

Lord of the Flies

1954

Introduction and Background

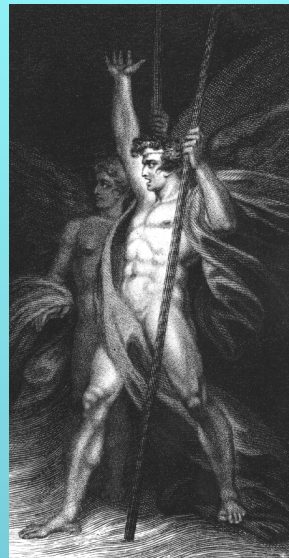
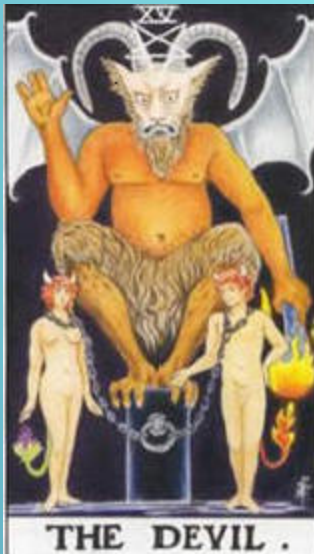
Title Translation

“Beelzebub” a Hebrew word for

LUCIFER

However, the literal translation of
“Beelzebub”

into English is **LORD OF THE FLIES**



L.O.T.F Author

William Golding

Born in Britain

1911-1993



In the decade before LOTF was published, Britain had been involved in two wars:

- WWII

- Korean War





As a child, Golding had witnessed WWI, which was referred to as “the war to end all wars”

HOWEVER,

22 years later Britain was again involved in ANOTHER WAR

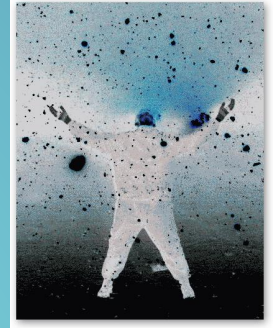
to end all wars, which caused more devastation than was imaginable



Through LOTF, Golding is making the statement that we cannot escape our savage, violent tendencies...



...and without
social order,
we devolve
into a state of chaos



LOTF Symbols

(Objects, characters, figures, or colors that represent ideas or concepts)

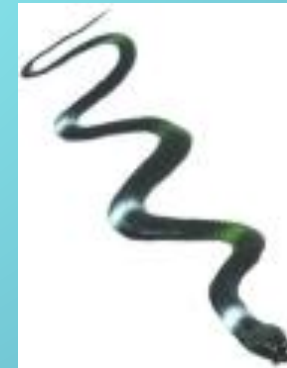
Piggy's Glasses = The last surviving evidence of the lawful, structured world



Conch Shell = New democracy on the island; when the shell is shattered, all order disappears

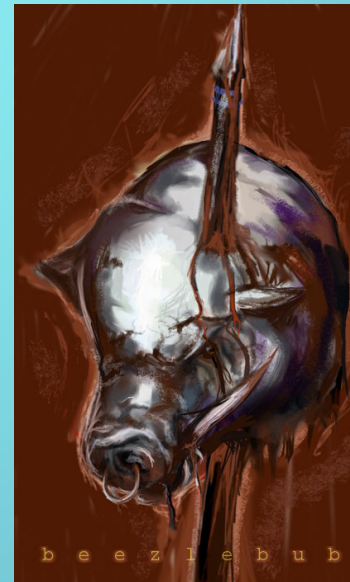


Snake = Evil...reference to the serpent in the garden of Eden



Important Images

- The Beast = The imaginary evil that is projected onto the island by the boys' paranoia
- Lord of the Flies = A pig's head on a stick that becomes the physical acceptance of evil on the island



TERMS TO REMEMBER

- **Microcosm = A small world that represents the world at large**
- **Edenic = Eden like, paradise like, a setting that has not yet been spoiled by man**



Character Analysis

- Ralph ~ Main character described as “fair haired,” having “broad shoulders...[like a] boxer’ s,” and has a face that “proclaims no devil”

Committed to civilization
and morality

Translation = GOOD



Character Analysis

- Piggy \ Described as “fat,” “intellectual,” asthmatic, and needs glasses

Represents scientific, rational side of civilization, and social order



Character Analysis

- **Jack** ~ Described as having red hair, wears black with a snake clasp, ugly

Cruel and manipulative
Represents our
savage instincts
played out

EVIL



Character Analysis

- **Simon ~ Described as a skinny, vivid little boy, who “meditates;” and he faints, which some cultures have believed is a sign of connecting with the spiritual world**

Seems to be connected with nature, and he has an innate, spiritual goodness



Character Analysis

- ***Roger ~ “Silent”
and sadistic***

Targets the “littluns”

***The only one to
premeditate murder***

***Kills without
conscience***

Pure evil



Character Analysis

- Sam and Eric (Samneric)
~ Twins

Described as barely having enough skin to cover both, bullet-headed, and they finish each other's sentences

The last to remain loyal to Ralph

Represent the tug-of-war within us to remain good



Character Analysis

- “Littluns” ~ The younger kids

Represent the common folk, who easily follow the lead of others into savagery when there is no enforced structure in society



Themes in *Lord of the Flies*

- The Need for Social Order
- Power
- Vision
- Fear of the Unknown
- Loss of Identity
- Loss of Innocence

The Need for Social Order

1. The boys are separated from civilization
2. They attempt to create their own form of order and government
3. Without someone to enforce the rules, the boys fail to observe their own rules
4. The boys eventually abandon the rules of civilization
5. Without social order, the boys commit acts of savagery and murder

Power

1. To Ralph, power is democratic
2. The conch becomes a symbol of power
3. To Jack, power is authoritarian
4. Jack treats the members of his choir cruelly
5. The littluns begin to exercise power of small creatures
6. Roger enjoys unrestrained power

Vision

1. Mirages impair the boy' vision
2. Although Piggy' s vision is poor, he can see most clearly what they need to do to survive
3. Piggy is blind to the reality that evil exists in the boys themselves
4. Simon has the clearest vision of the true nature of evil on the island
5. Only Simon sees the “Lord of the Flies”
6. Only Simon goes to the mountaintop to see the beast clearly in the daylight.

Fear of the Unknown

1. The boys are afraid because they do not know where they are, why their plane crashed, or what will happen if they are not rescued.
2. The littluns fear the beastie or snake-like thing that comes in the dark
3. The bigguns fears beasts that are still unknown
4. “The Beast” – Snake-like thing – the dead parachutist – The Lord of the Flies – Simon - The boys themselves

Loss of Identity

1. The boys begin to lose their individual identities: littluns, bigguns, samneric
2. The choir becomes hunters
3. The mask allows the boys to become someone else
4. Jack's followers become a savage tribe
5. Ralph has difficulty remember he is the leader and why rescue is important
6. Percival forgets his own name

Loss of Innocence

1. Ralph's faith in democracy is shattered
2. Following the rules offers no protection
3. Piggy's belief in fairness is proven false
4. Violence takes the lives of three boys
5. The boys come to accept the notion that the world is not completely good

For Consideration

Simon as a “Christ figure”:

Simon goes alone into the jungle and confronts evil. Simon comes down from the mountain bringing news that will save the boys from their fear. Instead of listening to Simon, they ignore him.

For Consideration

Golding has said that *Lord of the Flies* is “an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature.” He acknowledges evil as a force that lurks within every person.