

From Anarchy to Savagery: Jack and the Presence of Evil in Golding's *Lord of the Flies*

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Abstract

William Golding's Lord of the Flies (1954), demonstrates a dark exposure of human behavior by analyzing the erosion of social order among boys left to survive on a deserted island. While existing scholarship often highlights narrative progression and ethical lessons, this article addresses Golding's depiction of cruelty as an organizing and ideological force within the story. The novel illustrates the loss of childhood and innocence and the rise of innate evil, demonstrated through brutal murders of Simon and Piggy, and Jack's compulsive quest for dominance. These events are analyzed through post-war disillusionment, political allegory, psycho-social insights, disclosing the fusion of external turmoil and internal impulses in cultivating savagery. Jack and his faction of boys embody the essence of evil and savagery, while Ralph, Piggy, and Simon endeavor to sustain rationality, ethical conduct, and collective norms. By examining the continuous presence of violence, Golding reflects his perspective about human nature and the fragility of civilization. Ultimately, the article stresses Golding's portrayal of the evil residing within human minds and hearts, highlighting the disastrous outcomes of unchecked power and savagery. This study additionally extends scope of broader future inquiry, particularly through interdisciplinary analyses of corresponding thematic resonances across dystopian narratives, advancing psychoanalytic, cross-cultural, and postcolonial discourses.

1. Introduction

Lord of the Flies (1954) unfolds in a desolate island somewhere near the Pacific. It is a story of Ralph, Simon, and Piggy, who relentlessly seek ways to get back home. Nevertheless, there is a boy with a fanatic urge who stands in opposition to those who believe in civilization. Bregman (2020) argues that from among the boys, there is a boy called Ralph who is chosen to be the leader of the group. He is fit, personable, and well-built. He clearly conveys his strategies for finding an exit, permitting all to enjoy the moment, and drawing attention to the ship by the smoke. Everyone follows Ralph's strategy without fail. Do they adhere to his other strategies? Not particularly so. The boys rather take more delight in enjoying foods and playing around in a cheerful way than lighting up the fire. Little after, they have

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started dressing up their faces like primal men, throwing off their outfits. And gradually they show overwhelming desire to poke, stomp and nibble.

This form of regression invites a critical juncture in the debate over whether human nature is fixed or could be deconstructed in times of necessity. Reiff (2010) writes that *Lord of the Flies* (1954) stands as a major twentieth-century work by William Golding, notable for both its narrative elements and its non-literary implication. In the novel, the sheer inhumanity, displayed by Jack and his associates, signals the decline of the pre-marooned civilization; this setback challenges the power embodied by the shell, which acts as an emblem of collective governance and the guarantee of verbal freedom (Kinkead -Weekes & Gregor, 2002). Golding thereby warns that humanity's unrestrained ego and obsessive greed for power systematically destroy the subtle framework of civilization.

While earlier research commonly explored evil, moral decline, and political allegory as discrete strands, the present article considers them as mutually emphasizing their integrated role within the novel's architecture. Instead of perceiving anarchy and savagery as episodic disruptions, the present analysis understands them as the persistent structural forces shaping the evolution of the boys' social dynamics. By embedding the narrative amid post-war tensions and psychological introspection, the analysis demonstrates how cultural ideologies and inherent urges influence the boys' movement toward savage behavior.

In this circumstance, Ralph turns out to be an arch enemy to Jack, who unveils his rivalry over power dynamics. Although power struggles have long been a recurring feature of history, *Lord of the Flies* (1954) profoundly stresses this theme. Golding's narrative structure functions as a counter-discourse to the imperial optimism articulated in Ballantyne's (1857) *The Coral Island*, effectively problematizing the constructed myth of Britain's self-reliance. His imagined island serves as a territory of disillusion instead of escapade. Echoing the grim contemporary visuals illustrated in *The Shield of Achilles* (1952), Golding's island setting embodies disunity, fragmentation, and ethical ambiguity.

The novel explores chaos, contradictions and conflict as reflected in the boys' evolution. Driven by perverse emotions, Jack and associates actively partake in Simon and Piggy's deaths. The contest between clarity and brutality therefore escalates across the unfolding events. Thus, the central justification of this article lies in advancing a unified interpretive model that synthesizes savagery, ideological formations, and historical consciousness across Golding's (1954) *Lord of the Flies*.

2. *Lord of the Flies*: A Scholarly Review

Lord of the Flies (1954) has been interpreted through a variety of literary lenses. While discussing the dark aspects of human nature manifested in *Lord of the Flies*, Reilly (1988) delineates a thematic contrast, noting that Ballantyne's (1857) narrative rests on a natural innocence in children, which is directly antithetical to

Golding, who exploits the same island environment to expose profound human depravity. He further argues that in reframing the story of *The Coral Island*, Golding rejects the notion of the boys' apparent innocence, drawing on the hard-won horrors of contemporary time to cast off the hollow idealism of its predecessor. On balance, Reilly upholds the view that asserts such behavioral transformation of the boys in Golding's work marks the termination of idealistic innocence and the surfacing of the profound depravity inherent in the human soul.

Johnston (2009), expanding this view, contends that the novel acts as a commentary on civilization's incapacity to control mankind's ingrained and insatiable drive toward barbarism. While Ralph directs the boys in keeping the signal fire to draw attention of the ships, Jack encourages them to indulge in unbridled freedom, disregarding the chance of returning home. Assessing this struggle for power, Johnston focuses on the lurking conflict between Jack's apparent brutality and the better-managed orderliness of Ralph, highlighting the boys' unruly lifestyle. To enjoy his unrestrained freedom, Jack employs every evil mechanism he is familiar with. His attempt to spread chaos and anarchy demonstrates the externalization of his malevolent instincts. While Baker (1988) argues that Golding exaggerates the discourse of intrinsic human nature, to frame the novel as a fable, he simultaneously highlights Golding's deployment of symbolism to illuminate human nature, civilization and society. The boys' symbolic fall from the plane reveals their corrupt nature as they are displaced from their respected social roles and placed in a setting that reflects their moral inadequacies. Given such deep structural deterioration, Baker concludes that dismay most aptly conveys the central thematic essence of *Lord of the Flies* (1954).

Reinforcing this historical context, Talon (1968) argues that Golding reveals cruelty and wickedness in the boys, despite their apparent virtue and compassion. Building on this critique, he contends that the evil unleashed by Jack and his associates points up the boys' loss of sympathy, as Golding is convinced that the catastrophic impact of the post Second World War disturbs mankind's natural sympathy and inspires violence and malice in every individual. Furthermore, he underlines Piggy's refusal to engage with the other boys, despite his acute awareness and keen grasp of their situation. At its core, Talon advances the view that the process of selecting a leader is somewhat ironic, as Ralph is ultimately selected despite his inability to assert complete control. Turning the focus toward the boys' mode of organization, Bufkin (1965) discovers an ideological conflict between the two groups regarding discipline and disobedience; this discord triggers a tension that brings the nexus of individual agendas and the political upheaval of Golding's time to light. Building upon this broader thematic foundation, themes such as theology, morality, the myth of the fallen man, appearance vs reality, and irony constitute the central focus of Bufkin's critique in *Lord of the Flies: An Analysis*.

Redirecting the focus from Bufkin's ideological standpoint to a psychological interpretation, Rosenfield (1961) critiques *Lord of the Flies* (1954)

from a psychoanalytic perspective. Her study explores the boys' behavior in terms of adult sensibilities, differentiating Ralph's personable impression from Jack's ugly appearance to symbolize a dualistic conflict between opposing ethical extremes. She posits that the rivalry between the two protagonists stages a psychic battle. While Jack represents the visible surfacing of destructive human instincts, Ralph serves as the vessel for positive human nature, framing their confrontation as a reflection of the Ego's effort to restrain the Id's unrest. Broadening this Freudian framework, Rosenfield observes that the island is vacuum where the various components of the subconscious are dramatized through character interaction; thus, the island's relapse into a systematic disorder does not only indicate a social failure but also a collapse of human mind's regulatory systems when the ego becomes fragile in front of the Id.

It is ultimately suggested that the final rescue of the children is profoundly ironic. Although their game is ended by a naval officer, he is himself engaged in a broader adult war. Hence, [Rosenfield \(1961\)](#) summarizes with the striking assertion that children are simply men of a smaller growth. Moving the critical lens from the mind's interior to how meaning is processed, [Cmeciu and Cmeciu \(2010\)](#) employ a semiotic framework to analyze [Golding's \(1954\) *Lord of the Flies*](#). They consider how the novel's characters, themes and setting serve as meaningful markers in a 'fictional (ritual) game'. In doing so, they scrutinize the symbolic setting of the island, the allegorical fall of the boys, their stay on the deserted island and the collapse of the allegorical plane. Their analysis aims to highlight Golding's contemporary social landscape and the biblical allusion to humanity's fall from grace.

3. The Golding Boys in *Lord of the Flies*: A Critical Background

By situating [Ballantyne's \(1857\)](#) idealized British ethos alongside [Auden's \(1952\)](#) stark imagery, [Golding's \(1954\)](#) seminal work reconstructs the island within a modernist framework of disjunction, disappointment, irrationality, immorality, and injustice. Just as Thetis perceives an artificial wilderness with a weed-covered field—standing in clear contrast to the previously idealized imagery ([Auden, 1952](#))—readers also perceive that Golding's boys largely fall short of moral values upheld by Ballantyne's boys, despite a few displays of any trace of human sympathy. While advocating his ideology of human evil, *Lord of the Flies* satirizes this war-like world, its culture of hate, and the precarious human condition, stating it as an intricate task grounded in both the essential qualities of human nature and the uncovering of their savage tendencies.

Moreover, Jack's disobedience to Ralph—who tries to establish discipline on the island—ironically provides him an opportunity to introduce a state of anarchy. Through Jack's rebellious behavior, [Golding \(1954\)](#) illustrates the steady deterioration of the British social order—a breakdown that simultaneously highlights the prevalent culture of bullying among the British schoolchildren. Golding elucidates this when Jack bullies Piggy for his poor eyesight and physical stature.

Such behavior reflects the stratified social dynamics frequently observed in schools, where dominant individuals exert pressure on those in weaker positions. Furthermore, Jack's theft of Piggy's spectacle clearly indicates a typical act of bullying. In this connection, [Weale \(2015\)](#) reports that a recent global survey indicates that schoolchildren in England experience lower levels of happiness than those in other countries, largely due to the extensive effects of widespread bullying.

Beyond these interpersonal dynamics, Jack's behavior draws the reader's attention to the concept of jingoism, exposing his overblown pride in British superiority. He feels greatly offended by the boys' resolution to elect Ralph as their leader. As a result, he plans a rebellion against Ralph, pursuing a series of wrongful deeds to undermine Ralph's leadership. However, [Golding \(1954\)](#) does not celebrate this jingoistic attitude of Jack; rather, he repeatedly prioritizes the need of restoring civilization—an aim that Jack ultimately fails to uphold. On the other hand, Ralph, Piggy, and Simon display rationality and wisdom in their actions. The narrative thus emphasizes the element of choice: the boys divide into two groups—one representing reason and civilized order, and the other manifesting carnality and self-indulgence. Such a portrayal of breakdown of law and order on the island represents Golding's effort to associate the decline of society with the fundamental human defects.

This crisis of harmony among the boys actually takes place by the introduction of democracy of voting—a mechanism that plays a crucial role that helps the narrative reach its climax. This electoral process of selecting a leader on the island is shown to be important as Ralph, backed by the conch's symbolic legitimacy, becomes chief. By blowing the sound of the conch, he brings all the boys into assembly to devise a plan for survival and rescue. All of them agree to maintain the signal fire, and obey democratically ruled principles to increase the probability of being rescued, except for Jack. While the election attempts to establish peace and order, it also sets the stage for discord. [Woodward \(1997\)](#) argues that the tension that Golding so masterfully depicts lies between organized democratic order and the release of primal aggression. [Golding \(1954\)](#) writes that Ralph, in opposition to Jack, has a natural aura: although he has wide and broad shoulders, the modest facial expression in his eyes and mouth shows no sign of malice. This non-hostile disposition is also evident in Ralph's compassion for the littluns, leaving a favorable impression on the other children. Assured of eventual rescue, he stresses organized procedures at the assembly. Golding writes as Ralph announces, "We can't have everybody talking at once. We'll have to have 'Hands up' like at school...Then I'll give him the conch...He can hold it when he is speaking" (p. 32).

The application of these civilizing rules underpins [Golding's \(1954\)](#) organization of the three boys in terms of their specific strengths. While intellectual capability is largely attributed to Piggy and Jack appears the most natural leader, Ralph stands out for his quiet authority that distinguishes him from the others. His imposing build, appealing appearance, and—above all—the symbolic power of the conch further strengthens this impression. Golding observes that Jack treats Ralph

with open hostility and demands the boy with the trumpet after reaching the beach with his choir. In response to such antagonism, Ralph explains that no one is blowing a bugle; rather he has only sounded it. This initial presentation of Jack reflects his fixation on superiority, as the boys' marching "in two parallel lines" (p. 16) underscores an inflexible hierarchy that differentiates him from the group. In fact, Ralph advocates a governance model based on democratic ideals, whereas Jack reveals himself as a despotic ruler; consequently, the conflict between them becomes apparent.

As a part of his strategic schemes, Jack successfully convinces a group of boys, and equips them as hunters to provide sustenance for the group, thereby hiding his deeply embedded evil tendencies and leaving others completely oblivious to what he plans to achieve under the guise of hunting (Golding, 1954). In fact, the concept of hunting and being hunted constitute two contrasting states—civilization versus savagery. Initially, hunting serves the practical purpose of gathering foods for their survival on the island, however, over time it functions as a source of amusement. As the boys become increasingly obsessed with the thrill of the hunt, Jack takes this as an advantage to engross them in his scheme, steering their focus away from all other duties Ralph once assigned to them. In alignment with Jack's radical departure from institutional norms, a number of boys who formerly made alliance with him ultimately lapse into savages, losing all the moral constraints that once governed their behavioral norms.

This transformation is further intensified when they paint their faces adopting the role of primitive warriors. They chant and dance in ways that echo rituals and Jack finally becomes their leader in the end. Central to this psychological shift toward ritualistic behavior, Jack embodies the novel's theme of returning to barbarism, as the adornment of paint and mask allow him to act fearlessly (Niven, 1989). While portraying Jack's hunting methods and dictatorial tendencies in the novel, Golding (1954) states that Jack tricks a living entity, bends it to his will, and claims its life as though it were a rich, satisfying draught.

Jack's predatory drive goes beyond animal existence as Simon is murdered during the pig hunt carried out by him. This escalation affirms that the notion of being hunted underscores his deeper intention to kill Ralph, Piggy, and Simon. After seizing total control, Jack acts as if no one could challenge him. Golding (1954) explains that Jack rests on his decorated throne, adorned with paint and garlands, striking as an idol. Around him were piles of meat on green leaves, fruits, and coconut shells holding drinks. His forearms suggested command and authority seemed to rest on his shoulder, whispering in his ear like an ape. Paradoxically, this primal display of power originates from Jack's former civilized privilege. He believes that he is fit to be chief because he holds the positions of chapter chorister and head boy, and he is capable to sing C sharp.

Yet, this illusion of superiority is quickly supplanted by his instinctive lust

for blood, where the pig hunt scene symbolizes man's capacity for destruction and violence. The way he and his associates hunt pigs transforms them from nice British boys into vicious monsters. The hunt emerges as an opportunity to exercise power over the helpless animals. The fun of hunting takes a horrific turn when, in a state of uncontrolled fury, they kill Simon, who not only represents human ingenuity, rationalism, and humanism but also serves as the moral essence of a well-ordered society—virtues that Jack utterly lacks. Paradoxically, his murder underscores a scarcity of the messengers of truth in the society. Baker (1988) concludes that the structure and form of a society are shaped by the moral fiber of its citizens, rather than by any political framework, no matter how logical or respected they may appear.

Ralph's ethical order is quickly challenged by Jack, whose incessant obstruction pushes Ralph in a desperate—ultimately hopeless—effort to bring order back to the island. Jack not only forms a hierarchal structure among the boys, but also deliberately spreads an artificial terror of the beast in their minds. Consequently, they participate in killing Piggy and Simon, demonstrating the savage and ruthless behavioral pattern that links Britain's rigid and oppressive social order (Crawford, 2002). Extending this line a step further, he puts forward that Jack's actions are like those of a totalitarian group of English boys who ultimately murder—or attempt to kill—anyone perceived as an outsider (Crawford, 2002).

Based on this argument, Crawford's (2002) interpretation brings forth a critical question: if Ralph, Simon and Piggy are treated as outcasts, would their removal really purify the island? The argument is further extended by the idea that although the British fought against the Nazis during the Second World War, they themselves were not entirely free from the influence of moral corruption. Correspondingly, Jack and his associates are not free from corruption, even though they perceive Piggy, Simon and Ralph as antagonists. By means of Jack's anarchy and increasing savagery, Golding captures the collapse of humanity during the intense turmoil of the Second World War. His conduct reveals his tendency to succumb to innate viciousness—an impulse that might have been kept in check if the boys had followed the social norms upheld by Ralph, Piggy and Simon. As depicted in *Lord of the Flies* (1954), humans cannot fully suppress the anarchic tendencies within themselves, even with civilization and culture. From this point of view, Golding critiques the naive and idealistic vision of innocence depicted in *The Coral Island* (1857).

While Ballantyne (1857) celebrates a harmonious rendering of the Pacific in *The Coral Island*, Golding (1954) deconstructs this paradigm as a symbolic sphere, marked by serpentine fear and progressive moral collapse. The fictional settings of both novels stand in clear opposition to each other, particularly in terms of moral purity, innocence, cruelty, fearfulness, and chaotic tendencies. More precisely, Golding demonstrates the menacing side of this 'fearfulness' through Jack's deliberate manipulation to assert dominance.

4. *Lord of the Flies*: A Scholarly Analysis

In *Fable* (1965), William Golding discusses that although the boys try to form a structured society on the island, it ultimately disintegrates into bloodshed and horror, driven by the destructive tendencies within them as the science of natural resource management always remains non-intuitive when lust for power takes hold. *Lord of the Flies* (1954) clearly highlights how human behavior affects the sustained balance within an organized society. Reiterating the discord between societal norms and human impulses, Dick (1987) discusses that the code of conduct Ralph relies on to unite the fragmented group into an ideal community disintegrates as the boys' urge to hunt overrides the needs such as a steady fire, housing, and cleanliness. The group of boys, trapped in an unfamiliar location after a plane crash, does not realize that their emotional wounds are not left behind. As a result, a sudden shift takes place in the group's behavior, receding from the authority of the conch to the impulsive drive for individual autonomy. This underscores the former as regulated social engagement, while the latter operates as a fundamental gratification of wish fulfillment.

The inclination toward irrational satisfaction is further elaborated on by Spitz (1990), who points out that Jack and his associates perform rituals of dance and song, enact acts of violence, and find ecstasy as they wield dominance. Spitz (1990) also observes that the boys, now siding with Jack, entirely overlook their responsibilities entrusted to them. Instead, they occupy themselves with a range of amusements, including killing pigs, collecting fruits, drinking, and playful pursuits. It can thus be inferred that a stable social organization shifts into a new system of governance where leadership centers around hunting. Within this developing order, Piggy's intellect, Simon's reflective wisdom, and Ralph's institutional control fall apart. As a result, the boys' cohesive structured community deteriorates into a primitive and ceremonial way of life, marked by paint and quasi-religious practices near the shore.

With the erosion of civil safeguards, the most vulnerable members are left unprotected; consequently Crawford (2002) contends that Piggy distinctly represents a socially marginalized outsider as his accent serves as a sign of his lower-class origins. In fact, Jack serves as Piggy's primary persecutor, holding strong convictions because of his elite schooling, and former position as head boy at his church school. Furthermore, Jack singles out Simon as a distinct threat; this leads to the brutal elimination of the sole individual capable of exposing the savage instincts Jack always tries to hide. While the other boys fear the beast which they associate with dead parachutist, Simon recognizes the real source of their terror, admitting that the problem is really inside us (Golding, 1954). Such profound and intuitive insight into Simon's character ultimately guides readers to Golding's deep-seated allegory about human nature.

The allegorical strain is localized in the boys' resistance to injustice,

especially evident in the combined rejection of Ralph, Simon, and Piggy; conversely, the enticing charm of boundless freedom sparks Jack's anger and wounded pride. Seizing upon the boys' psychological unease, Jack pursues his personal ambitions, escalating the antagonism between him and Ralph. In a fit of frenzy, he proclaims to the group that they do not need the conch anymore and that some boys should stay quiet, leaving decisions to the other members (Golding, 1954). By silencing opposing voices, Jack is depicted as possessing a character imbued with inherent malice, manipulating many to assume that they can experience absolute freedom to enjoy across the island's natural landscape. He also persuades them to believe in the existence of the beast, leading them to hunt for it. This psychological grip culminates in a grotesque ritualistic sacrifice: Jack cuts off the head after killing the pig, and orders Roger to sharpen a stick pointed at both ends to fix it in place. By framing this outlandish installation, Golding illustrates Jack's complete surrender to his baser urges, consecrating the pig's bloody head as a gift for the beast (Golding, 1954).

This inherent depravity inside soon manifests itself in a deeply unsettling external reality: Golding (1954) depicts Jack and his associates as they devolve into menacing figures—their faces marked with red, green, and white shades, rushing forward screaming and causing the younger children to run away in terror. He also notes that although Jack's face is covered with charcoal, Ralph still recognizes him, who is naked and fully smeared in paint, symbolizing a clash between his primal instincts and lingering human qualities. Utilizing this tribal leadership, Jack sets a condition for Ralph and his followers, stating that participation in the feast is allowed only if they join his tribe.

By suggesting social belonging as a process of transactional pursuit, Golding (1965) implies that the environment Jack establishes on the island is influenced by the boys' flawed and morally degraded condition. When Jack invites Ralph and his loyal associates to the feast, Dick (1987) contends that Ralph rejects to embrace Jack's subcultural order, much like the Apollonian Pentheus' denial of Dionysus' new religion. Jack fails to understand the breakdown of the society that Ralph strives to uphold. When Simon perceives that the violence on the island originates from Jack's inner darkness, Jack only laughs at such abstractions. Golding (1954) underscores this reaction by noting that the savage laughter of Jack assails Simon harshly, making him shrink back defenselessly to his place.

Golding (1954), in addition, notes that the seemingly orderly and fair society was gradually slipping into decline, revealing that the boys' ideal vision of the island is just an illusion. Ralph's attempts to maintain a sensible, orderly world fall apart as a result of Jack's organized descent into anarchy. As observed by Paulson (2007), the beast is an inner presence—a covert force of darkness that reveals the fundamental wickedness of human nature. Further advancing this viewpoint, he illustrates this idea through the tale of a royal dog, infected by a rabid bat, which either awakens hidden malice or taints the dog's natural goodness.

Jack's character manifests this metaphorical infection: his character operates as a conduit for mankind's unrestrained savagery and desire for power—a condition that Paulson believes may originate from an unrestrained childhood and later manifest as adult hostility. A similar psychological trajectory is echoed in Crawford's (2002) assessment, in which Golding expresses the grief over the erosion of innocence, underlining the novel's overall sense of despair. This deterioration is most distinctly apparent in the children under Jack's influence, who cease to exemplify normative childhood innocence as they internalize increasingly atypical personas, as Golding (1954) remarks that they are now no longer constrained by embarrassment and self-doubt.

In a broader sense, by portraying Jack's character, Golding (1954) uncovers mankind's enduring cynicism, underscoring both the profound darkness within people and the fragile nature of civilization. This darkness is most acute and strikingly tangible when Simon encounters the bloodied pig's head impaled on a stick and surrounded by flies. He realizes that the flies symbolize decay and the brutal killing of the pig exposes the unsettling reality of the erosion of human ethics. He draws close and perceives it as if the pig's head were speaking:

There isn't anyone to help you. Only me. And I'm the Beast. . .Fancy thinking the Beast is something you can hunt and kill! . . .You know, don't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are the way they are? The laughter shivers again. 'Come now,' says the *Lord of the Flies*. 'Get back to the others and we'll forget the whole thing. (p.161)

From Golding's (1954) viewpoint, the hanging pig's head represents the "Lord of the Flies," whereas Jack and the hunters resemble the flies flocking around it. Extending the scope of this nomenclature further, McClean (2001) interprets that the novel's symbolism by suggesting that *Lord of the Flies* can be understood as a direct representation of Baal-zebub, the primeval Canaanite god of evil. Within this framework, it is evident that the dead parachutist is not the genuine beast; Simon's murder, however, uncovers the real identity. When he comes to disclose the truth, he dies. In Golding's (1954) narration:

Simon is crying out something about a dead man on a hill... The sticks fall and the mouth of the new circle crunch and scream. The beast is on its knees in the center, its arms fold over its face. It is crying out against the abominable noise, something about a body on the hill... At once the crowd surges after it, pours down the rock, leaps on to the beast, screams, strikes, beats, tear. (p. 172)

Assessing the underlying connotations conveyed by this scene, Cox (1960) observes that Golding illustrates Simon—who embodies a Christ-like figure—attempts to convince the boys that their fear is merely an illusion; however, he is brutally slain amid a barbaric tribal dance.

Following Simon's killing, Ralph and Piggy are filled with fright and apprehension, confessing that the act was, in effect, a form of murder and are worrying about their uncertain future (Golding, 1954). In contrast, Roger coerces the younger boys into submission, instructing them to revere Jack as their chief. Jack, however, suspects that Ralph and Piggy may demand a logical justification for Simon's death, fully aware that their real strength lies in their capacity for logic. To challenge this rationalist thought, McClean, (2001) notes that Ralph and Piggy, as close companions, act as agents of wisdom, though individually they are limited, they depend on each other to reverse disorder. Piggy's symbolic name recalls to the slaughtered pig and sustenance, while his glasses and insight are indispensable—especially to Ralph.

Their shared strength identifies them as the primary defenders in the narrative; together they embody the psychological maturity and capacity to maintain harmony on the island. This harmony is suddenly dismantled; nevertheless, in a moment of narcissism, Jack contributes to the death of Piggy, who is considered the island's ultimate beacon of knowledge. Jack deliberately seizes Piggy's glass, which are vital for making fire, and Roger finishes him off with a boulder:

The rock strikes Piggy [...] the conch explodes into a thousand white fragments and ceases to exist. [...] Piggy falls forty feet and lands on his back across that square, red rock in the sea. His head opens and stuff comes out and turns red. Piggy's arms and legs twitch a bit, like a pig after it is killed. [...] and when [the water] goes, sucking back again, the body of Piggy is gone. (p. 206)

Once the conch is destroyed and his only remaining friend is gone, Ralph foresees that he is now the last imminent threat to Jack's absolute rule. Therefore, he is forced to escape from Jack to preserve his life, whereas Jack sets out to kill Ralph with lethal intent, believing that Ralph's presence will serve as a constant reminder of the atrocities he has committed. These murderous impulses eclipse his survival instinct; hence, madness overcomes him in a manner that he feels prepared to set the entire island on fire if necessary to kill Ralph. His narcissistic disposition and hunger for power turn him completely blind to Ralph's insight and leadership, which may help bring about their rescue. Jack's climatic chase of Ralph in the final scene signifies one of the most effective narrative strokes. Golding (1954) narrates that Ralph tips over a root as the cries rise behind him. A shelter burns nearby, and flames rise behind him while water shimmers far away. He falls on the hot sand, rolling to protect himself. Hoping for mercy, he forces himself upright, frightened of what might follow, and stares at a tall figure standing before him wearing a peaked cap. The cap features a badge above a green visor, decorated with an anchor and golden foliage.

The arrival of the Naval Officer at the climax scene signals a turning point in Golding's (1954) narrative, symbolizing external adult authority that reflects

simplicity of perfection and the familiar British self-satisfaction. Although Jack and his companions' painted faces initially surprise the naval officer, he remains completely unaware of Jack's anarchic behavior, savagery, and evil that unfold on the island. In citing *The Coral Island* (1857) at the conclusion, the Naval Officer constitutes the narrative's final ironic turn, exposing the adult world's distorted judgment that conflates performative play and manifestations of savagery in *Lord of the Flies*. By employing this deliberate textual reference to Ballantyne's, Golding underscores the officer's misjudgment of the reality, who assumes that the boys are participating in innocent, adventure-like behavior. As the adult world remains oblivious, the intensity of this inborn evil finally causes Ralph to break his silence, a shift reflected in the lines that portray his complete emotional breakdown:

Ralph looks at him dumbly. For a moment, he recalls a fleeting picture of strange glamour that once invested the beaches. But the island is scorched up like dead wood—Simon is dead—and Jack has... The tears begin to flow and sobs shake him. He gives himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seem to wrench his whole body. His voice rises under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys begin to shake and sob too. (p. 230)

This overwhelming emotional unraveling emphasizes the futility of opposing 'the darkness of man's heart' (p. 230). Despite Simon, Piggy, and Ralph embodying distinct aspects of intellect and discipline, the narrative ultimately reveals civilization's slide back into primal savagery. This unraveling carries deeper meaning as the boys initially form a harmonious microcosm of human civilization: Ralph shows the traits of a competent leader, Piggy represents pragmatic intelligence, Simon offers spiritual understanding through deep contemplation, and Jack provides essential strategies of hunting to ensure the group's survival. Yet, the eventual fall into anarchy cancels out these virtues of their efficacy. Jack's relentless pursuit of Ralph, along with Piggy's ruthless murder and Simon's frenzied mob killing, together emphasize the gradual elimination of governance, rational thought, and spirituality from the emerging social structure. Notwithstanding, the looming chance does not ensure true sanctuary. Ralph's unwavering hope of returning to civilization is deeply ironic, as it hints that the external world is already engulfed in chaos, war, and moral decay.

As Lawrence (1993) argues, Golding reflects a post-Second World War generations' loss of faith—an era when trust in human progress and moral refinement was significantly disrupted. This standpoint explicitly interrogates Ballantyne's (1857) romanticized vision of innate civility, further emphasizing Lawrence's interpretation that Golding conceptualizes civilization as fragile and precariously constructed. This volatility emerges from Jack's gradual metamorphosis: as the narrative develops, he is progressively portrayed as growing closer to oppressive power and aggression. His change is evident in his theatrical display of authority as

a primal clan leader among his hunting group at Castle Rock. Golding (1954) writes that he bursts into dance and laughs with such harsh intensity that it resembles bloodthirsty growling. His group members serve him with meat and drink, reflecting the class tensions and hierarchical structures that Golding intends to uncover.

Crawford (2002) interprets Golding's narrative as a literary tradition that foregrounds violence. While the island's surroundings, the crashed aircraft, the blood-stained pig's head, and the portrayal of Jack and his associates appear intentionally overstated, Golding (1954) symbolically underscores these motifs to reflect the broader disorder and fragmentation of modern England. In addition, this allows for a comparative reading of the anarchy on the island—which Golding describes as overgrown with wire grass, broken by fallen trees, strewn with decomposing coconuts and palms—and that of the English society of Golding's time.

This visual depiction further emphasizes both natural deterioration and ethical corruption. As argued by Crawford (2002), this perspective may be developed further to show how Golding combines his criticism of the social stratification with a critique of authoritarianism. Such hierarchical divisions within English society, which eventually give rise to violence and proceed in a subtly manipulative fascists-like way, transform modern England into a symbolic island of decay.

Reinforcing this evaluation of the structure of the society, Boyd (1988) suggests that Golding expresses a profound disdain for injustice rooted in class-based evils. This is evidenced by the manner in which he states that Ralph, who reflects a refined yet middle-class aura, establishes his power over Piggy. On the other hand, Jack, who embodies a privileged social position, belittles Piggy because of his lower social rank. In this way, the novel uncovers the latent hegemonic tension among the boys, which may be interpreted as indicative of class conflict in modern England. From Golding's (1954) perspective, *Lord of the Flies* indicates not only his accumulated years of experience, but also his profound emotional and moral self-discovery. This psychological transformation manifests as grief over the boys' loss of faith in the hope for a better world.

The depletion of optimism fundamentally reshapes the discursive construction of youth; consequently, the long-held belief that framed children as innocent and vulnerable is further contested. Crawford (2002) asserts that Piggy appears to signify intellectualism and democratic values in contrast to Jack, who mirrors a Hitler-like persona, and Roger shows the capacity that aligns with that of a concentration camp guard. In fact, Golding's (1954) influential masterpiece interrogates crucial political aspects of contemporary England—especially the British imperial legacy characterized by class divisions, tension, violence, and nuclear anxiety. Golding internalizes this macro-level historical unease as micro-level psychological dysfunction, and thus, probes these concerns through Jack's anarchy and savagery on the island. Hence, Golding incorporates these political issues as central themes, while dramatizing them in *Lord of the Flies*.

5. Conclusion

Kelly (2007) notes that *Lord of the Flies* (1954) was written shortly after the Second World War when the world was divided by conflict between liberal democratic values and totalitarian communism. Within this interpretive framework, *Lord of the Flies* (1954) serves as a landmark in modern literature advocating for the urgency of civilization, order, and discipline. In this narrative, Golding's worldview is often set in opposition to that of Ballantyne (1857), dismissing the idea that science can eliminate all human imperfections, including mankind's fallen nature. This skeptical attitude is reflected in the characters of Ralph, Simon, and Piggy who, although demonstrate intellect and common sense, remain incapable of avoiding consequences of the evil embodied by Jack and his cohort.

Once Jack's brutality takes hold, he refuses to give up, constantly adopting more brutal and violent actions, helping to erode innocence from the island. This erosion acts as the key catalyst of the narrative's primary conflict; accordingly, the paper analyzes the dual ideological positions of Ralph's efforts to uphold order and Jack's escalating barbarism, illustrating how this conflict intensifies prior to the arrival of the Naval Officer. Crucially, this study does not advance the claim that evil entirely overpowers human goodness; instead, the discussion is placed on Jack's expanding cruelty and the collapse of civility among the boys.

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Conflict of interest

The author declares no potential conflict of interest regarding the publication of this work. In addition to this, the author carefully checks the ethical issues including: plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and, or falsification, double publication, submission, and redundancy.

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