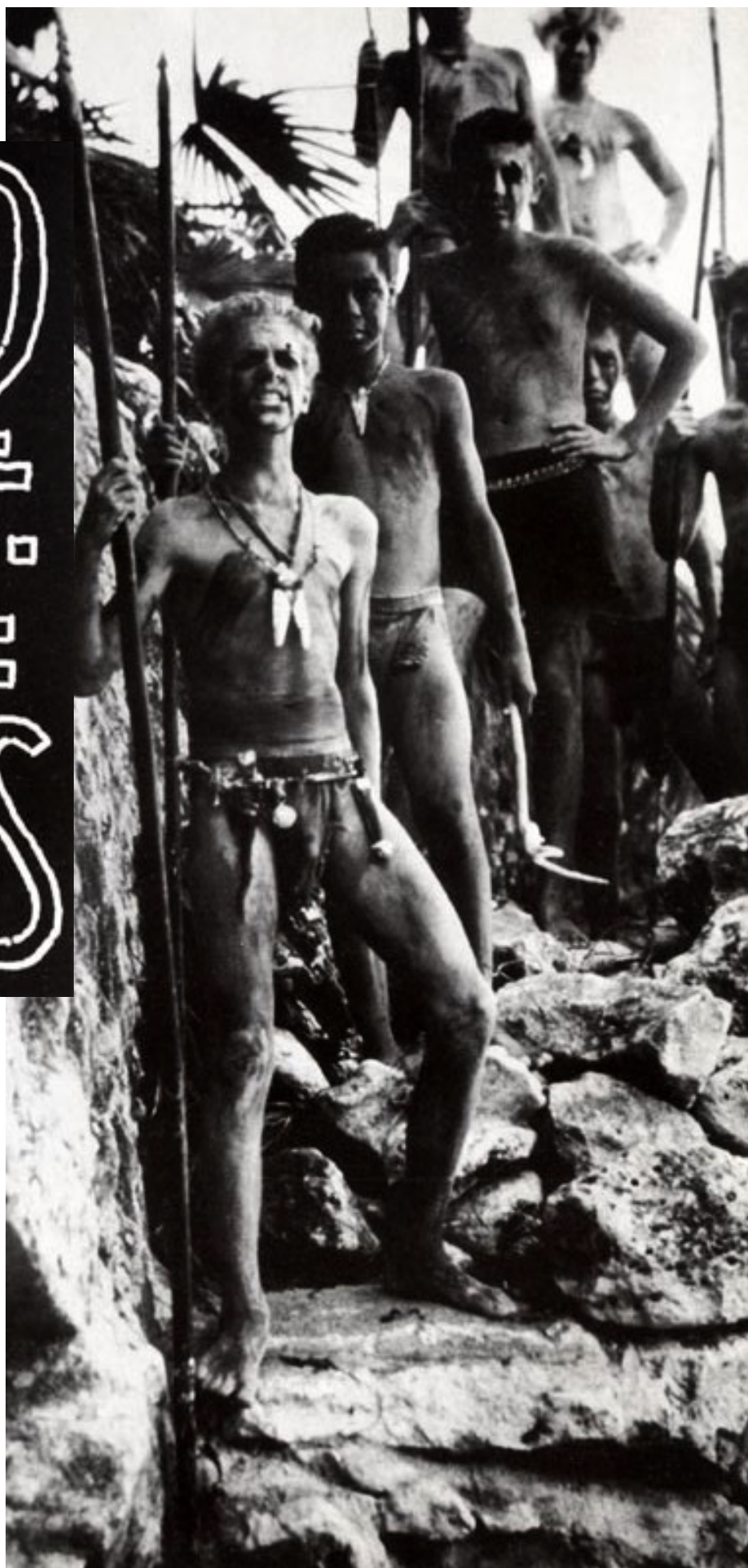


LORD OF THE FLIES



FILMS AND BOOKS

Reading a book is very different to watching a film. The way that we understand both is also different. We firstly need to think of the ways in which films and books tell their stories. In the chart below, try to fill in any ideas that you have about the ways in which each medium tells a story, how each creates meaning for a viewer/reader. Think of such things as character, point of view, descriptions. What can one medium do that the other cannot? (under novel, don't just write down "words" for how it tells a story. Think of the different ways that words are used, for example speech.)

FILM

BOOK

ADAPTATIONS

Adapting a book into a film seems to be very popular with film makers. Can you think of any books that have recently been adapted for the screen? What do you think the attraction is for film makers in doing an adaptation? You should think about both the technical problems and also the problems with an audience.

Why do you think that LORD OF THE FLIES was chosen to be adapted for the screen? What qualities does the book have that might make it an interesting film?

ACTIVITY

Imagine that you are the scriptwriter of the film and you are trying to interest a production company in financing your filmed version of LOAD OF THE FLIES. Write a letter to them explaining why you think that they should fund your film. You will need to give them details of the story, what it's about, who are the main characters and say why you think this story will interest audiences.

DIFFERENCES

As you will already have seen from your work on how different media tell stories, it is impossible for a film to tell a story in exactly the same way as a book (and vice versa). There will be additions and omissions. This does not necessarily mean that one is better than another, it means they are different.

The major difference that you will have noticed is that the boys no longer come from British public schools but instead come from an American military academy. This is obviously a very major change.

Why do you think that this has taken place? Does it have any advantages or disadvantages? Do you think that someone who has read the book would react differently to this change compared to someone who has not?

In order to explore this further, let us look at some of the other differences.

1 Were any of the characters altered?

2 Are they the most central characters or others?

3 On the whole, in what way have they changed?

4 Did the changes in characterisation affect your response to the film as a whole?

5 Did the changes help clarify certain situations for you?

6 Do you think that the changes occurred because of the inevitable condensing of the novel necessary in making a film of ninety minutes?

Fill in the chart below:

SEQUENCE WHICH APPEARED IN BOOK BUT NOT IN FILM	SEQUENCE WHICH APPEARED IN FILM BUT NOT IN BOOK

Having filled in the chart try answering the following questions.

1 What has changed the most?

2 Did the changes in the plot affect your response to the film as a whole?

3 Did the changes clarify certain situations for you?

4 Did the changes in the film in any way alter the way that you saw the message" of the book? Did they harden or soften the impact?

WATCHING AND READING

Because of the way in which we are viewing a film the first live minutes of any film are important: the opening sequences have:

1 To set up a situation, introduce the elements of the story that will get your attention, make you ask what will happen next.

2 To introduce the characters.

This is where film differs very much from literature. Film operates almost in a shorthand way. In a very brief amount of time a character has to be presented in a way that we can recognise almost immediately. Although we cannot instantly identify with characters in the normal way, the same principles apply. As each of the characters appears we are given visual impressions - the way they dress, mannerisms, reactions to situations and other characters - which guide us. Look now at the chart on the following page.

Fill in this chart describing the visual information given about each character as they first appear on screen. Concentrate on mannerisms, dress, accent (if any) and reactions to whatever is going on around them. Then read the opening chapter of the novel. How are the characters introduced to us there? What words, either in descriptions by the author or by the characters themselves, help to give us an idea of the characters of Ralph, Piggy and Jack?



	INTRODUCTION IN FILM	INTRODUCTION IN BOOK
RALPH		
JACK		
PIGGY		

As each character is introduced to us we begin to take sides. Our attitudes change, however, otherwise we would merely be dealing with stereotypes. Our initial reactions are then changed as the film proceeds and we watch the characters develop.

Try to describe the ways in which the characters change during the film and the visual ways that tell us about these changes. At the end of the film are our perceptions of the characters any different from that at the start?

You might find the following chart helpful in answering these questions.

	REACTION AFTER FIRST APPEARANCE	SYMPATHIES AT END OF FILM	CHARACTER CHANGE	VISUAL CHANGE
 <p>RALPH</p>				
 <p>JACK</p>				
 <p>PIGGY</p>				
 <p>SIMON</p>				

Obviously reactions do change. Some characters keep one's sympathies, others lose them. Some even gain them as the film develops. The important question is how the film maker creates a situation whereby one can alter one's perceptions as the film develops. Is this done merely in terms of plot the unexpected change of heart when the character we consider bad actually does something good? Or is it more subtle than that? (or a mixture of the two.)

Look again at chart three. Select a character that you consider changed during the course of the film. Try and work out why. Have they simply done something that we did not really expect, be it good or bad, or has the way that they are presented on the screen altered in any way? How are we made to sympathise with certain characters and dislike others? Do any of our sympathies change during the film? Of the four characters above, say whether this happens and how it happens.

POTTED BIOGRAPHIES

Imagine that you have been asked to give details about the lives of the three main characters in the film - Ralph, Jack and Piggy. Write three short descriptions of each of these characters, telling about what happens to them on the island and what sort of people they are.

When you have done this, you should think carefully about more than just events and facts. What were your feelings about the different characters, how would you sum them up? How did they relate to other characters?

What you have written above are your impressions of the characters, the ideas that you have built up during the film. However, you did not learn all of these things about the character at once. If we were watching a film and the complete character was revealed to us straight away and the character did not change during the film, then we might not find the film that interesting.

What we now need to look at is the way in which the character was revealed to us. What were the moments in the film that revealed the character points to us?

TASK

You will now be given a large sheet of paper which contains three charts, one for each of the major characters. In the column on the left, write down your character points, one to each box. Then in the column on the right, write down the moments in the film that revealed each particular point. Finally, think back to the film and the order of these events. In the final column, write down the order of the events that you have listed.

NARRATIVES

The descriptions that you have given each of the main characters have been formed by what each character has contributed to the development of the story, the narrative. To state the obvious, every story has a beginning, a middle and an end. An audience for any story expects this. However, each of these

three sections has a function in keeping the audience interested in the story. We have put these functions in the following chart.

BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END
set up	confrontation	resolution

a) The set up - as the name suggests, the part of the story where we are given the first details of the characters, what the film may be about, the setting.

b) Confrontation - all stories deal with conflict, even comedies. The confrontation is the working out of the ideas which are given to us in the set-up part of the story.

c) Resolution - here the conflict is solved, either happily or sadly depending on what type of story it is.

One thing we ought to consider is the moment when the set-up ends and the confrontation begins. Another way of saying this is when in the film does the story really get under way? At what point do we know enough about the characters for the story to start?

Similarly, when does the confrontation end and the resolution start to take place? What are the two moments in the plot that mark these changes. Also, what are the conflicts which are set up?

CONFLICTS

We said in the work on narrative that every story revolves around conflicts - be they between actual people or ideas.

What would you say are the major conflicts that are set up in LORD OF THE FLIES?

Here are some to start you off:

RALPH V. JACK
ORDER V. CHAOS

Let's look at just one of these conflicts. We have given you a conflict chart on the next page. You will see that Jack and Ralph appear at the top. In the first line of boxes copy in the descriptions of them that you have made earlier. Then in the central box, write down what are the moments in the story that bring them into conflict. Then in the outcomes boxes write down what happens after each of these conflicts and then finally the ways in which the conflict is resolved.

What you will do here is to follow through the narrative structure via a conflict. You could try doing a similar exercise with some of the other conflicts.

THEMES

A number of these conflicts also sum up what we could call the themes of the film. These are reflected at certain moments of the story. What would you say the major themes of the book are?

Here are some to start you off:

COURAGE	DARKNESS
DEATH	FEAR
LEADERSHIP	ORDER

Try to write down as many other themes as you can think of.

Obviously we understand and follow these themes through what we are shown on screen or what is written in the book. In the large chart that you will be given, try to write down incidents or scenes from the book and the film which illustrate each of these themes. Make sure that if an event occurs only in the film or only in the book then you mark it with either a B or an F

TOPICS

The Island

The island where the boys find themselves after the plane has crashed is one where there are no rules. It is up to the boys to create their own rules. Do you think that it is necessary to have rules?

If you were stranded on an island with a group of students from your school or college, what rules would you make up?

As well as being a place without rules, the island is also a place which is not familiar.

You will probably have noticed the boys talk about things which they have left behind -hamburgers, television programmes. What does the island hold for them?

As viewers of the film or readers of the book, we have to think of how the island is presented to us.



What images are given to us of the island, through either shots or descriptive passages?

In the following chart, write down as many locations as you can think of that we are shown of the island. What sort of place does each seem to be? Is each place beautiful, a paradise? Or are some more threatening? How does the author and the film maker convey these ideas to us?

In the third column, try to write down how the idea of each place is conveyed to us, in the film and in the book. You may wish to describe the same place at different times of day if the feeling about the place differs.

PLACE	IMAGE OF PLACE	HOW SHOWN IN FILM	HOW DESCRIBED IN BOOK

It is the island which brings about the changes in the boys. How does each react to the island?

A pair of glasses

Only one person on the island wears glasses and that is Piggy. What effect does this have on our understanding of his character? How do the other boys react to his wearing glasses? But are the glasses a negative thing? How do they become the most important object on the island? How does the fate of Piggy's glasses affect Piggy himself?

Do you think that there is any other meaning to the glasses - apart from just as an object? Do they represent anything else - an idea, say? Do they link into any of the themes?

Look back at your character descriptions of Piggy. Do they in any way fit into this description?

Mysteries

When the boys first arrive on the island they are somewhat at a loss as to what to do. The island is a strange place, full of mysteries, some of which are pleasant, some of which are scary. Try to make a list of all of the things that are mysterious about the island. How has the film maker created this sense of mystery? How does the film maker create a sense of either pleasure or fear?



In what ways are the mysteries important to the development of the plot? How are the various mysteries used within the plot?

Look back at your themes and conflicts work? Do any of the mysteries fit in with any of the themes?

Knowledge

The island can be seen as some sort of Paradise. Yet what happened to Adam and Eve in Paradise? And what happened to their children? You should find out the stories about Adam and Eve and also about Cain and Abel. In what ways do they relate to LORD OF THE FLIES? If Adam gained knowledge, then what knowledge do the boys gain whilst they are on the island?

Fire



The building of the fire and the attempts to keep the fire burning are very important parts of the story. What happens the first time that the boys try to build a fire? Why do you think that the author chose to make this happen? How does it relate to other things that happen in the story? At what other points in the story does fire play an important part? Obviously, from the point of view of survival and rescue, fire is very important to the boys. This, you could say, is a positive aspect of fire in the story. But are there any negative aspects to fire? Is fire, or anything connected with it, ever shown as being a bad thing.

Pulling it all together

You will be given a large 'LORD OF THE FLIES' narrative chart. In order to complete this you will need to refer back to all of the work that you have done so far.

This is what you must then do:

1. On the top line, fill in the major events of the plot. We have started you off on this.
2. Most of the other sections explain themselves. For each of the plot moments that you have noted you should see what is revealed about the character, the themes, the conflicts.

When you have completed the chart, you should then be in a position to write an essay on how 'LORD OF THE FLIES' tells its story.

ASSIGNMENTS

a) Imagine that you were one of the small boys (in the book, the littluns). What would persuade you to follow either Jack or Ralph? Imagine that the time had come for you to decide which one to follow. Try to write down your thoughts about what both had to offer and which you think that you would join and why.

b) At the end of the story, the boys are rescued. Imagine that you are Jack. You have to describe what happened while you were on the island and how it came about that Piggy and Simon died. Ralph is in the same room as you when you give your explanation. Write a short play in which this scene is acted out.

c) William Golding has described LORD OF THE FLIES as a fable. A fable usually has a moral attached to it. What would you say is the moral of LORD OF THE FLIES?

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