

Lingering LOTF Chapter 8

- “Lord of the Flies” (138)

Being the title of the book, I immediately recognized this as an important phrase in the book, but its significance is not so apparent. This was the first time the book had explicitly mentioned “flies” or “lord” — there had been some mention of bothersome insects and the idea of “chief,” but the two had never been worded like the title or combined to produce the same effect. The insects seem to be an everyday occurrence, a being of nature; and Ralph (the chief) was elected by the people. But the word “flies” has a negative connotation, associated with the maggots and decomposing; and “lord” has a bit of a medieval implication: uncivilized, ruthless, corrupt. By placing this strange wording so abruptly in a superficially-happy environment, the reader suddenly is encountered by an understanding of the largest underlying theme: the transformation of man (or boy, in this case) to savage in an isolated, overly-free society. The phrase gives the story more clarity, and makes the title a more understandable concept. Previous to that revealing, I had no idea what the “Lord of the Flies” really was — without any mention in the book I would have assumed that there was no literal connection, but instead a similar theme that both the book and the fly lord both carry. However, the sow’s head can literally appear to be a sort of “lord of the flies” to Simon and the hunters by the picture it portrays. It is the head of a pig, a large animal capable of thought and with a brain and a face like we “intelligent” humans do; and the “white teeth and dim eyes, the blood” (138) may paint the same image as the idea of a savage lord. Being a dead animal, there may be tiny flies swarming around it, almost like servants to a lord, staying close for protection and to protect. To the boys present, such a sanguineous act, with such thoughtless killing and no remorse, their minds may have hallucinated or looked at the pig in such a different way, and this could very well be Simon’s first impression of such a horrific bust, as was suggested by his reaction. After approaching the head (after Jack’s group had left), he imagined a conversation with the head, and this led eventually to a frightening hallucination, “found himself looking into a vast mouth ... with blackness within ... [and he] was inside his mouth” (144) and his passing out.

- ““All right then,’ he said in **tones of deep meaning**, and stabbed the air with his index finger” (127).

How do you convey of “tone of meaning,” especially as a child? Adults say that they have acquired enough wisdom to know what the true meaning of life is — whether it is happiness, experience, fun — and being able to express it in an undertone, in a way next to words. Jack accomplished this form of communication, but only with the realization of his worst fear. For that moment, just after he “turned, red in the face, his chin s[u]nk back” (127), he encountered for the first time humiliation. Unpopularity. A lack of attention and the popular vote. The people had been disappointed with his more radical

ways and ideas, and he was now officially ousted from power with this vote. His statement, “All right then,” (127), was one of few non-assertive statements Jack proclaimed, the majority being words of accusation or inspiration to hunt. Now, he was forced to agree with what the people *actually thought*, something he had ignored in his past campaigns: he understood now the new realm of society. He learned the perspective of others, not having the chance to be a ruler and having to obey orders or face consequences. And for that moment, Jack *understood* what others felt about him, and his voice contained that thought; but it did not last. He only had a glimpse of this reality, the reality that Piggy and Ralph were also starting to realize with their solitary moments of reflection and clarity. He jumped right back to his own mindset, even in the same sentence, by “stabb[ing] the air with his index finger” (127), a characteristic act of his decisiveness, and he asked again the general appeal. After several denials, he turns away to a solution of his own, a society of his own, a way to stay away from the reality that he just learned. Similar to when Ralph “discovered dirt and decay” (76) on his walk to the late assembly when he started to think, Jack realized also the decline in the community and in himself that had lost his popularity. And as the children were so happy to be free of thought, playing mindlessly on the island while Ralph sulked, Jack could not bear the weight of his humiliation, could not assume the humility required in working together, and he too went for a path of an “ignorant bliss” away from the “rule” of Ralph.

- “‘Thanks,’ [Ralph] said. Then with an **accent of pleased surprise** — ‘Thanks!’” (132). The repetition of the word “Thanks” in two different tones may be just to show Ralph’s surprise, but also an emotion that is generally lacking throughout their journey. The first “Thanks” is a figure of surprise, a normal etiquette, a conversational normality. But with his transition, his next “Thanks” had an “accent of pleased surprise” (132), which I found to be a wonderful description for his feeling. Jack had left, and the entire group felt a weight lifted off their shoulders without Jack’s conflicting, harsher hunting views. “Accent,” “pleased,” and “surprise” can all indicate a more positive tone, something a little out of the ordinary with a touch of enjoyment. Ralph feels pleased by this, which he did not feel often on the island with the pressure of leadership constantly forcing him to reflect on their progress and what should be done. As in Jack’s realization (*lingering, bullet point 2*), this was a brief moment that passed quickly as he and Simon soon returned to the concept of missing boys and the fire — but the moment was made and it made a visible impact on the leader.