

As the boys on the island progress from well-behaved, orderly children longing for rescue to cruel, bloodthirsty hunters who have no desire to return to civilization, they naturally lose the sense of innocence that they possessed at the beginning of the novel. The painted savages in Chapter 12 who have hunted, tortured, and killed animals and human beings are a far cry from the guileless children swimming in the lagoon in Chapter 3. But Golding does not portray this loss of innocence as something that is done to the children; rather, it results naturally from their increasing openness to the innate evil and savagery that has always existed within them. Golding implies that civilization can mitigate but never wipe out the innate evil that exists within all human beings. The forest glade in which Simon sits in Chapter 3 symbolizes this loss of innocence. At first, it is a place of natural beauty and peace, but when Simon returns later in the novel, he discovers the bloody sow's head impaled upon a stake in the middle of the clearing. The bloody offering to the beast has disrupted the paradise that existed before—a powerful symbol of innate human evil disrupting childhood innocence.