

A New Historicist Reading of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954)

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Abstract

The paper's objective is to follow the blueprints of the new historicist approach by placing William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* within the historical and cultural contexts of its time. More precisely, this paper attempts to show how *Lord of the Flies* reflects the ongoing conflict between dictatorship and democracy in the aftermath of the Second World War. Through the characters of Jack and Ralph, the two systems are exemplified. Yet in comparing and contrasting the antithetical traits of the two protagonists, this paper argues, Golding adopts a realistic approach that presents both the positive and negative traits of each character, never falling into the habitual error of giving an unrealistic black or white picture of either of the political systems they represent. In short, *Lord of the Flies* provides to its readers an open discussion on what make the world live in peace and progress, and people have to choose between democracy or dictatorship.

Keywords: New Historicism, William Golding, Lord of the Flies, dictatorship, democracy, World War II.

Introduction

A mixture of history and literature, new historicism is a critical approach that uses history to understand literature. Since its inauguration in the 1990s at the hands of Stephen Greenblatt, new historicism has become an important tool in studying literary texts by paying so much attention to the text and its historical background. As Greenblatt puts it,

New Historicist critics have tried to understand the intersecting circumstances not as a stable, prefabricated background against which the literary texts can be placed, but as dense network of evolving and often contradictory social forces. The idea is not to find outside the work of art some rock onto which literary interpretation can be securely chained but rather to situate the work in relation to other representational practices operative in the culture at a given moment in both history and our own. (170)

Advocates of new historicism, such as Greenblatt and others have acknowledged the importance of historical context because they believe that literature is highly engaged with the history of its own time. As Donald Keesey puts it: “the poem’s real meaning is always in the past ... and the search for that meaning is a search for the author’s original intention” (8). In other words, as Keesey argues, to understand a literary work of art we must understand the age and the mind of the creator of that work because it reflects not only the author's thoughts, but also the society in which the author lived. And this requires, of course, an inquiry and a considerable knowledge of the writer’s social and intellectual backgrounds. Thus, to understand the meaning of a literary text, critics need to consider the “dense network of evolving and often contradictory social forces” that existed at the time the novel was written. Whether they are clearly discussed in a text, these “contradictory social forces” have a seminal impact on the shape and direction of the text.

Thus, according to new historicists, it is so important to take the socio-historical context of Post-world war II literature into account when studying the texts produced during this period. Recognizing the impact of the historical and cultural contexts on the critic's understanding of the text, new historicists seek to investigate the wider historical context by examining both how the writer's postwar times affected the work and how the work reflects the writer's times.

Objectives:

Because critics have paid “scant attention to the significance of historical context in understanding Golding's fiction” (Crawford 18), this paper’s objective is to follow the blueprints of the new historicist approach by placing William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* within the historical and cultural contexts of its time. Published in 1954 after World War II, this novel reflects, the paper argues, essential historical issues of this period such as how the rise of dictatorial leaders is almost inevitable and warns us of what may happen to the world if leaders such as Jack and Hitler rose to power. More precisely, this paper attempts to show how *Lord of the Flies* reflects the ongoing conflict between dictatorship and democracy in the aftermath of the Second World War. As this paper attempts to demonstrate, Ralph is portrayed as a historical democratic leader, who has been elected by the boys on the island and exercises many democratic virtues, while Jack is depicted as an egoistic dictator, who wants to hold complete autocratic control over the boys just for his own self-interest, regardless of the common interest or the happiness of the other boys. Both characters will be examined in detail to reveal these contradictory traits of their personalities. Through the characters of Jack and Ralph, the two systems are exemplified. Yet in comparing the

antithetical traits of the two protagonists, this paper argues, Golding adopts a realistic approach that presents both the positive and negative traits of each character, never falling into the habitual error of giving an unrealistic black or white picture of either of the political systems they represent.

Golding between Fiction and History:

Joseph Conrad in his *Notes on Life and Letters* (1921) emphasizes the relationship between fiction and history. He writes: “Fiction is history, human history, or it is nothing ... fiction is nearer truth ... and a novelist is a historian, the preserver, the keeper, the expounder, of human experience” (6). Like Joseph Conrad, William Golding believes in the interrelationship between literature and history. He considers history as a branch of fiction. He believes that fiction is complicit in mediating historical and political issues whether these issues are explicitly discussed or not. In *Foreword to the Ends of the Earth*, Golding states that

Courteous historians will generally concede that since no one can describe events with perfect accuracy written history is a branch of fiction. Similarly, the novelist who deals with “before now” must pay attention, respectful or not, to history. He is faced with a spectrum. History lies at one end - infra-red perhaps – and what is thought of as fiction occupies the opposite end—the ultra-violet ... He must admit to writing history with the same good humour as a historian shows when admitting that he writes fiction.

Believing that “written history is a branch of fiction,” William Golding is considered one of the prominent writers who impressively mixed history with fiction. Historically speaking Golding served in the Royal Navy as a commander of a rocket-launcher and participated in the invasion of Normandy during World War II. To carry out his duties, Golding ordered the destruction of German ships and submarines and he killed German troops from sea during the D-Day landings. Golding was shocked by his own capacity to harm his fellow humans.

Golding’s experience in World War II had motivated him to find out the real reasons behind this destructive war. Golding suggests that one of the main reasons of this war is the rise of many dictators. Golding believes that there is a necessity of learning from our past to improve upon our future, and because of the growing fear of reappearance of other dictators such as Mussolini's Italy, Hitler's Germany, and Stalin's Russia, he writes *Lord of the Flies* which depicts the annihilating dangers of dictatorial rule and which is considered as a fictional plea for people to live under democracy than under dictatorship.

Lord of the Flies from a new Historicist Perspective:

Lord of the Flies is not altogether a work of fiction created out of Golding's imagination, but rather a product of the historical context of its time. It contains historical references that break the split between the fiction of the story and the reality of its time. Although Golding never openly states that the story is taking place in the shadow of WWII, it is obviously assumed due to the novel's references to the somewhat obvious historical contexts. For example, the boys are on the island in the first place because they are being evacuated from a war zone. Moreover, the novel is obviously set against the background of a nuclear war, reflecting the world of 1950s anxiety about the threat of atomic arsenal. For an instance, at the very beginning of the novel, Piggy refers to the atom bomb early in the novel (14).

In his attempt to find an explanation for the wide scale of destruction that spread worldwide during the Second World War, Golding has come to the conclusion that it was primarily caused by the anti-social attitude of dictatorial individuals; an attitude, which was the main reason of all the violence and destruction that took place in that devastating war. Even though the Allies were able to defeat Hitler, there will always be those who want power and control and enjoy killing. The shadows of Hitler and Mussolini still fall on world history, and their legacy is a traumatic one, just as their years in power were ultimately a destructive one, resulting in the Second World War – a deadly struggle “between totalitarian and democratic powers of the world” (Chavan 1516).

Golding could not stay away from portraying the dangers of those dictators, who threaten the peace and welfare of the world. He engages the post war's debates about the best type of government that should prevail in the world. He raises the question of which is the best government that should lead the world. In World War II, democratic countries and dictatorial countries had confronted each other across the globe. In *Lord of the Flies*, the ongoing conflict between Jack and Ralph is also meant to stand for the unremitting clash between dictatorship and democracy in real life, which has tangibly emerged after the Second World War. As Chavan says, “Jack is the dictator, the hedonic, who wants the world his way and succeeds on the fear and insecurity of the ignorant boys” (1518); whereas Ralph represents the leader “of goodwill and common sense” (Golding 35).

Like George Orwell, Golding is considered “a natural enemy of dictatorship. He fights it every moment, even when he thinks it is asleep. Because this is in his genetic code” (Kadare). Out of his own experiences of the Second World War, Golding provides in *Lord of the Flies* (1954) a glimpse of the political systems that have rapidly spread in the aftermath of that devastating War in many countries of the world. He distinguishes

between two different power systems that had controlled different parts of the world before the war: the democratic system, on the one hand, and the dictatorial one, on the other. As a matter of fact, “the conflict between the said ideologies pushed the world in the vortex of WW II in which Golding participated in action as an officer in the Royal British Navy” (Chavan 1518).

Golding believes that dictators throughout history, usually, have several characteristics in common who used to exercise and justify the absolute power held for the so-called greater common good of their people. Similarly, democratic leaders have several characteristics in common such as coming to power by elections held in a free and fair environment. The two main characters of *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph and Jack, share the same characteristics that are obviously identifiable in all democratic and dictatorial leaders who have come to rule different parts of the world. They possess, as Xiaofang Li and Weihua Wu have rightly stated, “recognizable traits that make them individuals as the sort of people that everyone has known in school, work and society, and become convincingly embodiments of particular aspects of human nature” (119). The remaining of this paper will discuss the comparison between Ralph and Jack who represent, historically speaking, the exact examples of historical democratic and autocratic leaders that the world knows throughout history.

An Elected Democratic Leader:

According to Chetan Dhruve, “the answer to “who is a leader?” is profoundly simple: A person who’s been elected to lead by the people he’s leading. We have a different word for someone who assumes power and leads without being elected: dictator” (1520). He proceeds to explain: “to qualify as a leader, you must be elected by the people you’re leading” (1520). Discussing the same topic Basile’s states: “In a democracy, the leader is elected by the majority of the people, giving him/her the right to guide the process of important decisions concerning the community” (2). According to both **Dhruve’s and Basile’s criteria**, Ralph is similar to many western democratic leaders that appeared during World War II such as Winston Churchill whose role in triumph of democracy over tyranny is well documented; who believed that “the passion for freedom and democracy was universal ... [and] that constitutional democracy was the best form of government for ensuring the welfare of the ordinary citizen” (Lambakis 15).

Like Churchill, Ralph is considered a democratic leader who has a “strong belief that he would contribute to the survival of civilization and the well-being of mankind. This personal vision was matched with a deep understanding of human nature” (Wilson). At the opening of the novel, Ralph – like Churchill who has been freely elected by his own people – is

freely and favorably elected by the boys as their leader. Moreover, Ralph shares many physical characteristics with Churchill who “looked younger, despite his many and varied achievements during the preceding ten years, involving considerable mental and physical effort. For he had been a soldier on active service” (Ingram 3). Similarly, like Churchill, Ralph is physically fit: “he might make a boxer, as far as width and heaviness of shoulders went” (5). Second, he is a kind boy who has eyes that “proclaimed no devil” (5). Third, Ralph is the son of “a commander in the navy” (9), who, Ralph assures them, must come in time to rescue them. Finally, Ralph has the conch shell, which represents something from the adult world, a megaphone from the airport: “there was a stillness about Ralph as he sat that marked him out: there was his size, and attractive appearance; and most obscurely, yet most powerfully, there was the conch” (20).

Like Churchill, Ralph, after being elected, attempts to set up a democratic society that requires the obedience of all boys, including himself, to a set of rules. He lays down rules for the boys about using the conch: “We ought to have more rules. Where the conch is, that's a meeting. The same up here as down here” (42). The implication of these rules is apparent in the importance that is attached to the purpose of the conch, as an object that stands for law and order in organizing the boys’ life over the island. Furthermore, Ralph lays down rules to organize their way of meeting and talking as if they were in a democratic parliament: “We can’t have everybody talking at once. We’ll have to have ‘Hands up’ like at school.’ [...] ‘Then I’ll give him the conch.’ [...] ‘He can hold it when he is speaking’” (31). Ralph’s insistence to impose these rules on all the boys, including himself, without any exception, contributes to his sense of democratic leadership and responsibility. As Sasan Basirat and Fatima Farhoud have rightly said,

Rather than assuming the role of a ‘leader,’ [Ralph] turns to an organizing and law enforcing ‘member’ whose assignments are designated by law. His efforts are aimed at safeguarding the children against the possible dangers of the outside nature, exploring its resources for their benefit, and finally saving them from the island ... Ralph’s group prioritizes the members’ common interests over the personal interests of any single individual, and as a result, there appears to be a cooperative atmosphere in which there is no room for any great discrimination between the leadership and the main body of the group. (193)

Responsibility for the Well-Being of His Subjects:

Another significant characteristic of Ralph that makes him similar to historical democratic leaders during World War II is his sense of responsibility. From the very beginning, Ralph “assumes primary

responsibility for the group's tasks when he starts organizing their living, because he realizes that not doing so will result in savagery and moral chaos" (Hynes, 1997: 59). Thus, despite the hardships, and anxieties that the boys have to confront on the Island, Ralph assumes the responsibility of trying as far as he can to make life easier for them. For example, Ralph works hard to sketch an accurate map of the island to secure the free movement of the children throughout the safe parts of it, without being exposed to any danger: "We ought to draw a map," said Ralph, "only we haven't any paper" (25). Moreover, he tries to create on the island "a culture of dynamism and openness" (Dhruve 2015). To achieve this end, Ralph follows several procedures. One of these procedures, for instance, is his attempt to eliminate from the children's minds the overwhelming fear of the beast that hinders their creative thinking. Knowing that the little children's anxiety would choke their clear thinking, Ralph exerts all possible efforts to reassure them that there is no beast on the island, unlike Jack, who, strangely enough, later on, makes use of this same fear to control the children's thinking, to dominate their actions and to exact their blind obedience to him. Thus, Ralph decides to go by himself with two other boys in search of the beast, venturing into places of the island they hadn't been to before, to safeguard the younger boys:

We've got to decide if this is an island. Everybody must stay round here and wait and not go away. Three of us – if we take more we'd get all mixed, and lose each other – three of us will go on an expedition and find out. (21)

Ralph inherently knows that as a leader he must physically take the lead in the hunting party, despite his feelings of great nervousness: "His mouth was tight and pale. He put back his hair very slowly (...) He forced his feet to move until they carried him out on to the neck of the land" (130). One can argue that Ralph's sense of responsibility is the outcome of another significant trait of his personality: being a task-oriented leader.

A Task-oriented Leader:

According to Tora Skodvin and Steinar Andresen, a "leader is supposed to look beyond his or her own interests and concerns, to the interests of a wider group" (2006:16). This is true of Churchill as well as of Ralph in *Lord of the Flies*. In his "Iron Curtain" Speech Churchill emphasizes the necessity to find ways to prevent another war and he seeks to establish a comprehensive peace that includes the entire world. As he says, "we have to consider here today, while time remains, is the permanent prevention of war and the establishment of conditions of freedom and democracy as rapidly as possible in all countries" (4). Similarly, in *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph has already done that by making the rescue of all the boys

his main task: “we'll be rescued sometime. We've just got to wait, that's all “(46). Typical of many task-oriented leaders, Ralph makes clear that his primary objective is to bring the boys safely back to England:

We want to be rescued; and of course, we shall be rescued ... My father's in the Navy. He said there aren't any unknown islands left. He says the Queen has a big room full of maps and all the islands in the world are drawn there. So, the Queen's got a picture of this island. (38-39)

Recognizing his responsibility to find a way out of the island, Ralph focuses all his actions towards rescue. In every meeting, Ralph reminds the boys that they have to work together towards that objective. After deciding the most important task he needs to achieve, which is rescue, Ralph organizes the children, assigns for each task, and ensures that each child has a clear understanding of his individual role. He creates clear and easy-to-follow work schedules with specific requirements and deadlines.

We have lots of assemblies. Everybody enjoys speaking and being together. We decide things. But they don't get done. We were going to have water brought from the stream and left in those coconut shells under fresh leaves ... You mostly sleep in shelters. Tonight, except for Samneric up by the fire, you'll all sleep there. (89)

Typical of the task oriented leader, Ralph is making sure that things get done in a manner that is both proficient and on time. Unfortunately, Ralph has difficulty achieving his desired goals because of the lack of cooperation from many boys. One can argue that Ralph's failure as a leader may be partly imputed to the growing disinterest of some of the boys and their inactivity towards the main objective of being saved from the island. Ralph blames the boys for having many assemblies without accomplishing any positive actions or producing any positive results:

We need an assembly. Not for fun. Not for laughing and falling off the log ... not for making jokes, or ... for cleverness. Not for these things. But to put things straight ... We have lots of assemblies. Everybody enjoys speaking and being together. We decide things. But they don't get done. (89)

Empathy with his Subjects:

Besides being elected by the majority of the boys, and besides being task-oriented like many advocates of democracy, typical of many democratic leaders, again, Ralph, “with the directness of genuine leadership,” (23) shows deep empathy with and understanding of his subjects. Similar to Churchill who “cared about people, and he demonstrated this as he practiced management by walking around” (Wilson) Ralph is a good listener to every boy's fear and a fair judge of their complaints, even when these complaints

are against himself. For instance, when Piggy tells him that he should not have called him Piggy in front of the boys, Ralph, looking with sympathetic understanding at Piggy and seeing that the child is really hurt and crushed, tries to soothe him by turning the matter into a light joke; and does not waver a moment in straightforwardly apologizing for having inadvertently hurt him. "Better Piggy than Fatty... and anyway, I'm sorry if you feel like that" (23). Throughout the novel, Ralph takes the boys' wishes and feelings into consideration before he asks them to do anything. He encourages them to talk about their feelings and he tries to help them when they are scared or upset. He respects other boys' opinions and encourages them to express them, even if they are different from his own. Even when he suggests that Jack remains as a leader of the choir of boys whom he calls hunters, he is motivated by sympathy for his hostile rival. He obviously understands that Jack is somewhat humiliated by the boy's rejection of him as a leader, and he wishes to soothe his bitter feelings.

Avoiding Equivocal or Tricky Language and Advocating Equality:

In her article, "7 Leadership Lessons from the Life of Winston Churchill," Marta Wilson describes Churchill as an honest and frank leader. She states the following:

Churchill communicated what he thought and felt to those he believed would benefit from his message. He was open and clear, as opposed to sending hidden messages. He offered his honest thoughts, ideas, and feelings. And, he shared his message with those it was intended for as opposed to telling someone who he hoped would pass it along.

Likewise, in an astonishing similarity, Golding depicts Ralph as being honest and straightforward in whatever he says to the boys. In every meeting, he makes sure that all of those who are under his authority understand whatever he is saying without twisting meanings or using words that carry double meanings:

He was searching his mind for simple words so that even the littluns would understand what the assembly was about. Later perhaps, practiced debaters - Jack, Maurice, and Piggy - would use their whole art to twist the meeting: but now at the beginning the subject of the debate must be laid out clearly. (88)

Furthermore, Ralph strives to make the boys feel as if they were all equals, giving them equal rights as well as assigning to them relatively equal duties, according to their ages and capacities; therefore, he is willing to transfer some of the responsibilities concerning hunting and feeding to Jack and the hunters. Ralph treats the little ones, too, as equals, recognizing that they have special needs that must be satisfied and that they should not be expected to

match the physical exertions of the older boys. Moreover, Ralph strives to provide every one of the boys with an equal chance to speak his mind. The rule of the ‘conch’ manages to make the boys feel that they have all an equal right of participation; “when holding it they get a chance to speak their mind and the others must listen. It is a significant trait for a democratic leader to aim for an environment of equality” (Olofsson 6).

Ralph’s Faults as a Democratic Leader:

Despite showing some unmistakable democratic characteristics during his leadership of the boys, Ralph has a number of flaws that lead to his eventual failure as a genuine democratic leader. As a matter of fact, no political leader is without flaws. For example, Churchill’s career “had been littered with catastrophic mistakes and misjudgments” (Heffer) and who “made more than his fair share of mistakes—some forgivable, perhaps, but others clearly beyond the pale” (Harris). Similarly, in *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph, like Churchill, “was neither a saint, nor a sage. He was, instead, a mere mortal, responsible for committing numerous acts of ill-judgment over the vast span of his career” (Harris). For example, the first of these faults is that Ralph is too lenient in facing Jack’s wicked dictatorship. When Jack and his choir reach Ralph, Jack aggressively asks where the man with the trumpet is and Ralph seems intimidated: “There’s no man with a trumpet. Only me” (16). If Ralph had shown, on that occasion, a sense of firm self-confidence and sturdy resoluteness as a leader, he would have nipped in the bud Jack’s hankering after power. Take another example; when Jack, for the first time, challenges Ralph’s authority, Ralph is reluctant to fight him, not out of cowardice or physical weakness, but rather, because his noble nature is loath to use his physical strength against weaker boys. In this connection, Xiaofang Li and Weihua Wu have rightly stated,

[Ralph] could challenge Jack physically and defeat him once and for all; he could lend Piggy more assistance in forming a coalition. Yet he does nothing and even thinks to “give up being chief.” His attitude towards Jack to some degree makes all the things go wrong and gets Jack’s group become more ferocious and violent. (120)

Added to this point of weakness as a leader, Ralph also suffers from a hesitant personality; he cannot decide things right away: "Listen, everybody. I've got to have time to think things out. I can't decide what to do straight off" (21). In this Ralph is very similar to Churchill who has been criticized for having a “poor political judgment and questionable intentions” (Harris). Moreover, there is an even worse problem with Ralph; he admits to his subjects that he does not have the power to think profoundly beforehand, as other boys do. He unabashedly tells them:

The trouble was, if you were a chief you had to think, you had to be wise. And then the occasion slipped by so that you had to grab at a decision. This made you think; because thought was a valuable thing that got results. . . .

Only, decided Ralph as he faced the chief's seat, I can't think. Not like Piggy. (87)

Unfortunately, this indecisive attitude, together with his reluctance to think deeply before making a decision, accompanies Ralph throughout his leadership period, and up till Jack decides to take over with his tribe, virtually defeating all Ralph's plans to rescue the boys from their severe predicament. This might explain why some boys decide to leave Ralph and join Jack. Their decision emanates from the fact that people are usually more ready to be led by a cruel but strong leader rather than by a kind but hesitant one. Hence, the children who join Jack's tribe do not seem to be too much troubled about Jack's cruelty and dictatorial leadership. Le Bon Gustave's observation about crowds' impressions of a leader's personality could, to a great extent, explain the boys' submissive acceptance and positive reception of Jack's callous dictatorship:

Authoritativeness and intolerance are sentiments of which crowds have a very clear notion, which they easily conceive and which they entertain as readily as they put them in practice when once they are imposed upon them. Crowds exhibit a docile respect for force, and are but slightly impressed by kindness, which for them is scarcely other than a form of weakness. Their sympathies have never been bestowed on easy-going masters, but on tyrants who vigorously oppressed them. (25)

The dramatic failure of Ralph's leadership illustrates that in order to have a successful democratic society; you need to have an unrelenting genuine democratic leader. Because of the inappropriate forbearance of Ralph, as a leader, and his inability to stand up to Jack's dictatorial attitude, the boys' experience with democracy has turned out to be an utter failure.

JACK'S DICTATORIAL TRAITS:

After having elucidated the similarities of Ralph as a democratic leader to Western leaders such as Churchill, notwithstanding his eminent important democratic characteristics, the remainder of this paper will be devoted to demonstrate Jack's most salient dictatorial traits – which are very similar to dictatorial leaders such as Hitler – and eventually to evaluate his experience as a typical autocratic ruler. As Chavan puts it, “considered in the context of WW II, Jack is another Hitler or Mussolini pushing the world in the ghastly abyss of war” (1520):

Jack is a combination of the western dictators of the 20th century. His red hairs symbolize communist dictator Stalin. His ‘crumpled and freckled’ face matches that of Mussolini. His blue eyes remind us of Hitler. Jack is a combination of communism, fascism and Nazism. (1521)

As a matter of fact, from a historical point of view, Jack shows tendencies comparable to Adolf Hitler. Like Hitler, Jack not only shows us how “the primitive desire and actions are released where there are no restrictions of civilization but also what an [sic] dictator would have done or would do when driven by his evil power and lust for blood” (Li 121). Nevertheless, both Hitler and Jack raise the issue of how deeply disturbed human beings were capable of “attaining such as power and exerting such influence over so many individuals, the vast majority of whom were not afflicted with any kind of psychological pathology get committed acts of such horror” (Hyland).

Overpowering Egoism:

Psychoanalysts who studied the behaviors of some famous dictators refer to their typical personality traits as being egocentric, deceptive and aggressive. Hitler, for example, has “intense narcissism, destructiveness, and a profound inability to relate to others.” His Egocentrism was illustrated in his inability to see a situation from another person's point of view. Moreover, as an egocentric leader, Hitler surrounds himself with like-minded people, and who will just blindly follow the Hitler wherever he goes without questioning him. Moreover, Hitler is also a deceptive and aggressive leader. As Philip Hyland and others have rightly stated,

The name Adolf Hitler is associated with an image of madman in command; a man of incomprehensible ‘evil’ who was directly responsible for the unimaginable suffering and death of millions upon millions of innocent people. (58)

Similarly in *Lord of the Flies*, one of the most salient characteristics of Jack as a dictator is his narcissistic propensity, which is illustrated in his way of thinking and in his behavior in a lot of different situations and activities. Like Hitler, Jack “took advantage of opportunities as they came along and was prepared to take control of as much territory as he safely could” (Pauley 244). Moreover, like Hitler, Jack is unable to love the other boys simply because he loves himself too much and is, thus, concerned with nothing but satisfying his own needs and fulfilling his own desires. The first incident that shows his display of his overestimation of himself, his arrogance and disdain for others, is when he protests against the boys’ calling him with his first name: “Kids’ names,” said Merridew. “Why should I be Jack? I’m Merridew” (18). Indeed, Jack’s haughty superciliousness is clear right from

the very moment he sees Ralph and does not seem to be satisfied with him as a leader: "The boy came close and peered down at Ralph, screwing up his face as he did so. What he saw of the fair-haired boy with the creamy shell on his knees did not seem to satisfy him" (17).

Jack's narcissistic behavior becomes visible when the boys express their need to "have a chief to decide things" (19). Typical of Hitler, Jack thinks that he is greater than anyone else. His inflated sense of self-importance drives him to think that he is the only one suitable for the position: "I ought to be chief ... because I'm chapter chorister and head boy" (19). Jack uses all his guileful scheming to make the boys believe that he is special. He claims that he should be the leader because he has always been a leader; regardless of the fact that the leadership to which he is referring has absolutely nothing to do with his ability to rule. In fact, he is only referring to his previous leadership of a church choir because of his nice singing voice.

From a psychological point of view, Jack is suffering from a narcissistic personality disorder; "a condition in which people have an inflated sense of self-importance and an extreme preoccupation with themselves" (Graif, 2015). As **Dhruve puts it**, "when you're a dictator, you automatically think you're way smarter than anybody else." Jack's self-important behavior is congruent with many of the harsh military leaders whose eyes staring made the best of a bad job" (2015:17). Ordering his Choir, "his face was crumpled and freckled, and ugly without silliness ... The tall boy (Jack) shouted at them 'Choir! Stand Still!' Warily and obedient, the choir huddled into line" (17). In addition, like the narcissistic Hitler, Jack is very harsh and cruel and does not show any emotional attachment to his group. He never cares about other boys' feelings. All he cared about was power and authority. That's an archetypal narcissistic individual.

"He's going to beat Wilfred."

"What for?"

Robert shook his head doubtfully.

"I don't know. He didn't say. He got angry and made us tie Wilfred up. He's been"--he giggled excitedly--"he's been tied for hours, waiting--"

"But didn't the chief say why?"

"I never heard him." (186 - 187)

Throughout the novel, Jack does not care at all about other boys' interest or well-being. He is exclusively concerned with his own. An outstanding example of his morbid egomania is quite clear when one of the boys faints as a result of overheating after marching in the hot sun while wearing the heavy, black choir robes in obedience to Jack's arbitrary order. Jack does not show any sympathy for him, nor does he even have any pricks of conscience

for having been, in part, the cause of the boy's fainting. He indifferently states that "he's always throwing a faint" (18). Similar to the narcissist Hitler, Jack lacks "empathy or caring for others, viewing people as "playthings" to be used" (O'Connor, 2103). Like Hitler, Jack has an absolute lack of consideration for the feelings of others. Inconsiderate and insensitive about other boys' feelings, he shows a callous indifference to their suffering and treats them in a grossly inhuman way:

"You want a pig," said Roger, "like a real hunt."

"Or someone to pretend," said Jack. "You could get someone to dress up as a pig and then he could act--you know, pretend to knock me over and all that."

"You want a real pig," said Robert, still caressing his rump, "because you've got to kill him."

"Use a littlun," said Jack, and everybody laughed. (132-133)

According to James Fallon (2011), "dictators do not relate in a normal manner to other people in a person-to-person, empathetic way. They may associate themselves with 'people' as a whole or 'people' in a tribal or abstract pan-world sense." This is absolutely relevant to Jack's relationship with the boys of whom he has appointed himself leader. For example, unlike Ralph's sympathetic treatment of Piggy, Jack treats Piggy harshly on a similar occasion and continues to make fun of his name, even when he is well aware of the boy's pent-up agony. Not only that, but by his stern manner and arrogant attitude in the meetings with the boys, he seems to enjoy frightening them in order to submit to his personal desires. On many occasions, Piggy and the other boys are "too uncomfortable" and "too afraid" to speak up in Jack's presence. At the end of one such meetings, Ralph invites questions but was met with silence. Piggy didn't say anything because he was apparently intimidated: "You're talking too much," said Jack Merridew. "Shut up, Fatty" (18). Another even more flagrant example is Jack's inconsiderate decision to take Piggy's glasses to ignite fire for his meat, although he knows that without them, Piggy is pathetically vulnerable and totally helpless. In short, Jack is the epitome of the unrestrained ruthless despotism that is characteristic of Hitler.

Jack's Cunning and Power of Deception:

In his article, "How to Defeat a Dictator," George Ayittey (2011) outlines specific traits of dictators throughout history: deception and manipulation:

Dictators are allergic to reform, and they are cunning survivors. They will do whatever it takes to preserve their power and wealth, no matter how much blood ends up on their hands. They are master deceivers and talented manipulators who cannot be trusted to change.

Similarly, Jack's cunning behavior and deception of the boys to reach his own selfish ends is obvious throughout the novel. Right from the very beginning of the novel, he employs what is called in politics "dictators' tricks" to fool other boys into believing that he would be a better and more successful leader than Ralph. The first of these tricks is revealed when Ralph, after being elected, suggests that they should have rules to organize the boys' life over the Island; Jack's answer indicates the beginning of his employing these dictatorial tricks:

I agree with Ralph. We've got to have rules and obey them. After all, we're not savages. We're English, and the English are best at everything. So we've got to do the right things." (45). "We'll have rules!" he cried excitedly. "Lots of rules! Then when anyone breaks 'em -"

Typical of many Dictators such as Hitler, Jack pretends to respect the rules of the group, although deep inside he is secretly plotting to disobey Ralph's rules and; hence, to discredit his leadership. As Robert G. L. Waite has rightly stated,

Hitler confirmed his contempt for parliamentary government by reading Wagner, who abhorred the idea of constitutions and had nothing but scorn for democracy, a word he put in quotation marks or labeled pejoratively "Franco-Judaical-German democracy. (Waite 112).

Similarly, when Ralph declares his democratic rules, Jack openly rejects them and claims the ability to set more appropriate and efficacious rules to control the boys' life on the island. When Ralph insists that he is still the leader and that he has the right to set the rules because the boys have freely elected him Jack replies:

Why should choosing make any difference? Just giving orders that don't make any sense ... Bollocks to the rules! We're strong-we hunt! If there's a beast, we'll hunt it down! We'll close in and beat and beat and beat-!" (27)

In another situation, when Ralph blames Jack and his hunters for not taking care of the fire, which might well have caused them to miss a good chance to be rescued if a passing ship had noticed the fire, Jack's answer, again, involves a tactical trick. He immediately answers: "I apologize." On hearing this prompt apology, the hunters' reaction is one of admiration:

Clearly they were of the opinion that Jack had done the decent thing, had put himself in the right by his generous apology and Ralph, obscurely, in the wrong. They waited for an appropriately decent answer. Yet Ralph's throat refused to pass one. He resented, as an addition to Jack's misbehavior, this verbal trick. (80)

From that incident on, Jack works hard to discredit Ralph and expose him as a weak leader. In order to attain this end, he adopts a number of cunning procedures. First, he tries to drive a wedge between Ralph and the hunters:

"What about my hunters?" ...

Ralph ignored Jack's question.

...

"What about my hunters?"

"Boys armed with sticks."

Jack got to his feet. His face was red as he marched away. Piggy put on his one glass and looked at Ralph.

"Now you done it. You been rude about his hunters." (145)

Jack seeks to nip his hunters' support for Ralph in the bud by telling them that Ralph underestimates them (147); and, to further infuriate them and inflame the situation, he tells them:

"Ralph thinks you're cowards, running away from the boar and the beast. And that's not all."

There was a kind of sigh on the platform as if everyone knew what was coming. Jack's voice went up, tremulous yet determined, pushing against the uncooperative silence. (146)

After inciting the hunters against Ralph's leadership and virtually stopping any support or even sympathy on their part with Ralph, Jack moves to the next step, which is claiming that Ralph has proved to be an inefficient leader:

"He's like Piggy. He says things like Piggy. He isn't a proper chief." (147)

...

"He's a coward himself."

...

Jack turned to the hunters.

"He's not a hunter. He'd never have got us meat. He isn't a prefect and we don't know anything about him. He just gives orders and expects people to obey for nothing." (147).

As a way to discredit Ralph's leadership, Jack accuses him of doing nothing of any benefit for the boys; he cannot even provide the boys with the food they need. At the same time, Jack intends to buy the loyalty of his hunters by giving them more meat than they can expect to obtain under Ralph's leadership. In a very cunning move, Jack invites Ralph, Piggy and other boys to eat meat in a ceremony, which one might call the ceremony of dethroning Ralph and proclaiming Jack the chief over all the boys. In this invitation Jack intentionally humiliates Ralph and asserts his own leadership over the hunters and all the other boys:

"Who's going to join my tribe?"

Ralph made a sudden movement that became a stumble. Some of the boys turned toward him.

"I gave you food," said Jack, "and my hunters will protect you from the beast. Who will join my tribe?" (147)

The fact that dictators exploit the issue of stomach needs in order to control their subjects is quite evident in Jack's reassuring promise that he is going to provide the boys with meat to eat, with fun to give them some psychological relaxation, together with safety from the beast (148). By this cunning way, Jack is able to gain considerable advantage over Ralph. According to Maureen Kelly (1969)

Historically, in times of widespread socio-economic distress, the general public feels itself vulnerable and turns to the leader who exhibits the most strength or seems to offer the most protection. In *Lord of the Flies*, Jack and the hunters, who offer the luxury of meat and the comforts of a dictatorship, fill that role.

In *Lord of the Flies*, the boys shift their allegiance to Jack because he has given them meat to eat rather than something that presently seems useless like the rescue fire, with which Ralph provides them. Thus, to assert his right of leadership over the elected Ralph, one of the things that Jack keeps reminding the other boys of, is the fact that it is he, not Ralph, who has provided them with meat (83). Jack understands that the boys, including even Ralph and Piggy, cannot resist their need for meat. On the other hand, Ralph does not have anything tangible to offer to the boys. "Jack looked round for understanding but found only respect. Ralph stood among the ashes of the signal fire, his hands full of meat, saying nothing" (83). In focusing on the fact that Ralph could not resist eating from his hunt, Jack is successful in humiliating Ralph, and making it clear to all the boys that he alone must be the chief now:

"Suddenly Jack bounded out from the tribe and began screaming wildly.

'See? See? That's what you'll get! I meant that! There isn't a tribe for you anymore! The conch is gone--'

He ran forward, stooping.

'I'm chief!' (213)

Jack's Indispensable Dependence on the Support of His Hunters:

A successful dictator depends not only on the tool of repression to keep up his rule, but also on "the loyal support of at least some groups of subjects" (Wintrobe 35). This is applicable to Jack, who is capable of maintaining power only by the support of his hunters. Without their help,

Jack could never have been able “to rule dictatorially.” As Abubakr al-Shamahi (2012) asserts,

A dictator's power comes from having the ability to surround himself with a loyal group of henchmen, the faithful minions who will ensure that power remains in the hands of the leader. Without such followers, it is impossible to rule dictatorially.

Right from the beginning, Jack's hunters provide him with an implicit support. On their first appearance, they are wearing a common, eccentric uniform, which gives the impression that they are a homogeneous group and suggests the emergence of “a small military dictatorship” (Kelly, 1969):

The creature was a party of boys, marching approximately in step in two parallel lines and dressed in strangely eccentric clothing ... Their bodies, from throat to ankle, were hidden by black cloaks which bore a long silver cross on the left breast and each neck was finished off with a hambone frill ... The boy who controlled them was dressed in the same way though his cap badge was golden. When his party was about ten yards from the platform he shouted an order and they halted, gasping, sweating, swaying in the fierce light. (16)

Like members of armed forces, Jack's hunters are clothed “in a particular fabric and with a particular design, color and insignia” (Pfanner 93). Furthermore, wearing a common uniform gives Jack's group members a sense of identification and commitment. “By its lack of variation and diversity, the uniform promotes a sameness of appearance and brings homogeneity to an otherwise heterogeneous group of people” (Pfanner 93). In addition, the hunters' uniform, like that of military forces, conveys multilayered messages that embody different meanings for the boys. To elucidate such implicit messages and meanings, Toni Pfanner in his article, “Military Uniforms and the Law of War,” says:

The uniform reflects order and discipline, and calls for subordination by displaying a variety of insignia, including badges that indicate rank and emphasize the hierarchical structure of armies. It also calls for respect and fear and symbolizes strength and power. (94)

From their very first appearance, the hunters inspire awe and terror in many boys, even to some extent, in Ralph himself. For example, Piggy, on first seeing Jack and his choir, is “intimidated by this uniformed superiority and the off-hand authority in Merridew's voice” (18).

Furthermore, the fact that Jack's choir's “bodies were hidden by black cloaks” is also very significant. Black is often used to signify evil and death in various cultures around the world. Mark Frank and Thomas Gilovich argue that “the color of person's clothing might have a significant impact on his or her behavior and that those who wear black uniforms are more aggressive than those who wear nonblack uniforms” (74). This is

totally true of Jack's group where the most aggressive characters, Jack, Roger, Robert and Maurice, except for Simon, are remarkably from Jack's hunters.

To sum up, Jack proves to be more successful than Ralph as a leader because of the support and loyalty he is capable of exacting from his followers. With the help of the hunters, Jack dictates his orders to the other boys, and is able to impose his authoritarian leadership on them. The hunters are the thugs whom Jack uses to help him come to power. Typical of many dictators' loyalists, the hunters defend Jack's meetings, and scare the little boys by telling stories about ghosts and beasts. As Sasan Basirat and Fatima Farhoud have rightly said,

We come to consider Jack's group as an entity comprised of an autocratic and narcissistic leadership that is embodied in Jack's personality, and a main body of members consisting of some children who are prepared to conform to his leadership. (191)

Like many dictators, to keep the hunters under his control, Jack assiduously pays them off. He gives them more meat and allows them much fun. In this, he is a typical dictator, who "buys" the loyalty of a group by giving them more than they can expect to obtain under a different regime. (Wintrobe, 2001: 39)

However, Jack, despite his success, has at times to confront what Ronald Wintrobe calls "the Dictator's Dilemma – the problem facing any ruler of knowing how much support he has among the general population, as well as among smaller groups with the power to depose him" (2001:37). For example, even though Jack has power over his hunters, much more than Ralph, in one situation, he has been snubbed by all the boys, including his hunters. Calling again for reelection, he straightforwardly asks the boys

"Who thinks Ralph oughtn't to be chief?"

He looked expectantly at the boys ranged round, who had frozen. Under the palms there was deadly silence.

"Hands up," said Jack strongly, "whoever wants Ralph not to be chief?" (147)

Jack attempts to use the same political tools that are used by politicians in voting for a leader. But when this fails to get him the leadership he aspires for, he decides to use other tools:

"I'm not going to play any longer. Not with you."

Most of the boys were looking down now, at the grass or their feet. Jack cleared his throat again.

"I'm not going to be a part of Ralph's lot--"

He looked along the right-hand logs, numbering the hunters that had been a choir.

"I'm going off by myself. He can catch his own pigs. Anyone who wants to hunt

when I do can come too." (148)

In short, by his cunning tricks, Jack ultimately wins leadership over the boys, who are atrociously oppressed by his tyrannical rule, and who in their heart of hearts must refuse him, but who are too frightened to express their true feelings openly. His rule is brutal and dictatorial. Under his rule, the evil consequences of dictatorship are made quite clear by Golding. All the benefits, the privileges, the comforts, the pleasures are for the autocratic ruler and his repressing supporters, regardless of the deep suffering of the masses or even the risk of losing their very lives. The final evil outcome of the leadership of Jack, who largely embodies dictatorship, is the death of two of the wisest boys, almost in cold blood, Simon and Piggy, and the destruction of the whole Island by a fire that has been intended to kill Ralph who stands for democracy with its basic concern for the Common Good, regardless of the individual benefits of the democratic leader.

Conclusion:

Lord of the Flies is an allegorical microcosm of the world Golding knew and participated in. "Published only a decade after the end of the Second World War, *Lord of the Flies* is a savage analysis of what can happen when regimes fall, fear rules and power must be fought for" (Faber Firsts). The destruction of the World War II because of the dictators who initiated this war had a profound impact on William Golding himself,

My book was to say: you think that now the war is over and an evil thing destroyed, you are safe because you are naturally kind and decent. But I know why the thing rose in Germany. I know it could happen in any country. It could happen here. (HG, 89)

Golding's portrayal of Ralph and Jack in *Lord of the Flies* is an accurate reflection of the real conflict between dictatorial and democratic leaders after World War II. Out of presenting Jack's detestable dictatorial traits grew Golding's hope that prevention of dictatorship might be possible, and that knowledge of these heinous characteristics can destroy existent dictatorships, and, simultaneously, prevent new ones from rising out of the ashes. As Chavan has rightly stated, "Golding, through Jack, doesn't only satirize the power of ideology and dictatorship but analyses the very physical and metaphysical roots of totalitarian leadership and its consequences" (2013: 1520). In his Nobel Prize Banquet Speech (1983), Golding blames rulers and leaders of the world for the misunderstandings and wars among countries:

I have been in many countries and I have found there people examining their own love of life, sense of peril, their own common sense. The one thing they cannot understand is why that same love of

life, sense of peril and above all common sense, is not invariably shared among their leaders and rulers.

Golding believes that our world needs to have a genuine democratic leadership, a leadership which can avoid the common faults in which some democratic leaders with goodwill fall, such as those faults which have led to the ultimate failure of Ralph's democratic experience in *Lord of the Flies* despite his sincere intentions. Genuine democracy alone can prevent chaos and wars throughout the world. Hence, Golding asserts:

I believed in the perfectibility of social man; that a correct structure of society produced goodwill; and that therefore you could remove all social ills by a reorganization of society. ("Fable" 1965).

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