

SELF-DESTRUCTIVE COMMUNITY AND THE IMPROBABILITY OF WAR IN *LORD OF THE FLIES**

Yasunori Sugimura[†]

I

An uninhabited island, the setting of this story, contains two vying elements — the sign system and the sign-destroying force. These two elements, juxtaposed and intertwined with each other, inhere in the topography, scenery, and various aspects of the island, interacting in a delicate balance, out of which comes the endlessly multivocal, differentiated world. The conch is a typical example of this sort of balance. Lack of this balance brings about the world of nondifferentiation, uniformity, and violence. The sign system is first introduced into the island by a pack of boys who become united under the rules of the conch. In disregard of its natural shape, which keeps the delicate balance between the sign system and the sign-destroying force, the boys confine the function of the conch strictly to a univocal, fixed sign. The destructive power, suppressed under the control of the univocal sign, gathers its strength in the boys' unconscious and actualizes in mob violence. The pig-hunting is this mob violence concentrated upon the pig itself. The severed head of a sow as a sacrificial offering is intended to exorcise the mob violence out of the group so that the union between its members may become tighter. But, on the contrary, this very violence inflicted upon the sacrificial offering, amplified and redoubled in the form of the Lord of the Flies, flows back into the sacrificers themselves, disrupting more than ever the solidarity of the boys' community. The Lord of the Flies is therefore the culmination of the sign-destroying force latent in our unconscious beyond good and evil.¹ The boys accordingly continue

[†] Associate Professor at Otaru University of Commerce.

* This is a modified version of a paper read at the 63th General Meeting of the English Literary Society of Japan held on May 18–19, 1991, at Meiji University, Tokyo.

¹ E. L. Epstein asserts that "the Devil is not present in any traditional religious sense; Golding's Beelzebub is the modern equivalent, the anarchic, amoral, driving force that Freudians call the Id, . . ." "Notes on *Lord of the Flies*," *Lord of the Flies* (New York: Perigee Books, 1983), 279.

to make scapegoats one after another in order to strengthen their unity. The offerings are no more limited to animals but extend to and are replaced by human beings. But, the community becomes more violent with the escalation in scapegoats, until it almost destroys itself by its own violence, losing power to keep war going.

In this essay, focusing on the relationship between the fixed sign system and the sign-destroying force, I would like to point out that the endless escalation of wars supposed to be implied in this novel is actually improbable, although many critics have asserted otherwise.

II

According to Jeanne Delbaere-Garant,¹ fundamental opposites coexist throughout this novel; fixity and flux, hardness and liquidity, angularity and roundness. This pattern is perceived everywhere on the island. Of all the natural objects on the island, the most remarkable presence is the conch whose form consists of a "slight spiral twist," which shows exquisite balance and the eternal interplay between roundness and angularity. In my opinion, what Jeanne refers to as "angularity" stands for the sign system that imposes law or rules, while "roundness" for the sign-destroying force. The disorder of the island begins with the great, round rock rolled down into the woods by the boys on their first expedition on the island, and attains its climax when Roger drops the rock with evidently murderous intent. Both "a square black cap" and "a long silver cross" belonging to the choir are of angularity, hardness, fixity, which clearly indicates that the choir is strictly bound by law and rules. These choir boys, once relieved of discipline and turned into hunters, form a complete circle and close in on the pig. The place of assembly has been a triangle made up of logs, but gradually becomes circular as the assembly loses its effectiveness. As seen in the conch, the complicated and multivocal pattern produced by exquisite balance and the eternal interplay of opposite forces could be called "intrinsic neutrality"² comprising infinite differentiation. Similarly, the sound of the

¹ Jeanne Delbaere-Garant, "Rhythm and Expansion in *Lord of the Flies*," *William Golding: Some Critical Considerations*, ed. Jack I. Biles and Robert O. Evans (Lexington: Univ. P of Kentucky, 1978), 72-75.

² K. Chellappan, "Vision and Structure in *Lord of the Flies*: A Semiotic Approach," *William Golding: An Indian Response*, ed. Satyanarain Singh, et al. (New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1987), 41.

shell comprises "irresponsibility" and "forethought," "childishness" and "intelligence," anarchy and order.¹ Its strident, piercing boom spreads through the island, drives the birds and small animals into a state of panic, while at the same time it plays an important rôle as a command summoning the boys to assembly. Tragedy arises where such a complex sound is regarded as a simple one for a mere command summons. "The root of evil," I believe, lies in "the tendency to convert and reduce complexity into simplicity."² Ralph vaguely feels that "things look different in different lights, and from different points of view"³ when he casually says, "If faces were different when lit from above or below — what was a face? What was anything?"⁴ In spite of this excellent insight, Ralph is completely ignorant of the meaning of the shape of the conch. Only for a moment does he feel "a kind of affectionate reverence for the conch" (85), but in the subsequent meeting he makes unnaturally strict rules. He prohibits the littluns to use any other lavatory than the one right along the beach, though it would be almost impossible for them to observe such a rule if taken short. Unnaturally enough, a fire should not be made except on the mountain, whither food, such as it is, must be brought for cooking. Nevertheless, at the meeting for making rules Ralph contradicts himself, thinking he has to "drop words like heavy round stones among the little groups that crouched or squatted" (86) in order to attract their eyes to the conch. While sticking to the strict rule corresponding to the angular part of the conch, Ralph is unconsciously attracted to the destructive power, that is, to the circular part of the conch, whose roundness seems abruptly to rise to the surface of his consciousness. The exquisite, and yet fragile balance between sign system and sign-destroying power is ubiquitous in nature, topography, landscape, animals and plants on the island,⁵ unfolding an eternal movement of differentiation. This differentiation is first witnessed in the multicoloured water of the lagoon (10), as well as in the heterogeneity of the boys' heads and

¹ Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor, *William Golding: A Critical Study* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 19.

² Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor, 20.

³ Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor, 34–35.

⁴ William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 85. All further citations and references are indicated parenthetically in the text.

⁵ See such scenes as "a stack of balanced rock projecting through the looped creepers" (28), "the square top of the mountain beyond the cirque" (30), and "the top of the split rock of the cliff littered with apparently tottering great lumps" (114).

clothes (19–20).

A conch pulled up from among the weeds by Ralph and Piggy, who are the first to appear at the outset of the story, acts as a sign to maintain the discipline of the community. Ralph as chief blows the conch to summon the boys to assembly. Whoever speaks in the assembly is bound to hold the conch. As the conch becomes the fixed sign, its inner equilibrium gradually breaks down. Jack's casual negligence in holding the conch leads to the precipitate loss of its dignity. With this loss of dignity the object of the chase becomes indiscriminate. The pig-hunting loses its value as a univocal sign for food provision, deteriorating into a sort of sport, in which a pig is easily interchangeable with any other object. It could be pig's droppings, another beast, or even a boy nicknamed Piggy, and furthermore any human being. When Jack pursues the pig in the semi-darkness of the undergrowth, his eyes and nose are arrested not by the pig in front but by its droppings only a few inches from his face. His concern is now not with the pig so much as with its droppings. The droppings temporarily take the place of the pig: "The ground was turned over near the pig-run and there were droppings that steamed. Jack bent down to them as though he loved them" (123). As discussed later, the fact that Jack is fascinated with the faeces suggests the process by which his world of sign system is being undermined by its antagonistic force. Fire is also a univocal sign which acts as a signal fire for rescue, but the signal fire is extinguished early and replaced soon by the fire for roasting pork. Since the pig is already interchangeable with any other object, the fire has the possibility of burning everything. The violence arising from the loss of inner equilibrium of the conch thus deprives everything of its differentiation.

Like the conch, butterflies keep an exquisite inner balance. They first appear when Ralph, Jack, and Simon make an expedition on the island. A host of butterflies are "lifting, fluttering, settling" (30) in their own tensional equilibrium. Even in the ghastly world of hunters who mangle a sow and spill her blood, butterflies, if in a small number, contrastingly insist upon their balance. But, even these butterflies disappear when the dripping head of the sow is spiked on a stick which is rammed in the earth: "Even the butterflies deserted the open space where the obscene thing grinned and dripped" (152). In the background of this complete desertion by the butterflies lies the collapse of the balance which has sustained their existence, because the severed head of a sow is a sacrificial offering where every

possible violence of the mob is gathered and condensed. This ritual of offering a scapegoat will be discussed later in more detail.

III

The mob violence comes from the destructive power working against the fixed sign system, but at first it appears as a nondescript dark power which haunts the boys and disturbs their solidarity. As the pig they hunt ceases to be a mere sign of food, they feel themselves pursued by something uncanny. Jack explains this feeling: "‘If you’re hunting sometimes you catch yourself feeling as if —’ He flushed suddenly. ‘There’s nothing in it of course. Just a feeling. But you can feel as if you’re not hunting, but — being hunted; as if something’s behind you all the time in the jungle’" (57). But, Ralph ignores these meaningful words of Jack’s, faintly indignant at his enthusiasm for hunting, and mentions the urgent need for rescue: "‘The best thing we can do is get ourselves rescued’" (58). So, it is Jack and his hunters who are first threatened by the uncanny. It then besets other boys as a menace which must be removed from the community by all means in order for it to be sustained. This menace starts as a form of faeces which the littluns cannot dispose of. The hunters are intensely attracted by this uncanny power, while groping for the means to avoid or remove it. Jack is scatologically fascinated with the droppings of the pig, the hunters are bizarrely excited by the blood dripping from the wounded sow. It is especially meaningful that the mangled sow is a mother suckling many piglets. "Excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse, etc.)," explains Julia Kristeva, "stem from the *maternal* and/or the feminine, of which the maternal is the real support."¹ She goes on to say that not only menstrual blood but also excrement is attributed to maternal authority, under which infants get sphincter training,² and that the defilements are "desirable and terrifying, nourishing and murderous, fascinating and abject."³ And yet, this outrage on the sow suckling piglets, together with its united image of incest and matricide, is suggestive of the infringement of the most fundamental law: "The sow collapsed under them and they were heavy and fulfilled upon her" (149). On this problem, E.L. Epstein notes:

¹ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1982), 71.

² *Powers of Horror*, 71.

³ *Powers of Horror*, 54.

"The killing of the sow is accomplished in terms of sexual intercourse. . . . The entire incident forms a horrid parody of an Oedipal wedding night; these emotions, the sensations aroused by murder and death, and the overpowering and unaccustomed emotions of sexual love experienced by the half-grown boys, plus their own irrational fears and blind terrors, release the forces of death and the devil on the island."¹ Nothing is more effective than the Oedipal violation in picturing the children's loss of innocence.² According to Jacques Lacan, "the Oedipus phase" ("*le stade de l'Œdipe*") is the period when the father separates the infant from the mother. The prohibition of the union of infant and mother is the incipient law, the law of the father ("the Name-of-the-Father," or "*le Nom-du-Père*"). The infant thus acquires the power of substituting other objects for the deprived one, the desired mother.³ Freud deals with the child who expresses the mother's departure and return by alternately hiding and producing a wooden reel with a piece of string tied round it. Besides, the child cries "o-o-o-o" ("*fort* ") and "*da* " when the reel disappears and reappears.⁴ "The two phonemes O and A (*oob* and *da*)," Anika Lemaire expounds, "symbolize the disappearance and reappearance of the reel. . . . The child moves from the mother to the reel and finally to language. Such an experience may be considered the inaugural moment of all future displacement, all metaphors and all language."⁵ The child, in this way, participates in the world of symbols. And yet, the fulfillment of desire for the deprived having been balked by the imposition of the law, the desire is eternalized and "metonymically displaced from signifier to signifier."⁶ Hence starts the signifying chain, the chain of differentiation. Any sign is therefore far from a fixed univocal one, for the sign is always already destroyed by the desire for the deprived object. Thus, it is the law of the father keeping the tensional equilibrium with the desire for the mother that enables the human being to

¹ E.L. Epstein, 280.

² Arnold Johnston, *Of Earth and Darkness: The Novels of William Golding* (Columbia and London: U of Missouri P, 1980), 12.

³ Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. David Macey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 85.

⁴ Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961), 8-11.

⁵ Lemaire, 52.

⁶ Lemaire, 88. See also *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977), 167 and *Écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), 518.

acquire the symbolic function¹ and produce language, perpetuate the dynamic process of the signifying chain, the chain of differentiation. This tensional equilibrium is inherent in the nature of the island, especially in the shape of the conch.

Meanwhile, once the law of the father loses its tensional balance with the desire for the mother, the law is of no value, and so the infant cannot distinguish between symbol and reality, thus unable to understand the symbolic function. It regresses into the pre-Oedipus phase, such as "the mirror stage" ("*le stade du miroir*"), where it barely detects its own image in the mirror, and further into "the imaginary"² where it is completely unified with the mother. As for this problem, Lemaire argues: "When the mother denies the speech of the father its function as law, she prevents the child from acceding to the paternal metaphor, to the representation, that is, of a father who is the authority separating the child from its mother. Such an attitude leaves the child subjugated to the dual relationship, to identification with the mother, and takes from him any possibility of access to the order of symbolism and of language."³ Fallen into this situation, the infant fails to identify its own image on the mirror by clinging to the foetal condition previous to the mirror stage. The infant cannot experience its body as a unified whole, but as something dispersed, i.e., "the fragmented body" ("*corps morcelé*"),⁴ which leads to the psychotic destruction of others as well as itself.⁵ Jack becomes suddenly brutal when he fails to grasp his painted face mirrored in the water: "He (Jack) knelt, holding the shell of water. A rounded patch of sunlight fell on his face and a brightness appeared in the depths of the water. He looked in astonishment, no longer at himself but at

¹ *Écrits: A Selection*, 67. *Écrits*, 278.

² What Lacan calls "the imaginary" is characteristic of the closed, dual relationship between mother and child, where the child is not yet positioned as an individual. Riveted thus to the imaginary, Lemaire observes, "the signifier is privileged and is taken in the literal sense, outside of any operation referring it to its symbolic dimension, . . . The cause of this incapacity to distinguish between signifier and signified is . . . due to an unfavourable outcome of the Oedipus." See Lemaire, 86.

³ Lemaire, 235.

⁴ *Écrits: A Selection*, 4. *Écrits*, 97. According to Lacan, before the mirror stage, the infant cannot experience its body as a unified whole, but as something dispersed, whereas the mirror stage turns this dispersion into the unity of the proper body. See also Joël Dor, *Introduction à la Lecture de Lacan* (Paris: Denoël, 1985), 99–100.

⁵ Dor, 99.

an awesome stranger. . . . He began to dance and his laughter became a bloodthirsty snarling" (69).

The union between the infant and the mother is not necessarily full of bliss. The infant sometimes harbours brutal aggressiveness toward the mother, lost in wild fancies of mangling her body while suffering from a delusion of being persecuted by her.¹ This is why the outrage on the sow has a double meaning: incest and matricide. Bernard F. Dick states: "The sow in *Lord of the Flies* symbolizes both matriarchy and maternalism. Her presence has a negative effect on the boys who regard the sight of a mother with her young not as an image of domestic harmony but as a threat to their freedom."² The boys, fallen into the state of "the fragmented body," make a bloodthirsty assault on a mother pig and cut her up while they have a sense of being always pursued by the uncanny. This means that the boys have lost the law of the father and lapsed into the imaginary.

The conch comes to the crisis of being smashed when Ralph and Piggy hold it up to reinforce the law of the father by cutting out mutinous factors such as the uncanny or the abject and destroying the inner balance of the conch. The law of the father, deprived of its balance with the desire for the mother, acts as a mere shell of rigid authoritarianism. The more forcibly the law is imposed upon the boys, the more intensely they become fascinated and entrapped by the desire for the mother. It is on this account that they long for a real sign of the law of the father from the adult world. But, ironically enough, they are invaded by the uncanny which the fixed sign system of the adult world has tried hard to exclude. This uncanny is the horrible figure of the paratrooper killed in an aerial fight and slowly rotting away on the mountaintop. For the boys, the dead paratrooper now becomes the frightening image of the beast always pursuing them, the image of the destructive power over the sign. This exclusion is being carried out by the law of the rigid discipline of the troops, i.e., by the law of the father unrecognized by the mother. It is not a haphazard circumstance that Ralph's father is one of the promoters of this war. The absurdity of this law culminates in the figure of the officer of the cruiser involved in the nuclear war. He appears to be none other than "order" to the boys who have fallen

¹ Melanie Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works 1921-1945* (London: Virago, 1991), 308-09.

² Bernard F. Dick, *William Golding* (Boston: Twayne, 1987), 22.

into barbaric chaos.¹ In short, the boys are suspended between the absurd law of the father and the barbaric chaos caused by the beast. A sacrificial offering to the beast is intended to soothe it in order for the group of the boys to save themselves from being disturbed and to solidify their unity. This sacrificial ceremony therefore serves as restoration of the law of the father. As Julia Kristeva has shown, "the function of these religious rituals is to ward off the subject's fear of his very own identity sinking irretrievably into the mother."² These rituals are the prevention of the return to "the mother" which endangers the foundation of the social system. In this case, it is to be noted that a sacrifice is offered no more to a deity but to the uncanny beast — the destructive power engendered in each member of the community. The sacrifice now serves not as an act of mediation between a sacrificer and a deity but as an outlet for the overflowing violence in the community.³ "The sacrifice serves," according to René Girard, "to protect the entire community from *its own* violence; it prompts the entire community to choose victims outside itself. The elements of dissension scattered throughout the community are drawn to the person of the sacrificial victim and eliminated, at least temporarily, by its sacrifice" (8). Such a sacrificial offering is, after all, the consolidation of the authoritative law, not aiming at equilibrium between law and desire, so that its pacifying effect upon the community cannot but be temporary. Hence the possibility of successive appearance of sacrificial victims suffering mob violence. What is common with the victims in *Lord of the Flies* is that they are killed or almost killed in a sacrificial fashion; sacred imagery is used in relation to Simon's dead body, Piggy falls and crashes on an altar-like square rock, Ralph's head is to be pierced like a sow's with a stick sharpened at both ends. The sow's skewered head is contrived to appease the uncanny beast, which is actually an image cast from the boys' minds full of aggrandized violence. But this sacrificial offering produces an adverse result. The violence intrinsic to the sacrificial ritual itself does not expel violence from the community but redoubles it. The beast becomes the Beast, the culmination of the increased

¹ Virginia Tiger, *William Golding: The Dark Fields of Discovery* (London: Marion Boyars, 1976), 54.

² *Powers of Horror*, 64.

³ René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1989), 6–7. All further citations and references are indicated parenthetically in the text.

sign-destroying force, the monstrous authority of the Lord of the Flies. It has a charismatic power standing face to face with the law, domineering over Jack and his hunters, over almost all the boys. Their joining thus in the territory of the Lord of the Flies is a serious menace to the union of the community. They accordingly continue to make scapegoats one after another in order to consolidate the foundation of their own community, only to strengthen the power of the Lord of the Flies. Consequently, the increasing number of scapegoats favours the Lord of the Flies. Ever-increasing violence begins to circulate among the boys.

Thus, the violence of rituals is no different from violence in general. "The difference between sacrificial and nonsacrificial violence is anything but exact; it is even arbitrary. At times the difference threatens to disappear entirely. There is no such thing as truly 'pure' violence," observes René Girard (40). Attributing "the disappearance of the difference between impure violence and purifying violence" to "the sacrificial crisis," he amplifies his theory as follows:

When this difference has been effaced, purification is no longer possible and impure, contagious, reciprocal violence spreads throughout the community. . . . The hidden violence of the sacrificial crisis eventually succeeds in destroying distinctions, and this destruction in turn fuels the renewed violence. In short, it seems that anything that adversely affects the institution of sacrifice will ultimately pose a threat to the very basis of the community, to the principles on which its social harmony and equilibrium depend. (49)

The Lord of the Flies chooses Simon as a special target for assault, simply because he puts more stress than any other boy upon "harmony and equilibrium" between law and desire. This "harmony and equilibrium" is the only means by which the law becomes valuable and deters the sign-destroying force headed by the Lord of the Flies from abusing authority over the island. This is why the Lord of the Flies warns Simon: "I'm warning you. I'm going to get waxy. D'you see? You're not wanted. Understand? We are going to have fun on this island. Understand? We are going to have fun on this island! So don't try it on, my poor misguided boy, or else —'" (159)

Simon does not exclude the desire but wishes for harmony and equilibrium. As the Lord of the Flies has very aptly pointed out, the desire for the mother, abhorred and excluded by the boys, exists distinctly in their mind:

“‘You knew, didn’t you ? I’m part of you ?’” (158) The Lord of the Flies is part of any boy on the island. Deleuze and Guattari refer to the same effect: “But this terrible mother, the sphinx, is herself part of Oedipus; her nondifferentiation is merely the reverse of the exclusive differentiations created by Oedipus, . . .”¹ True, like the other boys, Simon appreciates the sign system, and more than any other boy he feels dislike toward the sign-destroying force. On the first expedition he co-operates with Ralph and Jack in excluding a gigantic round rock. Confronted with the dripping sow’s head he feels it to be obscene. At the assembly, alluding to mankind’s essential illness, he puts a question to the other boys: “‘What’s the dirtiest thing there is ?’” (97) But, unlike the other boys, Simon has the sensitivity to identify the dirtiest and most obscene thing as no other than himself. What he senses in the obscenity and abjectness of the sow’s head is in fact his own figure.² While Jack fails to identify his own figure in the surface of the water and regresses into the imaginary even before the mirror stage, Simon, grasping precisely his own image, advances far beyond the mirror stage. He therefore willingly accepts his own debased figures; a bleeding ghastly figure swallowed in the mouth of the Lord of the Flies, a vomiting figure freeing the layer of rubber and canvas from the corrupting and stinking body of a dead paratrooper, a figure mistaken for the beast and mangled in the hands of demented boys, and a bloodstained figure lying dead on the beach, surrounded by innumerable phosphorescent animalcula.

Nevertheless, his abject figure can be sublime at the same time:

The water rose further and dressed Simon’s coarse hair with brightness. The line of his cheek silvered and the turn of his shoulder became sculptured marble. . . . Softly, surrounded by a fringe of inquisitive bright creatures, itself a silver shape beneath the steadfast constellations, Simon’s dead body moved out towards the open sea. (169–70)

Here Simon’s innate sign system expresses the sublime to counterbalance the abject, since Simon always seeks for equilibrium. Concerning this process of sublimation Julia Kristeva notes: “In the symptom, the abject permeates me, I become abject. Through sublimation, I keep it under control.

¹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, et al. (London: Athlone, 1990), 311.

² Tiger, 60.

The abject is edged with the sublime, . . . ”¹ A paratrooper’s rotting corpse held together by rubber and canvas, with its head lifted and bowed at the mercy of the wind, may well appear extremely abject. It is the rubber and canvas that have excluded the paratrooper from the sign system. Simon, out of his sheer wish for equilibrium, removes these fetters for the paratrooper to restore the sign, which, as seen in Simon’s corpse, naturally counterpoises the abject. The parachute filled with wind regains its dignity and makes splendid movements over the reef out to sea.

Meanwhile, the atmosphere of nondifferentiation, uniformity, and violence already exists in the background where war is being waged on a large scale mainly by males and not a single woman appears from beginning to end. Ralph and Piggy, influenced by this background, understand the conch from the point of view of univocal sign system, which drives Jack to fury, collapses the conch and ultimately the island. Jack quite appropriately accuses Ralph of his ignorance when Ralph admonishes Jack for neglecting his duty: “‘I’m chief,’ said Ralph, ‘because you chose me. And we were going to keep the fire going. Now you run after food —’ ‘You ran yourself!’ shouted Jack. ‘Look at that bone in your hands!’” (166) Ralph at first overlooks even the cooking aspect of the fire, urges all the members to eat nothing but fruit, fish and crabs, “even though fruit causes diarrhoea,”² and a crab has “not more than a ha’porth of meat” (80). On the other hand, Jack already uses fire for roasting pork, of which Ralph, while condemning Jack’s behaviour, takes his share. Naturally enough, Jack contradicts Ralph’s accusation. Jack gets more furious with Piggy, who respects the law of the conch to an extreme degree as if it were a mathematical sign and totally ignores the existence of the sign-destroying beast which besets Jack all the time. But, Piggy in fact simply turns a blind eye to the horror by depending entirely upon the civilization of the adult world.

Julia Kristeva defines the sign system as “the symbolic,” the sign-destroying elements as “the semiotic.” In civilized society, she observes, the symbolic gradually degenerates into a mere “code.” This degenerating process is what Kristeva refers to as “fetishization,” against which, she says, the semiotic has to fight.³ The smashing of the conch is attributable to this

¹ *Powers of Horror*, 11.

² Dick, 15.

³ Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia U P, 1984), 83–84.

revolt of the semiotic against fetishism. The semiotic exerts its destructive power upon the encoded conch, which as a result incurs innumerable cracks all over and is in a condition in which it can easily break into fragments when Piggy holds it up and gives Jack and his hunters the alternatives: "Which is better — to have rules and agree, or to hunt and kill?" (199) The semiotic also smashes Piggy's brain encoded by the rationalism of civilization.

Jack is originally the leader of the choir which especially makes much of discipline and order. "We'll have rules! Lots of rules! Then when anyone breaks 'em —" (36) The choir has various angularities; square caps, silver crosses, and two parallel lines in marching. These angularities are, on the other hand, coupled with the blackness of caps and cloaks which from the outset impresses the reader with the indescribable weirdness of their impersonal uniformity. This uniformity of the choir and the twins is strikingly contrasted with the personal differentiation of the other boys' heads and clothes (19–20). Thus, the Lord of the Flies has already come to coexist with the absurdly strict rules of the choir, much in the same way as the uncanny beast haunts the hunters the more often they exercise an iron discipline to exterminate it, only to aggrandize the violence inside the community. The darkness of the Lord of the Flies cannot be dispelled either by scientific rationalism or religious discipline. Sammy Mountjoy in *Free Fall*, for example, deals with everything in an utterly rationalistic manner, until he is baffled by the monstrous darkness. Coming to an impasse, he turns to religion for help, but religion cannot cope with darkness, either.

It could easily be imagined that Simon, a member of the choir, often faints under Jack's control. Simon is one of those who cannot do without harmony and differentiation. Unlike the other boys he occasionally hides in a natural shelter in the depths of the wood, where he tries to see the exquisite balance of every different component of the island. It is not so much under the blazing sun but rather in the evening that he can perceive most clearly the splendidly harmonized and yet highly individual, differentiated figure of every possible element on the island, widely ranging from dazzlingly multifarious colours and heat to cool breeze, green sepals, aroma of flowers, stars, and darkness (62). But, once the violence circulates through the community, the elements on the island seem to be utterly disrupted: "On the other side of the island, swathed at midday with mirage, defended by the shield of the quiet lagoon, one might dream of rescue; but

here, faced by the brute obtuseness of the ocean, the miles of division, one was clamped down, one was helpless, one was condemned, one was —” (122). Simon himself feels quite ill at ease even in his shelter: “He shifted restlessly but there was no avoiding the sun. Presently he was thirsty, and then very thirsty” (146). In both scenes above, harmony and eternal differentiation are completely replaced by discord and impersonal uniformity. The boys on the island become gradually insensitive to a great variety of natural phenomena: “... they grew accustomed to these mysteries and ignored them, just as they ignored the miraculous, throbbing stars” (63). This insensitivity to diversity no doubt corresponds to the impersonalization of the members of the community. A little boy with a mulberry-coloured birthmark, who has disappeared or perhaps burnt to death as a result of the conflagration, is soon buried in oblivion, and the smaller boys are “known now by the generic title of ‘littluns’” (64). The heterogeneity of the boys’ heads and clothes has turned homogeneous and impersonal, bleached or tattered by the weather. The choir, once rearranged as hunters, become far more impersonal, hence replete with far more violence. Roger, among others, turns remarkably wild. He kicks over sand castles and “a complex of marks, tracks, walls, railway lines” (65), which the littluns have been co-operating to elaborately build. In particular, these marks, tracks, walls and railway lines are finished with so delicately differentiated designs that they are “of significance only if inspected with the eye at beach-level” (65). Roger totally negates these subtle differences by making havoc of the littluns’ masterpieces. As if by a chain reaction, Henry, one of the littluns, exercises the same kind of violence as Roger does upon the tiny scavengers, trapping them in the bays of his footprints, preventing their varied, individual movements with a “wave-worn and whitened” (66) impersonal stick. Reverberation of Roger’s violence extends to the natural environment of the island. The fringe of palm trees is shaken by a sudden breeze, and heavy nuts as big as rugby balls fall one after another, glancing off Roger’s head. In response to this attack, Roger in turn begins to throw stones at Henry. Violence gradually escalates, circulating from human beings to nature, nature to human beings, and human beings to human beings. Above all, between Jack and Roger violence circulates and escalates endlessly. When they slaughter a sow, Jack and Roger compete with each other in inflicting a fatal wound upon her flesh. The competition of Jack with Roger for more violence reaches its peak in a scene where they make an onslaught upon

Piggy and Ralph who stand in the narrow neck. Ignoring Jack's order, Roger rolls a monstrous rock down toward Piggy, who falls forty feet dashing both the conch and his brains to pieces, whereas Jack, following the complete silence all around, flaunts his authority a little too late: "See? See? That's what you'll get! I meant that!" (200) Jack, preceded by Roger, takes the lead this time in violently hurling his spear at Ralph with full intent to murder him. This murderous intention derives not so much from his sheer hatred toward Ralph as from Jack's rivalry with Roger for a sacrifice with which he will secure the power to organise the group into solidarity. The same thing could be said of "a sense of delirious abandonment" (200) with which Roger leans all his weight on the lever to roll down the rock. This delirium is that which pertains to a man of power who is eager to command the group by making a sacrifice. Here we could see a pattern in which the one who makes more sacrifices than any other member gets the qualification to be the leader of the group.

Contrarily, the group can never restore solidarity by means of a sacrifice. The community is invaded by "contagious, reciprocal violence" on account of "the sacrificial crisis." What was once a conflict between the Jack-Roger group and the Ralph-Piggy group somewhat shifts to the one between Jack and Roger after they sacrifice Piggy and almost Ralph. The latent feud between Jack and Roger eventually shows clearly in this quarrel: "The Chief spoke to him angrily. 'Why aren't you on watch?' Roger looked at him gravely, 'I just came down —'" (201). Their competition for power is perceived even more clearly when they try to win Samneric over to their side: "The Chief snatched one of the few spears that were left and poked Sam in the ribs. . . . Roger edged past the Chief, only just avoiding pushing him with his shoulder. The yelling ceased, and Samneric lay looking up in quiet terror. Roger advanced upon them as one wielding a nameless authority" (201).

V

Although belonging to the Ralph-Piggy group, these twins, once captivated, leave it without any hesitation and soon take sides with the Jack-Roger group. The twins, whose every behaviour as well as their features is identical, form the roots of anarchy because of their nondifferentiation, just as the choir and the hunters do. The twins' chaotic conduct begins with their derision of Piggy's extraordinary adherence to the rule of the conch

(49). It is the untimely extinction of the beacon with the chance passing of a ship that gives the boy's community an occasion for disruption. Ralph's harsh censure of Jack for the hunters' neglecting to pay attention to the fire forms an apple of discord between the two boys, but actually it is Samneric who is to blame. It is also these twins who, taking a mere glance at the corrupted body of the paratrooper, make too much fuss about the furry beast with teeth, claws and wings, and frighten the other boys into panic. In addition, toward the end of the novel, although Ralph, who is being pursued by the demented hunters, entrusts Samneric with his last hope that they will keep the hunters from his shelter, the twins, already enlisted in the Jack-Roger group, easily betrays his hiding place under torture. Consequently, the hunters roll the huge rock down on Ralph's shelter, breaking the forest into shreds, burning up the island almost to ashes.¹

Such a being as Samneric is what René Girard calls "the double" or "a double vision" (161-63). "The double" or "a double vision" brings about "the similarity of the surrogate victim and the community that expells it, of the sacrificed and the sacrificer." Thus, "all differences are abolished" (163). In the mimicry of the pig-hunting, the rôle of a pig in due course changes places with that of a hunter: "While Roger mimed the terror of the pig, the littluns ran and jumped on the outside of the circle. . . . The movement became regular while the chant lost its first superficial excitement and began to beat like a steady pulse. Roger ceased to be a pig and became a hunter, so that the centre of the ring yawned emptily" (167). Moreover, in this play, the pretence has already become a reality. Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor observe: "The line between game, pretence and reality is becoming much more difficult to draw."² As mentioned before, the boys fall into the situation where the difference between symbol and reality has disappeared. In Freud's opinion, there is no distinction even between contraries in the field of the unconscious.³ In the following scene, Ralph experiences double vision of two directly antagonistic objects; the conch as a fixed sign and the skull of a sow as a sign-destroying force: "He walked slowly into the middle of the clearing and looked steadily at the skull that gleamed as white as ever

¹ I am greatly indebted to Professor Hiroshi Fujita for his useful suggestions about the twins.

² Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor, 49.

³ Freud, "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol. XVII*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1981), 81n.

the conch had done and seemed to jeer at him cynically" (204).

Neither can there be any difference between the sacrificer and the sacrificed nor between impure violence and purifying violence. Even Jack the sacrificer could easily be cast into the position of the sacrificed, should Roger hold supremacy and command the hunters. Roger himself, as well as any member of the hunters, might at any moment be forced into the position of the sacrificed. The twins casually flitting about among the other boys, in truth, provide a horrible agent able to make the community degenerate into reciprocal, irrational violence caused by nondifferentiation. The same uncanniness of uniformity as seen in the choir is discerned as early as in the twins' first appearance on the beach, which is described as "a black, bat-like creature" or as "a fluttering patch of black" (20). The twins always induce violence and maintain the circular shape of sign-destroying force, as can be inferred from the fact that they share "one wide, ecstatic grin" (75) when they carry the slaughtered pig on their shoulders, that, as Jack says, they make the essential components for the formation of *a ring* to enclose the pig (76), and that they, "still sharing their identical grin" (81), *run round each other* when Jack flaunts his slash in the pig's throat.

VI

When the difference between impure violence and purifying violence disappears, "impure, contagious, reciprocal violence spreads throughout the community" (49), whether the sacrificed are sublime or not. This shows that, however sublime the sacrifice, it does not restore harmony and equilibrium in the community.

A formal resemblance between the boat-shaped island with a rock bastion and the cruiser which finally rescues the boys suggests that foreign war in the adult world is the same sacrificial ritual as that performed by the boys on the island to purge the community of its overflowing violence. According to Girard, foreign wars are "in fact formerly civil strifes" (249). The community of the adult world, like that of the boys on the island, could be more and more infested with impure, reciprocal violence as the number of the sacrificed increases. The community incurs a sacrificial crisis which destroys the distinction between pure and impure. As the boys on the island, affected with the sacrificial crisis, burned up the island and had no grounds for fighting, so can the adult warriors ruin themselves through almost the same process, becoming incapable of continuing war. The island

with an *angular* bastion has the shape of a battleship. But, so far from attacking, this ship is obliged to retreat on account of a *circular* coral reef (atoll) at a little distance from what appears to be its bow: "The tide was running so that long streaks of foam tailed away from the reef and for a moment they felt that the boat was moving steadily astern" (31).

If it is the case that war in general is thus being analogized with the boys' fighting on the island, this novel is not necessarily pessimistic. The frustration of Simon's attempt to restore harmony and equilibrium between law and desire does not mean that war continues to escalate forever. The reciprocal violence caused by the sacrificial crisis among the members of the community might ruin their own base, putting a raid upon the enemy quite out of the question. Even if the officer had not arrived in time for rescue as a *deus ex machina*, the boys would have lost their nerve to kill Ralph, had they only turned to take a glance at the devastation of their "military base" by fire. It would be hard to interpret this novel as anything other than a paradoxical proof that the escalation of war is improbable, whether on this particular island or in the whole world.

Received December 18, 1992