

## **LORD OF THE FLIES: A PSYCHOANALYTIC VIEW OF DESTRUCTIVENESS**

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Lord of the Flies was William Golding's first published novel and since its appearance in 1954 it has become one of his best known works. It is commonly said that it shows how thin is the veneer of civilisation and how readily we humans can return to the state of primitive savages or animals and once again become blindly destructive. I read the novel recently for the first time, and I was struck by how similar were the processes depicted in the story to those I have experienced in my work as a psychoanalyst. I would like to make use of Golding's novel to discuss some of the psychoanalytic ideas about the nature of human destructiveness.

#### **The problem**

Golding has described some of the background to his novel in an essay entitled *Fable* (Golding, 1965):

"Before the second World War I believed in the perfectability of social man; that a correct structure of society produced goodwill; and that therefore you could remove all social ills by a reorganisation of society. It is possible that I believe something of the same again; but after the war I did not because I was unable to. I had discovered what one man could do to another. I'm not talking of one man killing another with a gun, or dropping a bomb on him or blowing him up or torpedoing him. I am thinking of the vileness beyond all words that went on, year after year, in the totalitarian states. They were not done by the head hunters of New Guinea, or by some primitive tribe in the Amazon. They were done, skilfully, coldly, by educated men, doctors, lawyers, by men with a tradition of civilisation behind them, to beings of their own kind. I must say that anyone who moved through those years without understanding that man produces evil as a bee produces honey, must have been blind or wrong in the head."

Further in the same essay, Golding discusses his choice of the fable as the form for his story, and his wish to contrast his vision with the nineteenth century optimism portrayed in the other famous story of boys on a tropical island *The Coral Island* written by Ballantyne. This was written says Golding at the height of Victorian smugness, ignorance and prosperity.

"So the boys try to construct a civilisation on the island; but it breaks down in blood and terror because the boys are suffering from the terrible disease of being human."

This viewpoint is at one with that of psychoanalysis, in that it requires us to look at ourselves and at our inner life and organisation rather than seek the problem in others. And although Golding depicts children becoming painted, masked hunters with sharpened sticks, apparently having become savages or head hunters again, in fact he shows a complex process is taking place, and that a reorganisation of the group and of the individual boys is involved in the emergence of the destructiveness. This is what psychoanalysts have found too, and we must reject the easy simplification that evil is the manifestation of something animal or primitive. It is in fact a complex human phenomenon.

Herbert Rosenfeld, working within the Kleinian tradition of psychoanalysis in England, has formulated his ideas on destructiveness in a number of works (Rosenfeld, 1971, 1987). Melanie Klein's work with small children had revealed a world of fantasy life very different from adult thinking, or even from that of the older child as discovered by Freud. The fantasies of violence, terror and omnipotence were unexpected and alarming, but it was recognised that they resembled the content of the delusions and other symptoms of adult psychotic patients. So from the 1940s onwards, Rosenfeld and others, fortified with Klein's findings, began treating psychoanalytically psychotic patients, and those with severe personality disorders of the borderline and narcissistic kind.

Rosenfeld found that despite the apparent indifference or deadness of such patients, and the impression that they formed no object relationship at all, in fact they formed very powerful transferences. He coined the term "narcissistic omnipotent object relations" to express his findings. He described the personality

organisation in which the person uses other people as things or containers, into which they project what is undesirable to themselves, or that which causes anxiety and pain. The person can then feel all powerful and free from disturbance, and can idealise themselves and their actions. Rosenfeld went on to distinguish between several groups with this narcissistic structure, and highlighted those who were intensely destructive and sadistic and proud of it. He called this destructive narcissism (Rosenfeld, 1971).

"I suggested that there was an enormous idealisation of the destructive parts of the self, which were felt to be attractive because they made the patient feel so omnipotent. When destructive narcissism of this kind is a feature of a patient's character structure, libidinal (that is to say loving, caring, interdependent) object relations and any wish on the part of the self to experience the need for an object and to depend on it are devalued, and attacked and destroyed with pleasure. It was part of my thesis that such destructive and omnipotent wishes are often difficult to recognise in what a patient says and does because the patient unconsciously experiences them as protective and benevolent, but very secretly." (Rosenfeld, 1987, p.22)

Rosenfeld particularly noted that:

"The destructive narcissism in some patients appears often highly organised, as if one were dealing with a powerful gang, dominated by a leader, who controls all the members of the gang to see that they support one another in making the criminal destructive work more effective and powerful. The main aim seems to be to prevent the weakening of the organisation and to control the members of the gang so that they will not join the positive parts of the self or betray the secrets of the gang to the police, the protecting superego, standing for the helpful analyst, who may be able to save the patient. To change, to receive help, implies weakness and is experienced as wrong or as a failure by the narcissistic organisation which provides the patient with his sense of superiority." (Rosenfeld, 1971)

This is the view of the psychoanalyst with his individual patient, but the same process can be observed in a group, where the members lose their individuality and powers of independent thought to become subsumed in a new kind of organisation. We have only to think of the Mafia for example.

We will hear more from Rosenfeld later, but for the moment these few introductory quotations have helped us to define our focus on this organised cruelty and destructiveness which is so uniquely human, and not in the least animal.

### **The novel**

Sir Kenneth Clark remarks somewhere in his writings that art springs from those experiences we have that are felt to be so significant that they demand elaboration.

I think that the novel, like drama, provides a particular mode of elaboration, and has arisen from our struggle to grasp and articulate what is most important in our lives and our inner worlds, but defies easy summary. Some things must be lived out and shown, before they can be formulated. So Golding must write his novel to really explore for himself and convey to us his vision in all its complexity. Psychoanalysis has emerged from this same human dilemma; it is another way in which an individual can live out what is most relevant to his or her life and development, and with the help of a participant slowly articulate and understand what it means.

I think Golding goes further and shows us what psychoanalysts have also learned, that at times such understanding can be felt as threatening and most unwelcome, and that great efforts can be mounted to prevent understanding. Let us see how this unfolds in the story.

I'm sure the story itself is reasonably familiar to us all. It begins with a group of English schoolboys crashlanding on a tropical island. They were being evacuated because their familiar world, the world of their parents, was engulfed in atomic war. They greet their island with delight, the sun, the sand, the coral reef and no grown ups.

"Ralph looks around him. Here at last was the imagined but never fully realised place leaping into life."

They all come together, they organise a leader and rules, they set about exploring and arranging to keep a fire going so that smoke will ensure their rescue.

But by the end of the tale, Simon the visionary has been murdered by the gang of hunters; Piggy has been flung to his death by a boulder rolled on him by the hunters of Castle Rock, his precious glasses smashed and his brains exploded over the rocks far below; and Ralph is running for his life, pursued by the hunters and by the fire they have lit, which will not only flush Ralph out, but destroy their island and their very source of life and sustenance.

How has this madness happened?

This is the question that Ralph articulates for us. We see the action largely through Ralph's eyes, and with him we struggle to grasp what is happening. This is the first theme I would like to highlight, the immense difficulty of conceptualising and articulating what is happening. Throughout the story Ralph struggles, and at crucial moments Piggy, the almost blind, fat little asthmatic with the vital glasses, who has learned to see more inwardly, helps him clarify his thoughts.

Here are the three boys, Ralph, Jack and Simon, going off to explore:

"The three boys walked briskly on the sand. The tide was low and there was a strip of weed-strewn beach that was almost as firm as a road. A kind of glamour was spread over them, and the scene and they were conscious of the glamour and made happy by it. They turned to each other, laughing excitedly, talking, not listening. The air was bright. Ralph, faced by the task of translating all this into an explanation, stood on his head and fell over."

As the anxieties of the littluns begin to break through and the glamour fades, we hear Ralph again:

"But there isn't a snake." Ralph was annoyed and, for the moment, defeated. He felt himself facing something ungraspable. Again, "But there isn't beast."

And later, after the excitement of the first pig hunt causes a ship on the horizon to pass by because the fire was neglected, Ralph sees the wearisomeness of their life, their dirt and their constant worry, and again knows he must do something about it.

"He lost himself in a maze of thoughts that were rendered vague by his lack of words to express them. I can't think, not like Piggy. Piggy for all his ludicrous body, had brains."

The initial excitement and glamour of this self-contained paradise, this island of no adults, where at last the boys can be free to look after themselves, begins to crumble. Golding shows us that it is the nightmares and terrors of the littluns which disturb the illusion that this is a good island, a garden of Eden. The littluns expressed the fears and loss of their parents which the older ones tried to deny. "No grown ups" in fact means, no one knows where we are, we are not in anyone's mind. The nightmare is the infantile terror of being totally unconnected with the parent, and at the mercy of the external world and one's internal phantasies. "My Father will come and rescue us" also contains the dread that "no one can find us" or even that no one else exists, having been obliterated by atomic war. And it is the boys' reaction to the littluns which open up the rifts and conflicts that lead to disaster.

Ralph struggles to understand what is happening, and tries to maintain a sensible adult world. He is leader, he encourages them to make shelters, to bring fresh water from the stream, keep the signal fire alight and so on. He is impatient and bewildered by the littluns fears of a snake thing and a beastie, but with the help of Piggy and Simon, he tries to hear them and do something for them.

Piggy has the glasses which can light fire, but he also sees the littluns are afraid, and he sees the rivalry between Ralph and Jack.

Jack reacts to the fears very differently. He is the leader of the choir, who become the hunters. At our first encounter with him in the story, he has the image of uniformed authority, the hint of the role that a uniform,

a mask is going to play in this drama. Jack is contemptuous of "littluns talk" and prefers direct action. He will hunt for food, he explores the island, he makes spears and organises his hunters. We are shown also that Jack reacts with hot shame when his wish to lead is challenged, or if his courage or competence is questioned or found lacking. This is the crux of the narcissistic organisation that Rosenfeld described, and which is now evolving in Jack and his hunters - the denial of anxieties and limitations, the contempt for the idea that they need help or rescue, and increasingly violent attacks on Piggy, Simon and Ralph who dare to question him.

Jack must be a hunter and Golding shows him being swallowed up in the compulsion to track down and kill, shows the madness that slowly comes into his eyes and eventually becomes permanent. This is a process which takes place within the individual, in Jack. It also occurs in the group, as we see the boys dividing up on the one hand, into a gang of masked hunters no longer individuals swallowed up in this narcissistic organisation; and on the other, into the few individuals who keep trying to understand what is happening.

Let me now itemise some of the features of this organisation, and select aspects of the novel which illustrate them.

One of the main functions of this state of mind is to discover an external enemy, a beastie who can be hunted, or placated with an offering. The boys try to locate the source of their fears in the shadows, the snake-like vines, in the ocean with its unknown inhabitants. When Simon haltingly suggests that what they fear is "in us", there is a chorus of ridicule, and the meeting rapidly disintegrates into laughter, talk of ghosts, fighting and insult. They are unaccountably angry, "the world, that understandable and lawful world, was slipping away". Unbeknown to them, the beast is already beginning to stir by way of this first hint of violence. Jack at one point shouts Ralph and Piggy down, yelling "Bollocks to the rules! We're strong - we hunt! If there's a beastie, we'll hunt it down! We'll close in and beat and beat and beat -".

Let us observe in this the fate of the littluns, the ones who voiced the nameless dreads, and cry out at night with dreams. The first littlun to speak up, the one with the big birthmark on his face (that is the one who spoils everyone's illusions of perfection) is the first to die. He is lost in the excitement of the first fire to be lit and is never seen again. The first pig to be caught is a piglet, tangled in branches, but no one can face the enormity of plunging the knife in. I think this is again a hint of the plight that the littluns voice, the tangle the boys in fact are in. We note in passing that Jack is ashamed at not being able to kill the pig, and furiously swears he is not afraid to do it, that he is a hunter. And again later, one of the older boys enjoys tormenting a littlun by throwing sand at him.

In these ways I think we can see the persecution or neglect of the littluns, the ones who express need and helplessness and fear. The narcissistic organisation is partly mounted against any such experiences.

Let us now see how the beast grows and becomes manifest. Jack, angry and humiliated by criticisms of his obsession with hunting, goes off to organise his hunters. He experiments with camouflage, using charcoal and clay. He looks at the results in a pool:

"He looked in astonishment, no longer at himself but at an awesome stranger. He split the water and leapt up excitedly. Beside the mere, his sinewy body held up a mask that drew their eyes and appalled them. He began to dance and his laughter became a bloodthirsty snarling. The mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness."

Here is the delicious liberation from self-awareness brought about by the mask, by the spell of this narcissistic state of mind which makes one a different person, utterly free from anxieties and self-doubts. The mask compels the others and they hunt a boar. In the excitement of the re-enactment afterwards, the game is not enough. They want a real pig again, you have to kill it again they say. Jack says "Use a littlun" and everybody laughs. The spell is working, and the group become close to losing the distinction between game and actuality, and once again it is the littluns who are contemptuously used.

The final breakdown between Jack and his hunters, and the others, comes shortly after. Jack, Ralph and Simon had fearfully gone to find the beast on the mountain, that is the dead airman who was being moved back and forth by his attached parachute. Full of dread at what they might find, having created a nightmare

beast out of their earlier efforts to investigate it, they approach. It moves, they run in terror. Later, trying to tell the others about this beast, the familiar rift opens up between them. They all think the beast is somewhere on the island, Jack is determined to hunt it down, and Ralph scornfully says "Your hunters - just boys armed with sticks".

Instantly Piggy sees what has happened "Now you've done it. You've been rude about his hunters".

Jack is enraged, and we see clearly it is a child's rage and humiliation, that his mask of omnipotence and fearlessness is being scorned and that limitations in him are being revealed. That is the end for him. He screams in his hatred, refuses to have any more to do with all the rules and talk, and takes himself and his hunters off to Castle Rock. This is a fortress of rocks at one end of the island, and it expresses vividly the fortress-like mentality of outraged narcissism, with its retreat into omnipotence and contempt for weakness.

The hunters, now all masked and organised with Jack as their new chief, set out on another hunt, this time more violent and explicit than the last. I think it is significant that they choose a sow,

"Sunk deep in maternal bliss, the largest sow of the lot. She was black and pink; and the great bladder of her belly was fringed with a row of piglets that slept and burrowed and squeaked."

The boys are like piglets, dependent on their island of pink granite and black forest, with its fruit and animals to sustain them. But masked in omnipotence, they are determined to deny all such vulnerability. They charge the sow, wound her, and chase her through the forest.

The hunters followed, wedded to her in lust, excited by the long chase and the dropped blood. The sow fell and the hunters hurled themselves at her. The dreadful eruption from an unknown world made her frantic; she squealed and bucked and the air was full of sweat and noise and blood and terror. Roger ran round the heap, prodding with his spear whenever pig flesh appeared. Jack was on top of the sow, stabbing downwards with his knife. Roger found lodgement for his point and began to push til he was leaning with his whole weight. The spear moved forward inch by inch and the terrified squealing became a high pitched scream. Then Jack found the throat and the hot blood spurted over his hand. The sow collapsed under them and they were heavy and fulfilled upon her. Roger began to withdraw his spear and the boys noticed it for the first time. Robert stabilised the thing in a phrase which was received uproariously 'Right up her arse!'"

This is no harvesting of food, a mere hunt, it is a violent domination, full of sexual excitement and with pleasure in the cruelty and triumph. This is the essence of Rosenfeld's observation, that the narcissistic organisation gives the power to reverse roles, the child is no longer small and vulnerable, dependent on the mother, it is now triumphant over the mother. This is done with pleasure, the sexualising and idealising of the power acting as a mask. It is in this state of mind that members of the group are capable of doing things they could never do as individuals. We also see that perversion is one manifestation of this narcissistic organisation within an individual. In the story Roger in particular becomes the representative of this sadism. He is the one who shoved his point right up her arse. He is the one who later becomes Jack's enforcer.

The boys offer the pig's head as a gift to the beast so it will leave them alone.

"The silence accepted the gift and awed them. The head remained there, dim eyed, grinning faintly, blood blackening between the teeth. All at once they were running away, as fast as they could, through the forest towards the open beach."

The beast is becoming manifest, and it obscurely terrifies them. Simon, the strange solitary visionary, has been observing the kill and the gift from his hideaway in the bushes nearby. Hot and dehydrated, he watches the head, and it watches him, and it speaks.

"There isn't anyone to help you. Only me. And I'm the beast. Fancy thinking the beast was something you could hunt and kill! You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you. I'm the reason why it's no go. Why things are what they are. You know perfectly well you'll only meet me down there - so don't try to escape! I'm warning you! We're going to have some fun on this island."

This is the Lord of the Flies, and the masked boys, captured as they are by the thrill of power and "freedom from shame and self-consciousness" are like flies, mesmerised and enslaved by this god. "Lord of the Flies" is the literal translation of Baal-zebub, the old Canaanite god of evil.

But Simon knows it is inside us, and he has just seen it in action, and he now goes further. He finds his way to the mountain top, where the dead flier is still pinned by his parachute. Simon discovers the true nature of this "beast", and releases the body, to be carried out over the sea and away. He returns to the beach, and in the gathering dark and storm he stumbles into the midst of the hunters' feast, wanting to bring them his news and insight.

The tragedy that now takes place reveals the inner structure of the real beast, the narcissistic state of mind. Ralph and Piggy have crept up to join the hunters and to try once more to unmask them and return the boys to their co-operation and awareness of their plight. These two represent the sane and appropriately fearful parts of the personality. But Jack will have none of it, he is chief now, and jeers at Ralph and Piggy for their fear, even showing them how much they need him and his ability to hunt. Just then lightning flashes, the gathering storm breaks, the littluns are terrified and now Ralph jeers at Jack "Who's clever now? Where are your shelters? What are you going to do about that!"

Jack instantly orchestrates a dance, and the hunters fall into excited re-enactment of the great hunt, free once more from fear and awareness of their vulnerability and limitations. Even Piggy and Ralph

"Under the threat of the sky 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."

As the group lose themselves, they go

"Round and round as though repetition would achieve safety of itself. There was the throb and stamp of a single organism."

Here is the beast, and its seductive elusion of safety even draws Ralph and Piggy in for a while.

"The mob forms a horseshoe shape, and into it stumbles Simon, who is unrecognised."

They have a real pig to kill, they have the beast at last.

"The sticks fell and the mouth of the new circle crunched and screamed."

In this way we see the beast has swallowed up Simon.

Golding here captures the confused madness that sweeps away ordinary reality sense, and leads to the murder of Simon. We see the beast at last, it is the group itself, and the state of mind that captures them like flies.

From this point, the splitting between the two sides of the group, or within the personality, becomes starkly apparent. The hunters retreat to Castle Rock, totally defended against awareness of what they have done, while Ralph and Piggy struggle to retain their sanity. Hardly able to believe it they say "That was murder. I'm frightened of us." They try again to go and talk with the others. But the others are beyond reach in their fortress. We can see that the retreat into omnipotence serves another function now, it spares the hunters from seeing the horror of what they have done and from feeling the guilt about it.

Let me briefly summarise some of the features of this state of mind as it now exists, this narcissistic organisation that is so vividly epitomised by the boys in Castle Rock. Firstly there is the splitting, this hardening between the hunters, and the few stragglers Ralph and Piggy who attempt to preserve their sanity and understanding of what has happened. For the hunters there is no struggle. They have in effect evacuated and disowned any awareness or capacity to think of what they have done.

Secondly we see that this is maintained by terror. There are hints that Roger terrorises the littluns and other members of the gang into preserving the mask of them being hunters. They must revere the new chief, Jack, and obey all his rules.

Thirdly this is a very paranoid state of mind. Jack expresses his conviction that the few remaining boys outside the group will attempt to spoil what the hunters have. He reminds them that the beast came into their midst in disguise, on the night of the storm. He is referring to Simon of course, in a paranoid suspicious way that denies the murder. They somehow imagine that Ralph and Piggy can attack them. In fact the only attack that Ralph and Piggy can mount is the attack of reason, to make them see what they have done and what is happening and it is this that is most terrifying, in fact. Rosenfeld, like Bion and others since, has pointed out how much the attacks mounted by this state of mind are against any possibility of insight. Knowledge itself is the enemy. We know that in totalitarian states throughout history, the secret police are thought police whose efforts are most vigorously aimed at their own populace, to prevent them getting together to think, or gain information from the outside world.

It is this particular aspect of the drama that now unfolds. Ralph and Piggy approach the fortress, in one last effort to stop the horror and bring the boys back to themselves. They intend to retrieve the vital specs which the tribe of boys took from Piggy in a raid, and at the same time to re-establish the order represented by the fragile conch shell which Ralph and Piggy still have.

Let us pause for a moment and take into account that Ralph and Piggy together, as a couple, are the representatives of insight. Neither alone is adequate to the task, they need each other throughout the story, and here at the last they are still trying to stem the tide, supporting each other. It may be no coincidence that he is called Piggy, in that it suggests a link with the mother sow who was brutally killed, and with the island itself which is the nourishing sow to the boys. Piggy's glasses and insights have been vital for the boys, and for Ralph in particular.

The two represent I think that psychic function which the internal parental couple play in development, that of being the guardians of insight and of the capacity for self-awareness and separateness. Ronald Britton (1989) elaborates this theme in a recent work. The triangle formed by the child and his two parents not only brings with it the child's realisation of his parent's relationship and traditional oedipal experience of exclusion and rivalry. It also brings with it the experience of the child being seen by the parents, what Golding expresses when he talks of the capacity for 'shame and self-consciousness'. One of the features of the narcissistic state of mind is the obliteration of the internal couple as a functioning couple, who see and think about the child and facilitate self-consciousness. So Piggy is smashed, and Ralph must also be destroyed. Another aspect of the importance of the internal couple can be found in Golding's book *The Spire*, which Hanna Segal discusses in her paper on *Delusion and Artistic Creativity*.

So, Ralph hides, having learned that he too must be destroyed. Jack decrees that Ralph must die. Golding hints that Jack is aware of some indefinable link between him and Ralph. There is a Ralph in him, who may, unless killed, make Jack think again of what he has done. He must be killed. Hence the utter madness of the chase and the burning down of the island. This madness is the implacable and relentless determination to kill insight and awareness, even at the expense of destroying the island they depend on.

The final scene is Golding's master stroke I think. Here is Ralph running for his life,

"He stumbled over a root and the cry that pursued him rose even higher. He saw a shelter burst into flames and the fire flapped at his right shoulder and there was a glitter of water. Then he was down, rolling over and over in the warm sand, crouching with arm up to ward off. Trying to cry for mercy.

He staggered to his feet, tensed for more terrors and looked up at a huge peaked cap. It was a white topped cap, and above the green shade of the peak was a crown, an anchor, gold foliage. He saw white drill, epilettes, a revolver, a row of gilt buttons down the front of a uniform."

At this dramatic moment there is a sudden shift of perspective. Suddenly through the eyes of the naval officer we see the island and the boys for what they are.

"Squirming a little, conscious of his filthy appearance, Ralph answered shyly.

'Hello'.

'Are there any adults, any grown-ups with you?'

Dumbly, Ralph shook his head. He turned a half pace on the sand. A semi-circle of little boys, their bodies streaked with coloured clay, sharp sticks in their hands, were standing on the beach making no noise at all.

The officer inspected the little scarecrow in front of him. The kid needed a bath, a haircut, a nose wipe, and a good deal of ointment."

Consciously Golding says he wanted this officer to represent blind adulthood, that attitude of British smugness, which he described earlier, which cannot believe that little boys would behave as other than young gentlemen even under such circumstances. But the dramatic effect is far more intense. Suddenly there is this immense shift where we see through the madness and it falls off the boys like the paint they have on their face. It is the shock of insight. The officer does not know what has happened or what he is seeing, indeed he turns away. But Ralph sees, the boys see, and so do we. The capacity for shame and self-consciousness has been restored.

"The officer nodded helpfully.

'I know. Jolly good show. Like the coral island.'

Ralph looked at him dumbly. For a moment he had a fleeting picture of the strange glamour that had once invested the beaches. But the island was scorched like dead wood - Simon was dead - and Jack had ... The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too. And in the middle of them, with filthy body, matted hair, and unwiped nose, Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the wise, true friend called Piggy."

Here we have the shattering of the narcissistic organisation and the full return of sanity. But this is no mere cognitive thing, it is filled with the horror and grief and pain of awareness of what has happened and of what has been lost. Ralph, like the group, is whole again.

## **Conclusion**

The use of a work of literature for psychoanalytic purposes is fraught with hazard. We often see the venture take the form of treating the characters as if they were real people, capable of being analysed. Similarly, the author may be equated with a patient in analysis, and analysed on the basis of his work. In both cases, the result is pseudo-analysis. It is a gross misrepresentation of what really takes place between analyst and patient, and it does grave injustice to the relationship between the reader, the experience of the novel, and the author.

The writer certainly draws upon his personal experiences and imaginative depths, his conflicts, his dreams perhaps, to gather the ingredients for his novel. In this, of course, he draws on the same human depths as us all. But he does work on the material. Henry James, speaking from the heart in one of his prefaces, says the "effort really to see and really to represent is no idle business in face of the constant force that makes for muddlement". This work involves for example, selection of the material, concentration of the action, ordering the events for dramatic impact, and resisting the temptation to simply tell and explain, and allowing oneself to be open to surprise from within.

The analytic process is also, first and foremost, a lived experience. Analyst and patient must work hard to allow the immediacy of the inner world to find real expression and be felt by both, and only then to try to formulate the meaning and significance of what is happening. The temptation to bypass this effort and settle

for second-hand explanation and theoretical formulations, to pretend we 'know', is very great. A great work of art succeeds in just the way this analytic process does, and for that reason the two can illuminate each other. Freud, for example, was greatly in debt to Sophocles and the tradition of myths that nourished the drama of Oedipus; he was helped to grasp the universal dimension of the phenomena he was coming across in his own dreams and in the experiences of his patients.

It is this aspect of Golding's work that I would like to emphasise in closing. What I found so striking was the powerful representation Golding creates of the spellbinding effect of this mask of madness which slowly creeps up on the boys. We, as readers, become caught up in it and can barely see the steps until the final shattering shows us what has happened. This is the same effect as can sometimes happen to us in the course of an analysis or a therapy. We, as therapists, can be mesmerised and spellbound by a defensive organisation, can lose our own sense of reality to a degree, and in that way we too can become one of the members of the gang. The therapeutic struggle is akin to the struggle of Ralph and Piggy to maintain their sanity, to know that murder has been done, to be frightened of what is happening within us. And I think the novel also gives us some understanding of why such tremendous resistance can be mounted against this process of insight and awareness. Not only does the narcissistic state of mind experience shame and failure if it is questioned or threatened, but once it has gone, then the individual is put in touch with vulnerability, dependence and the tremendous anxieties of childhood that the littlun in us all can still experience.

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