CHAPTER I

A LAMENT FOR LOST INNOCENCE

*Lord of the Flies* is the outcome of a dark mood that pervaded the world since the horrors of Nazism and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Golding shared this mood with many other sensitive minds. The novel shows savagery, despair and a sense of futility. The depiction of savagery through the behaviour of a group of boys from the "civilized" world is evident in *Lord of the Flies*. The boys' world on the island has its counterpart in the world outside where "civilized" nations are engaged in war. A thin line divides "civilized" and savagery and this is erased by selfishness. Rationality and common sense are subsumed into savagery.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century western society, certain misconceptions grew up about the nature of man. Golding writes: “It seemed to me that man's capacity for greed, his innate cruelty and selfishness was being hidden behind a kind of pair of political pants. I believed then, that man was sick—not exceptional man, but average man”¹. Paul Crawford argues that Golding, in one sense, wants to universalise the “totalitarian” spirit by these comments². Golding tells us that he worked out his thesis about the diseased nature of man in the play of children.

*Lord of the Flies* was the recasting by William Golding of Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island*. The morality of *The Coral Island* has been questioned and shown as unrealistic in *Lord of the Flies*. Civilized people are corrupt and are portrayed as savages in *Lord of the Flies* unlike in *The Coral Island*. Also unlike *The Coral Island*, the vileness proceeds not from the cannibals but from the boys. *Lord of the Flies* is an unbiased account of human life. Virginia Tiger writes: “Instead of Ballantyne’s unshaken faith in the superiority of the white race, Golding questions civilization itself; against man’s innate savagery it seems contemptibly weak”³.

On the island, the boys find themselves free. But soon we find that they involve themselves in different purposes. Ralph and Piggy strive to be rescued. Jack
reverts to savagery. Their liberty is not a true liberty. According to Michel Foucault, a true natural liberty does not continuously experience fear and hope. A liberty, Foucault further adds, of interests and coalitions and not of minds and hearts, is not a true natural liberty (FMC, 203).

In *The Coral Island*, the natives’ faces were besmeared with red paint, tattooed and streaked with white colour. In *Lord of the Flies*, Jack’s hunters colour their faces so that their primitive selves can be released from shame. Unlike the pastoral evocation of life in *The Coral Island* we have diarrhoea of the ‘littluns’, the damp scratching heat of a jungle, the filthy flies drinking at the Pig’s head and the unfriendly remoteness of the ocean in *Lord of the Flies*. The sight of ‘littluns’ suffering in the dark and huddling for comfort is pitiable.

Civilization does not restrain man’s inner depravity. Instead, civilization arms man with a greater power of destruction. It ultimately leads to the annihilation of mankind. The condition of the boys on the island is brought about by war among the civilized nations. Human beings have inflated egos and when these are combined with education and intelligence, they assume dangerous proportions for the safety and perpetuation of civilization. Laws to safeguard civilization are formulated but they remain insufficient because of selfishness. Michel Foucault in his book *Madness and Civilization* has not given credence to the view that the laws of the State are identical with the laws of the heart, whereas this identification was the bourgeoisie’s great dream and preoccupation in the classical age. Imposition of goodness by force only leads to intimidation and “then the only recompense of virtue is to escape punishment” (FMC, 57).

In *Lord of the Flies* Ralph, Piggy and Simon struggle for the sake of human decency and the values of civilization. Whenever Simon thinks of the beast, there rises before his inner eye “the picture of a human at once heroic and sick”, who is more than just a beast. He can meet and confront the beast within him. Simon died because he sought to deliver others from the horror of the monster when he finds out the truth about it after climbing on the mountain. Piggy’s challenge leads to his death and Ralph is hunted because he is opposed to savagery.
The children try to impose civilized standards on the island. Jack says: “We’ve got to have rules and obey them. After all, we’re not savages. We’re English; and the English are best at everything”. It is a parody of Ballantyne’s The Coral Island. The conch becomes a symbol of rational behaviour. An air of uneasiness prevails while remembering that a similar habit existed among Homer’s heroes. No one may speak unless he is holding the conch. Gradually, the shibboleths of civilization are erased and fears crop up. The boys are divided into two groups and Jack as the leader of the hunters is “safe from shame or self-consciousness behind the mask of his paint.” Jack throws a feast to tempt as many as possible to join him. Jack loses his name as he sits throned “like an idol, waited on by acolytes”, and “power lay in the brown swell of his forearms: authority sat on his shoulder and chattered in his ear like an ape”.

Paul Crawford in his book Politics and History in William Golding: The World Turned Upside Down has shown how in Lord of the Flies Golding applies fantastic and carnivalesque modes of Menippean satire to shake post-war English complacency about the deeds of the Nazis, particularly the Holocaust (PHWG, 54). Paul Crawford argues that the boys, in the novel, are subjected to unexplained phenomenon which brings in an element of mystery and suspense about the nature of the “beast”.

Uncertainty prevails about what is real and unreal on the island: “Strange things happened at midday. The glittering sea rose up, moving apart in planes of blatant impossibility; the coral reef and the few, stunted palms that clung to the more elevated parts would float up into the sky, would quiver, be plucked apart, run like raindrops on a wire or be repeated as in an odd succession of mirrors. Sometimes land loomed where there was no land and flicked out like a bubble as the children watched” (LF, 63).

The strange transformation of the natural fabric of the coral reef is rationally explained by Piggy as a mirage. But a general uncertainty of what is real and unreal does remain. The equivocal nature of familiar things is constantly in view. Even after Piggy’s scientific explanation, Phil speaks of seeing “something big and horrid” in the trees (LF, 93). Percival speaks of seeing a beast that “comes out of the sea” (LF, 96). Although Ralph insists that he was experiencing a nightmare, Phil maintains that he was fully awake at that time.
Three episodes indicate sadism and cruelty. The first is the destruction of the sand castles by Roger and Maurice and the flinging of sand into Percival’s eyes. The second episode is Henry’s attempt to control with a stick the motions of the “tiny transparencies” (LF, 66) that linger near the water and over the beach for food. The third episode is Roger throwing stones in the direction of Henry. The post-Freudian realism about the boys, in striking contrast with the earlier Romantic versions, finds a subtle expression in *Lord of the Flies*. The boys’ aggression and killing of the sow is suggestive of their sexuality.

The irresponsibility of the boys is revealed in the games played by them. These games have wider reverberations. Ambiguity is attached to various moves of the boys. Mark Kinkead Weekes and Ian Gregor write, “The glamour of the ‘natural’ is also ambiguous. On the one hand there is pleasure in ripping off the clothes that speak of discipline and regimentation at school, the pleasure of nakedness in sun and water. On the other, it needs only a little of Piggy’s ‘ill-omened talk’ about the realities of the situation to make a school-shirt ‘strangely pleasing’ to put on again.” We feel impatient with Piggy’s premature middle age.

The reader is made to experience reverberations of uneasiness from the beginning. The boys engage in rough games but these could turn into actual violence. Ralph exposes Piggy’s nickname. Jack drives his knife into the tree. Tension increases between Ralph and Jack and the game doesn’t seem to be a game anymore. Savagery seems to be stealthily creeping into everybody’s behaviour. For a moment, even Ralph is carried away by a “sudden thick excitement” when Robert acts as a pig – “Ralph too was fighting to get near, to get a handful of that brown vulnerable flesh.” Jack gets Robert by the hair and brandishes his knife. It is not a game though one could say it could happen. After becoming a pig, Robert suggests, “You need a real pig because you’ve got to kill him” and Jack replies “use a littlun” and everybody laughs. Jack has said it in fun but we have become aware of the possibility of a tilt towards savagery under the damaging influence of darker passions. The boys become afraid of lightning. The dance and chant of the boys change from a game to a protective ritual – “Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!”
Fun and games carry undertones of darker passions and savagery. Sometimes acts of savagery are not totally devoid of beautification. Simon is killed and his body is beautified, “The water rose further and dressed Simon’s coarse hair with brightness. The line of his cheek silvered, and the turn of his shoulder became sculptured marble” (LF, 190). Pebble is decorated with pearls and the pitted sand is smoothed and inlaid with silver. Acceptance is an essence of Simon’s view. He could see things inclusively in both their heroic and their sick aspects. This acceptance includes the bubble of Simon’s last breath escaping with an ugly sound of ‘wet plop’. Beauty co-exists with the alien, even with the ugly.

Ralph and Jack both want to have power. Their ways are different. Ralph is sanguine whereas Jack is sadistic and destructive. Ralph certainly thinks about the rescue more than Jack does. On the political level, the conflict between Ralph and Jack can be said to be between utilitarian democracy and authoritarianism. As per Erick Fromm’s distinction between rational and irrational will, Ralph’s will can be said to be rational because it is disciplined, realistic, patient and non self-indulgent. Jack’s irrational will is powerful but it drives man. Jack confesses to a feeling of “being hunted; as if something’s behind you all the time in the jungle”. The liberals are with Ralph but they become morally ineffectual: “This indicated that he wished to listen but would not speak; and Piggy intended it as a gesture of disapproval” (LF, 98). Savagery begins to overpower them and Piggy, Ralph and Simon sit “in the darkness, striving unsuccessfully to convey the majesty of adult life.” (LF, 117).

In A Moving Target, Golding voices his loss of belief in the “perfectibility of social man” and its effect on Lord of the Flies: “The years of my life that went into the book were not years of thinking but of feeling, years of wordless brooding that brought me not so much to an opinion as a stance. It was like lamenting the lost childhood of the world. The theme of Lord of the Flies is grief, sheer grief, grief, grief,...”

Ralph becomes happy at the thought of the absence of adults on the island. But Piggy knows that they may have to remain there for a long time. Piggy’s intelligence is usually disregarded. But when Jack steals his spectacles, he decides to confront him and rises to great heights of human dignity. He tries to clear the issues – “Which is
better - to be a pack of painted niggers like you or to be sensible like Ralph is? Which is better - to have rules and agree, or to hunt and kill? Which is better, law and rescue, or hunting and breaking things up?” (LF, 222).

Fear of an external beast still haunts the boys. Even rational, scientific Piggy thinks of strange sounds being made by the Beast outside his hut; “A voice whispered outside: ‘Piggy-Piggy’-‘It’s come’, gasped Piggy. ‘It’s real’” (LF, 184). Of course, the sounds are those of Jack and members of his gang stealing the remains of Piggy’s glasses. Paul Crawford writes: "Effectively, the fantastic elements in *Lord of the Flies* operate in tandem with those of carnival: they combine to disturb us and subvert dominant cultural notions of the superiority of civilized English behaviour. These are the kinds of assumptions that buoyed the complacency of England, and indeed other Allied nations, namely, that the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis were an exclusively German phenomenon” (PHWG, 62).

Piggy pays with his life for his courage. The savages turn furious and are about to attack him when Roger topples the rock that kills him. Conch, the symbol of law and order, is smashed. Like Simon, Piggy does not believe in the beast – “I know there isn’t no beast - not with claws and all that, I mean - but I know there isn’t no fear either... unless... unless we get frightened of people” (LF, 92).

Piggy is asthmatic and his asthma is an expression of fear and hate. This hate in Piggy’s mind is due to fear and alienation. But he dies when he comes out of this fear and resolves to face Jack. Piggy has insight and knows the future course of action to be undertaken. Mark Kinkead Weekes and Ian Gregor write: “His sickness tells Piggy truths of human motivation that his rational intelligence, and Ralph’s health, are blind to” (WG, 37).

The savages kill Piggy and his death is like the slaughter of a pig for he is decapitated by “a glancing blow from chin to knee”. He lands on the square red rock in the sea, a sacrificial table, with a grunt. The monster-sea sucks his body, which “like a pig’s after it has been killed twitched.” The symbolic name of Piggy comes clear, now.
Ralph is endowed with common sense. He aims to organise the community on democratic lines. Ralph proposes to hold the assemblies and he insists that people will not be allowed to speak out of turn. Ralph’s efforts for establishing a disciplinary mechanism within which each individual would be supervised and uninterrupted efforts would be made for their rescue. Michel Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punish* has endorsed and defined the disciplinary mechanism as that process.

... in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links the centre and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead.10

Ralph wants the values of civilization to be maintained and the decencies of human behaviour to be observed. He did not suspect Jack’s hatred until Piggy pointed it out and even then it was difficult for him to believe that it exists. This is a flaw in his character. Ralph wants to exercise power but doesn’t know how to do so. Also, he is unable to control Jack. As Michel Foucault observes: “Two ways of exercising power over men, of controlling their relations, of separating out their dangerous mixtures” (FDP, 198). Ralph does neither of these. He focuses on rescue but doesn’t visualise opposition from Jack, and thus remains oblivious of both the ways of exercising power: “marking and analyzing”.

On one occasion, when Ralph was faced with a problem, he said, “Let me think”, and we are told: “By now Ralph had no self-consciousness in public thinking but would treat the day’s decisions as though he were playing chess. The only trouble was that he would never be a very good chess player” (LF, 145). Ralph found himself vexed to find how little he had thought like a grown-up. Something flutters in front of his mind like a bat’s wing. It obscures his thinking. There are times when there is something he wants to say, then the shutter comes down and he cannot.

It is true that Ralph is drawn to savagery when Roger impersonates the boar and is eager to take a place in the dementia of the fearful dance that ended in Simon’s
murder. But, this is momentary. The reaction of Ralph and Piggy after the murder is important. Ralph insists that Simon is murdered whereas Piggy says: “We got to forget this. We can’t do no good thinking about it, see?” (LF, 194). However, Ralph does go along with Piggy’s suggestion that they pretend to others that they did not actually take part in the dance. Ralph focuses on rescue. For that, he exerts his authority even against the mutinous grumblings of the children: “We want smoke. And you go wasting your time. You roll rocks.”

As the narrative progresses, both ‘longing’ and ‘common sense’ are clearly projected. Ralph’s nightly game of ‘supposing’ fails to comfort, because the ‘wildness’ even of Dartmoor and the Ponies is no longer securely attractive:

His mind skated to a consideration of a tamed town where savagery could not set foot. What could be safer than the bus centre with its lamps and wheels? All at once, Ralph was dancing round a lamp standard. There was a bus crawling out of the bus station, a strange bus... (LF, 87).

The mind releases its secret that there is no safe barrier between civilization and wild nature. Neither Jack nor Ralph can see his own image and face. Jack cannot recognise his own image behind the “awesome stranger’s” mask of warpaint when he looks into the water-filled coconut. Ralph is also unable to recognise his own face, though he keeps “his face to the skull that lay grinning at the sky” (LF, 228). Ralph cannot penetrate this ‘parody thing’, which in its motion amalgamates the parachutist’s bowing and the sea’s breathing. All three motions are those of an ancient primal rhythm that does not so much ‘progress’ as endure ‘a momentous rise and fall’. It is the rhythm of man’s darkness and his history. It is the rhythm that transfigures Simon in death, engulfs the parachutist on its way to sea and imparts to Piggy some beauty in his death.

In his desperate race, Ralph hides himself in Simon’s cell. Like Simon, he connects with primal nature in terror: “He laid his cheek against the chocolate - coloured earth, licked his dry lips and closed his eyes” (LF, 243) and feels the ancient rhythm: “Under the thicket, the earth was vibrating very slightly” (LF, 243). Ralph repeats Simon’s early important admonition “you’ll get back” and with this partial
acknowledgement of his own savagery and evil he breaks through the cell. He strikes out: “He forgot his wounds, his hunger and thirst, and became fear; hopeless fear on flying feet, rushing through the forest towards the open beach” (LF, 245).

Michel Foucault has observed that fear and anxiety are caused by confinement which leads to evil or evil cannot be mitigated by confinement. In fact, physical and moral evil can be seen ramifying in every direction because of confinement. We can only feel "repugnance and pity" for the confined (FMC, 193). In fact Ralph’s hiding to save himself, makes him realise evil and rottenness.

The journey of Ralph’s life on the island starts from harmony with nature and ends with the realisation that humanity is in the grip of rottenness, taint and savagery. In the beginning, standing naked on the palm terrace and looking at the dazzling beach and the shimmering water, Ralph is like Adam in the Garden of Eden. Michel Foucault in his book *Madness and Civilization* reminds us of the moral and medicinal value ascribed to the country air in Europe once upon a time. It brought both health and spiritual vigour (FMC, 193). On the other hand, Ralph sadly begins to feel out of harmony with nature as the forest starts looking “savage with smoke and flame”. Frederick Karl has beautifully said about the ending that:

The officer berates the boys at the end in *Lord of the Flies*. The implication is that while the adults are disappointed by the boys the former are themselves, of course, little better. Ralph himself is torn by tears which indicate that his childhood and innocence are gone forever, that he has been initiated into a malevolent adult world from which escape is impossible. Crying for a childhood lost beyond redemption, he recognizes through his tears what he must face for the rest of his life.11

Ralph strives for social community, civilization and domestication. On the other hand, Jack rediscovers in himself the instincts and compulsions of a hunter. On all fours like an animal, he learns to flare his nostrils and assess the air, to cast across the ground for spoor. The forest for Jack is a place not only for hunting but also of being hunted sometimes. Jack reverts to savagery and the idea of rescue doesn’t remain real to him. Pigs matter more than ships to him. Mark Kinkead Weekes and
Ian Gregor write about Jack’s attitude: “But we are not simply to write this off as evil; Jack is also acquiring a kind of knowledge that Ralph singularly lacks and would be better for having” (WG, 29). Jack’s face painting starts off as a reversion to civilization, not to savagery. But when it is done:

He looked in astonishment, no longer at himself but at an awesome stranger... his sinewy body held up a mast which drew their eyes and appalled them. He began to dance and his laughter became a bloodthirsty snarling... the mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness (LF, 112).

At the time of killing their first pig, Jack and his co-hunters let the fire go out. But Jack has not totally turned to savagery. He still wants that all the boys should live together happily and peacefully. He still twitches at the memory of the blood.

The real danger comes when Jack splits from Ralph. He becomes power obsessive and wants to control the others. For Jack there are powers that are stronger than men and they can be propitiated by ritual, ceremony and sacrifice. Jack’s experiences are different from those of Ralph and Piggy. Simon’s view is that blaming bad men and the Devil is both right and wrong. There is evil in everyone.

There is a complete degeneration in Jack’s personality as his power obsession grows and becomes intimidating. It eventually leads to savagery. His actions show indiscipline. Decisions are not taken through consensus. Jack begins to lack direction in his actions and shows wildness in his behaviour. Michel Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punish* has said that there is an increased danger of power degenerating into tyranny if the disciplinary mechanism is not democratically controlled. There should also be wider participation in it and surveillance of it (FDP, 207). Jack’s power over the children comes from his wild and savage ways. Discipline, democracy, and surveillance are totally missing.

Jack takes pride in how "they closed in on the struggling pig... had outwitted a living thing, imposed their will upon it, taken away its life like a long satisfying drink” (LF, 88). The internal incantation – “Kill the pig; cut her throat! Bash her in” (LF, 94)-is a disguise for his emotional self-indulgence. Golding realizes the
corrupting effects of aggressive selfishness and lust for power in terms of “self-awareness”. He says:

It seems to me that this self-awareness, intelligence, with these come the defect of their virtue. We have to learn, and it’s quite possible, I think, that we never shall learn, that as species that will be the thing which will trip us up, our own intelligence and our own lusts. But if we are going to survive two aspects of man, his selfishness and his intelligence, we’ve got to learn to control those, otherwise they tend to destroy us.12

Compulsion to kill is disguised in the need for meat in Jack.

One of the most powerful carnivalesque elements in the book is that of the pig. Crawford has argued that Golding has used this element symbolically “to subvert dominant racial assumptions, in particular toward the Jews, and, universally, toward those humans considered alien or foreign to any grouping”. Crawford sees a strong link between pig flesh and the Jews. This is reinforced by Golding’s Hebraic title of the novel, Lord of the Flies. Jews do not eat pig flesh. In the novel human beings are made to act like pigs. This can be seen in the frenzied, carnivalistic debauchery of Jack. Simon’s and Piggy’s deaths signify the link between the pig symbol and the extermination of those who are considered outsiders. Piggy is Golding’s creation and did not feature in Ballantyne’s ‘Coral Island’. He is a Jew-like figure. “There had grown tacitly among the biguns the opinion that Piggy was an outsider, not only by accent, which did not matter, but by fat, and ass-mar, and specs, and a certain disinclination for manual labour” (LF, 70).

Both the Biguns and the Littluns are devoid of humanity. Maurice, a ‘bigun’, romps through the ‘castles’ and fills Percival’s eye with sand. But Maurice is not without a feeling of guilt – “At the back of his mind formed the uncertain outlines of an excuse” (LF, 76). There is also a suggestion that perhaps a parent’s “heavy hand” would have stopped him from doing this. Morality is not a matter of conditioning or memory. Johnny, a ‘littlun’, is morally innocent but not totally harmless: “Johnny was well built, with fair hair and a natural belligerence” (LF, 75).
The Samneric twins are captured and forced to turn into savages in the Castle Rock. Roger lets fall a huge rock which kills Piggy. Jack and his hunters turn to total savagery. With their painted faces, spears, and ululation they spread terror. Ralph weeps “for the end of innocence, the darkness of man’s heart...” (LF, 223). Jack’s gang persecutes Jew-like Piggy and others with a willful, transgressive violence. This is reminiscent of fascism and anti-Semitism. Paul Crawford writes: “We witness the demise of Ralph’s parliament and the ascendancy of Jack’s totalitarian, primitive regime based on savagery, hunting and primal drives. There follows aggressive sexual debasement and frenzy in the killing of the carnival pig, mimicking and rape by sticking the spear ‘Right up her ass’” (PHWG, 64). Descriptions of lower body parts, symbolic of misrule, abound in the book.

Frederick R. Karl, in his book *A Reader's Guide to the Contemporary English Novel*, has been critical of the operation of conflicting passions in the book. According to him, the boys struggle for supremacy is a re-enactment of a ritual of the adult world but the knowledge attendant upon adulthood is missing. The boys’ imagination remains childish and the seriousness of the theme is diluted. Any intended irony has not been gained and the power of conflicting passions dribbles away in the resolution (FK, 258).

We must remember that each word of the officer spoken at the end, is full of corrosive irony: “Fun and games. .. Having a war or something? . . . I should have thought that a pack of British boys – you’re all British aren’t you – would have been able to put up a better show than that. . . Like the Coral Island” (LF, 248).

The officer knows neither the children nor the adults. He thinks of himself not only as different from the children but also superior to them. The revolver, the sub-machine gun and the ‘trim cruiser’ reveal that it is the man that is the child. Ralph appears to be the most "grown-up" of all the persons, including the officer, but he has to weep. Mark Kinkead Weekes and Ian Gregor have said, “Through Ralph, Golding registers the proper response in pain and grief. What Ralph weeps for is the failure of Piggy’s idea of a rational world, Piggy’s friendship and his intelligence” (WG, 63-64).
Simon is confronted with the rotting corpse of a parachutist. He climbs the mountain to have a look at it. It has ‘white nasal bones; the teeth, the colours of corruption’ and a foul smell. There are flies in a dark cloud about the head. Both Pig’s head and the rotting corpse of a parachutist remind us of what human beings have done. Simon releases the parachutist’s figure from its tangle of lines. He can lay to rest the ‘history’ of man’s inhumanity. Mark Kinkead Weekes and Ian Gregor write: “On a deeper level Simon has shown that, by recognizing the truth of man’s evil, as it is revealed in what men have done, and by purging oneself from it one can be free to begin again” (WG, 46).

The parachutist’s figure is lifted by the wind and carried out to sea across the beach. The boys scream and flee into the darkness of the jungle. As the parachutist extended the meaning of the Pig’s head into a wider ‘history’ of man, so the parachutist has now been subsumed in Simon. Simon is killed by a “desire, thick, urgent, blind” that grows out of fear but is different from it. The boys become animals who “leapt on to the beast, screamed, struck, bit, tore. There were no words, and no movements but the tearing of teeth and claws” (LF, 188). The squirrel, the jaguar, the ape, have assumed the human form, symbolically.

Piggy blames Simon and points out that his crawling out of the dark had resulted in his death. However, the boys’ savagery cannot be ignored. The instinct to kill has entered the boys’ blood. It is true that Simon’s motives are uncertain. For example, at night he withdraws from the other children. The disturbing fact is that the only beasts on the island are the boys themselves. “Simon, walking in front of Ralph, felt a flicker of incredulity – a beast with claws that scratched, that sat on a mountain top, that left no tracks and yet was not fast enough to catch Samneric. Howsoever, Simon thought of the beast, there rose before his inward sight the picture of a human at once heroic and sick” (LF, 113). In his eagerness to explain the human nature of the phenomenon, Simon unwillingly becomes the “Beast” and is murdered. We become fully aware of the boys as beasts.

Simon has a moral imagination and thus sees the existence of his own evil. In contrast, Ralph exhibits only a “fatal unreasoning knowledge” of his approaching death which is directed towards his own survival, not that of the community’s. In his
book *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault has put forth the view that morality cannot be administered like trade or economy. Even the laws of nations are not sufficient to set the disorders of the heart right. It is a mistake to think that virtue can flourish under the decrees of State. Equally misplaced is the notion that an authority can make a virtue come to be respected or that physical constraints can safeguard it (FMC, 56). Simon’s bravery, in venturing to get to the truth of the dead parachutist, has a stamp of morality on it. Artificial and makeshift arrangements cannot make human beings lead a moral life. They only give birth to mechanical and disorderly personality. Virginia Tiger says: “Simon alone recognizes the real Beast and like Moses with the tablets of the law brings the truth down from the mountain” (VT, 59).

The Pig’s head speaks in “the voice of a schoolmaster” (LF, 178) and delivers “something very much like a sermon to the boy”. It insists that the island is corrupt and all is lost: “This is ridiculous. You know perfectly well you’ll only meet me down there - so don’t try to escape!” (LF, 178). The head’s advice about the realisation of evil is, in fact, the cynicism of adult life. It is a cynicism that can ignore even the indignity of being spiked on a stick and the cynicism that ‘grins’ at the obscenities that even the butterflies must desert. It recalls an incident when the butterflies “danced preoccupied in the centre of the clearing” during the sow’s mistreatment. The Head then represents something a great deal more obscene than simple bloodlust. It is the cynicism and easy optimism of the naval officer at the end who “grinned cheerfully at the obscene savages.”

The Lord of the Dung is Simon and the Head is his own strategic consciousness. The Lord’s head has “half shut eyes” and Simon keeps “his eyes shut, then sheltered them with his hand” (LF, 171) so that his vision is partial. He sees things "without definition and illusively" behind a “luminous veil.” Simon feels his own savagery: he “licks his dry lips” and feels the weight of his hair. After his epileptic fit, the blood “dries around his mouth and chin” in the manner of the "blood-blackened" grinning mouth of the Head. The flies leave the guts and "alighted by his runnels of sweat", (LF, 171) and drink at his head. The Head grins at this indignity. By a profound effort of will, Simon forces himself to penetrate his own loathing and break through his own consciousness: "At last Simon gave up and looked back; saw
the white teeth and dim eyes, the blood-and his gaze was held by that ancient, inescapable recognition” (LF, 171).

Fragments of the confrontation scene between Simon and the Head inform Golding’s *Egypt from My Inside*, where a small boy broods on the face of an Egyptian mummy and a red-faced, smug scientist looks on with “an eternally uncheerful grin” (HG, 76). Another such primal encounter is dramatized in Golding’s "Digging for pictures" in *The Hot Gates*. Excavating for ruins in the chalk hills of Wiltshire, he discovers a prehistoric skeleton in a “dark and quiet pit”\(^\text{13}\). Its jaws were wide open grinning, perhaps, with cynicism.

Simon has intuitive and correct faith. In Michel Foucault’s words, ... “there can be no true knowledge except by intuition, that is, by a singular act of pure and attentive intelligence, and by deduction, which links the observed evidence together”\(^\text{14}\). Simon does not argue like Piggy. He is also not as intelligent as Piggy and Ralph are. He has plenty of love, compassion and acceptance. He takes his time to arrive at any decision.

When Ralph confronts the same offensive Head which Simon had confronted, his reaction is totally different: “A sick fear and rage swept him. Fiercely, he hit out at the filthy thing in front of him that bobbed like a toy and came back, still grinning also into his face, so that he lashed and cried out in loathing” (LF, 228).

Ralph’s reaction is to turn away so that he does not acknowledge his own nature. Piggy resists superstition through reason and Simon does it through intuition. They are not set against each other. Perhaps there is a necessity of integrally developing and harmoniously establishing a reciprocal relationship between reason and intuition in the human personality.

When Simon thought of the beast, “there rose before his inward sight the picture of a human at once heroic and sick”. Some critics refer to such statements as “the teller’s assertions” which are external and extrinsic to the text or tale. The teller’s assertions obtrude more particularly in the situations where Simon figures. The point is that Golding’s belief extends beyond the narrow rationalistic confines of our lives. Therefore, he portrays saints like Simon who see life with simplicity and clarity.
The conflict between Ralph and Jack is not simply a struggle for power. It is a conflict between the forces of civilization and savagery. Golding tells us that the boys are “suffering from the terrible disease of being human”15. But how does Jack infect others with the terrible disease from which he suffers? A clue to this is provided when Roger throws stones at Henry only to miss:

There was a space round Henry, perhaps six yards in diameter into which he dare not throw. Here invisible yet strong was the taboo of the old life. Round the squatting child was the protection of parents and school and policemen and the law. Roger’s arm was conditioned by a civilization that knew nothing of him and was in ruins (LF, 49).

Roger’s missing the stones aimed at Henry is not something innate but only a taboo, a social condition or superstition (WG, 32). Roger is himself shameful of his sadism: “a darker shadow crept beneath the swarthiness of his skin”.

Later, Roger releases the rock that kills Piggy. Taboo has lost its power due to the absence of “parents and school and policemen and the law” which are as much the expression of humanity as the savagery that is latent. But the message is not that the absence of institutions and adults gives rise to the tragedy in the book. In his essay in The Hot Gates, Golding recognises that there is a moment “when mature counsel and authority might have saved them as on so many occasions we might have saved our own children, might have been saved ourselves” (HGF, 94). He sees that “the situation had to be highlighted by the children having some dim knowledge that wisdom, that common sense even is to be found in the world of grown ups. They must yearn for it, now they have begun to find the inadequacy of their own powers.” (HGF, 94).

The adult world of civilized nations comes into play at many points in the children’s world. The war among civilized nations has led to the crashlanding of the plane. The dead parachutist comes from the civilized world and fills the fear of beast in the children. The Naval officer, in the end, also comes from the adult world. Mark Kinkead Weekes and Ian Gregor remark:
Lord of the Flies is not a novel about children, demonstrating Golding’s belief that, without the discipline of grown-ups, children will degenerate into savages. There is no essential difference between the island-world and the grown-up one. Morality can be and has been inadequate to prevent wholesale destruction and savagery. The parachutist shows man’s inhumanity to man, the record of what human beings have done to one another throughout human history (WG, 38).

The novel is set in the future but surface detail corresponds to World War II. Paul Crawford argues: “The shift from the fantastic to the uncanny amplifies carnivalesque elements in the text that symbolically subvert, turn upside down, the vision of civilized, ordered, English behaviour. In combination, these elements are the structures through which Lord of the Flies disturbs. Yet, such is the inherent irreversibility of the narrative structure – its dependence upon hesitation or suspense of explanation – that we cannot read Lord of the Flies and register the peculiar shock it delivers a second time” (PHWG, 62). The behaviour of English boys is disturbing. With the advent of an English officer, our unease shifts from the carnival square of the island to the wider adult world – a world of continuing inhumanity.

The children take a dead parachutist to be a monster which is the projection of their own fears that could have been assuaged if the comforting reassurances of the adults had been available. It is true that grown-ups are deliberately made to remain absent from the events until the very last moment. The tale itself makes us aware of the absence of those human factors which might have saved the situation.

The fable’s structure bears the onus to make it clear that the children’s experiment on the Island has its counterpart in the world outside. Virginia Tiger has termed it the “ideographic structure” (VT, 51). This ideographic structure consists of two movements: Ralph’s point of view and the adult Naval Officer’s point of view in the coda.

It is true that Ralph is saved due to the intervention of the Naval Officer. But this Naval Officer is on the point of returning to ‘adult’ war which is feared to cause widespread disaster. Golding’s own comments in this regard are significant:
The whole book is symbolic in nature except the rescue in the end where adult life appears, dignified and capable, but in reality enmeshed in the same evil as the symbolic life of the children on the Island. The officer, having interrupted a man-hunt, prepares to take the children off the island in a cruiser which will presently be hunting its enemy in the same implacable way. And who will rescue the adult and his cruiser?  

The island society may be said to mirror the primitive societies of prehistoric man. Its progress illustrates a biological maxim, now fairly well discredited, that the development of the individual recapitulates in capsule time the development of the species—contogony recapitulates phylogeny. But to study the book as a social fable leads us to give primacy to social ideas since boys as men appear less as autonomous characters than as images of social ideas.

Thus, C.B. Cox has studied the tale in social and psychological terms and shows how intelligence (Piggy) and common sense (Ralph) will always be overthrown in society by sadism (Roger) and the lure of totalitarianism (Jack). The Naval Officer’s words and behaviour in the end show that he is ignorant of not only the adult world but also of the children’s world. He is set to return to the warfare in the adult world. Michel Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punish* has opined that there is a need to make discipline an essential part of national thinking. And to infuse this discipline, which English boys on the island lack, politics and army, or army-politics as tactics, have a prominent role to play. The foundations of the state are “laid not only by jurists, but also by soldiers, not only councillors of state, but also junior officers, not only the men of the courts, but also the men of the camps” (FDP, 169). The immaturity and ignorance of the Naval Officer doesn’t guarantee a happy state of affairs for the boys in the so-called “civilized world”.

*Lord of the Flies*, as an allegory, has a simple coherence which is easily understood. Golding’s religious faith, which is based upon his interpretation of experience rather than upon an unquestioning acceptance of revelation, is, in part, responsible for this. Golding is not a believer in a conventional sense. Also unlike Shelley, he does not subscribe to a literary creed that might provide a substitute for
belief. Don Crompton has remarked: "He (Golding) has no fixed centre, and this accounts for the very varied atmosphere, tones and attitudes present in his work - sometimes deeply pessimistic as in The Pyramid and, perhaps, Rites of Passage and sometimes, as in The Spire and Darkness Visible, illuminated by the possibility of a faith that derives from the memories of those moments of passionate conviction that convince him that something is better than nothing, good than evil, love than hatred or indifference."

An allegorical correspondence between the Island ship and England can be drawn. The Island Ship is gliding backwards just as post imperialist England is reverting to its nineteenth century character under the guidance of Jack. Piggy is the most contemporary character. He is fat, short-sighted and does not take into account class differences. Along with this he is asthmatic and has a balding head. This doesn’t qualify him for captainship just as the tolerant rationalism of pre-world war I disqualifies Ralph from the seat of power.

The symbols employed in the book do not have a fixed meaning. The dominant symbol of the island is a ship at sea. It also means a civilization threatened with submergence, a tooth in a sucking mouth, and a body dissociated from primal nature. It may mean consciousness divorced from the brute passivity of the subconscious (VT, 66). The boys, while on this island, are always in awe of the sea. This dominant symbol is woven into the narrative texture at various places. A logic of association is evolved through associating other images with this dominant symbol. Ralph is isolated at the tail-end of the island – “He was surrounded on all sides by chasms of empty air. There was nowhere to hide, even if one did not have to go on” (LF, 130). It is an isolation of the despairing hero as well as the rupture of the self-conscious mind. Piggy is described as "islanded in a sea of meaningless colour" (LF, 91) while he embraces the rock with "ludicrous care above the sucking sea" (LF, 217). Here the microcosmic/macrocosmic resonances are extremely rich. Due to the associative nature of symbols with variations, assigning them fixed meaning becomes difficult. Hence dynamism of thought dominates.

The image of the conch and its use could be an important object of power for keeping everybody under control and continuing with the civilized influences, if any,
of the past life before landing on the island. The possessor of the conch draws on the funds of order and democratic security. Physical senses connected with the conch are realised in the beginning. The focus is on the description of the fulcrum and level, weight and resistance. We feel how the shell is physically disentangled from the weeds. The conch is strange, beautiful and “the glistening thing that lay in Ralph’s hands.” The simple vulgarity of the farting noises, while blowing the conch, fills the boys with delight. The existence of the conch is physically imagined by us through its association with salt water, brilliant fish and green weed or through the description of its own strange cream and rose spiral and the sound which it makes to shatter the solitude of the island. It is only Piggy who invents the idea of the meeting, giving the shell a social purpose.

The use of the conch could have been an instrument of introducing disciplinary power which Michel Foucault discussed in his book *Discipline and Punish*. Disciplinary power is the outcome of the contact between the body and the object it handles and this power binds the body to the object.

The regulation imposed by power is at the same time the law of construction of the operation. Thus disciplinary power appears to have the function not so much of deduction as of synthesis, not so much of exploitation of the product as of coercive link with the apparatus of production (FDP, 153).

Discipline appears to be wearing off among the boys. The language of the conch loses its meaning because the standards it appeals to are gone. The idea of rescue vanishes. Roger begins to drop stones from a height and the boys don’t look even human to him: “Ralph was a shock of hair, and Piggy a bag of fat”. Jack and his tribe are unconcerned about Piggy’s glasses and conch. Jack does not have to give any reason for beating Wilfred. The conch doesn’t matter and a tear from Piggy’s eyes falls on its delicate curve and flashes like a star. The irony is established as the salt water of the sea has been the element of the ‘fragile’ white shell. It is different from Piggy’s tear.

Jack’s gang descends into a meat and sex society and rejects the liberal democracy of the conch-invoked meetings. Their carnival is filled with dance,
chanting, and irresponsibility. They dress and present themselves as a choir, an oxymoronic combination in the light of their actions. Golding’s use of carnival can be viewed as his deeply felt unease about the nature of English “civilization” in the light of the events of World War II.

As Paul Crawford concludes: "The misrule of carnival in contemporary history is presented as integral not simply to the Nazis or other totalitarian regimes but also to England with its divisive and cruel class system. Golding lays bare an alternative view to civilized English behaviour, one that counters accepted, familiar, erroneous complacencies. In the isolated focus, in the “carnival square” of Golding’s island, carnival affirms that everything exists on the threshold or border of its opposite" (PHWG, 67). The noncelebratory or Juvenalian satire with its combined fantastic and carnivalesque in *Lord of the Flies* subverts the view that the "civilized" English are incapable of the kind of atrocities carried out by the Nazis during World War II.

Golding has said that the dead parachutist in the novel represents “off Campus History”. “Off Campus History” is the history felt in the blood and bones, habits of feeling which have acquired the force of instinct and an unconscious legacy wished on children by their parents. Golding points out, “When they (prejudices) go beyond a certain point no one in the world can doubt that they are wholly evil. Jew and Arab in the name of religion, Jew and Nordic in the name of race, Negro and white in the name of God knows that” (HGF, 91-92).

These forces of off-campus history comprise “a failure of human sympathy, ignorance of facts, the objectivising of our own inadequacies so as to make a scapegoat” (HGF, 94). Golding says that off-campus history is always dead – “It is a cloak of national prestige which the uneducated pull round their shoulders to keep off the wind of personal self-knowledge. It is a dead thing handed on, but dead though it is, it will not lie down. It is a monstrous creature descending to us from our ancestors, producing nothing but disunity and chaos. War and disorder prolong in it the ghastly and ironic semblance of life” (HGF, 94). The dead parachutist stands for off-campus history. Campus history is important and it is a sort of self-knowledge gained through studying our past weaknesses and achievements. Campus history provides a clue to our behaviour in the future.
Alan Paton, the South African writer, underwent an experience of disillusionment similar to that of Golding. He has described how he came to the conclusion that there is only one way in which we can endure man’s inhumanity to man and that is to try in one’s life to exemplify man’s humanity to man. But to do that we have to go beyond the apprehension that man is cruel and bad. We need to identify humanity with its humanity and not with its inhumanity.

An analysis of Lord of the Flies reveals that “civilized” nations, in the course of waging war against one another, cause undue damage to their citizens and children. On the island most of the boys from the “civilized” world turn to savagery and a few sanguine and rational boys either perish or are forced to retreat to save their lives. The adults’ world of civilized nations intersects at many points with the world of children. The Naval Officer’s admonishing of boys in the end becomes ironic as he is to return to that very “civilized” world which is in the grip of savagery.
NOTES


15. William Golding, “Fable” in *The Hot Gates* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), p. 89. Subsequent references in the chapter will be cited as HGF.

