

# LORD OF THE FLIES : A SYMBOLIC REPERTOIRE

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William Golding's moral thesis in 'Lord of the Flies' is, as he tells us, the "fallen nature of man, and that what stands between him and happiness comes from inside him.....' (HG. 90). His concern for the "fallen nature of man" is not limited to his first novel, but provides the fundamental moral basis for all his fabulous works. His fabulistic pattern, therefore, incorporates in its structure an element of archetype which gives his fables the form and feeling of myth itself. The tight, compact, structure, the isolated nature of the settings, the fundamental moral basis of the thematic material, and the complex symbolic apparatus all imply that the Golding work of fiction is closer to artifact than to reality. Properly controlled symbolism enhances, expands and embellishes the moral thesis and major themes.

Any attempt to define an image, symbol, or metaphorical device is arbitrary, but necessary before one can discuss symbolism. All such metaphorical devices are designed to expand the literal, signal import of a piece of literature. As such, their suggestions, implications, and references are integral parts of the work. The simplest, most elemental form of device is the image. An image is a literal, verbal representation of an action, object or feeling; it can be described in terms of the senses. To take one from 'Lord of the Flies' : "The sand was thick over his black shoes..." (LF. 15). The thick sand and black shoes are 'literal images', merely descriptions of concrete objects. An image may also be figurative: "The beach between the palm terrace and the water was a thin bow- stave..."

(LF. 15). While an image evokes one or a limited number of references, when the reference itself evokes a further, separate level of meaning, then the image has become a symbol. Golding “shapes” his symbols and “creates” their suggestive properties in several ways. One, a traditional characteristic of symbols, is to draw suggestions from the narrative environment, the action, and situations which surround the symbol. Another way in which Golding develops a symbol’s connotative suggestions is through association with other symbols and images. The simile and metaphor, two very basic metaphorical devices, find an important place in Golding’s symbology. In almost every Golding work there is a series of animal similes subordinate to the main imagery which serves to create a feeling of savagery and instinctualism so important to the moral thesis. Golding’s moral thesis in most of his novels is one which is timeless. As long as man has had the capacity to reason he has been aware of the duality of his nature. Consequently, any study of Golding’s use of symbolism must include some mention of archetypal symbolism. Northrop Frye defines an archetype as “a symbol, usually an image, which recurs often enough in literature to be recognizable as an element of one’s literary experience as a whole.” The “fallen trees”, the sacrifice of Simon, and the preoccupation with ritual in ‘Lord of the Flies’ elicit archetypal interpretation. Another metaphorical device in Golding’s fabulous fiction is emblem. An emblem is a simple, monolithic device whose connotative suggestions rarely number more than one or two. It is more than an image. It is most often in Golding’s works an object which acts as a central point of reference for the characters themselves. The shell conch in ‘Lord of the Flies’ is, for the boys on the island, an emblem of authority, the right to speak, the right to call an assembly. Though it accumulates symbolic connotations it remains an emblem for the boys. Finally, there are two terms- heraldic symbol and motif which figure in Golding’s novels. Northrop Frye calls “the heraldic symbol, the central emblematic image which comes most readily to mind when we think of the word ‘symbol’ in modern literature”.

He cites as examples Hawthorne's scarlet letter, Melville's white whale, and Virginia Woolf's lighthouse. The Heraldic symbol is more than an emblem' it is the central, controlling symbol of a work. A motif is an image which has little symbolic suggestion and remains incouspicious. In essence, a motif could almost be called an image which appears regularly but does not, like an image or symbol, accrete any symbolic suggestions.

Lord of the Flies is not only Golding's first novel, but a work from which most of the subsequent novels draw their moral and symbolic content. It is the most fabulous of the five fables, tight in structure, theme, and symbolism. Its theme is, quite simply, the loss of innocence and savage degeneration of a group of English schoolboys deserted and alone on a tropical island. The moral thesis of the novel is more complex. Golding's point is that the social disintegration of the boys and their subsequent collapse into savages are not the result of environment or social pressures, but of man's essential "fallen nature" and dual make- up. Man is an angel, ruler of the other species, but he is, at the same time, also one of them. As a result, whether this condition results from the animal in him or from "original sin", he is a creature at once savage, animal, and indifferent to compassion, love, and reverence, as well as the divine creation of his maker, the paragon of living species. Reflecting this "split" in human nature, there are in Lord of the Flies two contrasting poles of action. On the one hand there is the social order, a "democratic" common sense which the boys bring with them to the island, their hope of rescue, and their personal faith in order. On the other hand there is the fundamental animality of man. He is not merely a human; he is a human who has fallen from the perfection he conceives for himself and who is blighted by all the physical and instinctual drives which link him to the other animals. There are two groups of images and symbols corresponding to the dual nature of man. One group refers to man's intelligence, his dependence on social

order, and his basic need for faith and belief, and there is a contrasting group of images which refers to his animal, savage, fallen nature.

One of the powerful images of social order and unity is the circle. The first reference to a circle occurs when Ralph betrays Piggy's nickname to the boys: "For a moment the boys were a closed circuit of sympathy with Piggy outside ....." (29). The circle, or "circuit," is a natural consequence of the boys' reaction. Eugene Hollahan finds that

Golding's novel is arranged around the concept of two important kinds of circles, the first being the socio-political circle where the assembled boys engage in rational discussion in order to plan their way out of their difficulties, and the second being the tribal circle where the regressive boys dance ritually and kill savagely.<sup>1</sup>

The circle as an image of social order is highlighted in the following passage :

Yet there was a space round Henry, perhaps six yards in diameter, into which he dare not throw. Here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life. Round the squatting child was the protection of parents and school and policemen and the law. Roger's arm was conditioned by a civilization that knew nothing of him and was in ruins (78).

As the instinctual side of the boys begins to rise, the nature of the circle image also begins to change. As Hollahan points out,

The boys join the discussion circle in order to think and act rationally, submerging their identities for the common good; on the other hand, they join the primitive circle apparently in order to escape responsibility and restraint by hiding, as it were, behind a mask in the common circle.<sup>2</sup>

The change from social to primitive circle once it has occurred, becomes irreversible. Finding the fire dead and the passing ship gone, Jack and his hunters explain the details of their first kill : "We got in a circle—" (86). Other descriptions of pig kills are all in terms of the closing circle : "The first blow had paralysed its hind quarters, so then the circle could close in and beat and beat—" (93). When the twins return with the

news of the fact that when the primitivism on the island reaches its most destructive stage, even the circle of the tribe disintegrates. The crucial point of change is Simon's murder. As the boys dance and chant, they are in the tribal circle pattern : "The circle became a horseshoe. A thing was crawling out of the forest"(188). The "thing" is Simon, and his sacrificial murder marks the change from circle to semi-circle : "The semicircle shuddered and muttered in agreement"(197). It becomes obvious that once human blood has been willingly spilled, even the tribal circle begins to crumble. The hunters, in the final hunt after Ralph, abandon even the semicircle and form a cordon : "We're going to spread out in a line across the island --"(232). With the appearance of the naval officer, the image returns to a semicircle.

While not so prominent as the image of the circle, squareness is also present in the novel. Aniela Jaffe points out that the square is an archetypal symbol "of earthbound matter, of the body and reality."<sup>3</sup> Squareness forms an interesting parallel to the pattern of circles in the novel. It is associated with the island, the landscape. We are told that beyond the cirque of the mountain "was the square top of the mountain....."(37, 144), and that most of the rocks on the island are square (131).

A notable symbol belonging to the social and rational order on the island is Piggy's spectacles. Bernard Dick finds them "a symbol of political vision."<sup>4</sup> Oldsey and Weintraub feel they represent "intellect and science,"<sup>5</sup> and E.C. Bufkin sees them as a "symbol of reason, fittingly worn by the thinker of the group."<sup>6</sup> Admittedly, Piggy's glasses are the only means of starting a fire on the island, their symbolic characteristic is in terms of their relation to the intellectual-industrial society. They suggest the representation of that society in the new "society" of the island. Whether broken or whole, Piggy's glasses signify the myopic visual ability of intellect in a non-intellectual situation. Once they are broken, they become more impressive in this role (89, 191, 193,

207, 248). When faced with the growing incidence of savagery, they cannot function properly and fail to exhibit any of the intellectual prowess which engendered them. Another symbolic device is the conch which has many characteristics in common with Piggy's glasses. It is delicate, it glimmers, it is almost transparent. It functions in a symbolic way similar to the specs. Dick says it "soon becomes a symbol of authority."<sup>7</sup> Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor find that, once it is established "as the symbol of assembly, the conch becomes identified with its procedure, with democracy and the right to free speech."<sup>8</sup> Bufkin insists that "the conch, Golding makes clear, is a symbol of order and reason; it represents the voice of authority, at first heeded then flouted."<sup>9</sup> The conch not only develops as a major symbol for the reader, but an emblem for the boys themselves. Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor make a very important point about its implication :

Like the whole island, the shell is a unique, physical existence whose being is its meaning. Yet it can reveal man, as the shell shows forth all the implications for good or evil of the human breath that resounds through it. Only it is fatal to forget, as the children and many readers do, that the meaning is in the boys, not the shell.<sup>10</sup>

The symbolic function of the conch, however, is two-fold. As with Piggy's glasses, the conch is really an emblem; it is an emblem of man's use of authority and democratic procedure. It becomes for the boys a talisman for the right to speak (43, 49, 175). Subsequently, as the social forces on the island dissolve, so does the emblematic power of the conch. When the emblem no longer functions as it should, it no longer carried any symbolic weight for the boys. It is, naturally, Jack who voices this dissolution of power : "We don't need the conch any more. We know who ought to say things .....It's time some people knew they've got to keep quiet and leave deciding things to the rest of us –"(126). Like Piggy's specs the conch also has the characteristics of delicateness and shininess. After some days, exposure to "the air had bleached the yellow and pink to near-white, and transparency" (98), Later it becomes merely "the

white conch” (174), and finally “the fragile white conch” (191). These features suggest the fragile and delicate, position of the conch amidst jungle, violence, and the loss of social order. In its striking similarity to Piggy’s glasses as an emblem of order and reason, the conch provides a remarkable parallel to the specs. Where the glasses are man’s man-made symbol, the conch is a natural one.

A symbol which looms large in Lord of the Flies is the mountain. Philip Wheelwright points out that since going up is always more difficult than going down, it is “natural enough that the idea of going up should associate itself with the idea of achievement.”<sup>11</sup> Among the images associated with the idea of “up” is the mountain. It is while Ralph is climbing the mountain that he gets the idea about rescue and the fire (48). A passage which suggests that the mountain is more than an image is that in which the boys build the first fire : “once more, amid the breeze, the shouting, the slanting sunlight on the high mountain, was shed that glamour, that strange invisible light of friendship, adventure, and content” (51). These are feelings which are to become very rare on the island. Wheelwright notes a typical archetypal characteristic of mountains : “In usual mythology the gods of light, or in monotheistic developments the God of Light, dwell in the bright sky, or else upon a high sacred mountain lighted by the sun’s rays.”<sup>12</sup> While the boys’ mountain means none of these things, it suggests them all. The mountain is a central point for many events and occurrences in the novel. On the mountain the littlun with the mulberry-colored facemark is killed, Piggy’s glasses are broken, the parachutist lands, Simon finds the truth, and over it the storm which accompanies Simon’s murder descends. Until the beast arrives, it is characterized as a friendly mountain, the hope of rescue. Thereafter begin references to its unfriendly side. When it is realized that the littlun is missing, the author remarks: “Beneath them, on the unfriendly side of the mountain, the drum-roll continued” (60). Finally, when the twins leave the fire and Ralph arrives too late to signal the passing ship, he looks “down the unfriendly side of the

mountain”(85), where he sees Jack and his hunters returning from their kill. The mountain can be regarded as a sacred symbol of aspiration and achievement which is corrupted by the degenerating influence of the boys.

Another predominant symbol which belongs to this group of social, order-suggesting imagery is fire. Yet, like the circle, fire too changes with the boys and becomes destructive and savage. Bernard Dick says that fire, in its opening context “denotes the spirit of civilization which must be continually fed” (13). We are told often enough that “the fire is the most important thing on the island” (100, 127, 201). Even in the midst of the growing savagery Ralph tries to remember: “There was something good about a fire. Something overwhelmingly good” (201). The fire is at first primarily a signal. As such it is representative of rational thought on the island. It is a call to society, civilization, help from the outside world.

An important characteristic of the fire is that until the parachutist-beast arrives, it exists exclusively on the mountain. The symbolic implication of “up” are closely connected with fire, as Philip Wheelwright puts it:

Fire is widely, although not universally, connected in ancient times with the idea of up. Fire tends to fly upward; moreover the ultimate source of earthly fire and light is the sun, who holds his daily place up there in the bright sky.<sup>14</sup>

One might say that the fire, located on the mountain, is a source of light, a signal, and suggests hope, a sense of social intelligence, and faith. J. D. O’Hara interprets the fire as religious in nature:

Ralph’s moral leadership is essentially religious: the purpose of his life is to get home, and home acquires in the course of the fable the connotation of Heaven, while the signal fire, their means of salvation, increasingly suggests an altar tended by priests.<sup>15</sup>

This interpretation illustrates the strong suggestions of spirituality in the symbol of the fire. The fire appears as a hope, as a sign of intelligence and social preservation; it becomes a primitive tool of cooking; then it evolves into a primitive form of physical comfort. After its use for cooking and heat, the fire becomes willfully destructive. When Ralph realizes that they had “set the island on fire” (242), the symbol reaches its fullest and most contradictory meaning. The first fire on the mountain is intended as a signal but becomes destructive; the last fire is intended as destructive but becomes a signal. The irony of the novel’s enclosing fires is intentional.

Most of these preceding images and symbols suggest authority, hope, faith, intelligence, or social instinct. There is also a contrasting group of images which characterize the other half of man’s nature, his natural, primitive element. The island is the microcosm and is the setting for all these natural images. High atop the mountain, Ralph, Jack, and Simon survey their tropical “boat”:

It was roughly boat-shaped: humped near this end with behind them the jumbled descent to the shore. On either side rocks, cliffs, tree-tops and a steep slope: forward there, the length of the boat, a tamer descent, tree-clad, with hints of pink: and then the jungly flat of the island, dense green, but drawn at the end to a pink tail. (38)

Like the jungle, stones are ever-present on the island. The stones suggest a permanence which outlasts all else on the island. The permanence of stone betrays the short-lived, futile nature of man and mocks his primitive nature. It is noteworthy that part of the description of Simon’s dead body is in terms of the four elements, primarily stone: “line of his cheek silvered and the turn of his shoulder became sculptured marble” (190). It is ironic that Piggy, the intellectual, is actually murdered by stone, while Simon, the seer, is transformed into it like all timeless personalities. Another powerful element in the island microcosm is the jungle. The image of the jungle in Lord of the Flies suggests exactly what the jungle is: impersonal and uninvolved nature. It remains amoral and

allows both goodness and evil, innocence and knowledge to operate at will. It is not a force but a host. The boys bring to the jungle civilization, social order, and education. The most singular characteristic of the jungle is the density of the undergrowth which persistently suggests entanglement, confinement, and confusion. In phrase after phrase the words “tangle” and “undergrowth” reappear: A littlun “parted a tangle of undergrowth” (25), “all about was the undergrowth” (61). Jack becomes a furtive thing, “ape-like among the tangle of trees” (62), near Castle Rock “was an impenetrable tangle of creepers and trees” (129), the forest “was thick and woven like a bird's nest”(144), the boys “worked near at hand on any fallen wood no matter how tangled with new growth” (161). Even Ralph, when pursued like an animal finds the undergrowth useful: “At first light he would creep into the thicket, squeeze between the twisted stems and ensconce himself so deep so that only a crawler like himself could come through...”(235). While it begins to appear that the jungle has developed characteristics of evil, it is still an amoral place, merely providing a place for evil to exist, and becomes a host for evil only by default. Of the four murders on the island, only the littlun's occurs in the jungle, and that is accidental.

An image which develops into a major symbol is the mouth. Golding often chooses to describe a character's emotion, reactions, or personality in terms of that character's mouth. There is in Ralph “a mildness about his mouth and eyes that proclaimed no devil” (15); in response to Simon's disbelief in the beast, Ralph's “mouth was tight and pale” (130). The conch; the symbol of the voice of authority, is described in terms of “the pink lips of the mouth (22): “(Ralph) held the conch before his face and glanced round the mouth”(43), and then decides to use the shell as an emblem of privilege. While there are several references to the wide open mouths of pigs, to Piggy's mouth which “gapes” (12&), and to the pig's head stuck on a stake through its mouth (169), it is through references to the mouth's devouring nature that the image gains its

ultimate symbolic significance. After the first fruitless pig kill, the boys return to the beach "and for a while they were busy finding and devouring food as they moved down the scar towards the platform and the meeting"(41). The description of the first fire is alive with references to eating, chewing, and other functions of the mouth:

The squirrel leapt on the wings of the wind and clung to another standing tree, eating downwards. Beneath the dark canopy of leaves and smoke the fire laid hold on the forest and began to gnaw (57).

The mouth's functions are symbolically present in the characters themselves. During the feast following the first pig kill, Ralph "accepted a piece of half-raw meat and gnawed it like a wolf" (92). Shortly before Simon wanders onto the beach, the boys form their ritual circle and "the centre of the ring yawned emptily" (187). Then, in the horrifying destruction which follows, the mouth of the circle does its job:

The sticks fell and the mouth of the new circle crunched and screamed. The beast was on its knees in the centre, its arms folded over its face... The beast struggled forward, broke the ring and fell over the steep edge of the rock to the sand by the water. At once the crowd surged after it, poured down the rock, leapt on to the beast, screamed, struck, bit, tore. There were no words, and no movements but the tearing of teeth and claws.(188).

The sound produced with the mouth also becomes an interesting symbolic device in the novel. The hunters, during the final chase after Ralph, issue a cry which takes on animal characteristics:

It was an ululation over by the seashore-- and now the next savage answered and the next. They cry swept by him across the narrow end of the island from sea to lagoon, like the cry of a flying bird. (235).

This cry is repeated again and again until Ralph, the hunted, begins to "snarl" (239). Snarling is an animal expression. Ralph is finally chased into the open, "screaming, snarling, bloody" (245). The noble, aspiring sound of the shell and the screaming, snarling, ululation of the hunters and the hunted are two opposite images of

the mouth's functions. The mouth is the means of satisfying a basic drive in all animals. But here it becomes suggestive of the animal drives in man.

Flies connected with the title, are also present. The Hebrew "Beelzebub" means literally "lord of the flies". After the old sow is decapitated and her head mounted, "the loudest noise was the buzzing of flies over the spilled guts" (169). When Simon finds the sow's head:

The pile of guts was a black blob of flies that buzzed like a saw. After a while these flies found Simon. Gorged, they slithered by his runnels of sweat and drank. They tickled under his nostrils and played leap-frog on his thighs. They were black and iris descent green and without number; and in front of Simon, the Lord of the Flies hung on his stick and grinned. (171).

The flies, with their greed and lust for blood and meat, are certainly one of the "dirtiest things" there are. They are an image of man's predilection for evil. The fly imagery is also used to describe the boys' Early, at the mention of rescue, "there was a buzz... Another buzz" (29); when Ralph points out that there are no grown-ups, "the meeting hummed" (43); at Jack's description of the blood in the pig killing, the hunters "buzzed again" (8); and following Jack's apology for letting the fire die, "the buzz from the hunters was one of admiration at this handsome behaviour" (90). This "buzzing" and "humming" adds a note of swarming, random activity to the boys' actions. In these two ways the flies become a sign of evil. Where there is evil or the recognition of evil, there are flies. This connection becomes apparent when Simon reaches the mountaintop and sees the parachutist: "The flies hung around the figure too. The life-like movement would scare them off for a moment so that they made a dark cloud round his head" (181). The sow and the parachutist are killed to satisfy man's lust for killing. The flies find both victims of world's evil with impartiality.

Pigs are persistently seen on the island. The pig is a dirty animal yet it is not a symbol of evil. Pigs are not capable of killing the way the boys do, nor do they sacrifice

to propitiate their enemies. They are animals and act in the natural way of animals, innocent of evil or goodness. They are the object, throughout much of the novel, of the boys' evil and consequently become an image of the result of that evil: only man cuts "a pig's throat to let the blood Out" (41, 86); only man kills with no object of eating (223). The savagery of the pigs is not evil but self-preservation. When the boar charges Ralph, "with tusks gleaming and an intimidating grunt" (140), it is out of survival and fear, not hate. Just as innocent pigs are unable to cope with evil, so is piggy unable to prevent his destruction. His name is not ironic; Piggy is both intelligent and the victim of that curious combination of instinctual drive and moral degeneration we call man.

The key scene in the pattern of pig imagery is the killing of the old sow.

As the hunters attack and the pig runs, a new note is added to the image:

the sow staggered her way ahead of them, bleeding and mad, and the hunters followed, wedded to her in lust, excited by the long chase and the dropped blood. (167).

The sow is forced from her "maternal bliss" into escaping the lust of the hunters. The killing of the sow is an image of the force of lust. The sow falls in the middle of the opening. Golding summarized the act by combining biblical language and the contrast between murder and sexual orgasm: "The sow collapsed under them and they were fulfilled upon her." The maternal sow becomes the terrible "Lord of the Flies" in death. In a real sense, the pig's head becomes an emblem: it comes to represent the condition of man, his "essential illness," the world his evil has created.

A central image in the novel devoted to the primitive, instinctual side of man's nature is the beast. It personifies primitive fear experienced by the boys. Each visualizes the beast in his own way. To the littlun the beast is a black, batlike creature that danced on the sand"(25). The beast is a "snake thing" which lives in the jungle (46-47); it is a "dark thing, a beast, some sort of animal" (103); it "comes out of the seas" (109); It

becomes the darkness itself, " full of claws, full of the awful unknown and menace" (123). With the arrival of the parachutist, the beast takes on a corporeal shape. The figure, entangled in its own lines, moves ominously with the wind (119); it "squats by the fire as though it didn't want us to be rescued.." (155). It is ironic that to Simon, the seer, the parachutist is no mystery (181). With the murder of Simon the "beast" assumed its proper place in the hearts of the hunters. Yet for them, it is Simon who becomes the physical representation of the beast:

A thing was crawling out of the forest. It came darkly, uncertainly. The shrill screaming that rose before the beast was like a pain. The beast stumbled into the horseshoe. (188)

Simon is simply "a thing" "the beast." As soon as he is murdered, the parachutist is blown over the trees; the boys see it, scream, and watch it bump out of sea. It is logical to say that when the boys murder the beast -- Simon-they "become" the beast linguistically and psychologically. As Maud Bodkin puts it: "The devil is our tendency to represent in personal form the forces within and without us that threaten our supreme values."<sup>16</sup>

The image of the mask provides another symbolical dimension to the narrative. This is seen in the painted faces of the boys in the tribe. After some frustrating hunting attempts, Jack decides that the hunters should "paint (their) faces so they wouldn't see...."(68). The reason is, of course, camouflage, as Jack explains later: "For hunting. Like in the war. You know--dazzle paint. Like things trying to look like something else... Like moths on a tree trunk" (79). The image of the mask- or painted faces- has many archetypal facets. The mask is essentially an escape. Aniela Jaffe Writes :

The symbolic function of the mask is the same as that of the original animal disguise. Individual human expression is submerged but in its place the wearer assumes the dignity and the beauty (and also the terrifying expression) of an animal demon. In psychological terms, the mask transforms its wearer into an archetypal image.<sup>17</sup>

The mask is an image of disassociated evil behind which the boys hide their own evil: Jack is "Safe from shame or self-consciousness behind the mask of his paint..." (174). With such protection, the boys can liberate their personalities, which means they can liberate their evil.

Finally, although they are not true images, even the character names have a suggestive quality. In *Lord of the Flies* and most of the subsequent novels, Golding chooses his character names carefully, with an emphasis on their roles in the exposition of the moral thesis. "Ralph" means "wolf counsel";<sup>22</sup> Roger means "famous spear;" the most interesting name is "Simon". "Simon" is from the Hebrew Shimeon meaning "harkening" or "he heard." Certainly Simon hearkens to the situation which engulfs the boys; he is the only one who does. Simon was the name of the fisherman whom Jesus named "Peter," later called Simon Peter. Peter is from the Greek petros, meaning stone or rock. Simon, transfigured in his death into stone "sculptured marble", is the most timeless figure in the novel. Unlike the other boys, he has fits (27-28, 179); he is "queer," "batty" (69, 194); he is the only one about whom "passions beat" (89); he prophesies Ralph's survival (138, 245); he is a messenger (145). He is the only one who has a mystical experience. Reaching the open space which is soon to become the sow's death-bed, Simon crawls inside. He sees something beautiful: "Beyond the screen of leaves the sunlight pelted down and the butterflies danced in the middle their unending dance" (164). As Simon watches, the sow collapses under the hunters and the "butter flies still danced, preoccupied in the centre of the clearing" (168). It is this contrast, this simultaneous occurrence of beauty and evil which Simon recognizes as indicating of the true essence of man's nature. This and this most of all is what Simon "hearkens" to. It is a vision which the other boys cannot see because of their obvious limitations.

The moral vision of Lord of the Flies is one of contradiction, dichotomy, and opposites. It finds man an intelligent, compassionate, noble creature capable of the most

impressive achievements in his world. He is, at the same time a prisoner of nature: he is savage, brutal, capable of violent, destructive acts, and irrational, illogical behavior. The presence of both causes confusion, anxiety, and guilt; the acceptance of both is the thing to be desired most. In the novel, these two poles of human action are characterized by two parallel groups of images and symbols which expand, embellish, and enhance the thematic exposition of the vision. The images which suggest the nobler side of man's nature, like the conch, Piggy's glasses, fire, are all affected, sooner or later, by the emergence of the baser side of man's nature. In the end, all images and symbols are engulfed by the latter group, devastated or their suggestiveness corrupted, like the conch and fire. The novel is a fable in which imagery and symbolism universalize the moral vision and carry it beyond the narrow, tangled, boat-shaped island to man himself.

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