



An Application of Golding

Serena Pei

Valley Christian High School, San Jose, California USA

OPEN ACCESS

Citation:

Pei, Serena. "An Application of Golding," *The Palo Alto Scholar J+A+C+I+D 21(2)*, The Palo Alto Scholars Institute.

<https://www.paloaltoscholar.com/downloads>

Editor: The Palo Alto Scholar Editorial Staff

Received: January 31, 2021

Accepted: May 2, 2021

Published: July 19, 2021

Copyright:

© 2021 Serena Pei.

License: Published by The Palo Alto Scholars Institute under license. The author has attested that this work is original to them and non-infringing and that all sources are fair use and properly cited. This is an open access article published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

*The Palo Alto Scholar
Journal of Art + Culture + Innovation + Design
for Pre-Collegiate Students*

Research-Based & Critical Essays & Literary
Non-Fiction
Published by The Palo Alto Scholars Institute
Palo Alto, California USA
paloaltoscholar.com

Lord of the Flies by William Golding, a story about a children's adventure gone terribly wrong, reveals a multitude of dark insights into human nature. After a plane of schoolboys crashes on a deserted island, the young boys are met with numerous obstacles before their final rescue and return back to humanity. Golding's story is not only about the hard struggle between the boys, but also about the clash between humanity and inert barbarity, an issue that has resurfaced especially in these times of uncertainty.

Ralph ushers his fellow schoolboys to build shelter and send fire signals on the mountain, while Jack is focused on killing a wild island pig for his next meal. At first, most of the boys choose to follow Ralph the utilitarian over Jack the anarchist. However, the increasing interest in exploration and insatiable curiosity of these young children destroy their ability to reason. As the story progresses, the group dynamic takes a dangerous turn as the boys literally become beast-like themselves and are forced to grapple with their wavering sense of humanity and morale when they even begin to attack each other. When a dead parachutist lands on top of the signal fire mountain, the growing fear of hidden beasts on the island is confirmed. Now, suddenly, the mission is no longer to survive on the isolated island but rather to confront the "monster" and essentially defeat it. By the end of the novel, Jack and the boys are so blinded by their savage thoughts that they set out to kill Ralph. Just as Ralph is cornered in for the kill, a British naval officer appears on the island. When the boys see their final rescue, every one of them is overwhelmed by the bloodthirsty beasts they have become.

Despite the unrealistically convenient timing of the officer's aid, I personally believe Golding is extremely successful in



demonstrating the fickle yet frightening aspects of human nature. Even though the boys completely changed during their time on the island, they are still able to recognize their own humanity when help arrives. This ending provides an interesting insight into the reversible trait after an episode of moral decomposition. To show the terrifying aspect of the boys' inner beast that completely distorts reality in their minds, Golding utilizes gruesome language concerning mob mentality. In a scene of the brutal murder of Simon, a fellow schoolmate, "the crowd surged after it, poured down the rock, leapt on to the beast, screamed, struck, bit, tore" (Golding 214). These descriptions reveal the boys' sharp decline from civility to chaos. Additionally, Golding depicts the growth of Ralph from a boy to a man, from innocence to a final realization of his downward spiral. Ralph's maturity proves that human nature and character can be drastically changed during times of hardship. He is ultimately able to survive the ordeal and learn from the pressures of leadership, as he "wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of a true, wise friend called Piggy" (Golding 285). In the end, Ralph realizes the true difficulty of being a leader after his good friend's death. Golding effectively constructs a story around the complexities of human nature, civility versus chaos, as well as moral growth and theories of leadership.

Today, we can draw meaningful lessons from Golding as the destructive virus known as Covid-19 runs rampant in people's lives all around the world. In a sense, the virus can be thought of as the "beast" on the island: a boundary that controls the way we live as we all seek to overcome our fears and anxieties. Perhaps more disturbing than the global virus spread itself was the response of the "United" States. Despite humanity itself being threatened, Americans still have found opportunities to treat others with inequality. While many of our family, friends, and neighbors are fighting against death, we are distracted by race, fighting against ourselves and sabotaging our own humanity.



The gruesome murder of a man by the name of George Floyd, who suffocated for eight minutes and forty-six seconds under the knee of a police officer, truly illustrates the inherent cruelty and indifference that has been amplified in this time of chaos. While he was pleading for his own life, police officers were too callous to listen to the desperate cries of the man. This scene is disturbingly mirrored by the murder of Simon in *Lord of the Flies*. While Simon is desperately trying to communicate with the boys, he is brutally murdered because they are sadly blinded by their mission to defeat the "beast." As responsible citizens of a country of freedom and opportunity, we need to unite for real change. While the Black Lives Matter movement is effective in advocating change and spreading awareness, each one of us is ultimately accountable for our own actions. Not until everyone alters their mindset can America truly come together as a whole to fight one common beast. Without prejudices against each other, many unnecessary tragedies can also be avoided.

In the past, pandemics forced humans to break from the past and imagine their world anew. Similarly, Covid-19 is a portal, a gateway from one world to the next. Now, we can either choose to let our hatred and prejudice drag us down as a human race, or we can walk free of burden, courageous enough to acknowledge our fears and fight against it together. We should prevent fear from blinding our hope for a better future as it happened to the inexperienced children in *Lord of the Flies*. More than ever before, we need to trust in our neighbors, building more personal relationships in an isolated environment. We should aim to construct a utopia of social justice to deal with the current mental health crisis. Anxiety and depression fill our lives because we are physically separated from family, friends, and in-person interaction. Although separated, we can still search to connect with others in nuanced, even more effective ways. Through technology, we can meet people we would have never otherwise met. Truly these benefits are something we can look forward to everyday, something we can be thankful for during these



unique times. In response to this new reality, we need to change our perspectives, look forward, and learn to differentiate between good and evil. Now, as we take our first steps into 2021, we need to become informed, responsible global citizens in order to change the world.



Works Cited

Golding, William, *Lord of the Flies*. Penguin, 2016.

