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## Civilization To Savagery in Lord Of The Flies

Why is it that people in civilized societies find it harder to remain civilized, when away from the law, or authority figures enforcing it? In the novel, *Lord of the Flies*, William Golding explores the loss of civilization and the rise of savagery, by utilizing symbolism to allow the reader to question their beliefs and values, when away from a civilized society. Initially, Simon is a significant symbol in the story, whose change helps to show the development in the boys throughout the novel. Furthermore, the conch is another important symbol that changes the meaning to show the boy's final downfall into savagery. Lastly, the fire on the island is another crucial symbol in the story as it is their only hope of rescue, however later represents destruction. Overall, the symbols in this novel assist to convey the boy's loss of civilization and emerge into savagery, when taken away from a civilized society.

Firstly, Simon is a significant symbol in the novel, whose change helps to show the development in the boys throughout the story. Simon represents truth, pureness, and tranquility in the novel. He is the only boy who does not fear the beast. He mimics innocence and knowledge on the island. In the novel, it states, "Simon, walking in front of Ralph, felt a flicker of incredulity- a beast with claws that scratched, that sat on a mountaintop, that left no tracks and yet was not fast enough to catch Samneric. However Simon thought of the beast, there rose before his inward sight the picture of a human at once heroic and sick" (Golding, 103). This proves Simon's ability to see past the fear the beast has invoked in all of the boys, and think rationally with a calm mind. He is the only boy who can determine that there is no scary beast on the island. Instead, the beast is the savagery within the boys. While Simon is still alive, he represents the boy's knowledge, innocence, and not being completely engulfed in savagery. As the novel progresses, Simon's death represents the boy's loss of innocence and full submerge into savagery. For example, the novel states, "Kill the beast! Cut his throat. Spill his blood. Do him in! The sticks fell in and the mouth of the new circle crunched and screamed. The beast was on its knees in the center, its arms folded over its face... Itself a silver shaped beneath the constellations, Simons dead body moved out toward the open sea" (Golding, 152-154). This quote proves, the knowledge and innocence within the boys are now completely absent, as Simon was the only one who obtained the knowledge of the beast being the savagery within them. This shows the boys have become savages as they murder Simon, mistaking him for the beast. This can depict how the boys think they are saving themselves from a big scary monster, but intern they have become the monster. Overall, Simon who initially symbolizes innocence, purity, and knowledge on the island, represents a new meaning as the boys murder him. He now represents the loss of innocence, truth, knowledge, and tranquility. The more time spent on the island depicts their civilized side vanishes and savage nature takes over.

Secondly, the conch is another important symbol that changes meaning as the novel progresses. The conch is first seen as a powerful symbol, as it symbolizes law, order and helps to keep everyone civilized and together. However, later loses its meaning. In the novel, it states, "Jack stood up, scowling in the gloom, and held out his hands. I haven't finished yet. But you've talked and talked. I've got the conch. Jack sat down, grumbling" (Golding, 81-82). This proves the power invested in the conch, as even Jack who is one of the most repulsive characters abides by it. This shows how the conch has kept them civilized until this point as it reminds them of law, order and how to behave in a civilized society. As the boys have not spent

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much time on the island at this point, they still act according to a civilized society and follow a power figure or object. Eventually, the conch loses the power, order and the command it once had over the boys. As Jack comes into power, he manages to lead a rebellion by utilizing the boys fear and savagery, which is ironic as they once believed in the conch. In the novel, it states, "The rock struck Piggy a glancing blow from chin to knee; the conch exploded into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist" (Golding, 181). This quote proves, the broken conch means all hope of law, order and being civilized has vanished from the island. Savagery has engulfed everyone but Ralph on the island. The conch no longer has power or authority over the boys, and this represents the official downfall and breakthrough into savagery. Without the conch, it is chaotic and the boys lose their rationality. The conch, what once represented the law, order and civilization has completely lost all meaning. It cannot bring the boys together and displays the innate evil that befalls when away from civilization for a long period of time.

Lastly, the signal fire on the island is another crucial symbol in the story as it is their only hope of rescue, however it changes meanings throughout the novel. The signal fire represents the hope of being rescued off the island. The boys do all they can to return to a civilized society. In the novel, it states, "There's another thing. We can help them to find us. If a ship comes near the island they may not notice us. So we must make smoke on top of the mountain. We must make a fire. A fire! A fire! Make a fire!" (Golding, 38). This proves the hope of rescue through a ship seeing the smoke they create from the fire, representing the potential of returning to a civilized society. As the boys have not spent much time on the island yet, and come from a civilized society, they know the steps needed for rescue and the fire is an important one. Furthermore, the importance of the signal fire changes as the novel comes to an end. It is now used for destruction and savagery. In the story it states, "They had smoked him out and set the island on fire" (Golding, 197). This proves that the boys no longer care for the real reason they need the fire and simply want to use it for destruction. They do not think about any of the consequences, such as all of their resources and food burning. As a collective group, they willingly try to murder Ralph with the use of the fire. In a civilized society, they would not think of murder as a possible solution to their problem, let alone try and execute it. This shows the boys are completely taken over by savagery and can no longer reason. Overall, the signal fire is supposed to be used as a means of rescue and hope to connect back with society. However, it is turned into a weapon used to destroy and kill. This illustrates the transition of civilization into savagery, as more time is spent on the island.

In conclusion, in the novel, *Lord of the Flies*, William Golding explores the loss of civilization and rise of savagery, by utilizing symbolism to allow the reader to question their beliefs and values, when away from a civilized society. Firstly, Simon is a character representing innocence, tranquility and knowledge, however, later depicts the loss of all of these qualities found in a civilized society. Next, the conch initially represents power, order and civilization, but is later deemed powerless, which shows the boys decline into savagery. Lastly, the signal fire is hope for rescue, until it is later turned into a weapon used for destruction to demonstrate and satisfy inner savagery. All of these symbols change to depict how the morals in the society we live in can change, when away from civilization.