what modern day society was like, and from then on can keep faith in themselves towards being rescued.

When Ralph realises that " The world, that understandable and lawful world, was slipping away. " he tries to keep his composure and control the group but the power of Jack takes over and the boys gradually lose their civility. Never once throughout the novel Lord of the Flies, does Ralph become influenced or influence others towards savagery, but he doesn't harness the authority he needs to save the boys from themselves. Initially Jack is viewed as a potentially responsible leader when he is introduced, we can see how he keeps control of the choir and how he also provides comfort to the boys.

He does this in a couple of ways, firstly Jack introduces himself as a strong, confident person that would protect the boys, then he appeals to the boys' patriotism " after all we're English and the English are best at everything" this is an attempt to generate comfortability throughout the group. However as the novel continues we see that this is one of many ways Jack tries to control the group, being the egotistical person he is. He then continues down this path and gradually reverts to primal instincts " for a second he became less a hunter than a furtive thing, ape-like among the trees".

From here Jack becomes driven by the lust for blood " you should have seen the blood! " Another contributing factor for Jack's inability to lead responsibly is that his bloodlust came between them getting rescued, here Jack's power is questioned and " the dismal truth filtered through the boys". However he takes to a new strategy of manipulating the boys with their fear and gains power again amongst the island. It is evident that he is used to represent the defects of human nature that lead the boys to savagery, and although he prevails with authority his methods of leading, lead them to barbarism.

Being a great leader means being considerate of other peoples' opinions. Jack is not considerate of other people's opinions. During a discussion about the beast, Jack states " " We don't need the conch any more. We know who ought to say things. What good did Simon do speaking, or Bill, or Walter? It's time some people knew they've got to keep quiet and leave deciding things to the rest of us. " This shows how inconsiderate Jack is because the conch is the only thing that lets the boys communicate their thoughts and eliminating it would mean that they do not get a say in making decisions that affects them.

RAlph is the complete opposite he believes that everyone should have their turn to speak " I'll give the conch to the next person to speak. He can hold it when he's speaking. " These rules show that Ralph actually cares what the boys have to say. Being considerate, like Ralph, is very crucial to being a good leader because listening to everybody's opinions and beliefs ensures that final decisions can be formed to benefit the entire group.