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Identity of the Fire v.s the Conch

The identity of the conch and the fire hold great importance in the novel *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding. They both symbolize very meaningful and significant identities in this novel. The identities will not only interfere with all the boys on the island, but they also will become a part of each character in a different way. These symbols have both negative and positive impacts on each and every one of the boys. Not only will the symbols affect the boys on the island because of their actions, but they are affected by these symbols throughout the story all the way to the suspenseful end of the novel.

First, the fire takes on an identity that impacts the boys on the island greatly. The fire has an identity that becomes as mysterious as all the boys on the island. A quote from the novel that is relevant and important to the fire's identity "For a moment he had a fleeting picture of the strange glamour that had once invested in beaches. But the island was scorched up like dead wood, Simon was dead and Jack had... ". This quote illustrates that the fire, when given power, can have more destruction than any of the boys have ever caused, and as the boys on the island became exasperated towards each other the fire fed on their anger and consumes the island in flames.

Secondly, the fire obtaining great importance is this quote "The flame flapped higher and the boys broke into a cheer" This quote emphasizes the fact that no matter how

deadly the fire is, the boys are still mesmerized by it and overjoyed to have come in contact with it. They also don't realize how with one little match or something to go erroneous it can result in danger or death. Yet, they still light it to gain achievement without realizing the true fear of the fire which to them is simply warmth and light. The fire takes on different identities throughout the novel. For example, at the beginning of the book, the fire was only for rescue and feasting, but it later resulted in destruction and fear.

Next, one of the most well-known symbols in *Lord of the Flies* is the conch. The conch not only takes on many different identities, but it has a very significant impact on the boys and most importantly, Piggy. You could even say the conch was a part of Piggy and that it has great meaning to him. A quote which demonstrates the conch and its importance being a major symbol is "which is better to have rules and agree, or to hunt and kill?" This quote signifies great importance to the conch as being a symbol for rules and civilization. Jack, being the leader for hunters which later become killers, do not agree with the rules of the conch, resulting in anarchy. The conch is important to Piggy because the boys have nothing but the conch (rules and order), and if they lose rules they lose each other, which later will become savagery.

Eventually, Jack from *Lord of the Flies* fights against rule and order because it limits his ability to seize power and take control. Jack even strays from Ralph's crowd and starts his own group and states "And the conch doesn't count at this end of the island" proving he doesn't like the conch which represents rule and authority. With no rules and no civil norms, the boys will return to savagery. Jack's identity is related to the

conch in many different ways. He never realizes the importance of the conch and sees it only as something that will get in the way of him having absolute power.

As a result, the conch, and the fire are portrayed as symbols that are not identities the boys assume. They have an influence on the boys and change the way they think about each other, and their actions. The symbols in Lord of the Flies are objects we see often but, William Golding has done an exceptional job of giving these objects symbolism which take on a certain purpose, a new life, and different identities than we would normally know.