

Mankind's Evil Exposed in Lord of the Flies

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Mankind's Evil Exposed in Lord of the Flies

Despite the progression of civilization and society's attempts to suppress man's darker side, moral depravity proves both indestructible and inescapable; contrary to culturally embraced views of humanistic tendencies towards goodness, each individual is susceptible to his base, innate [instincts](#). In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, seemingly innocent schoolboys evolve into bloodthirsty savages as the latent evil within them emerges. Their regression into savagery is ironically paralleled by an intensifying fear of evil, and it culminates in several brutal slays as well as a frenzied manhunt. The graphic consequence of the boys' unrestrained barbarity, emphasized by the backdrop of an external war, exigently explores mankind's potential for evil.

Dismissing the detonation of an atom bomb and the possible deaths of their parents as merely an "unusual problem" (14), the schoolboys selfishly indulge in their lush jungle environs. The overwhelming "glamour [which] spread[s] over them" (25) momentarily eclipses their awakening need for domination. At first, the boys express this necessity through the seemingly innocuous heaving of rocks and the belittling of Piggy, who is physically inferior. Had these actions occurred in the boys' English homeland, they would

have been accepted as ordinary, childish behavior. However, under the guise of innocent [excitement](#), the boys derive an unimaginably "violent pleasure" (18) from "exercising control over living things" (61).

Ominously, their craving for power is a presage for the blood that is to be shed. This blood which had initially been so "[unbearable](#)" (31) is now lusted after; it compels Jack...

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...lightenment is a condemnation rather than a liberation, because the knowledge of evil will forever remain as a scar upon his mind.

Now that Ralph truly understands the "darkness of man's heart" (202), he will recognize it in all its forms and disguises, falling heir to Simon's role of the bearer of truth and condemnation. The constant possibility that he may succumb to internal evil may instill Ralph with an further sense of anxiety and despair. This torment marks "the end of [his] innocence" (202), and Ralph will never be able to return to his former state of carefree happiness. Only death, the end to each individual's experience of the human condition the same death that liberated Simon and Piggy can free Ralph from the enlightenment and curse of his insight.

Work Cited

Golding, William. *Lord of the Flies*. New York: Harcourt, 1962.

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