

ANA PAULA WITT MOSENA

**WILLIAM GOLDING'S *LORD OF THE FLIES*:
RELUCTANT ANIMALS AND THEIR FLIGHT
FROM FEAR TO REIGN IN TERROR**

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UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL
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DEPARTAMENTO DE LÍNGUAS MODERNAS

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FROM FEAR TO REIGN IN TERROR**

Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso

Ana Paula Witt Mosena

Orientadora:
Rosalia Angelita Neumann Garcia

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“Majestic Nature continues on her tragic way serenely, caring naught for the wails of the agonized and panic-stricken nor the protests of defeat, but smiling sadly, proudly (yet somewhat disdainfully in her passing stride) at the victor’s fierce Hurrah. She loves the writhing of sword-blades, rending of tradition, the crunching of bones and the flap of shredded shot-torn banners, streaming out savagely (in the night, in the day) over the battle-weary, the mangled dying, and the swollen dead. Christs may come and Christs may go, but Caesar is forever.”

Ragnar Redbeard

“[...] all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.”

The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen
United States of America

A Noemy e Roberto Mosená, por acreditarem.

A Vasco Py Siegmán, por fazer valer a pena.

RESUMO

Nesta pesquisa, analiso a imagética d'*O Senhor das Moscas*, de William Golding, em correlação ao tema da brutalização ante a ausência da civilização, sendo a última entendida como um estado avançado de desenvolvimento social. O romance representa a decadência de uma sociedade, em resultado da degeneração moral do indivíduo, e pela qual a responsabilidade é, portanto, de cada um. Podemos acompanhar tal decadência através da imagética, que engendra a atmosfera opressiva do romance — uma característica incomum em histórias de aventura.

ABSTRACT

In this research, I analyze the imagery of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* in correlation with the theme of brutalization in the absence of civilization, being the latter understood as an advanced state in social development. The novel represents the decay of a society, as the result of moral degeneracy of each individual, thus being each individual's responsibility. We can follow this decay through imagery, which engenders the novel's oppressive atmosphere — an unusual feature in adventure stories.

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INTRODUCTION

Life in society¹ entails various conducts, in line with the mores of our time and culture, which limits our range of action. These mores are, in great part, determined by institutions such as law and religion, which exist, yet in more simple forms, since remote times. Within society, people, in general, usually try to live in accord with its mores and rules. However, when a determined fraction of society faces the necessity or — perhaps more appropriately — the simple possibility of reinventing social conventions, the chances — depending on the character of the elected leaders of such reform — are that this new society will not advance on the previously established principles of civilization, but rather revert itself to primal, rough forms of human culture; for the mere subtraction of conventions demands far less effort than the addition or even the simple maintenance of any which is not compulsory by our species' instincts and basic, ancient tendencies. As these instincts and tendencies involve a large number of factors and correspondences (to such factors) that find no equivalence in the rest of nature — since both factors and correspondences are all related to our singular brain and its singular products —, the result would fatally diverge from a society close to (non-human) animal behavior, with plain, simple logics and rather straight, functional expedients. If driven by certain individuals to subtract, instead of preserve or improve some social conventions, a society is very much inclined to turn into a mass whose practices lack the evolved, constructive ethics of civilization as well as the uncomplicated, contradiction-free, never self-destructive objectives of all other animal species.

This is what happens in *Lord of the Flies*, where boys, aged six to twelve, are evacuated from England during a nuclear war, crashing in a Pacific island after their plane is shot down. No adult survives. Initially the boys are sociable, but soon the distance from society starts to be felt, leading them to savagery. A division, absent at first, grows stronger throughout the novel. The characters of Ralph and his friends form the group of those who manage to preserve their righteous civilized ethics until the end. The characters of Jack and his friends form the group of those who let themselves be guided by primal human drives. The turning point occurs when Jack breaks away from Ralph and becomes the leader of what is now his own tribe. Disagreements, fear and superstitions like the ones about a beast at loose: everything concurs to the final catastrophe. Ralph is segregated from Jack's tribe and

¹ "Society" is used here to refer to any group of people living in contact and sharing grounds, be it of a city, a country or any minor territory, such as an island.

his last few followers are either killed or made slaves. Before the closing moments, we experience the death of a little boy, the murders of two other characters, Simon and Piggy, and the hunting of Ralph. An ultimate irony turns a fire in the forest, which would condemn the boys to unimaginable torments, into their own salvation, when a ship takes notice of the smoke and rescues them.

The novel may suggest an ordinary adventure story in its first pages. However, in the end of the very first chapter, we notice clearly that it is not a *Coral Island*² type of novel at all. Not because of *what* happens at that moment — three boys³ are confronted with an unusual situation for them: to kill or not a piglet — but because of *how* the happenings are presented, surrounded by an atmosphere of dread. As reminded by BAKER (1963, p.294), *The Coral Island* is also cited in the end of *Lord of the Flies*, by the naval officer who rescues the boys, ironically juxtaposing both novels, chiefly regarding their endings: the nightmare created by Golding's characters *versus* the success obtained by Ballantyne's. "The effect is to hold before us two radically different pictures of human nature and society", states Baker. In both novels, the island represents a microcosm of traditional civilized society. In *The Coral Island*, civilized humanity is plain: it is constituted by rational, cooperative, and friendly subjects, hence retaining the ideals and conducts harmonious to those adjectives; while in *Lord of the Flies'* island, it is complex and assorted, including disturbed, unsympathetic and spiteful individuals, ultimately subtracting civilization's most evolved standards.

Golding himself, in an interview to professor EPSTEIN (1954, p.204), explains how dissimilar his novel can be from adventure stories like *The Coral Island*, in which civilized boys are innately and inevitably good:

The theme is an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature. The moral is that the shape of a society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system however apparently logical or respectable. 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?

Unlike in *The Coral Island*, "the moral", as Golding says, does not derive from the characters' actions, but from the narrative as a whole — an alarming prognosis about humankind. Therefore, more than just continuing the tradition of adventure stories, *Lord of*

² Adventure story written by R. M. Ballantyne in 1857.

³ Every time the expression "the boys" is employed, it includes younger and older boys indistinctly, as used in the novel.

the Flies breaks away from it and goes further, through diverse directions, when criticizing the hypocritical idealism implicit in many works of the genre.

An example of this kind of idealism is the concept that there would be so-called non-civilized peoples who would gladly accept being conquered by civilized ones. Nowadays nobody has doubts about the form in which these conquests are conducted, under arms, and, several times, with full support of law and religion. A commoner occasion for the use of arms — war — is an even more direct example of the kind of “defects of society” Golding is referring to. The novel was written soon after World War II, inspired, in a great deal, by Golding’s negative impression based on his own partaking as a naval officer. What he experienced, as anyone in war, was not laws, or better still, institutions fighting one another, but men doing so. In *Lord of the Flies* we find a critique on how important is man’s, not institutions’, initiative to prompt wars: each individual is responsible for his own acts.

The main conflict, between Ralph and Jack, bears resemblance with war because of the matters they contend for: who commands, which laws are acknowledged by this commander, what are people’s rights, duties and roles in this society. The novel demonstrates how fragile are human institutions, largely when they manipulate (and even are raised from) human weaknesses such as fear. In the desert island, everything, mainly the unknown, frightens the boys. FROMM (1973, p.268) explains that

Fright, like pain, is a most uncomfortable feeling, and man will do almost anything to get rid of it. There are many ways to get rid of fright and anxiety, such as the use of drugs, sexual arousal, sleep, and the company of others. One of the most effective ways of getting rid of anxiety is to become aggressive. When a person can get out of the passive state of fright and begin to attack, the painful nature of fright disappears.

The boys react in different ways, but one of these ways — aggressiveness — leads them to utterly destroy their recently created society. The savagery into which they descend, and especially how they descend into it, makes any comparison to standard primitive societies not only simplistic, as truly misguided, due to the fact that these boys, differently from such societies, have a civilized background to build upon. They — mainly the bigger boys — already knew how to live respectfully in social order, and yet they are renouncing this knowledge and whatever values it bares. That they however hold so fully the aptitude to sheer savagery, is an alarming sign that this aptitude — and perhaps its somewhat concealed employment — is not at all absent in the society from which they come.

This transition, from a social Eden to a wasteland, can be satisfactorily followed through the novel's imagery, which helps build its oppressive atmosphere. According to The UVic Writer's Guide⁴,

[t]he term imagery has various applications. Generally, imagery includes all kinds of sense perception (not just visual pictures). In a more limited application, the term describes visible objects only (especially ones that are vivid). But the term is perhaps most commonly used to describe figurative language, which is treated in modern criticism as a central indicator of meaning or theme in literature. Some works make use of image-clusters (groupings of metaphors and similes), or have characteristic image motifs (such as the animal imagery in *Othello* or *King Lear*).

I have preferred to take into account as many instances under the category of imagery as possible, with the purpose of embracing several relevant elements which help engender the novel's atmosphere, such as word choice, allusions, similes, metaphors, motifs, themes and symbols. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to analyze the imagery of *Lord of the Flies* connected to the theme of brutalization in the absence of civilization.

The paper is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, the context of production is going to be developed, emphasizing the times in which Britain — the characters' country of origin — has been through war. The purpose of this emphasis is to examine how persistent war is within society, no matter how apparently developed a society may seem. In the second chapter, the consequences of a sudden absence of civilization are going to be studied. Finally, in the third chapter, imagery is going to be surveyed in three sections. The first section deals with the novel's (non-human) animal images, finally pointing to the parallels between them, the boys and their new environment. The second section contemplates what I shall call "human images": those which deal with human fears and their causes in *Lord of the Flies*. At last, the third one reflects upon what will be designated as "savage images": the ones that result from the ascendancy of human fears and portray the boys' moral decay and fall into pointless, terrorizing violence. The main works consulted during this research were David McDowall's *An Illustrated History of Britain* and Bertrand Russell's *Unpopular Essays*.

⁴ THE UVIC Writer's Guide (1995). *Imagery*. Retrieved September 2, 2009 from <http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/LTImagery.html>.

1. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

William Golding believed individual ethics to be an essential feature in the construction of any political system, for the latter would be controlled by such individuals. Be it law or any constitutional rules exerting an innate or indelible influence in human nature, it does not matter how rigorously prudent and fair the political system of a country is, either in legislative or constitutional terms; if the political sphere is — as it really may be — filled with a majority of individuals (or with a minority of individuals with more authority and/or influence than others) who approve or even yearn for the waging of a war against another country, this desire will be eventually fulfilled, despite its improbable fairness or the complete lack of it. Politics is, evidently, molded according to the politicians' ethics.

Throughout *Lord of the Flies*, the author criticizes a common practice, among quite a few people, of blaming the system for their own lack of ethics. Of blaming “human nature” — as if such were the nature of a collective being instead of singular beings in collective situation — for wars provoked by people's *personal* choices, be the motivations for these choices (power, religion or economy, e.g.) entirely acknowledged or not. As a Briton, and as a former naval officer who fought in World War II, Golding was perspicacious enough to know why people, more than countries, make wars.

The present data about the novel's historical context covers the period, in the history of Britain, between the middle of the nineteenth century — that is, some decades after the Napoleonic Wars (1799—1815) — and the middle of the twentieth century — that is, shortly after World War II (1939—1945). It was an era when the British Empire had hoarded so much power, that the risks and demands of fighting for its keeping became relatively small. Moreover, as always seems to be the case with power, the ultimate proof of its greatness was to not give up any part of it, no matter how diminutive. Britannia's bellicose apparatus was being successively activated, and numerous wars followed, culminating in the worst of them in terms of human loss: World War II and its 449,800 dead Britons.

By the fifties', Britain had already passed through countless wars, among them, the two World Wars. The nation had already changed politically, decreasing in power as an empire, for many of its colonies were now independent. Differently from the nineteenth century, when Britons were generally self-confident, in the twentieth century their self-confidence was disturbed by many social problems generated by the wars, which also altered

the worldwide mood to one of paranoia. Along with the devastation left by World War II, the question of the inevitability of wars remained. In other words, whether they would be either a necessary evil or something intrinsic to humankind, or none.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the British Empire was economically prosperous, for its industries manufactured more than half of the world's shipment of coal, iron and steel. Aiming to protect its commercial routes, Britain would wage war against other countries. That is to say, Britain undoubtedly would declare war to protect its economy. This period was the acme of the Britons' awareness of their own importance in the world's scenery. Jack sums up this idea when he says in chapter two that they are "English, and the English are best at everything" (p.43). This thought appears throughout *The Coral Island* as well (but perhaps less sentient of the statement's arrogance). Inside Europe, Britain tried to keep a balance of power, which would block any nation from being too strong, avoiding rivalries that could lead to wars. Outside Europe, the British Empire tried to keep its high commercial position through the occupation of nearly all the oceans of the world by its naval fleet. In both places, the country extensively utilized war as a mechanism of protection and control.

Approximately after 1850, however, the country began to worry about the competition with other European countries, which lead it not to a reduction, but to an expansion of its empire. Wars were declared against Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, and India. With Dr. Livingstone's reports, who was a missionary and explorer of areas in Africa unknown to Britons up to that time, Christianization became a practical commercial and political tool in that continent. The words in vogue were Christianization and civilization, the pseudo-noble frontal names for plain stealing, praised in *The Coral Island* and criticized in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. In 1890, with the confusion established by a race to tame a land, the European countries signed an agreement dividing Africa in areas of interest. The British Empire happened to remain with the biggest share. Once more, Britons declared a war to defend their possessions, this time against the Dutch and, later, against the Egyptians.

During the Sudan invasion in 1884, Britain saw itself involved in a contradiction that would become one of the major reasons for the collapse of the Empire: on the one hand, its imperialist ambitions; on the other, its liberal ideas, which the nation wanted to spread everywhere. "The most important idea of the nineteenth century was that everyone had the right to personal freedom, which was the basis of capitalism"⁵. There was another reason for

⁵ McDOWALL, 2006, p.154.

the interest in creating colonies: the preoccupation, from 1830 onwards, with the quick population growth. This preoccupation had, as one of its results, an increase in migrations and deportations to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand from 1840 on.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the extent and number of foreign areas under British dominance became such that Britain's Empire was larger than one nation could effectively control, and the cost of the colonies started to surpass the profits. In the twentieth century, these expenditures became a burden too heavy to carry, due, in addition to all else, to the demands for independence coming from the British colonies.

In 1857, Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species*. His theory of evolution was exploited by many as a way to explain everything (pseudo-) scientifically. A dangerous interpretation of the work was that there existed superior and inferior human races. The idea soon influenced imperial politics, being a vicious alternative to the religious excuse of the civilizational mission in other countries. To the colonized, it was possible to become a Christian, but it was not possible to change their race. By that time, the Britons really believed they were the most advanced of all races, having a moral obligation to govern the inferior ones. Again, Jack embodies this arrogant view, when he utters that “[i]t’s time some people knew they’ve got to keep quiet and leave deciding things to the rest of us —” (p.112) (this “us” is ambiguous, perhaps including Ralph or not).

Around the end of the nineteenth century, however, it had become clear, including for the Britons themselves, that the British Empire was not that powerful anymore. Germany was united now and had become a strong nation. Its economic prospects were clearly better than those of Britain. Like the US, Germany was producing more steel than Britain and it used that to build strong industries and a powerful naval fleet, which would soon take part in the Great War.

Britain had hopes of not entering the war. However, it had promised Belgium to guarantee its neutrality through the Treaty of 1838. With the assault of Belgium by Germany, Britain was forced to participate. It entered the war fearing, as well, that the German ambitions would — like Napoleon did, more than a century earlier — utterly modify the map of Europe. “In particular, Britain could not allow a major enemy power to control the Low Countries”⁶.

World War I (1914-1918) was an “international conflict between the Central Powers—Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey—and the Allied Powers—mainly France,

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.157.

Britain, Russia, Italy, Japan, and (from 1917) the U.S. After a Serbian nationalist assassinated Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria in June 1914, a chain of threats and mobilizations resulted in a general war between the antagonists by mid-August.”⁷ Among the consequences of the war were the collapse of four empires and the genocide of the Armenian population in concentration camps, in the final years of the Turkish-Ottoman Empire (denied until today by the Turkish authorities).

Apart from the Crimean War, this was the first European war Britain fought in for a whole century and the country was quite unprepared for the terribly destructive power of modern weapons. Modern artillery and machine-guns completely changed the nature of war, along with the introduction of tanks, in 1917, and the use of planes.

During that same time, British newspapers encouraged the nation to hate Germany and to wish for its destruction. Nationalism was even stronger in France, which had already been defeated by Germany in 1871. “As a result, when Germany offered to make peace at the end of 1916, neither the British nor the French law welcomed the idea. Both were prisoners of the public feelings they had helped to create”⁸. When Russia, following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, made peace with Germany, the German generals waited for a victory against the Allies. However, the attack from German submarines against neutral navigation pushed America into the war. The arrival of the American troops in France put an end to the hopes of the German Empire, which surrendered in November 1918. Approximately fifty times more Britons died than in the twenty-year war against Napoleon in the eighteenth century. “‘Never again’ was the feeling of the nation when it was all over.”⁹ However, nothing was over...

World War II, 1939—45, [was a] worldwide conflict involving every major power in the world. The two sides were generally known as the Allies and the Axis [coalition of countries headed by Germany, Italy, and Japan]. This second global conflict resulted from the rise of totalitarian, militaristic regimes in Germany, Italy, and Japan, a phenomenon stemming in part from the Great Depression that swept over the world in the early 1930s and from the conditions created by the peace settlements (1919—20) following World War I.¹⁰

One of the peace settlements mentioned in the article above was the Treaty of Versailles (1919), which imposed harsh penalties to the defeated countries of the Great War. In those countries a strong nationalist feeling was born, achieving its peak with Nazi-Fascism.

⁷ BRITANNICA CONCISE Encyclopedia (1994-2008). *World War I*. Retrieved September 10, 2009 from <http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/World+War+I>.

⁸ McDOWALL, 2006, p.160.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.161.

¹⁰ THE COLUMBIA Electronic Encyclopedia® (2005). *World War II*. Retrieved September 13, 2009 from <http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/World+War+II>.

Hitler's ambitions of increasing the vital space or "Lebensraum", from Germany to the limits of the Soviet Union, started with the annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia. When he assaulted Poland, European potencies decided to stop him, prompting World War II.

From 1939 to 1945 some war technologies were used for the first time, such as the radar, the microwave communication system and the atomic bomb. Some were improved, such as submarines, tanks, ships, and aircrafts. The British Royal Air Force was crucial to the resolution of the war, being represented in *Lord of the Flies* by the plane (in which the boys are initially traveling) that crashes on the island, starting the whole story, as well as by the parachutist (the "beast from air") who falls in the forest, in chapter six.

Instead of the progressive restoration of prosperity by the gradual fading of hostilities, the last stages of war brought one of history's most horrifying events, for, in 1945, over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the first atomic bombs to reach humankind with the novel destructive power of nuclear technology were released. More than 110,000 people died immediately and thousands of others died later in consequence of the after-effects. The outcome of World War II as a whole was that of 72 million deaths, including 46 million civilians. In the Nazi concentration camps alone it is estimated that 12 million civilians died, under appalling, systematic cruelty, as broadly known today. Furthermore, the advances on warfare technology had produced weapons of so high a power of devastation, that the mere threats of their use proved to be a procedure just as confrontational as the actual use of (older) armaments. War and the correspondent fear could now oppress societies without a single shot being heard. This was the essence of the Cold War, which began almost immediately after the end of World War II.

With so many wars in Britain's history, there persisted the question of why civilized gentlemen such as Britons would have any need for war to solve any problem. *Lord of the Flies* reflects on that question when presenting Jack, an ordinary civilized English boy, who could "sing C sharp" (p.19) in the choir, descending into a state in which he destroys everything in order to achieve power — power, actually, to do little apart from destroying everything. Some of his, and, by extension, humankind's motivations for these disconcerting endeavors are going to be developed in the next chapter.

2. THE DISAPPEARANCE OF CIVILIZATION

Every human carries the potential for good and evil. Living in society requires from us certain conducts, according to the mores of a given time and culture. Conducts that limit our evil and even good acts. Everybody has some rights and duties that relate to their role in society. Humanity has created certain devices, to determine and control mores, rights and duties. Two of the most prominent of these devices are religion, which has been controlling a profusion of people's habits for centuries, and law, whose rules are, in some places, still combined with those of religion. In primitive times, before civilization as we know it, the seeds of religion were planted in the grounds of superstition and magic thought. Fear of natural phenomena, for instance, was one of the greatest sources for the birth of superstitious beliefs (before the idea of elaborating original fonts of fear — such as hell — occurred). Religiousness is still far from splitting from superstition, and this rupture would arguably signify the very extinction of anything we could recognize as religion. Still, with science, unbiased philosophy and the advance of their diffusion, creed's field of influence shrinks. In other times¹¹, a major segment of religious thought condemned countless men, women (in special) and even children¹² to prolonged torture sessions, finally burning them alive as witchcraft partisans — all without the consequence of any vehement protest from the people. Nowadays, a minor segment obligates women to wear burqas, and sporadically kills some of them, in public humiliation ceremonies, when people throw stones against female so-called offenders — but the largest part of the globe's community stridently declares full despise for such doings, and these objections include the voice of many religious societies whose ethics are more distanced from those of the times when creed was the absolute guideline and people would burn, tied to wood stakes or locked inside the bellies of bronze bulls.

Law, in its turn, was, throughout history, frequently defined by mere whims (sometimes religious-oriented, as said before) of a few characters with unrestrained power. As time passed, law became gradually less of an instrument to order people according to a few

¹¹ Especially in Europe, between the 14th and 17th centuries.

¹² “[Em 1620], [h]orrorizado, o chanceler de Würzburg[, Alemanha] documentou como tudo ocorreu: ‘Um terço da cidade está certamente implicado. Os mais ricos, os mais atraentes e os mais proeminentes membros do clero já foram executados. Há uma semana, foi queimada uma menina de 19 anos, considerada a jovem mais linda da cidade (...) existem 300 crianças de 3 ou 4 anos acusadas de manter relações sexuais com o demônio. Vi crianças de 7 anos sendo executadas e estudantes pequenos e corajosos morrendo aos 10, 12 ou 14 anos de idade’” MISTÉRIOS DO DESCONHECIDO: Bruxas e Bruxarias. Rio de Janeiro: Abril Cultural, 1994/Time Life, 1990, p. 70, 23v.

people's desire, and more of one that ordered people according to their own common requirements. Some divisions of the law still operate as the rule of few over many, and there is no better example for that than war and its mandatory recruiting. Yet, ever after World War II, the war enterprise has never again received long-lasting popular support. The reputation of war leaders became tainted before civilized common and knowledgeable views, and some of these leaders were even condemned by law. To evade naivety, it should not be affirmed that, after 1945, a bellicose endeavor cannot escape from being properly pronounced unnecessary and unreasonable, for as long as people with hostile interests remain, the society who resigns itself as an unconditionally peaceful one shall be the easiest target. Nevertheless, the declaration of hostilities (may it be through official or practical assailing means) always comes first from a single side, towards which it becomes harder and harder for enlightened minds to maintain any positive reflections. In any case, no matter which side is contemplated, its involvement in war is majoritarilly taken under sad, regretful and even revolted feelings. Ancient romanticism about belligerent glory and the value of warriors is, this day, just as credible as the myths of mighty beasts, fire-spitting serpents and the divine will of the god Mars. The proud soldier is exposed as a bully, and the war hero is welcomed only as a victim.

By the mentioned changes in the dispositions of law and religion, I deem that these institutions, usually recognized as key devices for the establishing of ethics, conducts and rules, are themselves regulated, obeying plans which are traced somehow beyond their sphere. What are those plans and how are they traced are matters that demand examination and thought, in order to answer what truly disappears with the disappearance of civilization.

What is considered to be a good or an evil procedure within each society is largely going to depend on the amount and variety of the experiences that each society had till its current phase. Assuming that the social condition is unavoidable or even crucial to mankind, it is possible, however (and beyond subjective concepts of right and wrong), to always identify (through practical, not moral concerns) any procedures as being counterproductive, contradictory and perhaps self-destructive ones. We are able to do so by seeking any opposition to the filling of all central tangible needs¹³ and to the autonomy of whichever productive potential of the particular society that employs such procedures; and — just as important — by regarding such society not through its people's majority or minorities, but

¹³ By the term "central tangible needs" I refer both to the supply of physically (brain/intellectual orders considered) necessary provisions (such as food, water, shelter, clothing, medicine, and, taking license on modern society's inescapable demands, electricity, gas and impartial education) as well as to the maintenance of basic security from inequitable physical (brain/intellectual orders still considered) harm (such as rape, murder, kidnapping and, for it might jeopardize the safety of the previously mentioned provisions, robbery).

through each and everyone of its individuals, and thus through its unquestionable totality — so that all considered needs are those common to everyone, and so that (if not conflicting with the filling of the referred needs, and if interesting to *any* part of that society, including one's own) no individual potential may be impeded. In other words, whenever and however a (minor or major part of a) society, which is composed by individuals, obstructs the objectives of any of these individuals, this society, as a whole, is actually obstructing (a part of) itself. The only exception is made when the hindered goal was to obstruct another which posed no obstruction whatsoever. Indeed, it is possible to make this examination, from which it becomes clear not necessarily what is beneficial (again, in practical means) to a society, but most certainly what is not.

As a matter of fact, a political and social correspondence to this method of diagnosis (and its prospect to subsequently result in the treatment and discarding of those unconstructive procedures) is found in the concept of individual freedom¹⁴, in which one's freedom is solely but rigorously limited by the securing of another's. This concept has been widely accepted and promoted as one of the main achievements of civilized culture — but it actually can be assumed as the very definition and primal and final aim of civilized culture. The ideals of civilization are first and foremost related to such concept, even more than to technological and cultural advance, or economic prosperity, for the latter — depending on the employment of gathered *personal* talents to science, teaching, learning, art, philosophy and commerce — have their easiest means through the achievement of the former. Every political, legislative and religious procedure renounced throughout the centuries, as well as those that remain as cause for the most unanimous protests, had or have some inclination against the plenitude of individual freedom. The nations considered as the most prosperous and taken as role-models for the treatment of their own people are those which best conduct the concept (and the greater is the declared endorsement of such conduct by any of these nations, the more fervent and poignant will be the dissatisfied manifestations in the case of any noticeable discrepancy — as well demonstrated by the worldwide popular response to the US' repeated war promotions). China comes as an interesting example on the subject, since its rise as an economic and industrial potency does not imply in any influence on other countries in terms of cultural behavior, differently from what happened with the rise of Britain and of the US — countries whose governments were not so far above their citizens as China's authoritarian

¹⁴ The term "Democracy" was avoided for being more commonly recognized as a system between citizens and politics. With "individual freedom" I refer to an ideal which envelopes politics, laws, philosophy and common, everyday practices and views among all people.

government is. As can be observed, societies that have experienced the unreserved practice of individual freedom as a system have always, as a whole, made strong efforts to maintain it, and have from then on rejected the influence of other systems. Maybe the ultimate proof of the evenhandedness of individual freedom is that, differently from any other social system, it can be reinforced by a minority without incurring in the disrespect of anyone's (non-intruding) desires. Law and religion, however, cannot, at any rate, be pointed as the prime compellers for such a model. To clarify this assumption, I may address, a propos of law, the Constitution of the United States — more precisely, its 1st and 14th amendments, which are quoted below in respective order (being contemplated only the first paragraph of the 14th):

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

These texts became virtually effective between December 15, 1791 and July 28, 1868. However, between the 1st amendment's sanction and the days when any Afro-American person — born in the US — could freely speak his/her mind and enjoy the same unabridged privileges and immunities of all North-American citizens, more than a hundred years passed. The proper legislation that would finally end the shameful concept of “equal but separated” came only when a large part of the North-American population expressed their loathing towards racism. As anything more practical than a mere pile of words, the law that endorsed the ideal of individual freedom and rights came only after a large part of society had expressed that this ideal, through the beliefs and actions of many people, was already a practical reality, no matter how far from absolute.

Now, regarding religion, we simply need to consider, taking Christianity as our subject, that the religious set of concepts and rules over which the practices of torture and murder by fire were supported in long gone times is the same set over which many preachers sermonize about love, compassion and the virtues of the meek. The Bible did not change. What changed was the character of the public that priests must mesmerize with the Holy Book, thus changing the choice of psalms or, more importantly, the interpretation of whichever is chosen. To sum it up, both law and religion, as suggested before, were not the

chief regulation devices of society, for they were themselves regulated. They changed and adapted in accord to society's advance — and, all weighed up, it is my opinion that the only reliable marker of this advance is how definitely settled in a social system individual freedom is.

By this whole postulation, it seems evident to us that humanity has been aiming for the achievement and refinement of individual freedom throughout its entire history. It is not a matter of right or wrong, but purely a quest for avoiding as many hazards and as many obstructions as possible, to whichever part of a society, and thus to a society as an actual whole. Furthermore, favoritism for any generalized part of a society and its particular principles would always signify arbitrary judgments, which would fatally change in the course of time, never allowing humankind any sort of certainty about the conditions of its following generations. “I hope my son grows fit to whatever purpose whatever majority of people designs him for” — one can imagine a father's highest hopes in such reality — a reality that, completely disregarding the value of strict individuality, should inspire some inquiry about what, after all, would be the point of one's desire to reproduce one's particular genes (the very process of life in this planet).

Yet, though the presented logics consider it as a general tendency of humankind, individual freedom is a concept whose acceptance and supporting, at a personal level, find a great deal of difficulty, mainly because it requires a certain resignation concerning power: an individual must accept that his powers should be limited, which would demand some instincts to be repressed, since nature has imbued all its creatures with the urge to use their powers to the most, so as to ensure survival — but human power exceeds this function, being capable to producing a survival which, differently from any other in nature, profits from much more than the benefits of its basic requirements, and being, furthermore, capable of taking the most opposite direction: self-destruction. Still, these notions escape many, as it escapes also the simple math which declares that in a world where one is allowed to rule, there is always a much, much bigger chance for one to be ruled. Strangely enough, individual freedom depends on a collective pact — a tacit, non-instituted one, but sufficiently strong, for it has been pushing laws and religions — as well as (and especially) human abstract mechanisms such as moral — towards its interest: the interest not of a majority, nor of a minority, but of all. It is upon the verification and approval of history's most untroubled sceneries and of the highest and most varied levels of human productiveness that this pact is set. It lives, therefore, in the preeminence of information, learning and the conclusions thereof. My conclusion is that civilization can and should be defined by this pact, and that we should recognize, as the

disappearance of civilization, the disappearance of the ascendancy of the conscience which inspires such a pact.

Because of their young age, the boys in *Lord of the Flies* bare all these notions only subconsciously. They were suddenly set apart from all the products of modern society, remaining basically with two alternatives to deal with this split: either trying to preserve all their conducts as close as possible to what they understand from rules of the past, or letting themselves be driven by the new circumstances and their reflexes to it, consequently reformulating the rules. The first alternative is adopted by the boys who agree with Ralph's principles, while the latter, by the ones who agree with Jack's ideology. In order to avoid the uneasiness of a radical transformation, the boys who stick to the latter alternative (of a reform) simply subtract certain rules — as could be expected, for thus they produce the desired social changes without having to adapt themselves to wholly unfamiliar proceedings, and therefore remain fundamentally the same who wanted to benefit from the transformations. Moreover, they subtract a more circumstantial convention — individual freedom, whose force, as said before, comes from the pressure of historical background upon society, and, rather ironically, not from individual drives. Additionally, it seems that they follow criteria in regards to these reformulated rules which relate to previously developed personal matters (since their social notions are, as mentioned, mere subconscious ones). Examples of such matters can be pointed as repressed primitive instincts and a number of unaccomplished desires.

Both groups of boys want to enjoy the absence of adults' regulations and have “fun and games” — Ralph wants to hunt as much as Jack. Their two different ethics, nonetheless, reach a stage in which they cannot exist at the same time anymore, since they clash in a vital point: Ralph's group preserves the historically built consciousness, from which individual freedom is developed and maintained; while Jack's group seems to utterly forget everything his previous society has learned about that subject, hence erring in quite similar manners as their antecessors of early ages. The antagonism between the two ethics turns into an open conflict, resembling a war.

OREND¹⁵ explains that “War should be understood as an actual, intentional and widespread armed conflict between *political communities*. Thus, fisticuffs between *individual persons* do not count as a war, nor does a gang fight, nor does a feud” (my italics). Although apparently contesting one of the premises of this paper — that some events in *Lord of the*

¹⁵ OREND, B. (2000). *War*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Retrieved October 29, 2009 from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/war/>.

Flies are analogous to war — the two sentences above truly apply to the work, since the groups in conflict portrayed in the novel represent, microcosmically, “political communities” instead of just “individual persons” despite the personal rivalry between the leaders of both groups. Additionally, Orend cites “the one and only (so-called) ‘philosopher of war’, Carl von Clausewitz, [who] famously suggested that war is ‘the continuation of policy by other means.’” Orend agrees with Clausewitz’s suggestion, but thinks war is more than that. He states that

war is about the very thing which creates policy — i.e., governance itself. War is the intentional use of mass force to resolve disputes over governance. War is, indeed, governance by bludgeon. Ultimately, war is profoundly anthropological: it is about which group of people gets to say what goes on in a given territory.

The conflict presented in the novel is rather analogous to a war, due to the issues the groups contend for: who commands, which laws are acknowledged by this commander, what are people’s rights, duties and roles in this society. As a critique on the potentiality of humans for disconcerting endeavors such as war, *Lord of the Flies* remains incredibly (and sadly) up to date. It bares three implications. First, how ultimately flimsy is the collective pact among people to grant their individual freedom; for if the people lack a substantial number of individuals who hold the pact, all vanishes. Second, how persistent is human instinct and how contradictory it is on a social scope, since its base is the individual and its inclination is to subject all individuals. Third, how permanently open to capricious manipulation are devices such as religion and law, since their expedients are defined solely by the people who regulate them. However they may reinforce individual freedom in a developed society, they have been the very origin of many wars throughout human history. Undoubtedly it would be naïve to affirm that all armed conflicts were avoidable or unnecessary, at least as a means of defense. However, like Orend, we cannot deny that “War is a brutal and ugly enterprise”.

Yet it remains central to human history and social change. These two facts together might seem paradoxical and inexplicable, or they might reveal deeply disturbing facets of the human character (notably, a drive for dominance over others). What is certainly true, in any event, is that war and its threat continue to be forces in our lives. Recent events graphically demonstrate this proposition, whether we think of the 9-11 attacks, the counter-attack on Afghanistan, the overthrow of Iraq’s Saddam Hussein, the Darfur crisis in Sudan, the bombings in Madrid and London, or the on-going “war on terror” more generally.

Jack cannot restrain his “drive for dominance over others”. He does not accept that his powers should be limited in order to preserve the common benefit. He annuls the collective pact which makes individual freedom possible and sticks to his instincts which go

against it, employing primitive forms of religiousness and law. All that is allowed and approved by most of his fellows, who equally are driven only by instincts — first those which reflect fear, just like Jack's, and then, before Jack's authoritarian rise, the derivative herd instinct. Additionally, enhancing to extremes what nature has provided him — the human drive to use its already excessive power — makes him an icon of how detached humans are from animals, but also leads him and the companions he drags along to the most ominous consequence of this excess, which is, as mentioned before, self-destructiveness.

The human facets that are most prominent in this process of decay are going to be examined in the next chapter.

3. IMAGERY

Before Piggy's question, in chapter five: "What are we? Humans? Or animals? Or savages?" (p.99), I work on the premise that, according to the novel, a good answer would be the three of them. Therefore, this chapter is going to be divided in three parts: images of animals, of humans and of savages. I did not keep Piggy's sequence in order, so to highlight the idea that humankind belongs, in the first place — although in a very peculiar and skewed way — to the kingdom *Animalia*; acquires, later on, through culture and civilization, the knowledge of how to properly control the immoderations of its natural aptitudes (so to avoid, for instance, that its overactive imagination may guide its behavior, giving credit to groundless fears); and, finally, in the lack of such knowledge, is susceptible to linger in that peculiar, skewed condition, of a species in which both the natural balance of animal kingdom as well as the most developed designs of human civilization are absent — a condition to which I refer as savagery.

The section called "animal images" is going to focus on the comparisons between men and (other) animals, and between natural phenomena and animals. In the section "human images", there is a focus on the images linked to human fear. Finally, in "savage images", the emphasis is on images associated to cruelty, either of human order or not. The images covered in the three sections were organized according to my interpretation on their semantic field of pertinence. Therefore, some arbitrariness may be found, as in the case of an image that would fit in more than one section.

3.1. ANIMAL IMAGES: The imagery of humankind's conflictual relation with its nature — the animal nature

The motto that man is a rational animal has been continuously repeated. *Lord of the Flies* questions to what extent this motto is correct through comparisons between humans and animals which make the reader reflect upon the correlation. Given the novel's setting, however — children set aside from civilization —, this receives the status of a test: how long would these children remain *rational* animals in such an environment? How far goes the influence of civilization upon them? There are several images correlating humans and natural

phenomena to animals. We can apprehend the implied idea that humankind, in its most natural, i.e., animal state, away from civilization, is no less inclined to ruthlessness than wild animals are. Moreover, we can apprehend the idea that, actually, in such conditions, humankind's inclination to ruthlessness surpasses that of wild animals, for acts of absolutely unnecessary and unprofitable violence are possible to occur within our own species, perhaps also involving, in the perpetrator's psyche, even a sense of passionate pleasure and realization that surely is not comparable to wild animals' impulses. From the several images connected to animals present in the novel, I selected the ones that most called my attention, as follows.

Insects usually have negative connotations among humans, either for being considered filthy and pestering or for being insignificant. The *littluns* (the younger boys) cannot be counted as long as they run "round like insects" (p.47); and boys swarm here and there (p.118, 206). Butterflies, whose appearance (due to the colorful beauty of its wings and its connection to flowers) is one of the few from the *insecta* class to be considered with sympathy by common perception, are recurrent up to chapter eight, when they give way to the flies that come with *their lord*: "Even the butterflies deserted the open space where the obscene *thing* grinned and dripped" (my italic). Flies "without number" — carriers of disease and destroyers of crops, which feed on rotting flesh, decaying fruit, or the internal organs of other animals¹⁶ — will appear, instead of butterflies, from chapters eight to eleven, landing sometimes on the pig's head and spread bowels: "The pile of guts was a black blob of flies that buzzed like a saw" (p.155); sometimes on the dead parachutist: "The flies had found the figure too" (p.164); and sometimes even on Simon: "Gorged, they alighted by his runnels of sweat and drank" (p.155). The author's choice of words in the following passages directs the reader to the image of insects in their larval (young/body-developing as the boys) state: Simon "bent down and wormed his way into the center of the mat" (p.59). "Ralph wormed out of the ferns and sneaked forward to the edge of that impenetrable thicket that fronted the neck of land" (p.208). "Within seconds he was worming his way into the thicket" (p.218). "He wormed his way through the thicket toward the forest" (p.222). "Ralph wormed between the rising stems" (p.225).

Literature is populated by black birds. Not very far from Poe's raven, the image of the boys from the choir is also one of bad omen (p.17). In a note to his Portuguese translation of *Beowulf*, RAMALHO (2007, p.202) explains that,

¹⁶ THE COLUMBIA Electronic Encyclopedia® (2005). *Fly*. Retrieved November 5, 2009 from <http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/fly>.

although being one of the bellicose beasts, the raven would also bring good omen, in the Scandinavian as well as in the Latin language tradition, which would be associated to the joyful dawn. Nevertheless, I stick to the Anglo-Saxon symbolism of the morning as a period of suffering [...] and I interpret that the raven indicates, then, the vestige of the bloodshed of the day before the morning when the winners celebrate the sadness of the defeated (my translation).¹⁷

Thanks to vampire stories (besides its natural affiliation with diseases and unpleasant minuscule double wounds), the bat (obviously not a bird, but just the same a dark, ominous flying figure) also enjoys a negative reputation: the shadow of a boy in the sand, at a distance (p.15), resembles a bat, the same animal that obscures Ralph's ideas with its wings (p.119).

For centuries and still, dogs have entertained a better reputation than the previous creatures, being regarded as loyal animals, as do the Samneric twins, who grin and pant like dogs (p.15); as skillful animals, like Jack, who is "dog-like, uncomfortably on all fours" during one of his first hunting expeditions (p.49); even as silly and pure animals, like Henry, a littlun who points to the water "like a setter" (p.66); However, they are traditionally considered inferior animals. Without his glasses, Piggy does not get pleasure from being "led like a dog" (p.194).

Cats and horses, generally associated with agility and speed, respectively, are compared to Ralph, who, in a moment of despair, running away from Jack's tribe, "launched himself like a cat" and "shied like a horse among the creepers and ran once more till he was panting" (p.223). The term monkey is by and large used to portray funny behavior, differently from the term ape, which is used in the novel in comparison to Jack, when "for a minute [he] became less a hunter than a furtive thing, ape-like among the tangle of trees" (p.50).

The pigs (boars) that inhabit the island are the animals chosen by the boys to be hunted. Piggy (p.6), resembling those animals (as implied by his nickname), is also chosen to be persecuted. A fairly intelligent boy, he is discriminated because of his obesity, his distinct accent, and his excessively responsible way of thinking, considering his age. Moreover, when dying, "Piggy's arms and legs twitched a bit, like a pig's after it has been killed." (p.206). Another image related to pigs emerges when Ralph is warned, by the Samneric twins, in the last chapter, that he is going to be chased like a pig (p.215): "Roger sharpened a stick at both ends", meaning Ralph's head would be offered as a gift to the beast (p.216). Pigs are normally linked to greed (probably due to their big appetite) and uncleanness. The Lord of the Flies —

¹⁷ In the original: "[...] apesar de ser uma das bestas bélicas, o corvo também traria bons agouros, tanto na tradição escandinava quanto na de língua latina, o que se associaria ao amanhecer feliz. Todavia, atendo-me ao simbolismo anglo-saxônico da manhã como período de sofrimento [...] e interpreto que o corvo indica, então, vestígio do sangue derramado no dia anterior ao qual se segue a manhã na qual os vencedores comemoram a tristeza dos derrotados.

to some scholars Beelzebub, a god of the Philistines, to others, Satan — is portrayed as the pig's head in chapter eight (p.161).

Calling a group of people a herd is rather derogatory, for it means they will not act autonomously, as individuals, but tag along each other's actions, thus engaging in rather mechanical collective routines or — maybe more precisely — rites. The littluns — “*heads* brown, fair, black, chestnut, sandy, mouse-colored; *heads* muttering, whispering, *heads* full of eyes that watched Ralph and speculated” (p.14, my italics) — obey the call of the shell, from the first chapter on, like a herd obeys the call of the horn.

The comparison between natural elements/phenomena and animals is occasionally of a zoomorphic kind, occasionally of an anthropomorphic one, for nature has both animal and human characteristics and behavior. The flames of the first fire in the mountain, for instance, are compared to a squirrel which eats and gnaws the trees (p.45); and to a jaguar, “as [it] creeps on its belly” (p.45). Limbs “yielded passionately to the yellow flames that poured upwards” (p.42), in a fantastic inverted movement. The element of fire is one of the novel's main symbols, having both positive connotations, such as protection from darkness, possibility of rescue and hot meal, but also negative connotations, such as prejudicial competition and destruction of the island.

The “breakers on the reef” have a “long, grinding roar” (p.9), and “When [...] breezes reached the platform the palm fronds would whisper, so that spots of blurred sunlight slid over their [Piggy's and Ralph's] bodies or moved like bright, winged things in the shade (p.10). In chapter six, Ralph

saw the landsman's view of the swell and it seemed like the breathing of some stupendous creature. [...] Down, down, the waters went, whispering like the wind among the heads of the forest [...] Then the sleeping leviathan breathed out, the waters rose, the weed streamed, and the water boiled over the table rock with a roar (p.116).

The sea is a demon, and its waters boil with a growl, as if the “stupendous creature” were hampering the boys' rescue. Seeing the vastness of the ocean, the boys have the impression that “The coral was scribbled in the sea as though a giant had bent down to reproduce the shape of the island in a flowing chalk line but tired before he had finished” (p.27). The moonlight sits down on the water, before the parachutist falls on the forest, where “The changing winds of various altitudes took the figure where they would” (p.104). After the Samneric twins notice the figure of the parachutist, nature seems malevolent: “the trees of the

forest sighed, then roared” and “The leaves were roaring like the sea” (p.108). The mountain is said to have “punched up a hole of blackness” (p.135).

The non-animal natural phenomena, particularly fire, enjoy a relative neutrality in relation to the animal ones. That is to say, contrary to most bestial connotations, fire has a symbology which is neither positive nor negative (and positive and negative at the same time). The non-animal natural phenomena are thus neutral agents, or better still, when negative, they have an indifference, an irrevocability and an amorality perfectly distinguished from the animal descriptions — which, usually linked to the boys, carry a good deal of either moral or emotional sense — according to the decisions and attitudes of each one of them. The animal metaphors seem to point to good and evil, to qualities and defects of each character (and, consequently, to the psychological and thematic conflict that takes place in the attempt of defining what would be good and evil, qualities and defects, both in the context of the island as in the context of human condition as a whole).

The natural — climatic and geographic — motifs, however, be they positive or negative, are free from pejorative or affirmative connotations: when positive, they are simply practical and/or useful; when negative, simply threatening. It follows that, while the imagery of animals as a depiction of humans suggest an unstable nature, which hurls judgments between its divisions of virtue and malevolence (in sum, humanity’s constant and troublesome effort to determine good and evil), the imagery of non-animal natural phenomena suggests nature in its plenitude, encompassing both virtue and malevolence without any conflict between each other. The images of the sea and the wind do not relate to any specific animal upon which any mundane judgment could fall: they tell of roarings (of uncertain quality) and of mythical, inexistent creatures, which, in a certain way, represent the referred indifference (and non-moral stability), not being under the same kind of semi-moral verdict which falls, for instance, upon the connotations attributed to the nature of the pig or the flies. Worthy of note is also that these mythical creatures are entities whose power humankind has no means of altering.

The indifference of nature seems to be interpreted, by the characters, as malevolence, as if nature could have a personality similar to the human one to some degree. This quasi-personality, as silly as it may look, influences the boys to a rather serious extent, as developed in the next section.

3.2. HUMAN IMAGES: The imagery of humanity's oldest cause and consequence — fear

Nature keeps the tendencies of the survivors. Fear was always an effective device of survival in the animal kingdom, for the creatures who felt it the most, tended to avoid and flee its causes the more hastily. A noise, a smell, a sudden movement amidst the branches: the animals that most rapidly responded to such signs, and especially the ones that responded with the most intense fear, were those that first fled and escaped the predator. And these were, in animal history, the tools of fright: to run and to hide. The animal mind could not exam its inclinations beyond the benefit of survival. That is to say, fear proposed no explanation. Human advent, however, presented brains whose perceptions went far beyond the detection of food, of sex and of immediate danger. These brains could contemplate what was not there, thus multiplying signs of danger. Also, they produced such a high a level of reflections upon any detected element or any effectuated action, that they could not help questioning why to fear, to run and to hide. A deer would flee a storm by instinct, since the deer that fled it first, for whatever reasons, never got wet, never got cold and never got weak, and thus survived to generate the now still fleeing deer. A human, the same. However, the latter could question the whole process. Just like the deer, the human would not have, on its own, plain consciousness about the entire course of its species, hence being unable to reach the proper explanation for the reasons of fear. The psychological insecurity and discomfort we can easily relate to doubt would impel the enquirer to settle for whatever explanations he finds the best. These explanations would relate to the signs that all animals perceive — with the five senses — as well as to those only humans can — with imagination. So, while the deer simply flees by instinct before the darkening of the sky, the changing of the air, and the noises which, in the absence of abstract thought, are connected to the storm and to nothing else, the human might end up running from what he finally interpreted as a flying pack of colossal iron lions, that roar in fury, occulted behind the clouds of their bestial breath, and whose arrival poses a threat not because these felines eat those who walk the earth, but because giant sparks of fire are released over the land as they clash their metallic skin one upon the other during the commotion. This novel, absurd explanation will not, of course, revoke the instinctive reasons for which the human runs from the storm. Consequently, the human being is subjected to multiply its sources of fear.

Like in our example (which is based on a common behavior of primitive human characters), in *Lord of the Flies*, nature, with its quasi-personality, frightens the characters to a great extent, inciting their imagination to work against themselves — they create monsters

and ways of eliminating them. The images of the novel that revolve around fear, its sources and outcomes, and fear as a cause and consequence of many human enterprises are going to be developed in the course of this section.

Fear is an impulse whose main objective is its own purging. Though most of humanity's explanations to its fears actually aim at easier ways to such purging, the consequent superstitions that rise from these hasty explanations are themselves responsible for the creation of many objects and practices which — once consecrated — begin to be feared by humans, such as idols, numbers, animals, and an infinity of tiny everyday routines. Nevertheless, it seems nearly impossible to see humankind becoming independent from its influence, due to the fact that “Man is a credulous animal, and must believe something; in the absence of good grounds for belief, he will be satisfied with bad ones” (RUSSELL, 1950, p.99). Russell points out that “Primitive magic has the purpose of securing safety, either by injuring enemies, or by protecting oneself by talismans, spells, or incantations” (*id., ibid.*, p.106-7).

We observe that, in *Lord of the Flies*, there are some of these “talismans, spells, or incantations” which are employed by the characters. The conch, which can be reckoned as one of them, is actually of a practical quality, enabling the boys to gather and therefore unite against any possible real, physical troubles, just as any animal pack. Ralph is elected chief mainly because he was its carrier: “The being that had blown that, had sat waiting for them on the platform with the delicate thing balanced on his knees, was set apart” (p.19). Nonetheless, the chanting, the dance and the mask — all of a purely superstitious nature — are harmful — either they put the characters in a state of frenzy (the chanting and the dance) or in a state of alienation (the mask). It is not by chance that Jack, Ralph's nemesis, is the architect of these wicked devices, which increase in popularity as fear increases among the boys. Fear leads them all to savagery. It “generates impulses of cruelty, and therefore promotes such superstitious beliefs as seem to justify cruelty. Neither a man nor a crowd nor a nation can be trusted to act humanely or to think sanely under the influence of a great fear” (RUSSELL, 1950, p.109).

As previously regarded, the insecurity and discomfort which are aroused in humans by the persistence of doubt over any matter — i.e., the unknown — are the very source of superstition. Several things do not have an explanation for the characters, who are mere children. The disposition of the pink rocks spread through the island, for instance, was a work of “Some unknown force” (p.23). Without adult guidance, not only the nature of some things remains unknown, as the fear before the unknown freely emerges.

A universal symbol of the unknown is darkness — for darkness is, to human eyes, a physical maintainer of all things unknown. The character of Simon, under the effects of a sort of epileptic crisis, talks to the Lord of the Flies, as the pig's head “introduces” itself. After unexplainably revealing to Simon that things are going wrong in the island because of them, “Simon found he was looking into a vast mouth. There was blackness within, a blackness that spread” (p.161-2). Blackness, or darkness, relates not only to night, but also to the forest, and to “man's heart” (p.230). Without the sun, “the growing slice of gold that lit them from the right hand and seemed to make speech possible” (p.109), the boys feel desolated. In the first chapter, the boys see something in the beach that looks like a dark creature. Then, they notice that “the darkness was not all shadows but mostly clothing. The creature was a party of boys, marching approximately in step in two parallel lines and dressed in strangely eccentric clothing” (p.16). The forest is the darkness where the boys have to plunge, where even the heat (certainly another potentially hazardous element) is dark (p.25). Apart from Simon, who “muck[s] about in the dark” (p.93), the other characters, even Ralph (p.99), are afraid of the dark. Climbing up the mountain in search of the beast, “The darkness seemed to flow round [Ralph, Jack and Roger] like a tide”, which makes Ralph question what is the use of looking for the beast since they are “handicapped by the darkness” (p.134). “The darkness and desperate enterprise gave the night a kind of dentist's chair unreality” (p.136).

Chapter eight is called “Gift for the Darkness”, not for an idol or a god: darkness, here, means the boys' own hearts, but also the projection of their fears. Afraid of the beast that may dwell in the forest, Ralph's tribe has to build another fire, on the beach. They collect fallen wood from the skirts of the forest, in order to avoid going into it. These skirts, and the scar, were “sufficiently friendly in daylight. What they might become in darkness nobody cared to think.” Hastened by the imminence of the evening, the boys change from “energy and cheerfulness” to “panic” and “hysteria” (p.146). “Ralph stood up, feeling curiously defenseless with the darkness pressing in” (p.185). In chapter three, when Simon is in the jungle, “Darkness poured out, submerging the ways between the trees till they were dim and strange as the bottom of the sea” (p.60).

In the dark, “Two grey trunks rubbed each other with an evil squeaking that no one had noticed by day” (p.108). Percival's cry in the darkness, after he tells about his nightmare, “chilled them and set them grabbing for each other. Then the wail rose, remote and unearthly, and turned to an inarticulate gibbering” (p.103). Even if not concealed by darkness, invisible elements and their sounds inspire alarm. When Jack is alone in the forest and hears a bird's cry, “a harsh cry that seemed to come out of the abyss of ages”, he is terrified: “Jack himself

shrank at this cry with a hiss of indrawn breath, and for a minute became less a hunter than a furtive thing, ape-like among the tangle of trees” (p.50).

While darkness is a font of fright because of its veiling powers, other natural elements implicate fear by revealing more than what the boys expected to see. Piggy thinks the boys in the island are the only survivors of an atom bomb and, what is more, they may stay there until they die. “With that word the heat seemed to increase till it became a threatening weight and the lagoon attacked them with a blinding effulgence” (p.10). Due to the heat and the sun, there are mirages: in the first chapter, “swathing mirages that were wrestling with the brilliance of the lagoon” (p.9). The beach has a “diamond haze” (p.15). As the evening approaches, the mirages go away (p.23).

Strange things happened at midday. The glittering sea rose up, moved 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. Piggy discounted all this learnedly as a “mirage”; and since no boy could reach even the reef over the stretch of water where the snapping sharks waited, they grew accustomed to these mysteries and ignored them, just as they ignored the miraculous, throbbing stars. At midday the illusions merged into the sky and there the sun gazed down like an angry eye. Then, at the end of the afternoon, the mirage subsided and the horizon became level and blue and clipped as the sun declined. That was another time of comparative coolness but menaced by the coming of the dark. When the sun sank, darkness dropped on the island like an extinguisher and soon the shelters were full of restlessness, under the remote stars (p.61-2).

Mirages block Ralph from seeing clearly the ship on the horizon, in chapter four (p.70). The days were “obscured by the shifting veils of mirage” (p.113). On the other side of the island, in a place Jack discovered long before the others, “The filmy enchantments of mirage could not endure the cold ocean water and the horizon was hard, clipped blue” (p.122). Walking towards Jack’s tribe, in chapter eleven, Ralph sees “things partially, through the tremble of the heat haze over the flashing sands, and his own long hair and injuries” [...] “The sky and the mountain were at an immense distance, shimmering in the heat; and the reef was lifted by mirage, floating in a land of silver pool halfway up the sky” (p.197). The vastness of the ocean is dreadful: “There were miles of vague water at his right and the restless ocean lay under his left hand, as awful as the shaft of a pit. Every minute the water breathed round the death rock and flowered into a field of whiteness” (p.212).

The whole situation in the island makes nightmares common among the littluns, and even among *biguns* (as the bigger boys are called) like Ralph. In chapter two, the littlun with a sign on his face starts the series of testimonies about nightmares, with a description of a

snake-thing. In chapter three, after the testimonies about beasties and the disappearance of this littlun during the fire, the boys start to think the island is not good (p.54). Fear increases according to the rumors about a beast at loose (p.89). There is a collective hysteria among the littluns, who miss the consolation of their parents (p.95), and Ralph feels “the breaking up of sanity. Fear, beasts, no general agreement that the fire was all-important” (p.96).

Beasts dwell in the boys’ imagination, embodying their fears, what is unknown and what is incomprehensible. They can be anything scary: from unknown animals to supposed ghosts. The “snake-thing” seen in nightmares by the littlun with a mark on his face is interpreted as the beast from water in chapter five (p.35). Then there are rumors that there is a beast in the forest too (p.90). However, Percival, another littlun, affirms that “the beast comes out of the sea” (p.96). Simon tries to express his opinion that maybe the beast is within everyone, but nobody understands him (p.97). As if it was not enough, somebody talks about ghosts (p.98). The parachutist who falls in the forest is interpreted as the beast from air in chapter six (p.104). This beast is first seen by Samneric, who exaggerate in its description, saying it was furry and had claws (p.110). Again, Simon was incredulous: “However Simon thought of the beast, there rose before his inward sight the picture of a human at once heroic and sick” (p.114). For Jack, who “remember[s] his age-old tremors in the forest”, the beast is a hunter (p.141). In order to appease their fear of the beast, he orders his tribe that, from what they kill, the “head is for the beast. It’s a gift” (p.154). Reinforcing the contradictory conducts of the boys’ society, the pig’s head which Jack offers as a gift to the beast is itself regarded as an embodiment of the beast (p.161). Jack’s tribe changes its chant because of the beast: instead of “*Kill the pig*” (p.127), they sing “*Kill the beast!*” (p.171), before killing Simon, who is considered one of the beast’s disguises (p.181).

Silver, the color of Jack’s knife blade and therefore the color linked to one of the novel’s major icons of violence and its potentials, covers the island’s atmosphere, before the great storm, during which Simon is murdered. In chapter eight, after Jack’s rebellion against Ralph and his friends, “The sky, as if in sympathy with the great changes among them, was different today and so misty that in some places the hot air seemed white. The disc of the sun was dull silver as though it were nearer and not so hot, yet the air stifled” (p.148). The storm, surrounded by a “silver atmosphere”, is the apex of the boys’ fears. It is as if the whole world were collapsing and there was no adult to say a word of comfort to them. The tropical island becomes colorless with the impending death of Simon during the storm: “There were no shadows under the trees but everywhere a pearly stillness, so that what was real seemed illusive and without definition” (p.155). The savages, later, utter a “silvery laughter” (p.202).

This metaphorical use of silver, bearing connection with Jack's weapon, might be read both as a foreshadowing as an attendance to the rise of the novel's greatest bastion of dread: Jack himself.

Jack displays a strong drive for power, wanting to lead at any cost, but he is also very frightened, attempting to wipe fear out in every possible way. Ultimately, he becomes a complete personification of humanity's troubled relation with its instincts: he is utterly driven by them, while, at the same time, desperate and unable to comprehend any proper truth about them. The only rule he never complained about was: "Until the grownups come to fetch us we'll have fun" (p.34). But the possibilities of fun proved to be even more restricted by the island's environment and weather than they ever were by adults' rules. In a playground of dangers, fright and desolation, the only sensation of any former ideals of amusement he could achieve again was that of withdrawing those rules. Fatally, however, by renouncing the rules most regular boys want to be free from, Jack and those who follow him become less of anything themselves could identify as boys. They become frightened fatherless creatures, subjected to deal with their fears in whatever manner comes to mind — and, overall, subjected to creating as many new fears as they can.

With his influence upon others, Jack contaminates those who are also feeling miserable and terrified. As remarked by RUSSELL (1950, p.86), more than just fear,

Every powerful emotion has its own myth-making tendency. When the emotion is peculiar to an individual, he is considered more or less mad if he gives credence to such myths as he has invented. But when an emotion is collective, as in war, there is no one to correct the myths that naturally arise. Consequently in all times of great collective excitement unfounded rumors obtain wide credence.

Jack will trail his path to leadership supported by the rumors of supernatural dangers, i.e., supported by the boys' fears. As a hunter who can kill the beast, he is favored in spite of Ralph, who cannot protect the boys from something he does not even admit to exist: "But there isn't a snake!", said Ralph. "We'll make sure when we go hunting", replied Jack (p.37). As fear increases, each "tribe" protects itself its own way: Jack's will dance to forget the beast; Ralph's will build a fire to forget the island (177).

The way Jack leads, offering fun and protection, eventually conquers nearly all the boys, who, after all, would rather fear him than the unknown. Ralph is afraid of being alone, but he also fears being led by Jack, for this would mean he had relinquished civilized values, like the others. When he helps killing a pig, in chapter seven, he feels temporarily part of the group. However, he is "carried away by a sudden thick excitement" which grew with the

chant, along with a “desire to squeeze and hurt [which] was over-mastering” (p.126-8). Ralph is aware that such desires would take control of him if he did not try to take control of them. Ralph’s encounter with the pig’s skull is quite scary: “the pig’s skull grinned at him from the top of a stick.” It gleamed like the conch “and seemed to jeer at him cynically [...] A sick fear and rage swept him”, for everything the skull represented: the hunting, the descent into savagery, the filth. (p.210-11). Despite admitting the boys have become savages, by the last chapter, Ralph is afraid of the “ambushing fears of the deep night” (p.211), so he tries to think the savages are human too. He muses that in daylight they could “Pretend they were still boys, schoolboys”, but in darkness, with “the horrors of death”, they could not (p.211).

Ralph feels that the understandable, lawful world is disappearing (p.99). After Phil and Percival give testimonies about their nightmares, in chapter five, Ralph asks Piggy, the most rational boy, if there are ghosts or beasts. Piggy answers negatively, for, if they existed, “things wouldn’t make sense”. Ralph is not convinced. “But s’pose they don’t make sense? Not here, on this island? Supposing things are watching us and waiting?” (p.101). When the world around Ralph starts to dissolve, he gradually loses the confidence he once had in civilization, until his imagination, like the rest of the boys’, begins to create fantasies surrounding unreal dangers.

The “things” that seem to have lost their sense belong to the realm where fear has been tamed (or, if not, at least its motives have been better enlightened) by ages of scientific achievements, by an advanced stage in the development of law and by shrunken religiousness, which, apart from minor sectors of some societies, at least does not jeopardizes the already recognized relative freedom most individuals entertain. This is not the world of the island, in which a new society is established. New, but driven just by archaic feelings, primitive impulses and roughly thought concepts, whose exploration takes the boys further away from the knowledge acquired in centuries of development, and whose deceptive conquests accelerates this departure. Their destiny is a well-known scenery in human history, for it is that of human birth — a birth which spawns a savage. A savage who has, as all animals, no control or knowledge upon its instincts, but, differently from them all, has the aptitude to guess, to speculate — and thus to be mistaken; to be a fool. A savage that, without the support of nature understood and of history elucidated — and most especially without the personal embracing of such wisdom —, is bound to respond to fear with the elaboration of new fears — and perhaps may be bound to become a frightful thing itself.

3.3. SAVAGE IMAGES: The imagery of human primal disposition and its main talent — unrestrained destruction

The liberation put forth in the island is of a rather different quality from the individual freedom entertained within civilized society. Some influential fellows, such as Jack and Roger, who are unable to make the social pact to grant individual freedom, hinder the whole project of a peaceful, ordered society. They do not control — and do not want to control — their drives: these boys are corrupted by their very nature, dragging others along. The addition of fear to the latent aggressiveness they display result in recklessness and destructiveness. In order to appease fear, they unleash the beasts within them, using the devices developed by Jack: the mask, the chant and the dance. Under his leadership, the boys — apart from a few who remained under Ralph's command — become increasingly more united as a tribe of hunters and more intolerant with those outside their group, to the point of committing acts of extreme violence. The outsiders are reified, considered mere things, isolated affectively. There is no identification with them. RUSSELL (1950, p.126) notes that

Within the herd we are more friendly to each other than are many species of animals, but in our attitude towards those outside the herd, in spite of all that has been done by moralists and religious teachers, our emotions are as ferocious as those of any animal, and our intelligence enables us to give them a scope which is denied to even the most savage beast.

This section presents the aggressive images collected in the novel. These images comprise the outcome of fear, observed in the previous section: the acts of violence and the consequent decay of the characters and of the island. They also comprise the indifference showed by nature before the dreadful events.

The boys' first impression about the island is that it was “wizard. There's food and drink, and —' 'Rocks —' 'Blue flowers —'” (p.34). However, the ground “was torn”, dotted with “decaying coconuts” (p.4), giving a clue to the bad events to come. In their first exploration of the island, Simon, Ralph and Jack did not find only flowers and rocks. They found a piglet, too, and their first reaction was to kill it. The piglet was trapped in the creepers trying to escape with “the madness of extreme terror. Its voice was thin, needle-sharp and insistent.” Jack even drew his knife to kill it, but “There came a pause [...] only long enough for them to understand what an enormity the downward stroke would be.” He could not, this time, kill the pig, “because of the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh; because of the unbearable blood” (p.29-30). Jack Merridew, who was not sure whether

he wanted to be rescued (p.18), was still only a boy, not a savage.

An important image of violence is present in chapter four: Maurice and Roger, two biguns, spoil some castles three littluns are making in the sand. Maurice feels “the unease of wrongdoing”, because, “In his other life [he] had received chastisement for filling a younger eye with sand” (p.64). Roger, in his turn, not only does not feel bad about what he did, but also keeps on bothering one of the littluns, Henry. He throws stones at Henry, missing on purpose. He “dare not throw” them into a space around the littlun because “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” (p.66). Roger, the gloomy faced one, was also, like Jack, still only a boy, not a savage.

Hunting alone, Jack feels that “The silence of the forest was more oppressive than the heat” (p.50), which was “a blow” by midday (p.61). “[A] compulsion to track down and kill [...] was swallowing him up” (p.53). By the middle of this same chapter, a magical element hastens the process of descent into savagery: the “concealing paint”, which releases the boys from the remaining traces of civilization they still had: “the mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness.” Now Roger has the power of hurting and Jack, of killing and, even more important, of commanding. “He began to dance and his laughter became a bloodthirsty snarling.” “The mask compelled them” (p.68) to hunt and kill. After their first killing, they come back in a “procession”, chanting the dreadful “*Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Spill her blood*” (p.73).

By chapter five, Ralph is already aware of the “dirt and decay” of their life in the island (p.83). Even the conch (Ralph’s tool for keeping the boy’s unity and order through the first chapters of the novel) is worn out (p.84), symbolizing the growing decay. In chapter seven, Ralph notices the dirt of the hunters:

They were dirty, not with the spectacular dirt of boys who have fallen into mud or been brought down hard on a rainy day. Not one of them was an obvious subject for a shower, and yet-hair, much too long, tangled here and there, knotted round a dead leaf or a twig; faces cleaned fairly well by the process of eating and sweating but marked in the less accessible angles with a kind of shadow; clothes, worn away, stiff like his own with sweat, put on, not for decorum or comfort but out of custom; the skin of the body, scurfy with brine — (p.112).

War is openly mentioned in chapter six, when the lights in the sky, at night, “moved fast, winked, or went out, though not even a faint popping came down from the battle fought at ten miles’ height”. What came down was a parachutist, after “a sudden bright explosion and

a corkscrew trail across the sky” (p.104). Although the sun — “the growing slice of gold that lit them from the right hand and seemed to make speech possible” (p.109) — protects the boys from the darkness, it is also an enemy because of the heat: The “arrow of the sun” fell on Simon, who felt menaced by the air (p.149), which, in its turn, surrounds Ralph on all sides in chasms (p.116). The sea of infinite waters is also a threatening image: Jack leads the group of hunters “along by the suck and the heave of the blinding sea” (p.129).

In chapter eight, there is the violent killing of a sow. This act did not leave the boys remorseful, but “heavy and fulfilled upon her” (p.152). Her head is jammed onto a stick and offered as a gift to the beast. “The silence accepted the gift and awed” the hunters (p.154), i.e., besides the grotesque scene of the impaling of an animal’s head, the solemnity of the event was too much for the boys.

After the killing of the sow, the boys eat “beneath a sky of thunderous brass that rang with the storm-coming.” Jack sits like an idol: “Power lay in the brown swell of his forearms: authority sat on his shoulder and chattered in his ear like an ape.” From behind his painting, he rules with fierceness: “Jack spoke again, impatiently. ‘Has everybody eaten as much as they want?’ His tone conveyed a warning, given out of the pride of ownership”. Nature seems to follow the same mood, for “Evening was come, not with calm beauty but with the threat of violence”, and “All at once the thunder struck. Instead of the dull boom there was a point of impact in the explosion”. No image related to the island’s environment is as strong as the ones connected to the storm, in chapter nine, which, in its turn, cannot be dissociated from the subsequent murdering of Simon. “The clouds were sitting on the land; they squeezed, produced moment by moment this close, tormenting heat” (p.155), whereas thunder is compared to a gun (p.156), striking and exploding (p.170), and making a noise “like the blow of a gigantic whip” (p.171). The air is filled with gas until it “was ready to explode” (p.163), “dark and terrible” (p.170). The sky is dark and “shattered by a blue-white scar” (p.170). In face of the imminent storm, the boys feel desperate. Jack appeases them commanding that they “Do our dance! Come on! Dance!” (p.168-170). Their dancing is so intense, that it brings to mind the Maori war dance haka or a menadic ceremony.

The movement became regular while the chant lost its first superficial excitement and began to beat like a steady pulse. Roger ceased to be a pig and became a hunter, so that the center of the ring yawned emptily. Some of the littluns started a ring on their own; and the complementary circles went round and round as though repetition would achieve safety of itself. There was tie throb and stamp of a single organism (p.171).

It seems like a menadic ceremony not only because of the dance, but more importantly, because of its paroxysm: violence. In this case, this leads to the killing of Simon, who comes out of the forest in that moment to be sacrificed as a scapegoat. Being the only outsider, he is killed in a frenzy, a collective hysteria, in which the boys bite and tear (p.172). Not even Piggy and Ralph can help from taking part of the dance. They “found themselves eager to take a place in this demented but partly secure society. They were glad to touch the brown backs of the fence that hemmed in the terror and made it governable” (p.171).

The symbol of silvery shade was mentioned in the previous section regarding its implication as a fear-involving element. Still, its relation to violence is even closer than to fear, since the color of Jack’s blade is the foundation of such symbol, and the blade is, primarily, a tool of violence, through which fear is engendered. Therefore, due to the theme of this section, it is pertinent to point out that everything the sea touched turned to silver: “The tide swelled in over the rain-pitted sand and smoothed everything with a layer of silver” (p.173). Also, after the storm, “the sky and the mountain were [...] shimmering in the heat; and the reef was lifted by mirage, floating in a land of silver pool halfway up the sky”, while the line “the beach was swept clean like a blade that has been scoured” (p.197) directly quotes the term of Jack’s weapon. Finally, a silvery quality is associated to Jack’s tribe laughter, giving such manifestations a harassing connotation.

Ralph has a feeling that they are on the island for too long, because “that first morning [was] ages ago” (p.193). He asks again the few boys near him whether they are savages or not (p.193). At this point, actually, there are no more boys who could fit our concept of regular boyhood: either they have become savages, joining Jack’s tribe, or they have become dirty objects, staying with Ralph (p.196). Eric, for instance, is a “mask of dried blood” (p.192). The fruit trees are also devastated (p.195), and, in the last chapter, they are “smashed acres” (p.210).

When Ralph and his friends go to the Castle Rock to meet Jack’s tribe, they are greeted with a war-cry imitation, emitted by savages, not boys, who are “painted out of recognition” (p.198-9). Ralph, who was afraid of losing his mind and becoming a savage, had actually lost his mind in the effort to avoid that sick conversion. Unaware of the risk he is taking, he defies Jack’s tribe in the penultimate chapter. The consequence is nothing more than Piggy’s death. Roger sees the boys below him (Piggy, Ralph and Samneric) as “shaggy heads”, while Piggy’s back was “shapeless as a sack” (p.199), that is, he has utterly reified them. Still from Roger’s perspective, “Ralph was a shock of hair and Piggy a bag of fat” (p.205). All the boys under Jack’s command feel now empowered in their warrior-like

impersonation, based however on acts of indisputable, war-like roughness and violence. Having overpowered not just other boys, but also the frightful influence produced by their (still sustained) superstition, they feel capable of facing any threats, judging themselves protected by the (so understood) courage of their leader and by the disguise of their human, childish fragility, provided by the masks. Even Ralph's friends "understood only too well the liberation into savagery that the concealing paint brought" (p.196). Displaying its pride, the tribe utters "shivering, silvery, unreal laughter [... which] sprayed out and echoed away" (p.202.). Excited with the quarrel between Ralph and Jack, "The storm of sound beat at them, an incantation of hatred" (p.205). However, the empowered, unrestrained urge to attend savage lust was specially and most drastically emergent in Roger's psyche: "Some source of power began to pulse in Roger's body" (p.200) before he lets the great rock, "the monstrous red thing", strike Piggy, killing him. "His head opened and stuff came out and turned red. Piggy's arms and legs twitched a bit, like a pig's after it has been killed. Then the sea breathed again in a long, slow sigh, the water boiled white and pink over the rock; and when it went, sucking back again, the body of Piggy was gone" (p.206). It is important not to forget that, with Piggy's death — and as the Samneric twins were subjugated by Roger, who, as the tribe's hangman, watches them "as one wielding a nameless authority" (p.207) —, the conch explodes "into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist" (p.206), meaning Ralph was now not only a lone dissident, having lost all his friends, but also an insignificant, completely vulnerable individual, being deprived of his talisman, symbol of his (our) now shattered and vanished order.

After Piggy's murder, Jack promises Ralph the same fate: "That's what you'll get! I meant that!" He is sentenced: "There isn't a tribe for you any more!" Then the tribe let loose all its savage, murderous drive against the unwelcome boy, who is attacked by the rabble with their spears. While Ralph is running away, "the anonymous devils' faces swarmed across the neck" (p.206).

In the last chapter, the transformation of the boys is complete. In terms of numbers, half the occurrences of the word "savage", i.e., thirty times, is in the last chapter. A boy who Ralph judges to be Bill is not really Bill anymore: "This was a savage whose image refused to blend with that ancient picture of a boy in shorts and shirt" (p.208). Ralph, in his turn, displays an utter physical decay: he is dirty and covered with wounds. His appearance is so awful, that two littluns scream and run when they see him (p.210).

Now there is not the sound of the shell anymore, but the smell of smoke (p.209) and

the sound coming from behind the Castle Rock (p.212), Jack's tribe's fort. They have everlasting feasts to feel comforted, something Ralph cannot enjoy, and therefore he cannot run from his knowledge that "The breaking of the conch and the deaths of Piggy and Simon lay over the island like a vapour". He also knows that he has no way out, for "These painted savages would go further and further" and the shelters are wrecked (p.210), remaining no safe place to hide. But worst of all, "there was that indefinable connection between himself and Jack; who therefore would never let him alone; never" (p.209). Jack has made his own life in the island a crusade against Ralph, who embodies the only prominent (however fragile) opposite entity against his methods, and whose annihilation, therefore, would stand for a key display of power and a key step towards the heights of leadership. Most of all, it seems, he upholds his obsession with destroying Ralph, physically and mentally, for there is no better substitute for fun than this homicidal hunt game. Still, Ralph counts on the savages "daylight sanity" to try to talk to them (p.210). Yet, his feelings, already devastated by the horrific sequence of main events, are even more disturbed by his discovery that the Samneric twins have been made savages. The twins are currently guarding the castle and "seemed nothing more than a dark extension of the rock" (p.212). However, in a brief encounter, they explain to him that the tribe made them obey, through means of physical violence, applied mainly by Jack and Roger (p.214), the "terrors" (p.216). It is now known that the boys no longer fear the darkness — they fear those who control it, that is, Jack and Roger, who, to all effects, have become darkness themselves.

Increasingly disturbed, more than the savages, Ralph fears the supernatural, embodied by the figure of Piggy "with his empty head" (p.217) He spends the night in a "dark interior slope" in "age-long nightmares of falling and death" (p.218) after being told by the twins that Roger would jam his head in a stick, like a pig's, showing refinements of cruelty. All the same, he decides to try to talk to the tribe again, but before going towards them, he hears a "silvery laughter": the twins have given away where he was hiding (p.219).

A rock "as big as a cottage" struck him, shooting him into the air, throwing him down, dashing him against branches. "A shrill, prolonged cheer" (p.220) is heard when the rock rolls over Ralph. Near him, "the whole thicket bent and the roots screamed as they came out of the earth together. He saw something red that turned over slowly as a mill wheel" (p.220-21). Partially recovered from the blow, he suffers the attempt of a savage to pierce him with a stick. Ralph pays back the action, additionally showing his teeth, as if he also had become a savage (p.221). He is afraid of meeting Roger, "who carried death in his hands" (p.223). Ralph's biggest fear, however, is to be made a simpleton by "the curtain that might

waver in his brain, blacking out the sense of danger” (p.224). Ralph’s attention is called by another sound: “a deep grumbling noise, as though the forest itself were angry with him, a somber noise across which the ululations were scribbled excruciatingly as on slate” (p.224). The savages had set the island on fire.

“The fire was a big one and the drum-roll that he had thought was left so far behind was nearer” (p.225). Ralph was very afraid of losing his senses. “He could see the sun-splashed ground over an area of perhaps fifty yards from where he lay, and as he watched, the sunlight in every patch blinked at him. This was so like the curtain that flapped in his brain that for a moment he thought the blinking was inside him”. Ralph “saw that a great heaviness of smoke lay between the island and the sun” (p.225). The savages were not looking for Ralph anymore, but for “human flesh” (p.225). “They were all running, all crying out madly” (p.227).

The whole island is being destroyed: “A herd of pigs came squealing out of the greenery behind [a] savage and rushed away into the forest. Birds were screaming, mice shrieking, and a little hopping thing came under the mat and cowered” (p.226). As in a mining-camp, “the roar of the forest rose to thunder and a tall bush directly in his path burst into a great fan-shaped flame” (p.227). Ralph sees “a shelter burst into flames” (p.228). “The fire reached the coco-nut palms by the beach and swallowed them noisily. A flame, seemingly detached, swung like an acrobat and licked up the palm heads on the platform. The sky was black” and “the whole island was shuddering with flame” (p.229). From the paradise the island was in the beginning, now it is only a wasteland: “the island was scorched up like dead wood” (p.230); a “burning wreckage” (p.230).

Ralph is so terrified, that he becomes fear himself: “hopeless fear on flying feet” (p.227), for the savages’ “desperate ululation advanced like a jagged fringe of menace and was almost overhead” (p.228). In a last attempt of saving his life, Ralph is “crouching with arm up to ward off, trying to cry for mercy” (p.228).

Ralph does not see a naval officer when he stands in front of him. He sees *things*: “a huge peaked cap. It was a white-topped cap, and above the green shade or the peak was a crown, an anchor, gold foliage. He saw white drill, epaulettes, a revolver, a row of gilt buttons down the front of a uniform” (p.228). When the naval officer asks Ralph whether they were having a war, Ralph nods. When the littlun Percival tries to tell the officer his name, he cannot remember it anymore: it was “an incantation that had faded clean away” (p.229). Their identities were forgotten in the transition to savagery. What they have become was “tiny tots some of them, brown, with the distended bellies of small savages” (p.229). The naval officer

says he expected “a better show” from “a pack of British boys”, even mentioning ironically that what he sees is a “Jolly good show. Like the Coral Island” (p.230). However, everything connected to him — his uniform, guns, cruiser, soldiers — takes away his credibility to utter such a reproof. Despite the fear of becoming insane — and the nearness of that —, Ralph keeps his lucidity until the end, for he “wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man’s heart” (p.230).

Within his tribe, Jack acts like a dictator, punishing the boys without apparent reason. “Sitting on the tremendous rocks in the torrid sun, Roger received this news [that Jack would beat a boy without telling the motive] as an illumination. He ceased to work at his tooth and sat still, assimilating the possibilities of irresponsible authority” (p.180). An example of Jack’s cowardice is his attitude before the naval officer’s question about who was the boss, in the last chapter. He “started forward, then changed his mind and stood still” (p.229). More than anything else, this attitude is strong evidence that Jack, after all, relinquished the best of his former social senses without, however, truly forgetting their meaning and weight. It is not possible to announce equal verdict about the other boys, since their attitude before the presence of the officer remains unclear. Still, when it comes to Jack — the one who widely opened the trapdoor into the pit of humanity’s roughness, and who led the way to the very bottom —, the desolated scenery, the isolation, the hazards of land and weather were not an obstacle which the ideals of civilization could not surpass; for they were there, when Jack decided not to step forward, echoing that he had done wrong — or, beyond any suspicion, that he acted in a counterproductive, contradictory and even self-destructive manner. This final outcome — self-destructiveness — can be apprehended from the burning in the forest, which could kill the boars and other animals and turn the fruit scarce, hence leaving little to feed from (after all, the boys never fish). Jack created a society and roused it to such deeds, that the very sources of survival were endangered. And, in these times of ours, are not such procedures quite recognizable at a global scale?

These images, of astounding violence, have presented the outcome of the encounter between extravagances of human nature — lust for (excessive) power, fear of imaginary things, pointless aggressiveness —, taken to extremes, and a favorable environment to exert them. More than just presenting spoiled children who want to play at any cost to forget their fear, they present relevant symbols that represent humankind as a whole: a majority of corrupted children, deprived of their innocence.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have attempted to detail and study the imagery of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* in correlation with the critique it makes of the defects of society, tracing them back to the defects of individuals, that is, in correlation with the theme of brutalization in the absence of civilization. The society created by the characters of the castaway boys is impregnated with fear and cruelty. The more some of the boys, namely Jack and his crew, seem to withdraw from civilized conducts, the more they repeat some of the same errors society has been making. I have apprehended, from the novel, that these errors are related to the ascendancy of one's freedom over the freedom of others, though also — and in first instance — to the idiosyncrasies of the human mind and instincts, and to the misguided understanding of these. Moreover, I have concluded that social institutions like religion and law are susceptible to proceed in concurrence to these errors, being, to a great extent, the very result of them. Religion, for instance, has its roots in superstition, which, in its turn, was born out of the fear our primitive fathers felt of natural phenomena. Law, for instance, has its roots in the pursuit and maintenance of one's power over many, which, in its turn, was born from the human aggravation on basic instincts of survival, and was refined by the development of instruments of coercion. MUMFORD (1967), *apud* FROMM (1973, p.222), clarifies about the transition from a democratic to an authoritarian state in primitive times:

Out of the early Neolithic complex a different kind of social organization arose; no longer dispersed in small units, but unified in a large one: no longer "democratic", that is, based on neighborly intimacy, customary usage, and consent, but authoritarian, centrally directed, under the control of a dominant minority: no longer confined to a limited territory, but deliberately going "out of bounds" to seize raw materials and enslave helpless men, to exercise control, to exact tribute. This new culture was dedicated, not just to the enhancement of life, but to the expansion of collective power. By perfecting new instruments of coercion, the rulers of this society had, by the Third Millennium, B.C., organized industrial and military power on a scale that was never to be surpassed until our own time.

It continuously defies reason and the efforts to compel the authority of wisdom that some of the procedures of suchlike culture endures till today, as war is kept as a part of our species' chaotic, incalculable agenda.

Let alone the high probabilities of atrocious physical damage, a person's only chance to escape a war without feeling psychologically damaged would be to hold on to the very symptoms — of chronic alienation and apathy — that should confirm great damage (or grotesque flaw) on that person's psyche; for, in order to be insensitive towards the profoundly

problematic and entirely erroneous nature of killing and being put in the line of fire for reasons hardly associable to personal and individual necessities, one would be required to: a) neglect other human beings as nothing more than just targets, obstacles and entities limited to concepts of enmity based, however, in the functions of institutions just vaguely and superficially connected to the personal, individual attributes and values of such beings, and, most of all, b) neglect one's own being as nothing more than just a tool, a barrier and an entity defined not by its own orders, but by the outline of virtual, abstract institutions. The accomplishment of these requirements, of course, can only be attributed to someone who was deprived of conscience's completeness.

The boys, in the novel, mainly the older ones, have enough notions about the appropriate way to live within society, where one's freedom is limited by the securing of another's. Yet, they return to a state of savagery — following the one who has overtly and deliberately chosen to renounce these notions: Jack. He stands as an example of the grand flaws of certain people which lead whole societies to collapse. However, and no less importantly, the other boys represent the minor flaws of those individuals who let themselves take part on the perpetration of the former's mistakes, be it by accomplice action or careless consent.

Society forges our personality to a great extent, impinging fears, taboos and traditions. It has strange mechanisms of control, for instance, telling us not to fear the unknown by showing how dreadful it can be — and offering religion to protect us. Or else, telling us not to fear the enemies by showing how dangerous they are — and offering the law to protect us. From a tender age, we are encouraged to obey laws which attempt to turn people into docile and gregarious beings. People have different passions and drives; nonetheless, not all of them are good for society. Many boys on the island found an opportunity to satisfy their drives of creating mechanisms of social control, of playing idol, hangman, king and soldier. Images of fear — which later on results in acts of savagery — abound in the novel: untamed nature is dreadful for its vastness, e.g., the ocean, and the sky during the storm; for its strange and unexplainable phenomena, e.g., the mirages; and for its evocation of primal fears through darkness, e.g., nightmares. Beasts begin to populate the boys' imagination, which causes them to see beasts everywhere, but also causes them to try to eliminate these through risky and reckless “fun and games”.

Despite its superficial affinity with regular adventure stories, albeit the harsh critique of society, the novel has a peculiarly oppressive atmosphere, built through images of brutalization, comprising both the characters and the setting. The character of Piggy poses a

crucial question to this analysis: “What are we? Humans? Or animals? Or savages?” (p.99). My position is that the characters, as representatives of humankind — that is, “we” — are, or at least have the potential to be, the three of them.

As animals we are conceived, as savages we are born, humans we become through civilization, and savages we can be again or still, if everything we — as a species — have learned is lost or never reached. We can be regarded, as in the novel, as reluctant animals: because of our overdeveloped brain, in relation to other animals, we act in an exaggerated manner before our instincts. In case we are frightened, we do not just run or hide: we invent a cause for the fear (if its cause is unknown), ways of destroying that cause (or, at least, of tolerating it), taboos and prohibitions surrounding it, myths, festivals, prophecies, weapons, talismans, artistic artifacts — a myriad of elements consolidated over our misguided conceptions about our own nature and hence suitable for the creation of further conflicts, fears, errors and possible horrors.

Despite admitting civilization’s influence upon humankind, we cannot grant civilization’s strength, not even where it is most prevalent. On a desert island, our wisdom might be expected to flee from our (often) feeble minds. However, in a metropolis, among industrial advances and the more prosperous commercial movements, beside libraries and next to schools, people might still find themselves lost in society, away from history and science. We cannot forget that ignorance is a desert island.

With this analysis, I hope to have contributed to the study of literature as a form of art which is not isolated from society. Through a perspicacious view of the comings, goings and repeated patterns of History, Golding offers us, with *Lord of the Flies*, a harsh portrayal of the worst side of humankind. May it thus incite us to preserve our best side.

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