

Literary Analysis Essay

Lord of the Flies written by William Golding is a novel about a group of young British boys who are stranded on an island after their plane is shot down. The group encounters countless problems during their duration of being stranded on the island, resulting in multiple disputes between the boys. Conflict is apparent all the way through the novel, whether it's being man versus man, man versus himself or man versus nature. One of the ways that Golding portrays conflict is through two of the main characters, Ralph, leader of the civilized group, and Jack, leader of the savage group. Golding reveals the growing tension between civilization and savagery in three key moments in the rising action: when the signal fire is let out and a boat passes by the island, when Jack leaves the civilized group to create his own, and when the savages steal Piggy's specs to make their own fire. If these events did not happen, the climax would not have been possible.

The first key moment in the rising action that shows the growing tension between civilization and savagery is when Jack and his hunters let the fire die out, causing a ship to pass by without a smoke signal showing and allowing the group of boys to miss an opportunity of being rescued. This key moment is important because it marks the first strife between the antagonist and protagonist in the novel. Ralph's priorities are to build shelters and keep a signal fire going in order to get rescued, however Jack's priorities are to hunt meat for the boys and have fun. Tension is shown in this moment when they argue and Jack ends up taking his built frustrations out on innocent Piggy. Golding writes, "he took a step, and able at last to hit someone, stuck his fist into Piggy's stomach" (100, 14). This event reveals a clear difference between the savage and the

civilized as Jack uses violence, whereas Ralph suppress' his anger. Golding writes, “Unwillingly Ralph felt his lips twitch; he was angry with himself for giving way” (101, 12), which conveys his attempts to hide his spite towards Jack. Without this moment the climax would not be possible because it prevents the boys from being rescued. If the fire had been kept alight then this first spark in their growing conflict would not exist and would never have thrived over the course of the story. Therefore, the next important key event in the story would not have occurred.

Another key moment in the rising action where Golding reveals the growing tension between the civilized and the savage is when Jack decides to leave the civilized group. This is a key moment because the conflict between Ralph and Jack has grown from verbal disagreements, to a genuine divide between civilization and savagery. This event shows the growing tension between the boys because they are now competing against each other to be inferior chiefs, resulting in the rivalry rising to an all-new level. "The two boys glared at each other through screens of hair" (181, 20). As chief, Ralph says, “The best thing we can do is get ourselves rescued” (73, 22), where as Jack demanded that hunting is just as important. Jack says, “I’m not going to be a part of Ralph’s lot-“ (183, 6), showing that he is now unwilling to cooperate with the civilized group. If this event had not occurred, the climax would not have been possible because the two groups would still be living together as one and the conflict between the two boys would now have reached such a high level. This conflict also caused the next key conflict to eventuate.

The final key moment in the rising action that shows the growing tension between the savage and the civilized is when Jack and his lot steal Piggy's glasses from the

civilized camp, in order to create fire to cook the meat on. This moment is key because it shows that the boys acting out as savages and animals, "Then there was a vicious snarling in the mouth of the shelter and the plunge and thump of living things" (240, 8). This event also reveals the greed and incorporation of the savages as they resort to theft. This shows a great difference between the savage and the civilized, as the Piggy and Ralph would have approached the situation very differently, asking for the glasses back rather than stealing them. If this incident had not happened, the climax would not have been possible because the civilized boys would have never had to confront the savages about the theft of the specs, which would therefore prevent Piggy's death. Also, if the savages did not have access to the glasses, they would not have been able to start the fire that lit the signal, which resulted in the boys being rescued.

To show the growing conflicts between the savage and the civilized, Golding uses three important moments in the rising action: when the signal fire is let out, when Jack leaves the civilized group and when the savages steal Piggy's glasses to exaggerate the conflict in the novel. All of these moments were key for the climax to occur because they all link together and depend on one another. Golding links incidents that occur in the novel to real life by showing that every person has savage within them, and some turn to it quicker than others.